


# Developing characters and narrative by means of narrative identification through the Value Systems Theory and the Rashomon Effect

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## Table of contents

<b>Abstract</b> .....	<b>i</b>
<b>Keywords</b> .....	<b>ii</b>
<b>Opsomming</b> .....	<b>iii</b>
<b>Trefwoorde</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>v</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXTUALISATION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1 Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>1.2 Narrative identification and narrative persuasion</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>1.3 <i>Rashomon</i> and the Rashomon Effect</b> .....	<b>4</b>
1.3.1 <i>Synopsis of various characters' perspectives in Rashomon</i> .....	6
<b>1.4 Character and characterisation</b> .....	<b>9</b>
1.4.1 <i>Schwartz's Value System Theory</i> .....	11
1.4.2 <i>My rendition: plot and character summary</i> .....	14
<b>1.5 Problem statement</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>1.6 Research questions</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>1.7 Central theoretical statement</b> .....	<b>18</b>
<b>1.8 Methodological framework</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>1.9 Work plan</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<b>CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>2.1 Overview</b> .....	<b>22</b>
2.1.1 <i>Research and practice-led research</i> .....	22
2.1.2 <i>My methodological approach</i> .....	37
2.1.2.1 <i>Pre-production</i> .....	37
2.1.2.2 <i>Production</i> .....	38
2.1.2.3 <i>Post-production</i> .....	39
<b>CHAPTER 3: A CONSIDERTATION OF NARRATIVE</b> .....	<b>40</b>
<b>3.1 Narrative</b> .....	<b>40</b>
3.1.1 <i>What is narrative?</i> .....	40
<b>3.2 Transportation</b> .....	<b>45</b>
3.2.1 <i>What is transportation?</i> .....	45
3.2.2 <i>Transportation: the need for cognition and the need for affect</i> .....	49
<b>3.3 Narrative engagement</b> .....	<b>51</b>
3.3.1 <i>What is narrative engagement?</i> .....	51

3.3.2	<i>Narrative engagement, believability and realism</i> .....	53
3.3.3	<i>Narrative engagement and mental models</i> .....	54
3.3.4	<i>Narrative engagement and deictic shifts</i> .....	56
3.3.5	<i>The narrative engagement process</i> .....	57
<b>3.4</b>	<b>Identification</b> .....	<b>60</b>
3.4.1	<i>What is identification?</i> .....	60
3.4.2	<i>The impact of identification</i> .....	61
3.4.3	<i>Influences on identification</i> .....	64
3.4.4	<i>Linguistic identification</i> .....	66
3.4.5	<i>Identification and empathy</i> .....	69
<b>3.5</b>	<b>Additional narrative persuasion elements</b> .....	<b>72</b>
<b>3.6</b>	<b>En résumé</b> .....	<b>76</b>
<b>CHAPTER 4: CREATING CHARACTERS</b> .....		<b>78</b>
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Character development</b> .....	<b>78</b>
4.1.1	<i>Schwartz's Value System Theory</i> .....	81
4.1.1.1	What is Schwartz's Value System Theory? .....	81
4.1.1.2	Value features and universal requirements .....	84
4.1.1.3	Universal values .....	85
4.1.1.4	Value structure domains .....	91
4.1.1.5	Value relations with other human characteristics .....	95
<b>4.2</b>	<b>Character design</b> .....	<b>96</b>
4.2.1	<i>Character appeal</i> .....	96
4.2.1.1	What is character appeal? .....	96
4.2.2	<i>Cuteness</i> .....	102
4.2.2.1	What is cuteness? .....	102
4.2.3	<i>The Uncanny Valley</i> .....	107
4.2.3.1	What is the Uncanny Valley? .....	107
4.2.4	<i>My implementation, process, outcome and reflection on how I created my characters</i> .....	112
4.2.4.1	An introduction to how all of this began .....	112
4.2.4.2	Edali's character bone structure .....	129
4.2.4.2.1	Edali's physiology .....	130
4.2.4.2.2	Edali's sociology .....	132
4.2.4.2.3	Edali's psychology .....	134
4.2.4.2.4	Edali's depiction in the artefact .....	136

4.2.4.3	Ida's character's bone structure .....	141
4.2.4.3.1	Ida's physiology .....	142
4.2.4.3.2	Ida's sociology .....	144
4.2.4.3.3	Ida's psychology .....	146
4.2.4.3.4	Ida's depiction in the artefact .....	148
4.2.4.4	Vesre's character bone structure .....	154
4.2.4.4.1	Vesre's physiology .....	155
4.2.4.4.2	Vesre's sociology .....	157
4.2.4.4.3	Vesre's psychology .....	159
4.2.4.4.4	Vesre's depiction in the artefact .....	162
4.2.4.5	Hengca's character bone structure .....	168
4.2.4.5.1	Hengca's physiology .....	169
4.2.4.5.2	Hengca's sociology .....	171
4.2.4.5.3	Hengca's psychology .....	173
4.2.4.5.4	Hengca's depiction in the artefact .....	176
4.2.4.6	Other characters and notable observations .....	181
4.2.4.7	Design conceptualisation .....	183
4.2.4.8	3D design process .....	192
4.2.4.9	Final renditions.....	204
4.2.4.10	Segment reflection .....	211
<b>CHAPTER 5: RASHOMON AND ITS EFFECTS.....</b>		<b>215</b>
<b>5.1</b>	<b>The cinematography of <i>Rashomon</i>, the literal .....</b>	<b>216</b>
<b>5.2</b>	<b>The visual language of <i>Rashomon</i>, the figurative.....</b>	<b>219</b>
<b>5.3</b>	<b>The Rashomon Effect, the theoretical.....</b>	<b>224</b>
<b>5.4</b>	<b>Relevant cinematographic and visual language tools.....</b>	<b>229</b>
5.4.1	<i>The five Cs of cinematography .....</i>	229
5.4.1.1	Camera angles.....	230
5.4.1.2	Continuity .....	231
5.4.1.3	Cutting.....	231
5.4.1.4	Close-ups.....	233
5.4.1.5	Composition .....	233
5.4.2	<i>Narrative arcs .....</i>	234
5.4.3	<i>Implementation, process, outcome and reflection on how the narrative was created .....</i>	237
5.4.3.1	Narrative development.....	237

5.4.3.2	My visual language tools.....	246
5.4.3.2.1	Camera .....	246
5.4.3.2.1.1	<i>Rashomon</i> influences .....	246
5.4.3.2.1.2	The meaning of the camera position.....	247
5.4.3.2.1.3	The setup.....	249
5.4.3.2.1.4	Camera angles .....	250
5.4.3.2.1.5	Axial cuts .....	251
5.4.3.2.1.6	The action axis.....	253
5.4.3.2.1.7	Passive motion .....	255
5.4.3.2.2	Colour .....	256
5.4.3.2.2.1	The meaning of the colour .....	256
5.4.3.2.2.2	Colour of the light.....	259
5.4.3.2.2.3	Colours of speech bubbles .....	260
5.4.3.2.3	Lights .....	261
5.4.3.2.3.1	<i>Rashomon</i> influences .....	261
5.4.3.2.3.2	The meaning of the lights .....	261
5.4.3.2.3.3	Lighting setup .....	262
5.4.3.2.3.4	Light intensity.....	263
5.4.3.2.3.5	Light colour .....	264
5.4.3.2.3.6	God rays/ volumetric lighting.....	264
5.4.3.2.4	Framing the panel: mise-en-scène.....	265
5.4.3.2.4.1	The meaning of the frame.....	265
5.4.3.2.4.2	Panel curve.....	266
5.4.3.2.4.3	Panel distance .....	268
5.4.3.2.5	Speech and bubbles .....	270
5.4.3.2.5.1	The meaning of the speech bubbles.....	270
5.4.3.2.5.2	Expressions of emotions.....	272
5.4.3.2.5.3	Intensity of emotions.....	274
5.4.3.2.6	Composition .....	274
5.4.3.2.6.1	The room .....	274
5.4.3.2.6.2	The chairs.....	275
5.4.3.2.7	Glitches.....	276
5.4.3.2.7.1	Defining glitch .....	276
5.4.3.2.7.2	The meaning of the glitches.....	277
5.4.3.2.7.3	Types of glitches.....	278

5.4.3.2.7.4	The intensity of glitches .....	278
5.4.3.2.8	Music.....	278
5.4.3.2.8.1	<i>Rashomon</i> influences .....	278
5.4.3.2.8.2	The setup.....	279
5.4.3.2.8.3	Characters personified.....	279
5.4.3.2.8.4	The meaning of the music .....	280
5.4.3.2.9	Post-processing effects.....	282
5.4.3.2.9.1	The setup.....	282
5.4.3.2.9.2	The meaning of the post-processing effects .....	283
5.4.3.3	Narrative reflection.....	283
<b>CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND SYNTHESIS.....</b>		<b>286</b>
<b>6.1 Post-production reflection .....</b>		<b>286</b>
6.1.1	<i>Reflection on chapters</i> .....	286
6.1.1.1	Chapter one .....	286
6.1.1.2	Chapter two.....	286
6.1.1.3	Chapter three .....	287
6.1.1.4	Chapter four .....	288
6.1.1.5	Chapter five.....	292
6.1.2	<i>Response to research questions</i> .....	296
6.1.3	<i>Limitations and future research</i> .....	301
6.1.3.1	Limitations.....	301
6.1.3.1	Future research.....	301
<b>Reference list.....</b>		<b>304</b>
<b>Films:.....</b>		<b>326</b>
<b>Images:.....</b>		<b>328</b>

## **Abstract**

This study is aimed at creating a digital graphic novel. To achieve this, a research-led practice methodology of pre-production, production and post-production steps was followed for the development of characters and a narrative for this type of novel. The characters and narrative were focused towards achieving narrative persuasion by means of narratological concepts such as transportation, narrative engagement and, predominantly, narrative identification.

The narrative was informed by the Rashomon Effect, which was also established as a symbiotic element that could aid in achieving narrative persuasion. In addition, the characters that were developed were informed by Schwartz' (2012) Value Systems Theory. This is a universal value system that allows, if applied in the manner utilised in this study, for optimal narrative identification. This theory was used towards creating characters that could bring about not only narrative identification, but ultimately also narrative persuasion.

Given the research-led practice approach that was followed, emergent supplemental concepts that supported the narrative entailed cinematographic principles and narrative arcs. Emergent supplemental concepts regarding characterisation included aspects such as character appeal, cuteness and Mori's (1970, 2012) Uncanny Valley theory. These supplemental concepts not only enhanced the development of the narrative and the characters, but also demonstrated the interconnectedness between theory and practice.

This study also reflected on the practical and the theoretical processes that culminated in the creation of an artefact, which comprises of a Rashomon-based narrative that explored the medical trial of four suspected terminally ill suicidal patients, in the form of a digital graphic novel. In the narrative, the audience assumes the role of an inspector who is asked to recollect his investigation of these patients to the medical board, with the urgency to find closure and to possibly save a patient by allowing him or her to resume treatment. From the point of view of the audience, four unique accounts and perspectives of specific events are presented by the four characters. These diverse accounts relate to the ambiguous nature of the

Rashomon Effect, which entails that all the accounts seem equally plausible; however, given the aim of achieving narrative persuasion in the audience, the audience may be likely to identify more with one character's value system (based on Schwartz's Value Systems Theory) and thus may be likely to find one character's account of events more plausible than the others.

The audience experiences the characters' bone structures, including their physiology, sociology and psychology, which are informed by their respective value domains. Essentially, the characters were developed and designed according to these value domains, which guide their recollections, accounts and perspectives. Throughout, the aim is to achieve, through these universal value domains, narrative identification, persuasion and finally also narrative empathy.

The approach of research-led practice is demonstrated by first developing salient theoretical concepts pertaining to narrative and character, after which a reflection on the way in which these concepts guided the practice is provided. Emergent supplemental theoretical concepts necessitated by the practice are examined so that the iterative relationship between theory, practice, refinement of theory and refinement of practice is demonstrated. Thus, the study aims to achieve academically sound levels of rigour and validity in both the artefact and the written component. The study contributes towards the body of theoretical and practical knowledge pertaining to narrative development as well as character development.

## **Keywords**

Character development, character design, character appeal, cuteness narrative identification, narrative persuasion, narrative engagement, narrative transportation, narrative, perspective in narration, practice-led research, Rashomon Effect, research-led practice, Schwartz's Value Systems Theory, the Uncanny Valley

## Opsomming

Hierdie studie het ten doel gehad om 'n grafiese novelle te skep. Om hierdie mikpunt te bereik is 'n metodologie van navorsingsgeleide praktyk gevolg, wat bestaan het uit preproduksie, produksie en postproduksie as stappe om karakters en 'n narratief te ontwikkel vir hierdie tipe novelle. Die karakters en die narratief is toegespits daarop om narratiewe oorreding te bewerkstellig deur middel van narratologiese konsepte soos transportasie, narratiewe betrokkenheid en, veral, narratiewe identifikasie.

Die narratief is belig deur die Rashomon-effek, wat ook beskou is as 'n simbiotiese element wat kan bydra tot narratiewe oorreding. Verder is die karakters wat ontwikkel is gelei deur Schwartz (2012) se Waardesisteemteorie. Dit is 'n universele waardesisteem wat – indien aangewend soos in hierdie geval – die moontlikheid van optimale narratiewe identifikasie daarstel. Hierdie teorie is gebruik om karakters te skep wat uiteindelik nie slegs narratiewe identifikasie kan bewerkstellig nie, maar uiteindelik ook narratiewe oorreding.

In die lig van die navorsingsgeleide praktyk as metode het 'n aantal bydraende konsepte ook opgeduik ten opsigte van die narratief, naamlik kinematografiese beginsels en narratiewe boë. Konsepte wat hulself aangedoen het in terme van karakterisering sluit karakter aantreklikheid, oulikheid en die sogenaamde Uncanny Valley-teorie soos geformuleer deur Moris (1970, 2012) in. Hierdie bydraende konsepte het nie net die ontwikkeling van die narratief en karakters belig nie, maar toon ook die wederkerige verbande tussen teorie en praktyk.

Die studie reflekteer verder oor die wederkerige verhouding tussen praktyk en teorie soos dit kulmineer in die skep van 'n artefak wat bestaan uit 'n Rashomongebaseerde narratief wat die mediese behandeling van vier potensieel terminaal-siek pasiënte in die vorm van 'n digitale grafiese novelle behels. In die narratief neem die gehoor die rol van 'n hospitaalondersoeker aan wat gevra word om sy gedagtes oor die pasiënte met die mediese raad te deel, om dringend afsluiting te verkry en moontlik 'n pasiënt se lewe te red deur hom of haar toe te laat om voort te gaan met behandeling. Vanuit die perspektief van die gehoor word vier unieke weergawes en beskouings van spesifieke gebeure voorgehou deur die vier karakters. Hierdie uiteenlopende vertellings hou verband met die dubbelsinnige aard van die Rashomoneffek, wat

behels dat alle weergawes ewe oortuigend klink, maar gegewe die poging tot narratiewe oorreding, is dit moontlik dat die gehoor wel meer met een karakter se waardesisteem sal identifiseer (soos gebaseer op Schwartz se Waardesisteemteorie) en mag daarom een karakter se weergawe van gebeure meer geloofwaardig vind as die ander s'n.

Die gehoor ervaar ook die karakters se beenstruktuur wat hulle fisiologie, sosiologie en sielkundige dimensies insluit en deur hulle onderskeie waardomeins belig word. In wese is die karakters ontwikkel en ontwerp volgens hierdie waardedomeins wat ook dan hulle herinnerige, vertellinge en perspektiewe rig. Die mikpunt is deurentyd om hierdie universele waarde domeins aan te wend om narratiewe identifikasie, narratiewe oorreding en uiteindelik ook narratiewe empatie te wek.

Die benadering van navorsingsgeleide praktyk word verhelder deur eerstens sentrale teoretiese konsepte wat verband hou met narratief en karakter te ontwikkel, waarna 'n refleksie oor hoe hierdie werk die praktyk gerig het volg. Bydraende aanvullende teoretiese konsepte soos voortspruitend uit die praktyk word ook aan die bod gestel sodat die wederkerige verhouding tussen teorie, praktyk, verfyning van die teorie en verfyning van praktyk op die spits gedryf word. Gevolglik poog die studie om akademies-verantwoordbare geldigheid in benadering te bewerkstellig in die geskrewe sowel as die praktiese komponente. Die studie lewer 'n bydrae tot die teoretiese sowel as die praktiese kennissfere ten opsigte van narratiewe- sowel as karakterontwikkeling.

## **Trefwoorde**

Karakterontwikkeling, karakterontwerp, karakter aantreklikheid, narratiewe identifikasie, narratiewe oorreding, narratiewe transportasie, narratiewe perspektief, navorsingsgeleide praktyk, praktykgeleide navorsing, Rashomoneffek, Schwartz se waardesisteemteorie, die Uncanny Valley

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXTUALISATION

### 1.1 Introduction

This study is exploratory in nature. While an extensive range of theoretical issues underpin the goals of the study, these are explained in detail and were deemed necessary in order to attain the desired results. The goal of this study is to explore the notion of narrative persuasion through a theoretical lens and to apply these insights to a practical component with the aim of enhancing narrative persuasion through narrative identification with characters. Furthermore, elements of characterisation (as these find practical expression in character development and design), medium, as well as salient cinematographic and narratological elements (aided by Schwartz's Value Theory to develop characterisation) and the Rashomon Effect (as an aid to narrative development) have been perused. I hope to achieve a sense in audiences that their narrative identification with characters is heightened by means of signifying elements that work to achieve narrative persuasion.

The artefact that forms the practical component of this study is a 3D narrative (in Unity programme) based on the Rashomon Effect, which is a subjective narrative structure that utilises multiple perspectives. My application of the Rashomon Effect entails, apart from narrative perspective, to use four main characters and one support character. The character design is informed by, specifically, cuteness, which informs character design as youthful and likeable, the Uncanny Valley, which warns of character design that instils aversion by falling short of realism, and character appeal, which informs good character design practices (these are discussed in full in subsequent chapters). The character development, the story world, the narrative, and the cinematography are guided by the model proposed in Schwartz' Value Theory that underlies the practical development of character, while the narrative is guided by the Rashomon Effect. The overall aim is to apply these concepts, gleaned from the theoretical investigation, to the practical component with the aim of producing narrative identification as well as narrative persuasion in the end-user.

A brief perusal of salient concepts follows below.

## 1.2 Narrative identification and narrative persuasion

Van Krieken, Hoeken and Sanders (2017:5-9) propound that the process of narrative identification begins when the audience experiencing a narrative assumes the perspective of a character through their spatiotemporal, perceptive-, cognitive, moral, emotional and embodied states. The degrees of identification can be related to the effectiveness of affective, cognitive and perceptive experiences in the audience (van Krieken, Hoeken & Sanders, 2017:2).

Busselle and Bilandzic (2008) add that narrative identification is initiated when the audience transfers their state of self into the deictic shift that is suggested in the narrative, which establishes a point of view that is shaped by the narrative and its various components (the medium and how it presents the narrative; the assumptions and expectations of audiences through their real-world knowledge and the understanding of genre schemas; the structure of the story world, the characterisation of characters and how these two are cohesively presented).

This transfer of state, variously termed *transportation*, *entrancement*, *absorption*, *immersion* or *narrative engagement*<sup>1</sup>, can have its impact measured by how successful the transfer is; in short, how receptive the audience becomes to the narrative experience and how much they forgo their own identity and perspective to assume the one created by the narrative. The greater the narrative identification, the more susceptible the audience is to be influenced to adopt the perspective or the characters'(s') standpoint during and after the experience; in short, narrative persuasion.

For consistency, I use the term *transportation* in this study. The effectiveness of transportation can be hindered by certain variables, such as *external realism*, which is a disturbance in the narrative that is informed by external realities (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2008:267-270), and *narrative realism*, which occurs when the audience senses an inconsistency within the narrative (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2008:270-271).

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1 Transportation (Gerrig, 1993; Green & Brock, 2000, 2002), entrancement (Gerrig, 1993), absorption (Graesser, 1981; Gerrig, 1993; Slater & Rouner, 2002), immersion (Jacobs, 2015), narrative engagement (Slater & Rouner, 2002; Busselle & Bilandzic, 2008).

Arguably, the only variable that a creator can control is *narrative realism*, with a view to ensure that possible implausibilities in the character components are minimised; and to allow the creative to manipulate these components to achieve a greater sense of transportation, which leads to a higher possibility of narrative identification and, by implication, greater narrative persuasion.

Busselle and Bilandzic (2008:255-280) and Cohen (2001:245-264) describe narrative identification as the process when a real-person experiences and adopts the perspective of a character and sees the events of the narrative through this character's eyes. Oatley ([1994] 1999:69) and Zillmann (2006:151-181) add identifying with the goals and plans of the character to this adaptation. In other words, a real-world person may experience narrative events from the perspective of a character, and this is likely to produce emotive and empathetic responses. In summary, real-world people tend to imagine what it is like and what it is to be a character in a narrative world (Cohen, 2001:245-264; Tan, 1994:25).

Various sources (Appel & Richter, 2007: 113-134; Diekman, McDonald & Gardner, 2000: 179-188; Strange & Leung, 1999:436-449) confirm that narratives can have effects on real-world participants and their attitudes and beliefs. This effect is termed narrative persuasion. Narrative persuasion is the result of real-world people becoming engrossed in, and transported into a story world and co-sensing the experiences of a character in that story world (Green & Brock, 2000:701-721; Moyer-Guse, 2008:407-425). Studies by Green and Brock (2000:701-721) have demonstrated that when a narrative is experienced, this can stimulate persuasive effects. This experience is, in fact, multidimensional and the dimensions thereof may vary in importance of the effects and extent of the persuasion (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009:321-347). Busselle and Bilandzic (2009:321-347) have also found that emotional engagement occurs more strongly with story-consistent attitudes rather than with attention-based focus. Green (2006:163-183) and Slater and Rouner (2002:173-191) further argue that identification is a tool that is used in narratives to achieve persuasion.

As mentioned earlier, I want to optimise the experience for the audience so that their transportation into the world of the character's perspective is predicated on maximising narrative persuasion. To do so, I apply the Rashomon Effect as the

narrative foundation of the study, since this effect is reliant upon narrative identification and narrative persuasion.

### **1.3 *Rashomon* and the Rashomon Effect**

The Rashomon Effect is a term used to describe a narratological structure in a thriller/crime/mystery genre schema. This effect can be defined as a cinematographic open-ended narrative approach in which a group of characters are portrayed as possibly guilty of some sort of crime which they all narrate from their various perspectives. The narratives require the viewer to make a decision as to the most plausible guilty character (see Roth & Metha, 2002:131-132).

Heider (1988:73-81) describes the Rashomon Effect as the result of the subjectivity of perception on recollection, where observers of an event can experience considerably diverse accounts that are equally plausible. In turn, Roth and Mehta (2002:131-132), Ramirez and Blat (2003:4), Kurosawa and Richie (1987), Heider (1988:73-81) and Anderson (2016:250-265) refer to the film *Rashomon* (and the Rashomon effect) as deriving from a 1950 black and white film by Akira Kurosawa. The film by the same name presents four diverse accounts of an event that are portrayed from the perspectives of four different main characters: a samurai, a bandit, a wife and a woodcutter (there are initially three characters until it is revealed that the woodcutter also witnessed the event). A monk and a commoner (towards the end of the film) also present diverse opinions, the former seeing things in a positive perspective, whereas the commoner has a more realistic, or even negative, perspective. Their clashing views lead to a climax that questions the intent of human nature and leaves the narrative open-ended. The final decision as to who is the guilty party is left to the audience, and this decision is arguably based on the extent to which an audience member identified with the perspective of a character and therefore with his or her version of the event.

Ramirez and Blat (2008:1-4) summarise the experience of conflict in the plot on the side of the audience as hard to resolve, given the lack of evidence as to which perspective is most believable (a characteristic of the Rashomon Effect). The diverse but seemingly equally plausible accounts of the characters (none of which can be entirely discredited due to a lack of solid, defining evidence) create a narrative no-

man's-land in which every character relates the narrative from their perspective and where one single truth consequently does not exist.

Anderson (2016:250-265) adds that “[T]he Rashomon Effect is not only about differences in perspective. It occurs particularly where such differences arise in combination with the absence of evidence to elevate or disqualify any version of the truth, plus the social pressure for closure on the question”. Clearly, the Rashomon Effect hinges on narrative perspectives.

Niederhoff (2011) defines narrative perspective as “[T]he way [in which] the representation of the story is influenced by the position, personality and values of the narrator, the characters and, possibly, other, more hypothetical entities in the story world”. Pfister's ([1977] 2000) adds that the conjunction of multiple perspectives<sup>2</sup> offers a comparison of their differences or similarities. I believe this relates to how perspectives work in the Rashomon Effect. Nunning (2001:213) transferred Pfister's theory from drama to narrative, which led to some adjustments added which entail that the perspective of a character or narrator can entail a structure of psychological idiosyncrasies, norms, attitudes, values, mental assets and a worldview model.

Busselle and Bilandzic (2009:323-324) explain that in the scheme of a narrative, when the audience is provided with a point of view or a perspective from a character's standpoint, they will cognitively interpret events and also other characters from that perspective and that interpretation will be filtered through the character's motivations. This means that the audience is not made up of objective observers, but become active participants in the narrative. The audience not only identifies with the characteristics of the character, but also experiences their emotional process and based on the intensity of the identification, and this can either be a sympathetic or empathetic experience. The former refers to emotional care for a character, and the latter entails more profoundly sharing the emotions of a character.

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<sup>2</sup> Nunning (2001:207-223) and Surkamp (2003) expanded on Pfister's (1977, 2000:57) theory of perspective in drama for the study of narrative. Pfister (1977, 2000) describes the perspective of a character (in a play) to be established by psychological disposition, ideology and an awareness of the actions of other characters. These qualities can be different for each character and so with it each perspective is different, even when focused on the same event.

### **1.3.1 Synopsis of various characters' perspectives in *Rashomon***

The plot of the film *Rashomon* revolves around the murder of a samurai and how it came to be. A monk and the woodcutter are present during the trial of the bandit, for they seemingly were the only (but weak) sources of evidence. The wife and the samurai (through the medium, delivering his victim statement), deliver their accounts of the event. The conundrum of this trial is that the bandit, the wife and the samurai all claim (in isolated accounts) that it was they themselves who killed the samurai. For now, I will only note important elements relevant to the study.

The bandit claims that he killed the samurai, but that it was justified for he complied with the wife's request and the samurai accepted the duel, and hence his actions were justified. From his perspective, he sees himself as daring, respectful and legendary. He regards the other as noble and virtuous and himself equally so; the wife is smitten with him and the samurai a worthy adversary. His defence can be seen as valid from the perspective of the time, because he abided by a code of honour which holds cultural value to the Japanese (Warren, 2012:199).

The wife, in turn, claims that she killed the samurai, but that it was an accident brought about by her being defiled, concomitant with the rejection of the samurai of her request to kill her in order to redeem and purify herself. She also notes that she later attempted suicide by drowning, but failed. From her perspective, she sees herself as a frail woman who is helpless in the face of the events that transpired. She regards the others as heartless and cruel to her good intentions and the bandit a fiend and the samurai unjust. Her defence can also be seen as valid from the perspective of the time since she desired to be cleansed (religiously and socially) (Blum, 2008) and redeemed via jigai (suicide), a frequent action among the nobility at the time (Turnbull, 1996:72).

The samurai, in his turn, claims to have been the killer himself and it is insinuated that this transpired either due to grief because of the wife's betrayal or his tarnished honour for being captured, made worse by the way the wife's fate reflected upon his good name. From his perspective, he sees himself as humble and compassionate, as can be seen in his decision to forgive the bandit and not to sentence the wife to death when offered the chance to do so. He sees the others as selfish and focused

on their own desires. His defence is similar to that of the wife but unwavering in his devotion to his honour; his jigai was committed in isolation and without hesitation, and can be seen as a form of seppuku to restore his honour, an important aspect of the samurai and their bushido (the warrior's way/code) (Turnbull, 2003).

The woodcutter admitted after the trial that he saw the events in secret, and that he believes that his perspective is the "truth". He states that he saw himself only as an observer, and he portrays the rest of the characters as quite undignified, arguing that the bandit and the samurai acted cowardly, scared and clumsy and the wife was an aggravator who was also fearful. In all, he portrays their actions as shameful and dishonourable. His perspective is perhaps felt as the truth until it is revealed that the woodcutter did not come forward to testify, since he had stolen the dagger that was used to kill the samurai. He is also criticised by the commoner, and this reminds the audience that it is human nature to deceive and to only be concerned with oneself. This causes the monk to question his belief in the good nature of humanity, but the woodcutter redeems himself by taking an abandoned child as his own. Despite his good intentions, however, the fact that he also lied makes him unreliable, putting his perspective into question. This leaves the audience to decide if the woodcutter (or any of the other characters) was telling the truth, thus rendering the entire narrative open-ended.

Clearly, the Rashomon Effect is about the accounts of the characters in the narrative as told from diverse perspectives. This establishes a deictic shift to the character-centric approach, and also allows for the narrative to have multiple, equally important perspectives, meaning that there can be multiple equally significant main characters (the importance of this is discussed later on in the study). Furthermore, all the characters have equal value in terms of their perspectives; the characters' accounts, however, also make it clear to the audience to expect inconsistencies in the presented accounts and thus inadvertently suggest the notion of *narrative realism*. The lack of evidence requires the audience to focus more on affective reasoning over rational reasoning; this means that the audience is prompted to rely more on sympathy or even empathy and the values displayed by the characters in order for them to arrive at a conclusion regarding the possible truthfulness of the various accounts of events (these elements are discussed later in the study). Therefore, the

narrative is predicated on an open-ended conclusion, which means that the narrative does not guide the audience towards a single “correct” conclusion – they must draw their own conclusions as to the most likely perspective of the events.

The effectiveness and the precise planning of the narrative led to the great success of film *Rashomon*, with many adaptations<sup>3</sup> afterwards (in various media) that were based on its structure. In the literature, a number of studies focused on the symbolic, narratological or cinematographic elements of the Rashomon Effect, but not many insights have been published regarding the influence of the characters’ various facets as central to this effect, or on the application of related issues to the development of characters.

The present study, then, explores how these identification aspects, as well as the notion of various perspectives, inform characters and their experiences of an event in order to create different characterisations that are likely to have a bearing on the narrative identification of the audience with a character’s account of the story, so that narrative persuasion may be said to take place. For this reason, I use the Rashomon Effect as my narrative structure, because this effect is predicated on narrative identification; and the Rashomon Effect utilises narrative and also cinematic elements to bolster the identification process together with the complexities of an open-ended narrative.

A character, like an audience member, therefore, displays various character traits informed by his or her beliefs, values and the like that may be argued to have, at least regarding certain traits, universal resonance. If, then, such universal traits can be traced, a suitable model that describes these traits may shed light on how characters are composed of various dimensions (a central concern of the present study is the notion of perspective, and it can be argued that perspective is informed by values in particular). One such model is the Value Systems Theory that was developed by Shalom Schwartz (2012). This theory purports that we all have a certain set of universal values to a lesser and greater degree that drives our motivations, beliefs and actions. In light of the Value Systems Theory’s assumptions, I have decided to develop my own rendition of the Rashomon Effect with the intent of

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3      Films such as *The Usual Suspects* (1995), *Snake Eyes* (1998), *Predestination* (2014) and *Gone Girl* (2014) make use of the Rashomon Effect.

using the Value Systems Theory as the core driver in my characterisation process, so that characters' accounts of events in the narrative are informed by their more or less universal values. Before discussing the Value Systems Theory, I briefly peruse the concepts of character and characterisation as these inform the present study's application of the Value System Theory toward the development of characters with certain values and traits.

#### 1.4 Character and characterisation

In *The living handbook of narratology*<sup>4</sup>, it is noted that the term 'character' is mostly used as a literary concept, but Ryan (2012:16) expands on this notion and defines characters as created (in and by *various* media formats) as *participants in story worlds* in contrast to people in the real world<sup>5</sup>. Worth (1981:162-84) explains that stories are about characters in dynamic story worlds. Furthermore, narration relies on its medium to provide attributes and, with it, 'flesh' to characters. Theoretical approaches towards character rely on real-world knowledge to provide guidelines and purpose to characters that exist in the story worlds (Jannidis, 2012: 2). Once a character has been identified in a story world, audiences apply a framework of intrinsic qualities, such as intentions, wishes and beliefs (character development) and extrinsic qualities, what is perceived (character design and action) to the character (Jannidis, 2012:15). The ascription of qualities to a character is used to provide them with properties (directly or indirectly) that can be psychological, social and/or locative in nature; this process is known as characterisation (Jannidis, 2012:22; Scherer, 1977:156-57; Chatman, 1978:96-145).

Characterisation can also be demonstrated in the medium either directly, through communicative cues, or with reference to the character's environment and its effect on a character (Margolin, 1983:843-71). Story worlds and characters are constructed during the process of narrative communication (where the narrative is perceived and understood by the audience), and thus story worlds and characters contribute to this communication process (Jannidis, 2012:4). This is also known as the situation model

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4 *The living handbook of narratology*: <http://lhn.uni-hamburg.de/>

5 Forster's (1927, 1985:67) classification into flat and round characters is still relevant. When speaking of a flat character, Forster (1927, 1985:75-78) refers to the process of constructing a character around a single quality or idea. In contrast, a round character is perceived as more complex, organised and able to grow.

or the mental model (Bussele & Bilandzic, 2008:257-260). This process of communication has a bearing on what people (real-world) assume to be relevant and affects their scope of validity of interpretations (Sperber & Wilson, 1995). I intend to use the Value System theory as my basis for the characterisation (character development) and the implementation of attributes to my characters in terms of their intrinsic qualities. Characters' extrinsic qualities (related to their actions) are informed by their intrinsic qualities. For their extrinsic qualities (related to appearance), I will use cuteness, character appeal and the Uncanny Valley as supplemental concepts to the design of my characters. I discuss the implementation of these dimensions later in the course of the study.

For the practical application of characterisation to the creation of a character, one therefore needs to take into consideration the intrinsic and extrinsic qualities of a character (remembering that these are informed by the character's values) so that, ultimately, an audience member who shares similar values to those of a character is likely to experience narrative identification.

If we refer back to the Rashomon effect, it was indicated that the characterisation process relied on diverse recollections with values deeply embedded in the Japanese culture (in terms of what is perceived, intentions, wishes and beliefs), although arguably certain values such as honour and the like may be said to be universal. Their values, which are intrinsic qualities, inform their actions, which are extrinsic in nature. Hence, for this study, I have used a similar approach for creating my characters, namely that characters have certain rather universal values (intrinsic) that inform their extrinsic actions. Therefore, the Value Systems Theory is at the core of the entire characterisation process, and it determines the character development predicated on their values (intrinsic) which, in turn, inform the character design and their actions (extrinsic).

### 1.4.1 Schwartz's Value System Theory

The Value System theory (VST) was developed and refined by Shalom Schwartz (2012). Bilsky and Jehn (1999:1-3) note that this theory is concerned with the unification and structuring of values. Schwartz (1996:1-24) adds that the development of VST has been significantly influenced by Kluckhohn (1951) and Rokeach (1973). In the social sciences such as psychology, anthropology and other disciplines, values are a central concept, with emphasis on social and personal organisation and the characterisation of cultural groups, societies and individuals. It relates to the development of values and helps to explain the motivational bases for behaviour and attitudes (Durkheim, [1897] 1964 & Weber, [1905] 1958). VST<sup>6</sup> define values as desirable, trans-situational goals with variable levels of significance that serve as guiding principles in people's lives (Schwartz, 1992).

VST integrates the intentions and content of values of a person (or a character, in this instance) into dynamic relations with others. Actions that emanate from values have practical, social and psychological consequences that can either correlate or contrast with other values. This implies that characters do not simply act, but that the motivations for their actions are informed by intrinsic qualities, which may also have a bearing as to whether they are aware of the consequences of their actions. I believe that since these values are real and universal, audiences may relate to certain values portrayed by the various characters, so that each person may choose to sympathise, empathise and understand the perspective of a particular character with greater identification of the values of the character corresponding to those of the end-user.

I therefore integrate the Value System theory into the development of characters for my animation. Traits (that are intrinsic in nature) are based on the section grouping for my characters, and these intrinsic properties in term guide the actions of the characters and so lead to their extrinsic (actions) application. I purport that audiences will interpret these intrinsic and extrinsic properties, evaluate and compare between them and so develop varying levels of identifying with characters.

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6 There are correlations between VST and other value-related studies [Rokeach Value Survey (1973), Portraits Questionnaire (PQ-29, Schwartz, Lehmann, Melech, Burgess, Harris & Owens, 1998; Bubeck, 1999), Organisational Culture Profile (O'Reilly, Chatman & Caldwell, 1991; Blisky & Jehn, 1999), Study of Values (Allport & Vermon, 1931)].

By using the Value System Theory, I hope to ensure that the characterisation process is optimised for my character-centric approach, so that they will be relatable to ensure narrative identification through universal values, and ultimately guide the process of narrative persuasion so that the audience will be persuaded to find a character's account of events more plausible based on the level of narrative identification.

In order for me to describe the intrinsic qualities of my four characters, one must first understand the ten global values, a brief summary of Schwartz' (2012:5-7) descriptions will suffice for now:

Schwartz (1994:22) explains that the ten values are Self-Direction, Stimulation, Hedonism, Achievement, Power, Security, Conformity, Tradition, Benevolence and Universalism. These can be categorised into four linked groups: *Openness to Change* (Self-Direction, Stimulation and Hedonism), *Self-Enhancement* (Hedonism, Achievement and Power), *Conservation* (Security, Conformity and Tradition) and *Self-Transcendence* (Benevolence and Universalism).

*Table 1: A brief overview of Schwartz' (1992, 2012) values.*

Self-Direction	Independent thought and action; choosing, creating, exploring.
Stimulation	Excitement, novelty and challenge in life.
Hedonism	Pleasure and sensuous gratification of oneself.
Achievement	Personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards.
Power	Social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources.
Security	Safety, harmony, and stability of society, of relationships, and of self.
Conformity	Restraint of actions, inclinations, and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms.
Tradition	Respect, commitment, and acceptance of the customs and ideas that traditional culture or religion provide.
Benevolence	Preservation and enhancement of the welfare of people with whom one is in frequent personal contact.
Universalism	Understanding, appreciation, tolerance, and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature.

As shown, a person can understand and to some degree, relate to these universal values. As with the characters of Rashomon, I will now explain the personalities of my characters (which stems from their values), how they see themselves and how they reason decisions in my narrative. To begin, I will give a brief summary of the plot.

### 1.4.2 My rendition: plot and character summary



Figure 1 (from left to right): Edali, Ida, Vesre and Hengca

In my rendition of the Rashomon Effect and my narrative, four characters (whom I call Edali, Ida, Vesre and Hengca) are all terminally ill and admitted to a hospital. It is known that the four characters were found at the edge of the roof and an attempt at suicide by each of them was thwarted by the hospital staff. There are, however, various accounts related by the four characters. Each character explains that they did not attempt suicide, but instead attempted to stop their value-counterpart's attempt at suicide; and they promptly explain the events that led to the climax. It is then up to the audience to decide which character is telling the truth and, for purposes of the present study, this choice determines which character may be allowed to receive continued treatment. I have therefore decided to use the Rashomon notion of open-endedness and a narrative that ends inconclusively in this manner – deciding which character is most likely to be saved; a decision, as noted, that the audience members must make in their minds.

Edali is a 13-year-old boy from a wealthy family. His value category is *Self-Enhancement*. He is at his core an achiever, ambitious, intelligent, confident and highly values his social standing. He claims that he didn't attempt suicide, but rather tried to stop his value-counterpart, Ida, from committing suicide. He reasons that Ida wanted to jump from the roof of the building because he felt like a burden (financially

and in general) to his family and that his death would alleviate their suffering. Edali sees himself as the most mature member of the group and as the leader; he sees himself as the voice of reason and destined for greatness. His body language, appearance and expression suggest an air of elegance, confidence and mystique. He sees Ida as overly sensitive and meek with no regard for his self-worth; he, however, finds his own kind nature commendable. He regards Hengca as abrasive and wild, but he admires her similarly driven passion to achieve; they share neighbouring values. He sees Vesre as zealous and stubborn, but he admires her commitment and resolve. They also share neighbouring values.

Ida is a 13-year-old boy from a poor family, and his value category is *Self-Transcendence*. He is at his core kind, caring, considerate, supportive and avid to preserve things. He claims that he didn't attempt suicide either, but rather tried to stop his value-counterpart, Edali, from committing suicide. He reasons that Edali wanted to jump because he wanted to have control over his inevitable fate and to be immortalised in the eyes of others as an activist. Ida sees himself as selfless and the resolver in the group, and he also sees himself as the one who understands the rest and actively helps others. His body language, appearance and expression embody a gentle and empathetic soul who is tender and nurturing. He sees Edali as self-centred, egotistical and cold with little consideration for others, but finds his dedication commendable. He regards Hengca as too direct and confrontational but admires her liberal attitude. They share adjoining values. He sees Vesre as close-minded and demanding, but admires her respect and care for others; they also share neighbouring values.

Hengca is a 13-year-old girl with no family. Her value category is *Openness to Change*. She is at heart independent, goal-driven, exciting and seeks out growth and lives her life to the fullest. She claims that she did not attempt suicide, but rather tried to stop her value-counterpart, Vesre, from doing the same. She reckons that Vesre wanted to jump because of how her religion and culture conceptualise the soul, and how her condition is at odds with this. She believes that if she were to die for her beliefs, she would become a martyr and earn salvation. Hengca sees herself as realistic and true to her nature; she also sees herself as pragmatic, determined to live and experience life. Her body language, appearance and expression display a

laid-back, cool, down-to-earth demeanour. She sees Vesre as a puppet to the constraints of society, highly strung, submissive and particularly bland; she, however, admires her devotion to her beliefs. She regards Edali as too concerned with what others think of him and egotistical but admires his competitive spirit. They share neighbouring values. She sees Ida as too reclusive and a pushover, but admires his openness; they also share adjacent values.

Vesre is a 13-year-old girl from an average family, and her value category is *Conservation*. She is deeply humble, respectful, diligent, lawful, responsible and committed to her beliefs, traditions and her group's way of life. She claims that she didn't attempt suicide either, but rather tried to stop her value-counterpart, Hengca, from committing suicide. She reasons that Hengca wanted to jump were because she didn't want her condition to worsen and permanently disable and restrain her. She wants to live life to the fullest and becoming deprived of her senses threatens that, so she would instead have one last big rush of stimulation. Her body language, appearance and expression display a sense of control, obedience, harmony and spiritualism. She sees Hengca as disrespectful, inconsiderate, abrasive and spiritually shallow; but however admires her strength and passion. She regards Edali as too cynical and blunt but admires his authority. They share adjoining values. She sees Ida as too malleable and naïve, but admires his dedication to his family; they also share neighbouring values.

From the contextualisation, the outline of characters and narrative, as well as the brief theoretical overview of salient concepts that guide the present study, a problem statement, sub-questions, aims and objectives as well as a central theoretical statement, are formulated below.

## 1.5 Problem statement

How can a theoretical investigation of narrative identification, narrative persuasion and the Rashomon effect, as well as the Value Systems Theory as guiding principle, find practical application in the development of characters and a narrative in order to achieve narrative identification and, ultimately, narrative persuasion? *This question is answered by means of a theoretical perusal of theory relevant to the problem and the application thereof to the development of characters and a plot aimed at achieving narrative identification and narrative persuasion.*

## 1.6 Research questions

1. How are narrative identification, the Rashomon Effect and the Value Systems theory conceptualised in the literature, and how do they relate to one another in the context of narrative and character development? *This question is answered by means of a literature study of salient concepts and a discussion of these in terms of their possible application to the practical development of characters and a plot.*
2. How can these be applied to the development of a character's intrinsic and extrinsic qualities? *This question is answered by developing a set of characters informed by, in particular, the Value Systems Theory.*
3. How can these be applied to the formulation of a narrative structure? *This question is answered by exploring, in practice, the application of the Rashomon Effect, keeping in mind how characters' values drive different perspectives in order to achieve narrative identification and narrative persuasion.*
4. How can these insights be integrated into the characterisation of characters and a narrative 3D digital graphic novel, and how do the theory and practice mutually influence each other in the process? *This question is answered by frequently reflecting on the influence of selected theoretical constructs on the practical application thereof, and also by exploring how the practical*

*development of characters and a plot give rise to refinements of the theoretical insights gleaned from the literature.*

## **1.7 Central theoretical statement**

The central argument of this study is that narrative identification can be informed by the Rashomon Effect and the Value Systems theory, in terms of how these are applicable to the development of characters and narrative plot. I further argue that these are useful tools for practical application in the development of characters and a narrative.

I argue, furthermore, that in the process of narrative identification that takes place while engaging with the practical product, the audience will be *transported* into the deictic shift and this will give rise to affective, cognitive and perceptive experiences emanating from the narrative and the characters. Within this *transportation*, the audience may apply their real-world knowledge to the experiences so that they can better understand the narrative (and its elements). I then argue that for a creative person, it is imperative to control the measure of *narrative realism*, to structure the narrative (and its elements) in a way that optimises narrative identification. Narrative identification primarily happens between the audience and the character and is based on how much the audience can identify with the character. This can lead to narrative persuasion. I identify that narrative persuasion can have effects on real-world participants and their attitudes and beliefs during and after being exposed to a narrative. From this, I argue that to develop an effective narrative that allows for narrative persuasion, one must have a calculated, planned narrative structure and characters that optimise narrative identification.

For my narrative structure, I argue that the Rashomon Effect allows for equal and multiple deictic shifts to occur and emphasises the perspective of the different characters to give rise to narrative identification. The Rashomon Effect requires a great deal of affective reasoning from the audience (which will allow audiences to identify more with certain characters' personality and values) and also gives autonomy to the audience (through an open-ended conclusion of a narrative) so that they are likely to feel that narrative identification is required.

I present Schwartz's (1992, 2012) Value Theory as a solution to allow for greater narrative identification, since Schwartz's (1992, 2012) Value Theory is predicated on universal values that exist in all people, which are not restricted by time, culture or location. I identify that these global values inform a person's goals, beliefs, drivers and actions and that due to its universal nature it serves as the ideal character development tool for characterisation and narrative identification (as also that the Rashomon Effect encourages affective reasoning).

To achieve characters that people the narrative in a way that allows for a large measure of identification on the side of the audience, I purport that the Uncanny Valley's notion of steering clear from characters that appear "real" (but not quite real) can be addressed by means of cuteness in characters. Together, this combination of narrative and character-related concepts informs the entire practical project, to achieve the final argument, namely that theory can give rise to creative solutions which, in turn, may yield insights into refining the theoretical premises of the study.

## **1.8 Methodological framework**

My methodological framework is informed by theory-led practice. Theory-led practice is a variation of the more common approach of practice-led research. Gray defines practice-led research as "... firstly research which is initiated in practice, where questions, problems, challenges are identified and formed by the needs of practice and practitioners; and secondly, that the research strategy is carried out through practice, using predominantly methodologies and specific methods familiar to us as practitioners" (Gray, 1996:3). In summary, in practice-led research, the research is initiated by practice, while the reverse is in theory-led practice, where the practice is initiated by theoretical research.

My approach entails that a theoretical study of key literary terms, in this instance character development, narrative identification, narrative, perspective in narration, practice-led research, the Value System Theory, and the Rashomon Effect are used to develop a theoretical framework. From this framework, I develop the practical component where my narrative and a set of characters are informed by salient theoretical concepts. This narrative, its story world and characters are then integrated into a visual medium in the form of a 3D interactive narrative game, and

the production and its process are similarly informed by the theoretical framework. In turn, the practice-led dimension of my approach may have a bearing on the development of subtle changes in how the theoretical concepts I apply can be understood, so that there is an interaction between, and integration of practice and theory. The parallel growth and cross-evolving practice and theory is documented until completion, where a reflection is executed during and after the process.

## **1.9 Work plan**

My work plan comprises developing the various chapters with their theoretical foci and the different practical components, where the theory and practice have a mutual bearing on each other. The first chapter presents the introduction of the study and contains an explication of the problem and argument.

In the second chapter, I discuss my methodological framework and how I use research-led practice as the structure that guides the present study.

The third chapter elaborates on salient concepts related to narrative and narrative identification, and how these are formulated in medium, story worlds, character models and a narrative structure. I also explain the numerous effects within these categories that influence narrative identification and the effects that the audience are likely to experience during *transportation* and the results thereof. From this, I identify the requirements for my practical application of these to characterisation and narrative structure.

The fourth chapter explores character and the selected character model with reference to how these pertain to characterisation, with the aim to demonstrate how these can be applied to character design and character development. I then reflect on how I used character design and character development to construct a character-centric approach with the purpose of narrative identification and how the theory informed my practice.

The fifth chapter covers the narrative structure and framework of the Rashomon Effect and the cinematographic tools used in my 3D digital graphic novel. I reflect on how I created my narrative and how I designed my medium to allow optimal focus on

narrative identification, by means of a character-centric approach with the purpose of narrative identification and how the theory informed my practice.

The sixth chapter contains the synthesis, where I combine my findings and reflections of the previous chapters and reflect upon these, and how the different sections of the dissertation respond to my research questions.

## CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Overview

#### 2.1.1 Research and practice-led research

In this chapter, I will firstly discuss what is defined as research and how my chosen methodology, which is practice-led research (or to be more precise, its initialisation variant, research-led practice), fits into the framework of what is accepted as research. In so doing, I will establish the key factors of the methodology and how these are applicable to my study and then also, provide a guideline, or set of methods, which will inform the study. After I have established what practice-led research is (as well as the related methodology of research-led practice), I will also begin to apply the first step of the methodology, which entails the phases of a pre-production, production and post-production description.

To begin, one must consider the framework of what research is. The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC)<sup>7</sup> defines research in the following terms: “

1. It must define a series of research questions, issues or problems that will be addressed in the course of the research. It must also define its aims and objectives in terms of seeking to enhance knowledge and understanding relating to the questions, issues or problems to be addressed.
2. It must specify a research context for the questions, issues or problems to be addressed. One must specify why it is important that these particular questions, issues or problems should be addressed; what other research is being or has been conducted in this area; and what particular contribution a project will make to the advancement of creativity, insights, knowledge and understanding in this area.
3. It must specify the research methods for addressing and answering the research questions, issues or problems. One must state how, in the course of the research project, you will seek to answer the questions, address the issues or solve the problems. One should also explain the rationale for one's

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7 "Definition of research - Arts and Humanities Research Council."

<https://ahrc.ukri.org/funding/research/researchfundingguide/introduction/definitionofresearch/>. Accessed 8 Dec. 2020.

chosen research methods and why you think they provide the most appropriate means by which to address the research questions, issues or problems.”

In conventional terms, one can distinguish between quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Haseman (2006), Guba and Lincoln (1994), Sandelowski (2000), Combrink and Marley (2009) help to explain these two methodologies, noting that quantitative research is concerned with an approach that leans heavily on theoretical models, hypotheses, measuring quantifiable data and evidence, cause and effect, formulation and distribution. Qualitative research differs significantly from the former and applies a broader approach to its methodology. Unlike the former, which is more concerned with numerical and measurable data, qualitative research is concerned with understanding and documenting (be it by observation, the nuances of behaviour and interpretation thereof) the nature, meaning and actions of humanity. Qualitative research generally takes into account the perspectives of both the participants and researchers (which one can readily divulge, may have little significance to quantitative research) and delivers results via qualitative texts. In sum, quantitative research is an approach characterised by measurable data which relies on numerical values, whereas qualitative research applies multiple methods to acquire qualitative data via the study of texts and the interpretation of textual information.

There has been an emergence of a third approach to fulfilling the prerequisites of research, which Haseman (2006) explains as performative research, which is concerned with acquiring symbolic data. This approach or paradigm is not necessarily encapsulated by words or numbers, but rather by forms of practice. In this sense, it is similar to qualitative research with regards to the diversity of methods that one can apply but is distinct in terms of its symbolic system of practice. In both qualitative and quantitative research, practice is a means to capture their data, be it numeric or textual, whereas in performance research, it is the capturing of symbolic data deliberately through-and-via practice that is important.

Another distinction to be made between the quantitative and qualitative research, and performative research, is that the former's approach to handling research as Haseman (2006), Guba and Lincoln (1994), Sandelowski (2000), Combrink and Marley (2009) describe it is to focus on addressing and solving problems; in other

words, problem-led research. What this means is that as the former two are distinct in their own way, they share a similar structure which focuses on establishing a problem statement or central theoretical question. Ultimately these approaches seek to clearly establish what the problem is, formulate on how the problem will be addressed (by researching answers to research questions) and by establishing a hypothesis that may be tested. All of the practice that follows (be it theoretical or practical) is conducted with the aim of addressing the problem.

Concurring with Haseman (2006), Green (2007:2) notes that the standards of research involve a continuous engagement through either a set of research questions or a singular one. In qualitative and quantitative research, the question(s) would arise first, from which the artefact and the process of the study would be informed, with the intention of exploring and refining said question(s) through practice and the issues related to said question(s).

From the prerequisites of research, one can ascertain that knowledge generation is imperative to research. Practice-led research is also concerned with knowledge generation, albeit in peculiar manners that are set out in the discussion that follows. The Cambridge Business English Dictionary (CBED) provides definitions of two particular types of knowledge relevant to practice-led research (or research-led practice) that are relevant to the present study, namely, explicit and tacit knowledge.

Explicit knowledge is “knowledge that can be expressed in words, numbers, and symbols and stored in books, computers, etc.”<sup>8</sup> and tacit knowledge is “knowledge that you do not get from being taught, or from books, etc. but get from personal experience, for example when working in a particular organization.”<sup>9</sup>

Gray and Marlins (2004:1) explain that there is a type of knowledge generated through practice; they note that by engaging in practice, a person can learn from the experience. Of importance here is reflection on the experience of practice. Most notably, these authors acknowledge that knowledge is also generated in this type of

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8 "EXPLICIT KNOWLEDGE | definition in the Cambridge English" 2 Dec. 2020, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/explicit-knowledge>. Accessed 9 Dec. 2020.

9 "TACIT KNOWLEDGE | definition in the Cambridge English" 2 Dec. 2020, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/tacit-knowledge>. Accessed 9 Dec. 2020.

research. With regards to knowledge, a person can learn and generate new knowledge through both practice, existing knowledge and reflection on the interaction between the two.

Performative research, as Haseman (2006) notes, is based on practice and is more specifically concerned with the improvement of practice and how (through practice) new forms of knowledge can be generated. Performative research, in the sense of being guided by practice and thus the name practice-based research, can thus be understood to be centralised around practice, or as mentioned earlier, led or based on practice. Rust, Mottram and Till (2007:11) also confirm that practice is the key component in this form of research. Candy (2006) provides a more distinct understanding of practice-based research and practice-led research. Both relate to and rely on practice; practice-based refers to an approach where the produced artefact is the contributing element to the research-knowledge pool. If the research is, however, more concerned with developing new understandings of practice, then one speaks of practice-led research. Candy (2006) elaborates that practice-led research is concerned with practice and nature thereof; it aims to expand the research-knowledge pool specifically centred within and around said practice. Borgdorff (2010) concludes that in sum, said research has its place and validity in academic-research pursuits.

This type of research is, of course, related to practice-based research, also in the context of the present study, which includes an artefact. While the primary focus of this study is centralised around the nature of practice and how to expand knowledge within and around the practice, it is also additive by providing the artefact, which is the outcome or result of the practice-led research. In sum, not only does this study provide new knowledge within and around the specific practice, it also provides a contribution of said knowledge through the means of the artefact. McNiff (2008) corroborates this as imperative to the research approach, they note that through iterative cycles of process, the researcher can experience, examine and understand the focus of their study and from it, manifest their findings through an artefact, which also serves as an artistic expression.

Scrivener and Chapman (2004:2) further elaborates on the significance of the artefact(s), noting that in order for an artefact to be submitted as integral component

to the research requirements, the artefact(s) must first (and obviously) be produced; secondly, the artefact(s) itself must be of high quality and original in regard to its context, be it in aesthetics, cultural, political or social context; thirdly, the artefact(s) must be a form of response relevant to applicable interests, concerns and/or issues; fourthly, not only must the artefact(s) be in response to the aforementioned, it must also manifest said aspects; in the fifth place, as the artefacts are produced in response and manifest to applicable interests, concerns and/or issues, said interests, concerns and/or issues must also reflect the context as mentioned above; in the sixth and seventh place, the artefact must be able to generate apprehension and must be central to its process and finally, in the eighth instance, the process of creating the artefact must be self-conscious, reflective and reasoned. The authors note that the crucial factor in the above is the eighth step, which is how the researcher demonstrates how he or she explored, expressed and arrived at the interests, concerns and/or issues of the study and how in turn, how their self-conscious, reflective and reasoned process had been manifested.

Sullivan (2009:44) argues that practice can be seen as a valid form of research via the unique approach and generalisation of new knowledge via practice. Candy (2006), Doman and Laurie (2010) concur that with regards to practice, in order for it to be contributory to the knowledge-research pool, the process of practice must be reflected upon and in turn the same on the results of said reflection. In sum, the reflection on practice and its iterations. What this leads to is a form of documentation of said practice in the form of documentation and reflection of the practice itself and a thesis that extrapolates the relevant knowledge of the practice and its reflection. This also includes the artefact, which is the outcome of said practice. All of the aforementioned must provide an understanding of the process and the researcher's understanding of the pre-existing and newfound knowledge, and the study as a whole must be accessible for others to utilise in further research endeavours. Sullivan (2009:45) and Biggs (2003:4) concur with this regard to research via practice, even when the outcome of the research isn't guaranteed, the continual iterative cycle of producing new knowledge that originates and flows from pre-existing knowledge is guaranteed.

Sullivan (2009:47) also concurs with the relationship of the study and with those who consume it, they state that "...knowledge embedded in practice, knowledge argued in the thesis and knowledge constructed as discourse within the institutional setting all contribute to new understanding.". With regard to academic consumption, there is validity in the critical process, the artefact and the role that the practitioner had in creating the outcome for consumption. Sullivan (2009:50-51) Borgdorff (2010) and Biggs (2003:3-6) (with their statement specifically focused on the artefact) elaborate by explaining that through practice-led research, the newfound knowledge is interpreted, made sense of and then executed so that it is able to be communicated with others, in a sense, the iterative reflection cycle produces outcomes that can be understood. Through this communication, both the participant and the audience (be it the public or the academic) can conduct in understanding said knowledge through discourse, discussion and debates, all of which are analytical and critical. Biggs (2003:3) and Mäkelä (2007) explain that the artefact serves as the answer to the research question and its proposed problem, it also invites the aforementioned analytical-critical communication. Doman and Laurie (2009) elaborate that the artefact itself serves as the research output, which provides new forms of knowledge and new knowledge in itself. Biggs (2003:5), Doman and Laurie (2010), Mäkelä (2007), however, do note that merely presenting the artefact does not suffice, what is needed is the context that led to the outcome of the artefact, hence, all of the above. They do note that this context is provided in combination of the artefact and the critical exegesis, which explains how the study contributes and advances insight, knowledge and understanding in the applicable field.

Gray and Marlins (2004:105) provide a useful outline for the role that practice can play in requisites of research-knowledge in the form of research models:

"For example, practice - through action and reflection - provides a means of:

1. Investigating the subject/content and context of one's own creative activity in order to advance or innovate; understanding one's own creative process (In relation to others'); making explicit the practitioner's tacit knowledge; as a result of greater self-knowledge being able to contribute to the wider development and understanding of research methodology involving practice.

2. Discovering new practices or methods/processes/techniques and materials by experimentation; rediscovering/revitalizing/revising traditional practices in new/contemporary contexts; reconstructing artwork/artefacts to bring about new understanding/insight through the experience of making/re-making.
3. Understanding a range of different practices - using one's own practice to contrast/compare those of other practitioners.
4. Being a catalyst in participatory action research where creative practice can actively involve, inform and inspire others.
5. Using the skills of the artist/designer to visualize and understand complex processes (perhaps in other fields) - making the invisible visible.
6. Providing knowledge transfer of mutual benefit between different 'worlds' of practice and research, for example, art/design higher education and industry”.

Green (2007) explains that practice-led research is sometimes used ambiguously but that essentially it is non-quantifiable, because the practice itself yields to the research, and from it, questions emerge that the researcher seeks to engage with.

Sullivan (2009:48-49) elaborates that in the more traditional sense, research is conducted and moves from the 'known to the unknown', whereas with practice-led research, the process is flipped, where it is an exploration from the 'unknown to the known'. This is critical to the understanding of how knowledge is produced in practice-led research. As already established, new knowledge is generated, but by foregoing (but are still informed by) the conventional frameworks of research in order to produce creative outcomes that would not have been discovered by using traditional methods, in a sense, this radical and creative approach can yield unconventional knowledge results that hold validity. This approach holds purpose and is clear but is open to exploration and discovery.

I have previously mentioned that this study makes use of a variation of practice-led research, namely, research-led practice. Smith and Dean (2009:2-8) explain that practice-led research and research-led practice are not separate processes, but rather an interconnected process which can also be a collaborative effort. The authors (2009:7) define research-led practice as “... a terminology which we use to complement practice-led research, and which suggests more clearly than practice-led research that scholarly research can lead to creative work”. Ultimately, it is the

instance that leads to the research. In the case of practice-led research, the process begins with practice which then leads to research and vice versa; in research-led practice, the process begins with research first, which then leads to practice and vice versa. Ultimately, both are focused on practice and oscillate between practice and research during the process. The difference is, in other words, what initiates the research, which in research-led practice would then be (academic) research that gives rise to practice.

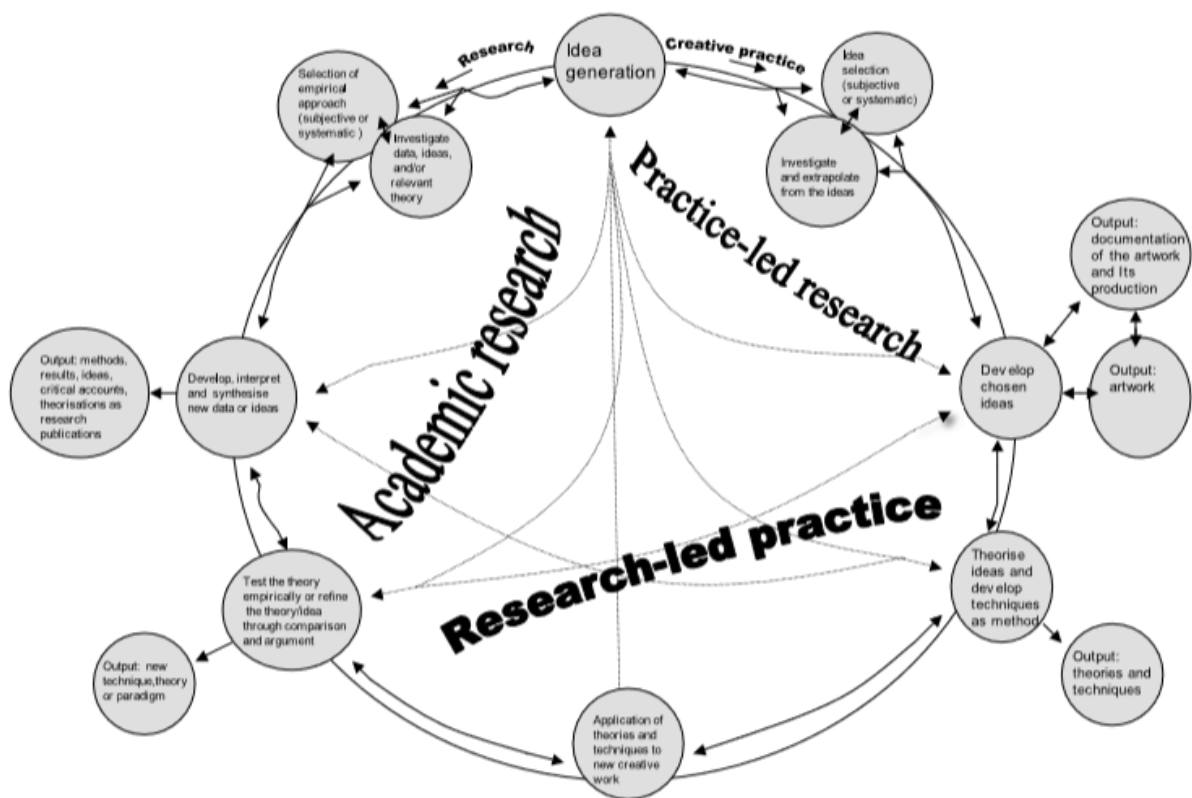


Figure 2: Smith and Dean's (2009:20) model: the iterative cyclic web. The figure originates from "Practice-led Research, Research-led Practice in the Creative Arts" by Smith and Dean (2009).

Smith and Dean (2009:19-21) provide an explanation to their figure shown above. Here one can see how the authors link both sides of the research application (from practical to theoretical) into a circular, webbed structure or cycle. This demonstrates that a study may find itself beginning at a specific point (academic research, research-led practice and practice-led research). The authors (2009) add that as the study progresses, it may freely proceed along the circle to create a research cycle

and may, at any point, oscillate back to another segment in the figure. What this means is that as a study progresses, it may be initiated from either theoretical or practical premises, and then proceed to the other side to implement iterations of a sub-cycle. From here, the research may proceed freely to the next step, so that there is a free-flowing backwards and forwards movement between theory and practice. As the study progresses, outcomes will begin to appear and be concluded. The conventional cycle for practice-led research would begin from the practical side, like idea generation, and can then cycle clockwise or counter-clockwise as needed. For research-led practice, the study begins from a theoretical premise but ultimately follows the same process as practice-led research. The significance of this to my study is that, despite its theoretical beginnings, its focus is on practice as a research product.

Sullivan (2009:42) and Borgdorff (2010) note that if creative artists wish to conduct artistic practice in the academic world, then they must participate in this area being artistic practice but also take on the role of theorist and researcher, therefore, in this regard, research and practice are conjoined. Another clarification provided by Green (2007:2-3), Biggs (2003:3) and Nimkulrat (2007) is the distinction between art-as-art and art-as-research, where the latter is another segment of practice-led research. In art-as-research, the researcher sets out to provide evidence, to document the output of the study, so that it may serve as a foundation for future developments and research. Such an output may be subject to scrutiny, it may be corrected and elaborated upon, and aims to add to academic knowledge. This documentation, in the form of recordings of the process, serves to provide rigour and validity to the study; this is the distinction between art-as-art and art-as-research. With regards to practice-led research, the rigour entails not only that the research has been conducted, but one also needs to show how it was done and how it was completed. This is achieved through practice-led methodologies that produce a new pool of knowledge, which in itself can be represented through the artistic artefact. What can be ascertained from this methodological approach and its documentation is that it provides the process and completion of the study, through practice that led research (or in my case, research that led practice) and that it has been done with rigour. Evidence must be provided of original effort, logic, and links made between the study's components and the exploration of said links. The study should aim to

address emergent research questions, and an effort must be made to exclude irrelevancies and to elaborate on issues that emerge as relevant to the study. Apart from rigour, Green (2007:2-3) and Douglas *et al.* (2000) also note that such a study must also display validity, which entails that the researcher explores what has been done before and how the present study would expand and elaborate the pool of knowledge relevant to the applicable field of study. In sum, the research must be relevant to its field and should provide new knowledge to that field. Combrink and Marley (2009) reaffirm this notion by stating that research for academic purposes must comply with the criteria as mentioned in the beginning of this segment, it must provide new knowledge which is accessible for scrutiny and must be cohesively structured by its outcomes and the process that led to it, be all of the aforementioned, it is evident that practice-led research is structured to deliver on said compliances.

Green (2007:3-4) also notes that another segment of practice-led research is lodged within assessments of the study itself, which is done by reviewers who must also be acquainted with the nuances of practice-led research. What this means is that the quality of the study is determined by those who receive and judge it, as is normative in the academic sphere. In this regard, one can look at Holbrook *et al.*'s (2006:86) statement that "... the assessment language showed a marked difference between the exegesis and the exhibition, and the relative emphasis in assessment centred on the exegesis". Again, referring to what was mentioned before, the exegesis is the record of the study, which presents itself in an attempt to demonstrate rigour and relevance through validity, all with the intention of gaining research recognition. What this means is that, as the assessors apply relevant criteria and expectations, so must the entity leading the study be informed of relevant expectations. Ultimately, this process enables both the assessor (who is knowledgeable of practice-led research) and the assessed to learn from the experience and to further develop their understanding of this paradigm.

Green (2007:4-5) finally notes that another structural segment of practice-led research is that it is qualitative and experiential. The author refers to Haseman's (2006) notion that practice-led research is additional to both qualitative and quantitative methodologies and that practice-led research culminates in a

performative methodology, and may make use of qualitative and/or quantitative methodologies. Regarding performative research, the experience of both the artefact and the nature of its practice can lead to the bolstering of the research and the evaluation thereof. It is, however, crucial to note that quantitative research is not a prerequisite for practice-led research, because in practice-led research, the required qualities of rigour and validity are already present in the development of the artefact. Indeed, including quantifiable qualities as a prerequisite could hinder or distract the iterative nature of practice itself. What is, however, important is the notion that practice-led research can unify Haseman's (2006) triangulation of performance, qualitative and quantitative research. It provides an overlap of experiences of practice and reflection and can thus lead to further developments akin to those found in quantitative research. Borgdorff (2010) notes that neither social science, humanities or scientific models can serve as a foundation for artistic research but rather that it is merited to its own approach.

Bowen (2005) mentions that with regard to research, irrespective of its approach, one should follow a cohesive methodology; they also note along with Mafe and Brown (2006) that said methodology should produce a compelling literature review, that is, to document the research and to provide validity and rigour to said research, the components of the study should be aptly conceptualised, described and theorised. In the *SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Lincoln, Lynham and Guba (2017:217-218) explain the various qualities of participatory paradigms. Firstly they describe the ontology of the participatory paradigms as being concerned with participative realities, which can range from the subjective to the objective. These realities are given harmony and order through the application of the mind. The epistemology of participatory paradigms assumes the form of critical subjectivity through participatory exchange with said harmony and order. This manifests through experiential, propositional and practical knowledge and co-created findings. The methodology entails participation in collaborative actions and focuses on the practical components. The language of the methodology is based on shared experiential contexts. The authors further note that the nature of knowledge generated from participatory paradigms extends from the epistemology inherent in these paradigms in the sense that it manifests through critical subjectivity, practical knowing and living knowledge. The accumulation of this knowledge is achieved by

communities of inquiry that are embedded in the communities of practice. The criteria to measure this type of knowledge are based on the qualities of the epistemology, namely, the experiential, propositional and practical knowledge, and how these interchangeably agree or coincide with one another, all with the implication of bettering the world by providing humanity with a font of knowledge to draw from. The values of participatory paradigms are intrinsic and formative and its ethics are intrinsic, with regards to the process that leads to revelation. The position of the inquirer in participatory paradigms is that of a primary voice (with secondary collaborative voices), which manifests itself through self-reflective actions that the inquirer is aware of, and which clarifies theory and the presentational forms that the research assumes. Training in the participatory paradigms may entail co-researching so that it is a shared process, either as facilitators or researchers, all with the intent of actively engaging in the process. The facilitator and researcher should both work in a democratic fashion during the course of the research.

In summary, with regard to the epistemology of participatory paradigms, experiential knowledge arises from the practitioners' understanding of their experiences. It entails the intrinsic and pre-linguistic formulation of tacit knowledge, which can assume form of pre-established knowledge, developed skills, personal experience and intuition in practice, all embedded in the practitioner's personal actions and reactions. The practical knowledge gained stems from the experiential knowledge, in particular, the ability of the practitioner to execute the practical component skilfully, all the while being mindful of the propositional knowledge. Knowledge is made manifest in a presentational form, in particular through process documentation. Regarding propositional knowledge, it is the language-based statement that allows the practitioner to contextualise and clarify meaning in practice and also to inform concepts and interpretations. This is achieved by means of constant reflection, but especially during post-production reflection. From the experiential knowledge gained and the diligence when applying practical knowledge, one gains presentational knowledge (or the artefact), which is informed by the former. As made clear in the term presentational knowledge, this refers to how the experiential knowledge is presented, be it through aesthetic creations or metaphors. It serves to invite others to also explore and experience, to interpret and imagine. The product of experiential knowledge is the artefact. Doman-Laurie (2010) notes that the artefact is indeed

central to the exegesis of the research, for it is informed by reflection on practice, which is explained through literature review and driven by practical knowledge.

With regard to the present study and with reference to the aforementioned, Heron and Reason (1997:279) explain the four relevant types of knowing, namely experiential knowing, presentational knowing, propositional knowing and practical knowing. Experiential knowing is a direct encounter with something (be it an entity, place, process or energy) and how said thing is felt and imagined. It is how it is manifested through imagination and feeling and brought into being. It stems from the intrinsic understanding of said thing and perceptually imagining it. Presentational knowing emerges from the aforementioned, where it takes the experiential knowing and begins to manifest it through symbolic meaning that takes the form of some artistic expression. It is the metaphorical manifestation of our experienced idea. Propositional knowing is the conceptual foundation of the thing, it is how it is understood and reasoned through documentation, it is reflective of the presentational form and is grounded in the experiential articulation. Practical knowing is the skill to know how to do something, it is relevant to all of the aforementioned, for it does more than merely feeling or imagining, manifesting or conceptualising, entails doing these things skilfully, which increases the quality of the outcome.

Scrivener (2004:6) provides a basic structure that helps to establish a model of approach to a creative-production project/study. He proposes a five-step model. The first step is the pre-project reflection on practice, which includes, as mentioned earlier, the interests, concerns and/or issues identified in the project/study. From this, the second step emanates, which identifies domains that are relevant to the practice and the resources that these domains provide. From these, one also needs to strategize how these resources will be acquired. The third step applies and refines the identified strategies throughout the study. This step also entails continuous cycles of reflection of the applications and refinements, which may lead to new interests, concerns and/or issues. These may well cause one to return to the second step and then again to the third step. This iterative process continues until the project is complete. The fourth step entails to provide a reflection on the practice and the completed project. The fifth and final step comprises a reflection on the reflection, i.e.

a reflection on the fourth step, which is a critical reflection of the practitioner's own reflection.

Gray and Marlins (2004:57-58) elaborate on the possibilities provided by this model by suggesting a mode of reflection, which can also be implemented into the steps in the broader context as well as, specifically, in the third step. They divide these modes of reflection into three categories: past, present and future. If one considers the broader spectrum and the reiterative third step of the structure discussed above, one can see how reflections of the past, present and future are applicable. Gray and Marlins (2004:57-58) define these modes further by terming them as such, so that a reflection of the past can be seen as a reflection-on-action (this means that as one reflects on the past, one can evaluate the general standing in the study, which may then lead to documenting the process and from there, evaluating how the study must progress). A reflection on the present can be seen as in-action-reflection, which is when the evaluation of the past leads to new action. This action is experienced, and this experience can inform new questions and insights that are regarded as discoveries. From here, one reflects on insights, questions and discoveries, which when reflected on, can lead to planning for the future. Reflections on the future can be seen as reflection-for-action, which entails envisioning possibilities for the future. This process can also be repeated when the present becomes past, which must be evaluated. This evaluation is used to make the future present through action and from there on provide a new future.

Combrink and Marley (2009:192-194) have developed a methodological structure for collaborative practice-led projects that utilise all of the aforementioned by encapsulating it into three stages, namely the pre-production stage, the production stage and the post-production stage. They note that the pre-production stage begins (in the broader context) at the intuitive possibility and realisation of a probable project. It is the conceptualisation at its infancy and as such, is chaotic, playful and heavily reliant on experiential knowledge. It is also conceptualised by co-creative findings, be these from multiple practitioners, from influences from outside fields, from study leaders or facilitators. From this experimental phase, an ambiguous shape begins to emerge, which contains the possibility of a project and working title, along with the core concept and its relevance within its field of practice and context.

There is, however, also an emergence of possible interests, concerns and/or issues and a gesture of a theoretical framework. As this shape begins to take on form, a plan of action begins to suggest itself. This plan is flexible to allow for creative changes but does provide clarity with regard to validity. As this plan of action takes shape, the participants take on their roles, and results are anticipated as creative, theoretical and reflective outcomes. Workshops can be held to inform practitioners of the nature of the project, encompassing all of the above, to solidify the understanding of the project and its place in the research milieu and to add rigour through practical knowledge. While speaking of outcomes, it is also imperative that practitioners should consider the publication and exhibition of the project during this phase, as it is necessary to build up to this conclusion so that it may be critically assessed by external means.

Combrink and Marley (2009:194-195) note that the production step comes after the pre-production step. This is where the majority of the process, production and reflection take place. It is especially important that the cycle of reflection (now more iterative in nature) not only takes place at an individual level among participants but also in the context of the project as a whole, which would mean continual discussions between all who are actively involved in the project. This is necessary to ensure that the possibility of new emergent ideas have greater potential, but to also gather insights from various perspectives, which then lead to emergent ideas and new approaches. Those in the role of referees (such as supervisors) must also validate the quality of both practical and theoretical process with regards to the research outputs. It is imperative that this iterative cycle is continuously reflected upon and improved with a view to establish a more acute form of vigour and to refine validity. Eventually, the production reaches a conclusion. The whole of the project is then perused and reflected on in textual documentation, a process catalogue and artefact(s). This step is necessary so the project's validity and contribution can actually become a contribution to the knowledge-research pool.

Combrink and Marley (2009:195-196) add that the post-production step follows the production step. In the post-production step, a final reflection is made on the project after completion, including all participants getting together so that areas of success, shortcomings and possible new issues can be addressed and recorded. This should

also be included in the contribution bundle, so that the public and all of those interested in the field may also experience this reflection and perhaps find their own emergent issues to which they may address, thus inciting more expansion of the research-knowledge pool. This is normatively the scholarly documentation, with results and research validity and rigour applied. To summarise, the entirety of the project becomes an exploration from the 'unknown to the known'.

## **2.1.2 My methodological approach**

I intend to use Combrink and Marley's (2009) methodological structure as the framework for my study, as mentioned in the beginning, I will provide a brief description of how I have applied the steps of pre-production, production and post-production into my study.

### **2.1.2.1 Pre-production**

My pre-production encapsulates the bulk of Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, where I describe what has been established regarding relevance to my field, the emergence of interests, concerns and/or issues and the intention of how I wish to address said interests, concerns and/or issues. The segments of theory in Chapter 1 are composed in the pre-production phase. In segments 4.2.4 and 5.4.3, I also describe in detail how the pre-production process began as well as its relevance to the segments' foci. I provide a brief description of what knowledge has already been established that can be considered experiential knowledge. It must be noted that I encompass the role of the researcher and the leader of said research, this study does, however, qualify as a collaborative effort (through workshops, peer reflections, assistant collaboration, supervisors and other creatives' input), what this means is that, throughout my study, I would make iterative reflective cycles on both practice and research, which would either be informed by my own reflection or that of a collaborative reflection, either way, the emphasis is keen on the conscious application of said iterative reflective cycles to reach the outcomes of this study. I completed my degree in Graphic Design with a sub-specialisation in multimedia design, and from this, I have sufficient experience and knowledge in design, multimedia design, front-end design, cinematography, web-design and animation. With regard to animation, I always had a greater interest in character design and

development, and I have pursued both fields beforehand as a personal interest. My curiosity for character development grew over time. Alongside the design side of my degree, I had also completed studies on art history, which were part of the degree, as well as some communication studies, philosophy and anthropology. I remembered that in one of my anthropology classes there was a brief discussion about the *Rashomon* (1950) film and its effect, but it would only be after the completion of my first degree that my interest in it piqued, which then led me to watch the film and to study the Rashomon effect. In terms of characters, as I was immersed in the Rashomon effect, I became curious about the nature of humanity. The ambiguity of the Rashomon effect fascinated me, especially in terms of the different characters and their character dimensions. This ultimately led me to discover narrative identification and Schwartz's (1992, 2012) value theory.

It is evident that the inception of my study began with a theoretical curiosity, which led to a desire to understand the complexities of how these aforementioned theories could be applied in practice, to perhaps yield a new understanding of narrative and characterisation. I wanted to study these with the intention of providing an exploratory framework that could yield greater narrative persuasion, which could be useful for both designers (who might utilise characters in design narratives) and storytellers (who might find the application of the aforementioned as informative to their approach to narrative, characters and story-worlds). It should be evident that from my initial beginnings that I followed research-led practice, for it was due to my reflection on theory that the idea for my study emerged.

### **2.1.2.2 Production**

My production step is segmented into two components, the theoretical foundation and the implementation, process, outcome and reflection of the relevant theoretical concepts that gave rise to practice, in this instance characterisation and story (narrative). The theoretical foundation can be described as a summary of the theoretical results of my implementation, process, outcome and reflection. To provide more clarity, Chapter 3 presents a perusal of narrative theory, which has implications on both characterisation and story (narrative). This can be seen as a foundation and outcome of character and narrative, and that is why the theory is developed and explained first. Theoretical concepts include an exploration of the

notion of narrative and how one becomes immersed in a narrative, specifically through transportation, and narrative engagement, identification, to achieve narrative persuasion. Chapter 4 also establishes a theoretical foundation – in this instance focusing on characterisation (theoretical points such as character development through Schwartz’s (1992, 2012) value theory, character design through character appeal, cuteness and the Uncanny Valley) and by the end of this chapter, in section 4.2.4, the implementation, process, outcome and reflection of characterisation and its relation to narrative theory are applied. In Chapter 5, the same structure is followed. I firstly begin with a theoretical foundation of my story (narrative), which is structurally informed by *Rashomon* (1950) and its effect, along with it I also discuss the process of how *Rashomon* (1950) came to be, its cinematographic approach, its visual language and the theoretical framework of the Rashomon effect. In addition, I also provide cinematographic (the five Cs of cinematography) and narrative arc guidelines which informed my practice. From this theoretical establishment, I proceed to the implementation, process, outcome and reflection with regards to the narrative, specifically by (5.4.3). In Chapters 4 and 5, I first establish my theoretical foundation, which is then explained in the subsequent implementation, process, outcome and reflection segments of how the theoretical foundation was created by my research-led practice.

### **2.1.2.3 Post-production**

I then proceed onto my post-production step, presented in Chapter 6, which contains my syntheses where I combine my findings and reflections of the previous chapters. Here I reflect upon the project as a whole and how the different sections of the dissertation respond to my research questions. As part of the production and post-production requirements, I also submit this dissertation, my process documentation (in the form of an accessible website) and my artefact to the North-West University for examination and educational use, so that it may contribute to the specified practice research-knowledge pools and be open to evaluation, elaboration and criticism. As part of Chapter 6, I also provide through my post-production reflection, suggestions for further research that may stem from my own study in order to allow for more emerging ideas on research opportunities.

## CHAPTER 3: A CONSIDERTATION OF NARRATIVE

### 3.1 Narrative

#### 3.1.1 What is narrative?

In this chapter, I explore a number of theoretical tenets pertaining to narrative. I discuss relevant technical minutiae that underlie the development and understanding of a narrative firstly, for it is important to know what a narrative is before one can create a narrative. From this, I explore relevant concepts that provide their own distinctive approach, namely Transportation, Narrative Engagement and Identification, that lead to narrative persuasion. As mentioned in the introduction, narrative persuasion is essential to the study, for not only does it impact the success of the narrative, but also affects the outcome of my characterisation approach, which is to develop characters that are persuasive based on their value character-centric appeal. In sum, this chapter is a theoretical foundation that sets out to develop an understanding of the complexities that influence the entire study.

Brown (1991) and Kinnebrock and Bilandzic (2011:1) define stories as satisfying a universal human need. Furthermore, Polkinghorne (1991), Fiske (1993) and Kinnebrock and Bilandzic (2011:2-5) state that narrative entails a mental simulation<sup>10</sup> that relates to a mimetic structure (Oatley, 1994:53), and can usually be subjectively interpreted (Kinnebrock & Bilandzic, 2011:2). Such interpretation involves the self (Escalas, 2004:38) as well as emotive investment in the process (Murphy, Frank, Chatterjee & Baezconde-Garbanati, 2013:121). Appel and Malečkar (2012:459) and Kinnebrock and Bilandzic (2011:1) further define narrative as a form of information sharing that also relates to our daily consumption of information.

Escalas (2004:37) explains that a mental simulation usually manifests in the form of a story and the cognitive construction of its hypothetical events, which refers to the possibility of scenarios in a spatiotemporal domain; in which we perceive ourselves, more often as the foremost figure, which is the deictic centre (see 3.3.). This process in itself constitutes how we persuade ourselves to go along with what the narrative

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10 With regard to simulation, Escalas explains that we as humans will construct components such as behaviors, goals, events and outcomes, which are evident in stories (2004: 38).

communicates. Escalas (2004:37) adds that the persuasive components of narrative are a form of mental simulation.

Various scholars describe the fundamentals of a narrative, or specially *narrativity* (Coste 1989; Ryan, 1992, Prince, 1982) as a spatiotemporal sequence (Bruner 1990; Fiske, 1993; Kreuter *et al.*, 2007:222) of connected events (Kreuter *et al.*, 2007:222) that relate to the development of the flow of events (Prince, 1982:153); this is referred to as a *story* (Kinnebrock & Bilandzic, 2011:2). The sequence of a story can be defined by the *syuzhet*, namely the portrayed narrative sequence (which may be achronological), and the *fabula*, which refers to the chronological sequence of events (which entails a mental restructuring in the mind of the consumer of the narrative).

Slater and Rouner (2002:7) argue that the interplay of sequences can evoke affective reactions. The consistency and coherence of these events increase the effectiveness of narrativity (Prince, 1982:153; Ryan, 1992:371) by portraying the story as plausible and believable (Slater & Rouner, 2002:6-7). The story is independent from the medium (Abbott, 2002:12), but is portrayed through the medium via *modes*, *voice* and *style*. The medium may have a bearing on the progression of events in the story (Toolan, 2001:6); stories tend to have a beginning, middle and end, although these need not be represented in chronological sequence (Escalas, 2004:38; Kinnebrock & Bilandzic, 2011:5). Most stories, therefore, present the reader or, in the case of stories that are not text-based, the user, with a goal, action and outcome (Pennington & Hastie 1986; Stein & Albro 1997).

Deighton *et al.* (1989:338) argue that with regards to the progression of events and the influence of these on characters, problems arise which characters will struggle with and attempt to resolve. Slater and Rouner (2002:8) add that by displaying (showing rather than telling) events creates a proxy between the audience and the experienced events, which enhances the effectiveness of the represented narrativity. A plot has a narrative *structure* which contains explicit and implicit messages (Kreuter *et al.*, 2007:222) regarding a topic; these messages are causally connected (Escalas, 2004:38). From these connections, we experience and learn (Toolan, 2001:6; Czarniawska, 2004:10). Prince (1982:160) also argues that the quality of the discourse's craftsmanship will affect the intensity of narrativity.

It is the combination of *story* (or *fabula*) and *discourse* (*syuzhet*) that creates a narrative *structure* (Kinnebrock & Bilandzic, 2011:5), which adds up to a unified experience (Oatley, 1993:53), but it is the progression and assimilation towards this unified experience that incite interest within the audience to mentally engage with the narrative (Oatley, 1993:57). Moyer-Gusé (2008:409) refers to this investment into a narrative as *involvement*. Slater and Rouner (2002:7) add that a successful narrative structure can be sequenced into phases, and depending on the clarity of these phases, an increase in narrativity will occur. The aforementioned phases add up to establish a *schema* that entails the abstract, orientation, complicating action, evaluation, resolution and coda. The use of an archetypal schema categorises a narrative into a genre, which can be useful for audiences to apply existing knowledge and understanding into the experience which, in turn, enhances the processing of the narrative.

Kinnebrock and Bilandzic (2011:2) and Oatley (1993:53) state that during the consumption of a narrative, a *mental model* is constructed by the audience, which contains the current simulation of said narrative and its characters, location and events. Kinnebrock and Bilandzic (2011:2) add that along with the provided information from the narrative, the audience filters the given information through their own pre-existing knowledge which can be “general world knowledge; narrative knowledge on typical plots, roles, action sequences; knowledge on filmic means, e.g., music indicating imminent danger”.

Many scholars (Brock & Livingston, 2004; Czarniawska, 2004:10; Green, Garst & Brock, 2004; Busselle & Bilandzic, 2008:264; Zwarun & Hall, 2012:327; Hoeken, Kolthoff & Sanders, 2016:292) agree that a central role of narrative is to entertain. The effect of this role has been defined to impact audience attitudes differently than the role of a rhetorical approach<sup>11</sup> (Zwarun & Hall 2012:327) and as by-product, to engage with the purpose of affective pleasure and to understand the story rather than to engage in critical thinking (Green & Brock, 2002; Raney, 2002; Slater, Rouner & Long, 2006; Busselle & Bilandzic, 2008; Zwarun & Hall, 2012), although

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11 Kreuter *et al.* (2007:222) also refer to these as non-narratives, which intend to teach, reason, provide meaning or argue through either factual or informative methods. Petty and Cacioppo (1986) provide examples of the rhetorical approach which is commonly used in advertisements, political speeches, educational campaigns.

the cognitive aspect does not fall away (Raney, 2002). Information from a narrative is residual, meaning it can have lingering impacts on the audience after exposure, and repeated exposure can also intensify these impacts (Adaval & Wyer, 1998; Wyer, Adaval & Colcombe, 2002). Green, Brock and Kaufman (2004:311) state that the enjoyment gleaned from a narrative could lead to mood change or a desire for repeated consumption of the narrative.

A number of scholars (Slater & Rouner, 2002:174; Zwarun & Hall 2012:327; Hoeken, Kolthoff & Sanders, 2016:292) explain that the results of the effect that a narrative has on an audience lead to decreased counter-arguing<sup>12</sup>, which occurs when the audience logically evaluates messages, which can lead to altering perceptions<sup>13</sup> (Costabile & Terman, 2013:316), beliefs (Appel & Richter, 2007; Strange & Leung, 1999), behavioural intentions (Massi Lindsey & Ah Yun, 2005; Slater, Rouner & Long, 2006) and attitudes (Diekman, McDonald & Gardner, 2000; Lee & Leets, 200) in audiences on the *topic* of the narrative through the use of narrative tools. Tools such as satire, extrapolation, metaphor and exaggeration (Zwarun & Hall, 2012:330) bolster this altering of perspectives; this can also be enhanced by means of narrative structures like action, a dramatic turn of events, suspense, surprise and curiosity<sup>14</sup> (Brewer & Lichtenstein, 1982; Oatley, 1993:55; Slater & Rouner, 2002:7). In addition, Raney (2002) states that the enjoyment of a narrative is influenced by the empathetic or affective identification with the story's characters as well as the cognitive evaluation of their actions and the thematic message of the narrative.

The state of increased affective investment and reduced cognitive resistance allows the narrative message to be rather elusive and, in turn, more persuasive (Slater & Rouner, 2002:174; Mazzocco, Green, Sasota & Jones, 2010:361). Murphy, Frank, Chatterjee and Baezconde-Garbanati (2013:118) state that the benefit of evoking social and emotional stimulation also adds to the affective influence of a narrative,

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12 Counterarguing can be described through the process of elaboration, which emerge from the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986) or the Extended Elaboration Likelihood Model (Slater & Rouner, 2002). Elaboration entails that an audience will weigh and access information based on personal knowledge and counterarguing is when the assessment holds negative results (Green & Brock, 2000).

13 Studies have also revealed that this impact also holds true to topics concerning social issues (Slater, Rouner & Long, 2006) and health (Morgan, Movius & Cody, 2009; Moyer-Guse & Nabi, 2010).

14 Audience members who measure high in the sensation-seeking personality trait are more receptive to these narrative structures (Everett & Palmgreen, 1995).

and Slater and Rouner (2002:179) explain this by referring to the fact humans are “... social information processors before they are processors of facts, figures, and logical arguments”.

As mentioned earlier, when experiencing a narrative, audiences enter a state of *involvement* (or *investment*, see Slater & Rouner, 2002:179), which Moyer-Gusé (2008:409) summarises as requiring one to be immersed and engaged into the narrative and to be similarly retracted from one’s own environment and critical thinking while experiencing various emotional and cognitive responses as the narrative progresses. Slater and Rouner (2002:180) argue that in this state, the audience is “... certainly more likely to endorse beliefs consistent with the information provided in the message.”

Theories that pertain to concepts such as transportation, identification, absorption and narrative engagement explore the cause of this involvement<sup>15</sup> (Slater & Rouner, 2002:181; Green, Brock & Kaufman, 2004:312; Moyer-Gusé 2008:409). Transportation refers to the effectiveness of the *narrative* through *imagery*, *attention* and *emotions* (Green, Brock & Kaufman 2004:312) when processing the narrative that causes the audience to become involved (Green & Brock, 2000:701-2), while identification relates to the loss of one’s own self-awareness to *adopt* a character’s perspective, which includes their thoughts, goals, behaviours and emotions, which then gives rise to empathy and involvement (Cohen, 2001:251; Green, Brock & Kaufman, 2004:318-319). Absorption, in turn, is concerned with the *vicarious experience* of the personality and emotional side of characters that draw the audience into the narrative which then gives rise to involvement (Slater & Rouner, 2002:178). Finally, narrative engagement defines this involvement as multidimensional. The concepts outlined above work together to incite this involvement. The result of this investment, involvement and immersion of the audience into a narrative is seen as integral to *narrative persuasion* (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2008; Green & Brock, 2000, 2002; Slater & Rouner 2002).

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15 There is an additional approach known as entertainment-education that uses these theories to create narrative that involves audiences but also informs them, a rhetorical narrative of sorts (Moyer-Gusé, 2008:408-409)

I find transportation and narrative engagement the most useful concepts to apply in the present study, and therefore the emphasis in the sections that follow is on these terms although my discussion refers to adjacent concepts where relevant.

## **3.2 Transportation**

### **3.2.1 What is transportation?**

The term transportation is commonly used in Green and Brock's (2000, 2002) well-developed, tested and established Transportation Imagery Model<sup>16</sup> (also see West, Huber & Min, 2004; Appel & Richter, 2010:105; Christy & Fox, 2016:284). Green and Brock (2000, 2002) coined the term transportation based on the work of Gerrig (1993); the term originally referred to the experience of entering a narrative world.

Multiple scholars (Gerrig, 1993; Green & Brock, 2000:702; Green & Brock, 2002:324-325; Green, 2004:247; Slater & Rouner, 2002, 8-9; Nell, 2002; Escalas, 2004:38; Green, Brock & Kaufman, 2004:314; Vaughn, Hesse, Petkova & Trudeau, 2009:450-451; Appel & Richter, 2010:103; Kinnebrock & Bilandzic, 2011:2; Zwarun & Hall, 2012:329) argue that transportation as a form of communication and, importantly, as a component of narrative persuasion, is achieved when the narrative and story contents enthrall the audience's cognitive capacity, allowing them to withdraw from their surroundings and from their self-awareness. During this process, critical reasoning may be negated; indeed, Green, Brock and Kaufman (2004:323), Kinnebrock and Bilandzic (2011:3) state that critical thinking may actually hinder narrative processing and enjoyment.

Escalas (2004:45-46) conducted an empirical study on the effects of narrative mental simulation, or processing, on advertisements. They found that when audiences are mentally stimulated through transportation, they experienced less counter-arguing than when there was no narrative content. It was further found that transportation improves attitudes towards advertisements, brand evaluation and positive feelings and that transportation leads to persuasion.

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16 Vaughn, Hesse, Petkova and Trudeau explain that the Transportation Imagery Model is used in Green and Brock's (2000) Transportation scale, which measures "... ease of imagining the events in the story, emotional involvement, attention to the story, feelings of suspense, unawareness of surroundings and vividness of mental imagery" (2009:450).

Escalas (2007:18-30) also conducted an empirical study where self-referencing was used during the narrative mental processing of advertisements. It was found that mental processing causes transportation, and that if there is no transportation, analytical arguing ensues. It was further found that transportation reduces counter-arguing in the context of narrative. Thus, the resultant finding was that self-referencing can be persuasive via the process of transportation and leads to a favourable evaluation of the advertised product.

Green and Brock (2000:701; 2002:319) and Green, Brock and Kaufman (2004:312) summarise the three core components of transportation as imagery, attention and feelings. Green and Brock (2002:329) state that when audiences invest into imagery, they commit perceptual and cognitive resources to manifest it. The authors (2002:321-322) explain that imagery is simulated sensory mental content that is stimulated when there is no external stimuli or sensory input. This stimulation of content takes place during or after exposure to the narrative, and in this process strong imagery<sup>17</sup> can be acknowledged, recollected and elicit a response; however, imagery must have narrative meaning in order to make sense.

Slater and Rouner (2002:9-10) argue that certain elements could have a bearing on the ability of imagery to captivate. These elements range from clear and lasting events which can also be conflict or action-driven, or even the uncertainty of the outcome of these events. The authors also argue that the visualisation (transitivity) of character relations and the growth of these as well as the overall craftsmanship<sup>18</sup> (also see Green & Brock, 2000; Green & Brock, 2002:328; Green, Brock & Kaufman, 2004:323; Mazzocco, Green, Sarasota & Jones, 2010:361), intensity (Appel & Richter, 2010:101) and directness of the narrative will have a meaningful impact on audiences.

Slater and Rouner (2002:9-10) add that a narrative structure and its cohesiveness (as well as its ability to allow audiences to temporarily put aside critical thinking) can be achieved by ensuring that the given information of the narrative is self-sufficient

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17 Green and Brock (2002:326-327) state that there are similarities between transportation and the term experiential mode as conceptualised by Epstein (1990) in the way it correlates with imagery. The experiential mode generates an empathetic holistic approach where emotions are realistically represented through imagery.

18 Green and Brock (2002:328) state that the minimum requirement for high craftsmanship is a sound narrative structure, they use suspense as an example.

and autonomous and that this information is, in fact, sensible and coherent. Green and Brock (2002:319) elaborate that there can be chronological breaks (such as flashbacks) in the *syuzhet*; these will not, however, hinder transportation as long as they are comprehensible. The authors further argue that by using structures of developed and applicable narrative genres, such structures allow the audience to use pre-existing information when making sense of the narrative.

Green, Brock and Kaufman (2004:314) describe the experience of being transported as one that is sought after by audiences. Multiple scholars (Gerrig, 1993; Green & Brock, 2000:702; Green & Brock 2002:319; Slater & Rouner, 2002, 8-9; Escalas, 2004:38; Busselle & Bilandzic, 2008; Vaughn, Hesse, Petkova & Trudeau, 2009:450; Appel & Richter, 2010:102-104; Kinnebrock & Bilandzic, 2011:3-4; Zwarun & Hall, 2012:329) note that audiences become more susceptible to persuasive effects generated by the narrative if the narrative's mental imagery elicits strong responsive emotions. Escalas (2004:38), Kinnebrock and Bilandzic (2011:3-4) argue that this happens when the audience experience themselves as part of the narrative and in the process experience a sense of vividness<sup>19</sup> (i.e. rich narrative details, see Green, Brock & Kaufman, 2004:320). Murphy, Frank, Chatterjee and Baezconde-Garbanati (2013:121) elaborate that emotion is a component of transportation, but is its own distinct construct.

Scholars (Green & Brock, 2000; Green & Brock, 2002:319-325; Green, 2004; Green, Brock & Kaufman, 2004:313; Busselle & Bilandzic, 2008; Murphy *et al.*, 2011; Zwarun & Hall, 2012:329) argue that transportation affects audiences' attitudes, knowledge and behaviour, even when the audience does not necessarily agree with the message (Green & Brock, 2002). Transportation also allows identification with those who have similar attitudes towards the intended message, and it can facilitate story-consistent beliefs<sup>20</sup>. Mazzocco, Green, Sasota and Jones (2010:361) argue that it is also the emotional investment with the narrative and the characters that causes this effect.

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19 Nisbett and Ross (1980:45) define vividness as information that promotes provoking imagery, is emotionally compelling, and creates sensory- and spatio-temporal perspective. Green and Brock (2002:327) suggest that through vivid imagery, even people with a low imagery propensity can experience transportation.

20 Petty and Cacioppo (1986:87) explain through the elaboration-likelihood model that messages which are more relevant to the audience can hold a greater meaning and so, they can have a greater impact on their reception and thus, influence persuasion.

Mazzocco *et al.* (2010:363-366) conducted empirical research and found that transportation mediates attitude change based on emotional responses, rather than rational responses. Emotional responses are significantly correlated with empathy, and audiences who are more susceptible to transportation reported more empathetic emotional responses and positive attitudes, which suggests that transportation is persuasive. It was also found that a narrative that is well written, suspenseful and high on emotion can indeed cause transportation, even in those who are less transportable.

Costabile and Terman (2013:319-323) conducted an empirical study on the use of music in films. They found that music in film results in greater levels of transportation and, in turn, led to greater narrative persuasion. They also found that music in films achieved identification with the protagonist and caused audiences to evaluate and favour them. The authors further note that transportation via film music allows for greater immersion and as reactance, it enhances identification.

Slater and Rouner (2002:11) and Green, Brock and Kaufman (2004:313) state that transportation in narratives allows the outcome thereof to have persuasive effects in the short term (Green, Brock & Kaufman, 2004:315), and when done right, also in the long term. Green and Brock (2002:319), Christy and Fox (2016:284) add that transportability can also have a bearing on one's identification with characters. Green, Brock and Kaufman (2004:316-319) argue that transportation encourages the audience to empathise<sup>21</sup>, assume and share the perspective of characters due to a natural need to understand others in their social environment. This can also lead to familiarity and connection when the character resonates well with the audience; the characters can, at the very least, be perceived as real persons. It may be said that transportation is a prerequisite for identification. Due to a state of flow that is experienced, transportation induces audiences to be more receptive to new information.

Flow is a term that originates from Csikszentmihalyi (1990). It can be summarised as a desired experience where one becomes attentionally focused on a rewarding activity that is neither too difficult nor too easy to participate in, and loses sense of

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21 Green, Brock and Kaufman (2004:319) argue that we empathise more with morally good characters and disapprove of those on the opposite spectrum.

time and self-awareness (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990:53). Green and Brock (2002:325-326) find similarities in flow and transportation and argue that the former can help to explain how and why audiences seek out and experience transportation. In relation to flow and transportation, the term absorption as coined by Tellegen (1982) can also be used. Absorption refers to the psychological state of mentally altering oneself to fit in with the experienced activity. With regard to the above, Green and Brock (2002:326) correlate absorption with transportation, for the audience temporally lose their own identity to take on that of a character and experience the narrative events from his or her perspective.

A number of scholars (Escalas, 2004; Green, 2004; Green & Brock, 2000; Wang & Calder, 2006; Mazzocco, Green, Sarasota & Jones, 2010:361; Murphy, Frank, Chatterjee & Baezconde-Garbanati, 2013:121) argue that the more a person is transported, the more likely they are to be persuaded. Green, Brock and Kaufman (2004:314-315) add that the more an audience is transported, the more likely they are to enjoy the narrative; the authors argue that it is not the emotional experience, but rather the transportation itself that facilitates enjoyment. Green and Brock (2002:329) and Costabile and Terman (2013:317) state that transportation may occur whether the narrative is presented as factual or fictional<sup>22</sup>; Green, Brock, Kaufman (2004:312) add that transportation is not limited to textual experiences and can occur in any media format that presents a narrative<sup>23</sup>.

### **3.2.2 Transportation: the need for cognition and the need for affect**

Cacioppo and Petty (1982) and Cacioppo, Petty and Morris (1983) explain that when an individual is presented with information, he or she tends to mentally reason and elaborate on the contents of the message - this is known as the need for cognition.

Green and Brock (2000) speculate that transportation correlates with the need for cognition in the sense that audiences commit cognitive resources into a narrative in

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22 Green and Brock (2002:329) argue that narratives labelled as fiction are able to persuade and transport audiences because the audience's expectations are to be entertained and that a sensible narrative can still be perceived as realistic and in its own spectrum, truthful.

23 Green, Brock and Kaufman (2004:313) stipulate that for some audiences, their mental imagery is more predominant and so, they will be more inclined to be transported via text. In contrast, audiences who have difficulty creating mental imagery will be more transported via visually presented narratives. Turkle (1995) states that this is also applicable to computer media such as video games which encourage *presence*, i.e., the feeling of participation in the narrative (Polichak & Gerrig, 2002).

a way that is different from the need for cognition that applies to rhetorical arguments. What makes transportation plausible as a form of persuasion is that the narrative is not a rhetorical argument, but entertainment, and as previously mentioned, can be felt to be plausible due to a cohesive and sensible structure and compelling imagery. It is this sensible distraction that makes a narrative comprehensive and seem true. Gilbert (1991) purports that only information that is felt to be false, i.e. not part of the narrative cohesion, compels mental reasoning.

Zwarun and Hall (2012:341-353) conducted empirical research with regard to viewing fantastical films online, outside of a laboratory environment, to measure the correlation between the need for cognition and transportation and the effect on story-consistent beliefs. They note that other studies do not find correlations between the two; however, in their research, they found significant correlations. They indicate that distractions are more commonplace outside of laboratory settings and can pose a threat to transportation, and also found that narratives that are designed to utilise transportation may lose their effectiveness due to distractions. Furthermore, the authors found that distracting audiences during online viewing hinders transportation, but those who are higher in the need for cognition experienced more transportation when distracted. Of importance for the present study is that it was found that transportation does play a role in narrative persuasion and that the level of transportation an audience experiences affects their story-consistent beliefs. Finally, the authors indicate that audiences will experience distractions in their natural viewing environments and that from these, levels of transportation will vary; it follows that story-consistent beliefs will not be as effective in such situations as in a laboratory environment.

On the opposite side of the need for cognition is Maio and Esses' (2001) conceptualisation of the need for affect. The authors (2001:585) describe the need for affect as a motivational basis that is applied in order to avoid or approach encounters that induce emotional responses in the self and/or others. Maio and Esses (2001), Appel and Richter (2010:107) and Appel and Malečkar (2012:463) argue that people who have a high need for affect can experience a higher level of transportation and persuasion from narratives that evoke an emotional response. Appel and Richter (2010:106-107) explain that this emotional content contains

affective evaluations, moods, preferences and emotions; they also argue that it is rather due to the need for affect, instead of the need for cognition, that people experience persuasive effects. It is surmisable that the need for affect relies on identification with characters in the narrative that provides emotional content for the audience to resonate with.

Appel and Richter (2010:115-130) found in their empirical research on the need for affect that affect has an influence on transportation, and that those who experience greater levels of need for affect or are inclined to shift their beliefs towards the intended outcome of the narrative for they are more susceptible to transportation. From this, the authors found that the need for affect is related to narrative persuasion from an emotional perspective. They do, however, note that emotional content may only be persuasive if the audience experiences transportation.

Because transportation provides a greater understanding of the cognition and affects of being transported into a narrative world, the following segment, Narrative engagement, takes what is known about the aforementioned and elaborates on how it also engages the audience with the narrative.

### **3.3 Narrative engagement**

#### **3.3.1 What is narrative engagement?**

A conceptually and empirically similar, but broader, concept than transportation is narrative engagement (Appel & Richter, 2010:104-105). Busselle and Bilandzic (2008:261) even state that transportation is, in fact, a compelling descriptor of narrative engagement. Narrative engagement originates from Busselle and Bilandzic (2008; 2009), it is multifaceted and focuses on four key dimensions that embody the experience of a narrative (De Graaf, Hoeken, Sanders & Beentjies, 2012:804). Appel and Richter (2010:104-105) explain these to be *attentional focus*, *emotional engagement*, *narrative presence* and *narrative understanding*. Busselle and Bilandzic (2008:256) acknowledge that the construction of mental models via transportation and the perspective-taking of identification are implemented when experiencing narrative engagement. Hoeken and Fiekkers (2014:86) argue that it is the ability of a story to captivate, fascinate and keep one's mental attention or the

identification with a character and their goals and beliefs that allow a narrative to have persuasive capabilities. In this regard, narrative engagement can persuade audiences.

De Graaf, Hoeken, Sanders and Beentjies (2012:804) explain that *attentional focus* is a dimension similar to that of transportation, and entails that the attention of the audience is focused on experiencing the story. De Graaf, Hoeken, Sanders and Beentjies (2012:804) add *emotional engagement* as a dimension which reads the emotional content and empathy evoked by *both* the narrative and the character(s); they summarise it as a combination of the character-centric focus of identification and the emotional intensity of the narrative through transportation. Busselle and Bilandzic (2009) add that emotional engagement with characters is influenced by their story-consistent attitudes.

Appel and Richter (2010:104-105) explain *narrative understanding* as the extent to which audiences are capable of comprehending the goals and actions of characters and the progression of the narrative events. Busselle and Bilandzic (2008:259) explain the process of entering into a story and assuming a perspective as the *deictic shift*; this can be seen as the *narrative presence*.

Appel and Richter (2010:104-105) elaborate that *attentional focus*, *emotional engagement* and *narrative presence* are experiential states and are comparatively similar to transportation's central aspects. The authors surmise that transportation and narrative engagement both relate to narrative persuasion through story-related attitudes and that both share high similarities in scale, to the point of empirical and conceptual overlap.

Busselle and Bilandzic (2008:255) add that narrative engagement can be experienced in terms such as transportation, absorption and entrancement. The authors (2008:256) argue that an important factor related to engagement is the authenticity of a narrative.

### 3.3.2 Narrative engagement, believability and realism

Busselle and Bilandzic (2008:256) state that believability, or realism, can be found in the similarities between the story world and the real world, also known as *external realism*; and believability further relates to the sensible and reasonable understanding of the narrative, also known as the *narrative realism*. They (2008:268) further argue that audiences tend to report high levels of experiential realism when similarities between the real and the fictional worlds are experienced; Hall (2003) further propounds that if a narrative is well explained, coherent and not contradicting, it will be considered realistic.

The process of believability initially begins positively - Gilbert (1991:111-117) states that it is easier for people to believe something than it is to disbelieve it. Busselle and Bilandzic (2008:265) explain that audiences have the desire to mentally construct the story and accept it and are aware of its fictionality because they want to believe and enjoy it as it would take more mental effort to disbelieve something. Shapiro, Pena-Herborn and Hancock (2006:278) and Busselle and Bilandzic (2008:270) add that audiences do not expect strict realism and that sensible plausibility<sup>24</sup> can satisfy their need for believability. Bradley and Shapiro (2005:312), Busselle and Bilandzic (2008:256) further elaborate that if, however, inconsistencies exist in the external and/or narrative realism, the processing of the narrative will be hindered by negative cognitions, which inhibit investment into, and engagement with the narrative<sup>25 26</sup>. De Graaf, Hoeken, Sanders and Beentjies (2009:390) state that it is easier to disrupt the engagement process than it is to enhance it, even to the extreme of a simple distraction.

Busselle and Bilandzic (2008:256) notes that even when different forms of media have unique attributes, that this theoretical application applies to all narratives, irrespective of the media. Busselle and Bilandzic (2008:267) note that when mental effort is exerted to evaluate the realism of a story, a judgement is made, and effort in

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24      Graesser *et al.* (2002) note that for a narrative to be considered real, it must be coherent and that coherence must be properly explained so.

25      Busselle and Bilandzic (2008:259) explain that this can hinder the processing of transportation and identification.

26      Busselle and Bilandzic (2008:256) and Ryan (2007:26) state that the processing of the narrative must be properly represented through the medium, irrespective of medium choice.

this sense does not have positive connotations. They explain that there are two original types of judgement, namely online and reflective realism judgements. Online reflective judgments occur during the construction of mental models, which will be discussed later; reflective realism judgements occur when the realism of a narrative as a whole is reflected upon. Both online and reflective realism judgements then allow for external and narrative realism judgments to occur. External realism judgments compare the consistency between fictional and real-world matter, and narrative realism judgments compare the events, logic and motivation to gauge if these are sensible and coherent. Realism judgements compare the consistency of the narrative's mental models to the counterpart in the audience's real-world and media experiences, like stereotypes and schemas<sup>27</sup> (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2008:267). Busselle and Bilandzic (2008:268) state that judgments are unlikely to occur if the narrative content reflects a realistic threshold.

As is the case with transportation, narrative engagement also refers to the use of flow and absorption, which as previously discussed, is interlinked. This helps to explain the above-mentioned clause of engagement, that in order to have effect, the audience must be engaged and focused on the activity, but inconsistencies and disruptions can hinder the state of flow (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2008:261).

### **3.3.3 Narrative engagement and mental models**

Busselle and Bilandzic (2008:257) propound that an important part of the engagement process is the creation of mental models. They describe mental models as arising when the audience constructs and conceives the specific narrative and its elements mentally; it is an active procedure in which the audience participates as the story progresses. The authors (2008:261) regard the process of transportation into a narrative as one that allows mental models to be created. These authors (2008:259) also note that the cognitive manifestation of the story world and the characters are intertwined mental models, but can be studied separately for the purpose of understanding their influence. Busselle and Bilandzic (2008:266) further see the status of fictionality as a mental model, which only becomes conscious then prompted to be reflected upon, but nonetheless allows audiences to reason the logic

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Busselle and Bilandzic (2008:269) note that stereotypes and schemas play an important role in the assessment of realism and more so in its absence.

of the story and to understand the type of information they are receiving. The previously mentioned modes of realism also play a role in the conception of mental models since they can influence engagement via the story contents. In short, this occurs when the events and contents of the narrative make sense and are engaging.

Busselle and Bilandzic (2008:257) add that as a mental model conceives the story's progression, it becomes a situation model, which is the process of how the information is assembled, the connection of the events that have passed and the events that are yet to come and how they cohesively provide engagement. Busselle and Bilandzic (2008:257) suggest that the story world and character mental models are inherent to the situation model. Again, the impact of the modes of realism influences the outcome of this model due to their application to the discourse and structure of the narrative. This happens when the sequence of the events makes sense and is engaging.

Busselle and Bilandzic (2008:257-258) note that as the mental model relies on its presented information and the situation model relies on the connection of said information, it can also be influenced by predefined narrative schemas that the audience can then apply to their construction. They add that schemas are independent from the current mental model but can be applied to the process to support its understanding, yet again, the modes of realism, albeit predefined understanding, comes into play in helping further the enjoyment of the engagement<sup>28</sup>. Therefore, pre-existing knowledge of narrative schemas makes the narrative sensible and engaging.

Segal (1995:71) explains that the mental model of the story world is a conceptual spatiotemporal domain. Busselle and Bilandzic (2008:259) explain that the story world model provides information on the period of time, its location and zeitgeist and with it, the logic and rules accustomed to the space, which is applied to the characters of that space. Segal (1995) and Busselle and Bilandzic (2008:259) note that the story world model is assumed to be based on the real world that audiences use to measure the sensibility of events of the world and the characters. Busselle

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28 Busselle and Bilandzic (2008:258) state that schemas can help the audience understand the current narrative's structure and can also provide expectation, which can be satisfied to enforce realism. I elaborate that sensible deviations to the schema provide memorable surprise, the subverting of expectations.

and Bilandzic (2008:259) elaborate that this process of assumption helps to alleviate cognitive load to the point that it is passively reasoned. They explain that the story world model can, however, stray away from real-world expectancies and with it, audiences will try to adjust their understanding. If this deviation were to violate the logic of understanding, it would cause the audience to become active in reasoning.

As the story world has its own mental model, characters also have their own character mental models. Magliano, Zwaan and Graesser (1999), Zwaan, Langson *et al.* (1995) explain that character models contain information about the characters such as their goals, motivations and identities and Rapp *et al.* (2001) elaborate that the audience projects these characteristics onto the characters as the situation model progresses. Busselle and Bilandzic (2008:260) add that these characteristics, be it their connection to their own or with other characters attributes, would remain constant during the progression of the situation model, unless purposefully developed. As is the case with the story world model, Graesser *et al.* (2002) explain that audiences rely on real-world knowledge to assist them in the understanding of these characters, namely in the form of stereotypes. Busselle and Bilandzic (2008:260) explain that the situation model allows characters to participate in the narrative's events and to develop in the process and that audiences will use what they learn, from the situation model and other mental models, and what they know, from their interpretation of real-world knowledge, to understand these characters. If characters sensibly deviate from expectations, they can possibly offer interesting new experiences.

### **3.3.4 Narrative engagement and deictic shifts**

As discussed in terms of transportation and now narrative engagement, Busselle and Bilandzic (2008:261) explain that when the audience becomes *involved* with the narrative, they focus their attention and mental energy to experience, process and construct the narrative. The unique by-product of this process is that they lose their sense of self and environmental awareness and, additionally, enter the story world, which is different from normal absorption, which can only engage the former. This combination of the loss of self and the entering of the story world is known as the deictic shift theory (Duchan, Bruder & Hewitt, 1995). Busselle and Bilandzic (2008:262) state that a deictic shift is a required process in order to become involved

in the spatiotemporal and subjective space of the narrative through the characters and their story world. Zubin, Hewitt (1995) and Busselle and Bilandzic (2008:262) note that through the deictic shift, the audience becomes centred in the story via the given perspective, and thus they can experience events directly. Busselle and Bilandzic (2008:261) explain that the use of textual- or visual tools that promote a more personal experience, like that of a first-person perspective, allows for a closer proxy to the deictic centre.

Busselle and Bilandzic (2008:262-263) add that the deictic shift is a phenomenological process which must exist in order for the audience to understand the narrative. They note that the application of transportation and identification are essential to this process. Transportation helps the audience to cognitively construct and understand the mental models through an actual metaphorical transportation, whereas identification with a character allows the audience to have a subjective perspective to phenomenologically experience the events and character qualities from.

By means of the function that the deictic shift provides, Busselle and Bilandzic (2008:264) propound that the audience can experience emotional content during the progression of the situation model, the most evident example being with the characters. Gendler and Kovakovich (2005:247) argue that this is an essential cognitive by-product of narrative sense-making; Moran (1994), Currie (1997) and Gendler and Kovakovich (2005) add that emotions or empathy experienced during the fictional process are similar to those of hypothetical situations, such as in anticipated simulations of events in real life.

### **3.3.5 The narrative engagement process**

Busselle and Bilandzic (2008:271-274) give a detailed explanation of how the narrative engagement process takes place. It begins with the audience constructing the three mental models. The situation model is made and keeps track of the spatio-temporal processes of the character's actions and the unfolding of events. The story world model manifests in the spatio-temporal setting, including its rules and logic. The character model provides the characteristics of the inhabitants of the story world via their identities, goals and traits.

These mental models must be presented in a plausible and sensible manner, even when diverging from real-world knowledge. Audiences apply their real-world- and genre knowledge to help them understand the structures they are creating and to populate the spaces not defined by the narrative. By using predefined genre knowledge, the narrative assists the cognitive processes in the minds of audiences.

In order for the audience to become fully engaged and understand the narrative, they must shift their state of being from themselves and into the narrative, into the deictic shift. It is in this deictic shift that the audience experiences the mental models first-hand from a given perspective. This takes place through transportation and its flow-like construction state, which promotes loss of self-awareness and environment awareness; and also through identification and its ability to allow the audience to take on the perspectives of the characters and their identities.

It is by default that audiences approach the narrative in a positive state; they tacitly understand the implications of fictionality, yet are not hindered by it. Indeed, they want to be accepting of the narrative experience they want to enjoy. This proactive mentality can, however, be violated by inconsistencies and divergences in the mental models, medium and real-world knowledge, which cause hindrances to the narrative experience. These violations in the mental models can be summarised into two categories, namely offences to the external- and narrative realism. External realism offences cause active judgments when there are deviations from understood real-world knowledge inconsistent with the story world logic. Narrative realism offences, in turn, cause active judgments when there are progressive inconsistencies within the mental models of the narrative. The symptoms of these offences inhibit the aforementioned benefits of transportation and identification as it requires a proper deictic shift with the mental models of the narrative. The explanation for this is that the audience expends mental energy to experience the narrative, and if uninterrupted, will have an enjoyable narrative engagement; whereas if mental energy becomes diverted to reasoning and judgement, less effort is spent on engagement, which leads to a less enjoyable experience.

As mentioned in the narrative engagement segment, the use of identification is a prevalent and important component regarding the immersion of the audience with

the narrative, and thus it is imperative to peruse the meanings of identification in the context of narrative.

### 3.4 Identification

#### 3.4.1 What is identification?

Keen (2006:216) explains that identification is not a technique, but rather the consequence of experiencing a narrative and the characterisation of characters.

Multiple scholars (Oatley, 1994:66-69; Oatley, 1999:445-446; Tan, 1994:25; Cohen 2001:247-261; Moyer-Gusé, 2008:410; Tal-Or & Cohen, 2010:404; Igartua, 2010:348-349; De Graaf, Hoeken, Sanders & Beentjes, 2012:804; Hoeken & Fikkers, 2014:86; Frank, Murphy, Chatterjee, Moran & Baezconde-Garbanati, 2015; Van Krieken, Hoeken & Sanders, 2017:1190) define *identification* as a process that occurs when the audience *cognitively* takes on the perspective of a character, by leaving their own identity through *absorption*<sup>29</sup>, and experiencing the events of the narrative from said character's point of view, to become or merge with the character, which is comparative to the deictic shift (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2008:262-264).

The process of identification allows the audience to experience strong positive or negative emotions<sup>30</sup>, which are both enjoyable, through cognitive- and emotional *empathy* with-and-as the character and to *motivationally* take on their intentions, goals, identity and perspective.

Slater and Rouner (2002:178-179) summarises Graesser's (1981) *absorption* as when the audience simply experiences the personality or emotions of a character, whereas with *identification*, the audience also forms a social bond with the character in some way.

Slater and Rouner (2002:180), Frank, Murphy, Chatterjee and Moran and Baezconde-Garbanati (2015:161) state that, similar to identification or transportation, absorption happens when counter-arguing is not present. In other words, from all the theories that suggest a connection between the audience and a character,

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29 Moyer-Gusé (2008:410) states that absorption, which is used in identification, overlaps with transportation.

30 Hoeken and Fikkers (2014:87) indicate that the intensity of the emotions experienced is influenced by the strength of the identification between the audience and the character.

identification is the one that defines a deeper bond between the audience and the character.

Liebes and Kats (1990), Cohen (2001:250-251) explain that empathy drives identification, whereas experiences of liking, similarity, modelling and imitation are not defined by empathy. What this means is that the audience may like a character, be similar to them, model or imitate the character, but it does not mean they necessarily experience any empathy with-and-as the character. Liking, similarity, modelling and imitation can be seen as sympathy, emotions towards-and-for the characters, and the audience is then spectating, not identifying.

There is a clear distinction between spectating and identifying, which would be the perspective from which the story is experienced. Bal (1997:143), De Graaf, Hoeken, Sanders and Beentjes (2012:805) elaborate on perspective as having two components, namely when the audience imagines the events from the perspective of a character, it is known as a reader experience, while the perspective that the narrative portrays is known as the text characteristic. When the text characteristic is portrayed from a character's perspective, and that perspective is experienced by the audience, the character becomes the perspectivising character and assumes a first-person perspective. What we can derive from perspective and identification is that, as the audience identifies with the character, they experience empathy with-and-as the character; in a sense, they become the character, they take on their perspective. With such a closeness between the audience and the character, one would expect this identification process to have an impact on the audience.

### **3.4.2 The impact of identification**

Cohen (2001:259-260) explains that identification can be persuasive because it makes the source of the intended message appealing and allows for multiple perspectives to be experienced. Multiple scholars (Slater & Rouner, 2002; Green, 2006; Mar & Oatley, 2008:182; Green & Donahue, 2009:247; Igartua, 2010:351; De Graaf, Hoeken, Sanders & Beentjes, 2012:804-6; Cho, Shen & Wilson, 2014:837; Hoeken, Kolthoff and Sanders, 2016:293-294; Van Krieken, Hoeken & Sanders, 2017:1190-1192) explain that due to the process of "becoming" the character, the audience comes to understand what the characters feel, experience, believe and act

upon. In addition, this feeling-with is believed to be a cause for change<sup>31</sup> in the audience's own attitudes and beliefs<sup>32</sup>, especially when the identification is strong between the audience and the character (Hoeken & Fikkers, 2014:86; Van Krieken, Hoeken & Sanders, 2017:1191). Various scholars (Slater & Rouner, 2002; Igartua, 2010:349; De Graaf, Hoeken, Sanders & Beentjies, 2012; Hoeken & Fikkers, 2014:86; Cho, Shen & Wilson, 2014:837) argue that identification is a cause of narrative persuasion.

Oatley (1999:446), Igartua (2010:351-352), Hoeken and Fikkers (2014:90) state that audiences are likely to identify more with protagonists and perspectivising characters (De Graaf, Hoeken, Sanders & Beentjies, 2012:805; Hoeken, Kolthoff & Sanders, 2016:294). Hoeken, Kolthoff and Sanders (2016:295-296) state that the first-person perspective, as the deictic centre, is the leading driver for identification because it incentivises the identification process. Andsager *et al.* (2006) and De Graaf *et al.* (2012) add that the opinions and attitudes of characters can also influence identification, to the point that audiences embrace these opinions as their own. Hoeken, Kolthoff and Sanders (2016:294) and Van Krieken, Hoeken and Sanders (2017:1192) propound that even when the opinion and attitudes of the characters differ from those of the audience, identification can still occur.

Slater and Rouner (2002:176-177) and Igartua (2010:347-350) argue that identification can also be influenced by the needs of the audience; in short, the desire to be entertained. If the narrative provides ample interest and quality, the audience will become more invested to experience identification and from it experience enjoyment. Furthermore, the more an audience identifies, the more likely they are to be entertained. In addition, the aforementioned qualities of a narrative can also give rise to narrative persuasion. Vorderer, Steen and Chan (2006:14) expand by propounding that entertainment is a subjective experience of relationships that the audience experiences through identification, and is fuelled by the need for social contact.

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31 Erikson (1968) notes that identification allows audiences to experience a social scenario that they would normally be able to experience and from that experience, and the audience can then adjust their own identities and social attitudes.

32 Van Krieken, Hoeken and Sanders (2017:1192) state that this effect is also present in the visual media, especially film.

Cohen (2001:258-259) and Igartua (2010:351) note that narratives promote higher levels of identification, and in turn narrative persuasion, than their counterparts, namely non-narratives. This is because narratives allow the audience to experience other worlds, through transportation and the extended-elaboration likelihood model, whereas non-narratives determine the audience's role as, in fact, passive audiences or spectators.

Green and Brock's (2000, 2002) transportation-imagery model resonates well with identification. In summary of an earlier discussion, Igartua (2010:351-352) explains that the transportation promotes attentional focus, which increases the investment into the narrative; vivid imagery, which enhances the experience of the narrative; and elicits an emotional response, and which in itself is important for identification to take place. Moyer-Gusé (2008:413) and Igartua (2010:351-352) summarise Slater and Rouner's (2002) extended-elaboration likelihood model as an approach that can be used to improve educational messages through narratives, and their persuasive impact, through the application of transportation and identification. The extended-elaboration likelihood model focuses on overcoming counter-arguing and criticism, and the two aforementioned concepts are used to achieve this result. Igartua (2010:352) summarises that when identification occurs, counter-arguing cannot take place, because identification causes a loss of self-awareness which, in itself, is a component of the issue. In addition, identification promotes involvement by the audience.

Cohen (2001:260) posits that identification allows the audience to experience involvement and empathetic emotions and, from these, enjoyment. This enjoyment causes the audience to be less likely to think critically about the narrative and its intended message<sup>33</sup>.

Igartua (2010:347-370) conducted empirical research on the impact that identification has in feature films of varying genres. The author found that identification with characters was correlated with enjoyment, even when the emotions experienced were negative. Identification also influenced the audience's

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33 Christy and Fox (2016:283-284) note that identification plays an important role in the video game medium, especially in narrative driven video games. Video games allow the audience to not only become, but also to control a character.

attitudes, beliefs and their reflections, thus supporting the notion of identification as being narratively persuasive.

Hoeken, Kolthoff and Sanders (2016:302-308) found in their empirical research that identifying with a character correlates with narrative persuasion, and also that perceived similarities between the audience and the character can have an impact on identification. However, the use of perspective had a stronger effect.

De Graaf, Hoeken, Sanders and Beentjies (2012:810-818) found in their empirical research that audiences identified more with the perspectivising character, to the point that it overrides similarity. This, in turn, caused audiences to also adapt their attitudes to align with those of the perspectivising character, and if audiences already shared attitudes similar to this character, their sense of shared attitudes would be strengthened. It was also established that the greater the amount of exposure to a character, the greater the sense of sharing and identification. Hence, identification can influence narrative persuasion.

### **3.4.3 Influences on identification**

Frank, Murphy, Chatterjee, Moran and Baezconde-Garbanati (2015) note that there are four primary aspects that have an influence on identification, namely similarity, liking, wishful identification and parasocial interaction.

As mentioned earlier, similarity is not the same as identification, but various scholars (Cohen, 2001:258-259; Moyer-Gusé, 2008:410, Murphy, Frank, Chatterjee & Baezconde-Garbanati, 2013:131; Hoeken, Kolthoff & Sanders, 2016:294) explain that similarity can influence identification. Similarity can help to bridge the connection between the audience and characters through physical-, social-, psychological- and spatiotemporal qualities; it is, however, not a prerequisite for identification to take place. Cohen (2006:188) claims that the most important quality required for identification is psychological similarity. Rubin and McHugh (1987) and Cohen (2001:258-259) add that the amount of exposure that a character has in the narrative can also influence identification, because it provides more time for identification to occur between the audience and the character.

Cohen (2001:258-259) and Cho, Shen and Wilson (2014:833-836) note that the perceived realism of a character can also influence similarity, for example, if the character's input is sensible and believable or makes use of stereotypes. Cho, Shen and Wilson (2014:833-834) state that in conjunction with perceived realism, typicality is also a factor. Typicality refers to experiences that are more likely to have been experienced by audiences and hence, can lead to more relatable scenarios. The importance of realism and believability is then applicable to identification (see narrative engagement, Busselle & Bilandzic, 2008, 2009).

Cohen (2001:259) elaborates that another important aspect that can influence identification is the attractiveness of the character, for example, physical- and personality characteristics. These notions are considered when I discuss characterisation (see Character appeal, 4.2.1).

Another influence on identification is Bandura's social cognitive theory (1986, 2002, 2004) which Murphy, Frank, Chatterjee and Baezconde-Garbanati (2013:119-120), Hoeken, Kolthoff and Sanders (2016:293) explain this as the process whereby people are motivated to learn from observation and then model their behaviour accordingly. When a character is perceived as socially relatable, similar, impressionable and most importantly liked, the audience may desire to learn from them. Another element of identification highlighted by social cognitive theory is that the desired behaviour is stronger when demonstrated, and is visually impactful, meaning that showing brings for stronger identification than telling.

Moyer-Gusé (2008:410) explains that in conjunction with social cognitive theory, there is also wishful identification, which is not identification as such but can influence it. Wishful identification takes place when the audience idolises a character and desires to be like them. Moyer-Gusé (2008:411) explains that another experience related to identification is parasocial interaction, which can be described as when the audience experiences an interpersonal pseudo-relationship with the character, and they see the character as a member of their social world. Moyer-Gusé (2008:411) and Hoeken, Kolthoff and Sanders (2016:294) further suggest that, similar to parasocial interaction, the experience of liking a character is also important. Liking has also been referred to as affinity or social attraction and refers to a situation where the audience evaluates the character positively and desires to

bond with said character. Raney (2004) notes that audiences evaluate the morality, goals and actions of characters and when they approve of these, they are more likely to support and like the character.

Moyer-Gusé (2008:411) defines the difference between identification, liking and similarity. Identification takes place when the audience cognitively assumes the perspective of a character, experiences a loss of self-awareness, sharing emotions and experiencing empathy. With similarity, liking and parasocial interaction, the audience still has a sense of self-awareness and makes assessments of the character and their relationship with said character. Wishful identification finds itself between the former and the latter, where the audience has self-awareness while wishfully imagining themselves as the character.

#### **3.4.4 Linguistic identification**

Sklar (2009:564) and Van Krieken, Hoeken and Sanders (2017:1191) state that there are linguistic elements in a narrative that can enhance the process of identification in terms of affect, cognition and perception. Keen (2006:214) adds that these elements also have a bearing on narrative empathy. When the story can use these experiences, the audience may become engaged. When it is felt that the narrative becomes more real than the real world, Van Krieken, Hoeken and Sanders (2017:1191) note that it is crucial for the audience to feel “present” in the narrative. Van Krieken, Hoeken and Sanders (2017:1191) add that experiences such as immersion, transportation, narrative engagement, and absorption can facilitate this process.

Along with the aforementioned influences on identification, the technical linguistic components of a narrative also play a role. The most obvious technique is the use of perspective or point of view. Multiple scholars (Leech & Short, 2007:221; Cohen; 2006:184, Brown, 2015:275-276; Van Krieken, Hoeken & Sanders, 2017:1193) state that if a narrative wishes to achieve identification, it must make use of perspective taking, because this allows the audience to experience the character as the character, even when the character is very different from the audience. Genette (1980) explains the use of first-person perspective as intradiegetic, in other words, when one is experiencing events from the perspective character. The third-person

perspective is extradiegetic, which means that the audience experiences events from a narrator who describes, usually from an omniscient point of view. It is therefore likely that the first-person perspective will elicit a greater sense of identification. Van Krieken, Hoeken and Sanders (2017:1193) explain that the use of “I” over “he, she, they” allows for the deictic centre to be affixed to the speaking character, and therefore “I” and the impersonal pronoun are mentally processed differently. The third-person perspective can still achieve identification, but the first-person perspective is more effective. In short, Van Krieken, Hoeken and Sanders (2017:1201-1202) argue the use of the intradiegetic, or first-person perspective, will result in the most identification due to what the authors call character transparency, which refers to clear and concise understanding. Implicit information, that comes from an intradiegetic perspective, therefore increases transparency, whereas explicit information, that comes from an extradiegetic perspective, decreases transparency.

Van Krieken, Hoeken and Sanders (2017:1194) note that, along with what the audience experiences when taking on the given narrative perspective, all of the narrative components, not just the character, play an important role in enhancing the experience. These include aspects like the story, discourse, structure or simply the situation model and the genre, objects, characters, story world or the mental models. It follows that the linguistic cues of the narrative are multidimensional.

Van Krieken, Hoeken and Sanders (2017:1194-1195) further note that through the process of assuming a perspective, the audience will also take on the physical, locative and the spatial positioning of the character, also known as spatio-temporal identification. Linguistic techniques and descriptions that elaborate on the actions and movements of characters assist with the above-mentioned aspects of spatio-temporal identification. Also, audiences respond faster to things that are in closer proximity to the character, and when a character relates to said object from their viewpoint, in a sense, the audience reacts to the spatio-temporal space of the character and how the characters perceive things in said space (Van Hoek 2007:900). This includes the use of tense, where the use of the present tense being the most optimal and then in order after comes the *plusquamperfectum* and the past tense. Van Krieken, Hoeken and Sanders (2017:1196) state that “... the use of proximal deictics (here, this, now) is likely to result in stronger identification than the

use of distal deictics (there, that, then)...". What all of this signifies is that spatio-temporal identification plays an important role in the process of identification. In short, Van Krieken, Hoeken and Sanders (2017:1198) argue the use of the grammatical subject position, proximal deictic elements and the use of present or *plusquamperfectum* will result in the most spatio-temporal identification.

Van Krieken, Hoeken and Sanders (2017:1196) note that with identification, sensory experiences come into play and are also important to the process. These include verbs that describe what the characters experience and perceive through their senses to allow viewers to feel the same. Both intradiegetic and extradiegetic depiction can elicit these experiences, although the former allows for a more direct connection. In short, Van Krieken, Hoeken and Sanders (2017:1199) argue the use of the verbs that describe perception and sensation will result in the most perceptual identification.

As mentioned earlier, when discussing identification, there is a cognitive connection that takes place between the audience and the viewer. Van Krieken, Hoeken and Sanders (2017:1196-1197) explain that this cognitive state can be defined into two forms, cognitive empathy and cognitive identification. Cognitive empathy can be described as the recognition of another's mindset, and cognitive identification is the actual adoption of said mindset, where the latter forgoes the comparison of self-to-other. In this cognitive state, the audience experiences things like the character's thoughts and intentions. It is then sensible to take into account linguistic elements such as direct thoughts, indirect thoughts and free indirect thoughts, which will allow the audience to experience the cognitive aspects of the character and from it, experience greater levels of identification. As with previous examples, the direct approach offers more intensity to the experience. Of importance is also identification with a character's moral attributes, such as their desires, norms, values, evaluations and goals on themselves, others and the world.

Another factor that plays a role in linguistic identification is emotional resonance with a character. Van Krieken, Hoeken and Sanders (2017:1197-1198) explain that there are two components to an emotional experience, namely affective empathy and emotional identification. Affective empathy takes place when the audience identifies the emotions of another and responds to them, whereas emotional identification

takes place when the audience takes on these emotions as their own when perceiving a character. What makes this experience unique is that it depends on perceptual, cognitive, moral and spatiotemporal descriptions to enhance its effectiveness. Linguistically, this requires the use of verbs, adjectives and metaphors as well as descriptors of the character's emotional state and experience. Van Krieken, Hoeken and Sanders (2017:1200-1201) also indicate that the use of the positive or negative verbs, adverbs and metaphors that describe the emotions and emotional state of the character will result in the greatest level of emotional identification.

Van Krieken, Hoeken and Sanders (2017:1198) indicate the final linguistic impact, which is the description of characters' actions and movements which can trigger similar senses in the audience, as if they experience these actions and movements with their own bodies. As with the above, these require linguistic representation to come into effect. In short, Van Krieken, Hoeken and Sanders (2017:1201) argue the use of the concrete action verbs, also with higher amount of usage, will result in the most embodied identification.

Van Krieken, Hoeken and Sanders (2017:1202-1203) conclude that linguistic identification makes use of other influences on identification, examples are feelings such as similarity and liking, which become encoded through-and-by the application of linguistic techniques. These linguistic identification techniques work in conjunction with one another to allow the process of identification to take place through experiences, emotions and attitudes and can optimise identification.

### **3.4.5 Identification and empathy**

Keen (2006:214) explains that empathy plays a significant role in the process of identification. Cohen (2001) states in her analysis of identification that empathy is in itself a core component of identification.

De Vignemont and Singer (2006:435), and Gallagher (2012:376) purport that empathy occurs when two parties are in an affective state, thus where one's state is similar to another via consciously imagining and caring the other's state while being aware that it is the cause for one's own reactive state. Keen (2006:208-213) clarifies

that empathy can be experienced through any distance of information, be it read, seen or heard of, exposure to another's state validates it as an allowance to experience it. Furthermore, empathy is a unified affective and cognitive component that is required to achieve perspective-taking, to infer relationships to memories and experiences, and to stimulate sensory and emotional responses.

Harrison (2011:256) elaborates that empathy is segmented into two parts, the first being sharing of affect, which is an emotional experience one person has *with* another, where a person experiences the same emotional outcome as another. This process is, however, involuntary. The second is perspective-taking, which broadens the process to include the empathetic experience as another, where identity and emotions are *shared*. This is commonly experienced during identification. It is sensible that when audiences become and merge with characters, to see from their perspective, that they can experience their emotions as well and that this empathetic bond is especially prevalent when the target of the empathy is suffering, and we experience a desire to help. When one is absorbed and/or transported into a narrative, the emotional investment into a character is more important than the similarity to a character.

Keen (2006:214) notes that similarity still has an impact on the experience of empathy, but notes that identification can bridge the differences in similarity for that experience. Therefore, characters do not require complex or realistic characterisation for audiences to experience empathy<sup>34</sup>. Rather, the combination of emotion, event and the identification with characters is necessary. An instance of empathy can spark identification – interestingly, more so when experiencing negative emotions, although there is no guarantee<sup>35</sup> that an emotionally loaded narrative will cause empathy.

We now know that empathy is centralised around the experience of emotions. Multiple scholars (Frijda, 1989; Tan, 1994; Oatley, 2002; Vorderer, Steen and Chan, 2006; Igartua, 2010:350-351) state that emotion is often an enjoyable experience

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34 Keen (2006:214) also notes that some audiences are more empathetic than others, which can signify more empathetic experiences.

35 Keen (2006:214) adds that the *Zeitgeist* of audience generation can have an impact on the empathetic experience of the narrative. A narrative may become relevant or more impactful when change deems it so.

and influences and alters moods in the self. Harrison (2011:257) believes that the experience of narrative empathy is applicable to all forms of narrative, but Keen (2006:214) suggests that fiction has a greater capacity to lessen cautious reasoning, which can improve empathetic feelings.

Ziegler *et al.* (2005:115), Harris (2000:66-70) and Harrison (2011:258) state that this emotional investment is connected to foregrounding important characters and also to developing protagonists. What this means is that it is important to have the central characters attentionally focalised within the narrative, in order to provide clarity and guidance for the audience to invest in the characters. This process provides higher levels of empathetic connections between the audience and the characters. Keen (2006:215-216) elaborates that the use of the intradiegetic, first-person perspective is more effective at stimulating narrative empathy than the extradiegetic, third-person perspective and including the motives of characters to engage audiences to experience empathy with them.

Harrison (2011:256) notes that there should be a distinction between empathy and sympathy, the latter meaning "... pity or compassion for individuals in states of distress." Another notable distinction can be made with personal distress which Keen (2006:208) describes as when a person responds to another's emotional state with aversion and apprehension, which leads to avoidance with regard to the self. As mentioned earlier, the empathetic outcome comes from a desire to help others in distress or suffering; Harrison (2011:256) explains that this desire does not need to be motivated by emotional responsibility, but can also stem from moral responsibility. Gallagher (2012:358) adds that we use empathy as our standard method to understand others - this is also known as social cognition. Harrison (2011:257) refers to the use of a spatio-temporal and emotional deictic centre coupled with the acknowledgement of social group and the desire to help as a synecdochial model of interpretation, which stirs the empathetic response. In sum, narrative empathy is more subjective and less direct in influencing attitudes, behaviour and beliefs, but can indeed be a cause for change in these attributes (Keen, 2006:208).

### 3.5 Additional narrative persuasion elements

Multiple scholars (Appel & Richter, 2010:102; Appel & Malečkar, 2012:460; De Graaf, Hoeken, Sanders & Beentjies, 2012:802-803; Zwarun & Hall, 2012:327-328) indicate that various fields have explored the concept of a narrative to discover its true persuasive meaning and how it influences and changes the perceptions, beliefs and attitudes of audiences<sup>36</sup>. Appel and Richter (2007), Appel and Malečkar (2012:460) note that these persuasive effects can have a lasting influence.

As explored in the previous segments, the concepts which I find most relevant to my study are transportation, narrative engagement and identification. Various scholars (Appel & Malečkar, 2012:460; De Graaf, Hoeken, Sanders & Beentjies, 2009:386-387; Moyer-Gusé & Nabi, 2010:27-29; Kinnebrock & Bilandzic, 2011:3-4; De Graaf, Hoeken, Sanders & Beentjies, 2012:803; Cho, Shen & Wilson, 2014:829) acknowledge transportation as a possible concept to explain narrative persuasion. In addition, scholars (Green & Brock, 2000, 2002; Slater & Rouner, 2002; De Graaf, Hoeken, Sanders & Beentjies, 2009:386-387; Kinnebrock & Bilandzic 2011:3-4) purport that this allows the audience to personally experience the narrative, its world and characters with close intensity and vividness through attention, emotion and imagery and in so doing, makes it a formidable occupant of their mental focus, which leads to less counter-arguing and hence, more persuasion. The simultaneous efficiency of intensity and uncritical thinking leads to results; if one is lacking in cohesion, the effect will diminish. Ultimately, the more the audience is transported into the narrative, the more likely they are to experience narrative persuasion. De Graaf, Hoeken, Sanders and Beentjies (2009:386-387) note that transportation and vivid imagery can make the events experienced feel real. Appel and Malečkar (2012:462-465) add that transportation makes use of established knowledge to support this effect and that audiences who have a higher need for affect are more susceptible to persuasion. Green, Brock and Kaufman (2004:316) and Moyer-Gusé and Nabi (2010:29) inform us that transportation does not require a character's perspective to come into effect; it is an optional step in the process and is significantly different from identification.

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36 Christy (2016:285-286) argues that traditional narrative concepts like transportation and identification.

Multiple scholars (Moyer-Gusé & Nabi, 2010:27; De Graaf, Hoeken, Sanders & Beentjies, 2012:803; Hoeken, Kolthoff & Sanders. 2016:292) note that identification also has a bearing on narrative persuasion. De Graaf, Hoeken, Sanders and Beentjies (2012:803) add that identification can have an impact on story-consistent attitudes. De Graaf, Hoeken, Sanders and Beentjies (2009:386-387) explain that through the process of identification, the audience aligns their beliefs with those of the character and that by experiencing these positive connotations, the audience becomes more agreeable and less likely to counter-argue with what the character represents.

Moyer-Gusé and Nabi (2010:28-30) explain that identification is a process of cognition and emotion whereby the audience adopts the identity of a character as their own, losing self-awareness, and from it they also adopt the perspective, goals and emotions of the character. They note that identification can help to overcome resistance to persuasive effects by allowing audiences to become emotionally involved and invested with the narrative's characters. Alongside identification, perceived similarity and parasocial interaction also play a role in the process. Similarity and parasocial interaction differ from identification in the sense that the audience still retains a sense of self-awareness, the former makes use of familiarity in shared characteristics between the audience and the character to enhance relatability, whereas the latter takes place when the audience experiences a bond or liking towards a character, sometimes similar, so much so that they feel them to be connected, or face-to-face, despite medium barriers.

A number of scholars (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2008, 2009; De Graaf, Hoeken, Sanders & Beentjies, 2009:389; De Graaf, Hoeken, Sanders & Beentjies, 2012:803; Cho, Shen & Wilson, 2014:829) also elaborate on the influence of narrative engagement on narrative persuasion. They acknowledge the multidimensionality of experiencing a narrative, like attentional focus, emotional engagement, narrative presence and narrative understanding; and also note that these can help to discern the impact of story-consistent attitudes.

Cho, Shen and Wilson (2014:829) add that narrative engagement relates to the use of perceived realism. Hall (2003), Cho, Shen and Wilson (2014:829-832) explain that there are shared fields of importance that stem from perceived realism that affect

narrative persuasion. Perceived realism is explained as when the audience evaluates the narrative in comparison to the real world and finds it relatable. There are three fields of importance that apply to the audience and their relation towards the narrative. The first field is the *plausibility* of the narrative's realism which evaluates the possibility that events could also happen in the real world. In relation to plausibility, the second field is the degree of *typicality*, which refers to how audiences can relate events of the narrative to their own real-world experiences; things that are plausible in the narrative but are not typical to the audience could provide lesser relations with regard to persuasion. The third field applies to the *factuality* of the narrative world, where components are, in fact, seen as derived from the real world, which the audience can assess if something is fiction or not.

There are two fields of influence that are applicable to the narrative structure. The first narrative-focused field concerns the *consistency* of the narrative, which focuses on the sensible, reasonable and coherent flow of narrative elements. The second is the *perceptual* quality of the narrative; this refers to the actual quality of the medium<sup>37</sup> in its manifested representation and how it accurately depicts the relation from the narrative- to the real world. Cho, Shen and Wilson (2014:833) argue that these fields can evoke identification, message evaluation and emotional involvement, which in sum means that perceived realism can influence narrative persuasion.

Cho, Shen and Wilson (2014:834-835) further argue that narrative involvement, especially in terms of emotional involvement, can be enhanced through perceived realism. They note that fictional narratives elicit stronger emotional involvement and argue that plausibility, typicality and factuality are not necessary to this specific form of involvement. They do, however, argue that only narrative consistency and perceptual quality are needed to cause emotional involvement.

The extent of narrative persuasion can also entail verbal messages. An example would be what a character says. Shen and Bigsby (2013:20-30) explain that a persuasive message has the intention of changing or enticing the audience's

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37 Costabile and Terman (2013:317) argue that music in itself is a powerful tool for narrative persuasion, for it increases emotional and cognitive engagement and can enhance narrative experience. This can be beneficial for many of the abovementioned concepts, which rely on these forms of engagement.

behaviour or beliefs. They note that there are three components to a message, namely the content of the message, which refers to the topic and its contents; the structure of the message, how it is delivered and in what order; and the style of the message, which refers to the use of language and the choice of words. By providing two-sided messages, the effect of persuasion can increase, since the process of counter-arguing is already being done for the audience. Another component is explicit and implicit conclusions, the former being the stated and the latter being the implied, they argue that the use of explicit conclusions entices more persuasion, for the source seems honest as opposed to appearing to hide something. The cohesiveness, powerful (dominant) language, and social position of the source also plays a role in persuasion.

Hoeken and Fikkers (2014:87-88) note that a core component of narrative persuasion is counter-arguing, or specifically, the lack of it. When the audience experiences narrative involvement, there should be no counter-arguing, even when the persuasive message of the narrative holds weak or negative beliefs, values or attitudes. The authors note that narrative messages are more efficient at eluding counter-arguing and hence, more persuasive, than their counterpart, non-narratives. It follows that narrative engagement is quite efficient at blocking counter-arguing and that reactance is a core component of counter-arguing. Reactance takes place when the audience realises that they are targeted by a persuasive message and in defiance may resist and become guarded.

For a number of reasons, narratives are more efficient at persuading people than non-narratives. Firstly, narratives are better at hiding the intended message, be it through various narrative components, and therefore the message tends to appear indirect. Secondly, the audience's intention for approaching the narrative is to be entertained, they do not expect to be persuaded. Thirdly, the investment of the narrative, be it through the aforementioned concepts, engages the audience and enthralls their mental state, and thus the charm of the narrative causes counter-arguing to be less likely to occur.

Moyer-Gusé and Nabi (2010:30-33) also agree that identification, transportation, similarity and parasocial interaction can help overcome resistance to persuasion. Moyer-Gusé (2008:416-420) warns that, aside from counter-arguing, there are other

factors that can hinder persuasion, such as selective avoidance, inertia, fear, perceived invulnerability and perceived norms. Selective avoidance refers to the audience avoiding or shying away from certain content for whatever reason. Inertia takes place when the audience does not want to change their own attitudes, beliefs or behaviours; they are content with their personal state and do not desire it to be disturbed. However, identification is effective at alleviating inertia because identification facilitates audience experience through a character. Fear entails that the audience may be afraid of certain content, and like selective avoidance, would prefer to keep their distance from experiencing it. If, however, an audience experience an event through a character, it is not the audience being threatened by the event but rather the character, and thus the audience can feel safe<sup>38</sup> and even enjoy the experience. Horror narratives can be used as an example. Perceived invulnerability is the audience perceiving themselves to be immune and ignorant to the dangers presented in the message. Similarities between the audience and the character can bypass this effect since the audience can see themselves being threatened by what the character is experiencing, but they may realise that their initial expectancy of being immune is falsified. Finally, perceived norms refer to the expectation that the audience has where they believe everybody in their social group does something, and therefore it is acceptable for them to do it. Parasocial interaction counters perceived norms; when the audience perceives a character as part of their social group and realises that not everybody in their social group commits the aforementioned norms, which leads to a break in their expected perceived norms. In sum, it is no longer a case of 'everybody else is doing it' because the related character breaks the norm of 'everybody' that is important to the audience.

### **3.6 En résumé**

In this chapter, I first discussed the technicality of what a narrative is, from its role as a form of communication, as a mental simulation and as a model that conveys information from one source to another and how said information is consumed and processed. I then explained the many intricacies of a narrative structure and how the

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38 Green, Brock and Kaufman (2004:318) argue that transportation allows the audience to embody the identity of any character and their persona without any cost or consequences to the true self, thus allowing safety in experiences one would normally abstain from.

application of these elements contributes to how the narrative information is delivered. I then also explained that when a narrative is experienced, audiences may find themselves immersed or aptly consumed by the narrative, which could then lead to persuasive outcomes.

Relevant issues pertaining to immersion followed - from the visual impact of vivid imagery, the cognitive focus and affective state of transportation. The latter suggests that the narrative itself, and its quality, is what causes change, or persuasion within the viewer. To elaborate on transportation, I then discussed narrative engagement, which unified various theoretical approaches to the immersion of narrative, from transportation through to identification, and it was demonstrated that in order for the audience to become engaged with a narrative, their mental models must be kept intact, which is achieved through a realistic consistency within the presentation of the narrative and its story world. Now: if a vivid narrative is able to transport the audience, and if consistency that is achieved by means of narrative realism causes engagement, then identification with the consistent characters in the narrative can also support the cause for narrative persuasion. With that being said, I delved into the qualities of identification and how it is a unique form of immersion that can only be achieved between the audience and the character(s). From this, it followed that the core component to experience empathy entailed sharing and feeling from a character's perspective.

Finally, it was concluded how in conjunction with one another, transportation, narrative engagement and identification all provide ample guidelines of ways to achieve narrative persuasion, which is in itself the ability to alter an aspect of the audience to be more in favour of the intended message of the narrative. In sum, as a narrative conveys information, indeed a message, to the audience, it has the potential to persuade its consumer to be more in favour of the intended message. It follows that a narrative requires an entity to deliver said message optimally, and as with most stories, that entity is a character or characters, which is the topic of the following chapter.

## CHAPTER 4: CREATING CHARACTERS

### 4.1 Character development

The previous chapter dealt with various salient aspects pertaining to achieving narrative persuasion, and narrative identification and narrative empathy emerged as useful concepts together with adjacent terms that pertain to persuasion. The present chapter explores character as a central element of narrative with a view to develop the necessary theoretical tools for application in a practical context. The chapter begins with a brief explanation of the characterisation process, which can be summarised into the internal- and external qualities that make up a character. The former I refer to as character development and the latter character design. I will begin by explaining the core component of my characterisation process, Schwartz's Value Theory, which encapsulates the entirety of my character development process and also informs my character design process. In the segment of values, I explain what a value is, how it is a universally identified attribute, what types of values there are and in what domains they reside and what said domains stand for. After I am done with my character development segment, I proceed to the character design segment, which pertains to three supplemental theories that will inform my design around my development. These are: character appeal, which describes how the application of design rules inform the design of characters with the intent of creating appealing characters; cuteness, which is an informed design approach which utilises intrinsic caring nature of humans for Neotenous appeal; and then the Uncanny Valley, which informs us of the dangers of human expectancies of things that appear human and the appeal of stylised design, especially within the 3D environment.

Once I have completed the character design segment, I will combine my findings and explain how my theory guided my practice, and I will explain how I created my characters, in short, my characterisation process, by referring to the theory within the character chapter as well as the narrative chapter.

In *The living handbook of narratology*[1], it is noted that 'character' is mostly used as a literary term, but Ryan (2012) expands on this notion and defines characters as created (in and by *various* media formats) as participants in story worlds in contrast to people in the real world. Worth (1981:162-84) explains that stories are about

characters in dynamic story worlds. Furthermore, narration relies on its medium to provide attributes and, with it, existence to characters. Theoretical approaches to character rely on real-world knowledge to provide guidelines and purpose to characters that exist in the story worlds (Jannidis, 2012:2). Once a character has been identified in a story world, people (real-world) apply a framework of intrinsic qualities (such as intentions, wishes and beliefs) and extrinsic qualities (what is perceived) to the character (Jannidis, 2012:15). The ascription of information to a character is used to provide them with properties (directly or indirectly) that can be psychological, social and/or locative in nature; this process is known as characterisation (Jannidis, 2012:22; Scherer, 1977:156-57; Chatman, 1978:96-145).

Characterisation also can be provided in the medium - either directly, through communicative cues, or indirectly, with reference to the character's environment and its effect on a character (Margolin, 1983:843-71). Story worlds and characters are constructed during the process of narrative communication (where the narrative is perceived and understood by a real-world person), and thus story worlds and characters contribute to this communication process (Jannidis, 2012:4). This process of communication affects what people (real-world) assume to be relevant and affects their scope of validity of interpretations (Sperber & Wilson, 1995). I intend to use the Value System theory as my basis for the characterization and implementation of attributes for my characters.

As mentioned above, the process of characterisation applies intrinsic and extrinsic qualities onto an entity known as a character. These qualities are informed by real-world knowledge to assist in the creation process and understanding of the character. What we can divulge from this is that the extrinsic qualities are concerned with the physicality of the character. This applies to their appearance and how they act in the narrative. Intrinsic qualities are concerned with the mentality of the character, such as their demeanour and reasoning for their actions. For the creator, this extends to how they design (extrinsic) and develop (intrinsic) the character. When designing a character, the creator has many components to take into consideration; like shape design, colour, silhouette, stylisation or realism, body language, clothing and apparel, their physicality, and how they perform actions are some of the examples. When developing a character, the creator, therefore, has to

conceptualise the depth of the character, their goals and motivations, their personality, disposition, psychology and sociology, and how they fit into the story world.

A creator can ultimately take all elements of design into consideration when designing a character's extrinsic qualities. I do, however, purport that the extrinsic qualities need to be informed by the intrinsic qualities of the character and as a whole because both intrinsic and extrinsic qualities need to fit in with the character's purpose of the narrative. What drives this contention are various elements of narrative dealt with in previous sections, including how consistency and realism plays an important role into the investment of the narrative and by extension, the identification with characters. If a character does not fit, or more importantly, causes distractions due to inconsistencies, it would be detrimental to the overall success of the narrative. It is the creator's challenge to create characters that fit and invite engagement.

I find the notion that extrinsic qualities need to be informed by the intrinsic qualities comes from the theory of identification, as discussed previously, similarity between the audience and the character can have bolstering effects for the identification process, but it is ultimately not the primary source of this outcome. What elicits identification the most is the empathetic resonance between the audience and the character, to the point that even a character who is completely dissimilar to the audience can have a persuasive impact. In terms of empathy, it is the understanding and affective feeling with-and-as a character that yields the highest level of identification.

My chosen method of character development stems from Schwartz' Value Theory (1992), which is a universal structure of values that informs the goals and motivations of an entity, and from it affects their beliefs, attitudes, norms and behaviour. What this entails for my character development is that it provides the basis for portraying their intrinsic qualities. This theory also informs the characters' purpose and action within the narrative and provides clear and precise understanding for the audience as to why, what and who the characters. This is because the core elements of this theory, namely values, have universal resonance. I will then design the character's external qualities to fit with their intrinsic qualities. In

the process, I want to optimise the identification process and lessen inconsistencies that could arise from a non-universal characterisation method.

When it comes to the design aspect, I have chosen multiple supplemental approaches to not only make the extrinsic fit the intrinsic but to also emphasise my intrinsic focus. These supplements pertain to *character appeal*, such as shape design, silhouette and body language, which intend to accentuate the intrinsic qualities. I will also rely on *cuteness* and *the Uncanny Valley effect* as a supplement. Cuteness, which is the appeal of youthful design, is intended to create a specific character appeal and to elicit affinitive care from the audience. The uncanny valley effect, which provides insight into the dangers of near-realism, is used to prevent dissociation and to rationalise the stylisation brought by cuteness. In conjunction with these supplements, I intend to create youthful characters that are visually appealing, that elicit nurturing and caring responses with the intent to emphasise optimal investment into the character and to clarify and solidify their internal qualities in order to experience identification through their universal value foundation.

#### **4.1.1 Schwartz's Value System Theory**

##### **4.1.1.1 What is Schwartz's Value System Theory?**

Schwartz (1994:21) summarises values as "... desirable, trans-situational goals, varying in importance, that serve as guiding principles in the life of a person or other social entity." A number of sources (Caprara *et al.*, 2006:2-3; Schwartz & Sagie, 2000:467; Schwartz *et al.*, 2012:2; Schwartz, 1996:122; Knafo *et al.*, 2011:181) paraphrase this similarly.

Schwartz (1994:21) explains that values serve as goals because they have a bearing on the interests of an entity and as such, can motivate action and direction with an accompanied emotional intensity. Values also serve as standards used for evaluating or justifying a course of action. Values can be acquired through an entity's personal experience or by exposure to the values of a dominant group. In various publications, Schwartz (Schwartz 1992:4; Schwartz, 1994:21; Schwartz, 2010:223; Schwartz, 2012:4; Schwartz, 1996:122) explains that values are salient in terms of the motivational goal they express. In that sense, values relate to the three core

requirements of human existence that are, in fact, universal. These requirements entail a biological organism's needs, the necessary requirements of cooperative social interaction, and the well-being of groups and their sustainment. While an individual entity would at least strive towards the fulfilment of their needs, more often than not, these values can be supported via a group entity or be required for the survival of the group. Hence, it is appropriate for an individual to find support through communication with those who are like-minded. Values are thus represented by social constructs that are sought after in particular contexts in order to fulfil individuals' goals.

Schwartz (2012:3) states that values have always been important to numerous fields of study such as anthropology, psychology, sociology and many more. Schwartz's (1992) Value Theory has had a great influence and impact on the study of values, ranging from 200 samples from over 67 countries (Caprara *et al.*, 2006:7). His body of work has to date includes 11 0649 citations on Google Scholar<sup>39</sup>, with his most prominent value related research having 17 479 (Schwartz, 1992), 7677 (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987), 6308 (Schwartz, 1994), 2347 (Schwartz, 2012) and 1554 (Schwartz *et al.*, 2012) citations. His original theory, which consisted of 10 universal human values and their value domains, has held significance for over two decades and has with time seen consistent elaboration, with the inclusion of focus- and anxiety domains, as example. A recent refinement of Schwartz' Value Theory (2012), which elaborates the original 10 values into 19-20 more distinct values, has been presented with the intent of allowing researchers to have a more holistic and precise application of the Value Theory The refined version is merely additive and is there for those who need a complex analysis. Schwartz (2012:12) notes that these values have a 90% minimum distinction, meaning that the value data project correctly in their respective fields, across their empirical cross-cultural studies and the samples (values) who aren't distinguished have always been mixed with their close neighbours. What this means is that Schwartz' Value Theory has sound empirical traction and that values. Ultimately, this theory is strongly supported as the universal foundation of human values. Knafo *et al.* (2011:179) explain that values allow researchers to understand and to empirically analyse entities, groups or individuals, and to understand their

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39 <https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=7gi3pqaAAAAJ&hl=en&oi=ao>

distinct qualities with-and-among others in their respective cultures. Bilsky and Hermann (2016:934-937) add that the Value Theory is a sound basis for cross-cultural research. What one can ascertain from this is that there is significant support and development for Schwartz's Value Theory. The argument of the current section is that this theory can be fruitful to apply to characterisation in the context of character development in the present study.

To understand Schwartz' Value Theory, one first needs to define values. Schwartz explains that "Values are used to characterise cultural groups, societies, and individuals, to trace change over time and to explain the motivational basis of attitudes and behaviour" (2012:3). Schwartz (2010:222) and Schwartz (2012:3) note that in his theory, he explores a basic value structure that is acknowledged in all cultures. These values are not entirely different from one another because they share either compatible or conflicting qualities. This is known as the structure of values, and this structure is reflected in all manners of diverse cultural groups. What is important to note is that these values may all be present to a greater or lesser extent in a person, but each individual or group will evaluate these values differently. This variation in evaluation gives rise to a hierarchy of importance so that what holds weight for one entity may have little worth to another. Schwartz (1992:3) explains the above mentioned as such: the value structure includes the relations between values, whereas a value hierarchy is the relative importance of values to an entity.

Bilsky and Koch (2000:1) propound that Schwartz' (1992) Value Theory is a comprehensively detailed conceptual and empirically proven theory (also see Schwartz, 1994; Schwartz & Sagiv, 1995) that explores the structure of values. Furthermore, the theory entails more than defining values, because it also explores the dynamic relationships between these values, so that it informs a structure of value cohesion as well as possible compatibilities regarding diverse values. Ultimately, the theory holds that values determine a person's motivational drive and reasoning.

#### **4.1.1.2 Value features and universal requirements**

Multiple sources (Schwartz 1992:4; 1994:20; 2010:222-223; 2012:3-4; Lee *et al.*, 2019:167) explain that there are up to seven features that define and comprise each value in the Value Theory. These features denote what can be regarded as a value.

1. Firstly, values manifest as beliefs that directly affect emotion, and this dimension is based on the importance that a value holds for an entity. The proliferation or diminishing of such a value can give rise to positive or negative emotions.
2. Secondly, values promote desirable goals to manifest, which will motivate an entity towards action. The entity will experience a drive to promote and further a particular value and to suppress or oppose a conflicting value.
3. Thirdly, values, unlike norms and attitudes, are consistently residual within an entity. An entity will experience norms and attitudes only during certain situations and actions, whereas values are persistently present in an entity.
4. Fourthly, values define the standards used by an entity and the criteria by means of which they assess things. This process is usually intuitive and applies to all fields of life that the entity experiences, and helps to define what is regarded as good and bad, what is right and wrong, or any other similar polar criterion. Values do, however, become active assessments when the entity must decide on something that conflicts with one of their important values.
5. In the fifth place, entities place values at differing levels of importance, and thus these values exist in a relative hierarchy that makes up the value structure of the entity. This structure also differentiates values from attitudes and norms.
6. In the sixth place, as can be gleaned from the aforementioned, the relative hierarchy of values is indicative of the fact that certain actions can be determined by more than one value and this, in turn, can influence actions taken by the entity. An entity can assess this hierarchy and conclude whether an action will serve to yield more outcome from multiple values, and such an assessment can then influence their behaviour and attitudes.

7. In the seventh place, because these values have an impact on an entity's decisions, the entity may not be actively aware of the influence of these values on behaviour. Entities are, however, likely to become aware of their values when there is a conflict between diverse values which requires an active assessment to conclude justification and course of action.

#### **4.1.1.3 Universal values**

Various sources (Schwartz 1992:5-11; Schwartz, 1994:22; Caprara *et al.*, 2006:7; Schwartz & Sagie, 2008:467-468; Schwartz, 2010:223-224; Schwartz, 2012:5-7; Schwartz *et al.*, 2012:2; Schwartz, 1996:122-123; Bilsky *et al.*, 2016:3) explain that Schwartz has devised ten values that fulfil certain broad and universal dimensions of entities. These values include the general goals associated with each value as well as value items that can be to help define them. Some items are specific (I will refer to them as narrow items), while others are more applicable to a spectrum of values (I will refer to them as broad items).

Schwartz *et al.* (2012) also revised the original Value Theory in order to provide a more refined approach to values. The refined version is structured in a way to respect the original prerequisites. It still classifies the universal requirements, and it respects the structure of said universal values in the circular motivational continuum, which are distinctive and upholds the value outcomes (or domains, which are part of unique structures, as I refer to them as, which will be discussed later), being social- and personal outcomes, self-protection- and growth outcomes, openness to change versus conservation and self-enhancement versus self-transcendence outcomes.

For the present study, I am not conducting any empirical research, but what is important to my study is how these values are applicable to the characterisation process. Therefore, the original Value Theory satisfies my requirements for characterisation. I will also briefly discuss the refined version for it improves the understanding of the original values. In the following paragraphs, I include the revisions via indents and the citations as such are from Schwartz *et al.* (2012).

Self-Direction is the value which aims to fulfil the need for mastery and control and is defined by narrow value items such as freedom, curiosity, independence, creativity

and choosing one's own goals. It also has broad value items such as intelligence, privacy and self-respect. The general goals of one who pursues Self-Direction are to explore, create, freedom of choice and to have independent thought and action. Self-Direction normally originates from universal requirements of coordinated social interaction and the universal biological organismic needs of an individual (Schwartz, 1992:5; Schwartz, 2012:5).

In the revised version, Self-Direction is split into two new distinct values, *Self-Direction-thought* and *Self-Direction-action*. The former's motivational goal segments the entity's freedom to cultivate their own abilities and ideas via their thought; the latter's motivational goal segments the entity's freedom to determine their own course of actions (Schwartz *et al.*, 2012).

Stimulation is the value which aims to fulfil the need to proactively and harmoniously seek stimulation and variety, it is defined by narrow value items such as being daring and having an exciting and varied life. The general goals of one who pursues Stimulation are to experience novelty, excitement and to pursue challenges in life. Stimulation normally originates from the universal biological organismic needs of an individual (Schwartz, 1992:7; Schwartz, 2012:5).

Hedonism is the value which derives pleasure and satisfaction from fulfilling needs. It is defined by narrow value items such as self-indulgence, experiencing pleasure and enjoying life. The general goals of one who pursues Hedonism are to experience sensuous gratification and gratification. Hedonism normally originates from the universal biological organismic needs of an individual (Schwartz, 1992:8; Schwartz, 2012:5).

Achievement is the value that relies on competence, via group or individual, to competently perform goals, complete objectives and to acquire resources for the survival of the entity. The narrow value items of Achievement include being capable, ambitions, influential and successful. The general value items include self-respect, intelligence and social recognition. The general goals of one who pursues Achievement focuses on being successful via social standards and in turn, achieving competence. Achievement normally originates from universal requirements of

coordinated social interaction, the survival and functioning of groups (Schwartz, 1992:8; Schwartz, 2012:5).

Power is the value which aims to establish social status within a group, which is prominent in social foundations and culture and on an individual level, this value asserts the need for control and dominance. The narrow value items of Power include acquiring and maintaining wealth, social power and authority. The broad value items are concerned with social recognition and to preserve their public image. The general goals of one who pursues Power desire to establish dominance and maintain control over resources and power, as well as to be prestigious and have social status. Power normally originates from universal requirements of coordinated social interaction, the survival and functioning of groups (Schwartz, 1992:8; Schwartz, 2012:5).

In the revised version, Power is split into two new distinct values, *Power-dominance* and *Power-resources*, The former's motivational goal segments the drive to gain power via asserting control over people; the latter's motivational goal segments the drive to gain power via asserting control over social- and material resources (Schwartz *et al.*, 2012).

In the revised version, a new addition to the value structure is inserted, namely the *Face* value. It lies between *Power-resources* and *Security-personal*. The motivational goal of Face strives to gain power and security by avoiding humiliation and maintaining an entity's public image. Face is positioned at the border of conservation- and self-enhancement domains, it is also within the personal focus and self-protection domains.

Security is the value in which either the individual or the group is concerned with stability, order and preservation. The narrow value items of Security are concerned with family- and/ or national security, social order, the reciprocation of favours and being clean. The broad value items include a moderate sense of belonging and being healthy. The general goals of one who pursues Security strive for harmony, safety and the stability of society, relationships and the self. Security normally originates from universal requirements of coordinated social interaction, the survival

and functioning of groups. It also concerns the universal biological organismic needs of an individual (Schwartz, 1992:9; 2012:6).

In the revised version, Security is split into two new distinct values, *Security-personal* and *Security-societal*. The former's motivational goal segments the desire to ensure safety in an entity's immediate environment; the latter's motivational goal segments the desire to ensure stability and safety in society (Schwartz *et al.*, 2012).

Conformity is the value where individuals enact self-restraint, through their actions or disposition, in order to assure group interaction and cohesion. The narrow value items of Conformity require individuals to practice self-discipline, politeness, obedience and to honour elders and parents. The broad value items express being responsible and loyal. The general goals of one who pursues Conformity focuses on the restraint of impulses, inclinations, actions in order to prevent harm and dissent in the spectrum of accepted norms and social expectations. Conformity normally originates from universal requirements of coordinated social interaction, the survival and functioning of groups (Schwartz, 1992:9; Schwartz, 2012:6).

In the revised version, Conformity is split into two new distinct values, *Conformity-rules* and *Conformity-interpersonal*. The former's motivational goal segments the notion to comply with laws, formal obligations and rules; the latter's motivational goal segments the notion to not disturb or cause harm to others (Schwartz *et al.*, 2012).

In the revised version, a new addition to the value structure is inserted, namely the *Humility* value. It lies between *Conformity-interpersonal* and *Benevolence-dependability*. The motivational goal of Humility focuses on an entity's ability to recognise their insignificance in the grand scheme of things. Humility is positioned at the border of self-transcendence- and conservation domains as well as the growth- and self-protection domains, it is also within the social focus domain (Schwartz *et al.*, 2012).

Tradition is the value that focuses on a group's established customs, which have become instrumental to their survival, identity and solidarity. These customs manifest

in the form of beliefs, ideas, symbols and practices. It is important to note that tradition is ambiguous with any form of group that develops these customs; it can extend from cultural- to religious meaning. The narrow value items of Tradition are expressed through the practice of devotion, being humble and showing respect to said traditions and the acceptance of one's portion. The broad value can include a moderate and/or spiritual life. The general goals of one who pursues Tradition lean towards a group-centred focus, whereas the ideas and customs of the group are accepted, respected and committed to. Tradition normally originates from universal requirements of the survival and functioning of groups (Schwartz, 1992:10; Schwartz, 2012:6).

Benevolence is the value that also focuses on the group and facilitating its functioning. There is a form of concern and affiliation with those closest to an individual, like primary and/or family groups, it is a sincere form of care. The narrow value items of Benevolence promote being honest, forgiving, responsible, loyal, helpful and developing mature love and/or true friendship. The broad value items can also include a spiritual life, developing a sense of belonging and finding meaning in life. The general goals of one who pursues Benevolence foster care for in-groups and promotes preserving, enhancing and fostering their welfare and well-being. Benevolence normally originates from universal requirements of coordinated social interaction, the survival and functioning of groups. It also concerns the universal biological organismic needs of an individual (Schwartz, 1992:11; Schwartz, 2012:7).

In the revised version, Benevolence is split into two new distinct values, *Benevolence-dependability* and *Benevolence-caring*. The former's motivational goal segments the desire of an entity to be trustworthy and reliable within their ingroup; the latter's motivational goal segments the care of an entity towards the welfare of their ingroup (Schwartz *et al.*, 2012).

Universalism is the value that is also concerned with the well-being of others but applies beyond the scope of in-groups. It is a larger scale of care which becomes active when one experiences or becomes aware of events or concerns outside of their in-group; it is when one becomes aware of issues that require care on a greater scale. These concerns can involve care for the environment and natural resources or societal and out-group issues. The narrow value items of Universalism advocate

social justice, equality, broadmindedness, wisdom, and they desire a world of beauty and peace, such as protecting the environment and finding unity with nature. The broad value items can mean pursuing a spiritual life in order to find inner harmony. The general goals of one who pursues Universalism include appreciation, tolerance, understanding with the intent of protecting the well-being of nature and people. Universalism normally originates from universal requirements of the survival and functioning of groups. Usually, when an entity is exposed to a group that is not their own primary group and from it realise possible intergroup mutualism and when they come to acknowledge the scarcity of natural resources. It also concerns the universal biological organismic needs of an individual (Schwartz, 1992:11-12; 2012:7).

In the revised version, Benevolence is split into four new distinct values, they are *Universalism-concern*, *Universalism-nature*, *Universalism-animals* and *Universalism-tolerance*, *Universalism-animals* is the addition from Lee *et al.* (2019). *Universalism-concern's* motivational goal segments an entity's commitment to justice, equality and the welfare and protection of all people, *Universalism-nature's* motivational goal segments an entity's desire to preserve the natural environment, *Universalism-animals* motivational goal segments an entity's empathetic concern for the welfare of animals and finally, *Universalism-tolerance's* motivational goal segments an entity's notion to understand and accept others who are different from the self (Schwartz *et al.*, 2012).

Spirituality was considered in an earlier version of Schwartz' (1992:10) Value Theory. It pertained to the need to find the ultimate meaning to life. There was significance to this value in areas where it was applicable; however, it did not fulfil the universal status and was dispersed divided among the aforementioned ten values, especially in value items like a spiritual life, inner harmony and meaning was used in its definition. It may not be a universal value, but it still holds significance in other values (Schwartz, 1992:10; 2012:8).

#### 4.1.1.4 Value structure domains

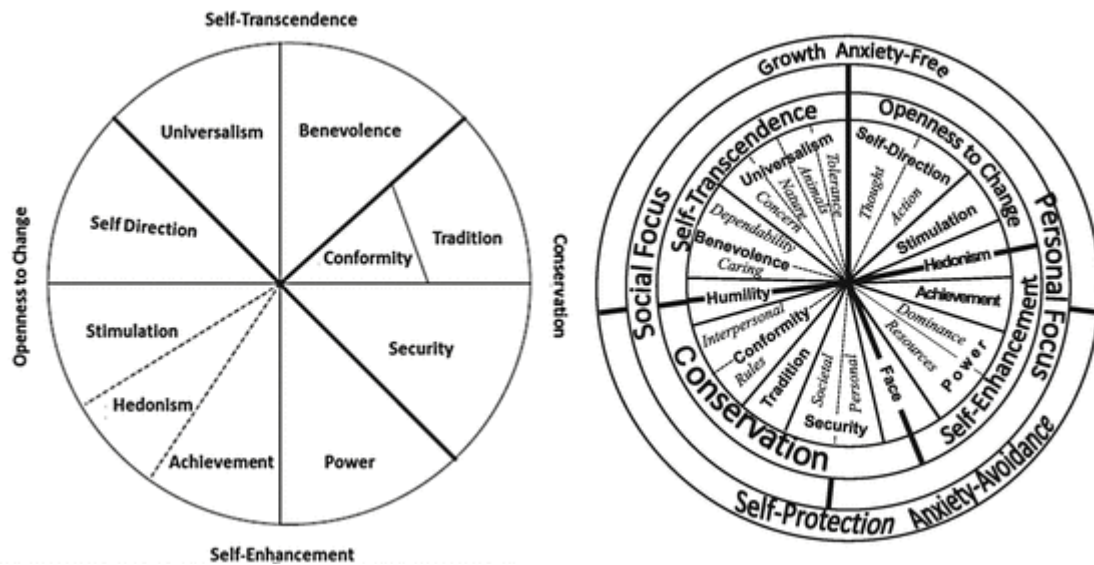


Figure 3: The left circular structure represents the original value structure (Schwartz, 2012), whereas the right circular structure represents the revised version (Schwartz et al., 2012) with the addition of Universalism-animals (Lee et al., 2019). The figure originates from “Putting the Pieces Together: Culture and the Person” by Wong and Lee (2017).

As noted earlier, multiple sources (Schwartz 1992:4; Schwartz, 1994:23; Schwartz & Sagie, 2008:467-469; Schwartz, 2010:225; Schwartz, 2012:8; Schwartz, 1996:123; Knafo et al., 2011:181) explain that the basic values exist in relationships with one another and that they are integrated into a dynamic, cohesive structure. As noted when the features of values were explained above, when an entity takes action with the intent of satisfying one or other similar value, their decision can either result in conflict or growth. Consequences of this nature can produce social, psychological and practical effects on the entity. What this signifies is that it is possible to pursue cohesive and neighbouring values, whereas values that are diametrically opposite to each other cannot be simultaneously pursued. An entity, when presented with this polarity, becomes aware of such opposing values and will evaluate and reason their decision-making in light of these, especially when confronted by an unusual situation. When viewing the circular structure in Figure 3., if value items were to be measured, value items that are more absolute, abstract and conflicting would be placed further from the centre, which signifies a stronger contrast, whereas value items that are more similar would appear closer to the centre. Value items can also

appear closer to neighbouring borders, which signifies a more diverse interpretation of pursuit.

The author (Schwartz 1992:14-15; Schwartz, 1994:24-25; Schwartz, 2012:8-9; 1996:123-124) explains that the base values have unique relationships with their neighbouring values, meaning that two neighbouring values can have a shared outcome. These relations are as follows:

1. Power and Achievement both strive to achieve esteem and superiority in a social environment;
2. Achievement and Hedonism are both centred on gratification and satisfaction of the self;
3. Hedonism and Stimulation both strive towards experiencing pleasant stimuli and arousal;
4. Stimulation and Self-direction are both dedicated to mastery and novelty;
5. Self-direction and Universalism both make use of independent decision making and experiencing diversity;
6. Universalism and Benevolence strive to become selfless and to also improve others;
7. Benevolence and Tradition focus greatly on the entity's in-group;
8. Benevolence and Conformity encourage standard behaviour for the betterment of close relationships;
9. Conformity and Tradition require the self to submit to the expectations of a social environment;
10. Tradition and Security both strive to uphold and maintain social arrangements that provides survival assurance;
11. Conformity and Security focus on maintaining order and promotes harmonious relations;
12. Security and Power aim to be victorious over or to avoid possible threats by establishing dominance over resources and relationships.

Multiple authors (Schwartz, 1994:25; Bilsky & Koch, 2000:2; Caprara *et al.*, 2006:7-8; Schwartz & Sagie, 2008:469; Schwartz, 2012:8; 1996:124) explain that the basic values form part of a greater domain which represents a communal representation of the included values. These domains simplify the conflicts in polarity into a more

understandable structure. These four domains are *openness to change* which is opposite to *conservation*, and *self-enhancement*, which is the opposite of *self-transcendence*.

In the openness to change domain, the values associated with this domain (Self-Direction, Stimulation and Hedonism, with the latter being shared with the self-enhancement domain) represent the tendency to pursue change and to be independent in one's actions, feelings and thought. In the conservation domain, the values of this domain (Security, Conformity and Tradition, with Conformity and Tradition either grouped alongside one another as their own respective segments or with Conformity closer to the centre and Tradition further from the circle but sharing the same segment with one another) represent the tendency to express self-restraint, preservation, order and resistance to change.

Furthermore, in the self-enhancement domain, the values (Power, Achievement and Hedonism, with the latter being shared with the openness to change domain) represent a drive to establish dominance, success and to pursue self-interest. In the self-transcendence domain, values (Universalism and Benevolence) represent the tendency to care for other entities or subjects' well-being.

Schwartz (2010:227; 2012:13-14) explains that there are two additional structures that are applicable to the universal value structure which follow the similar principles of complementary and conflicting poles. The first additional structure elaborates on two domains which conflict *personal focus* with *social focus*. Values of the personal focus domain (Achievement and Power from self-enhancement; Hedonism, Stimulation and Self-Direction from openness to change) are concerned with self-interest and express characteristics that promote it.

Values of the social focus domain (Tradition, Conformity and Security from conservation; Benevolence and Universalism from self-transcendence. Security and Universalism are centred at the border, meaning they express social and personal focus) are concerned with how one relates to others in a social environment which influences their characteristics.

Schwartz (2010:227-229; 2012:14) explains the second additional structure as comprising the *self-protection* and *growth* domains. Values of the self-protection domain (Achievement and Power from self-enhancement; Security, Conformity and Tradition from conservation) are driven by motivations that are based on anxiety and uncertainty; they are aimed at goals that hope to prevent loss and maintain control, and consist of values that focus on protecting the self against threats.

Values of the growth domain (Hedonism, Stimulation and Self-Direction from openness to change; Universalism and Benevolence from self-transcendence. Achievement borders both domains, social competence can alleviate and control anxiety) are driven by motivations that are anxiety-free, are aimed at goals that emphasise gain; these consist of values that express growth and self-expansion.

Schwartz and Sagie (2008:467) and Schwartz (2012:15-16) note that there is a general universal hierarchy of values; what this hierarchy means is that there is a general popularity of values that have been found across empirical studies. Schwartz (2012:15-16) lists in order from the highest common important value to the less-common as follows: Benevolence, Universalism, Self-Direction, Security, Conformity, Hedonism, Achievement, Tradition, Stimulation and Power. This hierarchy is based on the notion that human nature leans towards group and societal functioning, and thus embracing values that emphasise cooperation, loyalty, commitment, supportive behaviour towards primary groups have more positive connotations. Positive connotations also exist in values that emphasise hard work, dedication, effort, productiveness and problem-solving. The final positive connotation suggests that it is acceptable to fulfil needs and to gratify the self if it does not undermine the goals of the group.

Schwartz and Sagie (2008:466-470) note that societies and cultures formulate a value consensus with the intent of promoting cooperation, social stability and reducing hostility. A value consensus is effectively a specific group's value hierarchy. It attributes varying levels of importance across the spectrum of values. Based on how many entities within the group agree to the importance of a value, the greater the level of consensus will be. When an entity desires to stay within the group, they will adjust their value hierarchy to fit better with that of the group.

#### **4.1.1.5 Value relations with other human characteristics**

Authors (Schwartz *et al.*, 2012:2; Schwartz, 1996:121; Knafo *et al.*, 2011:181) note that research into values has also been motivated by a desire to understand the correlations between values and behaviour, attitudes and backgrounds. Schwartz (2012:16-17) explains that values are distinct from human characteristics like traits, norms, beliefs and attitudes, but are nonetheless related to these elements. Traits are therefore similar to values in the sense that they demonstrate repeated consistency in actions, feelings and thoughts, but the difference between traits and values arises when a person may display traits of a certain value but may not assess any importance for the goals of said value. The same is true for the opposite; a person may not display any traits of a certain value but can attach significant importance to the goals of said value.

Schwartz (2012:16-17) explains that norms are socially expected standards for how a person should behave. Values relate to norms in the sense that an entity will assess these norms and, depending on how said norms correspond or conflict with their values, will determine an entity's readiness to accept and apply these standards to their way of living. Norms that conflict with values will be resisted, and norms that correspond will be accepted.

Beliefs, in turn, are concerned with the certainty of a subject matter being 'true', with more certainty that the subject matter is in fact, 'true', it then leads into more belief in said 'truth', these 'truths' are conceptualised around probable subjective ideas. Values differ from beliefs, because they pertain to goals that are pursued, whereas beliefs are concerned with an assessment of truth.

In this section I have provided a detailed description of Schwartz's (1992, 2012) Value theory, describing what a value is, how it pertains to its universal nature, how it relates to and fits into a circular domain and how these values influence other attributes of a character's attributes, development and motivation. As values are the defining goal that drives and helps a character decide what is important to them and what course of action they may take and even their reasoning as to why they would do so, it is evident that the value structure is a substantial structure for character development. I have with this the essence of the character that I wish to portray, for

my audience to identify with. As it is my intention to portray a successful characterisation process that promotes narrative persuasion, I will need to develop a shell to host the essence of these characters, an extrinsic body that is informed by the intrinsic and to fit the same goal of appealing to the audience.

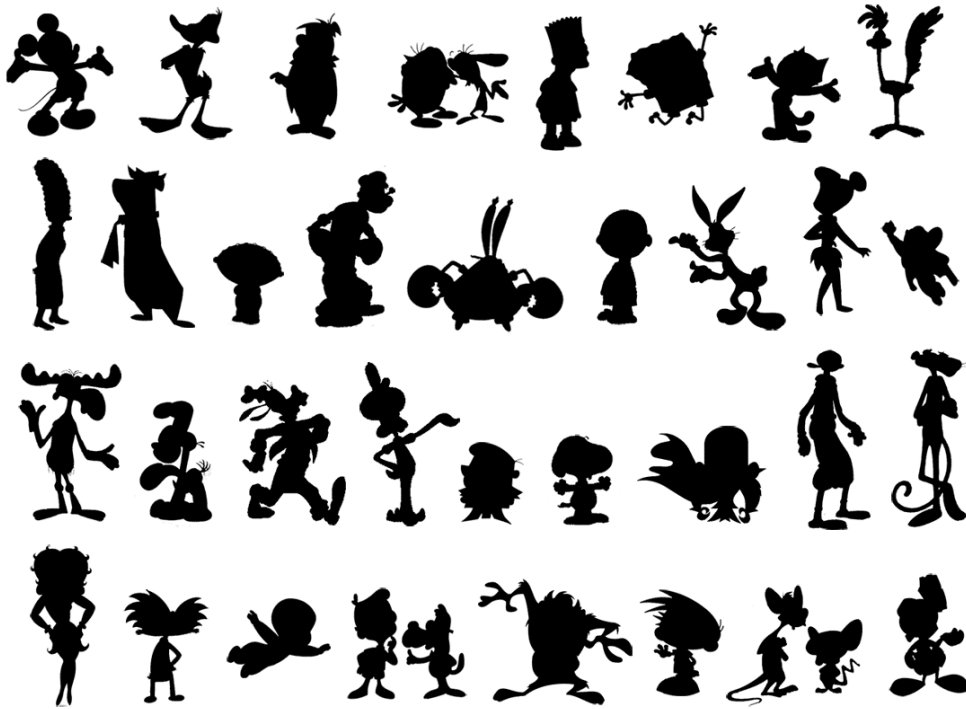
## **4.2 Character design**

### **4.2.1 Character appeal**

#### **4.2.1.1 What is character appeal?**

As I mentioned in the 'Identification' segment (see 3.4.3.), identification is more effective when a character is also visually appealing, and since I intend to have my audience identify with characters, so that they may elicit narrative persuasion, it would only be sensible to motivate my character design to create appealing characters and to also support the driving factor of the characters, the character development.

Ekström (2013:4) reiterates the statement I made in the 'Creating characters' segment (see 4.) that it is crucial to combine the intrinsic and extrinsic qualities of a character, to have them inform one another. Both these sets of qualities are significant to the character as a whole and to the narrative. The author (2013:4) stresses the importance of first understanding who the character is so that this knowledge may inform the design process.



*Figure 4: An example of silhouette design of popular characters.*

Ekström (2013:4-5) explains that the intrinsic qualities of a character can be represented in the external qualities of a character. The shape, silhouette and weight of a character help to distinguish the character and to convey information about their intrinsic qualities. This can also include information about a character. It is the combination of these elements that can convey many non-verbal qualities, for example, body language can serve as expressions of personality (one may think of a slouched versus a dignified posture where a character is slouching may be seen as relaxed, easy-going, insecure or unrefined, whereas a character with a dignified demeanour may be seen as refined, eloquent, prissy or self-centred). It is indeed not always possible to determine how the audience may interpret body language, but it is important to strive for consistency, or at the very least, to deliberately consider the relationship between internal and external qualities. What this means is that whether the extrinsic qualities synergise with, or even contrast with the intrinsic qualities (both directions can yield interesting results), the creator must consciously consider how the intrinsic informs the extrinsic, and from it, deliberately plan out their design.

Ekström (2013:5-7) notes that this consideration goes as far as the literal combination of shapes to create the body and even the overall physical attractiveness of a character; indeed, “Beauty and physical attractiveness are of great practical importance for human beings. Social acceptance, popularity, mate selection, and careers are all affected by an individual’s physical attractiveness” (Cross & Cross, 1971:433).

Walker (2013:4-6) maintain that good character design should consider characters’ appeal, where appeal is a wide category that can apply to different methods of design. Appeal is especially subjective but at its core pertains to anything that captivates the interests of the audience and maintains their attentional focus, from beauty to the grotesque. In this sense, it is important for a creator to consider their character’s appeal from the start and to take cognizance of the fact that the quality of a character’s appeal is likely to be correlated to the amount of thought implemented into their design and cohesiveness.

Outer characteristics often have a bearing on how a character’s inner existence is interpreted. For example, Ekström (2013:5-7) refers to “the halo effect” which associates beauty with goodness. This can also be seen in cuteness, which I will discuss later, which relates this notion to youthful appeal. As for shape design, it is generally held that shapes are used to universally communicate messages about something. When shape design is clearly applied to characters, it can convey said universal message about the character, whether it synergises or conflicts with their intrinsic qualities, again, what is important here is the deliberate consideration to have the external informed by the internal.

The clearest examples of these shapes can be found in the primary shapes. Bancroft (2006:34) explains that squares or blocky shapes can convey stability, dependability or strength. The conjunction of this shape with related intrinsic qualities can result in a multitude of characters, from those who are tough and with strong resolve, to intimidating or even clumsy. Solarski (2012:180) explains that circular shapes convey softness, friendliness or harmlessness. Again, when informed by intrinsic qualities, this could lead to warm, welcoming demeanours to even fragile and meek ones. Bancroft (2006:35) further explains that triangles can portray a form of dynamism, power or even danger or aggression. As with the above, this can

represent a character that either has wits or an edge or perhaps somebody who is antagonistic.

Ultimately, when considering all of the above, it is important to use these shapes to reflect the intrinsic qualities of the characters (or to even juxtapose it, if need be), it is also important to note the relations these shape designs can have with one another, how one character compares to another. The use of character design through shapes must still fit with a matching and consistent style, or if there is a break in style, that it is rationalised as to not cause confusion within the narrative. In summary, shape design plays an important role in creating distinguishable silhouettes which provide clarity, identity and convey internal qualities of the character.

The application of shape design does not imply merely picking a shape and applying it to the character; it is a deliberate consideration of all elements that are related to the character, even within the character itself. For example, Ekström (2013) notes that the use of asymmetry creates interest and contrast. This can be applied to the proportions of a character. When considering proportions, there are a multitude of variations that can produce many unique results, and these can be seen as part of a design style.

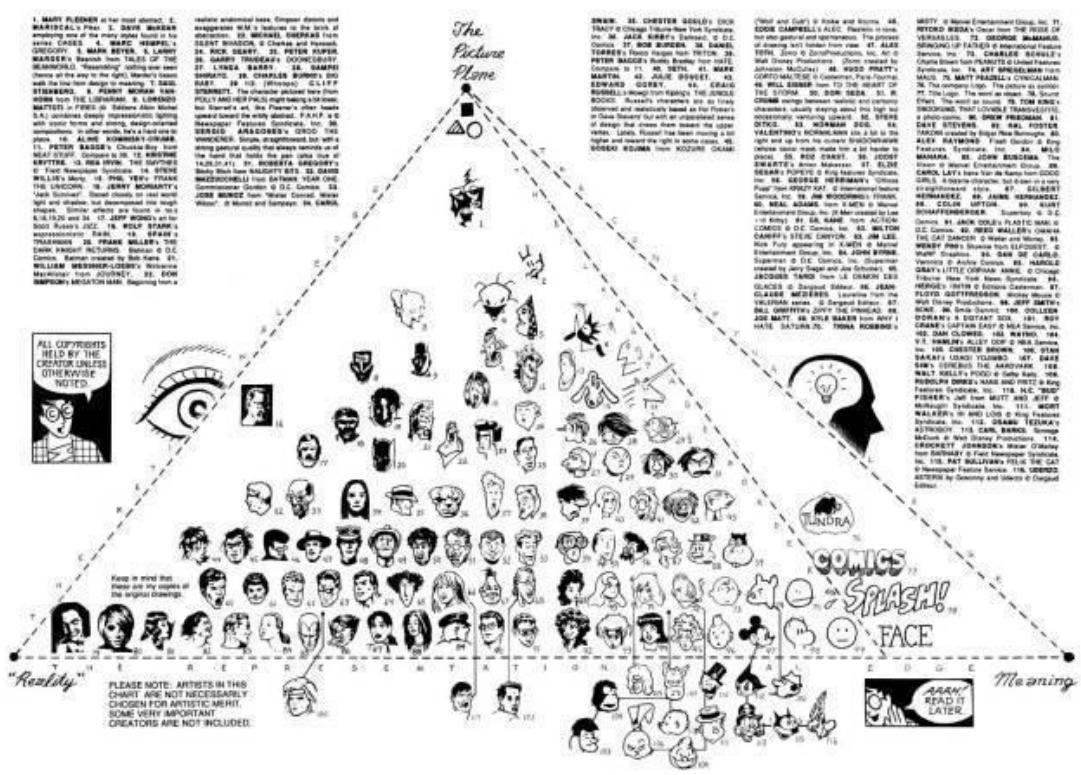


Figure 5: A representation of McCloud's (1993) planes. On the bottom left Reality is depicted, on the bottom right Meaning is depicted and at the top the Picture Plane (abstraction) is depicted. The figure originates from "Understanding Comics" by McCloud (1993).

McCloud (1993) explains that there are three elements that can influence the style of design. The *Meaning* of a design focuses on the idealisation or language of a design; it is the amount of emphasis that a design places on a core component. For example, details that are less important are either removed or reduced to allow what is important to have more prominence, so that one minimizes what is unnecessary and foreground what is important. To increase clarity of meaning would mean to reduce *Abstraction* (or the *Picture Plane*) and *Realism*. When referring to Figure 5, we can see that the imagery closer to Meaning (further away from Reality and Abstraction) portrays more clear and precise characters. This specifically, is applicable to cute design (see 4.2.2.) which relies on reduced but recognisable (leaning towards Meaning) character design. As I will discuss in the segment on *cuteness*, this type of design elicits an intrinsic sense of nurturing and care for the character and is a successful form of appeal. In sum, I am consciously designing my

characters to be cute so that it may appeal more to my audience and in turn, enhance the probabilities of identification.

McCloud (1993) explains that the *Realism* of a design relies on providing all the details indiscriminately so that this style strives to provide an accurate representation of what is real. In order to achieve this, the minimisation of *Meaning* and the *Abstraction (Picture Plane)* of design have to be limited to achieve a more realistic look. In my study, I have intentionally designed characters that appear to be human-like but are not Realistic by design (in sum, they are stylised); the reason for this decision is that it would contradict the appeal of *cuteness*. Another important element to my reasoning is the *Uncanny Valley* theory by Mori (1970) (see 4.2.3), which warns creators that the dangers of designing realistic depictions of humans, things that appear as near-perfect renditions, but ultimately fall short of what is expected to be 'human', can cause an '*uncanny*' feeling within audiences. As it would be obvious, I would not want to distract my audiences with uncomfortable feelings, and above all, it is much easier to purposefully create an appealing stylised look than try to make a perfect replica of a human being; in a sense, I am also aware of my own limitations as a designer, and I have consciously applied this knowledge to have the most optimal outcome for my study.

Finally, McCloud (1993) then proceeds to the *abstraction* of design, which is referred to as the *Picture Plane*. It rejects realism and meaning to allow for interesting, subjectively generated shape design. It comprises reducing instead of minimising and allows for the fundamentals of the design to receive focus. Walker (2013:4) explains that at the foundation of shape design lies simplicity, they note that by utilising good form, one can create recognisable silhouettes and help define characters from one another; they ultimately state that it provides clarity into whom the character is and that too much detail can muddy their definition, as I noted, clarity is important to narrative. Hence, in application to my study, I strive towards the centre of this triadic relationship. I do not want to go to the extremes of *Realism*, *Meaning* and *Abstraction (Picture Plane)*,

I aim to create a design that still focuses on shape design, in order to create appealing silhouettes, to convey the intrinsic qualities of the character through shape

and to formulate a unified style but I do not want to go to the extremes of Abstraction (Picture Plane).

I aim to create a design that utilises the cuteness of my characters so that they appeal to the caring side of my audiences, to assist the aforementioned shape design in capturing the essence of the character's intrinsic qualities by accentuating what is important but I do not want to go to the extremes of Meaning.

I aim to still apply notions of Realism to accomplish human-like characters; a completely stylised, cutesy look would mismatch the proposed severity of the narrative, which as mentioned in the introduction, involves a quandary about four suicidal children. An agree of Realism would help the characters fit into the narrative. I would, however, not go to the extremes of Realism for it would be more likely to impose unpleasant feelings within the audience versus that of a stylised 3D rendition.

Ultimately, I aimed for the centre of the triadic spectrum, a proportional balance of Realism, Abstraction (Picture Plane) and Meaning. By doing so, I am able to utilise the benefits of all three concepts. Having mentioned cuteness and the Uncanny Valley before, I will firstly discuss what cuteness entails and how it is portrayed and utilised. After the cuteness segment, I proceed to the Uncanny Valley.

## **4.2.2 Cuteness**

### **4.2.2.1 What is cuteness?**

A number of scholars (Black, 2008:39; Walker, 2013:10-17; Granot, Alejandro & Russel, 2014:77; Pellitteri, 2018:4) explain that cuteness is a form of appeal which is visually attractive. This approach takes the shape design and qualities of infants and apply these to either human- or anthropomorphic<sup>40</sup> objects or characters. These infant qualities can range from large round eyes and head shape to small features like ears and nose and even pear-like body shapes and smooth surfaces. Together, these can also be summarised as baby schema by Konrad Lorenz (1943) which

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40 Black (2008:39) and Hosany, Prayag, Martin and Lee (2013) explain that anthropomorphism is when one applies human characteristics to an object or animal.

Nittono, Fukushima, Yano and Moriya (2012) and Kuraguchi *et al.* (2015:7) concluded as being synonymous with cuteness. Walker (2013:10-17) notes that these design qualities work in conjunction with one another, through the use of some abstraction, to emphasise shape and minimisation of unnecessary details. In this manner, focal points are created which are complemented by the reduced features, all of which utilise child-like proportions to create an appealing sum total. Therefore, a clean, stylised design fits well with the cute appeal, since it does not try to replicate realistic features, but rather to enhance it. Together with elements highlighted in the character appeal section (see 4.2.1), body language and especially large eyes help to convey story elements like emotion, feeling and thoughts, which I note is imperative to my study for it can help me with my identification process. Gn (2016) states that with regards to a good cute design, one looks for a caricature, instead of a replica, of the human body.

Granot, Alejandro and Russel (2014:7-11) elaborate on the aforementioned by stating that these design principles also apply to the personality of the character or object and that qualities like being energetic, vulnerable, playful, funny, helpless or fragile can display cuteness. This does not mean that the design is in fact, youthful or infantile, but that cute characters can portray these traits. Ngai (2010:949-950) adds that people harbour a desire to protect cute things due to their unthreatening and subordinate nature. Black (2008:39) adds that what is important to applying cuteness is not the application of human characteristics, but the construction of a form that is considered cute.

Granot, Alejandro and Russel (2014:5-11) and Pellitteri (2018:6) elaborate on the above ideas from a socio-marketing perspective – they argue that brands may sometimes deliberately remove qualities from a character or object design to make it appear needy and vulnerable in order to appeal to a desire in the market for cute things, which is, in fact, a growing market. These tactics are used because it was found that consumers may buy or “adopt” products that have a cute appeal. Furthermore, in terms of appearance, the culture of cute originated to a large degree from the Asia-Pacific region, specifically Japan. Cheok (2012:5) and Pellitteri (2018) propound that the Japanese equivalent of cute, known as *Kawaii*, is synonymous

with all of the above in terms of design and is often used in the context of socio-marketing; in sum, cute and Kawaii follow the same principles.

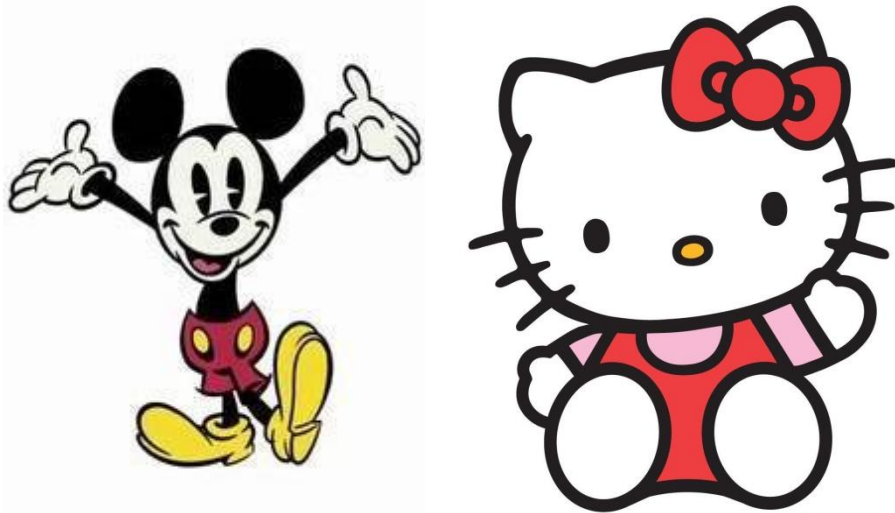


Figure 6 (left to right): Mickey Mouse is a popular and cute character from Western culture, while Hello Kitty, a popular and kawaii character from Japanese culture. Note that Mickey Mouse is copyrighted by The Walt Disney Company and Hello Kitty of Sanrio.

Overall, the reasons for appeal of cuteness can stem from a feeling of superiority of the user over the cute design, or it is an escapist strategy or even a coping mechanism to turn one's back on the harshness of everyday life.

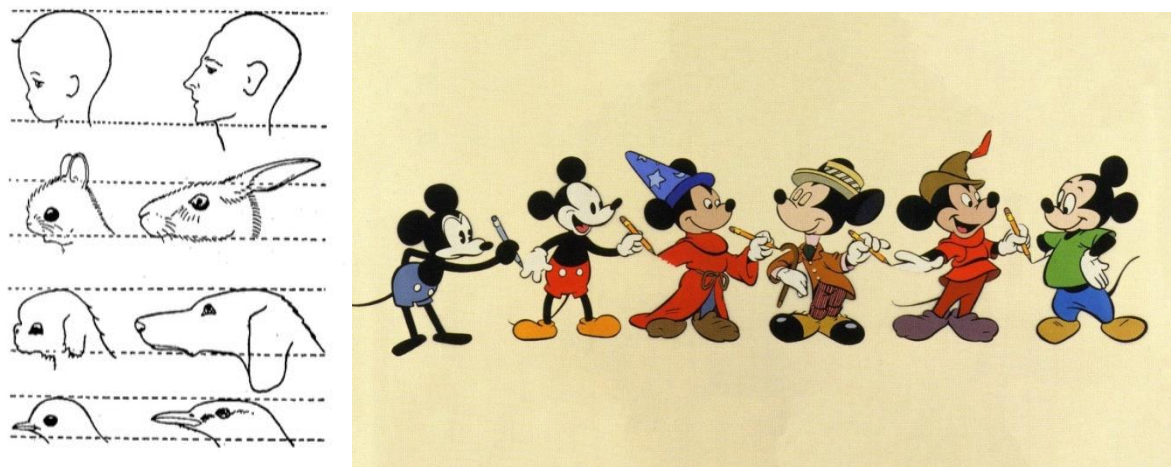


Figure 7: Examples of Neoteny from Gould's (2008) "A Biological Homage to Mickey Mouse".

Cho (2012) notes another relevant concept that relates to the aforementioned notions in the natural and evolutionary fields, notably Neoteny. In brief, Neoteny is the natural method of delaying the development of physiological characteristics so that the organism appears juvenile. Some organisms have evolved to recognise these characteristics, which may elicit natural caring responses and as such help with the survival of the young. What this means to us is that by natural evolution, organisms are developed to experience innate attraction and nurturing responses to what we can refer to as the cute. Similar to all of the previous descriptors of cute, Neoteny also refers to the same physical and personality characteristics that we tend to find appealing. The term cute is also applied to design, be it in products or characters, where the creators either apply or modify designs with the intent of utilising Neotenic responses.

In their empirical study, Cho (2012:65-67) found that neotenic application to products could lead to positive aesthetic judgements and can influence value judgements of participants. However, this appeal has a measure of subjectivity and depends on people's views towards youthfulness, which could resonate positively or negatively, especially if culturally influenced. Notably, from a design perspective, it was found that smaller, rounder, simpler, wider and light-coloured designs were perceived as cuter than their respective counterparts.



*Figure 8: After a massive outrage from fans, Paramount Pictures completely redesigned their rendition of Sonic in the movie Sonic the Hedgehog (2020) to be more aligned with his original, more stylised appeal.*

Cheok (2012:9-11) relates the topic of cute design to the fields of digital design such as game design, and notes that cute characters used in these fields are implemented to create positive relationships between the user and the subject matter. Cuteness is also used to make the information from the perspective of, among others, a narrative, appear more appealing.

Nittono, Fukushima, Yano and Moriya (2012:6-7) corroborate that cuteness is associated with positive feelings in their empirical studies. These authors found that cuteness makes the subject matter appear more approachable and friendly. They also found that viewing cute things increased the attentional focus of participants and elicited carefulness in performing tasks and motor behaviour.

Cheok (2012:12-13) summarised an empirical workshop<sup>41</sup> that sought to understand what people find cute, and notes that from an online questionnaire, people felt sympathy, care and adoration when experiencing cuteness. What triggered these emotions were elements that portrayed innocence, purity, sweetness, cheerfulness, happiness and funniness. The study also found that people, both adults and children, associated cuteness with primary, bright and warmer colours, with muted colours seen as being less cute. Cheok (2012:13-15) explains that this is due to cultural associations with warmth and vibrancy with youthfulness. Furthermore, it is suggested that soft, thin and long textures (like furs) are associated with cuteness; a possible explanation for this is that these textures are relatable with examples from nature, as animal infants tend to have soft fur.

Cheok (2012:16-20) further suggests small, gradual motions in animation when using cuteness; again, the association made was with small animals. With regards to sound, a higher pitch in frequency was associated with cuteness, and this may be related to the neediness of yelps and cries of young animals as if cuter animals tend to emit a higher pitch. Furthermore, smaller objects and characters with childish

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41 The workshop that Cheok (2012) summarised was called "Designing Cute Interactive Media" from the conference "Designing Interactive Systems" which was held in Cape Town, South Africa in 2008.

proportions are correlated the most with cuteness. Cheok (2012:21) also surmised that round shapes are more correlated with cuteness and that sharp ones.

As discussed in this segment, cuteness (the *kawaii* or Neoteny), has had an influence in many fields of design and has proven to be an effective strategy to make appealing characters. It has had a global development and is actively used in marketing; it roots itself in the appeal of Neoteny and invokes an instinctual state of care and nurturing within us. It then serves this study with great purpose and provides guidance for how I would design characters that I want to appeal to my audience. It is important to note, as with the example of *Sonic the Hedgehog* (2020) movie, that when working with 3D models, there is another level of complexity designers must be aware of, namely, the *Uncanny Valley*.

### 4.2.3 The Uncanny Valley

#### 4.2.3.1 What is the Uncanny Valley?

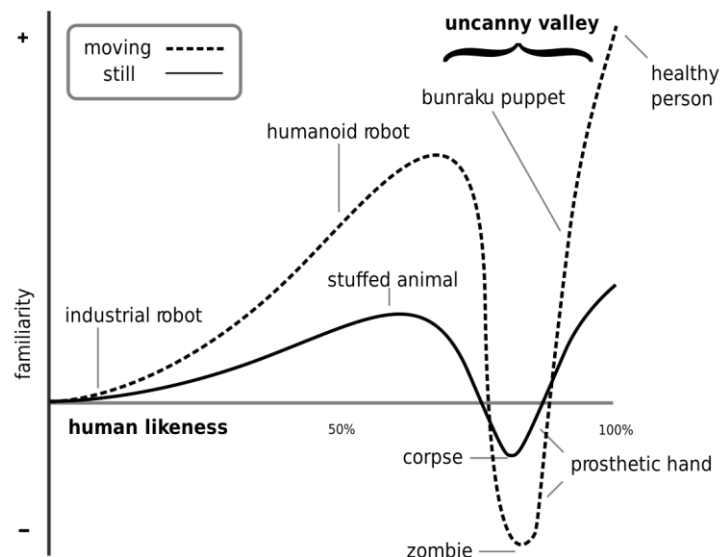


Figure 9: Mori's (1970, 2012) original depiction of the *Uncanny Valley*.

Mori (1970, 2012) proposed the hypothetical concept of the *Uncanny Valley*, which was intended for the field of robotics but has in time become a topic of discussion in the fields of computer graphics, animation and design. The author hypothesised that

as robots are designed to appear and act more human-like, the more likely they are to evoke positive emotional reactions in people. However, as this process continues, a point is reached where the positive reactions turn into negative ones, such as repulsiveness or the feeling of the robot's appearance being uncanny. Mori (2012) furthermore argues that this experience is due to the robot passing a threshold where it almost imitates real humanness but just falls short, which causes a negative reaction. The explanation for this reaction was linked to an innate fear of death or the symbolism of it. Examples that Mori used are zombie-like qualities, the unease of prosthetics that try to imitate what once was - and the more it tries, and inevitably falls short, the more likely it is to cause an unpleasant feeling.

Mori coined the term "Uncanny Valley" for this negative experience. However, it is not yet clear that as and if robotics were to progress to a point where there is no distinguishable difference between the robot and a human, likability and positivity may once again reach a positive response in humans. It is suggested that this experience of the uncanny valley is drastically amplified if movement is assigned to the robot because motion is a highly complex and subjective field of analysis in humans. Indeed, we can read body language and expressions accurately and innately, so when a robot tries to imitate a human but falls short, this negative experience is more drastic. Finally, it is recommended that in order to avoid negative feedback responses, designers should deliberately pursue a non-realistic design approach.

In the decades following Mori's hypothesis, there have been numerous debates on the validity of the Uncanny Valley, which has led to a divide of scholars trying to prove or disprove the theory and concomitantly with it, the term grew in popularity. To be clear, many have tried to provide a unique academic perspective with regards to the Uncanny Valley, but no ultimate solution has been found, so there is no absolute to Mori's theory on either side; nonetheless, his hypothesis may well hold true.

Of relevance to the present study is the effect the Uncanny Valley has had on the computer graphics industry. Bartneck, Kanda, Ishiguro and Hagita (2009:269) state that as the fields of robotics gradually grew, computer graphics already flourished and so attempted to provide realistic renderings of humans long before androids

could have reached the same standard. The authors note that it is commonplace in the computer graphics industry to refer to Mori's theory to explain characters that appear eerie or uncanny, and this discourse has spawned many field-specific studies to explain the effect. Schneider, Wang and Yang (2007:546) note that the discussion of the Uncanny Valley is most predominant in film and video game design, most notably to virtual characters found within these spheres. It seems that since it has become more possible to simulate realism through virtual means, the desire to create realistic virtual characters has risen, but as Mori originally urged creators to create 'safe' designs (to aim for an appeal before the valley), so many creators explore the benefits of a more stylistic design over that of a realistic one.



*Figure 10 (top to bottom): The Incredibles (2004) can be seen as an example of a safer design, as Mori recommended. The Polar Express (2004) can be seen as an example of a design more akin to realism and the uncanny. Both films were released the same year. The Incredibles (2004) was produced by Pixar Animation Studios and then released by Walt Disney Pictures. The Polar Express (2004) was produced by Castle Rock Entertainment for Warner Bros. Pictures.*

For example, McCloud's (1993) suggestions for the creation of cartoonish characters may provide a number of versatile options, as he explains how a cartoonish character can fit in both cartoon and realistic backgrounds, but realistic characters can only fit into their own realistic environments. The important difference is, therefore, between a cartoonish and a realistic character, which entails that the former is a conceptual (figurative) representation and the latter is a literal representation.

Schwind, Wolf and Henze (2018:46) elaborate on the aforementioned by stating: "Humans readily accept unrealistic characters when they are consistently unrealistic, as frequently seen in cartoons." These authors also caution that "[c]onflicting cues arise when a character displays multiple levels of realism at the same time, such as unnaturally large eyes in a realistic face."

Schwind, Wolf and Henze (2018:46-49) provide some guidelines for designers to help them avoid the Uncanny Valley. They state that if a designer were to aim for a high level of realism in their design, they should avoid any atypicalities to the norm of what is expected of high levels of realism, such as unnatural anatomy or the use of detailed textures (skin or eyes) on said deviations from the human norm.



*Figure 11: An example of the character Alita, from the movie **Alita: Battle Angel** (2019), with disproportionate eyes and realistic rendering. **Alita: Battle Angel** (2019) was distributed by 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox.*

They refer to the film *Alita: Battle Angel* (2019) as an example of this. It was found that people assess the eyes of a character most critically before even moving to the other features. What this means for the designer who strives towards realism is that critical attention should be paid to the eyes of a character, down to the slightest minutiae, in order to avoid the uncanny. However, if indeed possible, the designer

should rather make use of stylisation and childish features, according to the authors. They note that aesthetics that represent survival and reproduction do, in fact, promote pleasant appeal. It was also found that both artists and participants would consciously apply childish features to characters in order to increase affinity with said characters. There are numerous benefits of using childish features, such as the innate instincts of caretaking and the design methods used to achieve said appeal, similar to the discussion made in the previous segment (see 4.2.2). Apart from childish features, other appealing features such as smooth skin, symmetry, natural proportions, healthy appearance and skin tones can be used to generate more appeal. Finally, the authors suggest that if the aim is indeed intended towards realism, then body structures should not be altered; however, if stylisation is the goal, then there is more flexibility to alter body structures.

Misselhorn (2009:346) specifically notes that in the practice of animating virtual characters, designers are especially diligent when it comes to depicting accurate motion and emotion, with the sole intention of eliciting empathetic responses within the audience. They explain that, akin to what Mori (1970, 2012) said about motion, people are more acute and sensitive to how something human is supposed to act, from expression in body language to facial expressions and even the expression of the eyes. What is important here is the expectancies people have of others and in this case, that of things or characters that portray themselves as human. They explain that when an object lacks human-like features but has typical and salient features like those of a human, they are more likely to elicit perceptual empathy than that of an object which does have high human-like, and even typical, features but lacks salient ones. It is imperative that if a character were to be portrayed in motion or even emoting, it must satisfy the expectancies of the audience regarding what is human-like behaviour because if it falls short, it becomes uncanny and in sum, empathy is lessened.

Schneider, Wang and Yang (2007:548) found in their empirical study that the 'safest' design for a character was one that had a non-human appearance but could express emotion like a human. They do, however, note that a human-like appearance was correlated with attraction and conclude that a designer must be aware of these effects when designing a character.

Bartneck, Kanda, Ishiguro and Hagita (2009:270) add that in Mori's original statement he used the word '*shinwa-kan*' which was then translated into *familiarity*, which is used to determine how well the robot is emotionally received. They note that this translation is, in fact, a bit jarring as a better translation would be the word *likability*, in short, when a design is within the Uncanny Valley, it is probable to be less *liked*.

I have explained the ambiguous nature of the Uncanny Valley and how it holds relevance to the fields of character design and have provided examples of the difficulty of *Realism* and the benefits of stylisation, especially within the 3D environment. It is indeed possible to produce realistic results, but as with this valley, it is an incredible climb to reach acceptable results. It would be more beneficial for me to apply a stylistic approach, as it allows me to be more expressive with shape design and it allows me to apply the elements of cuteness and its appeal, while still rendering human-like characters that convey and express just as effectively with not as much *Realism*.

In the following segment, I discuss how I have implemented the sum of my characterisation theory into my practical component, how my theory has informed my practice by discussing my process and to conclude I will produce a reflection of this segment of the study.

#### **4.2.4 My implementation, process, outcome and reflection on how I created my characters**

This section of the chapter is written in a subjective narrative fashion to present a reflective account of the process of producing characters for the interactive digital novel.

##### **4.2.4.1 An introduction to how all of this began**

It should be noted here that as mentioned in my methodology chapter, specifically in the pre-production section (see 2.1.2.1), that my experiential knowledge before the initialisation of this study was encapsulated by my knowledge gained from my degree in graphic design, with a specific focus on multimedia design. What this means is that I had pre-established knowledge of design principles, multimedia

design, animation, web design (in the form of front end design), character design and characterisation for animation. In sum, my knowledge of practice was lodged in design principles, from a designer's perspective. Along with the design degree, I had also completed courses on art history, communication studies, anthropology and philosophy (informed by art). What this means is that I had pre-existing knowledge of theory and practice. I was briefly exposed to the Rashomon Effect in an anthropology class, but it was only when this study was initialised that I began to fully investigate it. The final pool of knowledge came from my personal interests, as will be discussed below, on characters, specifically character design and some character development. From this, I developed knowledge of shape design and anatomy (from both my degree and personal interests). It was only during the pre-production step that I began to explore character design and character development more deeply, specifically through the lens of Schwartz's (1992, 2012) Value System Theory. Another crucial point of the pre-production step is that I had attended research workshops at the North-West University, which informed me of the requirements of practice-led research and the expectancies that would become part of the study. In sum, I gained the knowledge and understanding of the ontology, epistemology, methodology, the importance of rigour and validity, how I would contribute to the research-knowledge pool and how said contribution would need to be accessible. The present chapter focuses on the characterisation process and how it was manifested in the study.

I have been fascinated with characters; it is by far the most significant aspect in my life that has driven me to pursue the path of a creative. The ability to create an entity that can portray the many nuances of humanity and the ability to produce renditions of said entities is what has given me passion to create. As any passionate creative, we desire to improve what we love best; we strive to learn how things truly work and how to do it better. This is important because at the beginning of my study, I was pondering "What makes a good character?". I knew I wanted to explore this concept, but at the time I did not know what approach to follow.

I then remembered that in one of my anthropology classes, during the completion of my degree, we had briefly discussed the *Rashomon* (1950) film. I specifically remembered that the film's focus was on the intricate nature of its characters, which

then piqued my curiosity and led me to watch the film. When I watched *Rashomon*, I was amazed by how the narrative could portray such nuanced characters with their own goals and then, as the perspective changed from one character to another, the identification one had with the character before being completely changed. I was baffled by how a simple gesture could alter my feelings towards a character, where in one moment I truly believed them, to a point where I could not decide by reason who was right or wrong. Up until the very end, I began to rely on not what I was shown, but what I felt and whom I felt was guilty. In a sense, I began to rely on whom I identified with. It should be noted that at this point, I only had a basic understanding of what identification truly meant. In the case of the Rashomon Effect, the actual guilty character was the one with whom I identified the least.

Afterwards, I pondered why I identified more with certain characters than others and came to the conclusion that it was due to their motivations, or their goals. The motivations I related with the least left me suspecting that character the most. The character I identified with the least with was the *wife*. Her motivations were driven from the perspective of a noble Japanese wife, and she argued and reasoned due to her standing in her specific culture, her gender and the specific tradition of *jigai* (Turnbull, 1996:72). I realised that I could not relate to any of these attributes because they were so specific to a certain time period, culture and tradition which I am not familiar with. I then questioned whether this meant that she was a bad character, but I came to the conclusion that she was not. She was masterfully crafted to represent something that was real to its circumstances; it was merely my misunderstanding of her that hampered my identification with her.

This conundrum made me realise that characters can fit perfectly into their narrative and their story world, but ultimately the things that bind them to that structure are not what we relate to directly. These are mere supplemental enhancers to the experience. We relate to the actions, depictions and reasons of *why* characters are who they are. This made me question if there is a structure or system that is universally imbued in all of us that transcends culture, time, race, gender and social standing. A system that, if properly represented, could portray *why* characters are who they are to anyone in any environment or milieu. After a while, I discovered the answer to my question, namely Schwartz's (1992, 2012) Value System Theory.

What Schwartz's (1992, 2012) Value System Theory provided me with was an explanation as to what motivated people in all walks of life and how, on a universal level, so that one could understand the motives of others. It clarified, for instance, how two individuals from across the world could relate to a common understanding of the values of a person. An example of this is a Muslim female from Turkey, and a Christian male from South Africa might have completely different opinions on things such as religion, culture, gender or social standing; in fact, they might have clashing opinions, but both of them can understand the value domains of, for example, conservation (values like conformity, tradition and security). They can, furthermore, understand the importance of family and community, the ability to care for those in their inner circles, to have respect for beliefs and to be concerned for the welfare of what and who they hold dear. It is apparent that a narrative will not always be able to shy away from specific elements of a character's disposition within their story world. One again I refer to the example of a Muslim female from Turkey; if issues arise within her narrative that are related to her spatio-temporal reality or elements that are specific to her physical, psychological or sociological standing, she must address these issues. As a character, her actions should not be motivated by stances such as "I do this because I am a Muslim...", but rather "I do this because I value tradition...". This is indeed a very direct example that lacks the many nuances of a narrative; however, it emphasises that the visualisation of their motive or goal, in the context of their values is superior to their particular circumstances. For the reasons mentioned above, I believe it is important to first understand the structural foundation of a character's value hierarchy, in a sense their true intrinsic core, before moving on to the extrinsic aspects. As I stated before, this intrinsic core must be reflected by, and must inform the extrinsic.

What I admire most about Schwartz' (1992, 2012) Value System Theory is not only its usefulness for a creative in establishing an initial intrinsic value core but also its comprehensiveness in allowing deeper intrinsic aspects of the character to be explored and established. Again, I will refer to the Muslim female from Turkey. Most likely, the values she holds most dear lie within the conservation domain, and now one can assess how her values might inform her demeanour. Is she soft-spoken but diligent in her family life due to her conservative nature, or is she a bold and strong figure in her community that valiantly stands up for her values? Either way, these

other demeanours of her can be flexible enough to fit the narrative but still represent her values. When considering both the examples provided above, it can be assumed that those are the demeanours of somebody who holds conservativeness in high regard. In a sense, she embodies her values or perhaps personifies them, and as a result, one can relate more to her than with somebody who embodies a non-universal foundation.

At this stage, I arrived at the main framework that I wanted to explore. The universal values provided a sound foundation from which to develop and design my characters, and I had a narrative structure that I believed would suit best to portray and emphasise the importance of said values. In sum, the Rashomon Effect and Schwartz's (1992, 2012) Value System Theory serve as my main driving points, one for character and one for narrative, this can be seen in my reasoning in my methodology chapter (see 2.1). My study was firstly informed by theory, but the main driving point would be practice, and thus my study was structured as research-led practice. At this point, however, I had a moderate understanding of narrative theory, more so of narrative identification. I realised that if I wanted to properly create a narrative, I would need to understand the foundations of narrative, and as a result, I started researching narrative theory. In the pre-production step, this was primarily driven by narrative identification, perspective in narrative and narrative persuasion. This chapter is, however, more focused on character with regards to research-led practice. Thus, my discussion of character and related processes involved will be supplemented with the relevant theories related to my characterisation process. The same process will be applied in the section on my narrative (see 5.4.3.). What I learnt from this understanding of narrative in the pre-production step is that I wanted my audience to identify with my characters, and to understand my characters' perspectives via their universal values, they could experience a deeper understanding of said characters, with the intention of having empathy manifest, so that my characters could then persuade the audience into their favour. My reasoning was that if the audience could identify with a character through their values and be persuaded to choose said character, that Schwartz's (1992, 2012) Value System Theory could serve as a guide during the characterisation process (both design and development), thus providing validity to the study and practice of character creation.

What is important to my characterisation process is the foundation of my narrative. I knew that I wanted to create a narrative that utilised all the elements of the Rashomon Effect. As such, the narrative would provide subjective perceptions on the recollection of events; and the characters of the narratives would provide equally and diverse accounts of said events. In doing so, they would be equally plausible; the narrative would not provide any evidence to discredit or disprove any of these accounts; there would be a need for closure, and it would be left in the hands of the audience to decide whom they believed to be telling the truth. The unique variation that I wanted to implement in my version of the Rashomon Effect is that the audience would be able to decide which of the characters to save (instead of judging them). I would argue that in doing so, it encourages the audience to choose the character they identified with the most, as I am of the opinion that the act of saving already instils the notion of caring within the audience.

In light of the above, I initially intended to create ten characters which each personified a value, but after reflecting, through consultation with my supervisors, I decided on four characters, based on the four value domains. The intentions with this strategy are to allow the characters to be more diverse and expressive in their accounts, to not overwhelm the audience with too many choices, as in less is more, and to be realistic with my timeframe and skill capacity to render and design said characters.

I decided to design these characters as children because I felt that they would elicit a greater sense of care from the audience as opposed to adults, and also perhaps invoke some sense of nostalgia. I also felt that Neotenous characters would elicit more nurturing responses. I then later confirmed my suspicions of this during the production step when I conducted research on cuteness in design, which verified my design choice and helped me to understand which elements of design I needed to apply during the character design process: qualities like larger heads, big eyes, small features and a more stylised appeal. My BA degree in Graphic Design furnished me with a keen awareness of the fundamentals of design, but I needed to add to my field of knowledge. To this end, during the production step, I consciously decided to research what design principles applied to characters specifically, which then led me to the practice of character appeal. From this, I learned the importance of shape

design, silhouettes and continuity in style when applied to characters from the same story world. It was here that I also started to grasp the triadic nature of *meaning*, *realism* and *abstraction* (the *picture plane*) by McCloud (1993), which when combined with cuteness, helped define the direction of where I wanted to go with my character design.

Through informed decision-making, I realised what type of appeal I wanted to strive for, and I knew what the intrinsic foundations for my characters would be. I knew I wanted characters that each portrayed a value domain and I knew that I wanted to make these characters and the values they represent to be visually appealing and cute; I wanted their extrinsic qualities to support and be informed by their intrinsic qualities and so settled on characters no older than early teens.

Another crucial point of transition with regard to pre-production to production was the further discovery and reflection of narrative and specifically how to achieve narrative persuasion. From my initial (pre-production) investigation into narrative identification, perspective in narrative and narrative persuasion, I came to realise that these concepts could be used concurrently, and upon reflection, this led me to assimilate three core components that were relevant to my study, namely transportation, identification and narrative engagement. In terms of narrative engagement, I discovered the importance of what role a character plays in the situation model during the comprehension phase, and how the audience would apply their real-world knowledge and understanding to their understanding of the narrative (and its characters). This also led to the crucial understanding of consistency in not only the narrative but also the story world and characters. If inconsistencies were to arise, these would hinder the audience from becoming immersed in the narrative and ultimately lessen the opportunities for identification – and this could also reduce persuasive and enjoyment outcomes. In reflection, I came to understand that my approach to both character design and development would have to maintain a sense of consistency. With regard to character development, this would mean that I would consciously have my development be informed by my emerging practice of integrating Schwartz's (1992, 2012) Value Theory into said development. What this means is that I would ensure that my characters bone structures (see 4.2.4.2, 4.2.4.3, 4.2.4.4 and 4.2.4.5) would be well informed by the character's value

domains and that I would ensure that in the narrative (see 5.4.3) these intrinsic qualities would be consistent with the characters development. What this also entails is that throughout my practice, I consciously and consistently reflected upon how my characters would express themselves based on their character bone structure, through their animation, such as their expressions, posture, silhouettes and body language. In sum, throughout my practice and in my outcome, I ensured that my characters were consistent with their development in all their manners of expression.

Narrative engagement also informed my character design, which was informed by their intrinsic (development) qualities, in other words, their character bone structure (see 4.2.4.2, 4.2.4.3, 4.2.4.4 and 4.2.4.5) also informed their extrinsic (design) qualities. I consciously made sure that the intrinsic qualities reflected in the extrinsic qualities of the characters, as this would also apply to their external expressions of development during the narrative, in sum; I had continuously reflected on and adapted my design to be fit and proper with the development during the process and outcome of the artefact. This also applied to the overall design of the characters; I would thus make deliberate design decisions so that the characters appeared consistent in regard to one another. Another implication that narrative engagement had on the design is that it made me reflect on what design elements could constitute as inconsistencies. This had led me to discover the Uncanny Valley as conceptualised by Mori (1970, 2012), which made me aware of the risks of designing characters that appeared to realistic (but fell short of real depictions) and how it could become a hindrance to my intended outcome. Since I was already intending on applying cuteness and character appeal, the theoretical discovery fitted well with my intended outcome and solidified my practice in said direction, in sum, I would design cute and appealing characters with the intention of avoiding the Uncanny valley during my production step. I was also conscious about my practical knowledge, meaning that I knew that my level of execution wouldn't be able to escape Mori's (1970, 2012) Uncanny Valley and so I reflected and concluded that I would follow the recommendations of Mori (1970, 2012) and aim for a safer and more stylised appeal, which I could execute better and yield more aesthetic results.

I had mentioned earlier that as I learned more about narrative, that the reflection and understanding of both transportation and identification had an influence on the

characterisation process. These theories had multiple implementations and iterations that affected my narrative (see 5.4.3), which included the narrative structure, narrative arc, dialogue, the visual language of the narrative and the list of expressions and emotions my characters would depict. What is relevant from this is that though the iterative cycle of creating my narrative, my characterisation process informed my narrative and vice versa. As example with transportation, I knew that the structure of the story and how it is depicted could evoke transportation, such as the quality of craftsmanship and vivid imagery, with this in mind, when I created my narrative, I took the characters' bone structures and developed how the characters would tell their accounts of the events of the story, it would also, however, include their intrinsic qualities, which is conveyed via their body language, how they would speak and what they would say, it also affected the type of emotions they felt during such frames of depiction.

This, in turn, came back to the characterisation process, as I also consciously wanted to make sure that the quality of craftsmanship and vivid imagery was apparent in the characterisation process. This informed me to try and create higher quality characters, through reflection and iteration, I constantly tried to make the character's design fit and proper in order to fit with the quality of craftsmanship needed for transportation, this will be evident in my process documentation. Another element of quality was the proper depiction and said vivid imagery. As the characters would express themselves through dialogue, body language and expressions, it would inform yet even more iterative- and reflective cycles. I would consider how the development of each character would inform how the characters would express themselves (via dialogue, body language and expressions); in order to create vivid imagery in hopes that it would instil an affective response within the audience. In sum, Not only did my intrinsic qualities (development) inform my extrinsic qualities (design), the completed characterisation of said characters was also reflective of the theory and then informed the application of the narrative, which was also informed by the theory, which then came back to how I would express the characters (through dialogue, body language and expressions) in the medium; thus a continuous cycle of iteration and reflection between theory and practice (with the focus on practice) became evident so that I could produce quality craftsmanship and vivid imagery, all with the intention of allowing my audience to be transported into the narrative and

from it, develop a need for affect and perhaps enhance the identification process, which could then lead to narrative persuasion.

Finally, in terms of identification – this emerged during the pre-production step, thus meaning it had already informed my decision-making for the practice, which led me to start an iterative cycle of practice.. This led to the emergence of more theory with regards to characterisation (a deeper understanding of Schwartz's (1992, 2012) Value System Theory, cuteness, character appeal and later, Mori's (1970, 2012) Uncanny Valley and also to more theory in terms of narrative and narrative persuasion (transportation and narrative engagement). All of this took place in the production step and also led to even more discoveries and greater understanding of identification itself, how there is a difference between identification, liking, similarity, affinity (and also parasocial interaction and imitation, which holds less significance currently to the study). It became apparent that the latter components could be distinguished from identification but also supplementary to identification. What this means with regard to characterisation is that identification played an integral role in both character and narrative.

To explain, I consciously wanted to make characters that were more likely to instil identification with the audience, and at the very least, could be perceived in some likeable, affinitive or similar fashion. This meant cute characters that would invoke intrinsic qualities within the audience to feel more nurturing towards the characters, to have their design be appealing. This also had its implications with the development cycles, as tied in with Schwartz's (1992, 2012) Value System Theory, which bolsters a unified value system which serves as the core component to the development process, so that audiences could easily identify more with the characters. Identification was also informative towards the narrative iteration cycle, as I deliberately tried to make my characters portray themselves in the narrative as likeable characters, with relatable qualities, which is all informed by their intrinsic value domain and have them provide compelling accounts as to why they should be saved by the audience. It had also led to the aforementioned discovery of Mori's (1970, 2012) Uncanny Valley. In sum, identification played an integral part in the reflective practice on both my characterisation process and narrative process and was consciously reflected and iterated upon. Throughout my process, artefact and

theory, all of my elements combined hopes to produce an outcome where the audience can become engaged and transported into the narrative, so that they may identify with my characters and experience narrative persuasion.

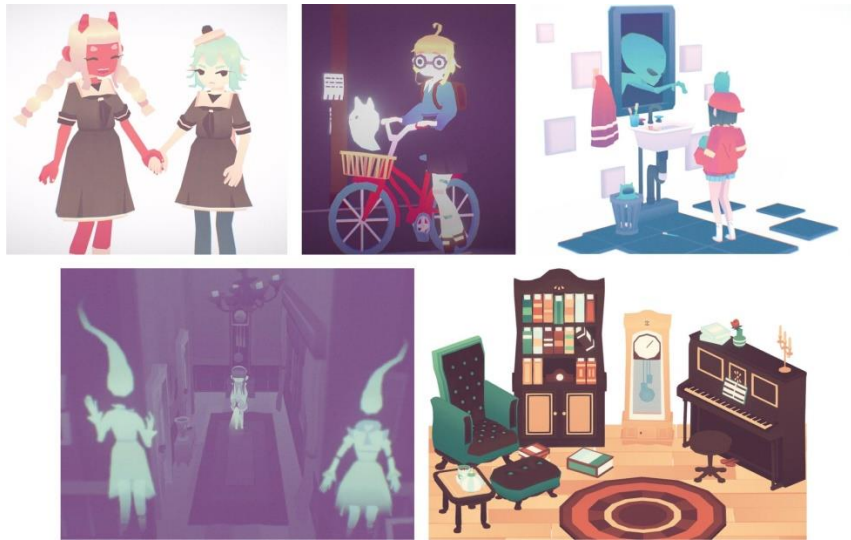
With regard to the medium choice of this study, in the pre-production step, I had intended for the narrative to take form of an interactive 3D game. The reasoning behind all of this was to allow the audience to have a more direct form of contact with the characters and the story world. They would also have been able to traverse the story world and interact with the characters through action and dialogue. I had also considered having the audience create an avatar to represent them and to have the characters be affiliated with the avatar of the audience. This was all driven with the intention of having the audience become immersed within the narrative, and this immersion could be seen as a form of transportation, as the audience's depiction of themselves in the story world would provide more reason for immersion, as the audience would at that point already have invested time into creating an avatar. It could also later be argued from the point of narrative engagement, as the audience would make their avatar fit and be consistent with the narrative and to have the characters intuitively respond to elements of the audience's choice (Like "her/his blue/brown/green/hazel eyes stared deep into me" with the bracketed options registering from user input from avatar creation). And, finally, as the predominant driving force, identification, as mentioned earlier, the characters would have been affiliated with the audience's avatar. It would have been established in the narrative (see 5.4.3) that the characters were already fond of the audience. This was intended to encourage identification between the audience and the characters. The choice between 2D and 3D was argued on the merit of space and depth, with all of the aforementioned the audience would be able to have more vivid imagery and narrative engagement in a 3D space that had depth and proximal location in a more accustomed medium. With regard to characterisation, this meant that I would have to sculpt 3D models of the characters and provide a base template for the audience to customise.

In the production segment, through conscious and constant iterative reflective cycles and collaborative discussions and reflections, the focus shifted away from an interactive game to a digital graphic novel, as can be seen in the segment later on

(4.2.4.7) and in the narrative segment (5.4.3.1). The reason for this shift was based on collaborative feedback and personal reflection, for the pre-production intended outcome was way too convoluted, complex and redundantly excessive. Through constant cycles through theory and practice (on both characterisation and narrative sides) the important relevance of the study was found via a more traditional approach of a narrative arc (5.4.2) and cinematography (see both 5.4.1 and 5.4.3.2). The narrative and the characters would be portrayed through a digital graphic novel that was more effective at portraying the Rashomon Effect and focused more on providing identification, narrative engagement and transportation via a decisive and methodically structured visual language (see 5.4.3.2) and also allowed me as a creative to effectively apply a more successful iteration of my practical knowledge. The results that this, through my medium, allowed me to create through constant iterative reflective cycles, a platform that allowed my characters to be highly expressive (via their intrinsic- and extrinsic qualities) that reflected their value domains. Also with regard to the visual language of the medium itself (see 5.4.3.2) which deliberately focuses on conveying the characterisation of each character and their value domains as well as inciting identification, narrative engagement and transportation. As part of the medium, I had also commissioned musical compositions to reflect the characterisation of each character and their narrative dispositions, all with the intention of also providing a deliberate insight into their characterisation and to allow for even more identification, narrative engagement and transportation, for a detailed description see the segment on the visual language of the music (see 5.4.3.2.8). This was all contributory to the characterisation process, which revolved around Schwartz' (1992, 2012) Value System Theory and accurately and deliberately depicting each character's value domains as a method of identification, with the intention of promoting narrative persuasion.

With regard to software, for the documentation of my process, I used Camtasia Studio to record my practical process, and any other forms of process (like dialogue, fabula, syuzhet, narrative arcs, concept art) were documented in their original file formats and attached to my process document. My relevant software choices in the pre-production step with regard to characterisation was the use of Blender. My initial intended outcome for my characterisation process was informed by a 3D style known as *low-poly*, briefly summarised, it is a 3D polygon mesh that has a low number of

polygons. This was based on my aforementioned experimental understanding of character appeal and cuteness and my intended outcome. The style also benefitted from my limited practical knowledge of 3D character design, in sum, it is an easier style to practically execute which also fitted with my pre-production step outcome, an example of low-poly character design can be seen below by the talented creative Premudraya.



*Figure 12: A wide collection of 3D low-poly art by the talented creative Premudraya<sup>42</sup>.*

As an induction to the pre-production step, I began to explore my own iteration of the aforementioned style, which can be seen in the figure below (see Figure 13). What is important to note here is that from my initial experimentation, I began to develop my practical knowledge in 3D modelling. It is, however, imperative to also note that these experiments weren't yet informed by my characterisation process, namely the characters bone structures (see 4.2.4.2, 4.2.4.3, 4.2.4.4 and 4.2.4.5). At this point, my pre-production step traversed over to the production step. As my own experiential reflections, and those from collaborative reflections, upon said experiments, led me to conclude that the practical output lacked rigour. From this practice then came the aforementioned conscious iterative reflective cycles between practice and theory, which contains the elaboration on narrative (a deeper understanding of identification and narrative persuasion, transportation and narrative

42 "premudraya (@premudraya) - Sketchfab." <https://sketchfab.com/premudraya>. Accessed 26 Oct. 2020.

engagement) and characterisation (a deeper understanding of Schwartz' (1992, 2012) Value Theory, character appeal, cuteness and at the end, Mori's (1970, 2012) Uncanny Valley). These cycles, along with the experimentation process, then led me to create the characters' bone structures (see 4.2.4.2, 4.2.4.3, 4.2.4.4 and 4.2.4.5) as my character development segment, which then informed my character design segment.



*Figure 13: My first initial experiments with low-poly art, made in Blender, prior to any character development.*

The final note on software with regard to my production step is that I had used Zbrush, Marvellous Designer, Marmoset Toolbag, Blender and Unity to achieve my final outcome. What is relevant about this is that I had consciously improved my experiential and practical knowledge in said programmes with the intention of accurately achieving my outcome through rigour. Through deliberate iterative reflective cycles, I have constantly worked towards accurately depicting the characterisation process and outcome (development and design) to have my characters and their narrative expression (through dialogue, body language and expressions) optimally allow for narrative engagement, transportation and identification all with the intent of allowing for narrative persuasion to take place and to confirm the validity of my study.

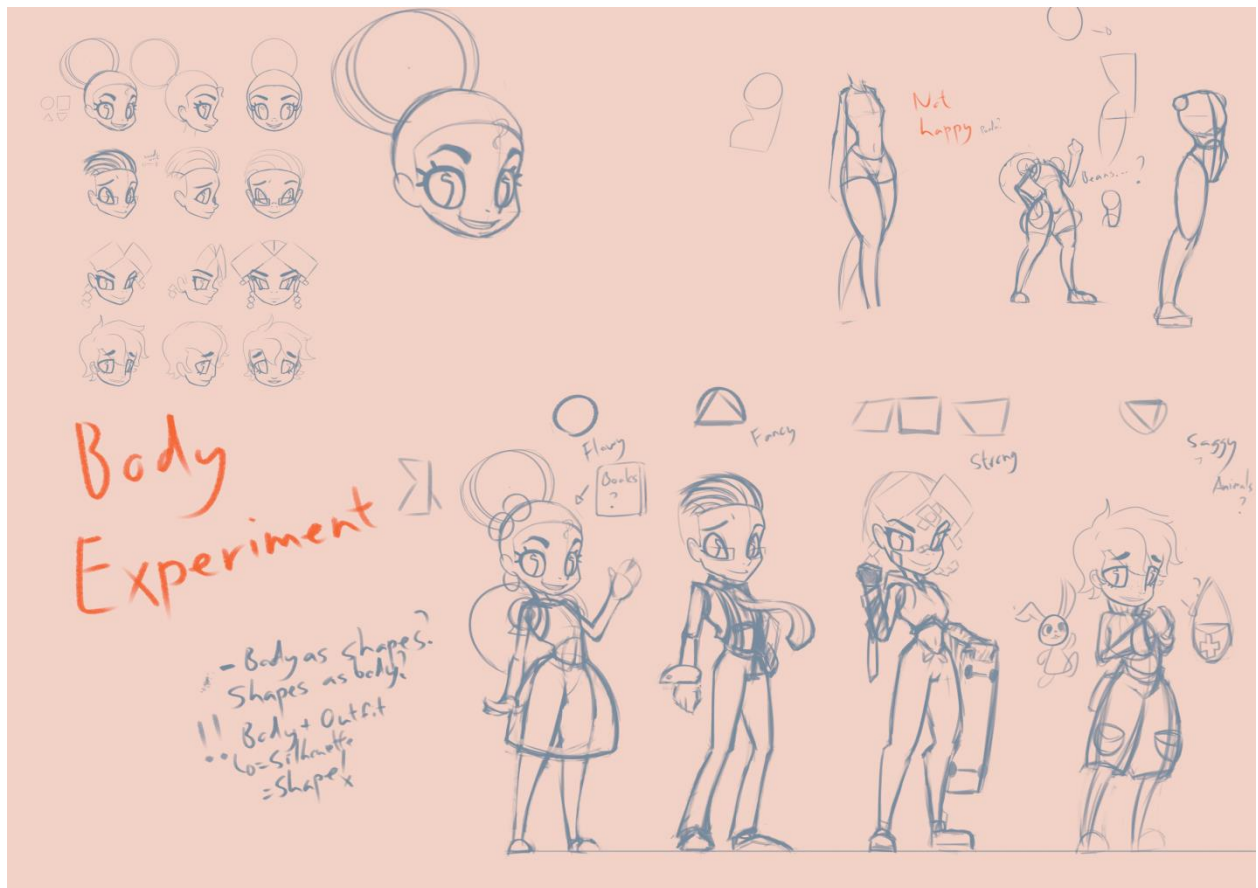


Figure 14: Concept art and shape design of character concepts.

The figure above is a representation of how my character development (their intrinsic qualities which were informed by Schwartz' (1992, 2012) Value Theory) had then guided me to begin conceptualising and designing my characters extrinsic qualities (the design was informed by the development which had its foundations laid in Schwartz' (1992, 2012) Value Theory).

Before I get into the conceptualisation phase of the character design, I will first explain how I used Schwartz' (1992, 2012) Value System Theory to generate my character development process. As mentioned before, in the course of my first degree, we learned of the many fundamentals of good design. During this time, I branched out into the multimedia side of the degree, and it was during this time we were tasked with creating a brief animation which had to have characters in it. In the multimedia faculty of the North-West University, we were taught to use the Lajos Egri's (1946, 1972) character bone structure, which is premised in developing a character structure that helps to define their motives for screenplay. This is quite

similar to the purpose of values, in the sense that it defines the motives, motivations and goals of characters. We were also tasked to create a narrative and to then create characters to fit said narrative by using the aforementioned structure. The structure in itself is useful in developing *who* the character is. It explores the *physiology*, *sociology* and *psychology* of a character and helps to create a profile of where exactly the character fits into the world; it is indeed useful to help conceptualise who the character is.

- Lajos Egri's Character Bone Structure**
- Physiology**
1. *Sex*
  2. *Age*
  3. *Height and weight*
  4. *Color of hair, eyes, skin*
  5. *Posture*
  6. *Appearance: good-looking, over- or underweight, clean, neat, pleasant, untidy. Shape of head, face, limbs.*
  7. *Defects: deformities, abnormalities, birthmarks. Diseases.*
  8. *Heredity.*
- Sociology**
1. *Class: lower, middle, upper*
  2. *Occupation: type of work, hours of work, income, condition of work, union or nonunion, attitude toward organization, suitability for work.*
  3. *Education: amount, kind of schools, marks, favorite subjects, poorest subjects, aptitudes*
  4. *Home life: parents living, earning power orphan, parents separated or divorced, parents' habits, parents' mental development, parents' vices, neglect. Character's marital status*
  5. *Religion*
  6. *Race, nationality*
  7. *Place in community: leader among friends, clubs, sports*
  8. *Political affiliations*
  9. *Amusements, hobbies: books, newspapers, magazines*
- Psychology**
1. *Sex Life, moral standards*
  2. *Personal premise, ambition*
  3. *Frustrations, chief disappointments*
  4. *Temperament: Choleric, easygoing, pessimistic, optimistic*
  5. *Attitude toward life: resigned, militant, defeatist*
  6. *Complexes: obsessions, inhibitions, superstitions, phobias*
  7. *Extrovert, introvert, ambivert*
  8. *Abilities: languages, talents*
  9. *Qualities: imagination, judgment, taste, poise*
  10. *I.Q.*

Figure 15: Lajos Egri's (1946, 1972) character bone structure.

However, for current purposes, I found that process lacking in the sense that it relies on the specificity of the narrative and the story world to define the motive of the

character. I will refer back to the *wife* in the film *Rashomon* (1950); she was masterfully crafted to fit her world but to the detriment of those who do not understand her world. When a creative tries to chart a character on this structure, they will immediately think of how they will make their character fit into the story world, which is the right thing to do, but my argument is that before even beginning to try and fit a character into the story, a creative must first think of how the character will fit into the hearts and minds of the audience, in sum, the components that are universally identifiable and relatable.

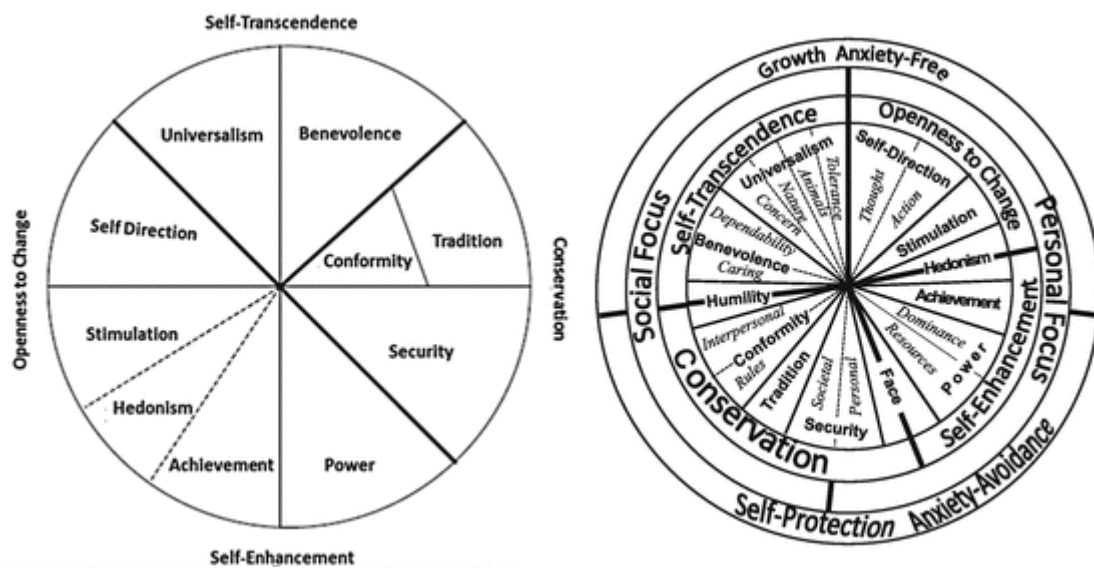


Figure 16: The left-hand circular structure represents the original value structure (Schwartz, 2012), whereas the right-hand circular structure represents the revised version (Schwartz et al., 2012) with the addition of Universalism-animals (Lee, 2019). The figure originates from “Putting the Pieces Together: Culture and the Person” by Wong and Lee (2017).

Lajos Egri’s (1946, 1972) character bone structure was explored first through the lens of Schwartz’ (1992, 2012) Value System Theory. I am of the opinion that a more accurate approach for how we would characterise our character can be achieved through a combination of the two structures. In short, we can choose a value domain and from there have it inform the *physiology*, *sociology* and *psychology* of the character.

In the following segments, I will elaborate on the character bone structures of each of my characters, which has its foundation in Schwartz’s (1992, 2012) Value System Theory, which then informed the *physiology*, *sociology* and *psychology* of the

character (their Lajos Egri's (1946, 1972) character bone structure), this also then informed the practice and outcome of their design *and* their expression throughout the narrative. Do note that after each character bone structure, I will provide a figure that depicts how said character's bone structure had been consciously implemented into the artefact; in sum, I will show how the characterisation process and the relevant narrative process informed my outcome.

#### 4.2.4.2 Edali's character bone structure

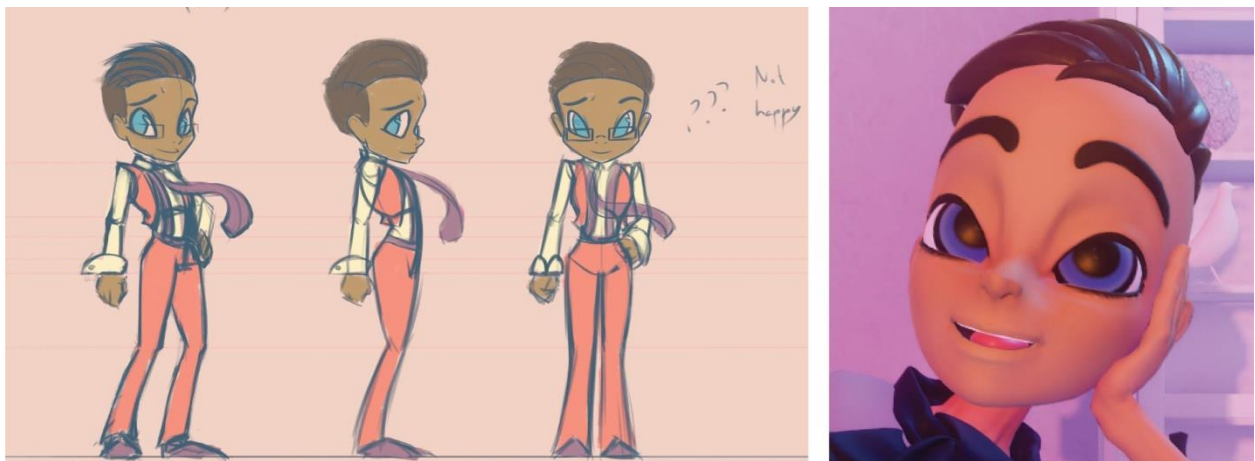


Figure 17: The concept art of Edali and his final rendering

The first character I will describe is Edali, whose main value domain is *self-enhancement*. He values power, achievement and hedonism. He is lenient towards values from *openness to change* and *conservation*, what this means is that although they are not his primary values, he finds merit in them. He is opposed to values from the *self-transcendence* domain, for they are the exact opposite of what motivates him. It is important to note that although he has his own hierarchy of values that have differing levels of importance, he still understands and experiences all of the values from the spectrum, he just holds a certain domain with high regard. I will also provide a brief reminder of the values within the *self-direction* domain from Figure 1, which explains Schwartz' (1992, 2012) values:

**Hedonism:** Pleasure and sensuous gratification of oneself.

**Achievement:** Personal success by demonstrating competence according to social standards.

**Power:** Social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources.

From the refined version of Schwartz' (1992, 2012) Value System Theory comes the addition of the value named *face*:

**Face:** The process to gain power and security by avoiding humiliation and maintaining an entity's public image.

I must note that originally I worked from the original ten values, and only after I had completed my characters did I discover the revised version. It will become apparent, however, that even without being aware of the aforementioned value's presence, it was already ingrained into Edali's intrinsic properties. This is another key indicator that these values are, in fact, universal and that I had already assessed the qualities of the *face* value with his domain.

With this, I can now implement it into Lajos Egri's (1946, 1972) character bone structure. I want Edali to personify *self-enhancement* within his *physiology*, *sociology* and *psychology*. I will begin with his *physiology*:

#### 4.2.4.2.1 Edali's physiology

1. Gender: Edali is a male, and as stated previously, I just wanted to provide equal representation across the sexes. There is no relation between his value domain and his gender. I can, however, see how some might see the combination of his value domain and sex as patriarchal. Upon reflection, I could have made Edali female to prevent this.
2. Age: Edali is 12 years old, again, as stated previously, all the characters are the same age as to not provide any advantage/ disadvantage to their account during the narrative.
3. Height and weight: Edali has a toned and refined build and is the second tallest in the group. All the characters have similar anatomy, again so as to not provide any advantage/ disadvantage. I reasoned that since the *self-enhancement* domain falls within the *personal focus* domain that he would be conscious about his appearance; he wants to appear powerful and as if he has achieved a good physique. For the purpose of my narrative, I found it to

suit him best; other creatives can, however, explore different body shapes to represent *self-enhancement*. Although very slight, his general shape design was intended to be jagged and triangular, as to also represent wit, cunning and power.

4. Colour of hair, eyes and skin: His hair colour is brown, and his eyes are blue, he has a mildly dark complexion because of his ethnicity, which is referred to as Coloured in South Africa. The important element here is his hair, it is stylish and trendy similar to that of youths of this current milieu. Edali is concerned with his appearance and wants to look good; he wants to be admired, and he desires approval. For the purpose of my narrative, I saw it fit to give him a stylish hairstyle. The hairstyle itself also represents shape design, a row of orderly triangular clusters that sweep off to the side. In reflection, at the end of the production cycle, I darkened his skin tone to match more closely with his ethnicity.
5. Posture: Edali always has a confident, coy and elegant posture. As with shape design, his silhouette and body language always try to represent somebody who is classy, smart, confident, cool and successful. He is aware of his posture during social interactions. I intended to conceptualise this posture for Edali to fit my narrative and the intent of my study, to make him personify *self-enhancement*. Other creatives can indeed explore with other postures, an example might be a frail old man but who emanates a strong presence of *self-enhancement* through his wisdom and his achievements
6. Appearance: Edali was initially conceptualised to wear a trendy and semi-formal outfit with stylish glasses and a triangular (shape design) tie. This changed later on as the narrative slanted more towards a hospital environment (see 5.4.3.1.). Edali's hospital apparel is slim-fitting pyjamas with his top stylishly folded around his neck. I initially did not have a specific colour scheme planned for him. His final colour scheme is gold and purple to signify a suggestion of royalty. Even when hospitalised, he shows off his style, his physique and his idea of him being a cool and confident character. With Edali's facial features, we can see that his jawline and even his eyes are specifically designed to reinforce the triangular shape. This is to reinforce her shape design in the focal point of expression.

7. Defects: Edali and all the other characters have no defects, the reason being, as said before, that I wanted to minimise any discrepancies that could undermine the Rashomon Effect.
8. Heredity: Edali was intended to have glasses, but these were removed for the above-mentioned reasons.

I feel it is important to note that I was considerate of both the Rashomon Effect and Schwartz' (1992, 2012) Value System Theory when I conceptualised Edali's physiology and also the rest of the group. As my intended goal was to personify value domains as well as to have all characters be portrayed as equal as possible. It is, however, apparent that the *self-enhancement* domain did inform the *physiology* of Edali, albeit direct. I am certain that other creatives can find numerous ways to inform their characters differently than described above, what is important here is that those decisions are informed by the character's value hierarchy whilst considering the narrative outline, which is necessary for my study.

#### **4.2.4.2.2 Edali's sociology**

1. Class: Edali falls in with the higher class; I specifically made it so that he contrasts with his counterpart, Ida. Edali was born into a successful family, his father is a wealthy CEO, and he has a wealthy and comfortable lifestyle. In a previous version of my narrative, I wanted to initially explore (see 5.4.3.1) the lives of the characters before they went to the hospital because with this the audience would have seen the living conditions of the characters to get a better understanding of their circumstances as to help understand their motives that the characters would later portray. This version was then removed to address time in my artefact, for it would have made the narrative a very drawn-out experience with the addition that it would not fit in with my intended role for the audience. In reflection, I would still have liked to have provided this insight into their homely lives in some manner.
2. Occupation: Edali is a student, so he does not have an actual occupation. He does, however, desire to pursue a career as a performer, actor or singer.
3. Education: From all of the characters, Edali has the highest level of education. He goes to a prestigious private school, and he is an overachiever, an honours student (which is a student who has achieved high grades in their

school coursework) and a prefect. He excels in his subjects through hard work and dedication but also due to raw talent. He continuously studies and tries his best to be at the top of the class. This shows his commitment to his personal growth and how he desires to achieve more in life, as his father also plays an important role in this process and has high expectations for Edali. Interestingly enough, Edali has his future cut out for him and can easily achieve any respected occupation; he does, however, desire to pursue a career in the arts, be it through acting or singing. He feels that it would be more of an achievement to break off from what is expected of him and to make a name for himself. In short, he is deliberately taking the hardest route to achieve fame and success, so he also commits a significant amount of his time to practice his creative skills. This also leans into his posture, his elegance and flair for dramatic and stylistic poses. An additional note to this is that Edali desires to defy his father's expectations.

4. Home life: Edali does not have much of a home life. His parents are divorced, his mother is living her own extravagant lifestyle in another country, and his father is more committed to his work than sustaining a healthy home life. The best description that I can give to describe his home life is that it is cold, lifeless and brief when there is any interaction. Edali does not know what a happy family is or what it feels like to be nurtured or loved. It is also what drives him to pursue a life in the spotlight, as he desires to be honoured and loved. To bring it back to his counterpart, Ida, who falls into the lower class, has a large family who has a lively home life. Edali is envious of this, for it is something that he will never have, but he can achieve something similar through his dream.
5. Religion: Edali is an atheist. His hubris and confidence in his own intellect and achievement make him feel very independent, and he sees religion as something beneath him. He is, however, respectful of other religions for he understands differences, and he wishes to gain respect and control in social situations, therefore he tolerates it.
6. Race, nationality: As stated earlier, he is what is referred to as Coloured in South Africa. My reasons for this choice, as explained above, were to merely provide a diverse cast.

7. Place in community: Edali is trusted in all of the circles he is involved in, he is seen as trustworthy, dependable and capable. His teachers admire his dedication to his studies and would always use him as an example of the 'perfect' student. With his school friends, he is also admired, he is the leader of the group and is seen as caring for his friends, he is the common ground that holds the group together. Edali understands people quite well and knows how to portray himself as the best, all with the attention of gaining adoration and social standing.
8. Political affiliations: Edali isn't too concerned with politics, but if he were to be placed in some affiliation, it would be centrist, leaning right.
9. Amusements: Edali finds excitement in his pursuit to become a successful performer. He enjoys learning about acting, learning to play instruments and sing. He is also considering art. Generally, when something catches his interest, he is driven to perfect it.

I find that here we can already start to see how his value domain influenced his sociology. He always, to some degree, has this desire for hedonism, power and achievement that would influence his decisions in the narrative. It is clear that despite his conditions, his goals that derive from his values are clear and precise

#### **4.2.4.2.3 Edali's psychology**

1. Sex life, moral standards: For all my characters, I wish to address the fact that none of them have an active sex life. Edali has the lowest moral standards of the group. His primary concern is which concerns his own betterment. He does agree to the notions of general moral standards, as it would promote him as agreeable, but he would not go out of his way to take action against it or to become an activist.
2. Personal premise, ambition: As stated in Edali's sociology segment, he is incredibly ambitious; he will go to great lengths to improve his social standing and to be recognized for his power and achievements. He ultimately desires to captivate the hearts and minds of as many people as possible.
3. Frustrations, disappointments: Edali has his share of frustrations and disappointments, firstly from his family and the lack thereof. As I will discuss in the narrative segment (see 5.4.3.1), all of the characters face a gruesome

dilemma, as all four of the children are terminally ill. This virus attacks and destroys all systems of the body, and while they are receiving treatment, their chances of survival are slim. The threat this disease poses to Edali is that it will leave him frail, weak, defenceless and dependent. It will warp his appearance and cause irreversible damage to his voice and leave him immobile. Essentially, the virus will destroy all that he stands for and all of his ambitions.

4. Temperament: Edali has a well-balanced temperament; he behaves and sees himself as the most mature. This is due to his academic understanding and mental development and his innate desire to appease rather than to oppose. He might, however, come across as cold, heartless and methodical since he tends to reason more with knowledge than emotion.
5. Attitude towards life: Edali is a realist. He understands that life can be unfair and cruel and that there is no room to be naïve. He is, however, eager to pursue his ambitions and to make something of himself. In sum, he believes that if life gives you lemons, you make lemonade and start an enterprise.
6. Complexes: The most obvious manifestation of Edali is that he is a narcissist. He does care about others, but he will ultimately always try to be the one who solves the problem or the one who maintains the peace, all while showing off his expansive intellect and reasoning. He also has a bit of a superiority complex, he will actively try to be the best at everything, and he believes that people only remember those in first place.
7. Extrovert, Introvert, Ambivert: Edali is an ambivert. He is methodical in any social situation; he will monitor discussions and will either retract and listen or intervene to provide insightful information. He is aware of the social game and is actively planning out his approach.
8. Abilities: Edali is by far the most talented of the group; he has a diverse set of skills, he always tries to master his abilities and is focused on improving himself. He is highly intellectual and will learn things even if just for the purpose of being dependable.
9. Qualities: Edali is, in fact, a good friend, since he desires to win the approval of others, when people admire him; he admires their admiration for him, with that he would care for his friend's well-being. He is a leader, he is smart and reasonable, he has good composure and is charming. He can, however, be

cold towards emotions since he rationalises everything. He can be egotistical and harsh, and his solutions are effective but sometimes unsavoury. He firmly believes himself to be the shining example of power and achievement and may see insecurity as frailty.

10. IQ: Edali has a high IQ as he can be placed above 130.

If we consider that Edali was conceived as having only an understanding of three values from one value domain, all of the above flourished from merely understanding said values and having said values inform my character development process for Edali. I could have tweaked many elements of Edali to represent a plethora of qualities of the *self-direction* domain and when one considers taking into account the narrative environment. It is evident that it is indeed possible to create a definitive character that has their values inform their *physiology*, *sociology* and *psychology*. As I have stated previously, defining the spectrum of values you want a character to represent can easily provide the needed guidance for any creative to produce characters that have depth and most importantly, provide a clear and universal understanding as to *why* they are who they are.

#### **4.2.4.2.4 Edali's depiction in the artefact**

I will now provide a range of figures to show how Edali's character bone structure is represented in the artefact (with the text removed in order to allow for a better display of him). It should be noted that as discussed previously, it will be evident that Edali's overall design has been informed by his development (his character, bone structure and his *physiology*, *sociology* and *psychology*) and that his value domain, *self-direction*, is clearly depicted in his physical manifestation. With regard to his outcome, we can see that he is as described and visualised, as in his *physiology*. His posture and appearance both show how Edali comes from a prestigious *sociological environment* shows that he portrays himself as elegant, sly, cool, mature and suave. He is confident and not afraid to dramatize and express himself, he would actively make himself comfortable across his couch while still striking a handsome pose. He holds himself in high regard and ties in with his *psychology*, with his ambitions to achieve as a creative; it is evident that he is concerned with how he portrays himself. He always tries to keep *face* value through his elegant poise; he radiates control and confidence through his *power* value and has a smug aura that personifies his

*achievement* value. His playful and suave expressions satiate the *hedonist* value. As with all of the characters, who experience a wide range of emotions (see 5.4.3.2.5.2), this can range from enjoyment, fear, disgust, anger and sadness, it is, however, prevalent that Edali is more of a dominant figure and would rather bolder emotions that signify power and downplay emotions that signify weakness. This is all intended to keep face with others, but it revolves around how others see him; Vesre is similar with regard to *face*, though she composes herself to conform to the expectations of others regarding her. Both Edali and Hengca are dominant personalities, but the difference lies with how Edali plays the social game, whereas Hengca does as she pleases.



Figure 18: Edali's depiction in the artefact (text removed for clarity) 1/4.



Figure 19: Edali's depiction in the artefact (text removed for clarity) 2/4.



Figure 20: Edali's depiction in the artefact (text removed for clarity) 3/4.



Figure 21: Edali's depiction in the artefact (text removed for clarity) 4/4.

#### 4.2.4.3 Ida's character's bone structure

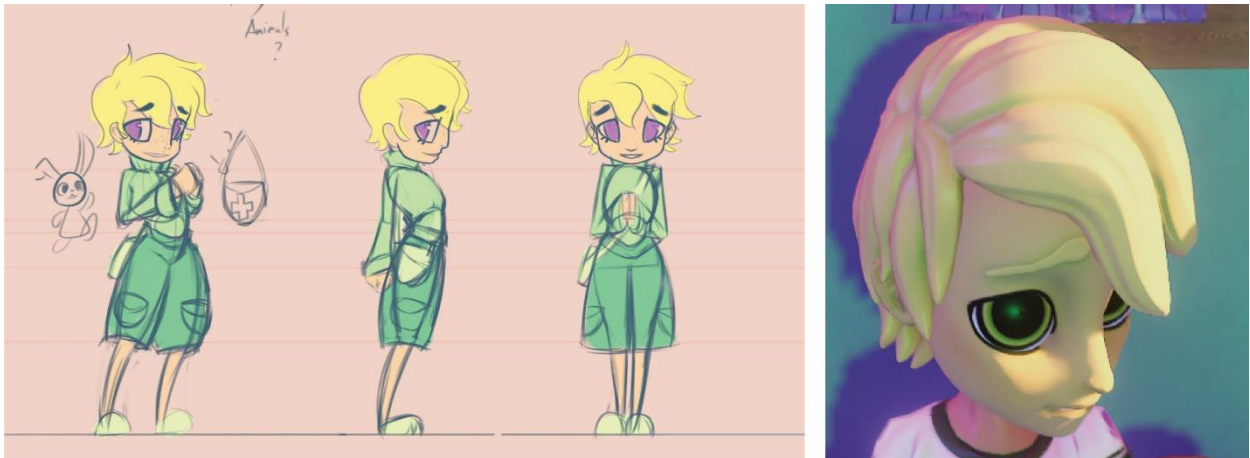


Figure 22: The concept art of Ida and the final rendering

As I have mentioned within Edali's character structure, his counterpart is a character named Ida. I believe it would be best to describe him next to emphasise the key differences between the two characters and how these differences reflect the opposing nature of their value domains. Ida's main value domain is *self-transcendence*, the things that he values most are benevolence and universalism. He is lenient towards values from *openness to change* and *conservation*, as with Edali, these aren't his primary values, but he still finds merit in them. Ida is, however, opposed to values from the *self-enhancement* domain; they are the exact opposite of what motivates him. As with Edali, it is important to note that although Ida has his own hierarchy of values that have differing levels of importance, he still understands and experiences all of the values from the spectrum; he just holds a certain domain with high regard. I will also provide a brief reminder of the values within the *self-transcendence* domain from Figure 1, which explains Schwartz' (1992, 2012) values:

**Benevolence:** Preservation and enhancement of the welfare of people with whom one is in frequent personal contact, and

**Universalism:** Understanding, appreciation, tolerance, and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature.

As stated in Edali's segment, only after I had originally conceptualised my characters did I discover the revised version of Schwartz' (1992, 2012) Value System Theory.

Apart from the refinement of the already existing values, another segment was added that would be applicable to Ida, namely:

**Humility:** Which focuses on an entity's ability to recognise their insignificance in the grand scheme of things.

The following application of Schwartz' (1992, 2012) Value System Theory onto Lajos Egri's (1946, 1972) character bone structure is depicted as I envisioned Ida before discovering the revised value theory. I will again reiterate that even though this discovery was made after the conceptualisation, the revised version manifests itself into his character structure, again emphasising the power of values within the character development process.

#### **4.2.4.3.1 Ida's physiology**

1. Gender: Ida is a male, and as with aforementioned reasons, this decision was purely based on providing a diverse cast.
2. Age: Ida is 12 years old, as with all of the characters.
3. Height and weight: Ida has a small and soft build; he is the shortest of the group. I envisioned Ida as a figure of caring and nurturing. He is primarily concerned with the welfare and wellbeing of those dear to him and other things (people and the environment) on a bigger scale. What this means is that opposed to Edali, who is concerned with his image, Ida does not see it as necessary to have a peak physique when there are other things that are more important to him.
4. Colour of hair, eyes and skin: Ida has blonde hair and a light complexion, he is considered Caucasian. He is not physically active in things like sport, which explains his lack of a tan; his hair colour is based on genetics. He has green eyes, a slight intention from my side to provide him with a greener colour scheme, as will be seen in his appearance, to signify nature as a component of his character. In the original conceptualisations (see Figure 22) I was merely experimenting with colour, his final version was decided on the green colour scheme. Again, creatives do not have to be this direct, but for the purpose of my study, I would like to note that I deliberately went to extremes to show how values could inform the character's development and design.

5. Posture: Ida has a meek, humble and timid posture. He is generally soft-spoken and is over considerate of his own impacts on social situations; he desires to not be a nuisance or to cause friction, so he deliberately tries to make himself appear smaller. He is, however, very passionate about those dear to him, which might lure him out of his shell, especially when it comes to their well-being. He also has a tendency to become more socially active when moral issues are involved. He understands others more than he understands himself and that inexperience reflects in his posture.
6. Appearance: Ida was initially intended to wear a large baggy sweater and some cargo pants; the clothes would have been worn down to signify that they might have been hand-me-downs. This also would have shown his lack of concern or knowledge of fashion and self-appearance. These clothes were gifted to him, and that meant more than looking good. He was also conceptualised to have a plush rabbit that he would carry around with him, a toy given to him by one of his younger siblings for his hospital stay. He would treasure this toy more than other mementoes his family would have given him. His new appearance was made to fit with the hospital theme (see 5.4.3.1). He still has baggy clothes with an older type of design, again, to signify it being older clothes. Another note to make here is that Ida's design is the cutest of the group, to simulate the nurturing nature of his character with that of the nurturing nature of the audience. In Ida's facial design, one may notice the soft features and shape of his eyes and jawline, which evokes a harmless demeanour. This is to reinforce his shape design in the focal point of expression.
7. Defects: As stated before, for narrative reasons, Ida doesn't have any visible defects.
8. Heredity: Aside from racial heredity, Ida doesn't have any discernible factors here.

We can already see how *self-transcendence* is reflected in his physiology, most notably in his shape design. I envisioned that a character from this value domain would have softer edges and a warm, gentle appearance as opposed to the angular nature of his opposition, Edali. In the same line as shape design, I reflect the values *universalism* and *benevolence* in his posture and demeanour, Ida does not look

physically threatening but rather inviting to signify his nurturing nature. As stated before, we can also see how I subtly worked his humble nature into his appearance.

#### **4.2.4.3.2 Ida's sociology**

1. Class: Ida can be classified as belonging to the lower class. His parents are still together, and both work equally hard to provide for their family. Ida does, in fact, have a lot of siblings, three younger brothers and two younger sisters. They live in a small cramped apartment, but they manage to get along just fine. They do not have much, but they do care a lot for one another. Their parents are capable of providing the necessities for the entire family; however, with Ida being hospitalised, his family is straining heavily to provide for his medical needs. It should be apparent that for somebody of the *self-transcendence* value domain, they would see themselves as a burden on those whom they care for dearly.
2. Occupation: Ida is currently still a student and does not have an occupation. He does, however, aspire to become a doctor who is capable of caring for others - in the narrative, he mentions this specifically. He would like to be able to help cure people of diseases. Another one of his aspirations would be to become a veterinarian; ultimately, he seeks a future where he can be proactive in caring for either the environment or people.
3. Education: Ida attends public school. He is an average student; he is proactive in his studies but is not at the same level as Edali. He is still timid and shy in his daily school life and sometimes struggles to converse with others; he does, however, make friends easily and in time opens up more to them. He is highly empathetic and is immensely involved in the care of his friends' lives. Teachers also like him for he also concerns himself with their lives and he behaves in classes. Ida would avidly participate in school charity events and fundraisers, and even if his contribution is very little, he is always eager to help. Ida does sometimes get bullied for his meek demeanour and does not resist it, he essentially turns the other cheek; however, if any of his younger siblings are being harassed, he becomes active and highly protective.

4. Home life: Ida has a wonderful home life. His parents are passionate in their relationship and are incredibly diligent in their work life, even if it is not a high paying salary. They have heavily invested in their children's lives and have unconditional love towards them. I will not go into much detail about Ida's siblings, what is important to note is that they are all diverse in their own unique ways, but they all do bond and love each other. Ida is the eldest of the siblings, and it is always up to him to parent the rest when their parents are at work. He would be the one who resolves bickering, he would be the one that treats wounds, and he would be the one to help them with homework and chores. Ida is quite good at housework, for he wants to help his parents as best he can, he wants to make their busy lives easier when they get home, and he is good at it. The family has a cat, and a dog and Ida usually takes care of them as well, he loves animals, so it isn't a chore to him.
5. Religion: Ida is interested in religion; he finds it to be a fascinating concept, and he finds moral teachings sound. He hasn't been directly exposed to a structured religious environment; this would later change when he meets Vesre, another character in the narrative. Ida is mostly interested in the teachings of 'The Book' for he believes that with it, he can help his family and help teach his siblings the importance of morals.
6. Race, nationality: As stated earlier, I wanted to provide a diverse cast. Ida is a Caucasian. He can either be interpreted as English or Afrikaans in origin.
7. Place in community: Ida is active in his school and his community. He participates in charity events, fundraisers, helping at shelters for animals and in general tries his best to help his community. He wants to preserve nature and his environment and wants to give back and assist the community in any way he can. He is aware of his shortcomings and knows that at the moment, he has only a small contribution to make. This awareness, however, drives him to want to achieve a good career that can provide him with a good income, so that he can help alleviate stress in his family and to have a greater impact in his community. Ida is, however, quite naive and believes that someday he can make the world a better place.
8. Political affiliations: Ida has yet to have a firm grasp on the concepts of political affiliations; he would be centrist leaning left.

9. Amusements: Ida enjoys spending time with his family, and he enjoys communal service. He loves animals and would often pay visits to aquariums or zoos. He has recently started researching how to make a garden to perhaps plant some vegetables.

Based on Ida's sociology, we can ascertain that his values, Universalism and Benevolence, have informed his development process here, he also falls into the *social focus* domain, and this is also portrayed in his motivations. He is driven and proactive in the lives of others around him, and it is evident that he enjoys it. What is also interesting to note are the differences between him and Edali, how they have completely contrasting lives. Ida is also in his own way envious of what Edali has, in the sense of wealth and success, Ida would love to be able to have those resources to help support the things he cares about. Ida does, however, understand that he cannot control such circumstances and doesn't regard Edali with any spite; he is motivated to achieve his goals through his own methods and dedication.

#### **4.2.4.3.3 Ida's psychology**

1. Sex life, moral standards: For all my characters, I wish to stress that none of them has an active sex life. Ida has the highest moral standards of the group. He is verbal about the welfare of all of humanity, things like equality for all, fair and just representation, the preservation of all life, anti-war notions, healthcare for all, the preservation and care of children and the elderly, the protection of innocent lives, pacifism, the conservation of natural resources, true and just care for animals, anti-inhumane practices, the list goes on. Ida is essentially a naïve idealist who truly believes in the betterment of the world and the belief that the world can be changed to become unified.
2. Personal premise, ambition: Ida's premise and ambition are that he wants to make the world a better place, to always help others in need and to one day be able to share his success with others. His passion for the care of others motivates him to leave the world a better place.
3. Frustrations, disappointments: Ida is frustrated that he can do so little for others, and he is frustrated with the system. As noted in Edali's segment, all of the characters in the narrative (see 5.4.3.1) are terminally ill with a violent virus. The virus's impact on the body is in most cases fatal and only seldom

do its victims survive, and when they do, they are maimed. For Ida, the realisation that his body will be crippled does bother him a bit; he doesn't really care about his own state but sees the frustration that it might impose on his ambitions. The true frustration comes from the medical costs of his treatment. It is an expensive process that Ida knows his family cannot afford, and this makes him feel like a burden on his family; his true *self-transcendent* nature fills him with guilt. It is interesting to note that Edali's frustrations are purely centred around himself, whereas Ida's frustrations are centred around the impact of his condition on others.

4. Temperament: Ida has a short fuse, but essentially a harmless temperament. It is more of an emotional outburst when things are unjust; he is normally reclusive and soft-spoken, but when issues arise that challenge his morals or if those he cares for are threatened, his emotional state becomes hyperactive. He is essentially driven by his ideals, passion, empathy and emotion. An example of this can be seen in the narrative (see 5.4.3.1), where Ida becomes frustrated with the healthcare system. This contrasts with Edali's cold and methodical nature to turn to facts rather than feelings.
5. Attitude towards life: As mentioned before, Ida is an idealist and an optimist. He sees the good in everything and believes that there is good in everyone, he believes in change and growth and is especially passionate to see this in life itself. He is affixed to the beauty of life and living, and he wishes to enhance it and witness it.
6. Complexes: Ida is an altruist; although it is a virtue, I see it as a complex. His sole devotion to others often leaves him not caring enough about himself. He would much rather experience the pain for others instead of having them suffer. At any moment he feels as if he is the cause of suffering, he begins to despise himself.
7. Extrovert, Introvert, Ambivert: Ida is in most cases an introvert, leaning towards an ambivert. When it comes to issues that Ida finds important, he will speak up and be vocal, but beyond that, he is reclusive and prefers to listen and be reserved.
8. Abilities: Ida has a growing skills set when it comes to the care of others, the environment and animals. He is dedicated to his studies, but due to his altruistic nature, he spends more time tending to others.

9. Qualities: Ida is a kind-hearted soul who is an excellent friend. He will always try to be supportive of others' endeavours and would try to motivate them to pursue their goals. He is truly the most empathetic, selfless and most understanding member of the group. He is, however, over-emotional, childish and naïve, a pushover and timid, his humble nature makes him see himself as less worthy, and he is ignorant to how the world truly works.
10. IQ: Ida has an average IQ, he can be placed around 100.

As we can see, Ida is indeed informed by his value domain, *self-transcendence*, albeit a very direct example. It is, however, telling that his values *universalism* and *benevolence* (and in reflection, humility) are concurrent and provide clear examples of his motivations, goals and desires. It helps inform his norms, beliefs and even informs many of his traits. As mentioned in the segment of value relations with other human characteristics (see 4.1.1.5), values can help any creative person establish the many nuances of a character. Another point to note here is that in comparison, Ida and Edali provide a unique relationship for the audience to experience. Neither character is inherently right nor wrong, a protagonist or an antagonist, both have their virtues and their vices, their strengths and weaknesses. It all comes down to whom the audience identifies most with, we have barely scratched the surface of my narrative, but it is evident that the stark contrast between the two characters promises an intriguing experience. In sum, I find that Ida's value domain has informed his character structure, and it reflects in his *physiology*, *sociology* and *psychology*.

#### **4.2.4.3.4 Ida's depiction in the artefact**

I will now provide a range of figures to show how Ida's character bone structure is represented in the artefact (with the text removed in order to allow for a better display of him). It should be noted that as discussed previously, it will be evident that Ida's overall design has been informed by his development (his character bone structure like his *physiology*, *sociology and psychology*) and that his value domain, *self-transcendence*, is clearly depicted in his physical manifestation. With regard to his outcome, we can see that he is as described and visualised, as in his *physiology*, what is of note here would be his posture and appearance; as noted, he wears hand me downs that are too large for him, his general demeanour is gentle and timid

though based on his *sociology*, he is very caring and kind, stemming from his ambitions to care for those near to him and universal issues. This can be seen in his posture and expression, his sheepish nature expresses his sensitive side, he is empathetic and concerned with the well-being of others and the world and as such isn't too focused on his own worth. He can be seen through his posture and expression as kind, nurturing, sensitive, caring, timid, concerning of others well-being. When it comes to his *sociology* and *psychology*, it is apparent that he would normally be soft-spoken but would become more expressive when dealing with issues involving morals or those he holds dear start to appear. Ida is indeed more introverted, even in his space, he would more often than not make himself appear small and not take up too much space, as intuitive to be accompanying to others. It is evident that through his manifestation that his values are existent. Firstly his humble and timid nature, his emphasises and focus on others more than himself shows both his *benevolence* and *humility* values. In moments where issues appear, concerning others, he becomes more active and expressive; signifying his willingness to escape out of his shell to stand up these qualities shows his *universalism* value. As with all of the characters, they experience a wide range of emotions (see 5.4.3.2.5.2), this can range from enjoyment, fear, disgust, anger and sadness, as opposed to Edali, Ida is more submissive in temperament but isn't concerned with the *face* value, he is comfortable to show his softer side or that he is sad or afraid; his expressions of his emotions are however a bit dampened by his introverted nature. Both Ida and Hengca become expressive when subjects are involved that they care for, the difference being that Ida's care is more centred on others, whereas Hengca's care is centred on herself. Both Vesre and Ida's body language is refined; the difference being that Ida's body language is due to his selflessness, whereas Vesre's body language is due to her awareness of conformist expectancies of her. The key contrast is between Edali and Ida, as Edali is confident, maturely expressive and aware of his image, whereas Ida has a sheepish and gentle nature, shy and open to express kind and submissive attributes.



Figure 23: Ida's depiction in the artefact (text removed for clarity) 1/4.



Figure 24: Ida's depiction in the artefact (text removed for clarity) 2/4.

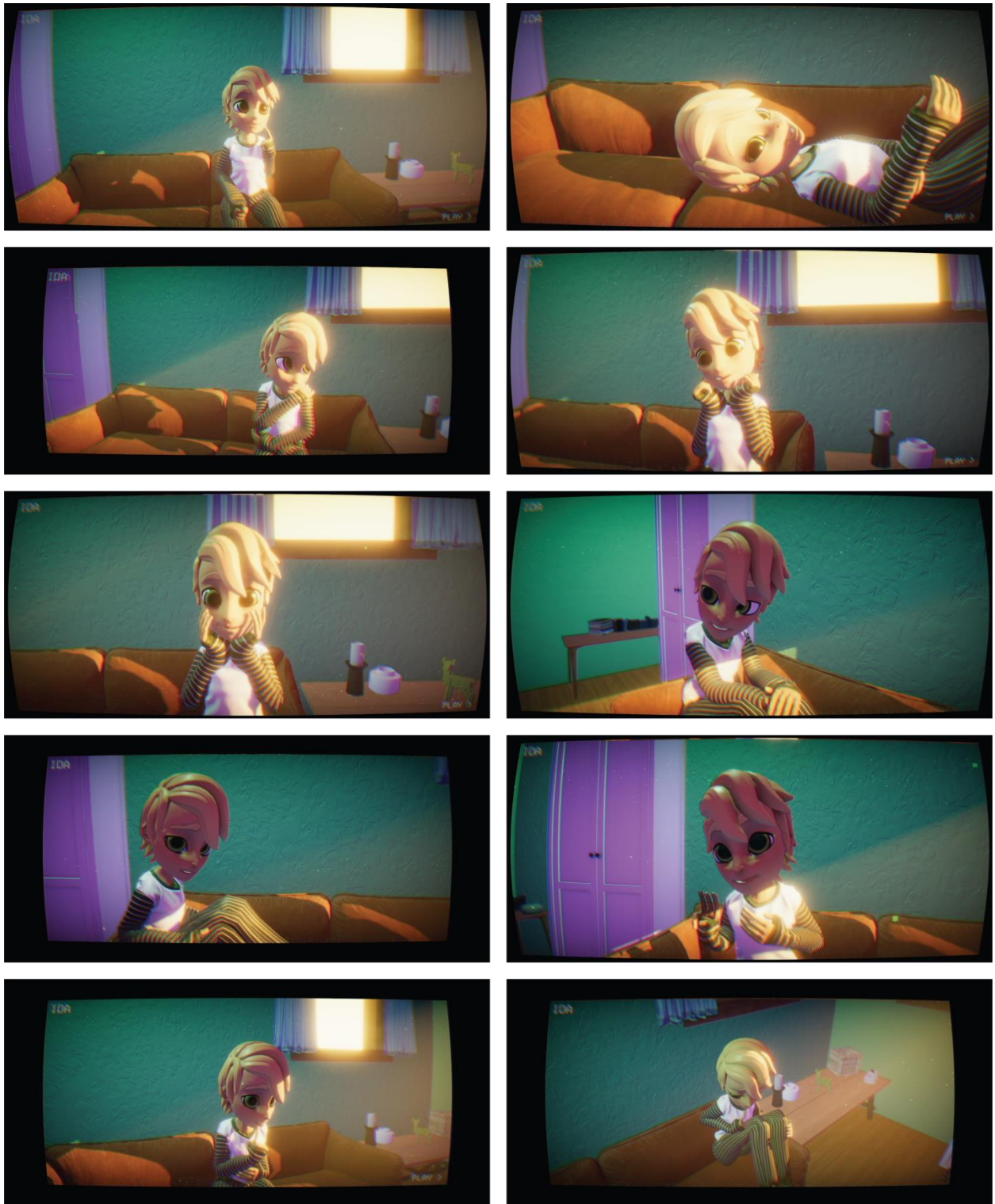


Figure 25: Ida's depiction in the artefact (text removed for clarity) 3/4.



Figure 26: Ida's depiction in the artefact (text removed for clarity) 4/4.

#### 4.2.4.4 Vesre's character bone structure

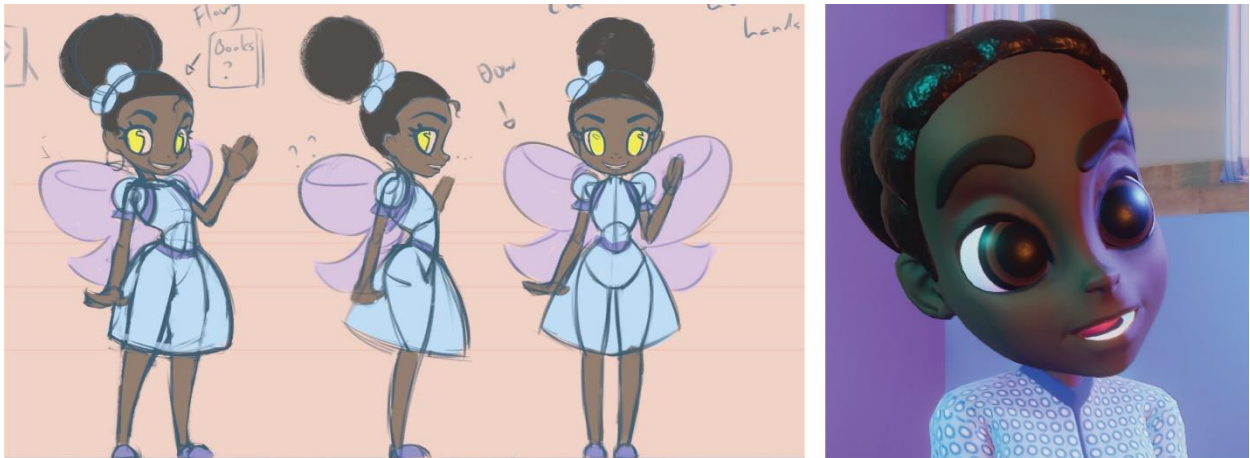


Figure 27: The concept art of Vesre and her final rendering

The third character that I will now discuss is Vesre. Vesre's main value domain is *conservation*, the things that she values most is conformity, security and tradition. She is lenient towards values from the *self-transcendence* and *self-enhancement* domains, although these aren't her primary values, but she still finds merit in them. Vesre is, however, opposed to values from the *openness to change* domain, as they are the exact opposite of what motivates her. As with the previous two characters, it is important to note that although Vesre has her own hierarchy of values that have differing levels of importance, she still understands and experiences all the values from the spectrum, she just holds a certain domain in high regard. I will also provide a brief reminder of the values within the *conservation* domain from Figure 1, which explains Schwartz' (1992, 2012) values:

**Security:** Safety, harmony, and stability of society, of relationships, and of self.

**Conformity:** Restraint of actions, inclinations, and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms.

**Tradition:** Respect, commitment, and acceptance of the customs and ideas that traditional culture or religion provides.

As with Edali and Ida, only after the original conceptualisation of Vesre's character structure did I discover the revised version of Schwartz's (1992, 2012) Value Theory.

Vesre was originally designed to be informed by the values security, conformity and tradition; however, it will become apparent that in her structure (written as intended from the initial development) that she does, in fact, contain the two newly added segments, face and humility.

**Face:** The process to gain power and security by avoiding humiliation and maintaining an entity's public image.

**Humility:** This focuses on an entity's ability to recognise its insignificance in the grand scheme of things.

The following application of Schwartz's (1992, 2012) Value Theory onto Lajos Egri's (1946, 1972) character bone structure will provide a detailed application of the *conservation* value domain and also reveal how I inherently applied the revised value segments that are also portrayed within her development into her *physiology*, *sociology* and *psychology*.

#### 4.2.4.4.1 Vesre's physiology

1. Gender: Vesre is a female, again, the reason only being to provide a diverse cast.
2. Age: Vesre is 12 years old, as with all the characters and to reiterate, not intended to provide any narrative advantage/ disadvantage.
3. Height and weight: Vesre has a soft and feminine build; she is taller than Ida but shorter than Edali. I envisioned Vesre to be concerned with the norms that her culture expects of their female members. It is expected of her to participate in a neat, orderly and feminine fashion. She is aware of her physique but not with the intention of being attractive but to conform to the traditions of her culture.
4. Colour of hair, eyes and skin: Vesre has dark brown natural hair; she has dark skin and brown eyes in the final rendition. She is of African descent; I did not specify any specific culture. It is interesting to note that her hair is made up into neat, orderly rows that are tied up into a big bun. She loves her natural, beautiful African hair but also keeps it orderly. It would be apparent by the shape design of her hair that in general, her shape design is based on a

circle. It can be seen as symbolic to religious ties, to symbolise harmony, unity and order and that she is approachable and friendly.

5. Posture: Vesre's posture shows decorum - she will mostly have good posture; sit upright with her arms and legs crossed. She has a firm sense of etiquette and presents a reserved but wise elegance. Her resolve and devotion make her appear the most composed and the most respectful of the group; she is rarely fast-moving and finds a good balance between emotion and reason. The circular shape design is also reflected in her silhouette, due to her femininity, she has soft curves. It is apparent that she is well mannered and dutiful in abiding by what she was taught.
6. Appearance: Vesre was intended to wear a respectable but gorgeous blue summer dress with a large bow adorning her waist. Her style would appear a bit more traditional (in comparison with other youths), but she would still convey a sense of pride in her appearance, the appearance of her outfit would also reiterate the circular shape design, as stated before. In the final narrative (see 5.4.3.1) she is hospitalised and wears a distinct blue onesie. In contrast with all the other characters that have a variation within their appearance, Vesre's onesie is unified as a singular piece, this helps establish her sense of order and harmony, it conforms to her traditions of being presentable and allows her to have a unique appearance above the rest. She looks quite plain compared to her counterpart, Hengca. The use of the colour blue signifies her collected and composed demeanour. Vesre is the only character that has a prop in the narrative, most importantly 'The Book' which she uses to express herself with and never leaves her side. Another important thing to note is the shape of Vesre's eyes and jawline, which is soft and circular. This is to reinforce her shape design in the focal point of expression.
7. Defects: As stated before, for narrative reasons, Vesre doesn't have any visible defects.
8. Heredity: Vesre does not have any distinct hereditary elements that make her stand out above the rest.

As with the previous characters, Vesre's physiology is informed by her *conservation* value domain. It is apparent in the use of shape design, silhouette, posture and body structure that her values have informed these elements. Vesre signifies a maturity

based on wisdom, traditions, order and respect, as opposed to Edali's purely powerful intellectually driven maturity. She has a greater grasp of her position within society and is eager to conform to the laws and traditions that govern her. She finds comfort in order and, quite literally, living by 'The Book'. The book does not only signify a connection to religion but also as a guideline to living a lawful life, one could refer to it as a rule book. She also mostly falls into the *social focus* domain, as with all of the aforementioned but also tapers on *personal focus* with her studies and her pursuit of virtuous salvation through her beliefs as to avoid losing face value.

#### 4.2.4.4.2 Vesre's sociology

1. Class: Vesre comes from a middle-class family. Her father is a pastor, and her mother is a commissioned officer in the police force. They have a comfortable lifestyle and are smart with their finances. They live modestly but do have some average luxuries. What is important to note here is that Vesre doesn't have an extreme lifestyle (on either side, like Ida and Edali). She has a modest and humble average life. It is also important to note both her parents' professions and how they have influenced her upbringing. Vesre is reminded regularly of moral and non-moral standards and has been raised to abide by the system.
2. Occupation: Vesre is also still a student; she does aspire to follow in either of her parents' footsteps. These desires are heavily influenced by her parents as they placed these expectations upon her; she does, however, find both options appealing and admires and respects her parents.
3. Education: Vesre goes to public school. She has a 100% attendance rate and is always committed to her subjects; she always completes her assignments and is a prefect and class leader. She desires to be a leader, but not for the same reason as Edali. She also falls into the *anxiety-avoidance* domain, so she desires to enforce control and establish order, and she desires to guide others on the right path and to reprimand those who threaten the harmony of her school environment. She has a conflicting social environment, with many students despising her firm reprimands while others similar to her value domain admire her presence. Her friend circle consists of other children that are part of her father's congregation or other prefects. Vesre does not mind

being despised by others, as with her value domain, those within her inner circle matters most.

4. Home life: As stated before, Vesre has an average lifestyle. Her parents reared her properly to behave, and she gladly obliges; she is thus well-behaved. Her parents care for her and want her to follow in their footsteps. Her grandmother lives with the family, and they take good care of her, and Vesre cares a lot for her grandmother, who is her closest friend. Vesre always romanticizes a more traditional lifestyle and inherently desires to also one day find a partner similar to her values; in sum, she finds the idea of starting her own family appealing.
5. Religion: Vesre is fervently committed to her religion. She always participates in her father's congregation and is active within that community. She will eagerly assist in events, customs, and religious days and will always try to better her community. She is a firm believer in the teachings of 'The Book' and often takes its teachings to a literal sense.
6. Race, nationality: As before, I wanted to provide a diverse cast. Vesre is of African descent.
7. Place in community: Vesre is firmly positioned within her congregation and in her school life. She is mostly concerned with the communities closest to her but does at times express concerns towards issues that revolve around the sanctity and well-being of her society. She is aware of political and security issues and would actively stay vigilant towards these; she wants to maintain social order within her school and actively tries to persuade others to join her congregation. She is somewhat concerned about the increase of liberal thinking that promotes debauchery and believes that it threatens the sanctity of her cultural traditions.
8. Political affiliations: Vesre is by nature very conservative, she leans more towards the right and considers herself to be a republican.
9. Amusements: Vesre enjoys philosophical reading and tries to understand the human condition; she finds delight in being able to help others correct improper behaviour and sees herself as a beacon of good morals. Vesre always ponders on the meaning of life and her position within it, and she finds comfort in her belief, she also believes that by actively living a virtuous life will grant salvation to the soul.

As we can see with Vesre's sociology, her value domain, *conservation*, is an integral part of her development, she is firmly committed to her traditions that her family, congregation and school impose on her, she conforms strictly to the rules of these social bodies rely upon, and she is concerned with the safety of herself, those close to her, her community and society in general. She is respectful towards her elders, and without hesitation, she abides by the rules that society and her beliefs impose. She is active in her community and is also driven by the *anxiety-avoidance* domain.

#### **4.2.4.4.3 Vesre's psychology**

1. Sex life, moral standards: For all my characters, I wish to address that none of them have an active sex life. Vesre has a strong sense of moral standards which is informed by her elders via the teachings of 'The Book'. She does, however, also have various other standards that she lives by, like how members of each sex should dress according to their roles based on her tradition and culture and that those who are older must always be respected. What drives her to conform and respect the greater moral standards is her desire to establish security for her community, herself and her society. Another key factor is, in fact, spirituality, although as Schwartz (1992:10; 2012:8) stated, this is not an official value but is considered to be found in other values. I still found this applicable to the narrative and to Vesre. Vesre has a strong understanding of the spiritual nature and bases many of her decisions on the moral implications it might have, as stated before, living a just and virtuous life which conforms to what she believes is 'right' is what informs her actions.
2. Personal premise, ambition: Vesre is by far the most subservient, dutiful and spiritually tempered member of the group. Her ambitions drive her to find meaning through philosophy, theology and moral development. She desires to improve her own life and the life of others, to seek- and provide guidance and to help others and herself understand their place in life and their purpose in life. She might appear overbearing or over-zealous, but she does not look down upon her fellow man, she genuinely cares and aspires for a harmonious world. If she were to follow in her father's footsteps, it would be to help her community grow and prosper by teaching them how to live virtuously. If she

were to follow in her mother's footsteps, it would be to keep her community and her society safe, she would also prefer to work with criminals to help them rehabilitate.

3. Frustrations, disappointments: Vesre is frustrated by those she is in regular contact with who deliberately disobey the law or intentionally stray down wrong paths. She doesn't like to see others ruin their lives, a typical example would be young children smoking, and she doesn't look down on them but only wants to guide them to self-betterment. As with the other characters, at this point, I also discuss the relevant narrative frustrations that specifically loom over the group. The virus damages and even renders bodily systems into a state of zero functionality. There is a fifth character by the name of Morn (see 5.4.3.1) who was hospitalised before the group arrived and they all became friends. One of the conditions Morn eventually faced was that he became an amnesiac, which then led to a catatonic state. This specifically frightened Vesre, since she follows the rules quite literally by *the book*, in her understanding of it, viz. that salvation only comes to those who consciously accept and acknowledge the teachings of "The Book" in order to receive the intended afterlife. This is never specified as any particular type since everybody has their own perspective of what comes after life. What is important here is that the virus threatens all that she is and all that she believes in. She is worried about what could possibly happen to her consciousness and the threat that she might forget the figurative concepts that are the very fundamentals of her values and development.
4. Temperament: She has a mild temperament, and she is not afraid to stand up and declare what she believes in, she will avidly share her opinions with the intention of trying to steer herself and others towards betterment or to instil order. She is, however, reserved and respectful when she speaks with adults and will conform to her subservient nature, even if she might not completely agree with their decisions, she stays to her traditional and conservative nature.
5. Attitude towards life: Vesre sees life as a complex balance of scales; she knows that there are many elements of good and bad that affect all aspects of life. She understands that she only constitutes a tiny part on the grand scale.

She does her best to try and balance, and even tip it in good favour, to all things connected in her life. She is realistically hopeful.

6. Complexes: Vesre is quite rigid in her life, she never strays off of the path and is quick to try and help others get back in line; she can be authoritative but with good intentions. This makes her appear obnoxious and boring. She is indeed very judgmental of others' decisions, especially based on her standards.
7. Extrovert, Introvert, Ambivert: Vesre would classify as an extrovert among her peers, but would become introverted when around those she deems superior and older than her. She believes in hierarchy and believes in being respectful, she also respects her peers, but she classifies them as on the same level as her, so her opinions are thus equally valid.
8. Abilities: Vesre has a specific skill set when it comes to tradition; she is ingrained with the norms of her culture and can effortlessly perform on said norms. She has a firm understanding of leadership and can easily handle the role. Like Ida, she has mastered housekeeping abilities but differs from Ida in the sense that it is expected of her and she unconditionally abides by these procedures. She is proficient in the teachings of her beliefs and has a strong philosophical foundation.
9. Qualities: Vesre is the obedient child whom many elders would wish for. She doesn't complain and always without hassle follows orders. She is an exemplary example of her culture and traditions and is humble in all walks of her life. She is also overbearing and overzealous and afraid of anything that breaks the norm. Her definition of fun is disproportionately outdated and plain.
10. IQ: Vesre has an average IQ; she can be placed around 110.

Based on the complete character structure of Vesre, we can clearly see that her value domain, *conservation*, has informed her *physiology*, *sociology*, and *psychology*. She is a shining example of somebody with conservative, tradition and security values (and in reflection, also humility and face values). When looking back on all of the aforementioned, it is easy to identify with what her values stand for, we all desire some sense of security in our lives as we also hold true to some of the traditions passed onto us, in some sense people do conform to a greater structure in their lives, be it their workplace, within their close circles or to societal law. We

understand the concepts of humility and preserving face within a social scenario. It is evident, yet again, that even if it is through personification, clarity as to whom a character is can be established via Schwartz' (1992, 2012) Value Theory.

#### **4.2.4.4.4 Vesre's depiction in the artefact**

I will now provide a range of figures showing how Vesre's bone structure is represented in the artefact (with the text removed in order to allow for a better display of her). It should be noted that as discussed previously, it will be evident that Vesre's overall design has been informed by her development (her character bone structure like her *physiology, sociology and psychology*) and that her value domain, *conservation*, is clearly depicted in her physical manifestation. With regard to her outcome, we can see that she is as described and visualised, as in her *physiology*, what is of note here is her posture and appearance, she dresses and conducts herself in an orderly manner, as with her *sociology*, she is also accepting of a more traditional, feminine, role and can be seen sitting neatly and respectfully. She also always has '*The Book*' with or near her, showing the significance of her beliefs that also stem from her *sociology*. Her general posture and demeanour can be seen as respectable, ladylike, neat, orderly, composed, mannerly and humble. Based on her *sociology and psychology*, she is eager to conform to what is expected of her, she obeys the rules and lives by the rules and finds comfort in stability, she is respectable to those traditionally superior or of authority, it is also evident that she lives her life as what she aspires to be, a person of conservative significance, she does become expressive in her demeanour when topics that revolve around her values arise and she is also not afraid to openly speak of her non-moral beliefs. It is then evident that in her manifestation, her values are prevalent. In the manner of how she composes herself, how she speaks respectfully, how she creates a postures shows that she is influenced by her *conformity, face and humility* values. At times when she becomes expressive, be it positive, like when discussing her beliefs, she finds enjoyment and expresses enlightenment and coupled with the aforementioned, her *tradition* values emerge. When there is conflict, however, she may become expressive, as noted in her *sociology*, she isn't afraid to enforce order, she may become frustrated or angry when others act out of place and thus shows her *security* values. As with all the characters, they experience a wide range of

emotions (see 5.4.3.2.5.2), this can range from enjoyment, fear, disgust, anger and sadness; in contrast with Hengca, Vesre keeps an orderly grip hold on how she expresses herself, she is aware of how others see her and wishes to be respectful and humble. Whereas Edali is also concerned with how others see him, his reasons are self-centred, whereas Vesre wishes to conform to others' expectations. She is thus also similar to Ida in their posture and levels of expressions; however, with Ida, it is due to his sheepish nature, whereas, with Vesre, it is due to composure and conformity.

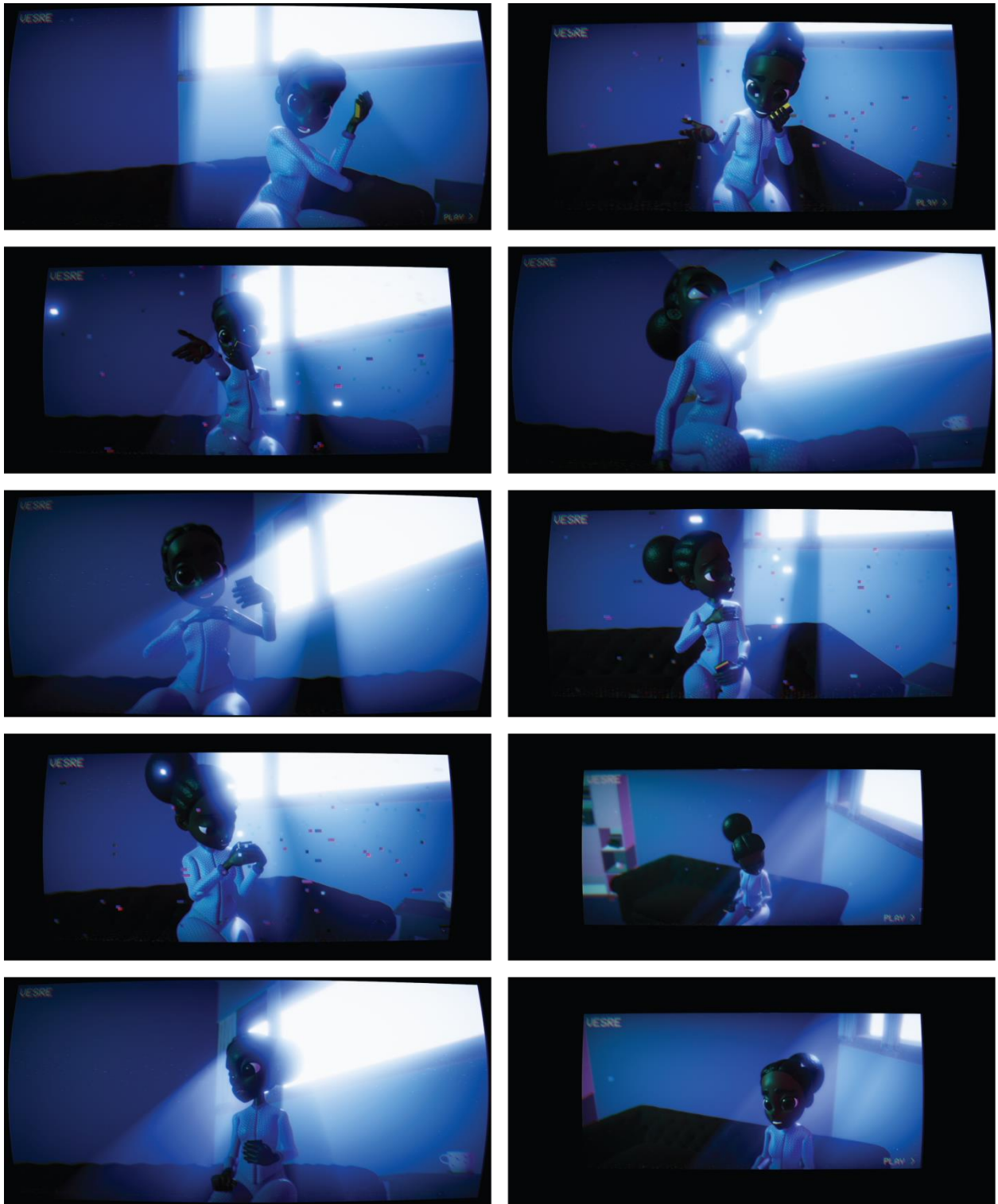


Figure 28: Vesre's depiction in the artefact (text removed for clarity) 1/4.



Figure 29: Vesre's depiction in the artefact (text removed for clarity) 2/4.

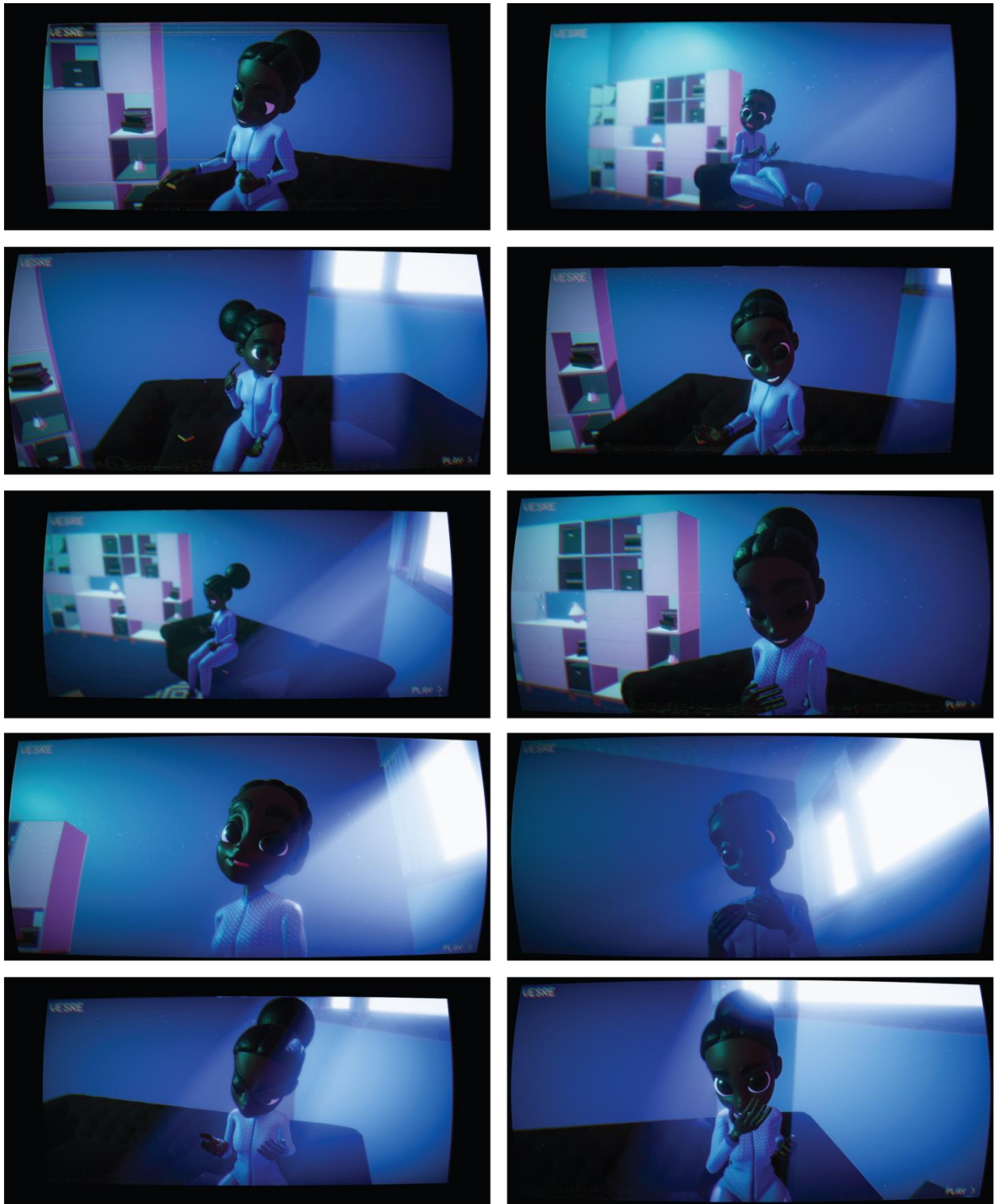


Figure 30: Vesre's depiction in the artefact (text removed for clarity) 3/4.



Figure 31: Vesre's depiction in the artefact (text removed for clarity) 4/4.

#### 4.2.4.5 Hengca's character bone structure

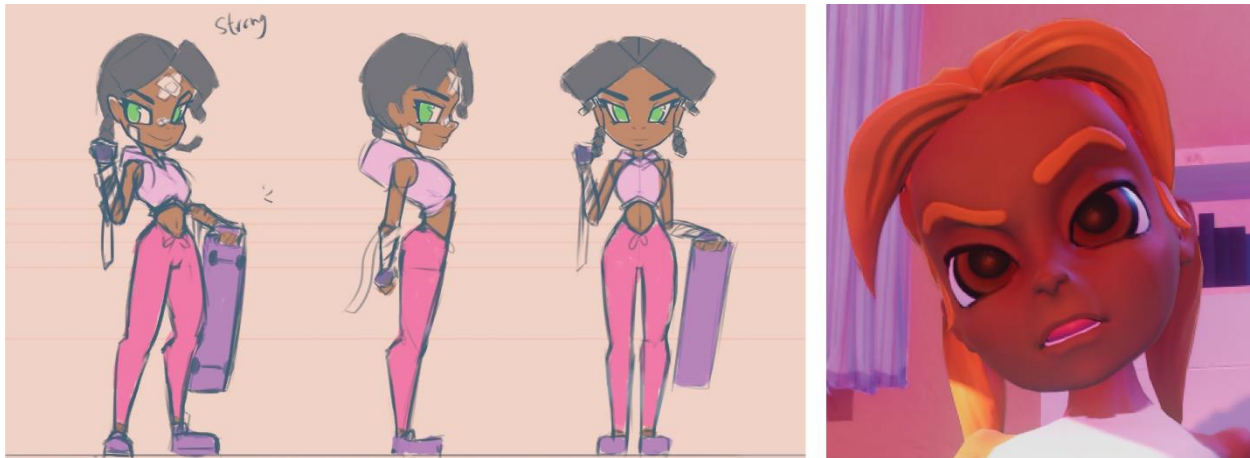


Figure 32: The concept art of Hengca and her final rendering

The final character that has been informed by Schwartz's (1992, 2012) Value Theory that I will discuss is Hengca. Hengca's main value domain is *openness to change*, the things that she values most are self-direction, stimulation and hedonism. She is lenient towards values from the *self-enhancement* and *self-transcendence* domains. These aren't her primary values, but she still finds merit in them. Hengca is, however, opposed to values from the *conservation* domain, as they are the exact opposite of what motivates her. As with the previous three characters, it is important to note that although Hengca has her own hierarchy of values that have differing levels of importance, she still understands and experiences all of the values from the spectrum, she just holds a certain domain with high regard. I will also provide a brief reminder of the values within the *openness to change* domain from Figure 1, which explains Schwartz' (1992, 2012) values:

**Self-Direction:** Independent thought and action; choosing, creating, exploring.

**Stimulation:** Excitement, novelty and challenge in life.

**Hedonism:** Pleasure and sensuous gratification of oneself.

In reflection, Hengca does not have any new segments to her value domain, merely refinements as is with the rest. As with all of the refined details of the revision of

Schwartz's (1992, 2012) Value Theory, it is already intrinsically informed within her character bone structure.

The following application of Schwartz' (1992, 2012) Value Theory onto Lajos Egri's (1946, 1972) character bone structure will provide a detailed application of the *openness to change* value domain and how they are portrayed within Hengca's development into her *physiology, sociology* and *psychology*.

#### **4.2.4.5.1 Hengca's physiology**

1. Gender: Hengca is a female, the reason for this only to provide a diverse cast.
2. Age: Hengca is 12 years old, as with all of the characters, and it is emphasized again, not to provide any narrative advantage/ disadvantage.
3. Height and weight: Hengca is the tallest of the group, and she has a strong, muscular build. As will be discussed later, Hengca is an athlete and is built as such. For now, know that she finds gratification and stimulation in being strong and being able to perform well. Her shape design reflects a more stocky and rectangular shape, to help signify her stalwart presence and her tough resolve.
4. Colour of hair, eyes and skin: Hengca has a darker skin tone, which stems from what is referred to as Indian in South Africa. She has hazel eyes and orange dyed hair in the final renditions; in her earlier concept art her hair was brown, but as I experimented more and finalised her colour scheme to match warm colours, I changed her hair colour too. There are two significant elements here to explain: she tries to portray herself as rebellious with her dyed hair and together with her hazel eyes, and she leans towards a warmer palette to signify fiery passion. The shape design of her hair also leans more towards a blocky form, with thick, wide clumps coming from her tied back hair and the strands from her forehead. She ties her hair back to allow her more convenience when practising sport, but it isn't done with effort, hence the two loose strands at the front.
5. Posture: Hengca has a very loud and abrasive posture, she will commonly put her feet up on things or take over her space to suit her needs; she is also a very active body so she will more often than not be seen in a dynamic pose. She radiates a tough and cool demeanour and shows that she isn't ashamed

nor caring of how others perceive her. In contrast with Edali's power through elegance, Hengca presents herself as bold, brash and imposing. What we can ascertain from this is that she likes to keep her body actively stimulated through stretching, and that she is hedonistic, she will dominate her space to create the most comfort for herself.

6. Appearance: Hengca was intended to be seen wearing sportswear, things like gym leggings and pants accompanied by a hoodie, all with dynamic patterns and design to make her appear dynamic. As with the final version of the narrative (see 5.4.3.1) in the environment changed to that of a hospital, Hengca now also wears pyjamas like the rest of the group. Her appearance consists of baggy but rolled-up pants, her pyjama top wrapped around her waist with a tight white tank top added to her top. Her appearance most definitely depicts somebody who either dresses for comfort or to appear tough. Hengca is deliberately trying to make herself appear cool, as with the aforementioned, her colour scheme is warm, vibrant colours that represent her passionate nature, even in the design of her clothes; it is deliberately made to signify her blocky appeal and bulk. Throughout the process documentation, you can see how I would regularly change her colour scheme when referring to the original conceptualisation (see Figure 32), Vesre and Ida mostly stay true to their own colour schemes, and Hengca and Edali switched around theirs. If one were to look at her eyes and her jawline, one would also notice the square/ rectangular approach. This is to reinforce her shape design in the focal point of expression.
7. Defects: And finally, as stated before, for narrative reasons, Hengca doesn't have any visible defects.
8. Heredity: Hengca does not have any distinct hereditary elements that make her stand out above the rest.

We can already get an understanding of Hengca's *physiology* and how it is informed by her value domain, her bold and brash nature and her tendencies to appear and to do as she wants. She carries herself with confidence and is driven by what suits her best, being stimulation, self-direction and hedonism. This is clearly opposed to Vesre, who is contained and reserved. Their appearances contrast significantly, as Vesre would appear orderly and eloquent whereas Hengca would appear wild and

carefree. Even in colour schemes, Hengca is warm and fiery, whereas Vesre is cool and collected. In posture, Hengca is dynamic and spacious, whereas Vesre is confined. It would seem fitting that two contrasting value domains can inform their *physiology*; again I would like to state that for other creatives they do not have to take the literal extremes, but for the purpose of my study and my narrative, this approach is intentional as to provide clear indications of their value domains.

#### **4.2.4.5.2 Hengca's sociology**

1. Class: Hengca can be considered lower class if at all. Hengca was originally middle class until the unfortunate deaths of both her parents, with no other guardian she ended up and is currently in an orphanage. Her class is in stark contrast to Vesre's modest but secure stable household. Hengca does not have any family or community that she truly belongs to, even within the orphanage, she rarely connects with others. Her rebellious nature does not help with this. She does have friends, but she sees most of them as superficial, and she doesn't truly connect with any of them, for she understands that at any given time they might find a home and leave her behind. She truly has nothing left besides herself, and so she commits to the growth and experience of herself.
2. Occupation: Hengca is a student; however, she has little interest in any academic pursuit. She is, however, avidly driven by a strong goal to become an Olympic medallist. A gruesome accident took away her mother and left her father paraplegic, he was an aspiring athlete who wanted to become an Olympic star, she had always admired her father's conviction and thoroughly enjoyed the joys of sport with him, for the competitive rush excited her intrinsic nature. He soon died and now that she is alone, and she has decided to pursue the same path as her father, as it is to her a challenge she gave to herself and to perhaps show the world that it was not in vain. She finds pleasure in becoming stronger and better, and the freedom to do as she pleases drives her to pursue an athletic career.
3. Education: As stated above, Hengca is a student but a defiant one at that. She finds academics to not be important, she would be disruptive in class as it is tedious to her, her anxiety and desire to run free boil over into excitable

energy. When reprimanded, she doesn't back down and instead stands her ground, she finds it exhilarating to oppose the authoritative figures, she sees the system as a stagnant machine that represses vibrant spirits or merely as something that systematically and uncaringly ushers the youth into their desired direction. She would be one of the few Vesre would eagerly reprimand for being disorderly; Hengca would actively skip classes to rather do things that are fun and to enjoy her life.

4. Home life: In the same line as with her education, Hengca does not perceive her orphanage as a home, merely a holding cell until somebody decides she is good enough for them. She does, however, not want a new family, she wants her old family back, but she knows that is unrealistic. She then acts rebelliously to scare off any potential foster parents and regularly causes chaos instead. She enjoys playing pranks on others and without hesitation, lashes out when reprimanded. She always sees herself as irrelevant in others' eyes and then assumes that they do not care. Her nature to do things devious or to do things excitable helps distract her from her tragedy. She stays in motion, moving forwards even when it is dangerous, for fear of stopping and looking back.
5. Religion: Hengca has little time for religion or their congregations. She sees it as a downright bore, and she sees its followers as mindless sheep. She does not like the idea of something so vague instructing peoples how to live their lives and to enforce what is right and what is wrong. With it, she believes that religion is a major cause for oppression, she sees its traditional ways as limiting to modern appeals. She finds it as something that leaves people close-minded and causes aversion to change or diversity.
6. Race, nationality: As before, I wanted to provide a diverse cast. Hengca is of Indian descent within the South African parlance.
7. Place in community: Hengca cares less for any form of structural community, the friends she makes she perceives as merely passing guests; when she does, however, connect with people, she begins to tolerate them. As an example, she has spent a great deal of time within the hospital and has befriended the group; she is, however, conflicted that if they were to part ways that they would still care for her. She doesn't care about society in general, but she is avid about her opinions on equality and diversity.

8. Political affiliations: Hengca is at her core very liberal, she is not too entwined in political matters but can be considered a democrat.
9. Amusements: Hengca has a plethora of amusements, ranging from exploring, doing daring stunts or dares, trying new experiences, good and bad, and seeing the world. She is always up for a challenge, and she always makes a memorable impression. She is very committed to becoming a professional sprinter, but she does try out other sports if they catch her interest; however, when that interest evaporates, she no longer takes an interest. She has had more experience in things than anybody in the group and is always eager for new and exciting things.

A lot about Hengca's conviction as a character has been conveyed during the *sociology* section and at the forefront is her value domain, *openness to change*. She shares similar interests with Ida and Edali. With Ida, she shares some of the universalism value components like equality and the liberal aspects of it. With Edali, she enjoys the competitive nature of their friendship, she doesn't necessarily want to be the best but rather to have many exciting experiences, and Edali's nature brings forth many opportunities. As with her tragic past, we can see how her values have informed her view of society and her standing in said society. She is a strong and independent individual who seeks out the pleasures of life, for these fleeting moments are all that she truly has.

#### **4.2.4.5.3 Hengca's psychology**

1. Sex life, moral standards: For all my characters, I wish to maintain as before that none of them has an active sex life. Hengca does have a sense of moral standards and would advocate it, but she would rarely be proactive in its pursuit. She is concerned with things that involve her and would become active if it were to involve her. She does, however, have very low non-moral standards, as opposed to Vesre. Since non-moral standards are more related to traditions, religious standards and rules and legal statuses, Hengca does not take them seriously.
2. Personal premise, ambition: Hengca's premise is that she has lost everything, so there is nothing left to lose, so she might as well enjoy life and be free. This weightlessness makes her eager to live from moment to moment and enjoy

the present. Her only driving ambition is to make her father's dream come true, as it is the one thing that she has left. Other than that, her ambitions come and go like seasons. In all other aspects, she only goes as far as the novelty, excitement and interest reaches. She likes to enjoy things and will always favour the more exciting option.

3. Frustrations, disappointments: Hengca is frustrated with the world and especially anybody or anything who tries to impose rules or restrictions on her pleasure. She is frustrated with her condition and wishes that she could be truly independent. With the virus, as established before, the most likely outcome is terminal, on the rare occasion of survival, the mental and physical damage is likely to either leave her catatonic or in a state of utter dependence, seldom would outcomes be better. For a wild and free-spirited soul like Hengca, a state of utter dependence would leave her caged in a system she despises and above all that her ambition to fulfil her father's dream would be severely hampered by the symptoms. Finally, if she were to enter a catatonic state, she would no longer be able to experience the joys and pleasures of life. This is indeed frightening to her.
4. Temperament: Hengca has the shortest fuse of the group. She is easily stirred by her emotions and will always make her voice be heard, be it with a friend or some sort of authoritative figure. Her temperament is unchained, and her emotions are strongly felt. She revels in this state of liveliness and passion, thus there is no guard to her words.
5. Attitude towards life: Hengca is a realist leaning towards pessimism. She sees the world through a darkened lens but rather than wallow in despair, she instead shrugs it off and embraces the nearest joy. She is at the odd end of nihilism, where nothing really matters, but she enjoys the senseless way of living and the rush of a hedonistic life. She is eager to live and to keep on living, she is more primal in that to not live is to not experience and to not receive stimulation.
6. Complexes: As noted, her nihilistic tendency combined with some existentialism has driven her down the path of her value domain, she is fully aware and ready to take responsibility for her actions, she does not shy away from them. She is willing to face trouble for the thrill of it, her forceful and strong presence, however, makes her always an agent of chaos. It is in this

chaos that change can occur, though it is not her goal to change anything but rather to be focused on her own sensuous gratification.

7. Extrovert, Introvert, Ambivert: Hengca is by all accounts an extrovert; she will always make her presence and her opinions known, even if it leads to unfavourable outcomes.
8. Abilities: Hengca is, in fact, a skilled athlete. Most of the sports she has touched she excelled at, and thus it had left many coaches confused when she no longer showed up for practice. The only constant is her commitment to achieve what her father sought to achieve.
9. Qualities: Hengca is by far the most honest member of the group when it comes to her own subjective opinions and feelings. She does not play by any of the rules and therefore, cannot be a cheat at it. When she does connect with somebody else, she does cherish their presence even when knowing that it might not last. She is carefree but also reckless; she can, at times, get others swept up in the results of her actions. She finds it hard to understand why people are so concerned with things that they themselves do not enjoy. She is always the life of the party and daring to any challenge that comes her way, though this may lead to her getting hurt, she doesn't care. She is volatile, but she brings change.
10. IQ: Hengca has a barely average IQ; she can be placed at 90. Though she might be smarter, nobody truly knows because tests bore her.

In reflection of Hengca's character structure, it is evident that her value domain, *openness to change*, has influenced her character development cycle, as intended. We can see in her *physiology*, *sociology* and *psychology* how these values informed their development. It is important to note that with this reflection, we can also see how she does, in fact, also fits into the *anxiety-free* domain, due to her carefree and open nature. She is also located in the *personal focus* domain as she is mostly driven by her own desires for hedonism, stimulation and self-direction. In essence, Vesre always follows the line whereas Hengca wanders freely; the two contrast each other perfectly.

#### 4.2.4.5.4 Hengca's depiction in the artefact

I will now provide a range of figures to show how Hengca's character bone structure is represented in the artefact (with the text removed in order to allow for a better display of her). It should be noted that as discussed previously, it will be evident that Hengca's overall design has been informed by her development (her character bone structure like her *physiology, sociology and psychology*) and that her value domain, *openness to change*, is clearly depicted in her physical manifestation. With regard to her outcome, we can see that she is as described and visualised, as in her *physiology*, what is of note here is her posture and appearance, it shows how free-spirited she is and how she is indifferent to what others think of her, and as noted from her *sociology* and her value domain, she lives by-and-for the moment, she has little regard for to structure and norms of society, and she represents herself are carefree, open, expressive, wild, passionate and dynamic. She isn't afraid to express herself or her opinions, and when she does, she tends to be passionate about it; there is seldom composure in her demeanour. According to her *sociology* and her *psychology*, she finds novelty in excitement and pleasure, which can be seen in her dynamic movement and her tendency to take over her surrounding space, she is also driven by her ambition to achieve her father's dream and would eagerly stretch and exercise in the midst of conversation. Hengca does as she pleases and isn't concerned with what others would expect of her, thus she is very independent, via her *self-direction* value. She doesn't pass up any opportunity to do what she wants and what she likes, be it stretching out lazily on her couch or exercising during an investigation, all driven by her *hedonism* value. In her expression of character, she is easily excitable and passionate; she also tends to express herself easily and can thus be seen as easily stimulated, all from her *stimulation value*. As with all the characters, they experience a wide range of emotions (see 5.4.3.2.5.2); this can range from enjoyment, fear, disgust, anger and sadness, similar to Edali, Hengca is more of a dominant figure via the robustness of her personality and demeanour, she is not afraid to express her emotional state, and she is in that regard very open about it and can be at times excessive, in this latter regard, she shares some similarities with Ida, although his expressiveness is concerned with issues regarding moral implications and others, whereas Hengca is concerned with issues regarding herself.

The contrast between Vesre and Hengca should be evident; Hengca is wild, carefree and chaotic, whereas Vesre is composed, orderly and pious.

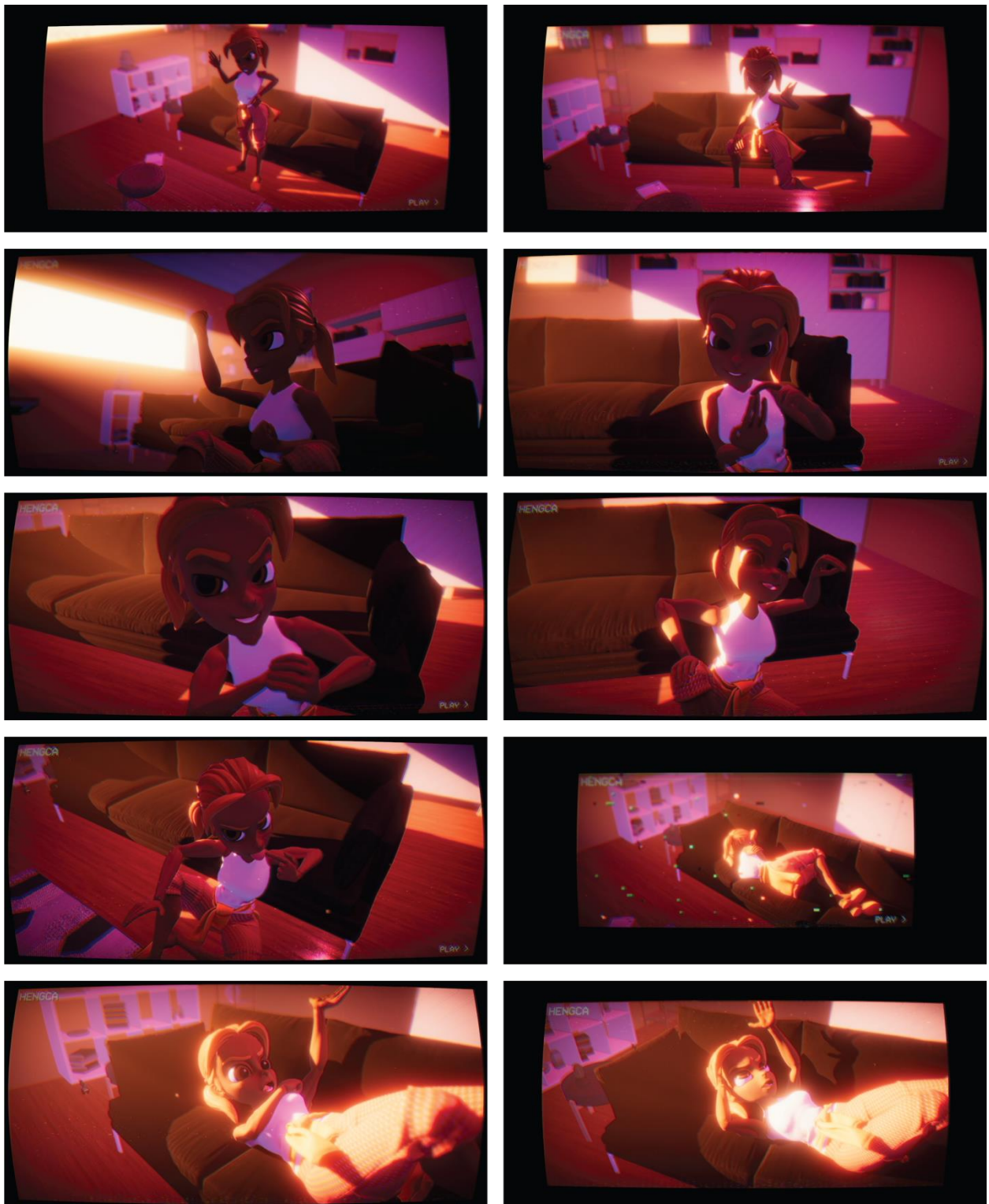


Figure 33: Hengca's depiction in the artefact (text removed for clarity) 1/4.



Figure 34: Hengca's depiction in the artefact (text removed for clarity) 2/4.



Figure 35: Hengca's depiction in the artefact (text removed for clarity) 3/4.



Figure 36: Hengca's depiction in the artefact (text removed for clarity) 4/4.

#### 4.2.4.6 Other characters and notable observations

There are in fact some other characters within the narrative, but they merely serve the purpose of narrative progression tools, as the hospital staff play a part in the progression of the narrative events and propose and clarify the Rashomon effect of the narrative towards the audience (see 5.4.3.1), the investigator is, in fact, the audience and the narrative revolves around their recollection of the investigation, in this recollection the audience poses questions to the characters to also progress the narrative. Morn is the 5th child character in the narrative, he has no direct affiliation with any values, and I had intended him to be the middle ground of the spectrum that the other four could relate with. He is, in a way, a fluid form that has a different meaning depending on how the other characters see him. Since we never see his perspective on the narrative, the audience can assume that he is merely as true to what 'Morn' is as to who is perceiving him. In earlier renditions of the narrative (see 5.4.3.1), Morn was intended to be the audience's avatar.

Another notable observation for creatives to note from the lengthy summaries of the four main characters is that each character does have a clear and defined development, with clear goals, motivation, intent through action and desires. In it, I find them to achieve the goal of developing a good character. There is a unique effect that is commonplace in many aspects of life, which is polarity or contrast. It is known that contrast invokes interest, a stark contrast between elements helps to emphasise the differing qualities, and in my case, the value domains. By creating such strong polarities between my characters, I believe that identification is easier and more interesting and possibly more likely to occur. I do want to note that as with the spirit of the Rashomon Effect, there is not one who is right or wrong, good or bad, evil or good. It is merely four parties with two stark polarities, and it is up to the viewer to find their connection. I advise creators to not focus on the specifics of let's say 'a good guy' versus 'a bad guy' but to rather think universally.

A final observation that I do find to be of utmost importance is the fact that not only are the characters' goals clear, but they are clear in a positive *and* a negative perspective. What I mean by this is that Edali is diligently driven to become a renowned star, due to his *self-enhancement* domain; he wants to live and to win the affection of the world. Ida, however, sees Edali's *self-enhancement* domain as the

reason for his 'attempted' suicide. Since the virus will take away his chances of stardom, he believes Edali wants to perform a protest that might earn him infamy as the child who wanted to bring awareness to the injustice of the system.

Ida is also driven by a goal to live; he desires to become more dependable to his family and to be able to take care of them as well as his community and other universal factors due to his *self-transcendence* value domain. Edali, however, sees Ida's *self-transcendence* domain as the reason for his 'attempted' suicide. Since the cost of treatment is too much for Ida's family, Edali assumes that Ida doesn't want to be a burden for them and would rather sacrifice himself than leave his family in debt.

Vesre is also driven by her goal to live a virtuous life, to have an impact on her community and to bring order and guidance to those who have gone astray. She also follows the teachings of 'The Book' quite literally, which is against suicide; this is all due to her *conservation* domain. Hengca, however, sees Vesre's *conservation* domain as the reason for her 'attempted' suicide. Due to Vesre's literal nature, the notion of losing one's mind or conscience, to become amnesiac, would mean she would forget her beliefs and lose her salvation. Hengca argues that Vesre wants to become a martyr for her beliefs.

Hengca is driven by the numerous joys that everyday life provides her and is actively seeking out enjoyable moments; she is, however, firmly dedicated to a promise she made, to become an Olympic athlete, just as her father aspired to be. It is evident that this is an important goal for her since it is the only consistent one in her carefree life, which is due to her *openness-to-change* value domain. Vesre, however, believes that it is due to Hengca's *openness-to-change* value domain that is the reason for her 'attempted' suicide. Vesre believes that Hengca would rather live a thrilling life than waste away in a hospital and with such little chance of survival, her goal is near-impossible; hence Hengca would rather experience one last massive rush of stimulation.

The reason why I have written 'attempted' as such is because there is no clear resolution or evidence in the end to prove or discredit any account. All of these notable observations help us provide a conclusive look into the depths of these

characters, now that they have manifested in the cognitive mind space we can move further into how they are conceptualised in visual format.

#### **4.2.4.7 Design conceptualisation**

In this and the forthcoming segments, I will briefly outline the iterative reflective cycles in regard to the characterisation process. This is not, however, my process document but rather a brief descript of key moments of development between cycles so that the reader can have a better understanding of how the final renditions came to be; thus I will only briefly describe *what* was implemented at certain points of the iterative reflective cycles and *why*. I will refer to the elements that informed these decisions (be it development of experiential and practical knowledge, further development and discovery of research and most notably, either personal or collaborative reflections on the aforementioned). It is advised, dear reader, that in order to fully grasp the process of my study, that you explore my process documentation. At the end of the process descript, I will provide a blanket reflection on the chapter as a whole.

As mentioned in the introductory segment of my characterisation practice (see 4.2.4.1), the study began with the pre-production step, which was firstly informed by my two main focal points of outcome being Schwartz's (1992, 2012) Value Theory and the Rashomon effect, the emerging theories were narrative identification, perspective in narrative and narrative persuasion. It was also noted that I had intended on using a *low-poly* style to achieve my outcome. *The what*: What can be ascertained from this is that I had done numerous experiments to establish how my experiential knowledge of design could apply 3D renditions through my practical knowing, which can be seen in the two following figures. *The why*: The outcome was undesirable, based on collaborative reflection. This then led me to explore theoretically the fundamentals of what is significant to my study with regard to character design.



Figure 37: My first initial experiments with low-poly art, made in Blender, prior to any character development.

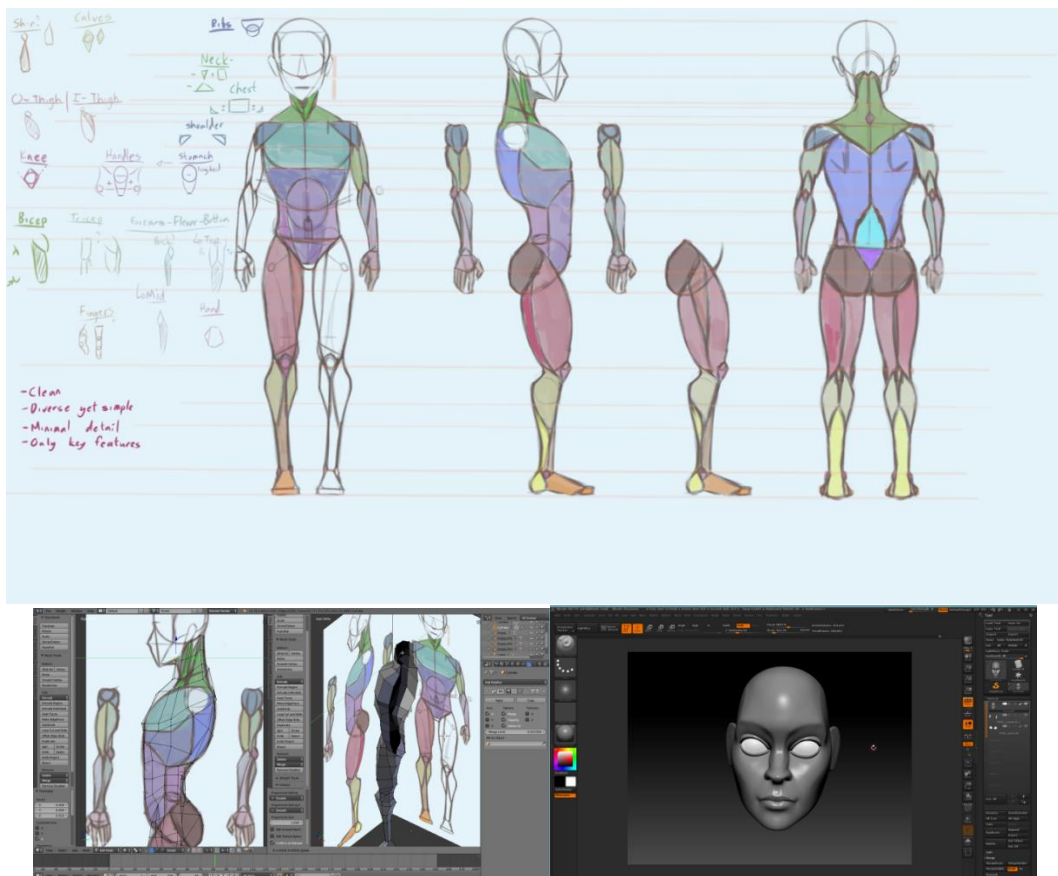


Figure 38: My initial experimentation with 3D modelling and studies of anatomy.

*The what:* In the following two figures, one can see how my theoretical research had led me to my findings on character appeal (see 4.2.1) and cuteness (see 4.2.2), the first figure (see Figure 39) depicts my experimentation with this newfound knowledge through practice, it must be noted that at this point I had also begun to create my character bone structures, also informed by the aforementioned knowledge and also with a parallel deeper investigation into Schwartz's (1992, 2012) Value Theory and identification, the second figure (see Figure 40) depicts the conceptualisation of my characters' design, which was informed by their character bone structures (development). *The why:* The clear shift in mentality can be seen as I began to lean more towards shape design, appeal and stylisation. It was from experiments like these that I formulated a facial structure and began to explore stylised anatomy. What is evident here is that my character bone structures (development, which was informed by Schwartz's (1992, 2012) Value Theory) began to inform my design, along with character design theory and narrative theory.

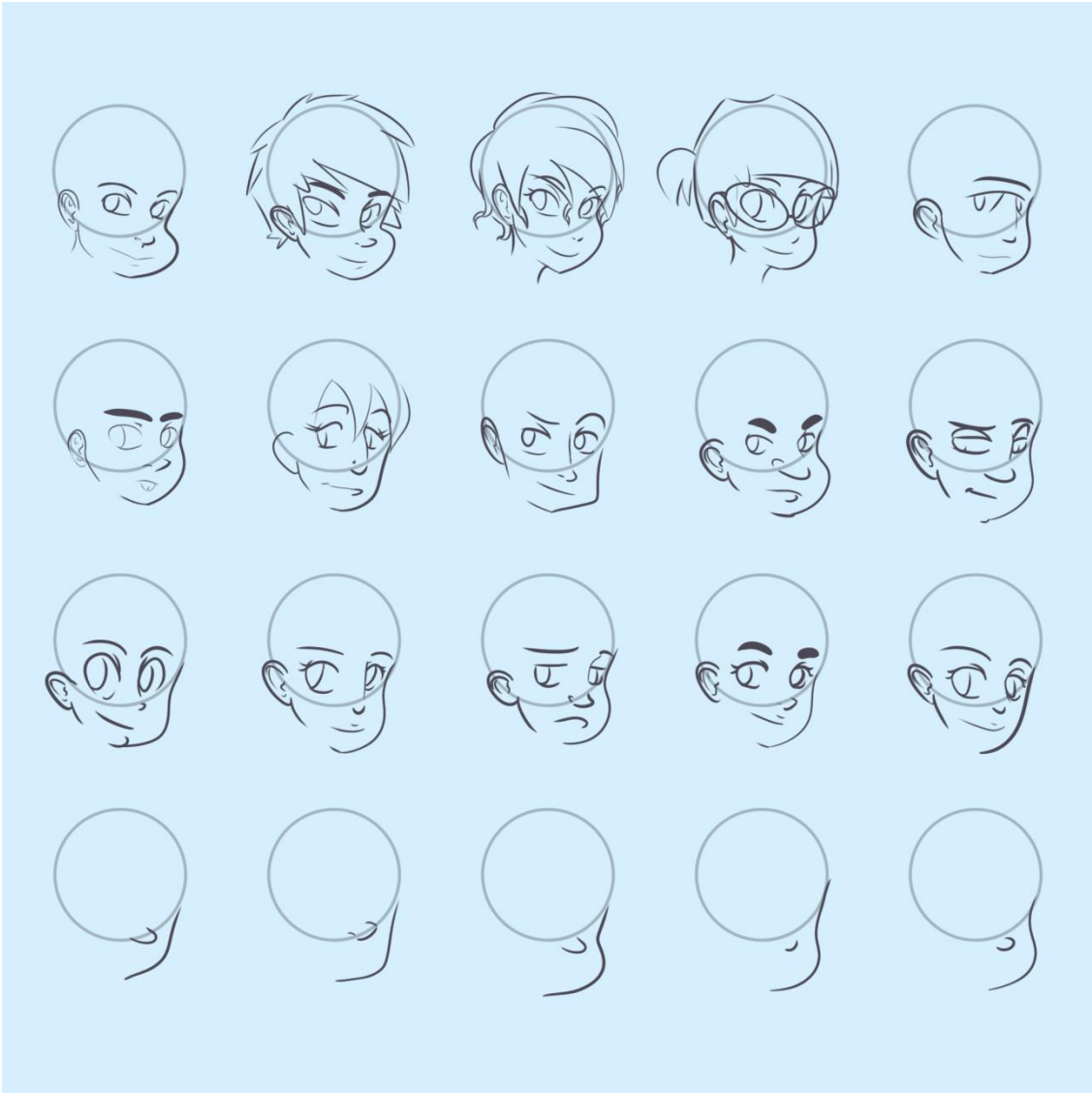


Figure 39: Style experimentation concept art

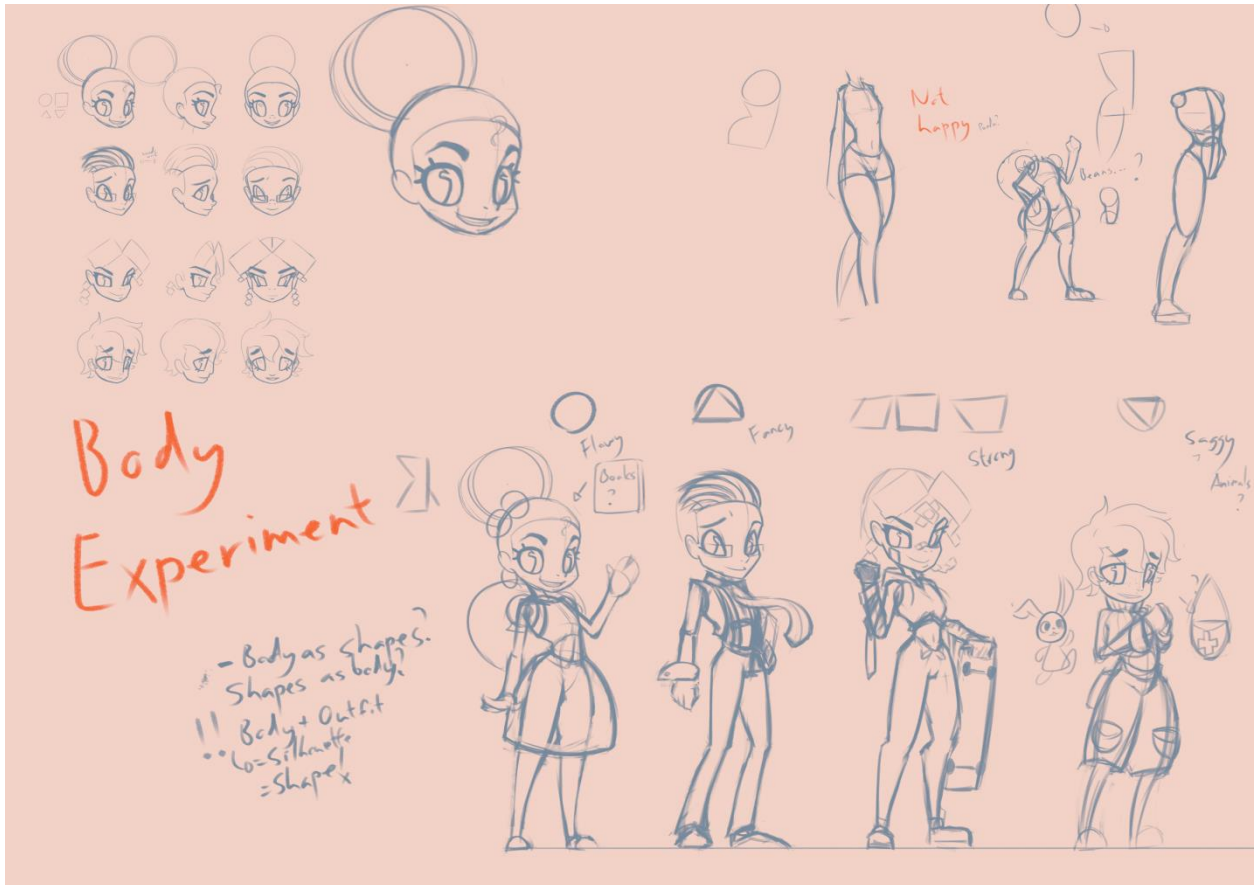


Figure 40: Concept art and shape design of character concepts

*The what:* In the following four figures below, one can see how through reflection (both personal and collaborative) and the further discovery of narrative engagement, transportation and deeper understanding of identification and narrative persuasion, I began to refine my characters' shape design, silhouettes, colour palettes, appeal and cuteness. *The why:* This shows that through my iterative reflective cycles of both practice and theory I had been led to create a solid conceptual foundation for my character design, which had been informed by the character development (with it being informed by Schwartz's (1992, 2012) Value System Theory), to not only create characters consciously informed by characterisation theory and practice but also by narrative theory, as example, characters who had consistency throughout their design.

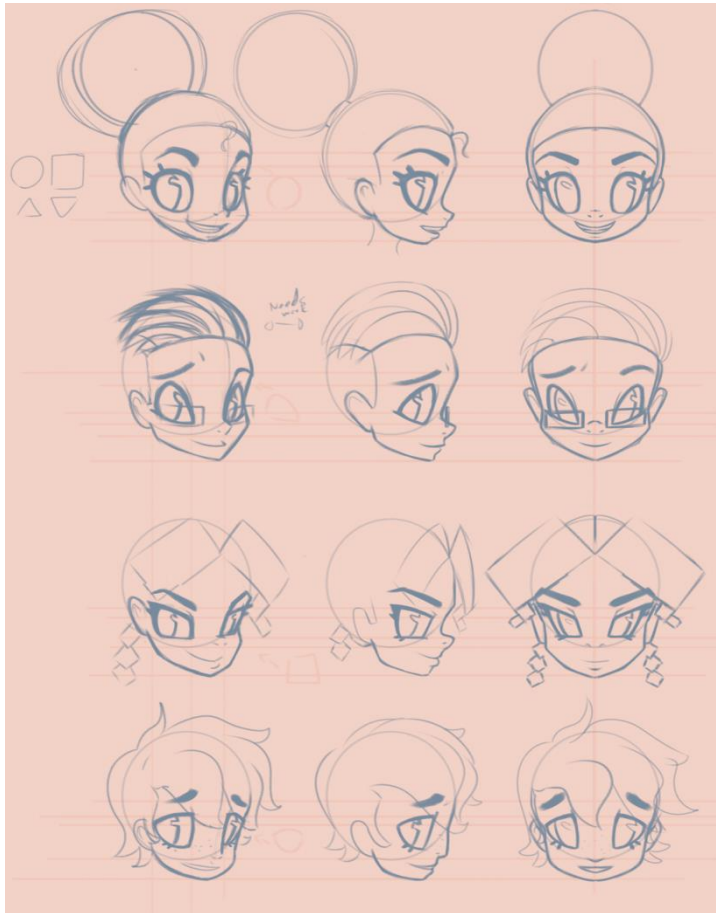
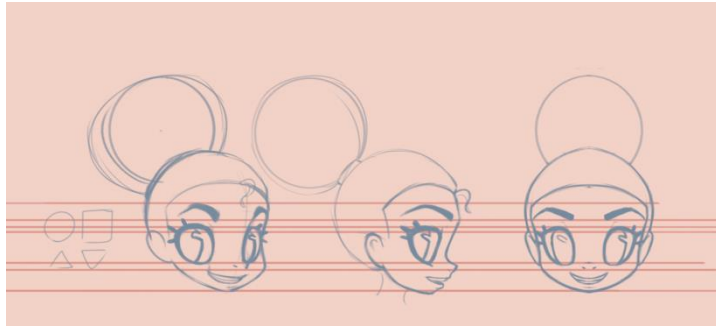


Figure 41: Structural consistency in character facial anatomy

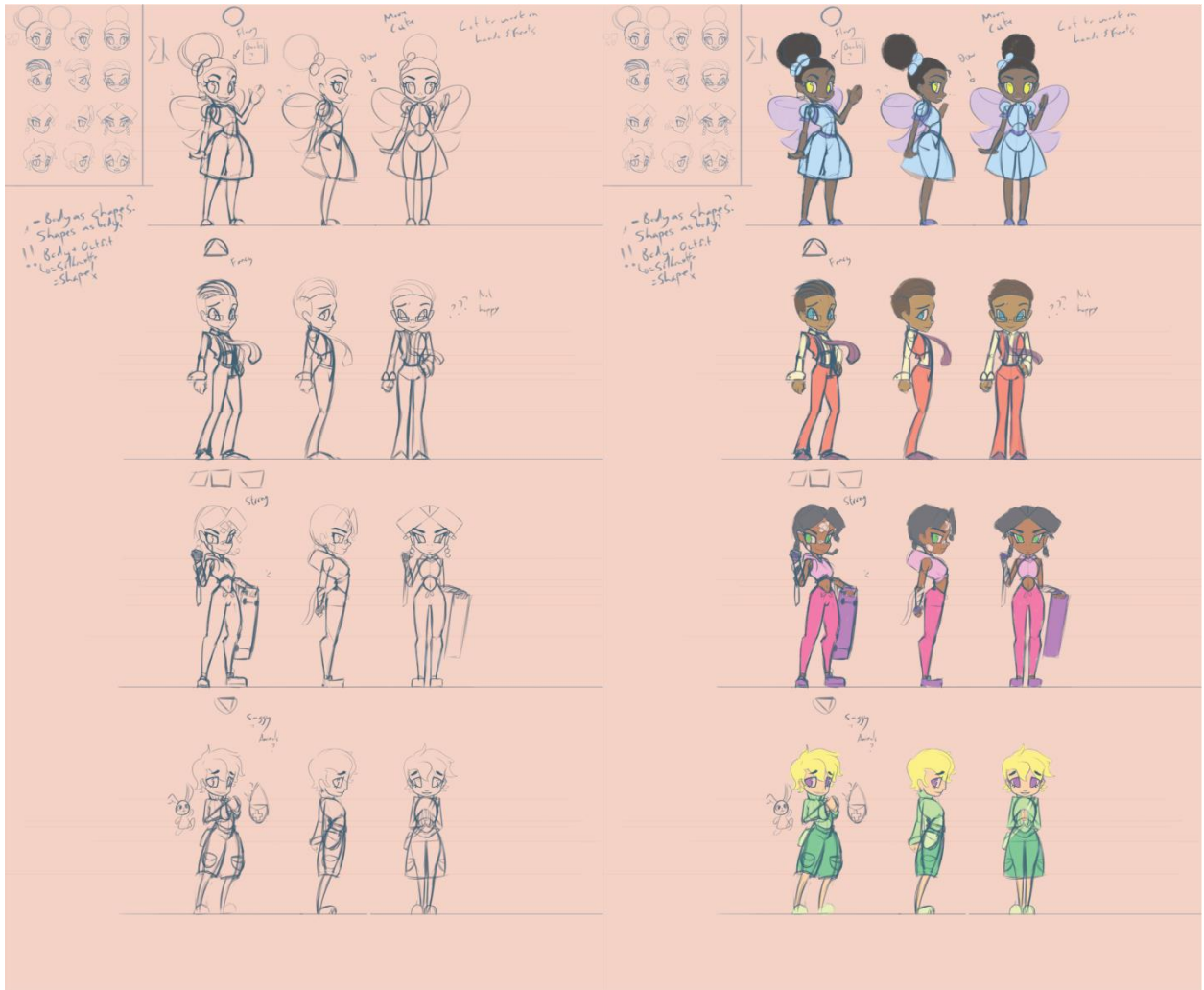


Figure 42: Shape experiments in body anatomy and colour scheme experiments

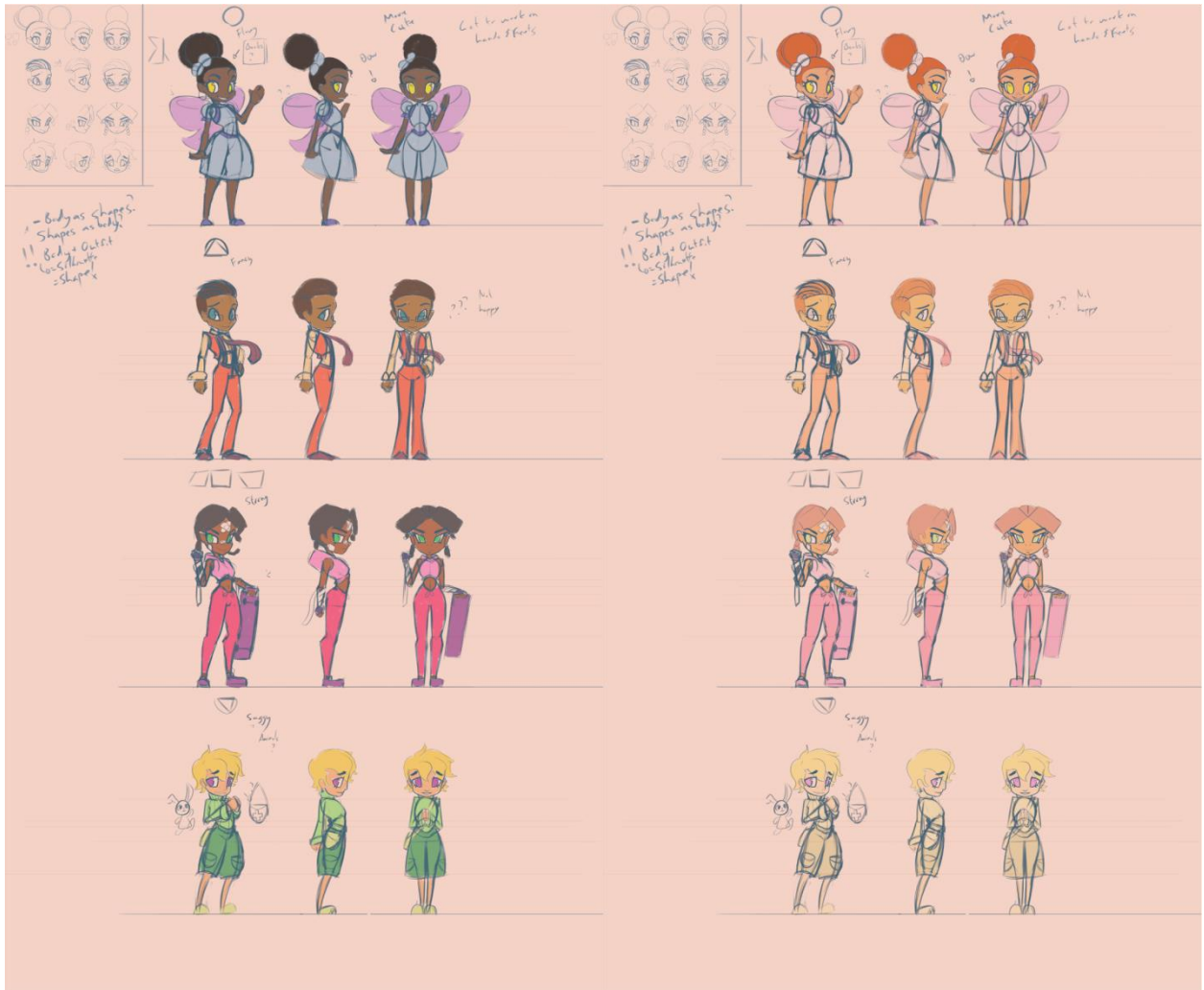


Figure 43: More colour variations of experiments

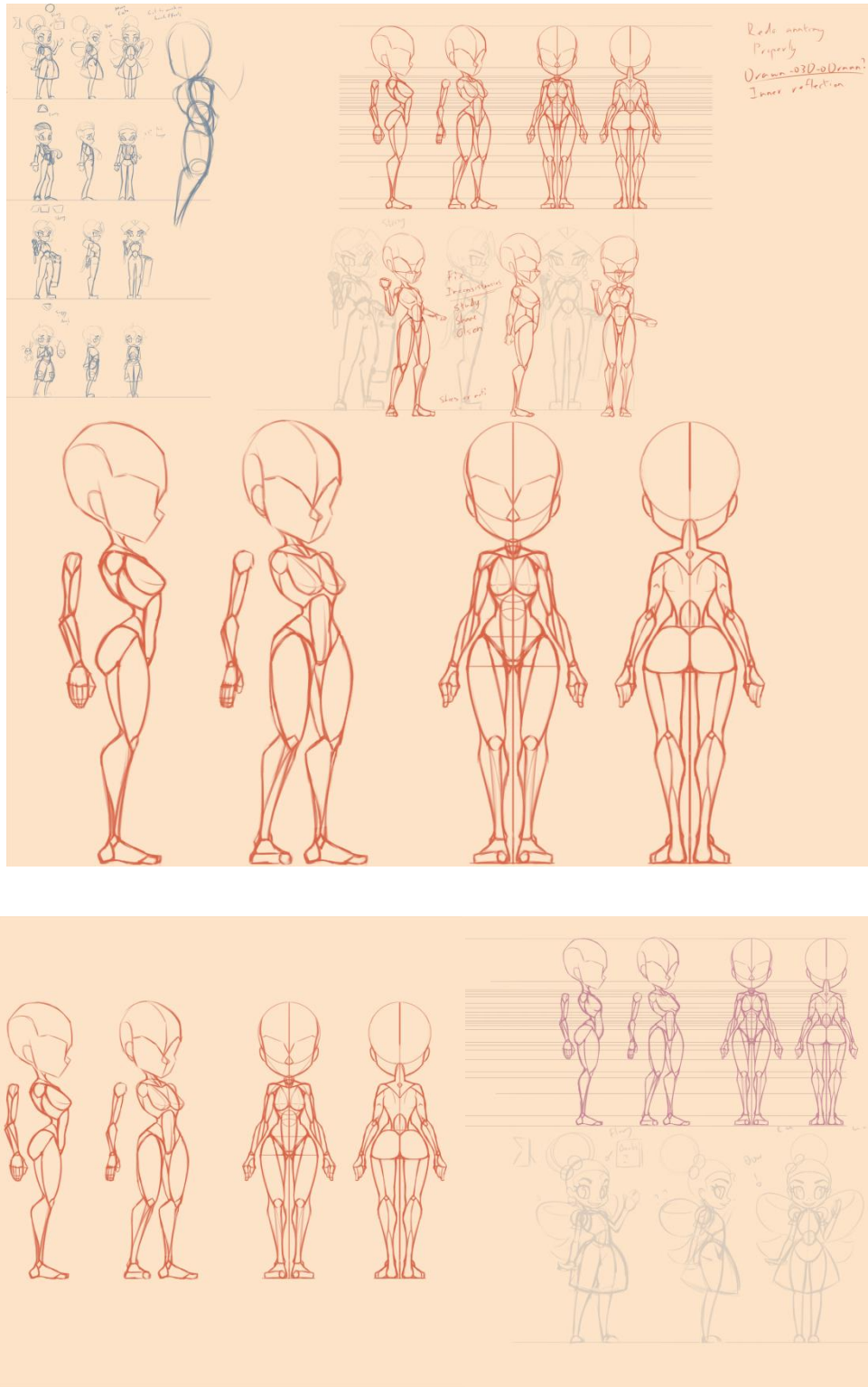


Figure 44: Structural consistency in character body anatomy

#### 4.2.4.8 3D design process

*The what:* the figure below encapsulates my pre-production experimental process specifically with regard to 3D character design. *The why:* What this shows is that I had consciously developed both my experiential and practical knowledge to understand how to deliver an outcome that had rigour.

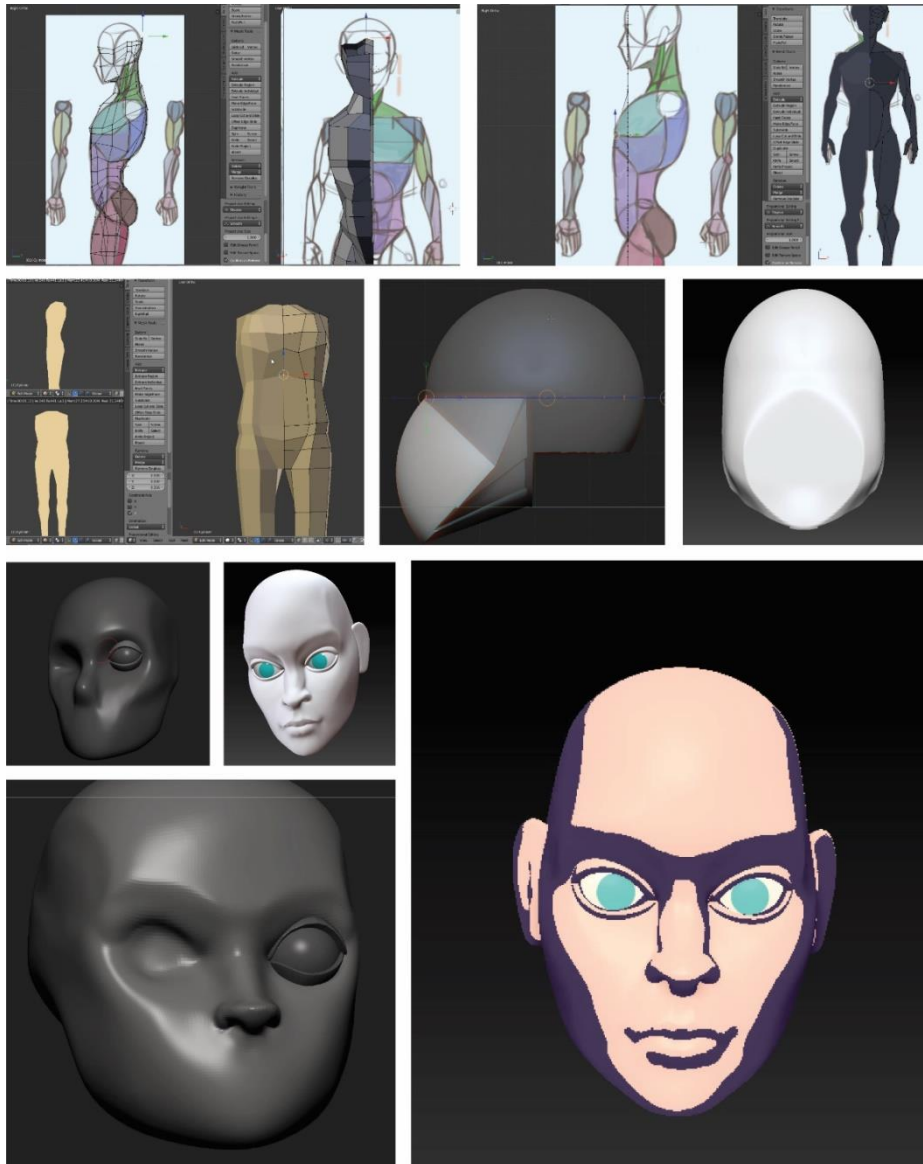


Figure 45: 3D experiments and application of course studies

*The what:* All the following figures up until the final renditions segment (see 4.2.4.6) depict my production step with regard to 3D design processes. It is also important to know that throughout the entirety of the process I would constantly develop my

experiential and practical knowledge (through workshops, online classes and tutorials) with the deliberate intention of delivering an outcome that had sufficient rigour, with the need to provide validity to the outcome. *The why*: As mentioned before, with the discovery of narrative engagement theory came the theoretical discovery of Mori's (1970, 2012) Uncanny Valley theory, which was now also consciously included in the iterative reflective cycle between practice. At this point, I had a greater understanding of Schwartz's (1992, 2012) Value Theory, character appeal, cuteness, Mori's (1970, 2012) Uncanny Valley theory, narrative, narrative persuasion, identification, transportation and narrative engagement. From this, I would constantly, consciously and deliberately cycle through my practice and theory in iterative reflective cycles (through personal- and collaborative reflections) to develop an even greater understanding of the underlying theory and how said theory informed my characterisation process (both design and development) to deliver the final renditions of my character that fulfilled the pre-requisites of the underlying theories with the intention of having characters that would deliver on both rigour and validity.

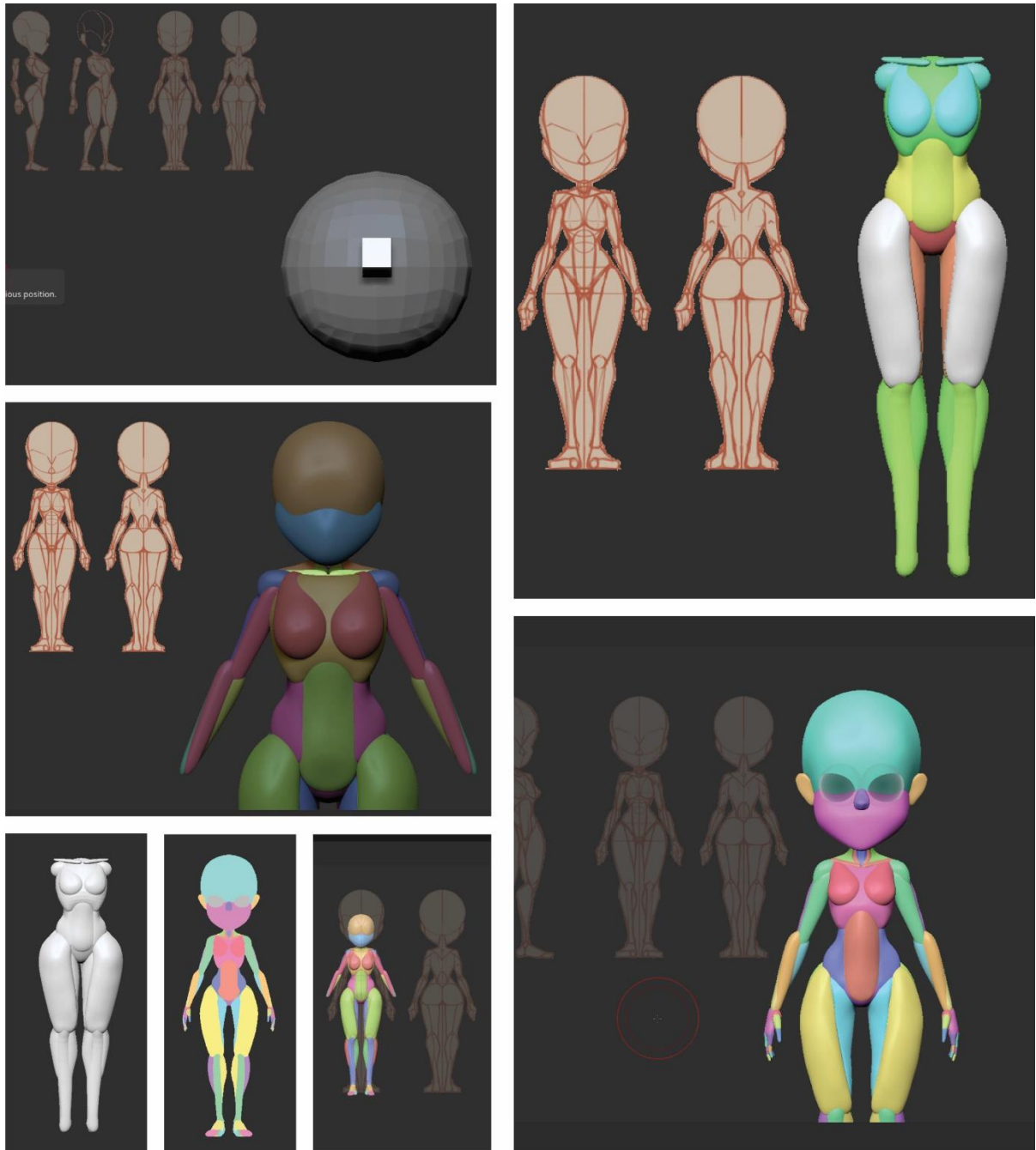


Figure 46: Character shape block-out of my character anatomy

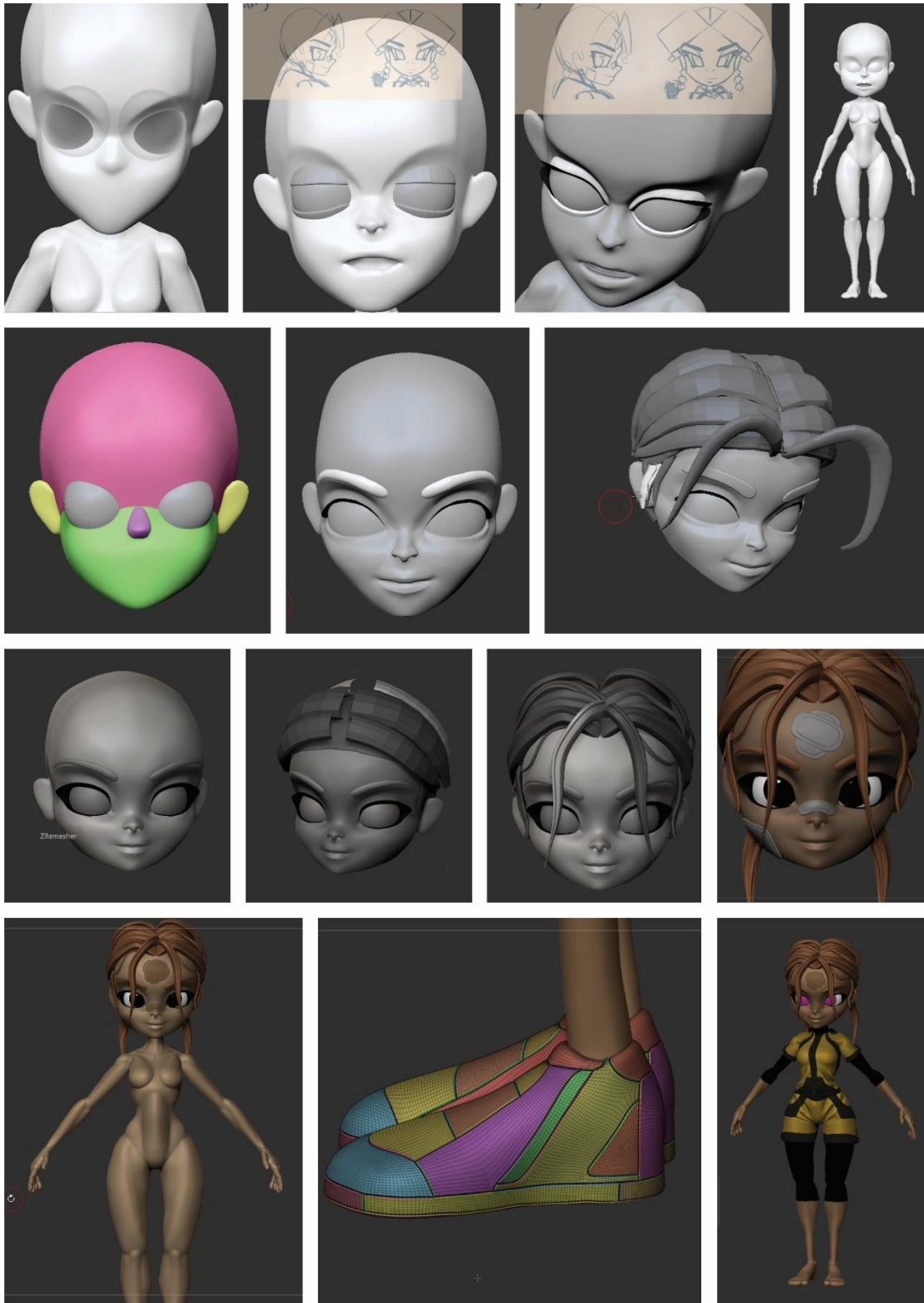


Figure 47: Development of Hengca for progress report

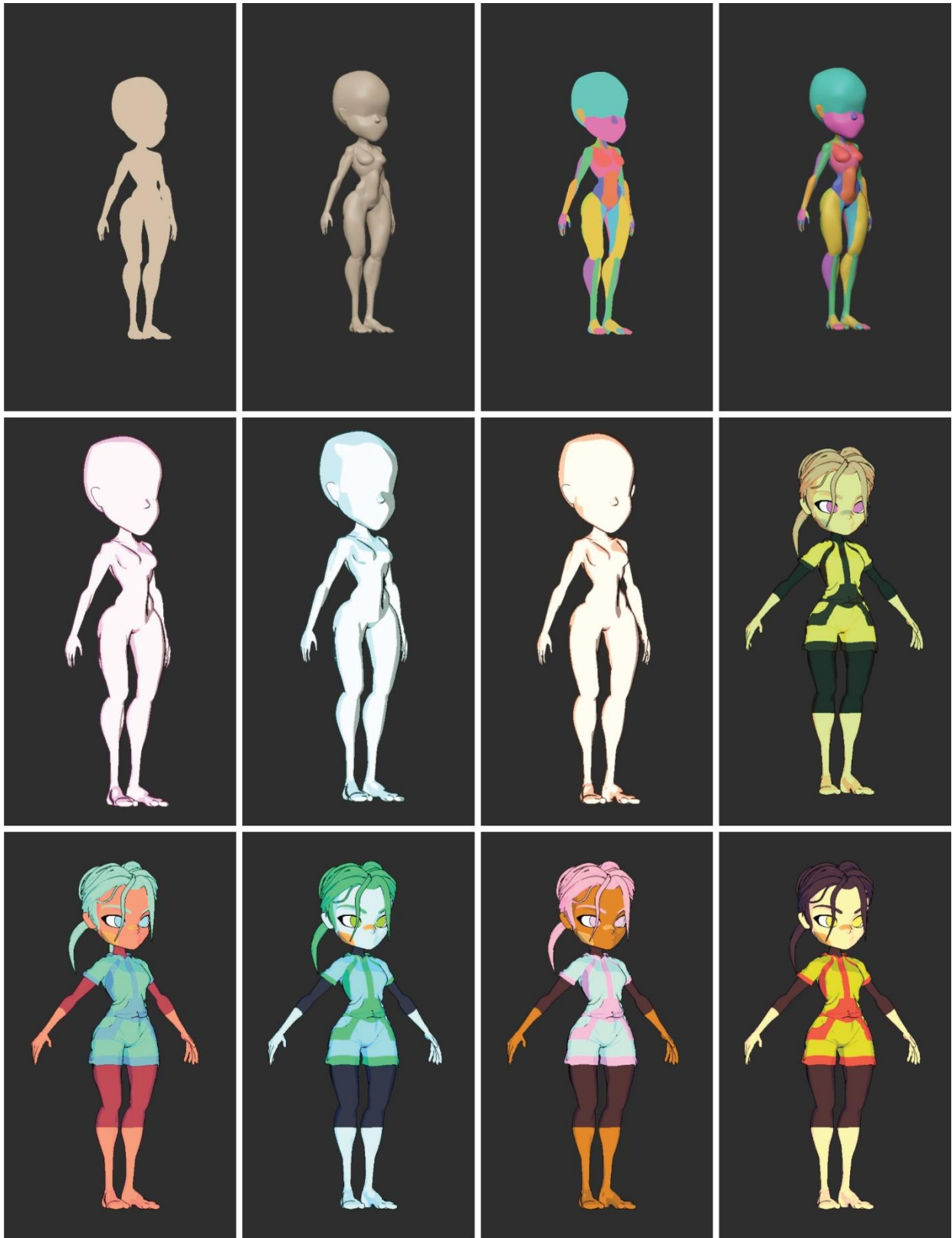


Figure 48: Renditions for progress report



Figure 49: Development of other characters and redeveloping facial appearance.



Figure 50: Facial and body adjustments and refinement

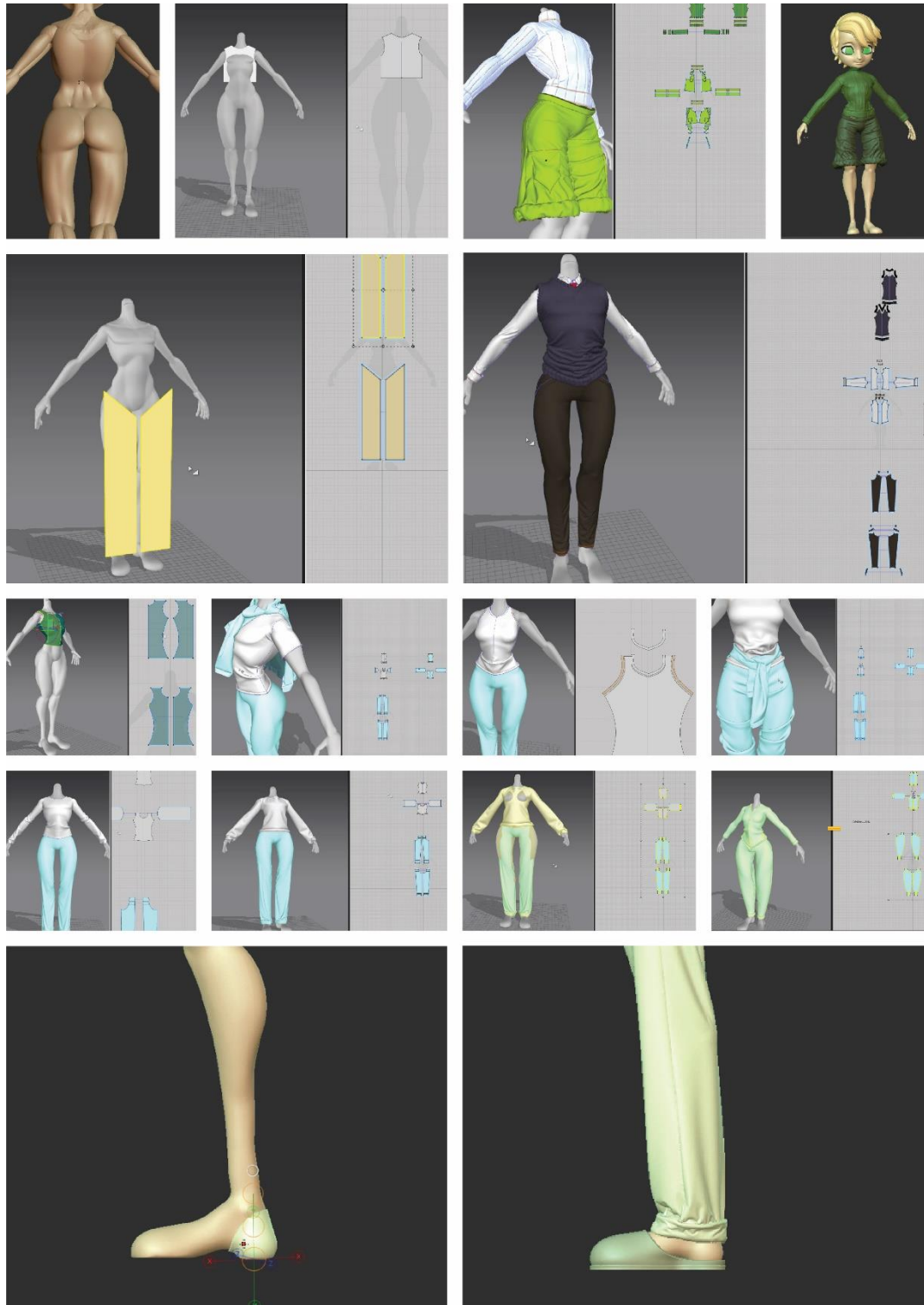


Figure 51: Developing clothing in Marvellous Designer and integrating into Zbrush



Figure 52: Refining facial features and initialising retopology



Figure 53: Final Zbrush versions of characters without textures applied to outfits

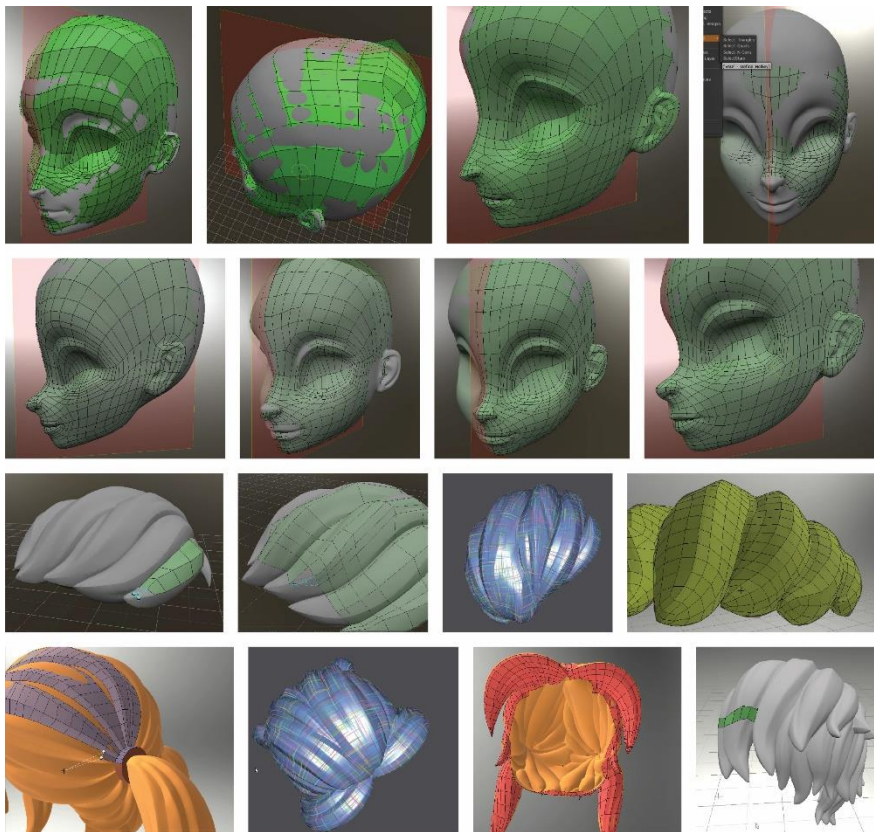


Figure 54: Retopology of face and hair

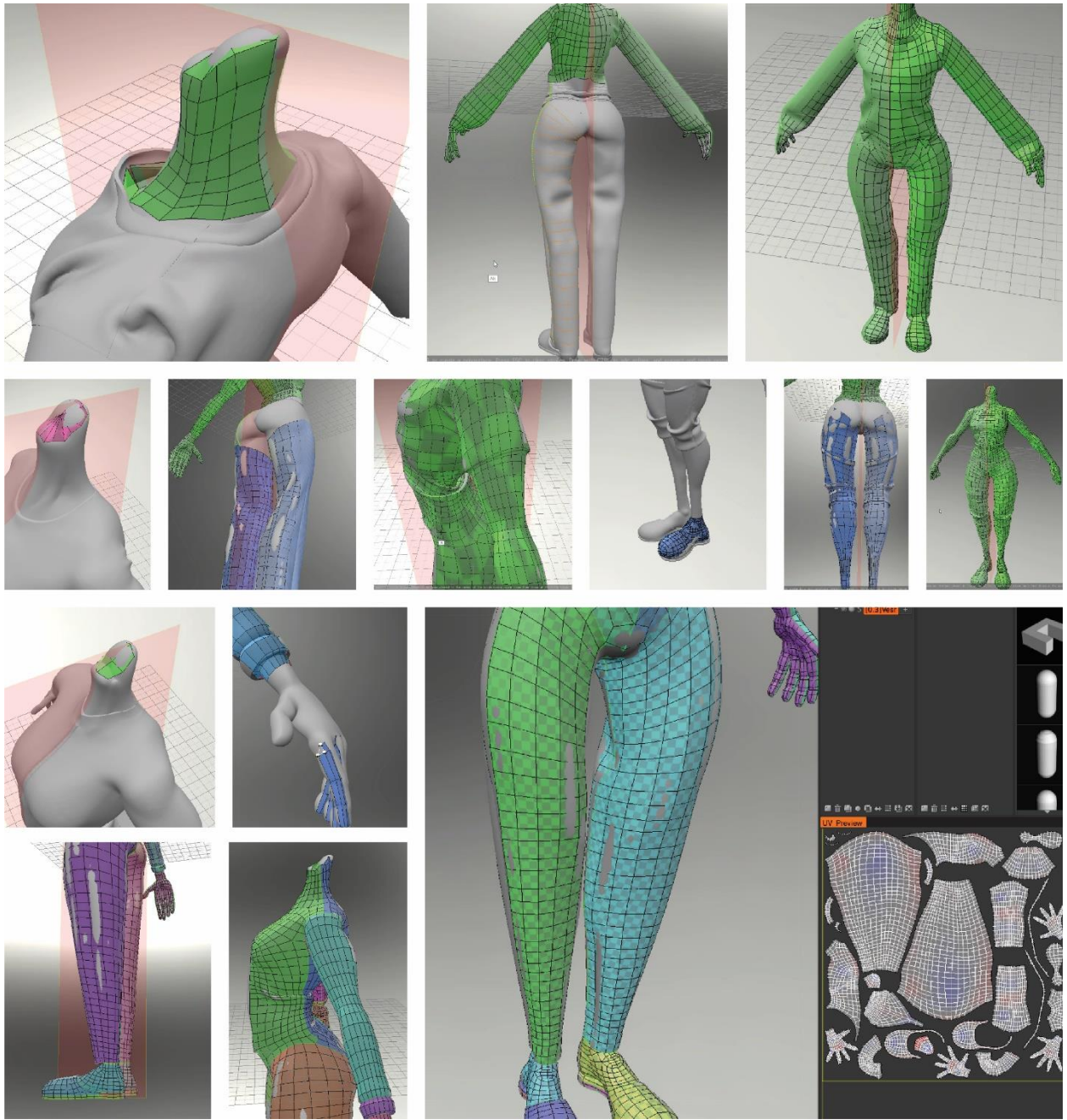


Figure 55: Retopology of bodies and initialising UV mapping

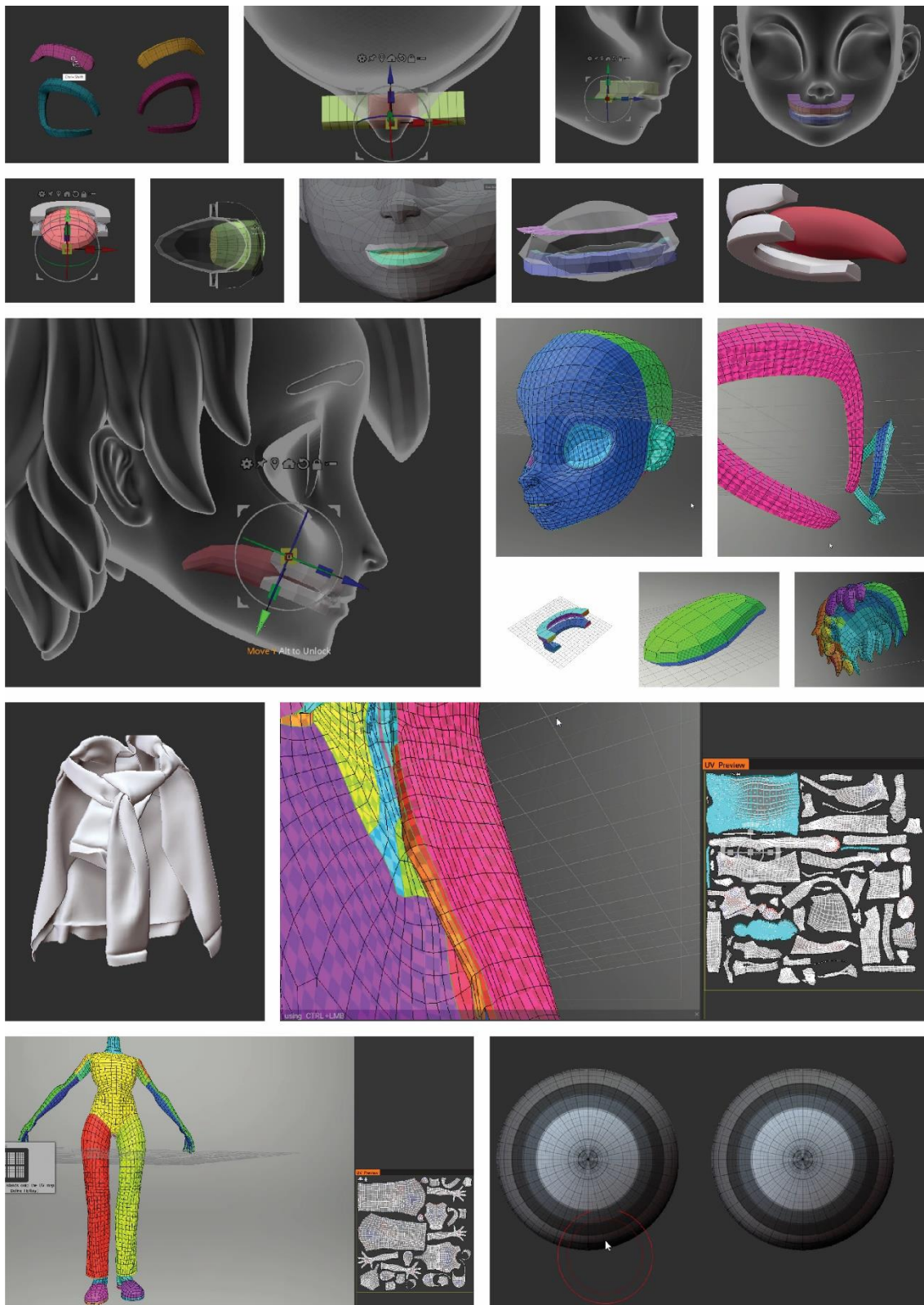


Figure 56: Retopologizing of secondary elements and creating mouth components

#### 4.2.4.9 Final renditions

This segment follows the same structure of the 'what' and the 'why' for the continual iterative reflective cycle that led to the final renditions of my characterisation process. It should be noted that at this point I had also conducted vigorous research and practice in the narrative segment (see 5.4.3), from it, I had theoretically developed a deeper understanding of narrative arcs, the Rashomon Effect, the cinematography and visual language of the *Rashomon* (1950) film and general encompassing cinematography theory (the five Cs of cinematography). In unison with the emergence and understanding of said theory came narrative practice, which in turn led further into the theory and vice versa, in sum, the exact continual iterative reflective cycle (from personal and collaborative reflection) had taken place with the creation of my narrative (see 5.4.3). The relevance that this has to the characterisation process is that the two started to integrate with one another, this convergence of the two then led to new continual iterative reflective cycles.

The first example of this would be how the narrative took on a grimmer theme (see 5.4.3.1), whereas my characters were now terminally ill and situated at a hospital. *The what:* This can be seen in the characterisation process as an active reflection on the materialistic style approach to the characters' depiction, as formerly mentioned (see 4.2.4.1), I had intended for my outcome to be of *low-poly* style, which included a simple and juvenile nature. This, however, changed with the aforementioned as I then decided to implement a more realistic, grittier style approach. *The why:* Upon reflection, this style change would fit more within the final rendition of the narrative, for the previous style, *low-poly*, would be jarring for the audience to have a highly-vibrant, youthful and fun environment filled with terminally ill and 'suicidal' children, in sum: I reflected on the notions of Narrative Engagement (see 3.3) and concluded it would be more consistent to fit the visual environment to the tone of the narrative. Subsequently, an additional reflection from Transportation (see 3.2) encapsulated that with the grittier, serious environment, the mood would reflect the nature of the severity and thus impose more vivid imagery for the audience to be transported to.

Another key factor in the iterative reflective cycle in relevance to the outcome of my characterisation was the type of animation I would use. *The what:* I had originally intended to animate my characters completely, with facial expression changes and

body movement, posture and gestures. I did, however, after working through Mori's (1970, 2012) Uncanny Valley theory, reflect on and realise my experiential and practical knowledge with regard to 3D animation was lacking. Thus if I were to delve into animation, I would have to do a very good and very accurate amount of animation in order to avoid the heightened Uncanny Valley which is more sensitive to things in motion. *The why:* I had reflected on the warnings of the Uncanny Valley and concluded that I had no experience as a 3D animator and if I were to animate my characters incorrectly, they might come off as uncanny. This would mean in terms of transportation (see 3.3) that my vivid imagery could lose its impact and cognitive activity would spike, which would lead to lesser transportation. With regard to narrative engagement, audiences might see it as an inconsistency via the uncanny feeling and therefore, not become engaged. Finally, in terms of identification, the audience might experience the wrong kind of affective state due to the uncanny.

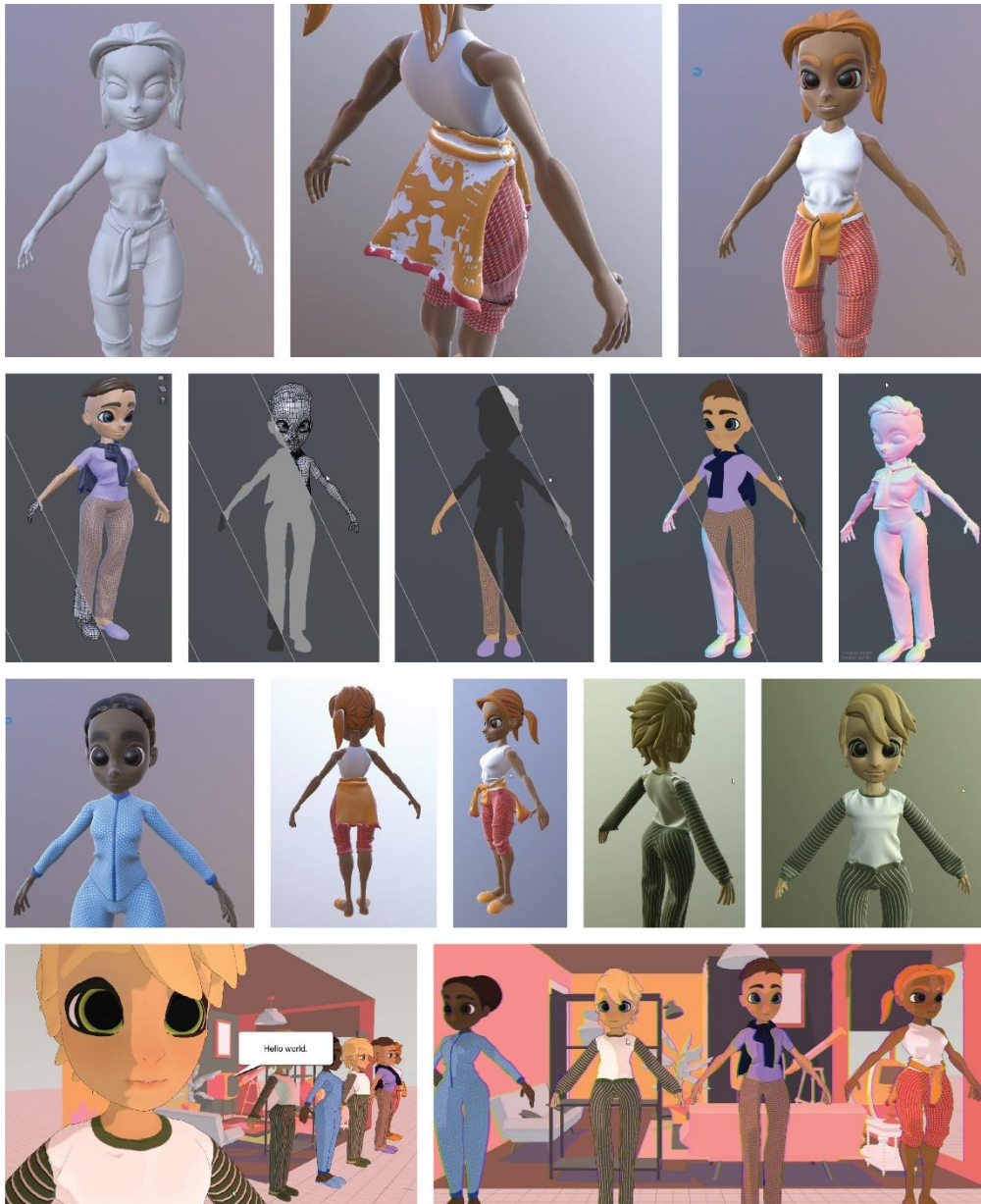
Based on the Oxford English Dictionary<sup>43</sup> animation can be seen as “[t]he state of being full of life or vigour; liveliness” or, more importantly, “[t]he technique of photographing successive drawings or positions of puppets or models to create an illusion of movement when the movie is shown as a sequence.” I decided I would not animate my characters *completely*, with facial expression changes and body movement, posture and gestures. Instead, I would animate my characters with facial expression changes and body movement, posture and gestures through sequenced positions that capture their inner states as one can see with the figure (see Figure 59). I still animated my characters but with my own application. By capturing the sequence of their movements in a ‘frame-by-frame’ motion, I could still express their character development and their character bone structure and lessen the effects of a heightened Uncanny Valley *whilst* also utilising the nature of the medium of a digital visual novel, specifically my visual language (see 5.4.3.2).

These two key iterative reflective cycles had the most impact on the direction of my intended outcome, and in the figures below one will see how said changes had been implemented into the characterisation practice as well as how both narrative and characterisation practice became integrated to produce a deliberate artefact that was narratively embedded and influenced by the theoretical structure, cinematography

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43 "Animation | Definition of Animation by Oxford Dictionary on ...." <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/animation>. Accessed 26 Oct. 2020.

and visual language of the Rashomon (1950) film, with the intention of creating a Rashomon effect that would allow my characters, narrative and story world to have equal representation and opportunity to immerse my audience in the narrative; how I had also developed my own visual language to fit my narrative and implement said visual language into the story arcs of my narrative (see 5.4.3), all with the intention of creating a cohesive and consistent narrative engagement experience, all while my character's design had now been both informed by the narrative (visual language, see 5.4.3.2), character appeal, cuteness and Mori's (1970, 2012) Uncanny Valley and, most importantly, by the character development, which is primarily informed by Schwartz's (1992, 2012) Value System Theory through the use of value domains, which are embedded into the character bone structures but now also informed the output of said character's narrative portrayal (dialogue, refer to the process document). All of the aforementioned is deliberately conjoined to enforce immersion within the audience so that they may experience narrative engagement, transportation and identification with the intention of establishing narrative persuasion. From this, the validity of the study can become prevalent, and the rigour of appropriate research-led practice (practice-led research) complied with.



*Figure 57: Baking of character details, baked renditions and Unity Cel shading experiment*

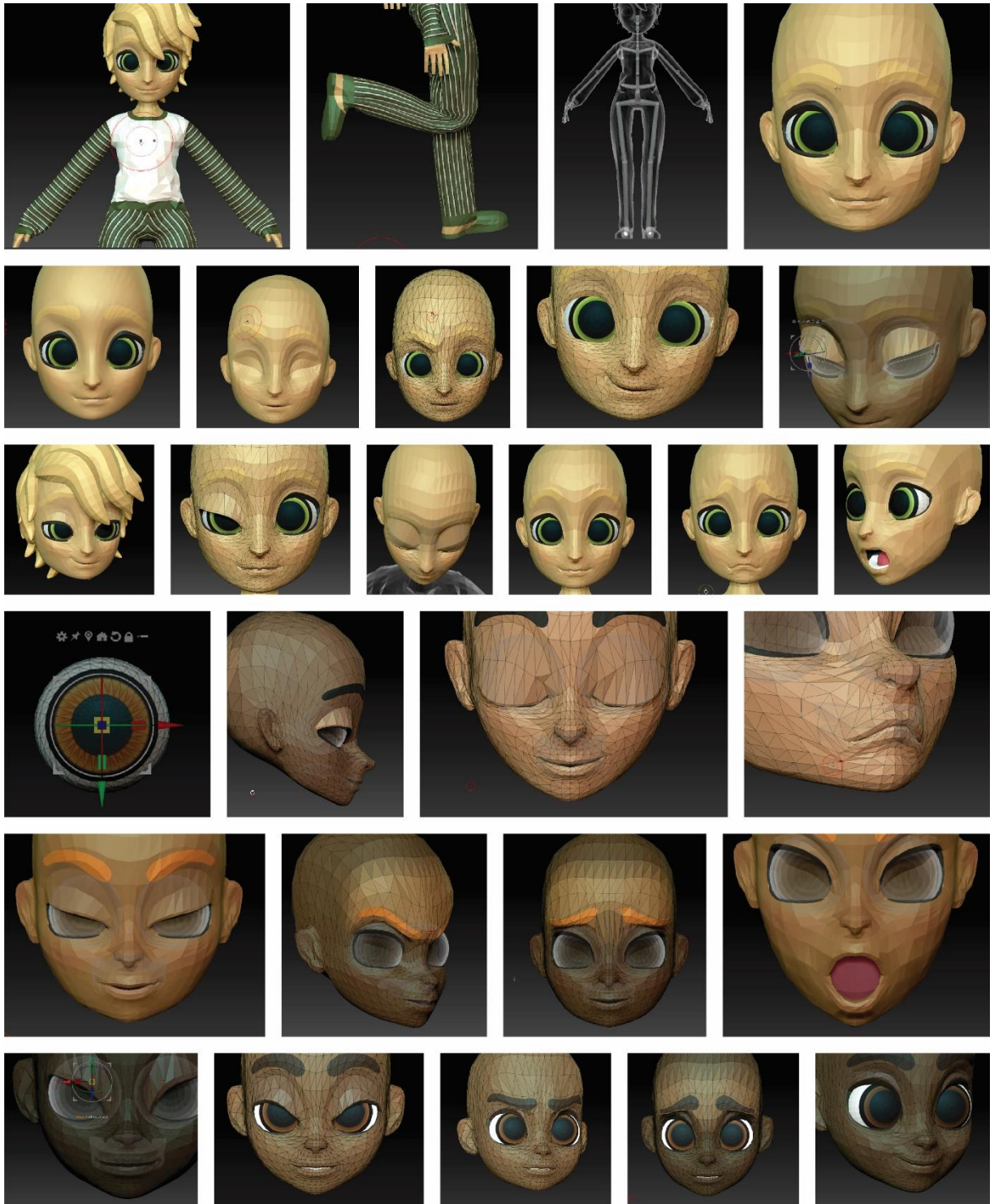


Figure 58: Morphing experiments and facial morphing for Blender integration



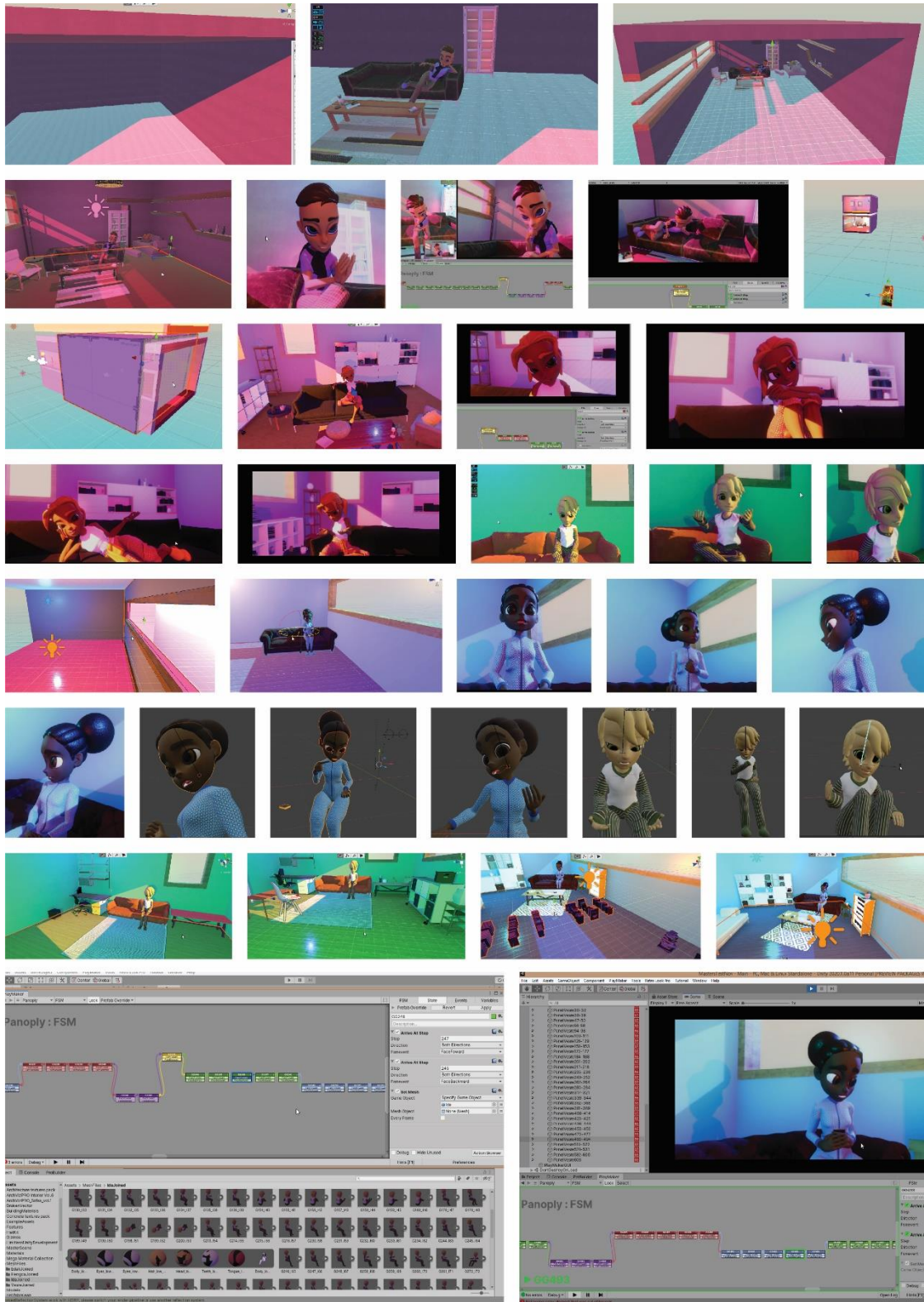


Figure 60: Setting up environments, populating with assets, code implementation, panel implementation and animation refinement

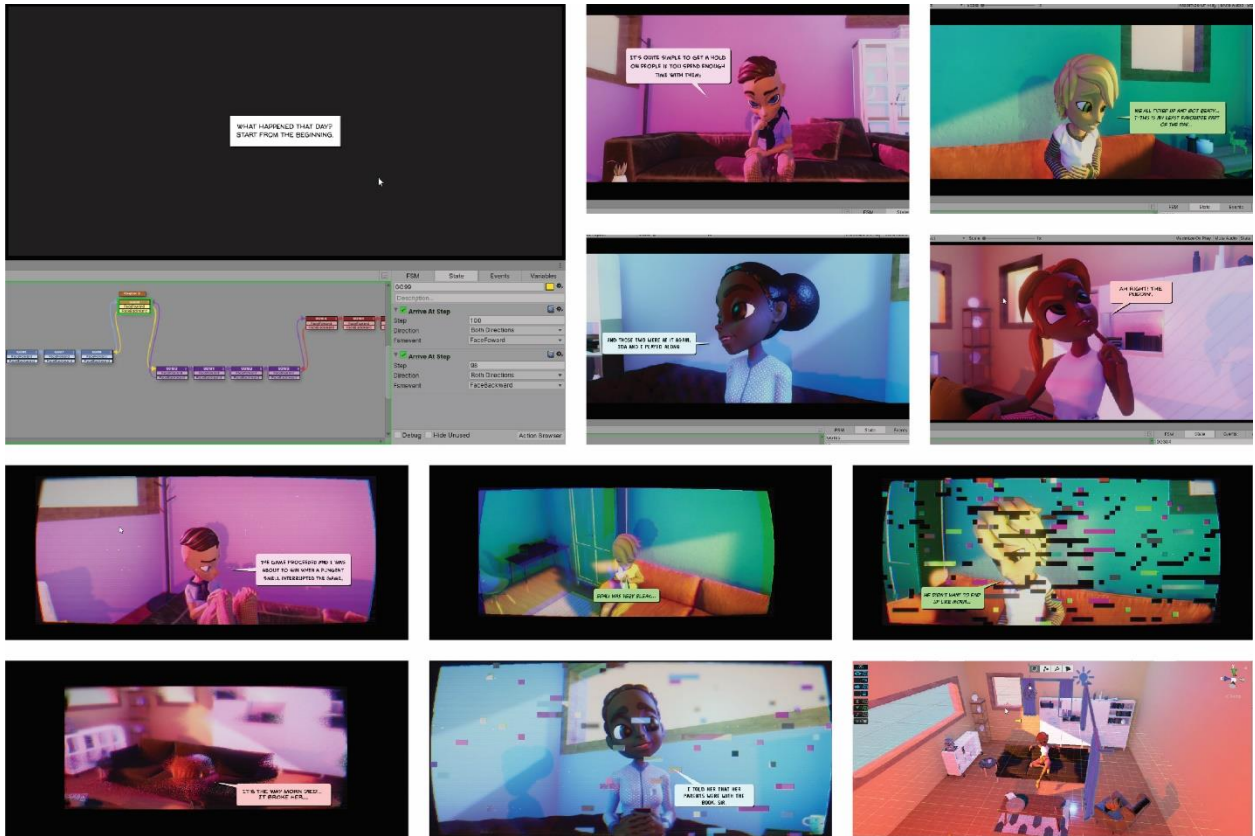


Figure 61: Text implementation, further adjustments to environment and effects implementation

#### 4.2.4.10 Segment reflection

Throughout the recollection of my process, specifically focused on the development and design of my characters, I feel that I have produced successful results that hold true to the nature of this study. I had explained how my progress developed as time passed, and I had clearly noted where and when my research had informed my practice and how it, in turn, guided my direction in this study. Therefore, methodologically speaking for this segment, I held true to my planned framework.

Throughout this discussion, I had reflected upon numerous things, and I again briefly conclude on these matters. I firstly want to state that there are indeed areas where I could have taken alternative routes that might have led to different results, but in the end, I am mostly happy with my outcome, and I find that I did hold true to the numerous theories and practice as stated within my introduction.

On the topic of my characters, I feel that their final results are sufficiently appealing and convey exactly what I had intended, namely to have their development (by means of Lajos Egri's (1946, 1972) character bone structure) be informed by my interpretation of Schwartz's (1992, 2012) Value Theory. I feel that the end result has consistently been informed by this, as will later be seen in the narrative section (see 5.4.3), through the use of my visual language (see 5.4.3.2). I also feel that my characters' designs succeeded in depicting the intrinsic qualities established by their bone structures and ultimately their value domains. I am both wary and somewhat proud of how my inexperience emerged in so many uncharted waters, but I feel that I have grown as a creative and I have also hopefully provided sufficient academic development of characterisation and character creation. I did reflect specifically on Edali and felt that if given the opportunity to alter him, I would alter his gender and skin colour to provide a clearer rendition as I had intended of his intrinsic values. I am, however, still conflicted by the notion of calculating discriminatory impacts that the audience might experience during the narrative. It is indeed a very murky pool that I do not currently have the intention of cleaning up. I do, however, feel that what is important is the intrinsic qualities of the character and how said intrinsic values inform the rest. I agree with the notions of what was discussed in the identification segment (see 3.4), that similarity is merely supplemental, and that empathy is the key to resonance between the audience and the character. I feel that by implementing Schwartz's (1992, 2012) Value System Theory, creators will be able to make characters that portray a strong intrinsic and extrinsic foundation that will allow their audiences to properly connect with the characters.

I had mentioned before that I would have liked to explore the events that led up to the narrative more to help audiences gain a better understanding of the characters because I feel that it would have helped to establish their value domains. For narrative and time reasons, I felt this was not possible at present.

I was quite surprised when I discovered the refined version of Schwartz's (1992, 2012) Value Theory, but I was impressed how without being aware of it, I had already intrinsically applied the gained knowledge into the characters' bone structures and I feel that this reflects the effectiveness of values. I was able to convey something that I intrinsically felt fitted with the characters. This gives me

hope that audiences will also experience those intrinsic connections with my characters.

Another reflection I had pondered during this study is that I should have increased my characters' polycounts in the final rendition. I would like to increase it, but ultimately I feel that it would only have a minor impact on the general outcome, and I find the final renditions already successful. Thus, it could have beneficial results, but it would not be revolutionary. Also, in reflection upon the facial morphing of my characters, I feel that I could have done better, but at that time in the process, my experiential- and practical knowledge limited me.

I am satisfied with my decision to alter the environmental outcome of the artefact to be somewhat more realistic and gritty as opposed to my initial *low-poly* appeal. I find that this approach, as well as with the means of visual effects and glitches makes the narrative more fitting to the application of my rendition of the Rashomon Effect (see 5.4.3.2.7).

I am happy with my application of animation at the current point in time; if I did, however, have the experiential and practical knowledge to properly animate 3D characters, I would have methodically and painstakingly worked to convey even more motion and expression of the characters' intent.

To come back to the topic of wariness and inexperience, I will admit that besides my feelings of pride in my growth and outcome, it was taxing on my time. I spent a lot of time first learning how to do something right and made many mistakes before I could produce results. In retrospect, I might have been able to produce similar results with a more familiar approach. This did not, however, affect my quality of work, because I was absolutely dedicated to producing salient and thorough research and a successful artefact.

Now that this reflection is concluded, I proceed to another theoretical segment that sets out to explore the narratological framework, cinematography and visual language of Rashomon and its effect. From there, I discuss the use and application of cinematography within its narrative space, and I discuss relevant aspects that would later influence my own narrative. I also discuss the relevant theories that

pertain to my use of visual effects that symbolise the internal conflict of my characters. After the theoretical segment, I discuss, as with my characters, how my previous theoretical discoveries and the subsequent ones influenced my implementation, process, outcome and reflection on how I created my narrative.

## CHAPTER 5: RASHOMON AND ITS EFFECTS

I have discussed the characterisation process and reflection on how I created my characters and how the relevant theories informed the practice, and vice versa, I applied the specific research relevant to characterisation (see Section 4 and all of its components) and also applied elements from the broad research pool (see 3.1 and all of its components). From this point onwards, I will discuss the relevant theoretical components of *Rashomon*, the Rashomon Effect, cinematography and visual language that impacted my study. After this segment, I will discuss the revenant cinematographic components and visual language that will be applied to the final rendition of my narrative. Once this foundation has been established, as with my characters, I will compose my implementation process, outcome and reflection on how I created my narrative.

It would be redundant to repeat what was already discussed in the introduction (see 1.3.2 and 1.3.2.1) and would only pad out this already lengthy study; I would advise the reader to refresh their memory. I will, however, discuss things here that were not previously mentioned, or I will reinforce relevant concepts with adequate information. With that in mind, numerous amounts of research in this chapter draws on an expertly crafted book viz. *Rashomon Effects: Kurosawa, Rashomon and their legacies* by Blair Davis, Robert Anderson and Jan Walls (2016); the book itself also contains numerous perspectives revolving around the aforementioned subject matter and from it more input from various experts will emerge.

Davis, Anderson and Walls (2016:1) state that *Rashomon* was Kurosawa's most famous film, and the most famous Japanese film, which was first screened in August 1950 and won the Venice Film Festival prize in 1951. The *Rashomon Effect* has become the by-product of the film itself and is recognised as an English term which refers to "...significantly different perspectives on and interpretations of the same dramatic events by different eyewitnesses".

Davis, Anderson and Walls (2015:2), Walls (2015:11) also state that the writer Ryunosuke Akutagawa was inspired by Ambrose Bierce's short story *The Moonlit Road* (1918/2012), which led to him writing his own rendition *In a Grove / Yabu no naka* (1922), which is "... about three different deposition-like statements recounting

the circumstances of a murder, of which is the murder victim's spirit speaking through the voice of a medium." They state that *In a Grove / Yabu no naka* (1922) was also a variation of two anonymous 12<sup>th</sup> century Japanese tales. Walls (2015:12) notes that Akutagawa introduced two new elements in his *In a Grove / Yabu no naka* (1922) that were not present in the aforementioned inspiration for his work. These elements were the testimonies of people who weren't involved with the main participants and the components of what we now call the Rashomon Effect, which leaves the reader unable to deduce who was right or wrong, effectively leaving the narrative open-ended.

Walls (2015:11) states that *In a Grove / Yabu no naka* (1922) was then to become the source of director Akira Kurosawa and screenwriter Shinobu Hashimoto inspiration for their testimony system in *Rashomon*. Walls (2015:13) and Nogami (2016:20-21) note that Hashimoto was the one who converted Akutagawa's *In a Grove / Yabu no naka* (1922) into a screenplay, named *Male Female / Otoko-onna*, which Kurosawa then picked up and began collaborating with Hashimoto. Walls (2015:13) notes that Kurosawa, however, found the screenplay too short and thus added some additional components to it from another Akutagawa short story, named *Rashomon* (1915), which included two trial witnesses (in the film *Rashomon* (1950), which would become the woodcutter and the priest) and the commoner finding shelter at the Rashomon gate. The motif from Akutagawa *Rashomon* (1915) revolves around justification of theft and serves as an ambiguous reflection on morals.

The reason I mention all of this is for us to understand how Kurosawa's masterpiece came to fruition, how his collaboration with Hashimoto was informed by Akutagawa's fine literary work and how Akutagawa established the foundation for what we are about to discuss. Ultimately it's an acknowledgement of the lineage that led to Kurosawa's film and how this lineage had already begun to establish the core theoretical components of the Rashomon Effect.

## **5.1 The cinematography of *Rashomon*, the literal**

In this segment, I will elaborate on information I could find on Kurosawa's directorial and cinematographic approaches to the narrative of *Rashomon*. With this, we can

perhaps understand from a technical perspective how *Rashomon* was made and how the lineage that led to *Rashomon's* creation came into fruition through visual means. We can also ascertain from this segment possible points of inspiration that I may implement into my own narrative, from a *Rashomon* perspective.

Kurosawa (1983:134-135) explains that he was inspired by silent cinema and the French avant-garde films when he imagined his depiction of *Rashomon*. He felt that there was an aesthetic that had been lost, and he desired to return it to its former splendour. From this, we can directly ascertain what type of cinematographic approach Kurosawa had in mind.

Nogami (2016:23) notes the relevance of sunlight in Kurosawa's cinematography. The use of sunlight, as in to create areas of light, dark and contrast, was so important that he would have his crew carry and move around eight large mirrors to find places to reflect the sun; effectively, Kurosawa understood his lighting, even more so he manipulated it, to provide *Rashomon* with the ideal lighting visual language.

Another implication that Nogami (2016:29) notes of Kurosawa's methods was how he used fire engines to douse the *Rashomon* gate, to simulate a heavy downpour, albeit not a direct cinematographic component, Kurosawa used what was available to him to establish his visual language. Nogami (2016:28) also provides another example, during the kissing scene between the bandit and the wife, where branches were deliberately used by the crew to simulate moving shadows across their faces. What all of this implies is as stated, everything was deliberately planned out to serve a purpose, as is the job of a cinematographer, to convey the visual language of the narrative.

Nogami (2016:27) notes that during the filming of *Rashomon*, Kurosawa had only used one camera. Redfern (2014) had conducted an evaluation of Kurosawa's cinematographic application in *Rashomon* by exploring the length, pacing and correspondence of shots within the film. What this means is that Kurosawa would intentionally use varying cinematographic tools to fit each character's recollections, be it to portray themselves or others as active or passive through the use of camera setup and execution. In terms of visual language, the camera serves not only as a

visual depiction of the events but is also characterised to fit the narrative of each character. Again, I would like to reiterate the cinematographer's approach, viz. that each application must have a purpose.

With regard to Kurosawa, the camera is as subjective as the subjects. As I will later discuss (see 5.3), this provides that which the camera presents as a layer of ambiguity, Redfern (2014) uses the examples of how important the kiss was to the bandit in his recollection(it was shown), whereas in the samurai's recollection there was no kiss shown, in these moments of recollection, the characters have authority over the camera. With regard to camera, Prince (2016:125), Richie and Prince (2016:143) note Kurosawa's deliberate use of axial cuts (these are jump cuts, where the camera suddenly moves closer to or further away from the subject matter), it was used in moments of climax or at critical moments in the story with an intended effect of being striking and eccentric. Another interesting feature that Prince (2016:133) notes is how Kurosawa would always begin his stories in the middle of things; he was precise and didn't need to provide context or exposition. What he presented was what was important, the here and now. Richie and Prince (2016:146) note another relevant aspect to this is the characters in the middle of these things, not only are we immediately thrown into the narratives, we immediately begin to experience his flawed characters and how they must struggle and grow from the current situation. They note that Kurosawa was attracted to the chaos and challenges that threatened the characters, for he believed it is what would provide said characters the most growth and development.

Davis and Burnham (2015:101) speak of Kurosawa's methodical usage of flashback, firstly at the Rashomon gate (the present) the audience is introduced to a woodcutter and a priest who are perplexed about the events that had transpired before, the commoner (be he the realist or the viewer) enquires into this mystery, from there on the flashbacks begin to how the woodcutter lengthily traverses a labyrinth of forest and progressively discovered some clues and ultimately a dead body. We are not shown the dead body, and the clues sprinkle intrigue and mystery, just as we are curious, so is the commoner, who presses for more information. Eventually, we reach the point of the trials (another form of flashback) where the woodcutter and the priest provide little evidence; however, eventually, the real trial begins, where the

bandit, the wife and the samurai (through the medium) provide their recollections (a flashback within a flashback) and where each plausible account presented provides even more mystery and intrigue. Kurosawa distinctively establishes three locations, the *Rashomon* gate, which is the present, the trial, which is in the past, and the woods, which is the past that led to the trial. At any moment, the audience knows where they are within the narrative.

In terms of music, Kurosawa (1983:138) was inspired by bolero music, which has a slow tempo. He states that the score Fumio Hayasaka made for *Rashomon* was eerie. Prince (2016:124-125) and Richie and Prince (2016:144) state that Kurosawa believed that the visuals and the sound were not additive but rather multiplicative. In sum, in conjunction with one another, they would respectively enhance the experience of the other. Prince (2016:125) also states that Kurosawa would usually use sound to explore "... the emotional and psychological perspective of characters ..."

## **5.2 The visual language of *Rashomon*, the figurative**

Brown (2016:1) explains in his book *Cinematography: Theory and Practice* that cinematography is the "... process of taking ideas, words, actions, emotional subtext, tone, and all other forms of nonverbal communication and rendering them in visual terms". They note that as a cinematographer, your primary concern should be to create a visual world for the characters, the visual world is important for how the audience will perceive, understand and experience the story, the characters and their motivations. They also note that everything in visual storytelling is interrelated, and the most crucial component of this is that everything has to be there for a reason, and that reason should enhance the experience of said narrative.

When I speak of a visual language, it is the embodiment of the cinematographic or any other technical components that are conjoined (be it camera and framing, special effects, sound and music, editing, cinematography, lighting and more) and to provide meaning as to why said components were used. As seen in the previous segment, Kurosawa had deliberately used various applications of said components to create a language that is used in *Rashomon*. In a sense, the visual language I speak of is the motivation for the action. As in language, there are many nuances

that have differing effects on conveying information. This motivation, this visual language, can be seen in its direct context, be it to convey elements of the story-world, or also seen as more abstract. In a sense, it is a visual language that can convey things like symbolism, metaphors, imagery, motifs or allegories and many more. Just as the subjective nature of Rashomon's message and the structure of the Rashomon Effect, so can many of the visual language fall into the realms of the subjective. What I will try to achieve in this segment is to provide some insight into the visual language of *Rashomon* through the perspectives of numerous academics.

Kurosawa himself (1983:135-140) acknowledges the influences of Akutagawa's *In a Grove / Yabu no naka* (1922), he speaks of how Akutagawa's short story delves deep into the human heart and explores their sombre intricacies and complexities of human nature, he himself sees humans as self-centred and self-dignified. Kurosawa (1983:135) further notes that he would express these human complexities through the use of light and shadow. What we can deduce from this, as Davis, Anderson and Walls (2015:4) note, is that Kurosawa was concerned with human nature as a whole. I find this to be akin to the notions of Schwartz's (1992, 2012) Value System Theory, as Kurosawa is concerned with the grander scheme of things, so too is this study.

Kurosawa (1983:135) notes that the story itself was deep and complex and so the script was made to be brief and straightforward so that he could allow himself the freedom to express it through his visual imagery (or in this regard, we can say his visual language). Nogami (2016:22) gives us some insight into how things went during the shooting of *Rashomon*. They refer to a particular moment where some of the staff, after reading the script, questioned Kurosawa on what it meant. Nogami (2016) describes that Kurosawa saw the script as "... about the very impenetrability of the human heart". I find this to be correlated with the aforementioned, of how complex the human condition truly is, it is indeed thick and tangled, like a forest, one could get lost in it. Richie (2015:41) mentions another moment that took place during filming, Kurosawa would show the actors animal films and accordingly instruct them to act as their specified animals. They note that bestial nature is apparent in the acting of *Rashomon*, there is an interplay between animal- and human nature and this can also be seen as a visual language, Kurosawa intentionally planned out the

characters' posture and demeanour to emphasise the inevitability of our nature, like animals, these tendencies are embedded within us.

As mentioned earlier, Walls (2015:14) notes that Akutagawa's *Rashomon* (1915) had also influenced Kurosawa, in particular, it helped to provide him with a setting where the main reflection between the woodcutter, the priest and the commoner would take place. The story begins at the *Rashomon* gate, and it ends at the *Rashomon* gate. Walls continues to elaborate that the visual setting of the *Rashomon* gate is depicted as being in ruin and amongst it lies debris, a visual indication of an aftermath, which will later be discussed. The gate is weathering a heavy downpour and what little remains provides shelter for the trio. It is a common visual language to associate rain and ruination with negative emotions and hopelessness.

Walls (2015:15) explains further that the word *Rashomon* itself means a web life-gate or net life-gate, he proposes that the choice of name (the gate and the film itself) could symbolise the Buddhist worldview of the web of *dharma*, which catches sinners and along with the gate, which houses the net, catches these netted lives, ultimately it is concerned with moral ethics, life and death and how it is all netted together.

Walls (2015:15) continues to elaborate on Buddhist beliefs, such as that the self is an unstable mass of illusory forces, also known as *maya*, and that suffering is embedded in the desires of the self, ultimately to transcend the self is to remove the mass and to experience the real truth. Wells connects this to Kurosawa's emphasis on the conflicting and differing selves (the characters), and how while the characters are rooted in their own selfish desires, there will be no truth.

Kurosawa (1983:135) maintains that the *Rashomon* film is about humans and their inability to be honest with-and-about themselves, how they will always embellish their own stature, even to the point of lying, they want to portray themselves as better than they really are. Kurosawa summarises it up to the egoism of humanity and how it is ingrained within our system and that *Rashomon* exposes it.

Horvat (2016:44-47) and Richie (2015:115-117) argue that even though *Rashomon* had a historical setting, it rather served as a criticism and reflection of the post-war

period, Horvat (2016:44-47) states that it was not about World War 2 but rather its aftermath, specifically after the Tokyo War Crimes trials. They argue further that *Rashomon* focuses on the reluctance of characters to take responsibility for their crimes, but the story ends on a positive note, where the woodcutter takes on a new life, despite his guilt. This is also a valid perspective into the visual language of *Rashomon*, it can be seen as Kurosawa's subjective message to his audience (at that time, his fellow countrymen), he wanted to layer in a deeper reflection, and perhaps this is the true answer to *Rashomon*, even if we are unable to find the truth, for we have yet to transcend our selfish desires, we can still strive towards betterment or enlightenment. Matsumura (2016:65) notes that the Rashomon Effect leaves the audience in a state of reflection, where one becomes aware of one's own interpretation of it.

Yalman (2016:86) finds the search for what is real and what is true within the forested mountains of the *Rashomon* film to be a metaphor for the uncertainties of Kurosawa's generation after the wars in Asia. That what seems real, might not be and that our actions have multiple interpretations. Yalman further notes (2016:87-88) from an anthropological perspective that all action has purpose but to understand the purpose of other's actions is ambiguous. As each purpose has an intent, and that intent (or motivation) may be personal or even unconscious to the one performing, and therefore rational analysis is barred, we can merely try to understand from our own ambiguous selves. What this means is that any action taken is already left up for interpretation, and once the motivation for that action is revealed, even more ambiguous interpretations occur. Yalman (2016:94) and Richie (2016:116) credit Kurosawa's work as being transcendent, that it is understood beyond the boundaries of Japan, it speaks universally for it proposes a universal dilemma of the human condition, so much so that *Rashomon* itself has become a metaphor for the aforementioned. Since the Rashomon Effect speaks universally of the ambiguous nature of interpretation of the human condition, I find it interesting that Schwartz's (1992, 2012) Value System Theory is also a universal language. I believe that both concepts complement each other since the Rashomon Effect emphasises ambiguous interpretation, it leads to a heightened state of affect between the audience and the narrative, which enables a deepened immersion for which the

Value System Theory can then reason also with the audience, which can then lead to a state of identification and then narrative persuasion.

Nogami (2016:27) argues that through simple compositions and the use of light and darkness, *Rashomon* had achieved an aesthetic beauty. They use examples of certain scenes where the light and shadows interact with the characters, like when the bandit was resting, obscured in playful but ominous shadows or when the wife was resting by the ravine, bathing in pure light. It is evident that lighting and simple composition merge into the intended visual language. Nogami (2016:28) confirms this by referring to Kurosawa's (1983) autobiography, where he stated that light and shadows within the forest were keynotes of the film, which resulted in him eventually filming the sun directly.

Richie (2016:39) explains a crucial visual language that takes place during the trial, we never see or hear the judge, we are in fact placed in the seat of the judge and the character's lead the discussion as if they are answering questions we imposed on them. This places the audience directly within the narrative and gets them more personally involved with the narrative. We become transported (creatively against our will) into this narrative, and we are forced into this conundrum, this *Rashomon* Effect, where we are tested both in our need for cognition and our need for affect. Each character makes a compelling and sensible argument, but at the same time, in conjunction with one another, there is no sense to be made, a cognitive paradox.

Then perhaps we could say that there should be no narrative engagement since this narrative is spun with so many inconsistencies that it would divert the audience from creating their mental models, for the rules are broken, and there is no logic. This is, however, the beauty of *Rashomon*, for it is "consistently inconsistent". The logic is that there is no logical answer, and the reason is established as being shrouded in mystery. It takes what is normally applied to other narratives and flips it on its head. It is established from the beginning that the narrative doesn't make any sense and that it is confusing, so as the audience, we expect it to be so. By establishing the narrative as such, what would be an inconsistency becomes a consistency.

Richie (2016:39) notes that there is even a pathetic fallacy, which is when human emotion or action is applied to elements in nature; they refer specifically to the end

scene where the woodcutter's redemption in taking the orphan home, the rain stops and the sun begins to shine. This does not provide a conclusion to the mystery of the plot, but it is indeed a form of visual language.

Richie (2016:120) notes that in general, Kurosawa's films had a particular style. This style utilised his cinematographic approach to create his visual languages. They refer to how Kurosawa would set up compositions to specifically reflect the situations of his characters, how he would use his camera to suggest said character's gaze, how he would edit and cut images together to create motion and how he would use long focal lengths to help create specific visual atmospheres. Kurosawa would eventually begin to use more than one camera to create spatial freedom. In sum, Kurosawa had in time developed his own unique visual language.

### **5.3 The Rashomon Effect, the theoretical**

From the legacy that is the film *Rashomon* came the now established term the Rashomon Effect. In this segment, I will further elaborate on the components of the Rashomon Effect and what exactly makes it so effective. This is a necessary step to understand in order to know what ingredients are needed when creating one's own Rashomon effect.

Richie (2016:39) explains that the core of the *Rashomon* film is to provide and instil ambiguity. They note that this is done by providing each character with an agenda (or as we can relate to, a goal). With the four main perspectives (the woodcutter, the bandit, the wife and the samurai) everybody had a reason, a justification, for what they had done, the latter three being their reason for killing the samurai and the former his reason for not providing his full testimony. They state that Kurosawa made each perspective equal through the use of this ambiguity. Matsumura (2016:57) elaborates on this by explaining that Kurosawa didn't allow his characters to create attractive personae of themselves.

Richie (2016:39) also refers to the web of life that Kurosawa and Hashimoto created, that is an interconnected system of ambiguity. They state that there is no morality in the film "... since morality is presumably based on some sort of truth, and truth itself as the film has demonstrated is divisive". This ambiguity is emphasised even more

by the characters and how they see themselves. Richie (2016) elaborates by explaining that during the trial, the characters are all depictions, theatrical dramatizations, they, therefore, tell an enthralling tale that best serves their interest.

In the midst of all of this ambiguity, Davis and Burnham (2016:96-100) note that the audience is placed in the role of negotiators. By giving power to the audience as negotiators, it also provides an opportunity for them to become invested, involved and immersed. There is a caveat, however, as some audiences do not wish to be placed in this active role, which might alienate them from the narrative experience. With the particular problem that all accounts are subjective, and from their perspectives they speak their 'truth'; however, there is never a defining piece of evidence that will provide resolution, so all the more emphasis is placed on the audience to formulate their own conclusion. Davis and Burnham (2016:100) elaborate on this conclusion as "... to either consider the philosophical ramifications of this lack of resolution or to mediate the varying accounts onto their own fifth version".

Davis and Burnham (2016:105-108) explain that Kurosawa tries to appeal more to the need for affect, for the narrative itself is clouded with ambiguity that would wrack the cognitive side, especially when considering that there is no resolution. The need for affect is established early on through the promise of intrigue and mystery (and as we understand it, narrative engagement). The viewer's expectations are set up to experience these things, and they are emotionally and systematically built up towards this intrigue (the confusion at the *Rashomon* gate, the lengthy flashback of the woodcutter, discovering the clues of a murder, the hint of mystery and the visual imagery of a dead man's hands curled in anguish, the introductory trial period and the constant persistence of the commoner). Just as the real trial begins, the audience is eager to experience the real confusion, as they are already invested and with the trial they are placed on the pedestal of the judge (negotiator). The commoner even forgoes the care for logic and rather embraces the pleasure of the intrigue.

As mentioned in the previous section, Richie (2016:39) spoke of how the *Rashomon* film ends with the visual language of the skies clearing and the rain stopping, but it does not answer the question of who truly killed the samurai or who was right or

wrong - there is no conclusion, but it is rather left with the viewer to stew. By not providing the viewer with an answer, they are left to make their own conclusions. Richie (2016:42) argues that Kurosawa's message, or rather his vision, transcended his intended Japanese audience, it is a message that all could understand. In sum, it is a universal message with a universal structure that all of us understand, it would be apparent to find connotation to Schwartz's (1992, 2012) Value System Theory, which is also a universal language we all intrinsically understand.

To me, Anderson (2016) provides the most cohesive and extensive explanation of what exactly the Rashomon Effect is. Anderson (2016:67) notes that the Rashomon Effect "... occurs in cognition, epistemology, anthropology, psychology, sociology, communication and other social sciences, and in legal studies". What we can ascertain from this is the impact that Rashomon (and its effect) has had across numerous fields - it is rare for something to be so provocative and engulfing.

Anderson (2016:81) provides a detailed description of what the Rashomon Effect truly is, namely that "The Rashomon Effect is not just about differences of perspective. It occurs particularly where such differences arise in combination with the absence of evidence to elevate or disqualify any version of the truth, plus the social pressure for closure on the question". To truly understand what this description means in the context of the *Rashomon* film and how it is truly effective, they provide further explanations as a set of ingredients.

Anderson (2016:68-73) states that the first ingredient is a compelling fact. In the *Rashomon* film, this is the death of the samurai, a nobleman. There are other facts involved, such as the sexual interaction between the bandit and the wife or the fact that the main characters were present. All of these facts do however vary in the form of interpretation, as in, the samurai is dead, but the manner of his death is wrapped up in ambiguity or even the sexual encounter between the bandit and the wife, it happened but was it rape, coercion or seduction? The important part about the facts is that there is pressure for closure. Unfortunately, in regard to the zeitgeist of the setting and time, the social need for closure did not include the maltreatment of the wife but the impact of a noble samurai's death. From the societal framework, society demands answers to such a fact. Anderson (2016:68-73) questions that would the social need for closure be so severe if it was the death of a bandit, would the judicial

system of *Rashomon* give the same treatment if a notorious bandit had been bested?

Anderson (2016:68) explains the second ingredient to be the intentional and carefully crafted narratives of the characters that provide their own unique version of what the 'truth' is, all while serving their best interests. What is important about these narratives is that, while being cultivated specifically by the characters, they do not discredit, disqualify or provide compelling evidence that could make their narrative superior to the rest. In sum, we enter with the facts, we hear their recollections and leave with nothing gained except the fact that there was nothing gained, factually. This ingredient extends even to the secondary characters, like the monk, the commoner and the woodcutter. The monk and the commoner serve as two conflicting viewpoints, the former an idealist and the latter a realist. The woodcutter serves as a witness to the facts and does, in fact, provide his own recollection eventually, but we soon discover that he isn't spared from his own ambiguity, for he lied at the trial and stole the dagger to serve his best interest. Making his recollection equivalent to the three main characters. Ultimately, these secondary characters provide only indecisive opinions that also do not add anything to the pool of facts.

Anderson (2016:86) concludes the aforementioned ingredient as each account being both plausible and coherent, with the intent of serving their best interests and to shift the responsibility onto another. All three involved in the fact, the samurai, the wife and the bandit, all claim to have killed the samurai. In the bandit's account, he had seduced the wife, and at her request, he set the samurai free, and they had an honourable duel to spare her the shame of having been with two men. In the wife's account, she had been defiled by the bandit, who had then left, and begged the husband for penance of her shame however his cold and uncaring glare had driven her to so much remorse that she fainted with the dagger in hand, accidentally killing the samurai. In the samurai's account, the wife instructed the bandit to kill her tied-up husband, to which he promptly responded in defiance by offering to kill her if the samurai so requested. As an honourable man, he did not sentence his wife to death, and he forgave the bandit, with dishonour and shame upon himself, which he redeemed by taking his own life.

In all of these accounts, the characters all acknowledge the same fact, viz. that they killed the samurai, but it was due to the circumstances of others. The woodcutter's recollection frames all the others as undignified, the wife as scheming, the bandit is a coward, and the samurai is dishonourable, the death of the samurai was by the bandit's hands, which came from a pathetic and frantic duel, which was spurred on by the wife who ridiculed the men, who were uncaring about her well-being. Effectively, all of the three were the cause that led to the samurai's death, and all three of them were seen not as they had described themselves.

Anderson (2016:71) does, however, note that there may be no evidence that may disqualify another's account, this is notably considered in the woodcutter's recollection. It would seem that the woodcutter's account could be seen as the 'true' recollection, but soon it is revealed that he had lied at the trial, claiming that he only found the body, when confronted on why he didn't testify, he claimed that he didn't want to get involved, then when it is discovered that he was the one who stole the dagger, his previous claim becomes clear – it was to serve his best interest, and so he is just like the other three. His account is then open to scrutiny as well.

We have the facts, we have the diverse but equally plausible accounts with no further evidence to discredit or disqualify any of the aforementioned, and we have the social need for closure. As this urgency for closure builds up, as Anderson states (2016:73) "The Rashomon Effect occurs where interests, culture and power converge to fix our attention on closure, to propel us to ask for explanations and to expect to get them, and soon". We desperately desire the final clue that would dispel the mystery, and then the film ends. There is no resolution, and we are left to our own devices, to reflect. As Anderson (2016:72) states, "The conclusion reached by a viewer, if any, must be inconclusive". This leaves a lasting presence in our minds which I believe makes *Rashomon* so notorious, we will never have that resolution, we will be forever plagued by this unsolvable puzzle, and our only solace is to make our own conclusions. We will, however, never have the gratification of knowing where we were right or wrong in our speculation, or we can see it not as an unsolvable puzzle but rather, a reflection of the inner workings of the human condition, forever a mystery, and just like a dense forest, we must not stray off the path or else face losing ourselves within.

Davis and Burnham (2016:109) explain that the *Rashomon* narrative is about "... unpleasant situations, characters and emotions" and that Kurosawa encourages the viewer to discriminate in order to engage them in the narrative. This is where the difference in my narrative will occur, in sum, in the *Rashomon* film the audience is placed in the position of the judge and they have to decide who is guilty, they have to discriminate and come to terms with the egoism of human nature. In my narrative, I want my audience to empathize with my characters, and so I task them not to judge but to save a life; thus, through the ambiguity of the Rashomon Effect where neither is right or wrong, I ask the audience to also come to their own conclusion on who deserves to resume treatment.

#### **5.4 Relevant cinematographic and visual language tools**

Now that I have explained the literal, the figurative and the theoretical components of *Rashomon* and its effect, I can progress to a brief layout of the components that are relevant to my narrative. Many of the components have informed my own approach, and from here, I proceed to discuss and signify which components are utilised in my study. I also needed to add other components that do not necessarily stem from *Rashomon* (such as colour, dialogue bubbles and frame manipulation of visual narratives and comics), since in my study I am not making a film, but rather a visual narrative. Therefore, I provide relevant technical and figurative aspects of specific components (the cinematographic and visual language) and how they influenced my narrative.

##### **5.4.1 The five Cs of cinematography**

The book by Joseph V. Mascelli, *The five Cs of cinematography* (1965), provides an extensive guideline to any cinematographer on key rules of cinematography. To simplify the theoretical exploration of cinematographic elements, I refer to two sources that summarise the core components of the five rules, or the five C's, of cinematography. The Academy of Film, Theatre & Television (2017)<sup>44</sup> provides on their website a summary of Mascelli's (1965) five Cs, namely camera angles, continuity, cutting, close-ups and composition.

### 5.4.1.1 Camera angles

The Academy of Film, Theatre & Television (2017) explains that camera angles play a salient role in how a story is portrayed and the angle used also serves to drive the story forward. It is a cinematographer's job to consider the application of camera angles because the use of camera angles affects how the audience understands the relationship between characters and their story-worlds, and other characters. It is also imperative to consider all angles used in a sequence and how they should flow seamlessly from one to the other.

Jarvis (2017)<sup>45</sup> elaborates on the types of angles a cinematographer may use to develop the narrative. The author notes that low-angle shots make the subject matter appear bigger and convey a sense of dominance. Russel (2017)<sup>46</sup> elaborates even further, explaining that low-angle shots help the audience to perceive the subject matter as imposing, strong and powerful, not just in physical demeanour but also in personality. The author uses the emotional perceptual example of an adult towering over a child. Jarvis (2017) adds that that high-angle shots entail looking down onto the subject matter. Russel (2017) further purports that a high-angle shot produces the opposite effect of the low-angle shot. The high-angle shot helps the audience to perceive the subject matter as weaker and more vulnerable; when a character looks up at the camera, this can be used to elicit empathy or sympathy from the audience. A complete overhead or bird's eye view is when the camera omnisciently looks over the subject matter and its surroundings. This helps the audience to develop a sense of proportion and provides spatio-temporal context. Jarvis (2017) adds that wide shots also help to establish a scene. Russel (2017) uses a similar term, namely the long-distance shot. This type of shot helps the audience to perceive the subject matter as alienated or detached and can also elicit emotions of uncertainty, anxiety and tension. Ultimately, this type of places puts a focus on the spatial distance between the subject matter and the audience.

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45 "What Are the Five C's of Cinematography? - Our Pastimes." <https://ourpastimes.com/what-are-the-five-cs-of-cinematography-12559965.html>. Accessed 24 Nov. 2020.

46 "How Camera Angles Affect a Viewer's Emotions - Our Pastimes." 15 Sep. 2017, <https://ourpastimes.com/how-camera-angles-affect-a-viewers-emotions-12255415.html>. Accessed 24 Nov. 2020.

#### **5.4.1.2 Continuity**

The Academy of Film, Theatre & Television (2017) explains that continuity is another integral part of the cinematographic process. Continuity helps to ensure that all elements of the narrative are presented in a continuous and consistent flow. Continuity's goal is to avoid inconsistencies within the pictorial frame, from elements of the story-world, characters to objects. This ensures that the audience isn't distracted from the storyline, and therefore continuity must be considered during production and editing.

Jarvis (2017) elaborates that continuity involves the dynamic and static elements of a film. The author also notes that a film must flow naturally in order to avoid inconsistencies and to make sense to the audience. These inconsistencies can either be literal, such as the objects, sets and clothing of the characters that do not match with what has already been shown. Continuity also applies to the figurative side, which entails that personalities must maintain consistency in terms of narrative and story-world.

I have already for this purpose discussed these inconsistencies in the segment of Narrative Engagement (see 3.3). I indicated that in order for the audience to become engaged with the narrative, they need to create mental models and perform a deictic shift into the narrative to become immersed in its contents. Any inconsistencies, either literal or figurative, activate cognitive reasoning and causes the audience to pause their engagement to battle with the distraction. For a detailed understanding of Narrative Engagement, refer back to its segment (see 3.3).

#### **5.4.1.3 Cutting**

The Academy of Film, Theatre & Television (2017) delves into another integral cinematographic rule, namely cutting. As mentioned earlier in the segment of camera angles (see 5.4.1.1), a cinematographer must not only consider the current shot, but also the scene as a whole. Cutting refers to how the cinematographer links together a sequence of shots which can evoke certain evocative effects. In sum, it is the process of considering how all the shots will work together to deliver on the intended outcome.

Jarvis (2017) explains that audiences may lose interest if the sequence of shots does not flow naturally or make sense. Cutting can also be used to transition from one scene to another. Cross-cutting occurs when one slice of action cuts over to another to portray that both events are taking place simultaneously and cutting an action occurs when a shot ends on an action that leads to the next.

#### **5.4.1.4 Close-ups**

The Academy of Film, Theatre & Television (2017) describes close-ups as the size of the subject matter and the relevant screen space that it fills. Close-ups can help to depict emotion and meaning of both subject matter and the scene. Close-ups provide more detail, and when depicting a character, the audience may experience a character's emotions more clearly since the character is closer.

Jarvis (2017) elaborates that close-ups help us to focus on detail and also make smaller details become more distinct due to the closeness of the shot. Close-ups range from medium to extreme close-ups. The use of a close-up helps to bring attention and focus to the subject matter, negating the surrounding action and when focused on a character, establishes emphasis on his or her emotions. Russel (2017) also elaborates specifically on distance: the closer the camera is to the subject matter, the more intense the portrayal is.

I would like to refer back to Kurosawa's use of axial cuts (see 5.1.), which entails a direct line between the camera and the subject matter. On this line, the camera can either move in or out; it may mean close proximity with a focus on the subject matter or create distance between the shots in order to detach or alienate the subject matter, as I stated earlier, the long distance. In short, the distance between the camera and the subject matter plays an important role that has literal (focus-detach) and figurative (closeness, emotional-alienation, uncertainty) effect.

#### **5.4.1.5 Composition**

The Academy of Film, Theatre & Television (2017) notes the integral part that composition plays in the visualisation of a narrative. Through the use of visual aspects such as spacing, lighting and colours and more, a composition is created that conveys a mood (or in the present case, a visual language) of a story. The composition or *mise-en-scène* reflects the style and theme of the cinematography.

Jarvis (2017) elaborates that compositions entail how shots are arranged to produce the image; this is also termed the visual order of a shot. A shot contains balance,

and certain mechanisms draw attention to elements in the shot, depending on the arrangement in the frame.

#### 5.4.2 Narrative arcs

For the sake of brevity, I provide a summary of what a narrative arc is, which has been incorporated into the narrative and will be later explained how it was used in my narrative (see 5.4.3.1). Flanagan (2019)<sup>4748</sup> explains that a narrative arc is a structure similar to that of a pyramid that is concerned with the chronological flow of the narrative's plot. The author also notes that a narrative arc can be broken down into smaller segments, which are referred to as story arcs, which can be centred around the development of a character.

Flanagan (2019) notes the five points of a narrative arc, which are also applicable to a story arc. Ultimately, a narrative arc is the overall narrative progression, and the story arcs are nested segments within the main progression. The first point is the exposition, which is usually the introduction of the story where both story-world and characters are introduced. It can also provide the main conflict of the narrative, which will then propel into the next point. With a nested story arc, it can either be present characters (or new characters) that have their conflict introduced. In terms of our understanding of narrative, this helps to establish the foundation for narrative engagement and also provides the possibility of transportation through the intrigue of the introduced conflict.

The next point is the rising action, which occurs when a string of events is introduced that can provide conflict, complications, suspense, surprise, tension through events and also through the development of conflict. This may entail either the development of conflict between the characters or the characters and their environment. With regard to a story arc, this rising action is central to the development of conflict. In terms of transportation, these components can further enhance the experience of the narrative and can help to establish something of the mental model of the narrative,

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47 "The Purpose of the Narrative Arc in Literature - ThoughtCo." 8 Aug. 2019, <https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-narrative-arc-in-literature-852484>. Accessed 2 Dec. 2020.

48 Flanagan, Mark. "How a Narrative Arc Structures a Story." ThoughtCo, Aug. 28, 2020, [thoughtco.com/what-is-narrative-arc-in-literature-852484](https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-narrative-arc-in-literature-852484).

with reference to narrative engagement. There is also the possibility that the rising action can provide incentives for identification to develop.

The next point is the climax. This is the build-up of the aforementioned rising action and is seen as the peak of the conflict and tension. It usually entails a scenario where a critical decision or revelation is made which will then lead to the falling action. In terms of the story arc, the climax is usually centred around the main character of said arc. With reference to transportation and identification, this climax can contain significant vivid imagery and emotional impact, which are salient to both concepts.

The next point is the falling action or *dénouement* which takes place after the climax. It can be seen as the aftermath or the consequences of the climax, where characters can express development from the results of the climax. Generally, the falling action produces a release of tension through the unfolding of the plot. This would then lead to the resolution. The significance of falling action relates to the development of the character(s) and how they resolve or experience the aftermath of the climax. This can also have significant implications for identification.

The final point is the resolution. This is normally signified as the end of the narrative and is the point where all the issues have been resolved. The ending itself can either be on a positive or a negative note. As noted with the Rashomon Effect, there was a sense of resolution (the woodcutter leaving with the infant), but the narrative was never truly resolved. Issues raised by the narrative persisted even when there was an ending, thus leading to an open-ended resolution or narrative.

There are many deeper theoretical implications pertaining to a narrative arc, such as its origins, variations, limitations or methods of application. It is, however, not relevant for me to explore these components because I had already found my foundation for the development of narrative arcs from the Rashomon Effect, which I then adapted to fit my narrative. The narrative arc and its inclusive story arcs as applied to my narrative are discussed in the following segment where I also explain how the points discussed above have been applied and how they equate to the narrative experience.



### **5.4.3 Implementation, process, outcome and reflection on how the narrative was created**

#### **5.4.3.1 Narrative development**

In this section, I provide a detailed analysis and reflection of how I have incorporated salient theoretical issues into practice and how the application augmented the theoretical insights. This is followed by an analysis of all the narrative components and their visual language. The section concludes with a summary of all the theoretical components and their practical counterparts. The process began when I watched *Rashomon* (1950) by Akira Kurosawa, which gave rise to a desire to create and understand the process of creating a universally grounded character (see 4.2.4). This drove the pursuit to delve into the theoretical foundation of the Rashomon Effect and Schwartz's (1992, 2012) Value System Theory. Only once I had worked through the two aforementioned theoretical concepts had I decided to begin this study. In other words, one can speak of theory-led practice. This led to an experimental phase regarding both characterisation (4.2.4.1) and creating a narrative. Since this segment's focus on narrative, I describe the development process from the narrative perspective. I initially began by broadly imitating the overall structure of *Rashomon* and Schwartz's (1992, 2012) Value System Theory and conducted further research into characterisation, narrative identification and narrative persuasion, which would ultimately lead to the completion of my (GRFN811) research proposal.

As for my experimentation, I had the idea of representing ten characters (of which each would represent a value) in a dire situation (a school bus crash, with the audience being the driver that indirectly caused it) that the audience would be part of and would be presented with the concept of saving one of said ten characters, there was even my own manifestation of commentary (representations of the commoner and the priest) in the form of the good perspective and the bad perspective (how a value can be seen as positive or negative). At this particular point in time, I wanted to fully represent each value and have each representing character provide an account for their reason for the audience to save them (a recollection of their goals and motivations), with the emphasis placed on saving only one character, the audience would have to work through each account and then come to a conclusion, the goal of saving a character originated from my research on narrative

identification and narrative persuasion, as I did not want my audience to judge but to rather empathise with the characters.

However, this version had its flaws and was too convoluted. Upon reflection, the number of characters was reduced to four to rather represent the value domains, which gave rise to a new line of research and process in the characterisation side of the study (see 4.2.4). What emerged from this was a deeper exploration and understanding of Schwartz's (1992, 2012) Value System Theory, narrative theory and character development, and also the same for character design. These led to exploring character appeal, cuteness and the Uncanny Valley. The results from this process and its relevance to the narrative are the characterisation that led to the completed character bone structures. What this meant for my narrative is that I had my characters figured out, and I understood that I wanted to have a narrative that would have a successful Rashomon Effect.

This reflection led me to explore and understand narrative properly. I did my research on what a narrative is, and from this, I came to a greater understanding of narrative engagement, transportation, identification (elaborated) and narrative persuasion (elaborated). I also delved further into the origins of *Rashomon* and its effect and from it I also elements of cinematography (the five Cs of cinematography) and narrative arcs. In addition to this, I had read the book *A Long Way Down* by Nick Hornby (2005), which revolves around four characters accidentally meeting up on the roof of a high building, all with the intention of committing suicide, which then later diverts into a series of misadventures but ultimately ends up with the characters having better lives, meeting up again and postponing their contemplation of life by another six months. From this book, just as Kurosawa had found supplement in Akutagawa's *Rashomon* (1915) for their rendition of Akutagawa's *In a Grove / Yabu no naka* (1922) (see 5), I had found my supplement in Hornby's *A Long Way Down* (2005) for my rendition of Kurosawa's *Rashomon* (1950).

From this theoretical point and reflection evolved my final attempt at the narrative (which is the foundation for the final version). It must also be noted that at this point I had also worked through McCloud's book *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* (1993) as part of my characterisation (character appeal, see 4.2.1 and 4.2.4) process. This source provided me with insight as to how I would approach my digital

graphic novel. During the conceptualisation of this version, I made storyboards and a small technical demo to test the application in Unity (a process was never completed for this version of the narrative changed, which will be discussed later). It should also be noted that at this point in time, I had also worked through the structure of a narrative arc (see 5.4.2) and began to implement it into my narrative. I followed the narrative arc point structure, with the considerations of the Rashomon Effect’s open-ended resolution to construct exposition, rising action, climax, falling action and resolution (with the open-ended alteration) with a view to apply the same structure to each character’s story arc. I provide a more detailed explanation of my narrative arc in the final rendition.



Figure 62: An example of my storyboards and tech demo for my third attempt at creating my narrative

The final attempt was set up so that there were four characters who were terminally ill and hospitalised. They all have a very slim chance of survival, and even if they were to survive, they would still suffer the consequences of the virus long afterwards. The problem with these consequences is that they threatened the value domains of

each character and could serve as valid incentives for attempting suicide and so all four the characters were found one night standing on the edge of the roof of the hospital, the events that led up to them standing on the edge revolved around the day of their good friend's death, namely Morn. The story would take place after the characters were apprehended, and it is the audience's job to investigate what had happened exactly. The audience would be tasked by the medical board to find out which of the characters were telling the truth and were applicable to resume treatment. The story would begin with the audience being introduced to the situation (similar to that of the final narrative version) and be tasked with helping them come to a conclusion. The audience would then begin to interview the characters one by one. Each character would provide an account (recollection/flashback) of how they ended up in the hospital and how the day of Morn's death played out. What is important to note here is that in this version, the characters admit that they were suicidal and they provide justification for their actions (similar to how the characters in *Rashomon* admit to killing the samurai but provide their justification). This process would repeat for each character, and at the end, the audience would report back to the hospital board and then arrive at a conclusion.

From this reflection, final revisions were made to the narrative. The setting would change slightly, it would still play out at the hospital, but instead of having the characters interact in the same space, they would be separated from one another. Another key element would be that it would not be the characters' visual recollection of the events but rather the audience's recollection of the investigation. A further key alteration would be that the characters would provide their ambiguous accounts directly after one another to help save the audience the tedious process of having to work through four long narratives. I found that this also enhances the Rashomon Effect, where one character would say they were the ones who did something, only to have the next character say the opposite in the next frame. This would solve the issue of having to practically animate the entirety of the narrative four times and reduce it to only one sequence of conjoined fragments that provide a whole narrative.

To summarise the final rendition of the narrative: the audience is immediately introduced to the medical board who explains that after a lengthy investigation they

are still at an impasse about the strangeness of the case and how it does not make any sense. They explain that the only evidence they truly have is the fact that these four characters were found at the edge of the roof and are assumed to be suicidal. The only direct witness (the nurse on duty) passed away from a heart attack before she could testify. There is social pressure for closure on the situation, and they are hoping that the audience can provide this closure. The medical board requires the audience to recollect in intricate detail how their investigation went so that perhaps after the meeting, a conclusion can be made. The audience then proceeds to briefly see the fact (the characters on the roof) and then begins to recollect their investigation. They begin by asking the characters whether they are suicidal, to which they all respond that they are not. The line of questioning leads the characters to explain that they weren't suicidal but rather, their value counterpart was suicidal and that they went up to the roof to stop said counterpart from committing suicide and that the events that caused this attempt were all centred around the death of their good friend, Morn. From that point on the characters start to piece together the narrative of the events that transpired, which leads to the climax on the roof. There are four smaller events (Morn being put on life support, Morn soiling himself, Morn waking and not remembering his friends, Morn's system attack and shift over to intensive care). Each of these small events represents a value dilemma that the character argues is the cause of their character's suicidal tendencies.

Edali states that the cost of life support and treatment was Ida's cause to commit suicide, for Ida didn't want to be a burden on those he loved for his treatment was already financially heavy on his lower-class family. Ida states that it is the fragility and dependency of Morn in this state that was Edali's cause to commit suicide, for Edali doesn't want to become helpless, powerless and unable to achieve his goals, for Edali wants to become a star, not a husk. Hengca states that Morn not remembering them was Vesre's cause to commit suicide, for Vesre believed that the mental degradation would cause her to forget what she believed in, in effect, she would no longer be Vesre, and so she would forget all that she values and lose her salvation, she would lose her soul. Vesre states that Morn's system attack and vegetative body was Hengca's cause to commit suicide, for Hengca was a free spirit that had high ambitions and a love for freedom and a life spent vegetative would rob

her from the joys of experiencing life, so instead she would rather have control and have one last big thrill.

Each character who is accused by these revelations also provides a sensible explanation as to what they might have been doing at the time of these events. Ida states that he doesn't like needles and the nurse administering the treatment made him not feel well, but he did understand that it was necessary for them to get better. Edali states that he was just disgusted by the smell and was honestly just embarrassed about it, he wanted to save face in front of everyone and not to reveal he has hyperosmia (a heightened sense of smell, hence easily becoming nauseated). Vesre states that she got angry at everyone else when they were acting chaotically when Morn was struggling to remember, their clamouring voices did not help, so she had to step in and create order. Hengca states that she got mad because the nurse had treated her as incapable of caring for Morn when, in fact, she had experience with taking care of her paralysed father before he passed away, she was merely angry at the system.

From this one is faced with either just a big misconception or some lies; either way, the accusations were severe, but in all accounts, they were ambiguous yet plausible. After the events are explained, the characters proceed to provide uninterrupted accounts of what had happened on the roof and how they managed to delay the suicide attempt of their counterpart, and at that point, the hospital staff found them, all four, just as in the beginning, provide the same story but from a different perspective. The audience then finally asks, as they were asked at the beginning, if the characters are suicidal, to which they respond no. The audience again sees the vision of the children on the edge of the roof, another loop around to the beginning. The audience is then transported back to the medical board, and their recollection is finished. The panel is yet again indecisive and proclaims that there is no solution, but they ask the audience whom they think is worthy of resuming treatment and then the story ends.



Figure 63: An example of how I mapped out my syuzhet and fabula.

I now explain the narrative arc of the narrative, which is to be followed by the explanation of the character's story arcs nested inside the narrative arc. The exposition of my narrative arc is similar to that of *Rashomon*. It begins in the epicentre of the conflict, which helps to establish that what is important to know is that there is a nonsensical conundrum and that there is reliance on the audience to bring closure to this conflict. The facts are stated, and the social need for closure is placed on the audience to recollect what had led to the conflict, in hopes of finding a resolution. This establishes a direct and firm mental model, which helps the audience to find and understand their deictic centre and makes the process of the deictic shift direct and simple. With regards to transportation, the intrigue and the promise of an ambiguous mystery can entice one cognitively to develop an interest in the narrative and spares the audience the need to sit through unnecessary expositional sequences by promising ambiguity and the conundrum.

The rising action happens as the audience begins to experience the Rashomon Effect, right at the onset of the narrative. All four characters provide the same account and articulate their claims to the cause of the fact. Thus the spell of the Rashomon Effect comes into play, and the audience begins to understand the real problem quite clearly, that there is a real sense of ambiguity. They are then further enticed with what exactly led to these ludicrous accounts, and what could be the

cause of such equally plausible accounts? From there on as the recollection proceeds, the audience constantly experiences ambiguous accounts of the events, which are all contradictory. However, the “facts” of the events are there, and all accounts make sense to what had happened. This conjoined telling of fractured puzzle pieces that the audience has to piece together begins to escalate up until Morn reaches a critical state and is taken to intensive care.

Again, it is evident what the mental model would be applicable to the recollection phase. This mental model is firmly established, and it is consistent, which allows the audience to embed themselves in the narrative through narrative engagement. During the rising action points, there are numerous possibilities for transportation and identification to occur, which are discussed later (see 5.4.3.2). What should, however, be stated at this point is that with regard to transportation, there is no overly complex structure that may cause the audience to experience counter-arguing. All is laid bare, and the Rashomon Effect is put into action. The audience is free to transport themselves and to enjoy the cognitive stimulation of this ambiguous conundrum, but they should also arrive at the realisation that the need for affect will develop as the rising action is experienced. This is achieved by the allowing the audience to experience both the need for cognition and affect, while the mystery of the Rashomon Effect stimulates their cognition with intrigue, and the visual language (see 5.4.3.2) entices the audience to also to experience an affective state by the need to save a character. The vivid imagery of the characters’ emotional conflict and their universally understandable characterisation enhance identification with a character or characters.

The climax starts happening when all the characters provide similar accounts of what had led them to the roof and how it happened; however, each account is ambiguous (by means of unique differences) and equally plausible. The resolution also briefly follows when the audience has to consider whether the characters are indeed suicidal, to which the response is likely to be negative. The narrative ends where it began, shrouded in ambiguity and an unsolvable conundrum, as promised in the exposition. From the various accounts, at this point, it is clear that the narrative kept all of its promises, and the audience now understands the events and why the

children were on the roof. Throughout, the intrigue of the Rashomon Effect is maintained.

The resolution ends at the same place as where the exposition started, at the beginning where the audience returns to the setting of the medical board. In this resolution phase, there is no conclusion made by the board; they (and the audience) are right back where they started. The audience is then asked that if they were to choose a character to save, whom they would pick. The narrative then ends, and the audience is left to decide, in reflection, on who they feel is worth saving. This is similar to the ending of *Rashomon*, where the narrative ends but the resolution is never provided, so that the final decision rests with the audience to contemplate what they have experienced and whom they would save. This question is a call for the audience to reflect on whom they identified with the most, and it requires their affective side to step forward, for there is no rational way to conclude. This emotional question entices an empathetic approach and a call for identification to which a persuasive resolution may be found; thus, narrative persuasion takes place.

Now that the narrative arc has been explained, the character story arcs are dealt with. As explained before, each segment of the recollection phase revolves around a certain character's dilemma and the misconception or accusation that occurs within it. To explain it simply, each segment begins with exposition, it establishes what event would trigger this dilemma, and it introduces all of the characters active in this conflict. The rising action begins with the characters explaining how the event's conflict escalated, which builds up to a climax, specifically between the main character and his counterparts. When a character makes an accusation, and the other provides a sensible explanation, however, due to the nature of the Rashomon Effect, the audience does not know if the accusation or the misunderstanding is true or false. The falling action is the reflection of all the characters on the climax, specifically the main character and his counterparts, the former feeling that there has been a resolution, whereas the latter is stuck without a resolution and contemplates the outcomes of the climax. This chain of events builds up to the climax of the narrative arc to make it more impactful as these floating contemplations then manifest as the greater climax. This then insinuates the character's falling action and resolution that they experienced in the introduction of the rising action of the

narrative arc. What should be apparent here is that there is a structured story arc for each character and in each arc, and each character receives equal amounts of screen time as to not discredit or disqualify any account, just as with the Rashomon Effect (see 5.3).

The name of my narrative is *After Morn*, which is inspired by a component of *Rashomon*. As with the film, the story takes place after the facts and the events - in my narrative, it takes place after the death of Morn. There is also another layer of meaning added to this, for the characters were at night on the rooftop, and as the narrative plays out, the likelihood is that their investigation began after morn (dawn, morning). Another additional note that can be made about the naming conventions of my characters is based on anagrams. Edali is an anagram for ideal, Ida is an anagram for aid, Vesre is an anagram for serve, Hengca is an anagram for change and Morn is an anagram for norm, which was based on some of my earlier conventions of having Morn serve as the audience, implying that they are the norm of the value spectrum.

At this point, I would like to reflect on the process of the mutual influence of theoretical concepts and practice.

### **5.4.3.2 My visual language tools**

Based on the five Cs of cinematography and also narrative arcs, it is clear how I constructed the visual language of my narrative. Specifically, I want to explain the specific cinematographic approaches that are found in the narrative. I discuss the literal use (technical) and the figurative use (visual language) and refer to apply relevant sources used that appeared necessary (see 5 and 5.4.1).

#### **5.4.3.2.1 Camera**

##### **5.4.3.2.1.1 *Rashomon* influences**

Regarding camera position, there are four important components from *Rashomon* that are salient to my practice. The use of axial cuts, as with Kurosawa's cinematography, was deemed imperative to the emotional experience (I elaborate on this later; see 5.4.3.2.1.5). The second component from *Rashomon* that was applied

in my camera usage is the importance of light, or to be more specific, the visualisation and capturing of light, be it through camera angles (see 5.4.3.2.1.4) or through the action axis (5.4.3.2.1.6). These components work not only to provide an emotional perception of the characters, but light also provides a sense of dynamism in the narrative and thus forms part of my visual language. The third component comes from Kurosawa's tendency to begin his narratives immediately, as it were in the thick of the action, and the same happens for the audience. They are exposed to a panel which discusses the conundrum (just like at the *Rashomon* gate) of the children's testimonies. The audience, who was tasked with investigating the character's accounts, is asked to recollect what exactly happened during the investigation. In a sense, the audience and the characters are immediately placed in the centre of the action. The final component relevant to camera use is the theoretical and visual language aspect of *Rashomon* (and its effect). For example, during the trial setting the audience is implied to be the judge who hears the characters' accounts. There is also a consistent pattern in terms of flashbacks that helps to provide ambiguity and subjectivity to each account that makes each seem plausible. Of course, in order to establish a Rashomon Effect, I would need to utilise these components in my own unique way, and as with *Rashomon*, the camera can become the deictic centre of the audience. I elaborate on this in the following segment.

#### **5.4.3.2.1.2 The meaning of the camera position**

In my narrative, the camera is the audience; more specifically, what they perceive. It is their perspective on the narrative world. It is established early on in the narrative that the characters speak directly to the audience (be it the medical board or the children). Regarding my already established understanding of narrative (be it transportation, identification and narrative engagement) is pertinent here. I know that by providing a perspective for the audience and by placing them in the narrative as part of the story-world (just like in *Rashomon*) allows them to make the deictic shift over from their world into my story-world. They have a role to play, and it is they who "investigate" the children's versions of events. By creating this deictic centre, I believe that the audience will already be welcomed in to experience narrative engagement, and in terms of narrative engagement, both identification and

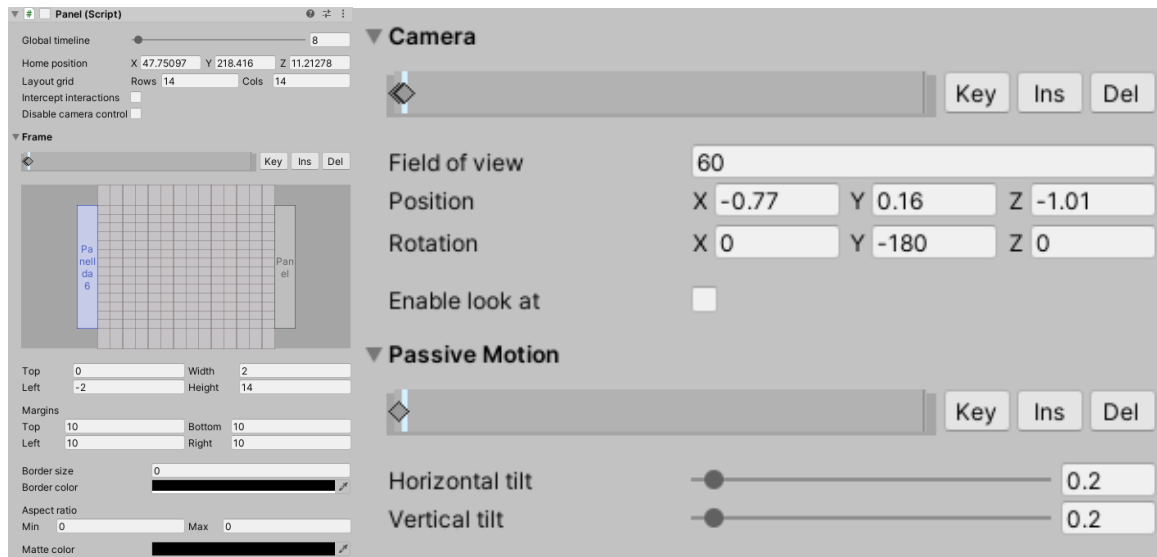
transportation can take place. With reference to identification, the audience isn't an omniscient voyeur; instead, the characters talk directly to the audience, and the narrative develops according to their telling. What this means for identification is that the audience can see the characters as interacting with them and as they reason with the audience; it is as if the characters are explaining their problems directly with the audience.

A significant problem would occur if this were to happen in real-time and if the audience were able to actually pose questions to the characters to gather information. As mentioned before in my character reflection segment (4.2.4), as a creative worker, one must understand one's limits and from there, develop creative solutions to solve the problem. It would be an interesting option to have the audience interact more directly with the characters, but this can be explored in future studies. My present solution was to have the audience recollect the events of the investigation. These questions had already been asked by the audience at that time – this approach is similar to the tool of the commoner in *Rashomon* (see 5) who served as a mouthpiece for the audience, and who helps to direct the line of questioning. As with the commoner, these questions posed by the audience may not be their direct input but by the creative use of recollection.

This technique allows for creative freedom regarding transportation. As the narrative progresses and this system is revealed, the audience will come to understand their role in the narrative, which can be described as the negotiator (see 5.3). This makes it possible for the audience to see the characters as persons interacting and reasoning with them. Furthermore, a need for affect ensues, and with the *Rashomon* effect in place, there is already a proven structure of intrigue and mystery within the narrative to transport them even further into the narrative. The most integral part is the freedom, through the tool of recollection, to have elements of the camera (be it the camera angles, axial cuts, the action axis and such) serve as being figurative and emotionally metaphorical to the audience's experience of the characters. Through the subjective recollection of the audience, they might see a character as distant and emotionally distraught or tender and close. From their own pre-existing understanding of filmic language (see 5.4.1) the audience is likely to see the characters as such. Through the use of recollection, all other elements that are being

discussed serve as vivid imagery that compels a need for affect, which can lead to identification with the purpose of reaching narrative persuasion at the end or during the course of the narrative.

### 5.4.3.2.1.3 The setup



*Figure 64: An example of the Panoply script and how it allows one to keyframe various elements, such as the camera and passive motion*

The camera setup for my narrative involved a specific setup that entailed a plugin called Panoply. In this plugin, there are frames with scripted cameras to work with the parallax and panel progression system of the plugin. What would happen is that I would create an invisible target for the camera, so the camera knows where to point and how to apply passive motion centred on a point (the parallax type effect). I would then set up the target and position the camera angle and distance from the target. Then keyframes are added for the panel where it would enter, present a view and if needed, adjust to another target and then exit. I opted to not modify the Panoply field of view to signify that all the narrative aspects are represented through the same camera.

This approach is intentional, for it adds consistency throughout all of the visualisations of the cameras. What this means is that I would express metaphorically through camera angles, axial cuts and the action axis (see 5.4.3.2.1.6) how a character is at any given time perceived by the audience,

although characters are constantly perceived by the same camera (audience). The consistency that is present is the audience member.

#### 5.4.3.2.1.4 Camera angles



Figure 65: An example of my use of camera angles (text removed for clarity)

Camera angles play an integral role in my visual language, as mentioned in the five Cs of cinematography section (see 5.4.1). Camera angles can help to convey certain emotions. I used varied angles extensively throughout the depiction of my narrative (as mentioned earlier, in the narrative, the audience recollects their investigation of the children to a panel of the medical board, and as in *Rashomon*, flashbacks are used). The difference from *Rashomon* is that it is the audience's visual flashbacks of the characters comprise verbal (textual) recollections.

All the camera angles are, therefore, subjective manifestations of how the audience perceives the characters during their investigation. This allows me the creative freedom to be expressive with my use of camera angles. When the camera is pitched low, the character on screen is seen as figuratively larger, dominant, confident, aggressive, direct and many more forms of dominant interpretations. When the camera hovers over characters, they are figuratively smaller and may appear insecure, sensitive, frail, meek and submissive.

Regarding the ambiguity of interpretation (see 5.3.), this method lends itself to vivid imagery (transportation) that compels an affective approach and encourages the audience to lean more into the emotional experience of the story, with the intended result of establishing identification that may lead to narrative persuasion by the end or during of the narrative. When the camera is placed at an angle, be it high or low, it is with the intention of evoking the emotional connotation as mentioned in the camera angles section (see 5.4.1.1), and thus, it forms part of my visual language. The camera angles in my are metaphors for how the audience may emotionally experience the characters. As with the setup segment (see 5.4.3.2.1.3), the audience can experience this application early in the narrative and experiences it be consistently used throughout the narrative. It follows that a mental model is established early on and is maintained throughout the narrative, thus allowing for narrative engagement to occur.

#### 5.4.3.2.1.5 Axial cuts



Figure 66: An example of my use of axial cuts (text removed for clarity)

As with the camera angles, the axial cuts in my narrative follow a similar pattern of intention. As already established, the camera serves as the subjective recollection of the audience's investigation into the characters. Like the camera angles that invite enforces an affective reaction, so do the axial cuts. Cuts are also used as an expressive emotional tool to signify the distance of the character's emotions; for example, when the camera is cut to a further position, the character may appear isolated, alienated, anxious or nervous. This is how the audience perceives the character. In other words, the distance is not the physical distance between the audience and the character, but rather the emotional distance between them. The opposite can be said for when the camera is closer to the character, or close-up, and the character appears more intimate, open and clear about the current situation or emotional state. Such a shot becomes a metaphor for the clarity that the audience experiences at that moment regarding a character's emotional state. It goes without saying that I heavily rely on the need for affect through this vivid imagery (transportation), with the intention of creating identification that may lead to narrative persuasion at the end or during the narrative. These axial cuts are a recurring and consistent element in the narrative. Thus, there is another addition to the mental model, which I respect by not introducing any inconsistencies in this pattern.

#### 5.4.3.2.1.6 The action axis

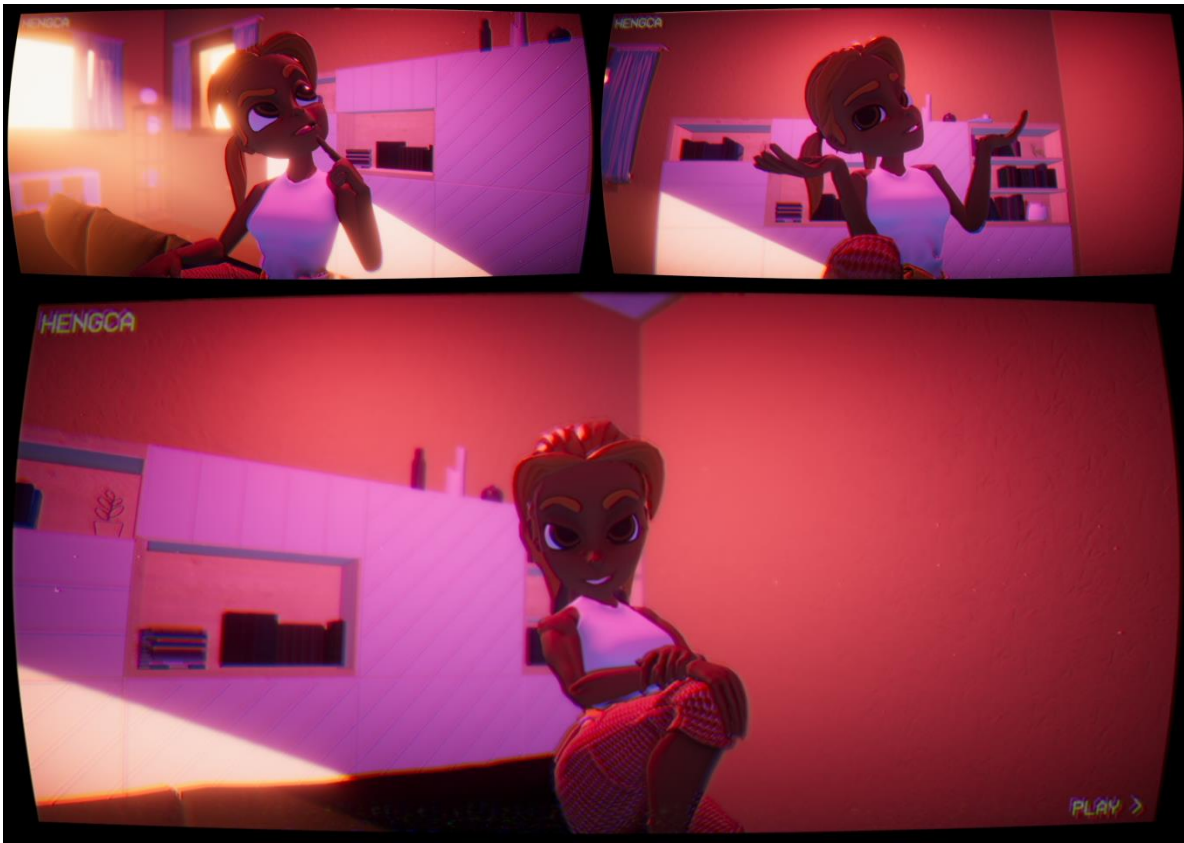


Figure 67: An example of my use of the action axis (text removed for clarity)

Brown (2016:79) explains in his book *Cinematography: Theory and Practice* that the action axis is an imaginary axis that exists between two characters which is established by an imaginary line that is created when the audience experiences the first shot of a scene. What this means is that if one is presented with two characters, A and B, with A on the left and B on the right, in our minds we position them as such, left and right. This then creates the action axis, which is a 180-degree axis where the camera cannot exceed said axis. The purpose of the line and the action axis is to firstly not confuse the audience with their spatiotemporal understanding of where things are and also to provide narrative information within the boundaries of this spatiotemporal understanding. Brown (2016:79) explains that this rule can help to convey feelings of movement, a directive look, geography, specific actions, and can also help to bolster existing frames.

In terms of my narrative, there are never two of the main characters present in the same space. The characters are always investigated in separate rooms. At any point in time during the experience of the narrative, the audience always knows where they are in the spatiotemporal space of the character, be it to the left of them or the right of them, in conjunction with camera angles and axial cuts. The obvious function of this is to create continuity and consistency for the audience. I upheld this rule in order to provide the necessary consistency to allow for narrative engagement.

There is also a visual language present here; as with the axial cuts and the camera angles, the action axis serves as an additional metaphorical tool. Firstly, it provides a more dynamic experience of the subject matter. Instead of only using axial cuts and camera angles, the action axis makes the character's space more alive and dynamic, which can lead to more vivid imagery (transportation). With this dynamism, I can also portray and frame the characters with other elements, and I can direct the camera to one side to metaphorically provide only a visualisation of the one side of the face, metaphorically hiding the other side, to signify that there is obscurity and ambiguity. If a character faces the camera on the turned axis, they are then facing away from the audience in spatiotemporal space, but the audience perceives them directly. As with the axial cut, this can be understood as the audience understanding the character's emotions despite them turning away physically to hide their emotions. Another important visual language element is the use of light. Like Kurosawa, I may turn the camera to face towards or away from the light, which can have numerous implications. Metaphorically, for example, it could show the characters as either bathed in radiance, placed in the spotlight or obscured by the blindness of the light. These elements are further explored in the discussion of light (see 5.4.3.2.1).

#### 5.4.3.2.1.7 Passive motion



*Figure 68: An example of my use of passive motion (text removed for clarity)*

Since the application of my narrative takes place in the Unity engine, the Panoply plugin (see 5.4.3.2.1.3), I have access to passive motion within my camera. What this passive motion entails is that if the audience were to move either their mouse or device around, the camera would mimic this motion. What this means in terms of narrative engagement is that the audience does have some interaction with the narrative (also with the input to progress in the narrative). Specifically, the audience has a level of engagement with their perceptions of a character so that they are, if subtly, active participants. In terms of visual language, this entails a measure of flexibility in the recollection of the investigation, so that the audience can alter their view of the characters. Ultimately, the audience's meta-perception of a character at any given point in time is dominated by these components.

### 5.4.3.2.2 Colour

#### 5.4.3.2.2.1 The meaning of the colour



Figure 69: An example of how my character's colour palette informed my composition (text removed for clarity)

Since *Rashomon* is a black and white film, I could not draw from it for inspiration. Instead, I concluded that in terms of composition (see 5.4.1.5) and from a narrative engagement point of view, I decided to use the colour palettes of the characters (see 4.2.4) as my main inspiration for my choice of colour. What this helps to establish is a clear and direct form of composition for each character's space.

Edali's room is filled with a mixture of purple, blues and pink to match his own colour palette (see Edali's character bone structure, 4.2.4.2). This reinforces the visual language of his characterisation, specifically his character bone structure which has been informed by his value domain, *self-direction*. He can be seen as elegant, flamboyant, methodical, royal and mature.

Ida's room is filled with a mixture of green and yellow to match his own colour palette (see Ida's character bone structure, 4.2.4.3). This reinforces the visual language of his characterisation, specifically his character bone structure which has been informed by his value domain, *self-transcendence*. He can be seen as warm, nurturing, anxious, timid and caring.

Vesre's room is filled with a mixture between navy and aqua, it being predominantly blue and cool colours, this is to match her own colour palette (see Vesre's character bone structure, 4.2.4.4). This reinforces the visual language of her characterisation, specifically her character bone structure, which has been informed by her value domain, *conservation*. She can be seen as calm, collected, enlightened, rational and orderly.

Hengca's room is filled with a mixture of warm colours, such as reds, oranges and yellow, which is intended to match with her own colour palette (see Hengca's character bone structure, 4.2.4.6). This reinforces the visual language of her characterisation, specifically her character bone structure, which has been informed by his value domain, *openness to change*. She can be seen as wild, temperamental, expressive, dynamic and passionate.

Both the character design and development influenced the visual language of colours in my narrative. Their spaces are personified to reflect who they are. It is as if their characterisation and general emotional spectrum spill over into their spaces. Another benefit from this can be linked to all three of the narrative concepts. Firstly, it establishes a form of narrative engagement, because it becomes evident to the audience that no matter where they are in the narrative, they will always know who is on the screen by the colour palette. This forms a mental model of consistency, and this consistency might become strained through the use of glitches (see 5.4.3.2.7) but is never broken, for the glitches are applied over the established colour palettes. As I had mentioned before, due to the subjective recollection of the investigation that the audience had conducted with the characters, there is a layer of ambiguity and a need for affect. This motivates the colour palettes of the characters' environments and perhaps even the characters themselves. The vivid imagery relates to how the audience recollects the investigation with each of the characters, and how they read the mood and atmosphere of the room. In sum, not only does the space signify the characterisation of the characters, but also the experience of them in their environment. Finally, with reference to identification, the colour palettes reflect the characters' intrinsic nature, which may lead the audience to make their own connections to the characters.

It is obvious that the colours also originate from the lights placed in the characters' spaces. I discuss this in greater depth at a later stage (see 5.4.3.2.3). For the present discussion, I can note that there are two lights present in each character's space. The strongest source of light comes from the outside looking in and is coloured to match the character's colour palette. There is a secondary light placed behind the character to add colour variation, depth and ambiguity. There are other segments that do not directly correlate with the character's spaces. When the audience speaks, a text box appears on screen and behind it is a grey filling that fills the screen. This signifies that the audience also has their own unique space where they convey their messages. This device is added consistently throughout the interrogation and helps the audience to establish a mental model when they question the children. The colour grey can be seen as ambiguous since it is neither light nor dark and may be perceived as neutral.

A further unique set is where the audience sees a glimpse of the children on the rooftop, standing at the edge; they are bathed in the light from the night sky, they are facing the light source directly, the blue tone paints an emotional tone of melancholic clarity. The recollection starts and ends with this sequence, which signifies the beginning and the end of the entire process. It also signifies that as the recollection begins, it also ends at the same place, effectively creating a loop. This technique conveys the concept of the Rashomon Effect in the sense that the narrative starts and ends at the same place, with no real conclusion. It also provides another key element of the Rashomon Effect, that is, the fact. It is the fact that the children were found at the edge of the rooftop, and that is the only fact that is presented with clarity (with no effects applied over it). The rest of the narrative is bathed in ambiguity.

The final element is the brief introduction and 'conclusion' of the narrative, where the audience faces the medical board. Here the light is bright and sharp spotlights are on the audience. This can be seen as a metaphor because as the characters were placed in the spotlight (see 5.4.3.2.3.2), so is the audience. It follows that the attention is turned towards the audience and their recollection of the investigation. In the introduction, as established, it is made evident that this social issue is dire and that there is a need for closure: a character must resume treatment, and the insight from the audience's recollection is imperative. Here the Rashomon Effect is made

clear to the audience because they need to provide an answer and find closure. At the end of the narrative, the board asks the audience if they had to choose a character to save, whom they would pick. After this, the spotlights are turned off, and the narrative is complete.

#### **5.4.3.2.2 Colour of the light**

As mentioned in the previous segment, all colours of the lights are informed either by the characters themselves (to match their colour palettes) or are motivated by other elements of the narrative. I provide some additional visual language information with reference to the introduction and ending scene. Here the audience faces the panel, the light is sharp and white, and it appears neutral, as is the environment. This colouration signifies the environment as almost sterile; it is a place of reflection and a space where a sense of clarity and closure is sought, and this is strengthened by it also facing the audience directly to instil this need in them as well.

The other sequence I want to discuss is the visualisation of the beginning and the end of the loop, specifically, the fact that the children were on the roof. This scene is depicted as a bright moonlit sky, with some cloud slightly obscuring the moon. This lighting matches the characters' description of the events, with the climax taking place at night, and it also highlights the fact that the children were on the roof and on the edge. There is, however, a subtle sense of ambiguity here, with clouds obscuring the moon partially. Here I also play with the notion that the moon is a secondary source of light that reflects from the sun. At first, it may seem to be quite factual, but in hindsight, the composition spells out the reality that the fact is merely as ambiguous as the tales to follow, a foreboding message to the audience. They were indeed on the roof, but it is not clear if any account is accurate. The children are also partially obscured by the moonlight. They are well lit from the front, but we only see them from behind, in their shadows. They become silhouettes, and it is clear that their shapes, not their details, are the main signifying elements. This vagueness and uncertainty also hinge on the Rashomon Effect.

### 5.4.3.2.2.3 Colours of speech bubbles

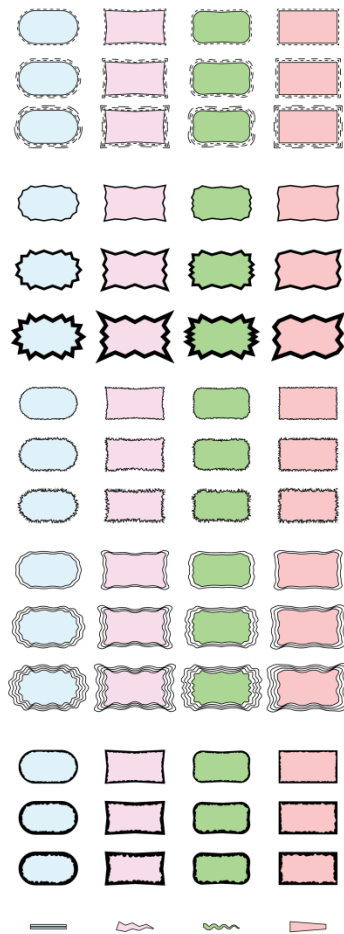


Figure 70: An example of speech bubbles: colours and shapes

The colouration of speech bubbles follows the same pattern as the use of light (see 5.4.3.2.2.1). The colours of the speech bubbles match the primary colour schemes of the respective characters. This is to again instil a sense of continuity and consistency in the viewer so that the audience can discern who is who by the speech bubbles' colours. The audience's and the medical board's speech bubbles lack colour, and this is to provide a balance between the colourful characters and those who want to investigate them.

### **5.4.3.2.3 Lights**

#### **5.4.3.2.3.1 *Rashomon* influences**

The influences from *Rashomon* become apparent within my narrative where lighting plays an important role. Lighting in *Rashomon* served as a tool of visual language, either to obscure or to illuminate, so that light has metaphorical or symbolic meaning and a distinct visual language. In my narrative, a similar approach is applied. Light is predominantly used to either place characters in the spotlight, to illuminate, or to either obscure through light and shadow (an example would be to cut over the face) or to even overexpose (where the light bleeds over the subject matter, obscuring them).

#### **5.4.3.2.3.2 The meaning of the lights**

As mentioned above and also in the section on colour (see 5.4.3.2.2.1), the light in my narrative with its colour has a distinct visual language. As with *Rashomon*, I also have three distinctive locations, the first being the room where the medical board meets with the audience at the beginning and at the end to discuss the conundrum of the narrative; the second location, albeit brief, is the visualisation of the children on the roof which encapsulates the investigation and creates a symbolic loop (to signify that our desire for closure is not resolved at the end); the final location(s) are the rooms of the characters, which are all distinctively laid out and signified with an expressive use of colour that reflects the characterisation of the characters.

Light can reveal things that are in the dark, it adds details, and it reflects off of surfaces, it makes the unknown known. However, where there is light, there is also shadow. Shadows reach where light cannot, and it obscures information so that light and shadow work in tandem to create a sense of ambiguity. Light can also be blinding, making it hard to see what is real. All of these components are integral to my visual language.

There are three sets of light that match these three locations. The first focuses on the audience, putting them in the spotlight and obscuring the medical staff. Their intentions may seem obscure while the urgency of their demands is thrust into the audience's vision, which creates the social need for closure. The second follows right

afterwards and almost in an identical fashion to those of the medical staff, where one sees the characters on the edge of the roof, bathed in moonlight. Here the light is facing the audience, but this time the characters are not facing the audience, they are facing the light, and we are left with their overexposed silhouettes. In this sequence, the fact of them being on the roof is established, but their intentions are obscured.

The third set of lights is used in the characters' rooms. Each character is equally lit from the side with a bright source of light that comes through a window. This lighting creates a frame that only partially sheds light on their accounts. Furthermore, most of their figures are positioned either in the shadows, slightly obscured, half-lit from the sides or over-exposed to light. There is also a backlight behind each character, and the audience can assume that this might come from a ceiling light. This light provides the characters with more depth so that they are not completely in the dark. In essence, the characters are always lit but are also always exposed to shadows, thus creating a sense that they never truly reveal who truly are; there is an aura of ambiguity.

#### 5.4.3.2.3.3 Lighting setup



*Figure 71: An example of how I set up my lighting via the composition (text removed for clarity)*

As mentioned in the previous segment, I set up my lights for the three environments, with two sets facing towards the viewer and then the room setups. For the latter, direct and strong light would come from outside the room, and a secondary light was placed above and behind the characters. Most of the shots have their own ambiguous but vivid imagery, I relinquished some of my control over to the forces of nature (the Unity engine), which I find makes the experience even more vivid, and as the lighting has a power of its own, I only controlled its initial placement, and it was then up to my characters to try and find themselves within the light, which yielded varying results that are indeed, naturally ambiguous.

#### 5.4.3.2.3.4 Light intensity



*Figure 72: An example of my light intensity (text removed for clarity)*

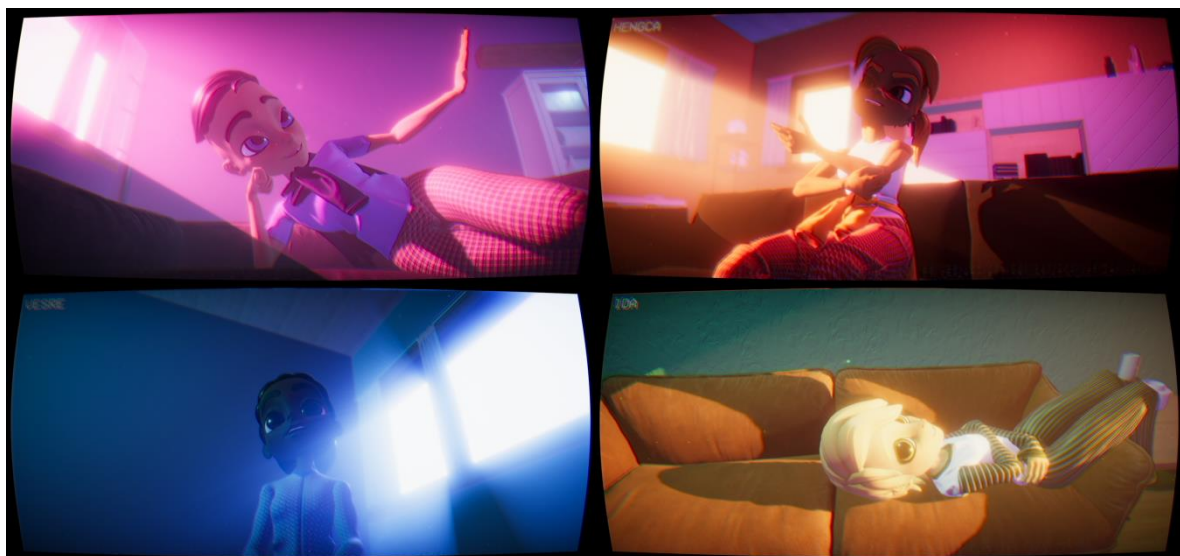
The intensity of my light is quite high, as I mentioned at the outset (see 5.4.3.2.3.1), the reason for this is to create strong areas of light and shadow, for better contrast. The intensity of the light portrays the polarity of the characters and reinforces the visual language of ambiguity. It is also there for when the camera faces the light to provide overexposure that also leads to more ambiguity, things are obscured through colourfully tinted glass. This intensity of the light drives deep into the transportation side by providing a strong visual language, and the audience experiences this intensity that washes over the scene as it adds to the dramatization of the recollection, which reinforces the need for affect. In terms of consistency, as

mentioned above (see 5.4.3.2.3.3) the audience is never puzzled by the light for it stays consistent, albeit intense, which enforces the spatio-temporal space for their mental models to formulate and their deictic centre to be established. Another quality of the intensity, as can be seen from its effects on transportation and narrative engagement, may lead to a stronger, consistent emotional experience that can open up another gateway for identification, all with the goal of ultimately reaching narrative persuasion at the end-or-during the narrative.

#### 5.4.3.2.3.5 Light colour

Just to pull together some threads, this is a reminder that I have already extensively covered the use of colour in my narrative and how it is achieved via light, and it can be seen in the previous section (see 5.2.2.2.2).

#### 5.4.3.2.3.6 God rays/ volumetric lighting



*Figure 73: An example of the volumetric lighting in my composition (text removed for clarity)*

Volumetric lighting or also known as god rays or even crepuscular rays are shafts of light that normally originate from the sun, which can be simulated in game engines (such as Unity) and can interact with volumes of fog or even particles. I have included volumetric lighting to achieve a certain visual language. I must first discuss the narrative implications of volumetric lighting. As with the limitations I had placed on myself when referring back to my lighting setup (see 5.4.3.2.3.3), I have also

considered the narrative engagement aspect of volumetric lighting. It is a common occurrence in real life to experience god rays/crepuscular rays and is also seen as a form of aesthetic; for engagement purposes, however, this adds a sense of familiarity that the audience can experience from a technical perspective. It solidifies my intentional decision to have my lights fixed and helps emphasise that decision by creating aesthetically pleasing shafts of light. This element is consistent and given prominence, and in doing so, it provides the audience with another layer of engagement. The most deliberate decision would stem from the vivid imagery (transportation) that this volumetric lighting provides, it fills the space with volumes of light, which interacts with the camera and dust particles, it creates an almost dreamlike space, similar to that of a recollection which I find useful to enforce the need for affect, it is another beautiful layer on top of the emotional metaphorical experience. In sum, it provides a natural splendour and beauty that evoke more of a sense of transportation within the viewer.

The visual language can be seen as another layer of ambiguity since these god rays produce a radiant, whimsical and pure element to the composition which frames the characters with halos while also obscuring them to an extent – thus once again suggesting ambiguity. I feel the characters are “worthy” of these god rays, as I want my characters to invoke identification within viewers. This differs from Kurosawa’s approach to character where the figures are rather egotistical creatures. My characters are ambiguous personas which have their own understanding of how they perceived the events that led to the fact, and they all provide valid reasons for their actions. Their values invite empathy, even if the viewer is unsure whose account to choose as the truth.

#### **5.4.3.2.4 Framing the panel: mise-en-scène**

##### **5.4.3.2.4.1 The meaning of the frame**

As I am creating a narrative in the form of a digital graphic novel; I take inspiration from Kurosawa’s *Rashomon*, but my choice of medium resulted in an alternative form of outcome. As discussed in the character appeal section (4.2.1), I referred to McCloud’s book *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* (1993) with reference to how he describes his planes of realism, meaning and the picture plane. Another

point that is relevant to my study is his description of panels, also known as frames. McCloud (1993:98-99) specifically describes panels, or frames, as an important visual language, or icon, of comics. These panels or frames do not have an absolute or fixed meaning, nor is its meaning as fluid as the imagery it contains. The purpose of a panel or frame is to indicate that the space and time of the narrative are being divided. The shapes of panels and frames do not affect the meanings of time, but rather the reading (or viewing) experience.

The experience that I wish to portray in my narrative can be summarised into two categories, viz. the panel curve and the panel distance. The former is a method of identifying the recollection phase of the narrative, and the latter is more concerned with the visual language that the panel may portray to enhance audience experience.

#### 5.4.3.2.4.2 Panel curve



*Figure 74: An example of the panel curve (text removed for clarity)*

As noted above, during the audience's recollection of the investigation of the character's account, the panel itself curves to visually replicate a VHS effect (see 5.4.3.2.9.2) and to indicate to the audience that recollection is taking place. As will be elaborated in the glitches segment (see 5.4.3.2.7), I have added effects to the narrative via post-processing volumes once all of the data had been read to achieve visual modifications. Specifically, this was applied to the panels that represent

recollections. The panel curves to simulate a frame of a CRT monitor; this has two purposes. The first is to inform the audience that they are in the recollection phase. This device is used consistently throughout the recollection phase and is thus allows for consistent narrative engagement since the viewer comes to understand that this CRT monitor display represents recollections or flashbacks. I have noted that I avoided inconsistencies to this rule in order to reinforce the mental model of the narrative. The second element is more metaphorical and a form of visual language: the panel curve that simulates a CRT monitor resembles a time in the past since it is seldom to find CRT monitors still in use. These monitors are objects of the past, which reinforces the notion of recollection. It also serves as a nostalgic tool and metaphor: through the use of nostalgia, audiences may experience a sense of the sentimental.

Newman, Sachs, Stone and Schwarz (2020:343-344) note that individuals who are prone to experiencing nostalgia may feel greater levels of empathy due to being prone to neuroticism, a lower perception of well-being and they may avoid motivation. The authors also note that nostalgia is a mixed emotion based on the aforementioned. Nostalgia is often experienced on days where negative achievements and social events occur but may lead to a stronger desire to help others or even feel inspired. If, then, I am able to instil a sense of nostalgia, the audience may become more empathetic and may also feel the desire to help others, specifically my characters. This is linked to identification, which stems from empathy with-and-as a character. Thus, through the use of nostalgia, I aimed to create an environment that motivates identification.

The final aspect of the panel curve is to provide the idea of the recollection being a recording as if the audience plays back the events of the investigation. It is also related to the visual language of the narrative in the form of a metaphor: the characters are recorded, analysed, and as is the case with the lights (see 5.4.3.2.3) they are put in the spotlight. The characters are placed in a stressful situation where they have to provide their accounts; they are reasoning their good intentions and open themselves up for the audience to experience and for the audience to decide whom they may want to save later. This urgency, this pressure on these terminally ill children who are going through an emotional turmoil, thrust into the spotlight and

displayed by some weathered display that will provide insight into the conundrum (the Rashomon effect) for the medical board to analyse and later question the audience on whom they would allow treatment to resume; it is all part of a strong, vivid imagery that tries to evoke a need for affect, a sense of care and empathy for these characters, and to perhaps lead to identification with these characters. All of this is purposefully planned out to achieve a point of narrative persuasion.

#### 5.4.3.2.4.3 Panel distance



*Figure 75: An example of the panel distance (text removed for clarity)*

As mentioned in the segment of the meanings of the panels (see 5.4.3.2.4.1), I discussed McCloud's (1993) description of the use of panels and their shape. Aside from the curve of the panels, as mentioned above, there is another component to the panels of my narrative, namely their panel distance. As the recollection of the narrative progresses, at certain points, certain panels will shrink inwards on the screen. This is part of my visual language and can also be seen as a similar metaphor to the axial cuts (see 5.4.3.2.1.5), which creates distance between the audience and the character, and makes the characters and their environments seem smaller, distant, alienated, compressed or pressured. This is also another form of

imagery that evokes an emotional meaning, which could lead to a stronger need for affect. There is only at the end of the recollection a segment where all four character panels appear simultaneously on screen. This is a unique element that signifies that at that point in time, the characters have a unanimous response, which is that they aren't suicidal. This then leads to the understanding that as the recollection begins with them separately stating that they aren't suicidal, they cohesively state it again, leading to no resolution to be found in their recollections.

### 5.4.3.2.5 Speech and bubbles

#### 5.4.3.2.5.1 The meaning of the speech bubbles

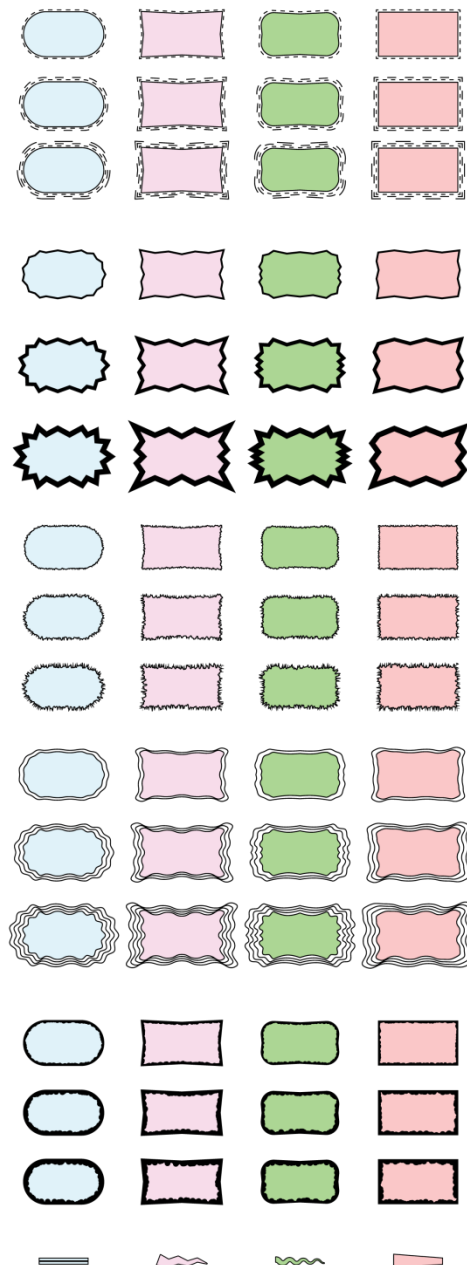


Figure 76: An example of speech bubbles: expression and intensity

In regard to the aforementioned, I will again refer to McCloud's (1993) insight regarding the use of speech bubbles and typefaces in applications for my digital graphic novel. McCloud (1993:134-135) notes that word *balloons* (or speech bubbles) are a well-established synaesthetic icon in comics. He notes that the use of

speech bubbles is primarily concerned with conveying sound in a visual medium, to the point that the shape and even the styles of lettering within or without a word balloon or speech bubble may suggest sound. Indeed, words themselves have the capacity to capture emotions and senses.

What one can deduce from this is that not just the speech bubble, but the formatting of the text inside the bubble, can suggest sound, senses and emotions. As we know, people have an understanding of tones of voice and a common sense of the importance of emotion. Since in my narrative, there is no voice-over; I had to convey their speech through textual means. The reason why I chose to use speech bubbles instead of voice-overs is therefore dual.

Firstly, the use of speech bubbles helps to convey the fact that this is a digital graphic novel; they are identifiable icons, as McCloud (1993:134-135) states, of the medium. Another reason is that it allows for more ambiguity, just as with my lighting setup (see 5.4.3.2.3.3). If I used voice-overs, the tone of voice may be difficult to control, but nonetheless, there may have been a clear expression of an emotion. With speech bubbles, emotions are implied, which of course leads to a greater possibility for ambiguity and a stronger Rashomon Effect. A speech bubble may be shaped in such a way to imply anger or hostility or perhaps through the animation of the typeface, and the choice of typeface itself can visually imply the emotional state of the characters, but it is never precise. To fully understand this concept, I elaborate on how I worked to create the characters' 'tone of voice'.



*Figure 77: An example of speech bubble implementation*

#### 5.4.3.2.5.2 Expressions of emotions

There are different core components of human emotions, but I focus on Schwartz's (1992, 2012) Value Theory. I also took into consideration Bradberry and Greaves' (2009) 'Five Core Feelings' model as a guideline to determine the emotions that my characters would have experienced during the narrative. For the most part, however, I was guided by the Atlas of Emotions<sup>49</sup>, which is an interactive and informative website that explains how emotions work, what sets them off and what they result in. This source also provides five core emotions, namely anger, fear, disgust, sadness and enjoyment. This conclusion was made when Ekman (2016) sent out a survey to nearly 250 scientists who were studying emotion. From this consensus, the aforementioned five emotions were identified as the most predominant and universally recognised forms of core emotions. On Ekman's Atlas of Emotions, they also provide graphs of the various levels of intensity of said emotions as well as their leading responses. In all, it is a very informative platform that explains how emotions work.

I have a speech bubble for each character that is informed by their shape design (see 4.2.4 and 4.2.1). To recap, Edali is triangular, Hengca is squarish or rectangular, Vesre is circular, and Ida is a soft mixture of all these shapes combined (due to his Universal/ Benevolent values and nature). The tails of the speech bubbles also match the nature of the characters, and the colours match the characters' colour palettes (see 5.4.3.2.2). From here one can establish that the characters' bone structures are reflected in the speech bubbles and have informed their shape design, again, creating a consistent platform of narrative engagement between the audience and the characters.

Not only did I make each speech bubble unique to the character, but I also added additional elements to speech bubbles to represent the emotions of anger, fear, disgust, sadness and enjoyment. Anger is represented through the bubbles becoming more angular and spikey, the thickness of the stroke of fonts is also increased to indicate boldness or loudness. Fear is represented through progressive fracturing/fraying of the bubble that turns inwards, with irrational patterns and

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49 "The Ekman's Atlas of Emotions." <http://atlasofemotions.org/>. Accessed 26 Nov. 2020.

uncertainty. Disgust is represented through the speech bubble becoming wavier with an echo of stroke that surrounds and suppresses the bubble, appearing nauseating and wobbly. Sadness is represented by the base bubble's stroke turning inwards and leaking into the bubble itself, with caustic bubbles of inky blackness seeping towards the centre, seeming to drown what is inside in a pool of dark remorse. Enjoyment is represented by the base bubble, but this time the stroke begins to repeat and beam outwards, gradually taking up more space as it becomes more excited, to appear light-hearted and playful.

Regarding typefaces, Hengca's reflects her character bone structure: it is loose, wild, passionate and playful. Ida's is meek, soft, careful and sensitive. Vesre's is straight, orderly, neat and composed. Edali's is suave, cool, mature and expressive. What this typeface reflects is the characters' bone structure and how their intrinsic and extrinsic qualities reflect in their speech. This also conjoins with the audience's typeface, which is neutral and standard or the medical board, which follows a similar pattern. In conclusion, there is an established structure of consistency within the typefaces that helps audiences identify who is speaking and helps them to have narrative engagement.

In addition to the particular use of typefaces, I also animated them, using slight wiggles and shakes, expanding or shrinking, bouncy or sliding text. I put emphasis on the emotional and characterisation qualities of the character's speech in each panel. In sum, the emotional significance and their characterisation are reflected through the animation. This is a consistent element that takes place during the recollection phase, which helps with narrative engagement, which can lead to stronger vivid imagery and need for affect as well as identification with the characters bone structure and emotional states.

Together these facets provide a visual representation of the ambiguous emotional states of the characters. The audience can see that a character may feel angry or sad, but they are not given an explicit description of the cause. Ultimately, this is a strong (and literal) tool for expressing emotion and creates a layer of vivid imagery. There is also the benefit of providing some into the characters' emotional states, which may incite empathy which could lead to identification.

### 5.4.3.2.5.3 Intensity of emotions

In the previous segment, I have hinted that emotions that are represented through the speech bubbles are progressive. I created three levels of intensity (low, medium, high) which were gleaned from Bradberry and Greaves' (2009) model. There is a recognisable scale of emotional intensity, which provides the viewer with consistency regarding the experience of the emotions, which aims to sustain the narrative identification process.

### 5.4.3.2.6 Composition

#### 5.4.3.2.6.1 The room



*Figure 78: An example of the room setup and the chairs (text removed for clarity)*

From all the numerous segments in this segment of the study, one can glean the fact that many of the nuances that come together in the composition. I do, however, feel it is necessary to explain the thought processes that led to representing my characters to appear in separate rooms that are distinct from each other but also somewhat familiar. Again, referring back to the idea that as a creative, one must know their limitations and from it formulate creative solutions (see 4.2.4). I had to consider the limitations of time and skill, and my solution was to provide a verbal recollection of events from each character's perspective. The characters are represented separately in order to prevent them from influencing one another's

narratives, but they are still represented in the hospital, but they are investigated in separate offices in the hospital.

I purchased an asset pack that could fill the empty spaces around the characters, and the majority of it serves merely as filler. The rooms appear like offices that one would perhaps see when visiting a psychologist. The vivid imagery of the colours is influenced by the light, which resembles the character's bone structure. All the items in the room are placed to give each room a distinct feeling, to help with consistency and mental models. An example of this would be the window placements: although similar in design, they are distinct. Edali's window is only on the left side, Hengca's window wraps around the left side and corner, Ida's windows wrap around the right side and corner, and Vesre's window is only on the right side. All the other furnishings in the room serve as fillers. This creates a form of visual language, where there is a sense of familiarity between the spaces, metaphorical for how their stories together form a cohesive flow from beginning to end. However, the rooms have subtle differences, just like the recollections of the characters, ultimately pointing towards a sense of ambiguity. Nothing except the characters moves in the spaces, and so the spaces themselves are quite consistent. This consistency aims to achieve narrative engagement and creates a sense of realism in the rooms. In each room, there are different seats.

#### **5.4.3.2.6.2 The chairs**

The chairs had been picked to match the characters' bone structures. Edali's couch is modern and dynamic, with pillows jutting out on the one side with sharp edges; Ida's couch is soft and plump but also appears worn and faded but still welcoming; Hengca's couch is consistently rectangular from all sides with no extra flourishes, it is direct, and it appears firm and angular; Vesre's couch seems like an antique couch akin to a more classic design like a Chesterfield couch; it appears more traditional, formal and esteemed. The seats are therefore extensions of their personalities.

### 5.4.3.2.7 Glitches

#### 5.4.3.2.7.1 Defining glitch



Figure 79: An example of the glitches and types (text removed for clarity)

Jackson (2011:26) notes that both analogue and digital glitches are similar through the fact that they distract the audience from the intended audio/visual product. Normally when an analogue glitch occurs, it is seen as an error (damage) in the physical medium, which leads to miscommunication between the sender and receiver. A digital glitch is similar in errors in the miscommunication between sender and receiver but does not stem from damage. Jackson (2011:32-34) notes that glitch as a form of art is "... the visual representation of the miscommunication during the transcoding of data", it may represent emotions such as nostalgia so that as one experiences the past, one is reminded of a current error in the communication process. Goriunova and Shulgin (2008:110) discuss glitches in the book *Software Studies: A Lexicon*, noting that a glitch is "... a short-lived error in a system or machine." or that it can be seen as a defect in electrical current or even as a sudden divergence from a correct value, ultimately, with a glitch the outcome is unpredictable, and something has gone wrong.

#### **5.4.3.2.7.2 The meaning of the glitches**

Glitches, therefore, suggest miscommunication, an error occurring in the transfer of information. They could suggest nostalgia and are experienced as rapid and sudden divergences from the norm. Glitches are unpredictable (or in my case, ambiguous) suggesting that something is wrong. I find glitches to be strong metaphors for my narrative's visual language. At certain points in the narrative, notably, only in the recollection phases, glitches were used to symbolise things such as emotional disconnect or break within the character, a sudden divergence or slip in their characterisation and that there is something wrong. However, recollection also pertains to the audience's perspective of the investigation. Glitches hinge on the uncertainty of the characters' credibility.

Regarding narrative engagement, it can be argued that these glitches can serve as forms of distraction that might reduce the engagement process. I would, however, argue that for the majority of the narrative, the audience experiences the recollection phase, and in this phase, these glitches become a consistent component that encourages narrative engagement. In terms of transportation, once the audience becomes aware of the intent of the glitch, they will see it as another form of imagery that evokes a deeper experience. Regarding identification, the audience may experience a stronger emotional connection with a character, because the ambiguity of glitches can be seen as manifestations or interpretations of deep character emotional levels, which might entice empathy within the viewer that could lead to identification and later, narrative persuasion.

#### 5.4.3.2.7.3 Types of glitches

Different glitches were used, from pixel breaking to colour bleeds, from static to blurs. There is a total set of ten types of glitches (five of which are at a low intensity and five that are at a high intensity). These intensities are discussed in the following segment.

#### 5.4.3.2.7.4 The intensity of glitches



*Figure 80: An example of glitch intensity (text removed for clarity)*

What is important is two factors; firstly, the intensity begins at a low level at the beginning of the recollection and gradually increases in intensity as the audience reaches the end of the recollection. This serves to drive the increasing ambiguity and helps to introduce more intrigue with the aim of achieving transportation. The second factor is the ambiguity of the glitches. The glitch serves as an element of chaos, indicating that there is something wrong, but there is no sensible pattern to be discerned. This element thus enforces the complexity of the Rashomon Effect, in the sense that there is sensible coherence within the accounts, but ultimately there is no evidence that could credit or disqualify any of the characters' accounts of events.

#### 5.4.3.2.8 Music

##### 5.4.3.2.8.1 *Rashomon* influences

As described in the *Rashomon* cinematography segment (see 5.1), it was noted that Kurosawa saw sound and music as multiplicative with the imagery he provided, meaning the combination of the two multiplies the experiencing of the narrative.

#### **5.4.3.2.8.2 The setup**

The first integral part of this segment is the setup of the musical score for my narrative. I had broken down the narrative into specific segments, namely the medical board scenes, the introduction to the recollection, the body of the recollection and the climax of the recollection. The reason for this approach is to help audiences understand diegetically that, in essence, there are clear separations between the settings. The medical board setting is apart from the recollection setting since the majority of the narrative takes place during the recollection, it can be further broken down into introduction, body and climax. The audience will firstly know where they are in the setting, as well as how far they have progressed in the recollection phase. As we can ascertain from the aforementioned, this will help audiences establish their deictic centre and mental models, which also provide consistency within the narrative that can lead to narrative engagement. As with the broken-down segments of the recollection, the audience can also understand the standard narrative structure (see 5.4.3), which also adds to the narrative engagement and provides a form of transportation. As the narrative progresses, it will become apparent that there are levels of intensity, especially in the recollection segment. The introduction will begin at a low intensity, the body will be at a medium intensity, and the climax will be at a high intensity. The post-recollection medical board segment will also use the same musical composition as the introductory medical board segment to symbolize resolution and completion.

Now that we have the base setup laid out, I can discuss the internal workings of said structures and how I intentionally designed the outcome to possibly yield greater immersive results.

#### **5.4.3.2.8.3 Characters personified**

I have assigned a main instrument to each character that personifies the character. Edali is represented through the kora, which is a string instrument from West Africa. It is plucked and produces sharp and eloquent notes, similar to that of a harp and lute. The kora's mystique, sharpness, clarity and direct nature suit Edali's character bone structure the best. His counterpart, Ida, is represented through a xylophone, which is a wooden percussion instrument that is played with mallets. Xylophones are

common instruments, and I hope to achieve a simple, naïve, homely, welcoming and humble allure to match Ida's character bone structure. Vesre is represented through bells, a percussion instrument with religious associations. This is a gentle but clear instrument. What this portrays in Vesre's regard is that she is traditional, conforming and respectful. Her counterpart, Hengca, is represented by an acoustic guitar. This is a common instrument often featuring in modern music and is popular among youths. The acoustic guitar makes a sound that is strong, sharp and emotional; it is expressive since it can either be played in a gentle- or aggressive fashion. I considered the cohesiveness of all the instruments because, during the recollection phases, all the narrative accounts are intricately woven together to create ambiguous accounts of the events that transpired.

The final instrument is the piano. It represents the audience and their role in the narrative. The piano is a very flexible instrument that can complement all of the other instruments when used together.

#### **5.4.3.2.8.4 The meaning of the music**

In the medical board introduction scene, the audience is exposed to the medical board, which directly speaks to the audience. With this, only the piano is played, and the melody and atmosphere are tense. This signifies that there is a social need for closure within the narrative, and it is in the audience's hands to recollect the events that had happened that lead up to this need for closure. As the piano will be present throughout the entirety of the narrative, it also provides a form of consistency that may give rise to transportation.

As the recollection phase begins and progresses (recollection introduction, body and climax) the audience is introduced to the other instruments; in other words, the characters and their personified instruments. When a character is on screen, his or her instrument plays as the leading instrument while the piano plays the supportive role. This is metaphoric for the account of the character on screen as well as the audience's supportive recollection of said character's account.

The final ingredient of music is melody. The melodies are defined by the various segments' main themes. For example, during recollection and the beginning of the

questioning process, there is a sense of mystery and ambiguity. In the body segment of the narrative, the body is broken down into four distinct segments that revolve around an event in the narrative and the leading point of conflict for a character (see 5.4.3). The first segment after the recollection introduction is Ida's segment, which revolves around the issue of the cost of treatment or the issue of an aversion to medical equipment and needles. The melody will for this segment is inspired by these issues (it can also be called 'Ida's dilemma'), and the same happens for each character's recollection and how they are viewed through the eyes of other characters. While the characters provide their perspectives and accounts on the topic at hand, the audience's piano consistently supports the main instrument, which serves as a bridge between perspectives. Thus the leading perspectives may change, but the audience's perspective remains consistent since it is the audience's recollection of the investigation.

There is also the issue of sound and image when glitches appear (see 5.4.3.2.7). When glitches are used, these are reflected in alterations to the music to match the altered visual and emotional state, thus keeping true to the continuity of the narrative.

This happens for each character's dilemma until a critical mass of emotion is reached that leads into a brief, but climactic moment where all the instruments are simultaneously playing. Here, in the visual layout, there is a brief moment when all the characters are simultaneously on screen. They are then represented in panels showing them on the roof to signify that their accounts all come together at the end, all equally plausible – in short, the Rashomon Effect. After this, there is the brief moment of resolve where the audience returns to the medical board, and the introduction melody (the need for closure through only the piano playing) is played, to signify that as the audience began this experience, they too then end up at the same point, with no real conclusion, which is another element of the Rashomon Effect.

The use of instruments, therefore, establishes a clear identity which personifies the characters on screen as well as the audience. This identity is kept consistent throughout the narrative, and the use of melodies provides an additional identity to the dilemma of events at hand. These choices aim to achieve narrative engagement

here, with consistency and continuity, to help the audience to become engaged in the narrative, which provides a gateway to transportation and identification. In terms of transportation, the use of melody is a metaphor for the atmosphere and the dilemma of each segment that provides a consistent and evolving set of imagery concurrent with the narrative. Affect may also stem from the music with the aim of encouraging deeper emotional connections with the characters and perhaps establishing empathy. These may work to create narrative persuasion in the audience.

#### **5.4.3.2.9 Post-processing effects**

##### **5.4.3.2.9.1 The setup**

Post-processing takes place after all of the visual elements on screen have been rendered and are applied to the final image. It is a type of overlay or filter that is applied that affects the outcome of the final rendition and is used for quality improvement or to apply effects (see 5.4.3.2.7).

For my digital graphic novel, the post-processing effects that I used serve four purposes. Firstly, to increase the visual aesthetic of the imagery; secondly, to unify the overall appearance of the visuals; thirdly, to create distinctive sections of narrative, which is the recollection of the investigation and the medical board meeting (it also serves to signify the metaphorical side of these sections, the ambiguous (recollection) and the known (roof scenes and medical board)). Finally, it allows for the application of glitches (see 5.4.3.2.7).

These post-processing elements are represented through two branches, the standard post-processing effects and the retro post-processing effects. The standard processes apply to the entirety of the narrative, and the retro side applies only to the recollection segments, which also include the glitches (see 5.4.3.2.7)

#### **5.4.3.2.9.2 The meaning of the post-processing effects**

Taken from the aforementioned, the meaning of the post-processing effects is to ensure visual and narrative rigour while integrating theoretical concepts as to bolster the validity of the outcome.

#### **5.4.3.3 Narrative reflection**

I would like to reflect on the broader scheme of my narrative and provide an appraisal of where the elements of practice and theory came to be unified. Firstly, my narrative is informed by the theory, and in turn, the practice led to more discoveries and a greater understanding of existing or new theories. In short, I purport that my narrative (at its foundation of text, medium and conceptualisation) is appropriate to the methodology. As ascertained from the influence of the Rashomon Effect, it is also evident that the genre of my narrative lies between that of a drama and mystery, which reflects a *Rashomon*-like schema. When considering narrative engagement, both the narrative and the genre schema are required to provide the audience with the comprehension phase of the narrative engagement process, alongside their real-world knowledge. From this comprehension, the audience is able to create a situational model which encapsulates the story world and the characters, which are consistent throughout the narrative experience and thus do not provide any disturbances from the inside that may hinder the deictic shift of the audience into the narrative. Through the constant back and forth between theory and practice, I have made informed decisions as to not providing any inconsistencies within my narrative. This approach allows the audience to develop a situation model and to experience a deictic shift that helps to develop a default base of acceptance.

I, therefore, oscillated between theory and practice to work towards achieving narrative engagement. The narrative can then allow for the audience to find their deictic centre and to experience a loss of self in a flow-like state, which also allows for identification to occur. My intended outcome is to provide the audience with an enjoyable (visually and ‘textually’) experience and for them to possibly experience narrative persuasion, which could result in changes to their attitude, behaviour and knowledge, specifically towards one of the characters. This occurs alongside the use of the Rashomon Effect’s open-ended resolution. In reflection, I find that I have profoundly utilised the interconnectedness of my theory and practice to provide an

optimal and consistent narrative which may lead to narrative engagement. I also applied various strategies as outlined above to achieve narrative identification, ultimately giving rise to empathy and narrative persuasion. These aspects are salient to the open-ended narrative where the audience has to, Rashomon-like, decide which account they felt is most plausible.

With the audience's understanding of the genre and their expectations (which the narrative aims to satisfy), the audience is encouraged to enter a state of uncritical processing of the narrative. From this narrative structure, it can be ascertained that I want to create an affective environment, through the use of the Rashomon Effect, which encourages an emotional investment and affective state. All these evoke curiosity, uncertainty and suspense (through ambiguity and the strong emotional atmosphere). Together with these emotions, there is a social need for closure, and the appeal of the characters (intrinsic and extrinsic) makes it difficult to find said closure.

Of course, there is also the intentional integration of both theory and practice in my cinematographic approach and in my visual language to provide a consistent aesthetic experience. From such quality, the audience is less susceptible to have their processing disturbed, which yields more for both uncritical and intense processing. For example, in terms of transportation, I applied theory and practice in a manner that allows for less counter-arguing (through uncritical and intense processing on the side of the audience) which thus allows for transportation to occur and to allow for narrative persuasion to come to fruition.

By integrating theory and practice (in both narrative and characterisation), I set out to provide an optimal environment for identification to occur. This is evident through my story, structure, discourse, characterisation process and the design of suitable and cohesive narrative engagement and transportation environments. These are encapsulated in the cinematography and visual language and aim to create as many opportunities for the audience to relate with my character's goals, motivations, emotions, their dilemmas and to understand them from an emotionally leading narrative perspective. From here, the audience can experience empathy with-and-as the characters. This would allow them to become absorbed in the narrative and

experience identification (and at the very least, liking, similarity and affinity) with the characters. Finally, these work together to achieve narrative persuasion.

## CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND SYNTHESIS

In this final chapter, a reflection on all the chapters and the study as a whole is presented with reference to how the research questions were addressed. Limitations of the study are highlighted, and suggestions for further research are noted.

### 6.1 Post-production reflection

#### 6.1.1 Reflection on chapters

##### 6.1.1.1 Chapter one

The aim of the first chapter was to provide a contextualisation of the study as well as a brief consideration of salient theoretical concepts such as narrative identification and narrative persuasion. A synopsis of *Rashomon* (1950) by Akira Kurosawa clarified how these concepts relate to the Rashomon Effect. With reference to character and characterisation, the significance of Schwartz's (1992, 2012) Value System Theory was underlined with reference to how, in conjunction with the Rashomon Effect, this model provides a structure for characterisation that could invoke identification and lead to narrative persuasion. These issues and their application were brought together with the summary of the plot and characters developed for the present project. From these, the problem statement and research questions were formulated, as well as the central theoretical statement, methodological framework and work plan.

##### 6.1.1.2 Chapter two

The second chapter presented the methodological framework, which is research-led practice. Research in an academic context was investigated with reference to different types of research, notably quantitative and qualitative research – and how these differ from performative research, which is the paradigm for practice-led research, or research-led practice. Different approaches in the latter paradigm were investigated. The difference in nuance between practice-led research and research-led practice was discussed with reference to the argument that these have similar aims but that they have different initialisation processes (the pre-production step). Of importance is that performative research can traverse theory and practice and vice

versa, keeping in mind the artefact, and maintaining rigour, validity and exposure of the research.

A consideration of salient issues such as ontology, epistemology, methodology and its correlated and relevant aspects (such as experiential, performative, presentational and propositional knowledge) in performative research followed. The significance of these in terms of reflection-on-action, in-action-reflection, reflection-for-action was indicated, after which the chosen methodology for the present study was indicated as formulated by Combrink and Marley (2009). This methodology consists of three steps, namely pre-production, production and post-production, with the understanding that these steps take place in iterative reflective cycles of practice and theory. The overall aim of such an approach is to comply with the requirements of academic research via validity and rigour.

### **6.1.1.3 Chapter three**

In this chapter, theoretical issues were dealt with, notably the link between characterisation and the Rashomon Effect in narrative. Emanating from these, the notion of narrative was explored as a form of communication. Relevant terminologies relating to narrative were explored, namely *narrative persuasion* as well as adjacent concepts that could achieve a state of narrative persuasion, namely *transportation*, *narrative engagement* and *narrative identification*. *Transportation* has to do with the significance of a narrative's story, structure and discourse, and how through vivid imagery, craftsmanship, need for cognition and need for affect, could transport the audience into the narrative by captivating the cognitive process in order to reduce counter-arguing and from it, allow for the narrative to achieve *narrative persuasion*.

In terms of *narrative engagement*, the sense of immersion between the audience and the narrative was explored with reference to its utilising both *transportation* and *identification* in its processes. The process of immersion can be broken down into three steps, namely comprehension, engagement and outcome. In the comprehension of a narrative, both the textual (story) itself and the real-world knowledge and understanding of genre schemas from the audience come together to create what is known as the situation model. The situation model contains both the story world and the character models (such as the character's bone structure). Through experiencing the situation model, the audience experiences a deictic shift

into the narrative, which then formulates into a deictic centre or perspective from which they can experience said narrative. Realism and consistency played an integral role because if inconsistencies or disturbances of the narrative experience were to arise, these could lead to counter-arguing and realism evaluation. I argued that a creative individual should avoid these and should ensure that the comprehension step is consistent with the story as a whole and the expectancies of the audience so that the audience can become engaged in the fictionality of the story and accept the situation model as the default for a narrative. If the comprehension were to be consistent and sufficient, the audience is likely to experience *identification* by means of various salient means. It was noted how these issues may lead to *narrative persuasion*.

With reference to *identification*, it was noted that it is a state of immersion specifically centred on characters and the experience of the audience of these characters. Narrative identification takes place when the audience experiences immersion via identifying with-and-as a character, and this would primarily stem from empathy. If the audience were to identify with (a) character(s), they would become emotionally immersed in the well-being of said character(s) through empathy. By identifying with-and-as a character, the audience would also experience changes in their attitudes and behaviours, in sum, *narrative persuasion*.

#### **6.1.1.4 Chapter four**

Character and the characterisation process were investigated in this chapter with the aim of creating a theoretical model for character development (intrinsically) through *Schwartz's (1992, 2012) Value Theory*, and also the character design (extrinsic) through supplemental theories such as *character appeal, cuteness* and *Mori's (1970, 2012) Uncanny Valley theory*.

I considered the significance of values as universal human phenomena but also with reference to characters in a narrative. Values, according to Schwarz's theory, form cohesive and conjoined structures that have specific relationships with one another. Salient values include *self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, power, security, conformity, tradition, benevolence* and *universalism*. In the refined values of *Schwartz's (1992, 2012) Value Theory*, the aforementioned values can be

segmented to provide specific subcategories (in the revised theory, two additional values were added, namely *face* and *humility*).

It was noted that one can speak of value domains. These domains may represent the related proximity of certain values like *conservation* (that includes conformity, tradition, security, face and humility), *self-enhancement* (including power, achievement, hedonism and face), *openness-to-change* (hedonism, stimulation, self-direction make up this domain) and *self-transcendence* (including universalism, benevolence and humility). The final domains that are pertinent are *self-protection* (or *anxiety-avoidance*) and *growth* (or *anxiety-free*). The former domain contains conformity, tradition, security, face, power, partial humility and achievement as values, which all focus on garnering control and protection of the self by avoiding or preventing conflicts or anxiety. The latter domain contains benevolence, universalism, self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, partial humility and achievement as values, which are focused on the potential of growth (for either the self or the other) with the aim of avoiding anxiety. The influence and relations of values with other intrinsic qualities like traits, norms, beliefs and attitudes were highlighted.

Throughout the chapter, the significance of theoretical concepts to practice were kept in mind, which prompted a consideration of how a creative would develop characters that portray certain values successfully. Therefore, supplemental concepts were considered that can guide the creative. These include *character appeal*, *cuteness* and *Mori's (1970, 2012) Uncanny Valley theory*. Firstly, with *character appeal*, the importance of shape design, silhouette and *McCloud's (1993) planes (abstraction [or the picture plane], meaning and realism)* was considered with reference to, how from a design perspective, these elements could produce appealing characters for the audience to experience. The importance of appeal would bolster the aesthetic language of the practice of the present project and could be used for deliberate and decisive decisions later on.

*Cuteness* was explored as an established design style. Cuteness is informed by Neotenous characteristics found in nature, which include youthful appearance like large eyes and head, rounded and soft features, as well as underdeveloped body and facial features. These features instil an intrinsic nurturing response – in other words, by presenting something cute, there is a foundation of care, protection and

nurturing for the cute thing. The significance for the present study of cuteness is that audiences would be likely to feel for, and feel with characters – these feelings relate to narrative identification and related concepts explored in the previous chapter.

The final supplemental theory is *Uncanny Valley* as an approach that was coined by *Mori* (1970, 2012). The essence of this approach is that realism (especially imitations of human-like features) in characters that fall short of being entirely convincing is likely to instil a sense of discomfort in an audience; a feeling that something is not quite right, that it is uncanny. In short, the expectation of something presented as “real” is high, and when a design falls short of being convincing, it can cause an uncanny sensation. Thus, to avoid the uncanny, one should *not* create expectations of perfect realistic imitations of human-like features. By presented something as not *realistic* but still humanlike would reduce the critical eye of the audience, in sum, by presenting something as stylised, the audience will come to expect something to not be *real* and so rather enjoy the humanlike expression as an imitation of humanity in an aesthetic form.

This chapter concluded with a reflection on the aforementioned. Firstly, a reflection was provided on how, by means of experiential and practical knowledge and interest, the project was initialised with reference to the Rashomon Effect and Schwartz’s (1992, 2012) Value System Theory. This was guided by the need to develop a characterisation approach that would allow for more identification through universal values and a narrative structure that emphasised perspective taking, all with the focus on providing an ideal identification experience that would lead to greater narrative persuasion. I clarified this by firstly explaining my pre-production step, which is informed by research-led practice, which includes the initialisation of the study firstly through theory (that of Chapter 1, namely: narrative identification, perspective in narrative, narrative persuasion, Schwartz’s (1992, 2012) Value System Theory and the Rashomon Effect).

By establishing the pre-production step and the initialisation of the study (via interests in characterisation, the discovery of the Rashomon Effect and Schwartz’s (1992, 2012) Value System Theory), I then clarified that my intentions (validity) were guided by characterisation, which was based on the understanding of Schwartz’s (1992, 2012) Value System Theory. I clarified how I intended these values to inform

the intrinsic side of the characters (their development) and from it, how these values also informed the extrinsic side of the characters (their design). These values also informed the representation of the characters in the narrative (via expression, emotion, text or dialogue and body language). I argue that if said values were to inform all elements of the characterisation process (from character creation to narrative representation), audiences would be able to universally understand and identify with the characters and this it could lead to stronger narrative persuasion through transportation, narrative engagement and most importantly, identification.

In terms of theory, as the experimental process of both the characterisation and narrative process was underway, I further explored narrative theory (Chapter 3) to gain a greater understanding of what informed narrative persuasion, from which came *narrative engagement*. I then clarified that through the discovery of this theory, it had then led to the search and discovery of Mori's (1970, 2012) Uncanny Valley theory, which would then again inform my practice, in a way that I could consciously strive towards a more stylised approach. Also, as noted previously, from the practice, the discovery of character appeal and cuteness theory also emerged. I demonstrated that narrative and characterisation informed the practice of my narrative process. I also explained how all elements from pre-production to production indicated how the methodology displayed sufficient rigour and validity through deliberate and conscious iterative reflective (personal or cooperative) cycles.

A further element was the values of Schwartz's (1992, 2012) Value System Theory that was shown to be applied to Lajos Egri's (1946, 1972) character bone structure. I demonstrated how these values could inform the character bone structure, that would lead to the development (intrinsic) and design (extrinsic) of my characters. Each character's *physiology*, *sociology* and *psychology* were informed by the character's value domain. It was shown that all the salient concepts used during the production step were applied by iterative reflective cycles.

The next notable impact was then the theoretical discovery of character appeal and cuteness. I intended to clarify that via this discovery, the practice was then informed towards a more stylistic approach which led to the initial character concept art, which would serve as the foundation up until the final renditions. The next important impact that I wanted to focus on was the further development of theory, specifically on

narrative, which led to *narrative engagement* and which then led to a further characterisation theory, namely Mori's (1970, 2012) Uncanny Valley theory. I noted that this discovery had then led to a reflection in practice, which united with the former two design theories, *character appeal* and *cuteness*, to provide me with a sound theoretical and practical foundation that would inform the design of my character all up until the final outcome (artefact). I wanted to make it evident here that the key theoretical framework, namely Schwartz's (1992, 2012) Value System Theory, which had informed my design, now accompanied with the design theories, informed the design process. In addition, I had kept to my methodology, and I had maintained a constant state of iterative reflective (personal and collaborative) cycles, with my desired outcome always in mind, viz. to deliver said outcome with rigour and validity.

The next step was the development of the narrative, which was explored subsequently. Throughout, concepts were consistently applied with rigour through the continual improvement of my experiential and practical knowledge that guided conscious decisions by means of iterative reflective cycles between practice and theory. This was done to keep the validity of the outcome in mind.

#### **6.1.1.5 Chapter five**

This chapter, like the previous one, first presented the relevant theory that would guide the practical component of my narrative. The most significant theoretical exploration was based on *Rashomon* (1950) by Akira Kurosawa and the Rashomon Effect. An evaluation of the *Rashomon* (1950) film's *cinematography, visual language* and the *Rashomon Effect* followed.

It was demonstrated that the central tenet of the Rashomon Effect in narrative is ambiguity it is established by providing four characters' accounts of events. Since the Rashomon Effect entails four equally believable accounts, that are all unique and subjective, with no evidence to discredit or disqualify another, the social need for closure is placed on the audience's shoulders. I clarified that the audience cannot rely too much on finding a cognitive solution through deduction, for there is nothing that would provide closure; instead, they must rely on their own feelings of who is right and who is wrong. Alongside this affective state, the audience is already teased by promises of a confounding mystery, which elevates the affective need and

provides the audience with a promise that there is no sense to be made; thus consistency is established. I also intended to note that the narrative does provide an 'end', but it does not provide closure as to whom was guilty, thus the resonance of the narrative lingers within the audience, and it is up to them to create their own conclusions, in sum, I intended to note that the narrative is open-ended.

It was indicated that all the accounts must be unique yet ambiguous so that no one can be discredited but hold equal importance. In *Rashomon*, the audience has to decide who is guilty of a crime, but, I provide a slight alternative to the Rashomon Effect. Whereas the audience in the film is placed in the position as the negotiator to *judge*, I would place my audience in the position as the negotiator to *save*, and I noted that this decision would emphasise identification with and empathy towards my characters.

In addition, a consideration of *Rashomon* (1950) and its effects, a brief description of some of the key elements of cinematography (via the five Cs of cinematography) and narrative (via narrative arcs) followed as theoretical points of departure that would have a bearing on my practice.

At this point, I will now reflect on the implementation, process and outcome of practice relevant to my narrative. I firstly began by focusing on the process of the narrative creation process. As with Chapter four, I noted that within the pre-production step, the study began with my interest in characterisation and most notably, when I had viewed the *Rashomon* (1950) film. I noted that as the interest in the study began to emerge, I began by firstly exploring and developing an understanding of the Rashomon effect and Schwartz's (1992, 2012) Value System Theory. I also indicated that along with this understanding, the various components of the study were initialised as research-led practice.

I then provided a brief description of how I explored numerous genres and plot possibilities during various iterative cycles, which led to the final rendition of the narrative. I intended to note the differences between the final rendition and the previous to demonstrate how the iterative reflective cycles impacted on the final rendition. After perusing the final narrative and plot, I provided a brief description of each character's account and motivation for why they find the counterpart suicidal but also I provide the counterargument for the accused character that also provides

a sensible explanation for the misconception that might have occurred in their counterpart. I also note the social need for closure placed on the audience, as they are the investigators to such an ambiguous case, all with the intention of finding the social need for closure and saving a character by having them be declared sane and able to return to treatment.

I provided an account of the narrative and story arc(s) to demonstrate the planning that went into creating a cohesive narrative that would both fit in with the theories of *Rashomon and its effect*, *narrative arcs* and the *narrative bridge* (*narrative engagement*, *transportation* and *identification*). I clarified the rising action of the *narrative arc* when the audience begins to recollect their account of the investigation they had undertaken with the characters and immediately it is established that a Rashomon Effect is in fact, at hand. This confirms the rules and the promise made in the exposition and gratifies narrative engagement and transportation, as intrigue begins to build as the audience experiences equal accounts and statements (as aforementioned, that the character is not suicidal but rather that their counterpart is and that they wanted to stop them from committing suicide). The rising action continues to build up around four key events, which have significance to the characters, these expand the pool of facts but provide evidence that has little to none impact on the equivalence of accounts, thus keeping the ambiguity and validity of accounts. The characters are all opinionated voices that provide their own input on the events relevant to their value domains. With all of this the audience will consistently and continuously begin to experience the characterisation of the characters, which can then lead to identification, the build-up of the ambiguity, the emotional visual language, narrative and intrigue further evokes more transportation, and a consistent formula (as with my syuzhet and fabula) provides ample narrative engagement.

As with the Rashomon Effect, the story 'ends' but it resonates long after said ending, with the implied question lingering with the audience and so the final step of the Rashomon effect is completed. On the grounds of narrative engagement, an ambiguous dilemma with a social need for closure was promised to the audience, it was made clear that the investigation does not make sense and on that promise and foundation of rules for the narrative, the promise is kept, and the consistency of a Rashomon Effect is held true, thus allowing for an optimal narrative engagement

experience. Regarding transportation, the promise and the continual delivery and build-up to the climax all call for a need for affect as well as the intrigue of the conundrum provides ample opportunity for transportation. Identification can occur all throughout the rising action all to the climax and even after the resolution. As the characters all present their ambiguous accounts but not only that, they do so in concern of their counterpart all while providing their sensible opinions driven from their universal value domains which manifest through very affective and vivid imagery, all to allow the audience to identify with the characters and finally direct the open-ended nature of the Rashomon Effect at the audience to contemplate and decide on whom they would save.

Throughout this reflection, it is shown how theory and practice informed each other, and the results led to an iterative reflective cycle of renditions

Another component of this chapter comprised the visual language tools that I had used to visually represent the narrative in a deliberate and meaningful way. In reflection, my intentions were to provide clarity to the reader and to establish that all of my visual language elements had been consciously and methodically planned out to either encapsulate or to be informed by combinations of my *characterisation process* (all of the development and design elements, in sum, all the elements that pertain to the visual representation of my *characters bone structures*), the *narrative bridge* (such as *narrative engagement, transportation, identification and narrative persuasion*) and also the *narrative structural components* (such as, *Rashomon and its effect, Rashomon cinematography, Rashomon visual language, cinematography and narrative arcs*).

In all of my visual language elements, I clarified where all of the above had influence in the informed decisions of my use of *camera*, through *camera angles, axial cuts, the action axis and passive motion*; Where all of the above had influence in the informed decisions of my use of *colour*, through the *colour of light* and the *colour of speech bubbles*; Where all of the above had influence in the informed decisions of my use of *lights*, through the *lighting setup, light intensity, light colour* and the *god rays/ volumetric lighting*; Where all of the above had influence in the informed decisions of my use of *frames*, through the *panel curves* and the *panel distance*; Where all of the above had influence in the informed decisions of my use of *speech*

*bubbles*, where they were *expressions of emotions* which also had *intensity of emotions*; Where all of the above had influence in the informed decisions of my use of *composition*, through the setup of the *room* and the significance of the *chairs* where all of the above had influence on the informed decisions of my use of *glitches*, through the *types of glitches* and the *intensity of glitches*; where all of the above had an influence on the informed decisions of my use of *music*, through the *setup*, *character personification* and *meaning* of the music; where all the above had an influence on the informed decisions of my use of *post-processing effects* and the *meaning* thereafter. In all of these aforementioned components, I intended to clarify what the meaning and significance of these tools as visual language meant to my narrative, how the aforementioned theory and practice emerged in said visual language, how they were utilised or how they had influenced the outcome. I also intended to clarify any additional theoretical applications to certain visual language elements, these were summarised versions (like *nostalgia* and *emotions*). In reflection, these supplemental theories served as instrumental to the needed practice, but I can conclude that they can be considered as future research (see 6.1.3).

### **6.1.2 Response to research questions**

In this segment, I return to the research questions and problem statement proposed in Chapter 1. After the reflection on all chapters, I find it best to answer these questions with all of the above considered.

With regards to my research questions:

- “1. How are narrative identification, the Rashomon Effect and the Value Systems theory conceptualised in the literature, and how do they relate to one another in the context of narrative and character development?”

While narrative identification was extensively explored, adjacent concepts such as *narrative engagement* and *transportation* as well as *narrative persuasion* were perused. The theoretical tenets of the Rashomon Effect were explored while links between the various theoretical concepts were illuminated.

When discussing character and characterisation, Schwartz’s (1992, 2012) Value System Theory as well as emergent concepts such as *character appeal*, *cuteness* and *Mori’s (1970, 2012) Uncanny Valley theory* were deemed relevant, and links

between these concepts and the preceding concepts related to narrative identification and the Rashomon Effect were made clear. In terms of how practice and theory related to one another, it was demonstrated that throughout the implementation, process, outcome and reflection of practice of narrative and characterisation (Chapter 4 and Chapter 5) all the aforementioned theories were deemed relevant and integral to the practice.

“2. How can these be applied to the development of a character's intrinsic and extrinsic qualities? “

Schwartz's (1992, 2012) Value System Theory played an integral role in the characterisation process of the characters, as it informed their intrinsic (development) and extrinsic (design) qualities, via an application onto *Lajos Egri's (1946, 1972) character bone structure*, where the value domains were chosen for the character inform the *physiology, sociology and psychology* of the character, thus establishing the foundation for their intrinsic and extrinsic qualities. These qualities, which were informed by the value domains of Schwartz's (1992, 2012) Value System Theory, then informed the design of the character, which was supplemented by design theories such as *character appeal, cuteness* and *Mori's (1970, 2012) Uncanny Valley theory*, all with the intention of properly depicting the character bone structure and in sum, the value domains. Across the *bridge (narrative engagement, transportation and identification)*, the characters were then manifested and expressed in-and-through the narrative and its theory (the *Rashomon Effect, cinematography and visual language*) so that their character bone structure would reflect the value domains they were supposed to.

“3. How can these be applied to the formulation of a narrative structure? “

With the significance of narrative identification and the importance Schwartz's (1992, 2012) Value System Theory has as the informative component in characterisation, a narrative structure was required that would allow for equal representation of perspectives for a diverse cast of characters, all while allowing said characters the opportunities to promote their goals and motivations, which stem from their value domains. This narrative structure related to the *influence, narrative, cinematography and visual language* of the *Rashomon (1950)* film and the Rashomon Effect. Through practice, I have concluded that the Rashomon Effect is optimal to achieve

narrative identification, which could then lead to narrative persuasion. Firstly, a Rashomon Effect narrative structure emphasises perspectives as an integral component of the narrative and allows for equal exposure of characters, the more characters there are, the more intricate the Rashomon Effect will be. It is integral to the Rashomon Effect to make all perspectives equal and plausible in validity by enforcing a need for affect; thus, each perspective is of equal importance. Since each perspective will be equal in comparison, the Rashomon Effect also allows for highly subjective interpretations of said accounts all promoted by each respective character, it is in this conjunction with one another that a layer of ambiguity is created, which does not invalidate another yet provides intrigue as it doesn't outrightly promote an account as the absolute. Also, the narrative is open-ended and does not provide a rational conclusion which then resonates with the audience, expecting them to draw their own conclusions. In sum, throughout my practice, I have concluded that a Rashomon Effect narrative is well suited for achieving narrative identification because each of its qualities hinge on the interaction and relations between the audience and the characters.

- “4. How can these insights be integrated into the characterisation of characters and a narrative 3D digital graphic novel, and how do the theory and practice mutually influence each other in the process? “

It was demonstrated in the reflections of the above segment (see 6.1.1), and the practice of Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 that all the theoretical components could be integrated into the characterisation and narrative process, and it has been shown that not only do these insights integrate with the practice but that the practice also informed further development and discovery of supplemental theories (*further understanding of narrative persuasion, further understanding of narrative identification, further understanding of Schwartz's (1992, 2012) Value System Theory, further understanding of the Rashomon Effect, narrative engagement, transportation, character appeal, cuteness, Mori's (1970, 2012) Uncanny Valley theory, Rashomon's (1950) influence, narrative, cinematography and visual language, cinematography [five Cs of cinematography], narrative arcs and supplemental overviews of nostalgia, emotions and comic [graphic novel] design*). By implementing rigour in methodology through research-led practice, that occurred through informed iterative reflective (personal and cooperative) cycles, it was found

that the characterisation process affected the narrative process and vice versa, via the representation- and expression of said characters in the visual language of the medium, a 3D digital graphic novel. The outcome of this can be seen in the artefact, which brings both narrative and the characters together, through the application of a 3D digital graphic novel, to allow for narrative identification to occur between the audience and the characters via the informed value domains and the narrative structure to allow for narrative persuasion to occur.

Finally, then, regarding the problem statement:

“How can a theoretical investigation of narrative identification, narrative persuasion and the Rashomon effect, as well as the Value Systems Theory as guiding principle, find practical application in the development of characters and a plot in order to achieve narrative identification and ultimately narrative persuasion? *This question is answered by means of a theoretical perusal of theory relevant to the problem and the application thereof to the development of characters and a plot aimed at achieving narrative identification and narrative persuasion.*”

As indicated, I answered the problem statement via an interconnected exploration of theory and practice, where both characterisation and narrative had been informed by theory and vice versa and even across practices. I argued that narrative persuasion can be achieved through narrative identification when the narrative itself, its theory and practice are informed by the Rashomon Effect and all of its supplemental theories (such as *cinematography, narrative arcs* and *visual language*), all while stemming from the *bridge of narrative persuasion theories* (like *narrative engagement, transportation* and *identification*) and even when informed across characterisation practice (via the *development* and *design* of a character, in sum, their *character bone structure*). This holds true also for the characterisation process; I argued that narrative persuasion can be achieved through narrative identification when the characterisation itself, its theory and practice is informed by Schwartz’s (1992, 2012) Value Theory and supplemental theories (with regards to design, such as *character appeal, cuteness* and *Mori’s (1970, 2012) Uncanny Valley theory*), all while stemming from the *bridge of narrative persuasion theories* (like *narrative engagement, transportation* and *identification*) and even when informed across narrative practice (via the *visual language, story, narrative arcs* and *character visualisation*). In short, a narrative driven by the *Rashomon Effect* and characters characterisation driven by *Schwartz’s (1992, 2012) Value Theory* can lead to *narrative identification* which can, in turn, lead to *narrative persuasion*.

### **6.1.3 Limitations and future research**

#### **6.1.3.1 Limitations**

The most dominant limitation, to my mind, has been my own knowledge, base, which had to be increased by huge strides through honing my experiential, practical, propositional and presentational knowledge to be able to deliver an academic outcome characterized by rigour and validity. During the course of the study, I had to acquaint myself with various new computer programmes, 3D applications and the like, apart from the obvious familiarisation with relevant literature. A larger pool of knowledge may have yielded better results, as in a larger collaborative pool. One can only imagine the outcome if experts in the fields of narrative, writing, animation, 3D design, cinematography, music and other valued academic disciplines were to collaborate on such a study, from start to beginning.

Another limitation came in the form of the Covid-19 pandemic, which resulted in limited access to workshops and other creatives and academics. Access to the musical composer's studio was also limited due to lockdown regulations.

#### **6.1.3.1 Future research**

The first possibility I would like to propose is the exploration of including the backgrounds of characters, to provide their value domains more explicitly, to see if by having a character's story arc be more inclusive in that step if it could perhaps yield more identification that could lead to narrative persuasion. Another possibility would be to either try to narrow or expand the pool of characters, to stress and test what the limitations are in order to create an identifiable good character which is informed by their values. Schwartz's (1992, 2012) Value Theory and the refined version, along with the multiple domains, can yield many sorts of studies that can test the significance of values with regard to narrative and characterisation. One could limit a study to two domains in opposition with one another (to see if there could be a better alternative to protagonist-antagonist), and one could try to test each domain counterpart as such or even try the ten character initial proposition or even perhaps the revised 20 to see if a value can constitute as sufficient to clarify a round characterisation.

In terms of design, there is a wealth of styles that can be approached here; one could explore designs that are either more *realistic*, more *meaningful* or more

*abstract*. One could try to exclude *cuteness* or *character appeal* or even experiment with the boundaries of the *Uncanny Valley*. One could differentiate the age of the characters, diversify, unify, specify or omit things in the characterisation of the characters. There is a wealth of different aesthetic styles that could be applied to see if the intended outcome shifts with such applications.

Another appealing suggestion would be to change the medium, to try it as a film or an actual novel, to perhaps turn to a traditional visual novel or even performative arts. It can also be applied to different needs, to see if it may work with advertisements, education, therapy and much more. With that being said, one could apply new propositional knowledge from other fields that weren't considered, like consumer sciences or psychology, anthropology, sociology, law and much more. As will emerge from the study, I briefly touched on *nostalgia*, *emotion* and *music*.

Another consideration would be to try different narrative genres, such as comedy, horror, romance or thriller. One could also look for alternative narrative structures or alter the presented structure itself to yield a new approach. It can be as simple as taking one of my older narrative iterations and refining them or coming up with a new one that perhaps captures the essence of the Rashomon effect more precisely. There are also other structures that can be taken into consideration that might break away completely from the Rashomon Effect, like an isolated odyssey or an omniscient narrator. There are also thematic styles that can be considered, like the application of French new wave or film noir. In sum, the narrative itself can be stressed to see what would yield better results for identification with characterisation informed by values to reach optimal narrative persuasion.

Another option would be to, in fact, make it a larger collaborative study, that would include experienced academics and creatives who might yield a greater outcome of the study or an adaptation or refinement of this study. Another exciting prospect would be to invite qualitative and quantitative researchers to implement this study to gather empirical data or ethically virtuous results. It can be as simple as applying a questionnaire after viewing the artefact or simply just adding an interactive UI option to track characters chosen.

Finally, for any creative, academic or creative academic with the desire to pursue concepts presented in this study but to wish to apply these to something other than

the perspective of a designer would also be interesting. I can take the musical approach as an example of how to personify a character (and/or their values) through music.

In conclusion, I may have had my limitations when it comes to knowledge and spatio-temporal resources, but I would encourage others to dissect and engage with this study, to have it inform new and better approaches and to criticise and engage with the areas covered in the present study.

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**Mickey Mouse** is a cartoon character created in 1928 at Walt Disney Animation Studios, who serves as the mascot of the Walt Disney Company. An anthropomorphic mouse who typically wears red shorts, large yellow shoes, and white gloves, Mickey is one of the world's most recognizable fictional characters.

Created as a replacement for a prior Disney character, Oswald the Lucky Rabbit, Mickey first appeared in the short *Plane Crazy*, debuting publicly in the short film *Steamboat Willie* (1928), one of the first sound cartoons. He went on to appear in over 130 films, including *The Band Concert* (1935), *Brave Little Tailor* (1938), and *Fantasia* (1940). Mickey appeared primarily in short films, but also occasionally in feature-length films. Ten of Mickey's cartoons were nominated for the Academy Award for Best Animated Short Film, one of which, *Lend a Paw*, won the award in 1942. In 1978, Mickey became the first cartoon character to have a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mickey\\_Mouse](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mickey_Mouse) . Date of access: 8 February 2021.

**Hello Kitty** (Japanese: ハロー・キティ, Hepburn: *Harō Kiti*), also known by her full name **Kitty White** (キティ・ホワイト, *Kiti Howaito*), is a fictional character produced by the Japanese company Sanrio, created by Yuko Shimizu and currently designed by Yuko Yamaguchi.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hello\\_Kitty](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hello_Kitty) . Date of access: 8 February 2021.