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Creation of Illustrations Based on the Symbols of Tarot

Thesis

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Tartu

2019

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INTRODUCTION

Back in 2012 I came upon a game called *The Elder Scrolls: Morrowind*. Despite being over ten years old, which is a lot for a video game, this world captured me for a long time. This was a role playing game (RPG) where the player explores (and optionally saves) the world. The world behind this game was elaborate and felt alien. Unlike most fantasy worlds, it wasn't exclusively based on medieval Europe, but was greatly inspired by Eastern mythologies and cultures and science fiction. For over six years now, the rich lore has inspired me to create artwork based on *The Elder Scrolls*.

Almost a year ago I was contacted by Tarot scholar who proposed a collaboration to create a tarot deck based on the world of *Morrowind*. I was trying to approach the subject of Tarot for some time myself, but it felt too massive and mysterious. This was my chance to delve into the world of Tarot and create series of illustrations with elaborate symbolism.

The lore of *The Elder Scrolls* is ambiguous; it relies on the gamer/reader's interpretation. It is aware of being fictional universe, and is a great source material for creating something new.

In this work I am creating a set of three illustrations set in the fictional fantasy world of *The Elder Scrolls* game series. These illustration's themes are based on the main plot of *The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind*, an open-world RPG released in 2002.

In the process of creation of these illustrations, I examined the events and characters of *Morrowind* through the archetypes of the Major Arcana of Tarot.

The Tarot is a symbolic system mostly used for divination, meditation, and as a tool for transformation on the psyche and achieving enlightenment. The Tarot can be seen as a symbolic map of consciousness and an ancient book of wisdom that reveals to us—both visually and symbolically—the creative ideas and states of consciousness that appear in

multiple existence in all cultures. The seventy-eight symbols are portraitures and archetypes of inner and outer experiences that are prevalent within human experience.¹

The illustrations I did for this work are based on the world of *Morrowind* and use Tarot archetypes as a tool to make those images more appealing to the viewer by speaking to their unconsciousness in the language of symbols. These images are not Tarot cards, nor do they oblige to completely obey the canon of the *The Elder Scrolls* universe.

The subjects for illustrations were chosen because I felt that they are points of the plot that are most interesting and in my opinion give a good overview of some of important aspects of the narrative. While thinking about how Tarot would fit in *Morrowind* (and how *Morrowind* would fit in Tarot) some of the first associations that came to mind were the protagonist at the beginning of their journey as The Fool, the main antagonist as The Devil, and his keep in the centre of volcano as The Tower. I decided that these three images are good point at which to start exploring connections between Tarot and *The Elder Scrolls* lore.

Tarot can be interpreted on many levels and applied to many spheres of human life depending on the use of cards. I am going to mostly interpret the cards in psychological terms because it is more approachable than, for example, esoteric explanation of meaning of cards. I am not going to address divinatory aspect of the cards. I approach Tarot from the standpoint of an artist who looks for visual inspiration and also from the standpoint of a person who seeks to better understand human nature, society, cultural tropes and our own inner world.

¹ Angeles Arrien. (1987). *The Tarot Handbook: Practical Applications of Ancient Visual Symbols*. New York: Jeremy P.T Archer/Penguin.

1. TAROT

1.1 History and application of Tarot

Around the middle of fifteenth century an artist Bonifacio Bembo painted a set of unnamed and unnumbered cards for the Visconti family of Milan. These pictures comprise the classic deck for an Italian game called “Tarocchi”: four suits of fourteen cards each, plus twenty two cards showing different scenes and later called ‘trionfi’ - in English, ‘triumphs’ or ‘trumps’.²



Image 1. Three cards from a Visconti-Sforza tarot deck

For years Tarocchi was seen primarily as a game for gambling, and to a much lesser extent as a device for fortune-telling.

Then, in the eighteenth century, an occultist named Antoine Court de Gebelin declared the Tarot to be the remnant of the Book of Thoth, created by the Egyptian god of magic to

² Rachel Pollack. (1980, 1983). *Seventy-eight degrees of wisdom*. London: Thorsons. Printed and bound by CPI Group(UK).

convey all knowledge to his disciples. Court de Gebelin's idea appears more fanciful than factual, but in the nineteenth century another Frenchman, Alphonse Louis Constant, known as Eliphas Levi, linked the cards to Kabbalah, and since then people looked deeper and deeper into the Tarot, finding more and more meanings, wisdom, and even, through meditation and deep study, enlightenment.³

Today, most people see the Tarot as a means of fortune-telling, or 'divination.' Strangely, we know less historically about this aspect of the cards than any other. Judging by the comparatively few historical references to divination as opposed to gambling, the practice did not become common until some time after the introduction of the cards themselves. Possibly the Romany, or 'gypsies', came across the game of Tarocci on their travels in Europe and decided to use the cards for fortune-telling.

People used to believe that the Romany themselves brought the cards from Egypt. The fact is, the Romany probably came from India, and they arrived in Spain a good hundred years after Tarot cards were introduced in Italy and France.⁴

Nowadays there are a huge variety of different Tarot decks available, but the most popular is the Rider-Waite Tarot deck, originally published in 1910. This deck was conceived by Arthur Edward Waite, a British scholar of occult and esoteric matters, and cards were drawn by illustrator Pamela Coleman Smith. The other widely known and used deck is the Thoth Tarot. This Deck was created by an English occultist Aleister Crowley and by painter Lady Frieda Harris. The Thoth Tarot deck was first published in 1969.

³ Rachel Pollack. (1980, 1983). *Seventy-eight degrees of wisdom*. London: Thorsons. Printed and bound by CPI Group(UK).

⁴ Rachel Pollack. (1980, 1983). *Seventy-eight degrees of wisdom*. London: Thorsons. Printed and bound by CPI Group(UK).

1.2 The structure of the Tarot

Majority of modern Tarot decks does not differ much from early card sets from fifteenth century. Traditional Tarot Deck consists of seventy-eight cards which are divided into Minor Arcana and Major Arcana. The word 'arcanum' means 'secret knowledge.'⁵ The Minor Arcana consist of four suits: Wands, Swords, Cups and Coins (Pentacles). The minor arcana is structured similarly to regular playing cards; each suit has ten numbered cards from one to ten and Court Cards - King, Queen, Knight and Page. The Major Arcana consists of twenty-two trumps. Trumps of major Arcana represent universal principles that humans experience in the course of their life. Psychoanalyst Carl Gustav Jung called these principles major archetypes of universal experiences that occur regardless of cultural or family imprinting.

⁵ Rachel Pollack. (1980, 1983). *Seventy-eight degrees of wisdom*. London: Thorsons. Printed and bound by CPI Group(UK).

The most common names of the Trumps of Major Arcana are:

- The Fool
- The Magician
- The Empress
- The Emperor
- The Hierophant
- The Lovers
- The Chariot
- Strength
- The Hermit
- Wheel of Fortune
- Justice
- Hanged Man
- Death
- Temperance
- The Devil
- The Tower
- The Star
- The Moon
- The Sun
- Judgment
- The World

2. THE ELDER SCROLLS

The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind is a role playing video game released in 2002. What makes the universe of *The Elder Scrolls* stand out among other fantasy settings is its lore.

2.1 What Is Lore?

The term "lore" describes a body of tradition and knowledge passed down among a particular group or culture. In the modern day, the term has come to be specifically applied to the information and knowledge that constitutes a fictional universe. *The Elder Scrolls* series has long been known and loved for the depth and breadth of its lore, which has resulted in a huge lore community that has thrived for over twenty years.

However, *The Elder Scrolls* lore has attracted its wealth of devotees not only because of its depth, but because of its uniqueness. TES lore is characterised by its tendency to challenge typical tropes and introduce weird ideas, creating a colourful and rich environment that separates it from other fantasy universes.

Although the two inherently go hand-in-hand, *The Elder Scrolls* games and lore are not the exact same. TES games can be seen as windows into TES lore; while they allow us a means to learn and become familiar with lore, they don't represent the lore as a whole. This could be due to gameplay limitations; developers choosing to dismiss lore for plot convenience, or because lore is so intricate, vast, and weird that it would be too daunting to present to a mainstream audience. Lore retcons and oversights are common in *The Elder Scrolls* games and are often a cause for frustration among fans, but they are inevitable.⁶

⁶ *Apocrypha Arcanum!* The Teslore Wikia [WWW]
<https://teslore.fandom.com/wiki/FAQ> (12.05.2019)

For me, when talking about lore, I find that it's important to distinguish it from the games. There are five open world games in *The Elder Scrolls* series plus several smaller games, mobile games and a MMORPG (massively multiplayer online role-playing game). I did not play at least half of it. Those that I played were interesting and enjoyable, but not something groundbreaking in terms of gameplay. The real value of *The Elder Scrolls* games (especially *Morrowind*) for me is not the process of playing them, but that they serve as a gateway into ambiguous and mysterious world of written in-game and semi-official lore. Most of it is far too extravagant and bold to be openly put in a popular fantasy video game for wide audience. Among all of those *The Elder Scrolls* games *Morrowind* was as weird as it gets.

2.2 The Main Quest and Lore of Morrowind.

First thing the player does after they start a game is create a character they will be playing as. The player chooses the character's gender and race from variety of options: four types of humans - Nords, Redguards, Bretons and Imperials, four types of elves - High Elves (Altmer), Wood Elves (Bosmer), Dark Elves (Dunmer) and Orcs (Orsimer) and the beast races – Khajiit and Argonians.

The fact that a player can choose any race and gender is not in any way contradictory with the Lore. It supports the idea of player defining the world.

Our character arrives as prisoner on a ship to the island of Vvardenfell. This is a part of the Imperial province "Morrowind," home to the Dunmer. Upon arrival we are given orders to deliver decoded message to some man in Balmora (one of the cities of Morrowind). After the character is created and given orders, he or she is released into the open world and free to go anywhere they want—to deliver the package or to leave it be and pursue free adventuring is up to the player.

Vvardenfell is a strange place. In the centre of the island, a huge active volcano is located - the Red Mountain. The volcano defines landscape and climate of the island - central Vvar-

denfell is a rocky desert but there is ash instead of sand. The shores of the island are swamps and peninsulas. The landscape of Morrowind is covered with strange glowing plants, crooked trees and giant tree-sized mushrooms. The only mammals inhabiting the island are sentient humanoid races and rats. The rest of the island fauna are various insectoid animals, and most of them size of “regular” mammals. There are huge transport animals with flea-like appearance, Silt Striders, and they are used as public transportation. In semi-official lore there are hints that they are actually sentient, but no one knows about it in Morrowind.

When travelling the world, the hero discovers that there is trouble going on: strange creatures are spawning around the volcano, ash storms bring blight and disease, and some people start having very strange dreams.

If the protagonist goes to Balmora to deliver their package, the man appears to be Imperial Spymaster and you were sent here by the Emperor himself for an as-of-yet unknown reason. The Spymaster gives the protagonist a series of tasks. By accomplishing the tasks, our hero gathers information for the spymaster and finds out that there is a prophesy about a reincarnation of an ancient king of Morrowind, Nerevar, coming to unite Great Houses and tribes of Morrowind, and save the land. Our character was sent to the island of Morrowind because they meet the requirement of the prophesy. *"A prisoner born on a certain day to uncertain parents"* would be sent, under guard, to Morrowind, would overcome numerous trials, and, eventually, unite the province and cast down the Tribunal as false gods. The gender and race of the Nerevarine was, and remains, unknown, though it is well known that they would not be a native of Morrowind.

We also eventually find out that there were other “candidates” who might be the Nerevarine. At some point these people failed to accomplish one of the trials and so were cast aside. Some of these “failed incarnates” were sent to Morrowind by the Emperor just like us. If our hero is a “real” chosen one, true incarnate of the soul of Nerevar, or it’s just our belief in the prophesy that makes them Nerevarine and some other person in their place could as well accomplish those feats, it is up for the player to decide.

The Tribunal are three Living Gods of Morrowind who once were mortals and achieved godhood. They are Vivec - the Warrior-Poet, Almalexia - the Healing Mother and Sotha Sil - the Magus. In their mortal times, The Tribunal were councillors of Nerevar. Before them, Dunmer worshipped a pantheon of pagan gods called Daedric Princes. The nomadic Dunmer (Ashlanders) still worship those gods.

At some point of the main quest the Nerevarine meets Vivec to receive from him the weapons for defeating Dagoth Ur. Dagoth Ur is the head of the Sixth House cult, the villain who spreads disease and enslaves the minds of people of Morrowind by invading their dreams. In order to kill Dagoth Ur, the Nerevarine needs to find his lair in the heart of the Red Mountain and pierce the Heart of Lorkhan, powerful artefact from which Dagoth Ur draws his power. Dagoth Ur wants to bend all the Morrowind to his will and establish theocracy with the new god, Akulakhan--a mechanical golem powered by the Heart of Lorkhan--that Dagoth Ur builds in the centre of Red Mountain.

Dagoth Ur was also one of the Nerevar's allies. The Tribunal says that Dagoth Ur stole the power of Heart of Lorkhan for himself. However, those who oppose the Tribunal think that the Tribunal also draw their divine power from the Heart. Finding out the truth about the origin of Tribunal and their power is optional and not part of the main quest, but it adds depth to the whole story. There is series of cryptic religious books written by Vivec called *The 36 lessons of Vivec*. These books describe the life of Vivec, the Tribunal and Nerevar before his death. The books present the "official" version of events, but between the lines there are hidden messages that reveal the truth behind the Tribunal. Reading the first letter of each paragraph of the Sermon Thirty-Six forms a hidden message: 'Foul Murder'. This means that Tribunal conspired to kill Nerevar in order to gain the Heart of Lorkhan. Additionally, if you take Sermon Twenty-Nine and associate each of the thirty-five listed numbers with a word in its respective sermon, another hidden message is revealed: 'He was not born a god. His destiny did not lead him to this crime. He chose this path of his own free will. He stole the godhood and murdered the Hortator(*Nerevar*). Vivec wrote this.'⁷

⁷ Morrowind:The 36 Lessons of Vivec. UESP.[WWW]

[https://en.uesp.net/wiki/Morrowind:The 36 Lessons of Vivec](https://en.uesp.net/wiki/Morrowind:The_36_Lessons_of_Vivec) (15.05.2019)

After defeating Dagoth Ur and fulfilling the prophesy, the Nerevarine may kill Vivec, but this is optional. In fact, even without ever touching the main quest, the Nerevarine might attempt to take Vivec's life provided they are powerful enough.

3. TAROT ARCHETYPES IN MORROWIND.

Tarot is used as a guide for personal transformation. The Major Arcana is a story of a spiritual quest. It represents the journey from the totality of formless nothing where everything is possible (The Fool) to the totality of everything, wholeness, mastery of all aspects of life (The World/ Universe).

The story of *Morrowind* follows this pattern. We begin our journey as a nameless and faceless hero and ultimately we may rise to become what amounts to a living god.

If the hero follows the prophesy, they eventually fulfill it and become a ruler of Morrowind who united all the people of the land and defeated at least one false god.

Of course the game gives the player an opportunity to deviate from this path and become a merchant, or sellsword, or magician, or cultist, et cetera. In Tarot terms, we would stay on the level of one of the trumps. Just like in real life.

So the path of Nerevarine may be described in the terms of the Tarot: as a journey from The Fool to The Universe. The archetypes are universal for all cultures, only exterior and aesthetics vary. The fictional cultures are inevitably based on real ones are no exclusion. Modern warrior wears camouflage, medieval wears steel armour, Native Australian warrior wears warpaint and Dunmeri warrior wears an armour made of the chitinous plates of a giant insect. Appearance varies from culture to culture, the essence remains the same. In (almost) every culture, there are mothers, fathers, rulers, wise men or women, warriors, heroes, and tricksters.

Carl Jung understood archetypes as universal, archaic patterns and images that derive from the collective unconscious and believed that they are the psychic counterpart of instinct. They are inherited potentials which are actualised when they enter the consciousness as images or manifest in behaviour on interaction with the outside world. They are autonomous and hidden forms which are transformed once they enter consciousness and are given particular expression by individuals and their cultures. In Jungian psychology, arche-

types are highly developed elements of the collective unconscious. The existence of archetypes can only be deduced indirectly by using story, art, myths, religions, or dreams. ⁸

3.1 The Fool/ The Universe/ Nerevarine

The portrait of Nerevarine (Appendix 8.) is based on both The Fool (Appendix 1.) and The Universe (Appendix 4.) Cards.

The Fool is the first trump of Major Arcana. In fact it is considered a zero trump because it represents not the beginning of the journey but the moment before the birth where everything is possible. Formless possibility of everything is the essence of The Fool. The Fool has yet no restrictions set by society and circumstance, and The Fool has no fear. The Fool is nothing that may become anything.

There is persistent archetype of The Fool in fairy tales. It's the main hero who is often youngest son in the family and therefore not burdened much by societal expectations. This hero is considered simple, but ultimately he outwits the evil because of his relative disinterest in temporary material concerns. For example Ivan the Fool is the main hero of many Russian folk tales. He does not pursue material benefit but goes on the adventure for the sake of it. The quality of the Fool is the thirst for the unknown.

Another type of the Fool is the court Jester. The court jester is the only person who dares saying whatever he wants to the king. There is truth hidden in the jester's play.

The Universe or The World is the last card of the Major Arcana. It symbolises completion of the journey and incorporation of all of the Major Arcana's lessons. The World is the mastery of physical and spiritual worlds. Some decks show Dancer of the World as hermaphrodite because this cards represents unity of the opposites.

⁸ Feist J, Feist GJ, (2009) *Theories of Personality*, New York New York; McGraw-Hill
Stevens, Anthony in "*The archetypes*" (Chapter 3.) Ed. Papadopoulos, Renos. *The Handbook of Jungian Psychology* (2006)

Most of the time people tend to see the world around us as dualistic: good and evil, light and darkness, plus and minus, order and chaos, male and female, et cetera. Most of the cards of Major Arcana have certain aspects of dualistic interplay in them. Both The Fool and The Universe however are beyond and above the duality. The Fool is beyond duality as the fool is, in a sense, nothing. The Universe is unity of everything. “The Fool is a perfect state before duality, and the World giving us a glimpse of the exhilarating sense of freedom possible if only we can reconcile the opposites buried in our psyches.”⁹

My illustration shows the Nerevarine both as the Fool and the Universe (Appendix 8.). This is the Nerevarine not fixed in time, both before the beginning and at the end of their journey. This picture represents the potential of the Nerevarine: not a particular Nerevarine, but the *idea* of Nerevarine.

In the beginning of their journey, when the protagonist steps out of the prison ship to the shores of a new alien land they are The Fool. This land holds multitude of trials and opportunities for our hero. In the very beginning the hero has no name and no face. In the beginning the hero may become anyone. This is an instance of The Fool: nothing in the beginning that is capable of becoming everything.

The face of the Nerevarine is hidden behind the golden mask with face of Nerevar.

The Nerevarine’s body is both male and female. It’s not specified in the prophesy whether Nerevar should incarnate into male or female and player can choose the gender of their hero. The archetype of The Fool, though often depicted as male, is actually not feminine or masculine in its nature because the instance of the Fool is before the concept of duality is introduced. As the Fool, the Nerevarine has no definite gender and as the Universe they incorporate both.

The body of the Nerevarine belongs to every race simultaneously. It is human in its overall shape, its skin has no definite colour that could characterise its race; it has scales and a rep-

⁹ Rachel Pollack. (1980, 1983). *Seventy-eight degrees of wisdom*. London: Thorsons. Printed and bound by CPI Group(UK).

tilian belly like humanoid lizard-like Argonias have, and it has a feline tail like the Khajiit, the cat people, have.

When Tribunal killed Nerevar, they removed his feet from the body, Nerevar's feet then became a holy relic. In broad sense feet symbolise power and movement. Removing feet means nullifying energy of the body. They probably made all the ritualistic dismemberment of Nerevar's body to prevent his spirit from coming back, though that obviously did not work. The fact that Nerevar's feet were separated from the body foreshadow that Nerevarine will be an outlander, or someone not native to Morrowind.

The Sea below the Nerevarine shows that they came to Morrowind from another land behind the sea. The sea in *The Elder Scrolls* lore is also a symbol for all the memory of the world. It is endless and timeless. It resonates with The Fool as formless endless potential and the Universe as containing and incorporating everything that there is in the world.

In most Tarot decks, The World card depicts the floating dancer in skies or in boundless space. There is a lightness about the figure that shows that it overcame all boundaries. It floats because the restrictions of physical world do not burden the blissful enlightened dancer. The Nerevarine floats and dances like dancer of the Universe. The usual rules do not apply to them not only because they passed all the trials and achieved great power, but also because they are playable character in a video game. If the player wants, he or she may save and load game, pause it, use console commands, and make or install user modifications that change any aspect of world of game.

The Nerevarine is shown dancing atop the Red Mountain, the centre point of the world of Morrowind. This is the place where Nerevar had died. The source of divine power, Heart of Lorkhan, is beating under that mountain. At the Red Mountain, the Nerevarine faced and defeated Dagoth Ur.

In their left hand Nerevarine holds the Heart of Lorkhan, the heart of the whole land of Morrowind. The blade Keening gives Nerevarine power over the Heart, and the Nerevarine holds it playfully at the tip of their finger, this careless and lighthearted gesture referring to The Fool. In the Rider-Waite deck, the Fool is shown carrying a wand, a symbol of great

magical power carelessly on his shoulder and using it as a stick for his bag. In the case of The Fool the wand does not damage him because he is innocent and does not use it for own profit. The Nerevarine's hand is protected by the glove Wraithguard, Keening is a powerful and dangerous tool that kills anyone who touches it with bare hands. Even though the Nerevarine is playing with this object of great power, they are aware of its dangers and equipped to handle it playfully. That refers to the mastery and knowledge of the Universe. The Nerevarine is able to handle the most severe aspects of their world with humour because in some sense it is all only a game and must not be taken too seriously.

3.3 The Devil/ Dagoth Ur

The Devil is a controversial figure. In its most traditional and basic sense, The Devil is all that is considered evil. Some interpret The Devil as a negative card, as a force of illusion and oppression, rule of desire over reason. For others, The Devil is a power to confront with courage and mirth, power to integrate those inevitable "darker," animal aspects of human nature that society prefer to overlook or stigmatise.

From the psychological point of view, The Devil is the darkest side of human nature. In Jungian psychology there is a concept of the Shadow. Shadow is the part of our psyche we are not consciously aware of. It contains things that one has decided to disregard about themselves, things that are too disturbing for us. Yet those things remain, but untouched by light of the consciousness they govern over it and cannot be controlled until faced.

Many people are drawn to the Shadow because it contains a great power of all those hidden desires and dark impulses. In order to progress in the spiritual journey, one needs to claim this power, and to own the power of the Shadow, one must face and integrate the Shadow into one's own conscious personality.

"The Devil represents the universal principle of mirth combined with stability. This is the only card in the entire deck which has undergone transformation within itself. During Greek mythology, this symbol was Pan, half-man and half-goat, the God of Merriment and

Sensuality. In Egyptian mythology, this symbol was Ra, the Sun Deity, a symbol of life force and energy. During the Middle Ages, there was a backlash to the panistic cults and the archetype of the Devil was created. The panistic goat was changed into the Devil.”¹⁰

In the Rider-Waite deck, The Devil (Appendix 2.) depicted as more of an oppression figure that holds humans enslaved by their desires. But this is the most common and surface meaning of the card. In actuality, The Devil implies a great deal more than sexual rites and violent energy. In a wider sense, it symbolises the life energy locked up in the dark hidden areas of the self, which cannot be entered by ordinary means. It is called The Devil because for those who are not prepared to receive this energy, it can manifest itself as monsters, a sense of the universe as filled with evil, or the temptation to indulge in violence.¹¹

In the Thoth Tarot, The Devil (Appendix 2.) is creative energy in its most material form. The impulse to create takes no account of reason, custom, or foresight. All things are equally exalt to the pan. He represents the finding of ecstasy in every phenomenon, however naturally repugnant, and he transcends all limitations.¹²

Dagoth Ur is the main antagonist of *Morrowind*, and is The Devil of this world (Appendix 9.). Dagoth Ur creates, but his creations are perverse. Dagoth Ur enslaves the people of Morrowind through illusions - the dreams and nightmares he spreads.

Dagoth Ur uses the Heart of Lorkhan as his source of power, and the ultimate goal of Dagoth Ur is to extend himself upon all the world through illusions, violence and disease. Like the Devil he creates without looking back. In *Morrowind*, we can't say that The Devil really owns the power, but he definitely holds and uses it and needs to be confronted before power may be freed.

¹⁰ Angeles Arrien. (1987). *The Tarot Handbook: Practical Applications of Ancient Visual Symbols*. New York: Jeremy P.T Archer/Penguin.

¹¹ Rachel Pollack. (1980, 1983). *Seventy-eight degrees of wisdom*. London: Thorsons. Printed and bound by CPI Group (UK).

¹² The Master Therion/ Aleister Crowley. (1944). *The Book of Thoth*. San Francisco, CA: Weiser Books.

Like the personal Shadow governs over a person's life from the unconscious part of the psyche, Dagoth Ur governs the people of Morrowind through their dreams and makes them do things they would not consciously do.

Dagoth Ur builds colossal mechanical golem powered with Heart of Lorkhan. Akulakhan is a manifestation of Dagoth Ur's will. With Akulakhan, Dagoth Ur intends to conquer the world, make Akulakhan the new God and become his high priest.

I depicted Dagoth Ur (Appendix 9.) as a priest of Akulakhan. Dagoth Ur is sitting on a rectangular pedestal like the Devil from Rider-Waite deck. The pedestal reminds us of an altar and a throne simultaneously. The symbol of the scarab is the sigil of the Sixth House, the ancient House of Dagoth Ur.

The motion Dagoth Ur makes with his hands is similar to the gesture of The Devil of the Rider-Waite deck. This sign with a gap between two double fingers, is the gesture made by the High Priest in Jerusalem to bring down the spirit force.

Instead of a head, there is a brass vortex mounted on Dagoth Ur's shoulders. It extends his throat and broadcasts his music, his terrible divine voice from his body directly into the world.

Behind the figure of Dagoth Ur is his creation, Akulakhan, still in the process of being built but already working. At the brow of Akulakhan, on the place of third eye, the Head of Dagoth Ur is placed. Dagoth Ur wears this mask in the game. Akulakhan is the tool of Dagoth Ur and is directly controlled by him. In some sense Akulakhan is the second body of Dagoth Ur, bigger and more powerful.

Separation of head from the body is traditional symbol of connection to the world of spirits. It means that head of person (in this case the priest) resides in another reality. Dagoth Ur is the entity that foremost manipulates others in the dimension of their dreams. He does this by tuning spirits of mortals with his music.

3.3 The Tower/ The Red Mountain

In both the Thoth and Rider-Waite decks, The Tower (Appendix 3.) is the symbol of destruction of things that are false and need to be dismantled.

The Red Mountain (Appendix 10.) is the lair of Dagoth Ur - The Devil. In the heart of the Mountain lies his stronghold, and it is there that he builds Akulakhan, which is powered by the Heart of Lorkhan.. The Heart is the source of Dagoth Ur's power. From this Mountain he spreads the disease across the island.

The Red Mountain is the place of Dagoth Ur's defeat. In order to restore Morrowind from crisis, Dagoth Ur and the Heart must be destroyed. The Nerevarine walks into this keep, gets to the Heart, cuts connection between the Heart and Dagoth Ur, The Devil loses his power, his golem Akulakhan crumbles, and his followers fall. After The Tower shatters, the world may begin to heal.

The Red Mountain was formed when the Lorkhan, creator of the world of mortals, died (he created the mortal plane by sacrificing his life) and his Heart fell in the centre of Vvardenfell. In the place where his Heart hit the ground, the volcano appeared. The Red Mountain is a source of many troubles for Dunmer, but it is also the thing that defines their way of life, their environment, and shapes their surrounding. Through destruction, Red Mountain gives life to the Dunmer, even though it has no desire to help anybody. As the Tower of the Thoth and Rider-Waite decks, this mountain of doom is the brute force that destroys and gives birth.

The Red Mountain is the place where things took place that led to the events of *Morrowind*. Nerevar, the king of the Dunmer (at this time, they were the golden skinned Chimer) wanted to prevent House Dwemer from using the Heart of Lorkhan, he gathered his councilors--Vivec, Almalexia, Sotha Sil and Dagoth Ur--and went with them to Red Mountain to confront the Dwemer. The Dwemer used the Heart before Nerevar could stop them and were wiped out from the world. Nerevar did not know what to do with the Heart and left Dagoth Ur to guard it. He then set up a ritual to consult with his patron goddess Azura. The Tribunal conspired among themselves to seize the power of Heart and killed

Nerevarine while he was summoning Azura. Enraged, the goddess cursed the Chimer, their golden skin turned the colour of ash, their eyes became red like embers and from this moment they became Dunmer - the Dark Elves. Vivec, Almalexia and Sotha Sil were able to draw power from the Heart and they became divine rulers of Morrowind. Dagoth Ur was left under the mountain, his life sustained by the Heart. Eventually he grew stronger and started developing his conquest plans.

In *Morrowind*, the Nerevarine destroys the Heart of Lorkhan instead of claiming it. Dagoth Ur was connected to the Heart and it should have been destroyed in order to kill him. If the Nerevarine claimed it for themselves, that would be the path of Dagoth Ur or The Tribunal. They would become like Dagoth Ur or Tribunal and we have seen where such paths lead. It is also said that the nature of the Heart is evil. The Nerevarine claiming the Heart would be an interesting option though it is not an available option in the game. But the Nerevarine is an incarnation of Nerevar, the hero who didn't intend to use the Heart, anyway.

Decades after the Heart of Lorkhan was destroyed by the Nerevarine, Red Mountain erupted as never before, and the island of Vvardenfel was nearly destroyed by the cataclysm. Many people died, and most of the settlements were reduced to ash.

Psychological meaning of The Tower is shattering of the ego's boundaries. The structure of The Tower symbolises the ego. The whole cosmology of the Elder Scrolls universe uses a mix of mystical and psychoanalytical models of the psyche. It so happens that the concept that is very reminiscent of the ego is called the Tower there.

In *The Elder Scrolls* there is concept of CHIM. In short, CHIM is a form of enlightenment. A character that achieved CHIM understands that they are part of the dream of the Godhead, as the whole universe is the dream of the Godhead. In other terms, the character realises themselves as a character of the fictional universe. Now, there is a problem that usually when the character realises they don't "really" exist, they really cease to exist in this universe. And this is where concept of the Tower comes in. Towers are important physical and metaphysical structures in TES Universe, and Red Mountain is one of these Towers. Tower means "I." "I" is "I am," "I" is number "1," letter "I" also looks like a tower. The Tower means the ability to realise yourself within a fictional universe and still be able to

say “I am,” to maintain one’s integrity and avoid erasure from the universe. To realise that you are nothing but a fantasy and yet still *believe* in your own existence gives one unlimited creative power to shape space and time at one’s will. It basically makes one a god. The character with that kind of power may be compared to a player who can create game modifications of their own, load and save games, or use the console to cheat. Players can see for themselves how abusing such things as cheat codes and saves makes them believe less in the universe, identify less with the character. When the player plays video game, some part of them sees this as the real thing and understanding the illusory nature of the game breaks the experience. Experiencing illusory nature of the game can break experience for the player or erase a non-playable fictional character from the universe altogether (unless they are self-aware and are fourth wall manipulators like Vivec). There is no point in using cheats and being all-powerful in the world if you don’t believe in it. The player needs to believe in their own in-game existence almost like in-game characters do. It’s worth mentioning that only a few characters survived this realisation of their fictional nature and became living gods, and Vivec is one of them. There was once an entire race that tried to uncover secrets of divinity and upon attempting CHIM was entirely wiped out in a single moment.

So in this sense, while symbolising the destruction of the illusion of one’s materiality at the same time, The Tower signifies acquiring godlike creative power through understanding of the illusory nature of the universe and through belief. The Tower is release of divine power. This is similar to the meaning of the Tower in the Waite and Thoth tarot decks where the Tower shows release of unconscious energy through the shattering of the ego. The Tower is a disaster that destroys one’s self and sets free the vast amount of power from within.

The Tower is destruction that may lead to creation of something more advanced.

4. ILLUSTRATION CREATION WORKFLOW

4.1 Generating ideas

Before I start drawing anything, I need to do research. In the case of this work, I had to read the texts on tarot and refresh my knowledge of *Morrowind* lore. To get into the mood and have visual inspiration I played *Morrowind*. I also see a lot of other artists artwork to get inspired, see how they work with the lines, shapes, colours. My drawing style is greatly influenced by concept art for *Morrowind* done by Michael Kirkbride (Appendix 6).

When I have some theoretical basis and visual inspiration, the ideas start forming and I make sketches. At this point, sketches don't have to be elaborate or visually appealing. Sketching is part of generating the idea, and at this stage of workflow I am thinking with a pencil and going through all the ideas that come to mind. Eventually, some solid ideas are formed and I choose the best ones and go with them. I make more elaborate sketches of future drawings where I'm thinking through all the important details that were lacking from the rough sketch. At this point, I should be able to imagine how my illustration will look at the end. Some of the sketches I have made for these illustrations are shown in Appedix 7.

4.2 Workplace and materials

When the sketch is done, it's time to start the final drawing. Sketches and thinking can be done almost anywhere, but traditional drawing itself requires the great deal of preparation of workplace and art supplies. I'm drawing these illustrations on A3 *Bristol Board* paper. For me, A3 is the most convenient paper size for creating illustrations, its dimensions are 297 x 420 millimetres.

A3 is big enough to fit fairly complicated scene in there and still be able to make it detailed. At the same time, A3 is not too big for scanning. It can be scanned in a common A4 scanned half by half and then merged. Ideally, it should be scanned in A3 scanner, but these are far more rare and expensive so I only have access to one in the Media Department. Bigger paper formats are harder to fit into regular scanners, and even if I manage it, there may be significant distortions on a merged picture. Large format scanners do exist but they are not affordable for use by single person and take too much space to keep one in a regular flat. Some print shops have large format scanners. When I need to scan something big I usually go to print shop.

Bristol board is thick, white, uncoated paper which is widely used by professionals for drawing comics and illustrations. It's good for drawing for a number of reasons. Its surface is smooth and doesn't absorb ink, the surface is also durable enough to withstand reasonable amount of erasing pencil lines. The paper is white and smooth and has minimal texture which is good when you need to use paper to draw line art and remove paper texture after scanning the drawing. Paper thickness is usually 0.15 mm or higher, weight may vary from 220 to 250 g/m². Both sides of Bristol board are working sides.

For drawing on format bigger than A4 I have a tilt drawing table. When drawing, the image must be parallel to the eyes, otherwise drawing may turn out distorted.

My tools for drawing on paper are pencils, ink, liners and erasers. I am using hard pencils (from 3H to H) for drawing lines that should be erased or hardly visible later. Pencils with medium hardness are for drawing smaller details and lines that will be left visible. Very soft dark pencils (3B - 9B) are for drawings where most or all of the details and shadows are done by pencil, so I can achieve greater contrast by using dark deep shades. In the case of this project I will do line art with ink and colour it in Photoshop so there is no need for making all the work with soft pencils.

Ink is my favourite drawing medium, as it allows me to achieve lines with a lot of character, especially when using the brush. For drawing, I am using jet black calligraphy ink "Calli" and thin brushes. I have a set of three calligraphy brushes of various diameters, and those are made with a natural hair I cannot identify. They are not bad for drawing with ink

and watercolour, but those are clearly low budget option. I also have very thin (number 2) watercolour brush with squirrel hair, this is the brush I prefer to use for lining with ink. Professionals use Windsor-Newton series #7 finest sable brushes for inking, but I don't have one. Brush drawing allows me to achieve great variation of line thickness, but it is hard technique and controlling brush properly takes a lot of effort to learn. Drawing small details with a brush is especially complicated. I use the brush mostly for creating bigger lines that need to be smooth and flowing and for organic shapes. For drawing with ink I also use G-Pen and Saji-Pen pen nibs a lot. G-Pen may produce line with various thicknesses and I can draw any kind of object with any amount of detail with this pen. Ink has a number of cons that prevent me from using it for all the linework; pen nibs require frequent cleaning during drawing process and after, it is only possible to draw with ink on horizontal surface, the ink nibs and brushes are harder to control than pigment liners. When I need to draw faster or concentrate on small details I use pigment fine liners. While being much easier to use than ink, liners can't achieve the richness of line variation and black of their pigment is not as deep as ink. Drawing done with liners looks more technical, while ink gives more organic feel.

I use three types of erasers: regular rubber eraser, soft eraser and eraser pen. Soft eraser is for removing "dirt" of softer pencils. Eraser pen allows greater precision than regular eraser and may even be used as a tool for drawing lines. A big old synthetic brush is for swiping bits of used eraser from paper sheet.

4.3 Drawing Process

For this project I am using the same technique I use to create most of my other illustrations. First I draw the sketch (or underdrawing) with hard pencils (3H - H). Then I make it more detailed and precise with softer darker pencils (H, F, HB, B). If I want to keep the pencil lines on a final drawing I make more details and even shadows and textures with HB or harder pencils. After the pencil sketch is done and cleaned of any unwanted lines and dirt I get to applying ink or liners. Inking is the most enjoyable and meditative part of

creating a drawing. All of the elements have been defined and thought through, inking is part where I mostly let my intuition do the job. Sometimes I listen to podcasts or think about matters not directly related to my drawing. I consider line work the most important part of my drawings, lines define objects on drawing and have own character. Ink drawings are shown in Appendix 8., Appendix 9. and Appendix 10.

When ink has dried and drawing is done I need to scan and colorise it. I have regular A4 scanner, with it I scan two halves of the drawing in 600 dpi and merge it in Adobe Photoshop using 'Photomerge' option. In Photoshop I am converting picture into grayscale, adding more contrast with curves and removing white background by adjusting slides in 'Blending Options'. I create new file in RGB colour mode with resolution of 300 dpi and A2 dimensions because I am going to print my illustrations in A2 format. Then I copy my black and white line art into this file, make this layer the top layer, setting blending mode to 'Multiply', locking it and start painting on the layers below. For painting I mostly use Clip StudioPaint. It is the software designed for drawing comics and illustrations. It supports Photoshop file format and have similar functions necessary for drawing and colour editing plus some features that specifically designed for creating comics, drawing and painting such as line stabilisation. I prefer it over Photoshop because it is easier and faster to mix colour with brushes there. The brush setting made specifically for painting. The functionality of this software if not as broad as Photoshop even when it comes to painting, but it is enough for my purposes. I don't need to make my colouring too detailed and elaborate or it will take away attention from the line work. I define main colour scheme and then add highlights and shadows.

After painting is done I adjust colour setting in Photoshop and the picture is ready for publishing on the Internet and may be prepared for printing. Finished coloured illustrations are shown in Appendix 8. Image 23., Appendix 9. Image 25. and Appendix 10. Image 27.

SUMMARY

The Tarot catalogues cultural symbols and archetypes and makes a story of spiritual journey from them. Sequences of Major and Minor Arcana tell us a visual story of the spiritual journey almost in the graphic novel sort of way.

There are many ways to tell a story. Some of them are old, such as pictures and oral tales. Some of them are new, such as interactive video games. Tarot cards are not ancient if by “Tarot cards” we mean strictly the deck of 78 cards as we know them today. The first Tarot deck appeared only in fifteenth century, but people were using pictures and visual symbols for telling stories and communicating with the mysterious and divine side of their nature since the dawn of human history. The roots of the symbolic system of Tarot go back thousands of years into the history of human civilisation, mystery traditions, mythologies and cultures mixing as countries rise and fall and people migrate over the world. Sure, the artist who had drawn the first deck of Tarot probably created it as a game for entertaining nobles. He did not expect that in a few hundred years, occultists and mystics would connect Tarot to Kabbalah and make it a legitimate part of mystical tradition. The author of original Tarot likely used medieval tropes common to the society that he was living in. However, those tropes did not emerge from nothing. There is a long history behind the images of Magicians, Priests, Emperors, Empresses, Hermits, Saints, Gods and Devils. Occultists, mythics and alchemists could apply Tarot to their mythical systems because the roots of the stories behind the pictures on cards and the stories of their belief systems go to the same place and follow similar patterns. Even some psychoanalysts may make sense of the Tarot because Tarot is another manmade system originated from human consciousness to make sense of the world around and inside us.

As outer appearance of the archetype varies from culture to culture, so too does it vary from person to person, especially in our individualistic age when everyone is free to choose own belief system. This is why some people who work with Tarot frequently and have strong opinions on how specific archetypes look for them, prefer to create their own Tarot decks. Choosing a specific Tarot deck is a matter of personal taste and cultural back-

ground. Creating one's own deck is a way of exploring and experiencing one's own world of archetypes and symbols.

The world of the modern person is filled with postmodern images of popular culture. Popular culture offers wide variety of stories and images for any taste. Science fiction and fantasy genres appeal very strongly to the desire of human spirit for connection with archetypes in their traditional form such as warriors, kings, tricksters, and magicians. As our society goes further and further away from a traditional way of life, the need to connect to those somewhat archaic forms of archetypes grows. People are torn away too fast from the spiritual and cultural world of their ancestors. The fantasy genre was born less than a hundred years ago. It was preceded by popularity of mystical genre in literature which arose when industrial era began. People of civilised society were separated from spiritual and mysterious worldview by a rational materialistic, down-to-earth approach. Over the last hundred years, the popularity of the fantasy genre grows and it continues to evolve and become more and more popular. As it grows, so too does the demand to connect with mysterious mythological world of primal archetypes.

Video games are one of the major media of fantasy storytelling. By being interactive, audiovisual media video games allow a great deal on immersion of the player into a fictional world. The story and characters of any video game may be connected to the Tarot symbols because, ultimately, they originate from the same archetypes.

The goal of this work was to indicate archetypes of Tarot in a fictional fantasy universe that I enjoy exploring. The world of *The Elder Scrolls: Morrowind* is based on wide variety of western and eastern mythologies and mystery traditions, and incorporates many archetypal symbols. After I have found connection between the Trumps of the Major Arcana of Tarot and events and characters of *Morrowind*, I used the visuals of Thoth and Rider-Waite Tarot decks as an inspiration and guidance in creating my illustrations for *Morrowind*.

RESÜMEE

Illustratsioonide loomine taro sümbolite põhjal

Juhendajad: Joonas Sildre, Lauri Tuulik

Minu lõputöö eesmärk oli luua kolm illustratsioon tarokaartide sümboolikat kasutades. Illustratsioonide teemad on seotud „The Elder Scrolls Morrowind“ video mängu maailmaga. Iga illustratsioon näitab tarot arhetüüpide kaudu ühte etappi peategelase teekonnast. „Major Arcana“ tarokaartides näitab vaimset teekonda ja seda võib üldiselt näha nagu igasuguse inimese teekonna mudelit.

Igasuguse lugu ja tegelasi võib seostuda tarokaartide sümbolitega, sest taro kuvandid ja (selle töö puhul) videomängu maailma kuvandid on pärit sama arhetüüpidest. Need arhetüüpid on universaalsed enamuse inimese kultuuride jaoks ja ainult nende välimus erineb, kuid sisuliselt, oma olemusena, nad jäävad ühesugustena.

Selle töö kirjalikus osas annan ülevaate taro ajaloo ja Morrowindi süžee kohta. Seejärel analüüsin, kuidas arhetüübid tarodest leiavad aset antud väljamõeldud universumis.

Kirjaliku osa viimases peatükis kirjeldan joonistuste loomise tehnilisi aspekte nagu materjalide valik ja joonistamise protsess.

Praktiline osa koosneb kolmest illustratsioonist. Illustratsioonid oli loodud traditsioonilist ja digitaalset joonistamistehnikat kasutades.

Esimesel illustratsioonil on Nerevarine - peategelane, kelle välimus ja teod sõltuvad mängijast. See illustratsioon põhineb „Loll“ („The Fool“) ja „Maailm“ („The Universe“) kaartidel - esimeses ja viimases Major Arcana kaartides. See pilt näitab peategelase potentsiaali. Nerevarini keha on kimäärne ja hermafrodiitne, sest mängija ise valib peategelase päritolu ja soo.

Teisel illustratsioonil on Dagoth Ur - peavaenlane. Selle pildi põhjal on „Kuradi“ kaart.

Kolmandal illustratsioonil on Punane Mägi - vulkaan, kus peavaenlase linnus asub. Mäe all on Lorkhani Süda - jumaliku võimu sisaldav artefakt. See illustratsioon põhineb „Torni“ kaardil. „Torn“ sümboliseerib purustust ja jõu vabastamist.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Tarot cards. The Fool.



Image 2. The Fool. Rider-Waite
Tarot deck.1910.



Image 3. The Fool. Thoth Tarot deck.
1969.

Appendix 2. Tarot cards. The Devil.



Image 4. The Devil. Rider-Waite Tarot deck.1910.



Image 5. The Devil. Thoth Tarot deck. 1969.

Appendix 3. Tarot cards. The Tower.



Image 6. The Tower. Rider-Waite Tarot deck.1910.



Image 7. The Tower. Thoth Tarot deck. 1969.

Appendix 4. Tarot cards. The World/ The Universe.



Image 8. The World. Rider-Waite
Tarot deck.1910.



Image 9. The Universe. Thoth Tarot
deck.
1969.

Appendix 5. The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind. Screenshots.



Image 10. Screenshot from The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind.



Image 11. Screenshot from The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind.



Image 12. Screenshot from The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind.



Image 13. Screenshot from The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind.

Appendix 6. The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind. Concept Art.

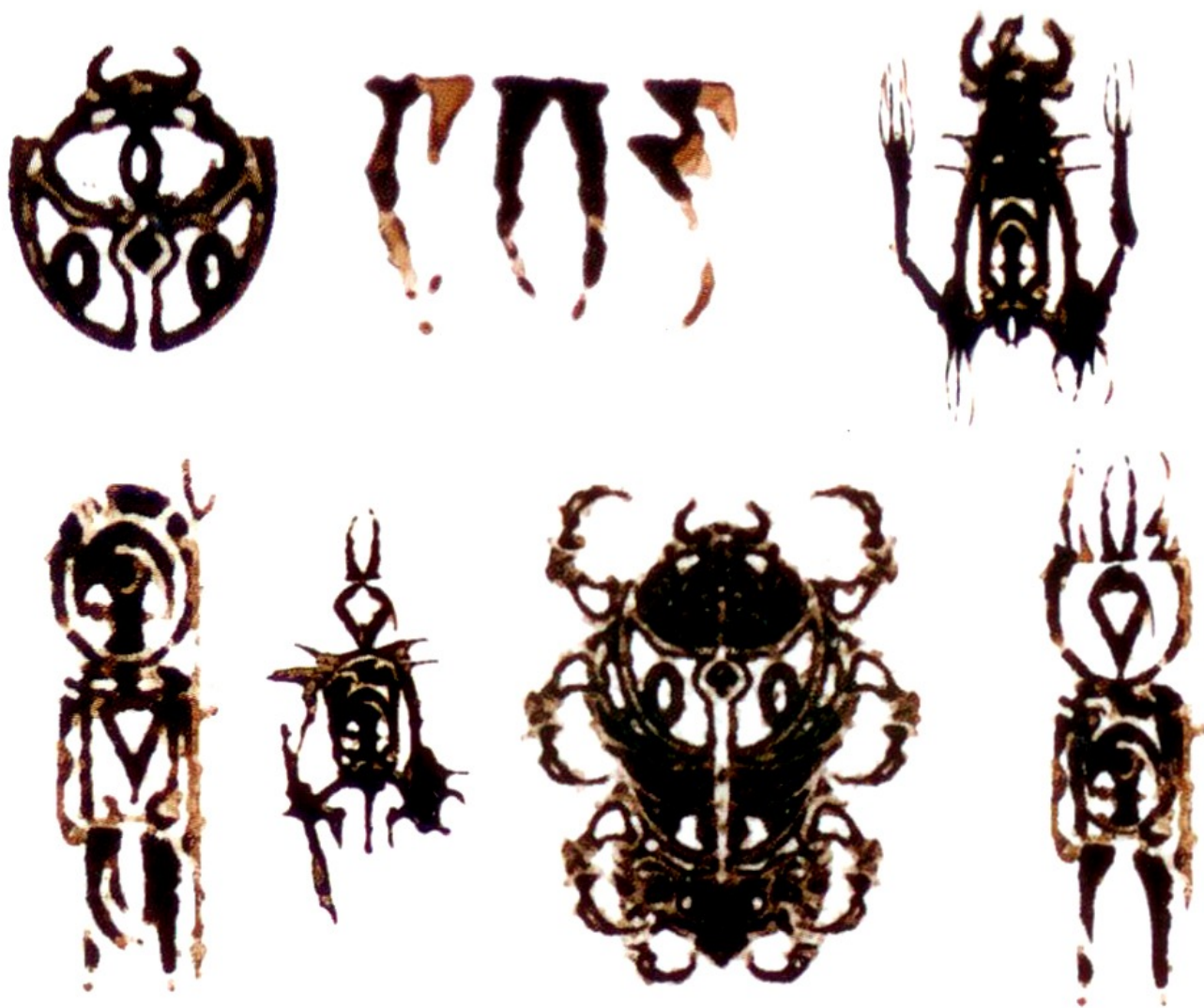


Image 14. Sigils of various factions of Morrowind.



Image 15. Nerevar.

DAGOOTH-VR

ROUGH DRAFT

THREE STICKS

~ OLD

~ BLOODY

~ INSCRUTABLE



Image 16. Dagoth Ur.



Image 17. Construction of Akulakhan.



Image 18. Vivec, Almalexia and Sotha Sil



Image 19. Vivec, Almalexia and Sotha Sil murdering Nerevar

Appendix 7. Sketches for illustrations.

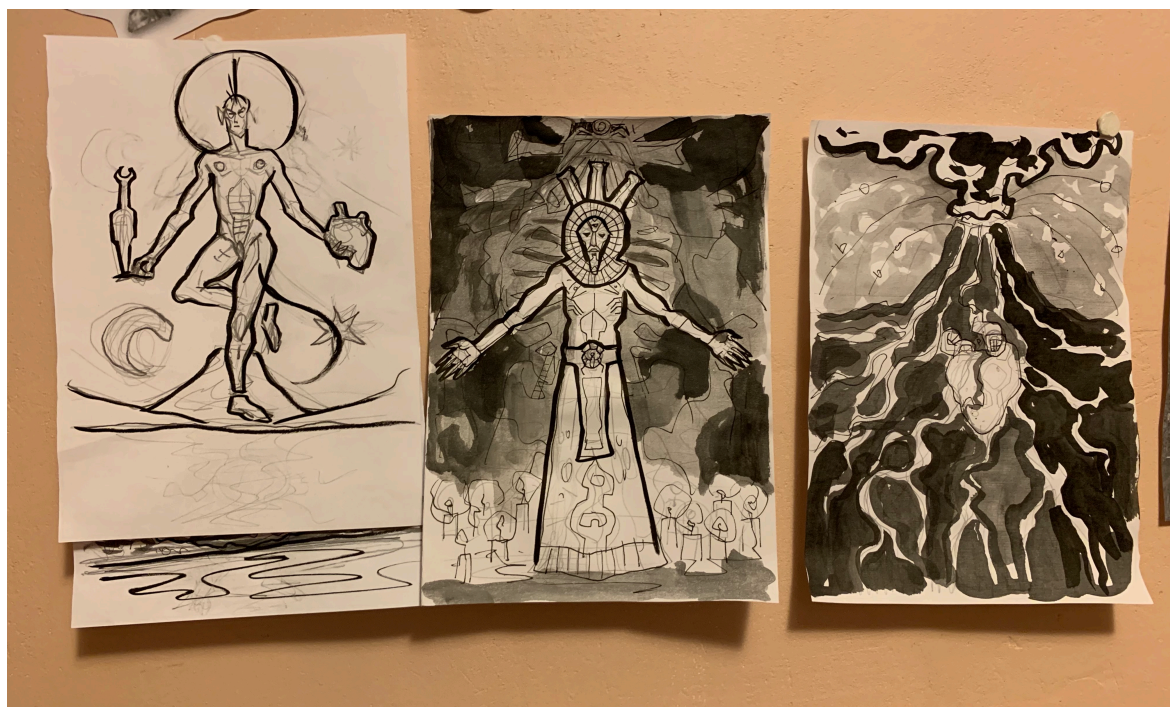


Image 20. Sketches for Illustrations.



Image 21. Sketches for *Nerevarine*.

Appendix 8. Nerevarine.



Image 22. Nerevarine. Ink drawing.



Image 23. Nerevarine. Digitally coloured illustration.

Appendix 9. Dagoth Ur.



Image 24. Dagoth Ur. Ink drawing.



Image 25. Dagoth Ur. Digitally coloured illustration.

Appendix 10. Red Mountain.



Image 26. Red Mountain. Ink drawing.



Image 27. Red Mountain. Digitally coloured illustration.