**SHAMAN**

Game Design Document

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**Contents**

[**1.0 Document History 3**](#_heading=h.30j0zll)

[**2.0 Game Overview 3**](#_heading=h.1fob9te)

[2.1 Synopsis 3](#_heading=h.3znysh7)

[2.2 Background and Setting 3](#_heading=h.tyjcwt)

[2.3 Art style and aesthetic 3](#_heading=h.3dy6vkm)

[**2.4 Unique Selling Point** 5](#_heading=h.1t3h5sf)

[**2.5 Target Market** 5](#_heading=h.4d34og8)

[**3.0 Gameplay 6**](#_heading=h.17dp8vu)

[3.2 Level structure 7](#_heading=h.26in1rg)

[**4.0 Mechanics 8**](#_heading=h.lnxbz9)

[4.0.1 Combat – Health and Stamina 8](#_heading=h.35nkun2)

[4.0.2 Combat - Melee 9](#_heading=h.1ksv4uv)

[4.0.3 Combat – Grappling/React/Interact 10](#_heading=h.44sinio)

[4.0.4 Combat – Crossbow and Bolts 11](#_heading=h.z337ya)

[4.0.5 Combat –Dodging 12](#_heading=h.3j2qqm3)

[**4.1 Camera Mechanics 13**](#_heading=h.4i7ojhp)

[**4.2.1 Camera – Lock On 13**](#_heading=h.2xcytpi)

[**4.2.2 Camera – Combat 13**](#_heading=h.1ci93xb)

[**4.3 Movement 14**](#_heading=h.2bn6wsx)

[**4.4 Systemic Properties 14**](#_heading=h.qsh70q)

[4.4.1 Systemic Enemies 15](#_heading=h.3as4poj)

[**4.5 Save Points 15**](#_heading=h.1pxezwc)

[**4.6 Upgrade System 15**](#_heading=h.49x2ik5)

[**4.7 Investigative Techniques 16**](#_heading=h.2p2csry)

[4.7.1 Investigation - Notebook 17](#_heading=h.147n2zr)

[**5.0**](#_heading=h.23ckvvd) **Enemies 18**

[**5.0.1 Grunts – Engkantos (Elementals) 18**](#_heading=h.ihv636)

[**5.0.2 Main Evil Spirits (Bosses) 18**](#_heading=h.32hioqz)

[**6.0 Interface 20**](#_heading=h.1hmsyys)

[6.1 Title Screen 20](#_heading=h.41mghml)

[6.2 Controls 21](#_heading=h.vx1227)

[6.2.2 PS4 21](#_heading=h.3fwokq0)

[6.2.3 XBOX ONE 22](#_heading=h.1v1yuxt)

[**7.0 Iterations 22**](#_heading=h.4f1mdlm)

# 1.0 Document History

Version 1.00 Draft of GDD

Version 1.10 Added 4.0 Combat Mechanics

Version 1.20 Added 4.3 Movement section

Version 1.30 Added 2.0 Game Overview

Version 1.40 Added 4.5 Save Points, 4.6 Upgrade System, 5.0 Enemies

Version 1.50 Added 3.0 Gameplay and 4.7 Investigative Techniques

Version 1.60 Added Iterations

# 2.0 Game Overview

### 2.1 Synopsis

*An ordinary person, chosen by an extraordinary world.*

The protagonist is a half Spanish, half Filipino adult male born in a rich Spanish family, sent to the Philippines to inherit the family’s fortune after his mother dies. In the Philippines, he discovers the grave responsibility of his family’s bloodline. The Philippines is prone to superstitions and myths about evil spirits and demons, but these turn out to be realer than suspicions. Tapping into your heritage, you attune yourself to hunting these spirits and assume the role of the **SHAMAN.** Though clumsy, ineffective and new, the player will develop his skills and sharpen his ingenuity, guided by a mysterious Mentor.

A pervasive evil whispers throughout the land. It is rumored that this is caused by a coven of spiteful witches (*bruja*), manifesting their evil through many symptoms: hexes, curses and the corruption of spirits. Villagers possessed to cannibalism, decaying land and withering foliage, stagnant water turning a sour, murky green from algae. Connect with your true calling, use your wits exploring the exotic mythologies of the Philippines, stop the infection of evil and become the SHAMAN.

### 2.2 Background and Setting

The game is set in the Renaissance period 1300 – 1600 and follows the story of the hero during the Spanish Colonial Era in Spain and Philippines. The game is set predominantly in the Philippines and also the unseen and mysterious Spirit realm that is intertwined within the Physical realm. This unseen world is housed to different types of spirits and creatures, both good and evil. The populace of this realm cannot be seen by those within the physical realm, the spirits and creatures however, can see within both realms. The game will have religious themes throughout.

The quest of the protagonist will explore the mysteries of the spirit realm and also to put a stop to the evil that is threatening the land of both realms. The game will host some dark fantasy, mythology, and alternate history themes.

### 2.3 Art style and aesthetic

Keeping in line with Spanish Colonial Era (1600s) Philippines, the architecture gravitates towards decrepit buildings and old fishing villages. There is a heavy dark fantasy touch to it, tying into the Coven of Witches spreading decay. Though the night may be gray and oppressive, the daytime exudes more splashes of color. The atmosphere tries to suffocate player with isolation and many environments are crafted to convey abandonment. It is also strongly guided by cultural influences of the Philippines; much of the environment is infused and integrated with spiritual beliefs and superstitions.



*Figure 1 - Daytime Fishing Village*



*Figure 2 - Nighttime Fishing Village*



*Figure 3 - Varied Environments (Balete Tree)*

### **2.4 Unique Selling Point**

One of the unique selling points of *SHAMAN* is its relatively unexplored stories of the Philippines. Exotic and obscure, these mythologies will have curious audiences hooked onto its satisfying and sometimes grotesque lore, while also paying homage to those familiar with the culture.

Players will be able to deeply immerse themselves in the thrill of the hunt, tracking evil spirits terrorizing villages and planning their attack. Players will need to be methodical and act strategically to be able to execute the monster. Investigate the creature’s behavior, pinpoint weaknesses, lay down traps, and manipulate the environment; with cautious and thorough planning, a successful hunt is not far from reach. Though your human fragility lay bare in this hostile nightmare, you can still topple great obstacles using that human ingenuity. *SHAMAN* claims an exciting blend of strategic planning and fast-paced action.

A key design choice of *SHAMAN* is giving players a goal and a myriad of possible pathways and solutions to achieve it. We believe this emergent gameplay that stems from the creativity of our players is at the core of what is fun and fascinating and is innately rewarding. With the systemic design of the objects and enemies, the player is able to manipulate his environment however he deems fit to hunt his prey; luring a fiery demon with bait and traps, cutting open a water-tower to flood the area, and electrifying the water while the demon splutters out doused flames. By allowing players to feel smart and have agency in the world, they create their own enjoyment.

### **2.5 Target Market**

The game is aimed around mature audiences (15 years+) who owns either a PS4, XBox One or PC. According to the 2018 research data of the ESA:

* Average gamer is 34 years of age, 45% of gamers are women
* 41% of households own a PC, 36% own a game console
* Gamers age 18 or older represent the majority of gamers, more than 70%

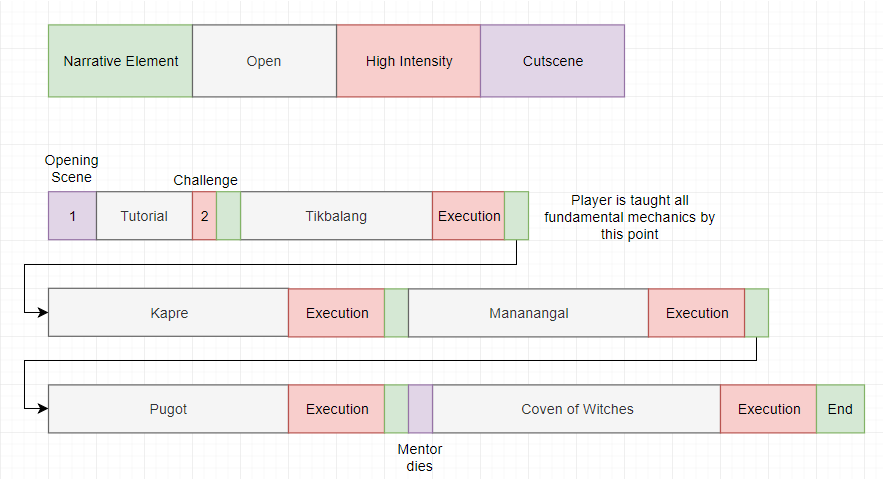
Interesting premises has been revealed to be one of top factors influencing decisions to buy a video game. 61% of gamers consider this factor for buying a game. Online gameplay capabilities do affect 50% of gamers, and 42% of gamers also play with friends. This might not be a multiplayer game, but gamers can compare how they approached certain monsters with their peers and see how they went about beating particular spirits, as well as sharing their thoughts with each other on the story as well as discovering an unfamiliar mythology.

Based on the data, the game will aim for people who are interested in a 3rd person action, adventure RPG experience revolving around myth and fantasy as well as a strong, immersive single-player experience.

Sandbox-type games and intricate systemic designs have been seen in games such as LoZ: Breath of the Wild and many Ubisoft titles, and have been received extremely well. Core gamers have been known to innovate interesting ways of solving problems and often stretch systems, which can raise interest in mid-level and peripheral gamers.

# 3.0 Gameplay

#### 3.1 Game and Narrative Timeline



The narrative of the story closely follows the mythological meta-narrative “Hero’s Journey” outlined by Joseph Campbell.

**Opening Scene** - The protagonist’s mother has died, and is told to leave Spain for the Philippines for his inheritance. The protagonist is seen sketching in his notebook. His carriage stops abruptly upon a forest road and he steps outside curiously, only to find that the horses pulling the carriage have been long dead. He then meets the Mentor, who tells him about spirits. The protagonist expresses disbelief, but they are then suddenly assaulted by *engkanto*, which are deftly dispatched by the Mentor.

**Tutorial** - The Mentor then provides the protagonist with a sword. As soon as the protagonist accepts the sword, the camera moves behind the player and gives them autonomy of their character. The player learns basic movement, grappling and combat during this tutorial, with the Mentor leading them forward through thick brush. The player also picks up a basic dagger and whip, and learns their move-set in controlled environments against weak *engkanto*.

**Challenge** – The player faces a *Kapre* without the help of the Mentor. This fight tests all the skills and mechanics taught to the player up to this point, acting as a knowledge checkpoint. After this, the player enters the first real hunting zone.

***Tikbalang* –** Phasing in and out of the spirit realm, the Mentor guides the player on the basics of investigation and pre-planning to hunt a *Tikbalang,* a shape-shifting spirit. The Mentor then briefly wishes the player good luck, before deliberately angering the *Tikbalang* and disappearing. This will set in motion the **execution phase**, and forces the player to follow the aforementioned plan.

The rest of the game is the player gradually developing confidence and skills, hunting a variety of evil spirits, and resulting in the execution of the Coven of Witches.

**Mentor Dies –** It is revealed to the player that the Mentor has been long dead, but his spiritual presence is strong enough to manifest itself on the physical plane. However, after being ambushed and attacked, he no longer has the strength to maintain his connection. At this point, the player is alone.

**Execution of the Coven** – After the player hunts all three witches, the corruption and evil pervading the land dissipates. The malevolence is shown to be drained back into the witches when they lose their life.

The player is then led back to a *Balete Tree,* which lets him commune with the spirit realm. There, he is able to communicate with the Mentor and the friendly spirits that whispered in his ear.

### 3.2 Level structure

The game is segmented into levels. Each level is a large, open sandbox for the player to explore and familiarize themselves with. Levels are separated by beautiful, closed-off environments that act as ‘*walking simulators’* to allow the game to unload the previous area and load the next one.

Though there are no load times and levels are not strictly separated area by area, there is an implicit segmentation to each ‘level’ and predictable structure that the player will unconsciously learn.

1. Player enters area.
2. Player given time to briefly explore the environment and absorb the unique atmosphere of the level.
   * Provides a ‘sense of place’ by allowing the player to have a large, encompassing view of the area. This is made possible through the level design.
   * For example, the level is a winding road down to the village. Before making the journey down, the player is able to see the whole village and what he is about to enter.
3. Player is introduced with the threat in a direct way during the introduction of the new level and forced to interact with them briefly.
   * This will often occur through scripted events.
   * This provides the player with a goal and provides them an outline of what they are fighting.
4. The player traverses around the open-ended level, gathering clues through the environment, stalking the evil spirit to observe it, interacting with the environment and acquiring helpful items.
   * They must constantly be watching out for the evil spirit.
   * This segment of the level is termed the ‘***investigating phase***’ and plays out similar to a survival horror game. A design objective emphasized during this phase is instilling weakness, fear and resentment in the player against the monster or spirit. This is achieved
5. The second phase of the level, ‘***planning phase***’ begins when the player confidently believes they have enough information and tools to deal with the evil spirit.
   * The player commences setting up traps and bait, making mental notes of where the spirit may flee, devising combat strategies, interacting with the environment and generally using their ingenuity to put any advantage in the fight in favor of the hunter.
6. The final phase, called the ‘***execution phase***’, is when the power dynamic between the player and the monster reverses, and the player experiences catharsis.
   * They execute the plan they had carefully crafted and engage in combat with the evil spirit, eventually hunting it down. This phase plays similarly to games such as *Monster Hunter: World*.
7. The monster is chased to their ‘***nest’*** and executed.
8. The mentor appears after leaving the spiritual realm to celebrate, discuss and lead him to the next area through the closed-off environments.

* The monster can be attacked at any time, but the player will very, very likely fail in hunting it, and will die during the encounter. Spirits are extremely difficult to kill and will present themselves to the player as ‘overpowered’ when first introduced.
  + This is designed to be taught to the player after they attempt it for the first time, while deliberately shaping the encounter to be as traumatic as possible.
  + Attacking early will engage *execution phase* early, and the player will be hunted until he dies.

# 4.0 Mechanics

### 4.0.1 Combat – Health and Stamina

The player has a health bar that must be sustained in order to stay alive.

* Enemy attacks and hazards can lower your health.
* Some consumables can replenish your health, some gradually, some instantaneously.
* Interacting with a Religious Object will recuperate you fully.

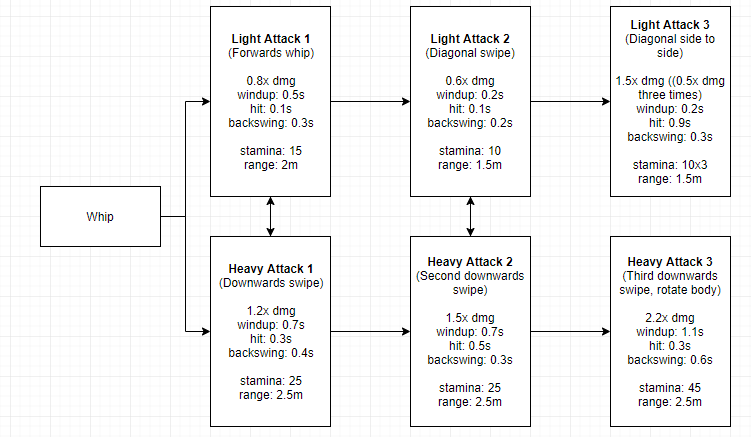
Players have a stamina bar that depletes during combat.

* Actions that require stamina:
  + Attacking
  + Running
  + Climbing
  + Dodging
  + Grappling
* The stamina bar replenishes itself after a short period of time if the player doesn’t engage in any actions that consume stamina.
* Stamina is not used outside of combat, and does not show outside of combat.
  + This is presented after sheathing weapons, providing a different running and climbing animation.

### 4.0.2 Combat - Melee

The player has three primary weapons for engaging in combat; a dagger, a whip, and a sword

* + The dagger favors low commitment attacks, fast animations, close ranged engagements and reactionary play.
    - The dagger has special animations during reactions and does more damage while grappling and parrying.
    - After a successful dodge, the player engages in a counter-attack stance which increases damage and modifies attack animations slightly.
  + The whip is a long-ranged, high commitment weapon that deals large amounts of damage. It benefits most from monster preparation.
    - The heavy attacks and combo finales of the whip have associated special effects upon them.
    - E.g. the stingray whip does additional damage to monsters weak to it, but is only applied during final hit of a combo.
  + The sword is a balanced mix of the two and benefits from strategic and methodical play.
    - The sword allows the player to reload his crossbow and attack at the same time.
    - The attack is a jab that deals moderate damage and shoves enemies away.
* The player uses stamina to attack with these weapons, allowing for a light attack or a heavy attack.
* Light and heavy attacks can be woven into each other, allowing for varied attacks.



* Each weapon type contains some item variations that can be found in the world, which boast different move-sets and niches.

### 4.0.3 Combat – Grappling/React/Interact

* Players can grapple enemies and carry objects. This allows them to carry them if they are small enough, or cling onto the enemy if they’re large.
  + The input must be hit repeatedly if they are grappling or grabbing onto an enemy.
* This input is also used as a reactionary ‘parry’.
  + E.g. A flying enemy swooping down to attack the player can be countered by using the reaction input just before he is attacked. This will let the player sidestep and use the momentum of the enemy’s dive to pull the monster into the ground*.*
  + Reacting too early causes the player to stumble forward and locks them in an animation.
* A different reaction is shown for different situations.
  + E.g. a staggered enemy can be tackled to the ground and stabbed repeatedly with a dagger.
* The player can also interact with different objects and situational items in the environment.
  + An input will appear at the bottom-right of the screen that shows what the player can do if they are close enough.
  + This is different to normal interaction, and can be likened to a *quick-time event*.

### 

### 4.0.4 Combat – Crossbow and Bolts

Players can shoot their hand crossbow that’s equipped to his left arm, firing any bolt set.

* All crossbow shots deal 0.5x multiplier damage and stagger any enemy if shot during their attack animation.
* The player can shoot the bolt during the windup and backswing animation of the player’s attacks.
* This is automatically targeted onto a locked-on enemy or object.
* Players can only shoot one bolt before needing to reload.
  + Reloading take up 3-4 seconds, depending on the characters skills.
    - Reloading slows the character to a slow walk during the animation.
    - Reloading disallows any type of actions, except attacks if a sword is equipped.
* The player can use the crossbow outside of combat.
* The player can aim the crossbow manually.
* The crossbow bolt fires straight for 50 meters before trailing downwards.

Bolts are the type of ammunition that the crossbow can fire. There are different types of bolts in the game that can catalyze interaction with different properties in the environment and the enemies.

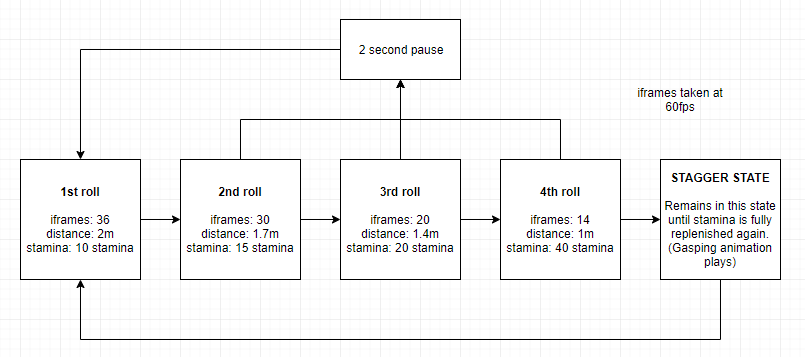
* Normal bolts have infinite amount of ammunition and don’t have any special effects.
* Electric bolts attempt to apply **electrify** to any objects or enemies, and stun the enemy (1s).
* Fire bolts attempt to apply **ignition** to any objects or enemies.
* Water bolts attempt to apply **wet** to any objects or enemies. Can be upgraded and swapped to Cold bolts to apply **freeze** to objects and enemies.
* Force bolts push any viable environmental object or enemy strongly. Can modify force strength.



### 4.0.5 Combat –Dodging

Dodging is the player’s primary defensive maneuver. Expending some stamina allows the player to roll a short distance in a direction to evade an attack.

* During the animation, the player is animation locked.
* The dodge provides invulnerability frames during the animation.
  + These occur as soon as the roll is inputted.
* Rolling consecutively has negative consequences.
  + Stamina consumption increases
  + Distance rolled decreases
  + Invulnerability frames decreases
  + Slightly longer backswings, ‘heavier’ animation plays
  + After 4 rolls, attempting another staggers the player, and tumbles them over instead of rolling.
    - During stagger, the player is standing still and exhausted until his stamina recuperates fully.
* Getting ‘hit’ during an i-frame will recover some stamina. If wielding a dagger, the player engages in a counter-attack state for a short period of time (5 seconds).
* This encourages precise and deliberate gameplay.



# 4.1 Camera MechanicsC:\Users\Darryl\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.Word\Lock On.png

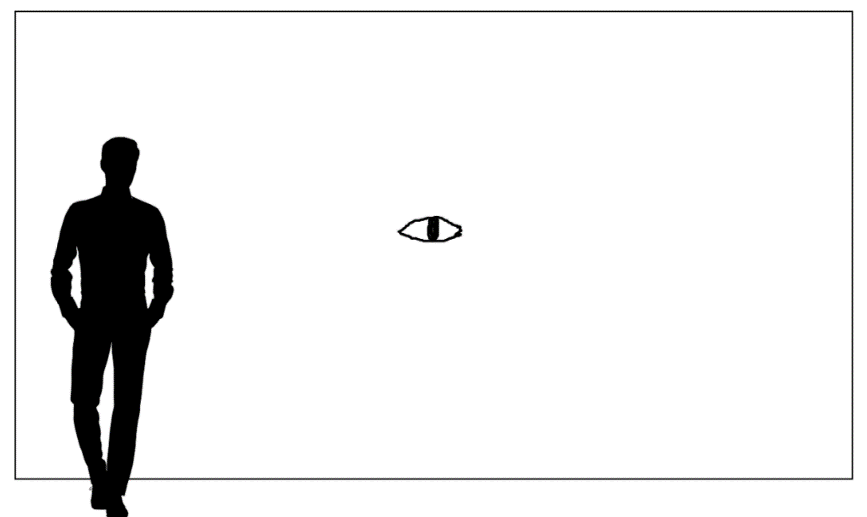
## 4.2.1 Camera – Lock On

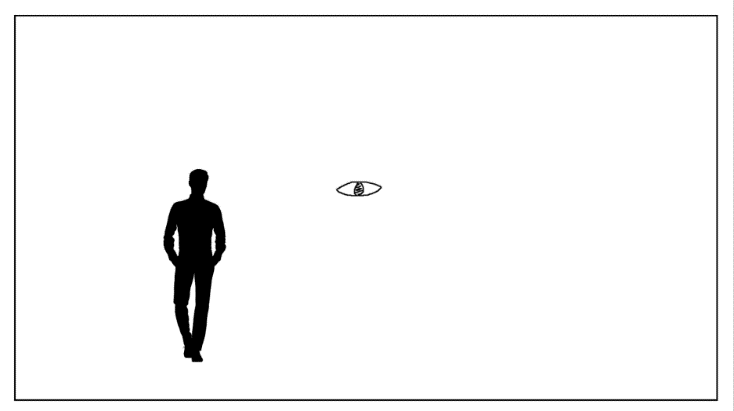
Players can lock-on to enemies or interactive objects if the center of their camera is 30 degrees around an enemy. If there are two enemies in the range, the lock-on prioritizes the closest to the center, but the player can cycle through them.

While the camera is locked-on, the field of view will zoom in slightly and focus on the enemy.

## 4.2.2 Camera – Combat

During combat, the player’s character will move off to the lower side and the camera will zoom forward, giving more room for the player to see the screen. This attempts to engage the state of flow during combat (what the character sees in-game is what the player sees in real life), as well as being more convenient for the player. Aiming zooms in and pushes the character further left.





# https://puu.sh/CXUR8/7202126442.png

# 

# 4.3 Movement

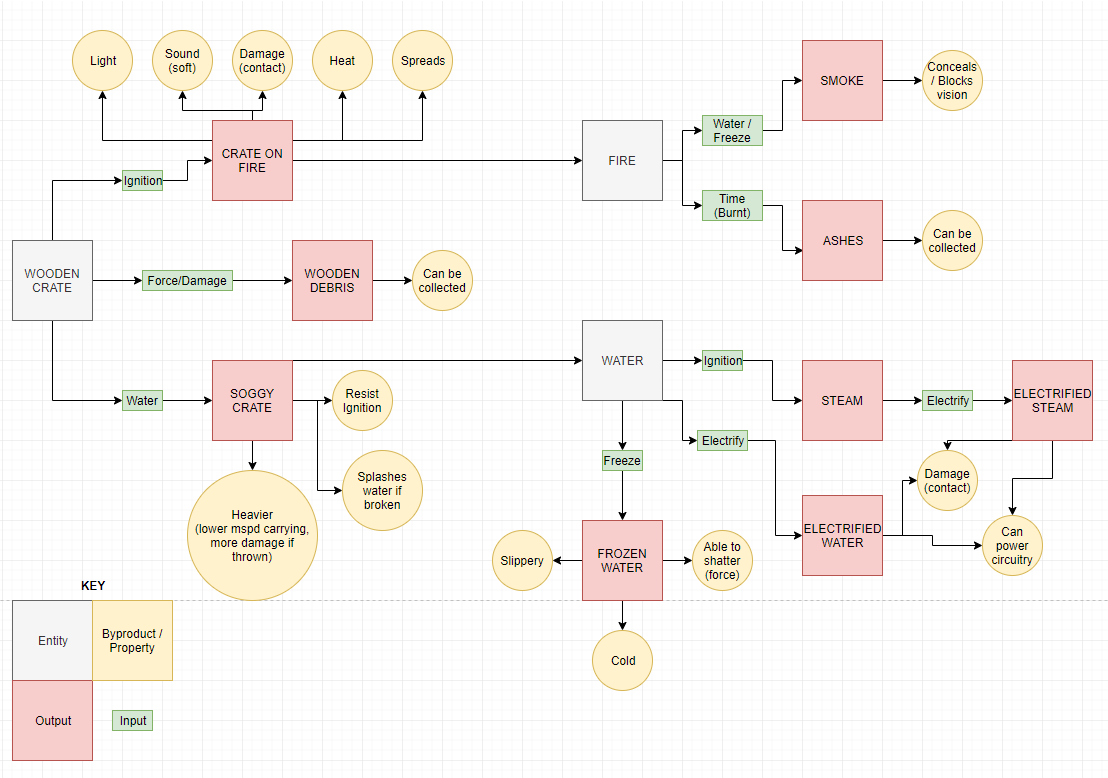
* Players can move in any direction relative to their camera direction.
* Players cannot jump.
* When the player interacts with a climbable object, he can scale it.
* Fall damage is prevalent in the game.
  + This is calculated by [(meters fallen\*2) – 20] points of damage.
* Players can run indefinitely by holding an input. In combat, running consumes stamina.

## 4.4 Systemic Properties

***“A key design choice of SHAMAN is giving players an open-ended goal and allowing any conceivable solution to achieve it.”***

By applying different properties to objects, enemies and player interactions that influence each other, we can create systemic relationships where emergence occurs. This allows the player to express creativity when playing the game and setting up their hunt.

Each entity in the game is always listening for inputs. When the entity engages with the input, either through contact or being in its presence, it will broadcast its outputs.



*Figure 7 - Example systemic flowchart*

The wooden crate is categorized as a **wooden material**. Wooden materials listen for inputs **ignition, force/damage and wet.** It has the properties **flammable, destructible and absorptive.**

### 4.4.1 Systemic Enemies

**A large part of SHAMAN’s core gameplay loop is investigating how enemies react to certain inputs.**

* Hunting an evil spirit may prove difficult if the player relies too much on fire due to the light it gives off, scaring it away.
* Light could also attract types of *engkanto,* making your job as the SHAMAN more difficult.
* Overexposure to light may burn the skin off certain enemies.
* Ashes can be used on a *Mananangal’s* severed torso to stop her from recombining.

**Enemies also provide unique outputs.**

* A *Mananangal* makes ticking noises. She will try to trick the player by producing a loud ticking noise, pretending it is in close proximity when it is far away. Inversely, she also produces soft, whispered ticking noises when it is very near.

## 4.5 Save Points https://cdn.discordapp.com/attachments/542629302521561110/554227540563197952/mary-statue-for-garden-dimarlinperez-virgin-mary-statue-garden.png

Throughout each level, an interactive Religious Object is lying around in a sacred and safe place, waiting to be discovered by the player. This location in the level acts as the players ‘home’; as much as it can be, anyways.

* + These objects act as a save-point for players.
  + When interacted, they replenish player’s health to full.
  + They allow players to upgrade weapons and skills.
  + The player can warp between zones through the religious object.
* If the player returns back to the game after quitting, he will enter the game next to the last religious object he touched.
* Soft whispering can be heard in the direction of the object (if the player is using stereo sound). These are friendly spirits guiding the player.

## 4.6 Upgrade System

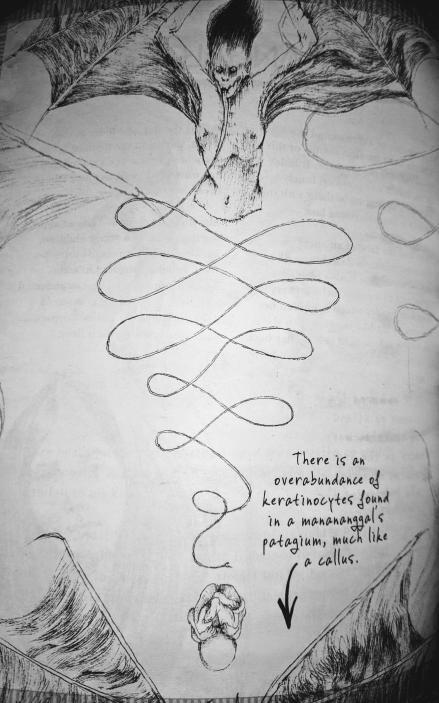
The player will earn an upgrade point each time they level up. The player will be given a choice to upgrade the weapon-type of choosing (Dagger, Sword, Whip or Crossbow). The upgrades will range from passive number enhancements to unlocking move-sets and reactions.



*Figure 9 - Skill Trees*

## 4.7 Investigative Techniques

Investigation is how a player gathers information on the world and his/her prey. Spirits and monsters have patterns of behavior, strengths and weaknesses and characteristics of threats. The player can infer and learn about them by:

* Engaging in an encounter that provides information.
  + The player can stumble upon a dead pregnant woman with her innards eaten, providing detail on the creature’s dietary habits.
* Overhearing or talking to an NPC and acquiring stories and rumors. Finding notes.
  + “*I swear, during the night I’ve seen severed legs standing in the middle of a field!”*
* Investigating the monster directly, stalking him through stealth.
  + The player can shadow the monster throughout the night to see where it rests, or map out the general movement throughout the area.
  + To investigate, the player must center their camera on the creature. The camera will zoom in (similar to combat camera) to indicate that the player is observing it.
  + 

### 4.7.1 Investigation - Notebook

The Notebook is a system that accompanies the player in his journeys. It acts as a bestiary codex and is important to the investigative nature of the game in terms of both flavor and organizing relevant and useful information.

* The player sketches creatures quickly when investigating. Prolonged periods of investigation increase the quality of the sketch.
* The player describes his experiences and characteristics of the monster.
* The player notes down useful information gathered throughout the world.
  + - This includes various Filipino stories, myths and rumors.
* The notebook also acts as the player’s impromptu quest-log.



# Enemies

## 5.0.1 Grunts – Engkantos (Elementals)



## 5.0.2 Main Evil Spirits (Bosses)





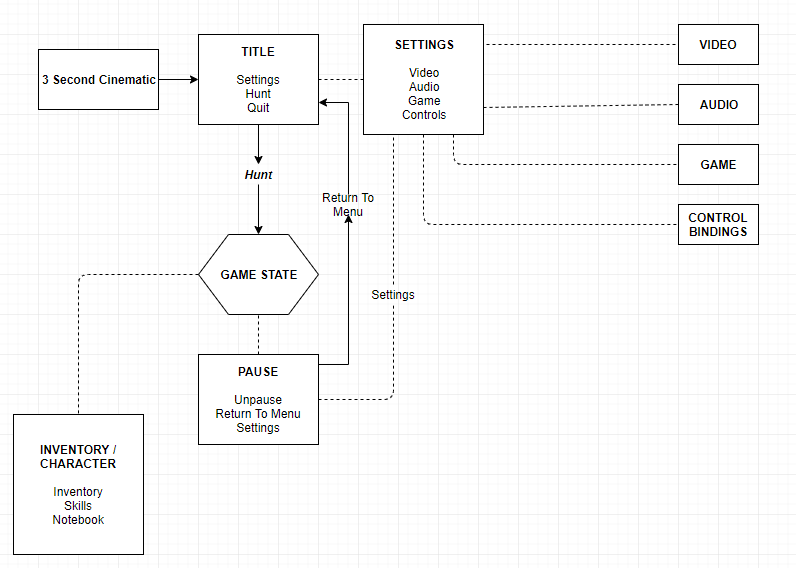






# 6.0 Interface

Menu system will be outlined in the following flowchart.



### 6.1 Title Screen

The title screen background is a fixed camera that centers on the protagonist next to the Religious Object in the area. If the player hasn’t interacted with the Religious Object in the area, it will center on the character at the beginning of the level.

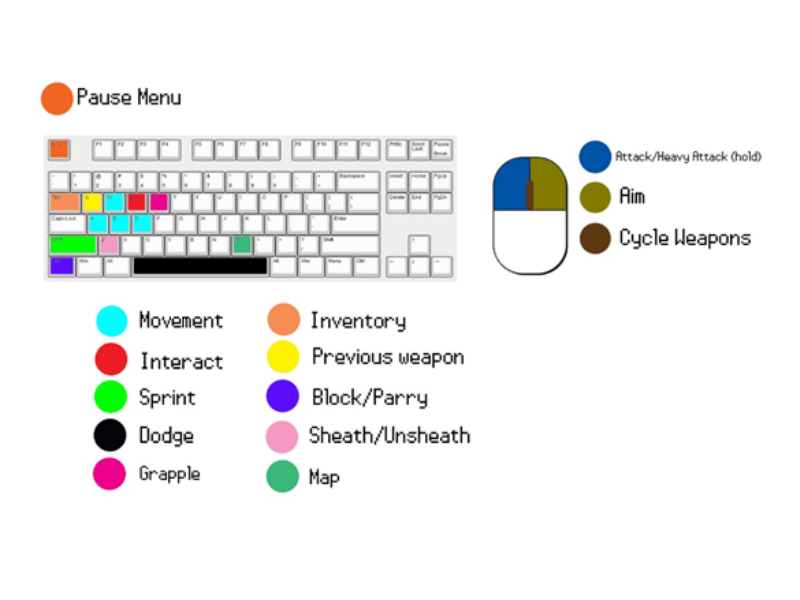
When HUNT is selected, the menus will fade away, and the camera will move behind the player, continuing the game.

* HUNT will be greyed out until the map and player data has been loaded in.
* This is similar to the title screen of God of War PS4\*

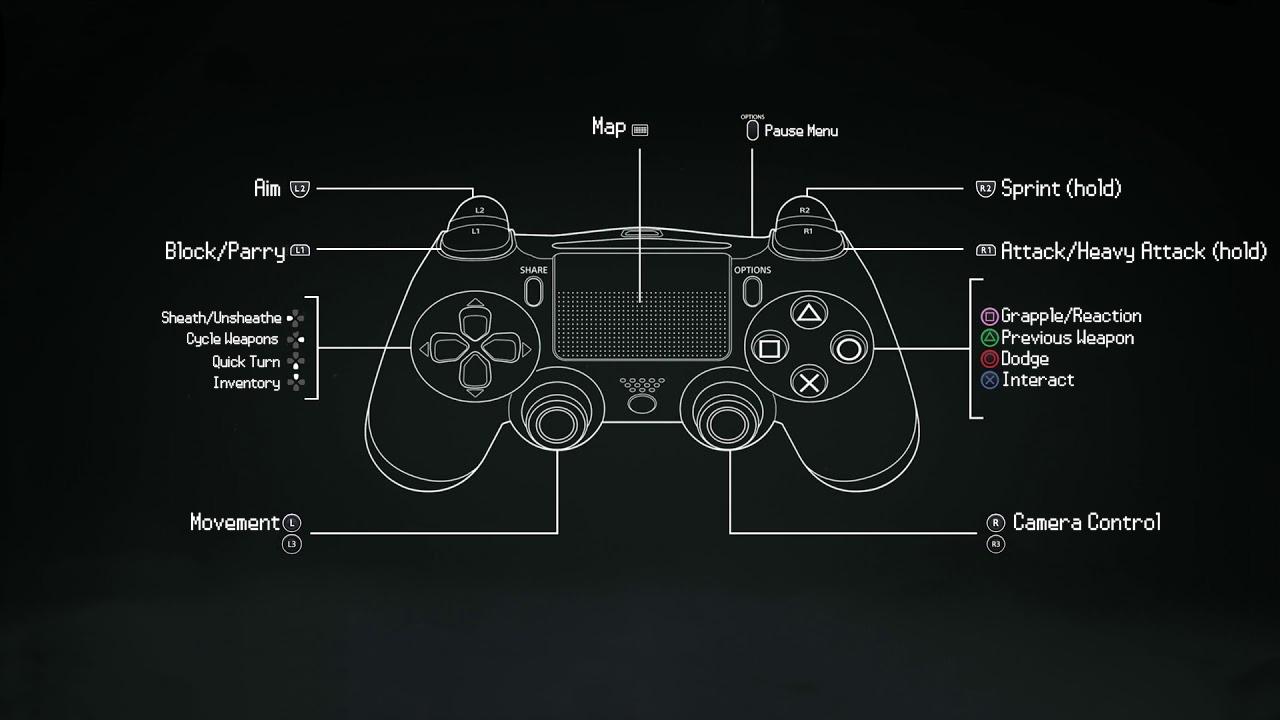
### 

# 6.2 Controls

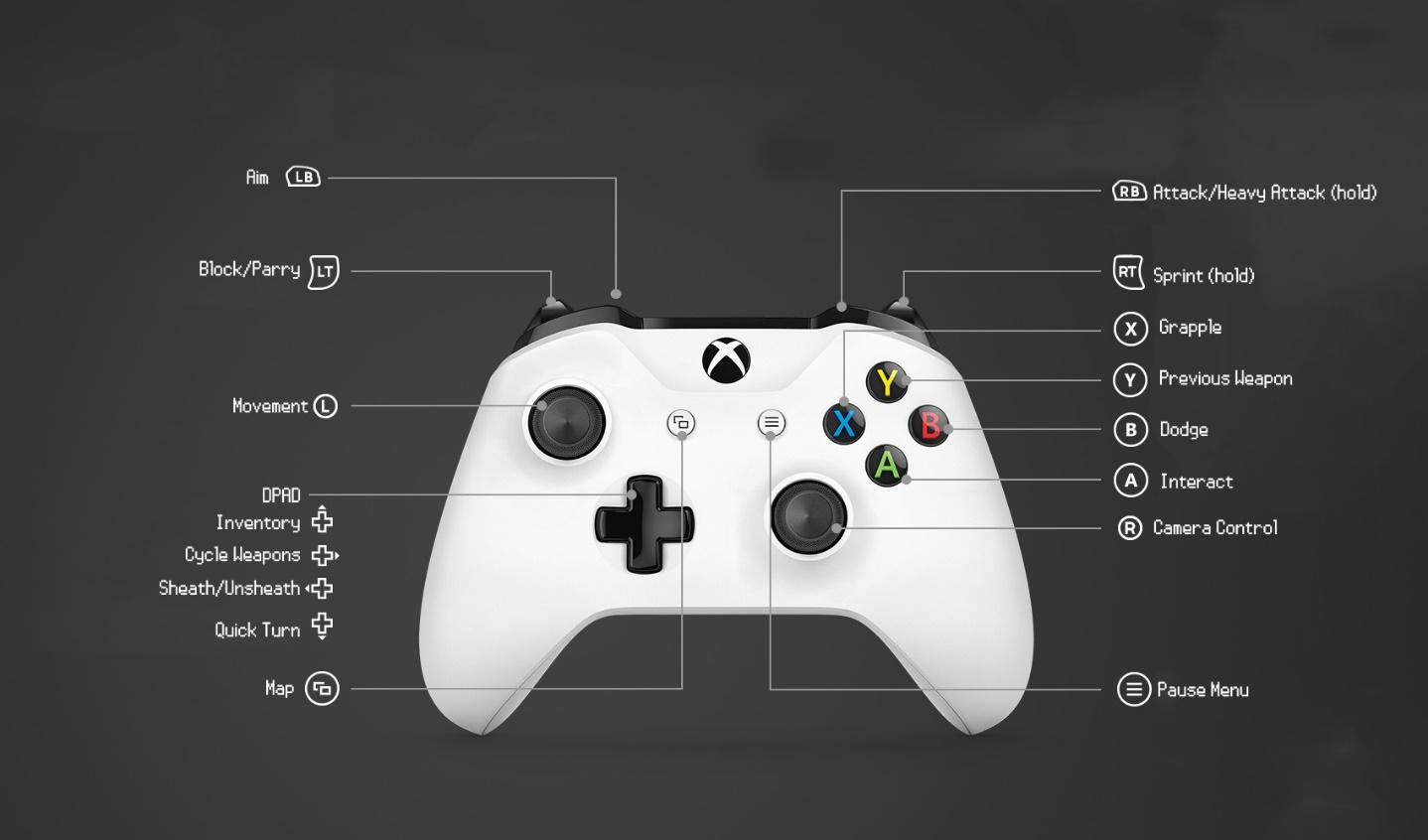
### 6.2.1 Keyboard and Mouse



### 6.2.2 PS4



### 6.2.3 XBOX ONE



# 7.0 Iterations

Originally, the game was meant to be a slow-paced game with linear level design. Surprisingly, large iterations occurred so that the project shifted genres entirely.

The slow pace of combat was to reflect the player’s human weaknesses, to force them to rely on strategies instead. However, with the types of enemies being considered, and the idea of a slow-paced hunt, we decided to instead segment the gameplay into slow and fast paced phases.

Originally, the hunting mechanic was not in the game. We believed it would be an interesting goal for the player to have the opportunity hunting down large and dangerous enemies in the game. After some deliberation, we decided hunting would be the actual goal of the game itself.

This meant that linear level design would be very enclosing and limiting. We thought about an open-world level design, but we retracted on that quickly. We wanted something open so the player had agency and choice, yet precisely designed so that the entire area could be designed around an encounter with the prey, including movement behavior, patterns and interactions.

We arrived upon an open-linear level design, where areas were large enough to be explored, but still separated by levels. The player could still explore towns and areas they visited, but the story and gameplay followed a linear track.

In terms of replayability, the idea of multiple spirits, or new spirits inhabiting the previously explored towns had been suggested. This allowed us to ‘recycle’ content with completely new encounters, providing experiences without allocating large amounts of resources. It would also provide a reason to explore previous areas.