

Revealing Celtic and Norse Mythological Depths through Dragon Age's Tattoos and Narratives

Authors : Charles W. MacQuarrie, Rachel R. Tatro Duarte

Abstract : This paper explores the representation of medieval identity within the world of games such as Dragon Age, Elden Ring, Hellblade: Senua's sacrifice, fantasy role-playing games that draw effectively and problematically on Celtic and Norse mythologies. Focusing on tattoos, onomastics, and accent as visual and oral markers of status and ethnicity, this study analyzes how the game's interplay between mythology, character narratives, and visual storytelling enriches the themes and offers players an immersive, but sometimes baldly ahistorical, connection to ancient mythologies and contemporary digital storytelling. Dragon Age is a triple game series, Hellblade Senua's Sacrifice, and Elden Ring of gamers worldwide with its presentation of an idealized medieval world, inspired by the lore of Celtic and Norse mythologies. This paper sets out to explore the intricate relationships between tattoos, accent, and character narratives in the game, drawing parallels to themes, heroic figures and gods from Celtic and Norse mythologies. **Tattoos as Mythic and Ethnic Markers:** This study analyzes how tattoos in Dragon Age visually represent mythological elements from both Celtic and Norse cultures, serving as conduits of cultural identity and narratives. The nature of these tattoos reflects the slave, criminal, warrior associations made in classical and medieval literature, and some of the episodes concerning tattoos in the games have either close analogs or sources in literature. For example the elvish character Solas, in Dragon Age Inquisition, removes a slave tattoo from the face of a lower status elf in an episode that is reminiscent of Bridget removing the stigmata from Connallus in the Vita Prima of Saint Bridget. **Character Narratives:** The paper examines how characters' personal narratives in the game parallel the archetypal journeys of Celtic heroes and Norse gods, with a focus on their relationships to mythic themes. In these games the Elves usually have Welsh or Irish accents, are close to nature, magically powerful, oppressed by apparently Anglo-Saxon humans and Norse dwarves, and these elves wear facial tattoos. The Welsh voices of fairies and demons is older than the reference in Shakespeare's Merry Wives of Windsor or even the Anglo-Saxon Life of Saint Guthlac. The English speaking world, and the fantasy genre of literature and gaming, undoubtedly driven by Tolkien, see Elves as Welsh speakers, and as having Welsh accents when speaking English. **Comparative Analysis:** A comparative approach is employed to reveal connections, adaptations, and unique interpretations of the motifs of tattoos and narrative themes in Dragon Age, compared to those found in Celtic and Norse mythologies. **Methodology:** The study uses a comparative approach to examine the similarities and distinctions between Celtic and Norse mythologies and their counterparts in video games. The analysis encompasses character studies, narrative exploration, visual symbolism, and the historical context of Celtic and Norse cultures. **Mythic Visuals:** This study showcases how tattoos, as visual symbols, encapsulate mythic narratives, beliefs, and cultural identity, echoing Celtic and Norse visual motifs. **Archetypal Journeys:** The paper analyzes how character arcs mirror the heroic journeys of Celtic and Norse mythological figures, allowing players to engage with mythic narratives on a personal level. **Cultural Interplay:** The study discusses how the game's portrayal of tattoos and narratives both preserves and reinterprets elements from Celtic and Norse mythologies, fostering a connection between ancient cultures and modern digital storytelling. **Conclusion:** By exploring the interconnectedness of tattoos and character narratives in Dragon Age, this paper reveals the game series' ability to act as a bridge between ancient mythologies and contemporary gaming. By drawing inspiration from Celtic heroes and Norse gods and translating them into digital narratives and visual motifs, Dragon Age offers players a multi-dimensional engagement with mythic themes and a unique lens through which to appreciate the enduring allure of these cultures.

Keywords : comparative analysis, character narratives, video games and literature, tattoos, immersive storytelling, character development, mythological influences, Celtic mythology, Norse mythology

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