How does the character’s visual design help convey the character’s background in Genshin Impact?
Abstract

This study examines the relationship between the visual design of characters in the video game Genshin Impact and their character background. The study uses formal analysis and data collected on selected characters’ color choices, shapes, movements, facial expressions, and backstories to analyze if the characters’ visual designs align with their narratives. This research is relevant to game designers, players, and game research scholars. Game designers can use the insights gained from this study to create more immersive characters that organically convey their backstories. The findings suggest that visual design plays a critical role in conveying character context and personality in the game. The characters of the sample showed a strong visual appearance, effectively conveying their background story and personality characteristics. The findings of this study confirm that the character design in Genshin Impact effectively conveys the character’s background. The analysis revealed notable strengths in employing a skillful combination of color, shapes, movements, and facial expressions to evoke specific emotions, accentuate character traits, and enhance the storytelling experience. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of carefully considering and refining visual design choices to align with the intended narrative and engage players effectively. Future research could explore other aspects of visual design and its impact on video game character development.

Keywords: video games, character design, visual elements, character background, Genshin Impact
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How does the character’s visual design help convey the character’s background in

Genshin Impact?

Outstanding character design in video games can generate interest and make a lasting impression. The visual aesthetics of characters play an essential role in conveying their backstory and personality to the players (Chapple, 2022). Genshin Impact is a character-driven game released in 2021 and has since been the third highest-grossing mobile game in the world (Chapple, 2022). By February 2023, the game had opened up four regions in the game with over 70 playable characters installed, each providing rich storyline quests, extensive voice acting, and plot text that allows players to explore the backgrounds and personalities of these characters (Vaz, 2023). The authors believe the game’s approach to character backgrounds is worth studying.

This thesis explores the relationship between the character visual design of Genshin Impact and the backstories of these characters. Using formal analysis as a method and guided by theoretical frameworks of character design theory in games and nonverbal communication, this study analyzed the character visual design elements of the game Genshin Impact to explore how the visual design of the characters helps to communicate the background of the characters in Genshin Impact. It seeks to answer the research question How does the character’s visual design help convey the character’s background in Genshin Impact?

The findings of this study illuminate how Genshin Impact effectively employs character design elements to convey backstory. This research provides valuable insights not only for game and visual designers but also for researchers. For designers, the research provides a practical reference on how visual design elements can be effectively combined to convey a character’s backstory and enhance the portrayal of the character. It emphasizes the essential role that color, shape and non-verbal communication play in character design and storytelling in games. For researchers in the fields of game studies, visual communication,
and digital media, the research expands the understanding of character design in games by offering a methodology for analyzing visual design elements in relation to character backstory. Furthermore, it contributes to the growing knowledge surrounding visual narrative techniques in digital games, providing a foundation for future research.

However, it is crucial to recognize certain limitations within this study. Firstly, the research predominantly centers on color, shape, and nonverbal communication, neglecting other significant visual design elements such as fashion design and patterns that can equally contribute to portraying a character’s background. Secondly, the analysis is confined by the restricted sample size imposed by time constraints, consequently narrowing the study’s scope and ability to accurately represent all game characters. Moreover, the researchers’ prior knowledge of the character backgrounds may introduce potential bias, as their preconceived notions could influence the interpretation of the visual elements.
2 Background

In the following background section, the study addresses the research question: How does the character’s visual design help convey the character’s background in Genshin Impact? This section provides an overview of character design in video games, visual design for characters, and nonverbal communication, laying the foundation for the subsequent analysis and discussion. A summary of the analyzed game is also provided.

2.1 Character Design in Video Games

As video games have evolved, game designers have expanded their focus beyond game design mechanics. Recognizing that video games encompass a blend of visual, sound, and textual elements, many game designers and scholars have turned their attention toward crafting compelling narratives within games. Jenkins (2003) asserts that game designers should approach their work as “narrative architecture.” Aarseth (2012) argues for interpreting games as a narrative art form, proposing a four-dimensional model encompassing worlds, objects, agents, and events, with agency referring to intricately developed and multi-dimensional characters. Consequently, characters play a pivotal role in shaping the game narrative (Aarseth, 2012).

According to Sheldon (2004), characters play a vital role in captivating players within the game world and fostering a sense of connection and investment in the narrative, making them a central component of any compelling story. Additionally, Freeman (2005) emphasizes the importance of creating characters that players can relate to, as this elicits emotions that contribute to a more engaging and immersive gaming experience. Freeman proposes the Character Diamond framework, which comprehensively analyzes and develops complex and multidimensional characters. The Character Diamond consists of traits that shape how a character perceives the world, thinks, communicates, and behaves (Freeman, 2005). When
adding personality traits to a character, Freeman suggests considering the following dimensions, aligning with the overall objective of enhancing the game narrative.

Motivation: What drives a character forward, such as goals and aspirations. It is derived from past experiences, personality, and relationships with other characters.

Morality: The character’s moral values and principles.

Ability: The character’s skills and expertise.

Social Competence: The character’s social skills and relationships with others.

Quirks/Flaws: The character’s imperfect or flawed traits

Mask: Some characters may have a “mask,” using a personality to hide their true personality; for example, the trait of aggression is used to hide fear.

The amount of character-related text in Genshin Impact is enormous, so this framework was used for analysis in order to analyze and present the character’s backstory.

2.2 Visual Design for Characters

To create a genuinely engaging and immersive experience, designers must consider the character’s backstories, such as past experiences and relationships. The character’s backstory should inform their visual design and animation to create a resonant and immersive character. All character designers must deeply understand the visual design principles of line, shape, outline, color, and composition. This allows designers to create consistent proportions, using a coherent color palette, and ensure the characters’ visual design is consistent with their backstory and personality (Sloan, 2017)

2.2.1 Shape

Lines and silhouette shapes can convey different emotions and personalities, such as sharp lines and shapes for aggressive characters and softer lines and shapes for more approachable characters. Simplifying complex visual elements into basic elements is an important process of perception and cognition (Sloan, 2017). According to Sloan, the three
basic “primary shapes” are the circle, triangle, and square (Figure 1), and each has applications and connotations.

**Figure 1**

_Circle, Triangle, Square_

- **Circle:** often associated with positivity, youthful energy, elegance, unity, balance, nature, and conservation (Sloan, 2017). In particular, circles and curved lines have historically conveyed femininity (Solarski, 2012).
- **Triangle:** can convey both a sense of energy and temperament. Energy can be associated with concepts such as vitality, movement, and speed, while temperament refers to the implied human characteristics that can be projected onto the triangle (Sloan, 2017). Typically, triangles suggest notions of aggression and threat (Solarski, 2012).
- **Square:** besides connoting ideas such as strength and stability, it can be associated with masculinity, security, orthodoxy, rationality, and purity (Sloan, 2017). Traditionally square or angular lines have been used to communicate masculinity (Solarski, 2012).

### 2.2.2 Color

Hue, saturation, and value are the main color attributes that enable us to distinguish between different colors. Hue is the primary characteristic of color. The phase of color according to wavelength is the most accurate criterion for distinguishing between different colors. Saturation is the purity and intensity of a color. The higher the saturation of color leads
to more vivid colors. The lower saturation of a color, the closer it is to pure gray. Value refers to the relative lightness or darkness of a color (Kirvan, 2022).

According to Sloan (2017), when analyzing and creating characters, the following essential components of color need to be examined (Figure 2):

**Figure 2**

*Hue, Value, Saturation*

- **Hue** (Figure 2A): Associated with the character’s connotation when analyzing the character’s appearance. Hue is divided into warm and cool colors, with warm colors usually associated with passion, optimism, and excitement, and cool colors usually associated with calmness, objectivity, and comfort.

- **Value** (Figure 2B): Relates to its brightness or the amount of light it reflects. High-brightness colors can create young, playful characters, and low values can create more calm, serene characters.

- **Saturation** (Figure 2C): Color saturation is the purity of a color. Highly saturated colors can be used to exaggerate or enhance the connotation of a hue. Low saturation tones can make characters appear more subtle, distant, thoughtful, and complex (Sloan, 2017).

Complementary colors are colors that are 120° to 180° in hue (Figure 2D), the most contrasting and sensually stimulating color combinations, such as red and green. It is often used by people to express things of great contrast and to express the purpose of using to
highlight the other. On the other hand, adjacent colors are the colors about 15° on the hue ring with very little color difference (Figure 2D), such as orange and yellow. It gives a simple, stable, and gentle feeling and can keep the picture unified. The combination of these colors creates a sense of harmony and unity, making the character design look more balanced and cohesive (Voronova, 2023).

Von Goethe (1840) posited that the physical properties of light influenced color perception, the physiology of the eye, and the impact of color on the human psyche. The author highlights that color perception is also influenced by the emotional and psychological state of the observer, with different colors evoking varying effects on emotions and psychology. Consequently, the author proposes the study of color psychology. In visual design, color psychology holds significant importance as it directly influences how the audience perceives and engages with characters and visual elements. By leveraging color psychology, designers can create characters that deeply resonate with the audience, eliciting specific feelings and reactions that align with the character’s personality traits and story. Hence, color psychology assumes a vital role in the visual design process, and comprehending its principles is fundamental for crafting captivating characters and visuals that leave a deep impression on the audience (Jonauskaite et al., 2020). However, it is crucial to note that visual design principles are not immutable and can be adapted to specific contexts or deviate from conventional norms (Sloan, 2017).

2.3 Nonverbal communication

As Meretzky (2001) suggests, humans are instinctively wired to react to other human or humanoid characters; therefore, well-developed characters can have a lasting and positive impact on players. To achieve this effect, Meretzky recommends that game designers present characters to the player realistically and naturally, emphasizing their actions and reactions. In “The Illusion of Life: Disney Animation,” Thomas and Johnston discuss Disney’s principles
for developing animated characters, suggesting that visual design is an important expression of character and story. A character’s shape, costume, movement, expression, and other visual elements should be consistent with the character’s personality. Thomas and Johnston state: “...a cartoon character only lived when the whole drawing, as well as all the parts, reflected the attitude, the personality, the acting, and the feeling of the character” (Thomas & Johnston, 1981, p. 110).

Non-verbal communication encompasses producing and interpreting signals aimed at conveying information to others, excluding verbal expression. It encompasses a range of methods for conveying information, including facial expressions, gaze, gestures, body posture, and overall body language (Segal et al., 2023). Isbister (2022) emphasizes the significance of psychological research as a valuable resource for character designers, offering design guidelines for leveraging non-verbal communication in visual design within gaming. By effectively utilizing non-verbal communication techniques, game designers can convey emotions and enrich a character’s personality, thus enhancing the overall depth of the character within the game (Isbister, 2022).

2.3.1 Posture

Isbister (2022) explores how people assess the personality of others from their face, body, and voice. US-based research suggests that different stances can reflect a character’s agreeableness and dominance. For example, the open and relaxed stance suggests the character is friendly, while the closed stance is aloof. Dominant characters tend to adopt a clear stance, take up more space and move less, while submissive characters may touch their hair and face often and occasionally look down (DePaulo & Friedman, 1989).

2.3.2 Movement

When planning how a character moves, designers should consider the information that these movements will convey to the player’s character and evoke the experience that the
player has. Use appropriate movement to reflect the character’s personality and mood (Isbister, 2022).

The style of nonverbal behaviors provides valuable insights into individual differences (Gallaher, 1992). Gallaher’s (1992) research assessed expressive movements through four dimensions: expressiveness, animation, expansiveness, and coordination. Expressiveness refers to the degree to which an individual’s nonverbal behavior conveys emotions or thoughts, for example, using large amounts of energy and variety in expressions and gestures when talking to others. Animation describes the movement and energy level in an individual’s nonverbal behavior. Movements, such as bouncy walking and quick reaction, represent a high animation level. Expansiveness refers to how an individual occupies and controls space through nonverbal behavior. Lastly, coordination refers to smooth and graceful movements.

Gallaher’s study revealed a significant correlation between movement style and personal qualities. Specifically, individuals with extroverted and social tendencies showed more expressiveness and animation, individuals who are confident and dominant are more expansive, and individuals characterized by introversion and habitual fear showed less expansive movements and less animation. In addition, consistent with gender differences, females typically scored higher in expressiveness, while males scored higher in expansiveness.

Laban (1974) introduced a motion analysis system encompassing four key components: space, weight, time, and flow. Space pertains to the spatial dimensions of movement, encompassing factors like direction and distance. The weight corresponds to the force or energy needed for movement, including the level of muscle tension. Time refers to the rhythm and tempo of the movement, encompassing elements such as speed and duration. Lastly, flow describes the degree of continuity or interruption in movement, encompassing
attributes like smoothness or erratic motion. This comprehensive framework allows for a thorough examination and understanding of various aspects of movement (Laban, 1974).

In a study on Laban signatures of emotionally driven movement, the clustering of emotional movements into different effort characteristics revealed the following emotional clusters: the first group included excitement, anger, surprise, and fear, all characterized by flexible, fluid, and rapid movements. The second group includes sullenness, surprised interest, pride, and satisfaction, all characterized by direct, brisk, restricted, and sustained movements. Finally, the third group includes sadness and love, characterized by sustained, fluid, brisk, and direct movements (Fagerberg et al., 2003).

Gallaher and Laban’s dimensions provide a framework to guide designers in creating a character’s movement style, which is valuable when making decisions about animation details. By considering a character’s underlying emotions, overall personality, and physical attributes, designers can effectively use a character’s movements to communicate their backstory and enhance their image (Isbister, 2022).

2.3.3 Facial expressions

Facial expressions are an essential and direct form of communication for humans to convey their emotions, intentions, and opinions to others. In addition to conveying emotional states, facial expressions also convey cognitive states, including interest, boredom, confusion, and stress, as well as providing conversational cues related to linguistic focus and syntax (Frank et al., 1993). As the graphical capabilities and processing power of computers have evolved and artists can create more visible and subtle facial expressions, the facial expressions of game characters have become increasingly important. According to Isbister (2022), visual designers should give the character’s face the right amount of mobility, for example, using gaze to convey the character’s social message.
Ekman identifies seven universal emotions and their corresponding facial expressions. These emotions are happiness, sadness, anger, fear, surprise, disgust, and contempt. Each emotion is associated with a different facial feature (Table 1) recognized in different cultures (Ekman, 2003).

**Table 1**

*Information about the Seven Universal Emotions and Facial Expressions (Ekman, 2003)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotions</th>
<th>Facial Expressions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td>The corners of the mouth curve upwards. A genuine smile includes the involvement of the eyes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sadness</td>
<td>Drooping expression. Mouth drooping, the gaze facing inwards or downwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>Narrowed eyebrows, flared nostrils, tight lips, an intense and focused gaze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>Widened eyes, raised eyebrows, an open mouth, eyebrows raised and drawn together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surprise</td>
<td>Widened eyes, raised eyebrows, and a slightly open mouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disgust</td>
<td>Wrinkled nose, narrowed eyes, and upturned lips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contempt</td>
<td>Asymmetrical emotion. Unilateral curled lips or a sneer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Moreover, Hooks (2017) suggests that game developers prioritize their characters’ eyes. According to Hooks, since humans make eye contact in real life, designers should pay more attention to the eyes of characters in video games to enhance players’ emotional engagement. In addition, the direction of the eyes - up, down, left, right - carries different meanings. Based on neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) studies, most people make visual associations when their eyes go up. When listening, the line of sight moves horizontally; when it moves downward, it engages in an inner dialogue (Hooks, 2017).

In addition to facial expressions, a combination of other non-verbal communication cues, such as body language and tone of voice, are important indicators for identifying emotions (Ekman, 2003). According to research comparing the non-verbal communication performance of feeling embarrassed and feeling happy, embarrassed participants showed
more control over their smiles, such as pressing their lips. On the other hand, happy
participants were more likely to smile and showed less smile control. In addition to facial
expressions, embarrassed people tended to turn their heads away from the camera and showed
more rapid and frequent downward gaze movements. In contrast, those who were happy
showed less frequent behavior. In addition, embarrassed participants touched their faces and
hair more frequently (Keltner, 2005).

2.4 Genshin Impact

Genshin Impact is a role-playing action game developed and published by miHoYo, a
Chinese video game development company. In September 2020, miHoYo released Genshin
Impact on multiple platforms, including PlayStation 4, Nintendo Switch, PC, iOS, and
Android.

In Genshin Impact, players take the role of a traveler who can freely explore seven
diverse regions within the game’s world. Each region showcases unique architectural styles
and environmental features, providing an immersive experience. Players can control any of
the four interchangeable characters in their party during gameplay, swiftly switching between
them in battles. This feature allows for the utilization of various skill and attack combinations.
Character design in Genshin Impact is influenced by the anime aesthetic, featuring
exaggerated features and vibrant attire. Each character possesses a distinct design,
accompanied by a unique backstory and personality, contributing to the game’s diverse cast
(Yaden, 2021). The game is also known for its stunning visual design, which includes vibrant
landscapes, character designs, and animations with distinctive personalities. The game’s art
style draws inspiration from anime and blends Eastern and Western aesthetics (Genshin
Impact, n.d.).

Teyvat, the fictional world in Genshin Impact, comprises seven nations with distinct
cultures and elemental powers known as Visions. These Visions represent a person’s identity
and power in Teyvat and are bestowed upon individuals chosen by the ruling Archons (Table 2). Possessors of Visions can harness their elemental abilities to execute potent attacks and manipulate them strategically (miHoYo, 2020).

**Table 2**

*Information about the Seven Regions and Archons in Genshin Impact*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regions</th>
<th>Mondstadt</th>
<th>Liyue</th>
<th>Inazuma</th>
<th>Sumeru</th>
<th>Fontaine</th>
<th>Natlan</th>
<th>Snezhnaya</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goetic Name</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbatos</td>
<td>Morax</td>
<td>Beelzebu</td>
<td>Buer</td>
<td>Focalors</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Element of Archon</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anemo (Wind)</td>
<td>Geo (Earth)</td>
<td>Electro (Electricity)</td>
<td>Dendro (Grass)</td>
<td>Hydro (Water)</td>
<td>Pyro (Fire)</td>
<td>Cryo (Ice)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Divine Ideal</strong></td>
<td>Freedom</td>
<td>Contracts</td>
<td>Eternity</td>
<td>Wisdom</td>
<td>Justice</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


3 Methodology

Formal analysis is useful for analyzing and understanding various aspects of visual art. According to Lankoski and Björk (2015), one way to examine specific artistic elements and their relationships in a structured and objective manner is through formal analysis. This approach can also identify visual characteristics shared among multiple objects, as Munsterberg (2009) noted.

Therefore, formal analysis helps answer the research question, “How does the character’s visual design help convey the character’s background in Genshin Impact?” can be clarified by investigating how the game utilizes visual elements to convey a character’s background story, personality, and abilities. While formal analysis provides valuable insights into visual design, it also has limitations. Formal analysis relies on the interpretation of the observer, introduces subjectivity and potentially makes it difficult to accurately represent and explain the subtle aspects of a character. Besides, it does not take into account how different audiences would perceive the visual design. Therefore these limitations must be taken into account, recognising that formal analysis provides a single perspective on character design.

The study analyzed four of Genshin Impact’s playable characters, using a purposeful sampling strategy based on the length of the relevant storyline of characters, ensuring that the sample was diverse in terms of gender, personality traits, and being from different regions (Table 3). The analyzed characters are Zhongli, Tartaglia, Yoimiya, and Fischl (Figure 3).

Table 3

Information about the Sample Characters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Zhongli</th>
<th>Tartaglia</th>
<th>Yoimiya</th>
<th>Fischl</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>Liyue</td>
<td>Snezhnaya</td>
<td>Inazuma</td>
<td>Mondstadt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Released Date</td>
<td>01-12-2020</td>
<td>11-11-2020</td>
<td>10-08-2021</td>
<td>28-09-2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 3

The characters analyzed in this study are A) Zhongli, B) Tartaglia, C) Yoimiya, and D) Fischl (Character Archive - Genshin Impact, 2023)

Data for this study were obtained through various methods, including in-game observations, screenshots, and official character artworks and backstories. During in-game observation, the analyzed characters were observed in the game environment, focusing on visual elements of their bodies, clothing, and accessories, including color and shape, as well as idle animations such as standing poses, body movements, and facial expressions. Screenshots of sampled characters were taken from selected angles, perspectives, and specific animation frames for documentation purposes. Official character artwork reflecting the initial visual design of the characters was also used to supplement in-game observations and screenshots. Character backstories are collected from in-game content, including character profiles, quest dialogue, voice lines, item descriptions, readable material, and time-limited storyline videos.

The data analysis involved three steps. First, the authors performed a visual analysis of the characters with a focus on the following:

- **Shape**: Analysis of the shape and form of the character’s body, clothing, and accessories, hairstyles according to shape theory in visual design. For this, each
character is analyzed based on their front, side, and back views and uses a greyscale image to focus on the shapes only.

- **Color:** Estimate color percentages through observation and apply color theory to analyze the character’s palette, individually considering hue, value, and saturation.

- **Posture:** Analysis of the character’s posture when the character is in an idle animation. Use the principles of nonverbal communication to analyze what emotions and personalities these postures convey about the characters.

- **Movement:** Analysis of the character’s movements when the character is in an idle animation. Use the principles of nonverbal communication to analyze what emotions and personalities these movements convey about the characters.

- **Facial expressions:** Analyze the character’s eyes, mouth, and whether the face is obscured when the character is in an idle animation. Use the principles of nonverbal communication to analyze what emotions and personalities these facial expressions convey about the characters.

In order to facilitate the analysis among the authors, the task was partitioned. One author analyzed the work’s aspects of color and shape, while the other examined animations and facial expressions. After completing the initial analysis, the authors shared their findings and discussed how their respective focus areas interacted.

The second step analyzed the character backstories according to Freeman’s character diamond framework. This resulted in a description of the characters based on these dimensions: Motivation, Ability, Morality, Social Competence, Flaws, and Mask.

Finally, the analysis of the visual representation of the characters, their character diamond framework, and the game’s description of their character’s backstories were compared to understand how and if they align.
A potential bias should be considered, as the authors have extensive experience playing Genshin Impact and have backgrounds as game design students. This prior knowledge may have influenced their interpretation and analysis of the character’s visual design and backstory. Additionally, due to the time limitations of this thesis, only four characters were analyzed. It is important to note that a limited sample might not accurately reflect more than 70 game characters. Therefore, the findings and conclusions from this study should be considered in the context of these limitations.
4 Results and Discussion

This section presents an analysis of the visual design elements of the sample characters Zhongli, Tartaglia, Yoimiya, and Fischl (Figure 3). This is followed by analyzing their backstories according to Freeman’s character diamond framework and presented sequentially for each character.

To facilitate the visual analysis, geometric forms were color-coded to aid clarity. Specifically, triangles were marked in red, straight lines in green, curves in purple, and rectangles and diamonds in blue. Additionally, a pie chart was used to display the color proportions in character designs. Keyframe screenshots and animation lines were also included in Appendix A to capture the movement and expressions of the characters.

This section finishes with a comparative reflection of the findings between the characters to identify consistencies and inconsistencies in how the game Genshin Impact visually communicates a character’s background story, personality, and abilities.

4.1 Zhongli

In this section, Zhongli’s shape, color, posture, movements, and facial expressions will be analyzed, and a comparison will be made between his visual representation and his background story.

4.1.1 Zhongli’s Shape

The character design of Zhongli is a combination of rigid and soft shapes and coexistence in harmony. From the overall silhouette, Zhong Li is rectangular in shape (Figure 4). Typically, squares and rectangles are perceived as the most robust and stable shapes, according to Sloan (2017), implying concepts such as strength and stability. Therefore, Zhongli conveys a sense of rationality, security, orthodoxy, and masculinity.

The body is accentuated by a recurring quadrilateral shape in various areas, marked in blue in Figure 4. The upper torso of Zhongli is a quadrilateral, creating rhythm and repetition
in response to the small rhombic elements ubiquitous on his body. On the back, the most prominent feature is the large rhombus patch design, and it is connected by a soft curved line that neutralizes many square and straight lines.

**Figure 4**

*Zhongli’s Shape Analysis*

In addition, the character’s body has several intriguing small elements. While the overall design of the dress is formal and symmetrical, there are many asymmetries in the smaller details. Research has shown that symmetries are often considered beautiful and harmonious; however, they can appear too stable and overly balanced, resulting in a lack of interest. Asymmetry creates more complex relationships between elements with more freedom of expression. Therefore it is often more interesting than symmetry and can be used to catch the eye (Bradley, 2017).
4.1.2 Zhongli’s Color Scheme

The color scheme of Zhong Li primarily consists of low-value and low-saturation dark brown and black, with high-value and high-saturation gold and orange serving as accents (Figure 5). This combination of light and dark contrasts and color purity can express a wide range of emotions. According to Sloan (2017), adjacent colors such as orange and yellow are weak contrasts. Weak contrast adjacent hues convey a soft, harmonious, elegant, and peaceful feel. However, they may produce a monotonous, fuzzy, dull impression. In Zhong Li’s design, light and dark contrasts of the same color scheme, such as brown and orange, determine whether the color scheme feels bright, clear, dull, soft, or strong (Sloan, 2017). In Zhong Li’s color scheme, the golden dragon scale pattern at the end of the tunic and the color of the inside lining contrasted with the brown base, presenting a regular and serious appearance. Zhong Li’s color scheme gives a gentle, calm, white, and serious look.

Figure 5

Zhongli’s Color Analysis

Note. The color wheel highlights the primary, secondary, and accent colors and the proportions in which they are represented in the character’s visual design.
4.1.3 Zhongli’s Standing Posture

Zhongli’s standing posture conveys his character of maintaining a balance between openness and restraint. In Standing Posture 1 (Figure 6A), his hands hang naturally at his sides, his legs are slightly spread out, shoulder-width apart, and his feet are facing outwards, displaying a relaxed and open stance (DePaulo & Friedman, 1989). His direct gaze, slightly raised eyebrows, and natural mouth expression suggest attentiveness and approachability, while the open stance and relaxed hands convey dominance and casualness.

Figure 6

Zhongli - Posture and Facial Expression

Note. A is standing posture 1, the character in the idle state. C zoomed in on the face from A. B is standing posture 2, the character in the Talents section in the game; this posture is frequently utilized during interaction with the player. D zooms in on the face from B.
In Standing Posture 2 (Figure 6B), Zhongli adopts a more closed stance with his arms crossed over his chest, a posture usually associated with defensive, self-protective, or self-soothing forms (DePaulo & Friedman, 1989). This change in posture can be interpreted as more defensive or closed-off, probably signifying self-assurance and authority.

4.1.4 Zhongli’s Movements and Facial Expressions

**Idle Animation 1.** Movement (Figure 16A): Zhongli raises and crosses his hands, wrapping them around his chest. Magic-condensed gems surround him, and his garment flutters slightly. After the gems rotate and disappear, he returns to standing with lowered hands. The crossed arms may signify self-protection or self-comfort, and the magical gems hint at his supernatural abilities and connection to a higher power. Facial Expressions (Figure 16C): During this animation, Zhongli’s slightly bowed head and closed eyes could signify introspection or concentration (Ekman, 2003).

**Idle Animation 2.** Movement (Figure 16B): Zhongli turns his body slightly to the right and tilts his head upwards while reciting his lines. He raises his left hand behind his back and curls his right forearm over his shoulder, with the back of his hand facing downwards, then slowly lowers it again. The deliberate and controlled movements (Gallaher, 1992) suggest a sense of elegance and refinement in his character. Facial Expressions (Figure 16D): As Zhongli gazes upwards while reciting his lines, his expression appears contemplative and introspective. His gaze is directed to the upper right, possibly suggesting visual association or reminiscence (Hooks, 2017). In connection with his voiceover text, it can be inferred that he is reminiscing about friends from his past.

Based on the analysis of Zhong Li’s standing posture and idle animations, his visual design effectively conveys a character with a calm, confident, dominant presence and a reflective and introspective nature associated with supernatural or mystical forces. His movements and expressions suggest an introspective personality with a rich personal history.
that may involve a longing for memories of the past. His measured, thoughtful movements convey a sense of calm and control, which may indicate an underlying personality trait or backstory.

4.1.5 Zhongli’s Character Analysis

Zhongli, the mortal vessel of the Geo Archon Morax, also known as Rex Lapis, has lived for over 6,000 years and witnessed numerous significant events in Teyvat’s history. Zhongli is a calm, reserved, and polite individual with a deep sense of nostalgia. Despite his stoic exterior, he has a sentimental side (Zhongli/Lore, 2023).

The following is the character diamond analysis of Zhongli, based on in-game textual data from the Genshin Impact Fandom Wiki (Zhongli/Lore, 2023).

Motivation: Zhongli is driven by his role as Morax, the Geo Archon, and Liyue’s ruler. His motivation is the effective governance of Liyue and ensuring the prosperity of his people. Additionally, Zhongli seeks to preserve the memory of his past and the friends he has made along the way, valuing the experiences they shared.

Ability: As a former god, Zhongli holds immense power and knowledge. Retaining significant strength and wisdom as a mortal, he excels in crafting and upholding contracts, and his extraordinary memory helps him remember every person and contract encountered.

Morality: Zhongli values contracts, laws, and traditions. Compassionate towards Liyue’s people, he offers help and guidance.

Social Competence: Zhongli communicates skillfully and navigates complex social situations. Sociable and knowledgeable, he enjoys sharing trivia with others. Boasting a vast network of friends, he engages in discussions easily.

Flaws: Zhongli’s lack of knowledge and management of the mora (the game’s currency) often leads him to financial ruin, despite his former status as a god of wealth.
Mask: Zhongli occasionally goes incognito as a mortal man, which can be seen as his “mask.” This could represent his desire to understand and relate to the people of Liyue better, or perhaps he uses it to conceal his divine status and responsibilities.

4.1.6 Zhongli’s Discussion

Zhongli’s backstory emphasizes his identity as Morax, the Geo Archon, and the ruler of Liyue, embodying qualities such as strength, stability, wisdom, and compassion. The character’s visual design effectively captures these characteristics through geometric shapes, color schemes, and postures that evoke a sense of power, stability, and elegance. For example, the rectangular and rhombic shapes prevalent in Zhongli’s design convey stability and masculinity, which align with his role as a ruler and protector.

Furthermore, the color palette utilized in Zhongli’s design complements his backstory. Combining low-value and low-saturation dark hues with high-value and high-saturation gold and orange accents projects a gentle, calm, fair, and serious demeanor. These qualities are consistent with Zhongli’s role as a compassionate leader who values fairness and order.

Zhongli’s standing postures and facial expressions also contribute to the visual representation’s coherence with the character’s backstory. The calm, confident, and stable demeanor conveyed by his posture and facial expressions reflects his authoritative and approachable nature, which aligns with his role as the Geo Archon and ruler of Liyue.

The idle animations provide insight into Zhongli’s character, with movements and facial expressions that evoke contemplation, introspection, elegance, and determination. These qualities are consistent with his role as a wise and compassionate leader who values the preservation of memory and the experiences he has shared with others.

We can identify potential inconsistencies by comparing Zhongli’s visual representation with his in-game backstory: The visual representation does not directly depict Zhongli’s strong sense of responsibility and contract adherence.
Despite these potential inconsistencies, Zhongli’s visual design effectively captures his wisdom, dignity, and elegance. While his visual representation may not directly address all aspects of his backstory, it still provides a coherent and engaging portrayal of his character that aligns with his in-game narrative in many ways.

4.2 Tartaglia

In this section, Tartaglia’s shape, color, posture, movements, and facial expressions will be analyzed, and a comparison will be made between his visual representation and his background story.

4.2.1 Tartaglia’s Shape

Tartaglia is triangular concerning his overall outline (Figure 7). Tartaglia’s body accessories are also mostly triangular and diamond-shaped. Triangles can offer different interpretations, depending on their purpose. Triangles pointing to the sky can convey stability, rest, and strength, while triangles pointing to the ground indicate unstable balance, instability, and tension. The human traits implied by triangles are often notions of aggression, hostility, cunning, passion, and sexuality (Sloan, 2017).

The visual design of Tartaglia focuses on the upper body and is full of asymmetry. The scarf secured with a diamond-shaped decoration on the right shoulder is thrown backward from the left. Tartaglia’s scarf creates an inverted triangle shape when he is stationary. However, as he moves, the scarf assumes a curved shape (Figure 8), creating an intriguing visual contrast between the static and dynamic states of the character’s design. Additionally, the scarf’s shape integrates a blend of triangles and curves, further enhancing the design’s visual appeal. The metal shoulder armor on the left side is seen as a triangle from the front and a diamond shape on the side. The jacket separates from the right breast and is divided into two layers, forming multiple triangles. Turning to the back, the scarf is separated into two pieces, with the lower end decorated with triangular accessories. The decoration of the scarf
that is fixed in the front is connected to the back by a curved line that neutralizes many triangles in the whole.

**Figure 7**

*Tartaglia’s Shape Analysis*

These traits show that Tartaglia’s visual design is carefully crafted to convey specific character and personality traits. Using triangular and diamond-shaped body accessories suggests that Tartaglia may possess aggressive and passionate qualities. Additionally, the placement of the triangles, whether pointing upwards or downwards, further emphasizes his character’s stance and attitude toward the world.

**4.2.2 Tartaglia’s Color Scheme**

Tartaglia’s primary colors are black, gray, and white, decorated with red and orange as secondary colors to create a visual counterpoint that directs the player’s Vision to his upper body (Figure 8). Gray is the conformist color that can make the character appear more subtle, distant, thoughtful, and complex (Sloan, 2017). Red and orange are warm colors, red
potentially means passion, energy, danger, and anger, and orange is enthusiasm, joy, and warmth (Sloan, 2017). His eyes and Vision are blue, a highlight color complementary to the warm color of his hair and scarf.

Figure 8

*Tartaglia’s Color Analysis*

*Note.* The color wheel highlights the primary, secondary, and accent colors and the proportions in which they are represented in the character’s visual design.

Tartaglia’s color scheme gives a sense of complexity and versatility. The predominant use of black, gray and white creates a sense of sophistication and elegance, while red and orange add a touch of vibrancy and energy to his visual design. The use of gray as a base color reflects Tartaglia’s introspective and reflective personality. In contrast, the warm colors of red and orange provide a visual contrast that draws attention to his upper body, highlighting his strength and passion. The blues of his eyes and Vision complement his warm hair and scarf, further emphasizing the complexity and depth of the character.
4.2.3 Tartaglia’s Standing Posture

Standing Posture 1 (Figure 9A), with feet slightly open and hands hanging naturally at the sides, suggests a relaxed and open demeanor (DePaulo & Friedman, 1989). His straight-ahead gaze and natural mouth expression convey a neutral or calm emotional state. In Standing Posture 2 (Figure 9B), his left hand at the waist conveys a slightly assertive attitude, suggesting confidence or preparation (DePaulo & Friedman, 1989).

Figure 9

Tartaglia - Posture and Facial Expression:

Note. A is standing posture 1, the character in the idle state. C zoomed in on the face from A. B is standing posture 2, the character in the Talents section in the game; this posture is frequently utilized during interaction with the player. D zooms in on the face from B.

4.2.4 Tartaglia’s Movements and Facial Expressions

Idle Animation 1. Movement (Figure 17): By coalescing weapons with water magic and playing with the weapon, Tartaglia displays a potential combat character or fighting ability. Combined with quick, decisive movements, it suggests high agility and readiness fight
The expansive of his movements (Gallaher, 1992), with large, fluid, and rapid hand movements, suggests an outgoing and energetic personality (Fagerberg et al., 2003). Facial expressions (Figure 18): Tartaglia’s facial expression is between concentration and satisfaction in this animation. As he moves his right hand from right to left to coalesce the magical weapon, the closed eyes may show concentration and control of his abilities. He smiles as he looks at his bow, indicating satisfaction or enjoyment of the weapon or his skill (Ekman & Friesen, 2003). Finally, closing his eyes as he puts the bow down may suggest a sense of completion or satisfaction.

**Idle Animation 2.** Movement (Figure 19): The rapid body rotation and shawl dynamics emphasize his energy and agility (Laban, 1974). The outstretched arm movements and spread legs reflect expansive, constant high-energy movements that may suggest an outgoing and active personality (Gallaher, 1992). Facial expressions (Figure 20): Tartaglia rarely faces the camera in this animation. Commencing with a lowered head and his left hand on the face, the character pivots his body towards the left. As he executes this motion, his expression remains hidden, with the swaying of his shawl in the back further heightening his mystery. As the camera pans to the front of his face, his countenance unveils a blend of lowered head and upward gaze, accompanied by a smile. This facial expression potentially conveys a unique combination of self-assurance and a mischievous or flamboyant demeanor (Ekman & Friesen, 1969).

4.2.5 Tartaglia’s Character Analysis

Tartaglia, also known as Childe, is a young, charismatic, and ambitious member of the Fatui Harbingers, a powerful organization based in Snezhnaya. Despite his youthful appearance, he is a deadly and skilled fighter, particularly adept at creating chaos on the battlefield. His personality is unpredictable, shifting from warm and friendly to ruthless and cool. Despite his battle-hungry nature, Tartaglia is a man of his word and a loyal servant to
the Tsaritsa, the Cryo Archon of Snezhnaya. He is also devoted to his family, frequently sending them gifts and letters. Tartaglia’s dedication to his values and those he cares for is unwavering (Tartaglia/Lore, 2023).

The following is the character diamond analysis of Tartaglia, based on in-game textual data from the Genshin Impact Fandom Wiki (Tartaglia/Lore, 2023).

Motivation: Tartaglia’s driving force is his thirst for battle and desire to challenge himself. This stems from his traumatic experience in The Abyss. Tartaglia is motivated to prove himself in combat but remains loyal to the Tsaritsa and devoted to his family.

Abilities: Tartaglia possesses remarkable combat prowess, excelling in ranged and melee confrontations and showcasing his mastery in hydro-based combat. Furthermore, he demonstrates exceptional strategic acumen and tactical finesse, swiftly adjusting to evolving circumstances and devising efficient battle strategies.

Morality: Tartaglia’s moral compass is somewhat ambiguous. He is fiercely loyal to the Fatui and will do whatever it takes to accomplish his goals, even sacrificing innocent lives. However, he does have a sense of honor and fair play and is not above recognizing the strength of his opponents and acknowledging their skill.

Social Competence: Tartaglia is charming, charismatic, and skilled at navigating complex social situations.

Flaws: One of Tartaglia’s main flaws is his bloodlust and obsession with seeking out powerful opponents. His warrior-like attitude often overshadows his judgment and has the potential to lead to unnecessary conflict.

Mask: Tartaglia’s mask is his friendly, easy-going, and brotherly nature. He uses this to conceal his true intentions and his character’s ruthless, combative side.
4.2.6 Tartaglia’s Discussion

Tartaglia’s backstory portrays him as a young, charismatic, and ambitious member of the Fatui Harbingers, driven by a thirst for combat and challenge. His personality is depicted as unpredictable and complex, with a fierce loyalty to the Tsaritsa and devotion to his family.

The color scheme used in Tartaglia’s visual design aligns with his complex and multifaceted character. The primary use of black, gray, and white exudes sophistication and elegance, while the red and orange accents add vibrancy and energy. The gray base color represents Tartaglia’s introspective and thoughtful personality, and the warm accents draw attention to his strength and passion.

Tartaglia’s standing postures and facial expressions effectively capture his personality traits. The open and relaxed posture in Standing Pose 1 suggests a friendly and approachable demeanor. At the same time, the self-assured and action-ready stance in Standing Pose 2 conveys his confidence and combat prowess.

The idle animations further emphasize Tartaglia’s agility, grace, and depth of character. The fluid movements and facial expressions in Idle Animation 1 portray focus, concentration, enjoyment, and determination, highlighting his proficiency in combat and mastery of elemental skills. Idle Animation 2 showcases Tartaglia’s mysterious and enigmatic charm through swift turns and subtle facial expressions.

In summary, Tartaglia’s visual design effectively captures the essence of his character as described in the game’s backstory. The strategic use of color, posture, movement, and facial expressions conveys the character’s complexity, unpredictability, and depth, illustrating a coherent and consistent visual representation of Tartaglia concerning his narrative background.
4.3 Yoimiya

In this section, Yoimiya’s shape, color, posture, movements, and facial expressions will be analyzed, and a comparison will be made between her visual representation and her background story.

4.3.1 Yoimiya’s Shape

Yoimiya is primarily a character composed around a circle (Figure 10), a shape often associated with positive energy and youthful exuberance (Solarski, 2012). Circles convey ideas such as playfulness, childishness, energy, and innocence, making them a popular choice for representing characters that are more youthful, traditional, and simple (Sloan, 2017).

Figure 10

Yoimiya’s shape analysis

However, to emphasize Yoimiya’s strength, her clothes and accessories incorporate square shapes with curves. Additionally, her tied-up hair has a radial triangular shape that conveys energy, movement, and speed (Sloan, 2017). By incorporating these different shapes
into Yoimiya’s design, the visual consistency of the game’s characters is maintained while still allowing Yoimiya to stand out as a unique and dynamic character.

Using circles in Yoimiya’s designs creates a sense of playfulness and innocence, highlighting her youthful energy and vitality. However, her designs also incorporate squares, especially in her clothing and accessories, adding a touch of strength and sophistication that emphasizes her status as a skilled warrior. In addition, the bow element in her designs adds a touch of femininity to her character, balancing her strength with a hint of elegance. Her tied-up hair in radiating triangles further emphasizes her energy, speed, and movement, adding to her dynamic and engaging visual design. Interestingly, Yoimiya’s asymmetry - especially in her clothes and accessories - creates a sense of imbalance that adds depth and complexity to her character designs.

4.3.2 Yoimiya’s Color

Figure 11

*Yoimiya’s Color Analysis*

*Note.* The color wheel highlights the primary, secondary, and accent colors and the proportions in which they are represented in the character’s visual design.
In the colors, Yoimiya’s design uses large areas of red and orange, with white, black, and blue accents (Figure 11). According to Sloan (2017), red and orange are warm colors often associated with passion, energy, enthusiasm, and joy. These colors are highly saturated and eye-catching, making them particularly suitable for characters aimed at younger audiences. Additionally, blue is a cool color that forms a complementary contrast to orange, intensifying the brightness and vibrancy of the warm colors. Although the low saturation of blue on Yoimiya’s dress may not be immediately noticeable, it creates a subtle and pleasant contrast that adds a sense of balance to her visual design. Complementary colors are known for their high visibility and vibrancy, making Yoimiya’s warm tones particularly effective in capturing the viewer’s attention.

4.3.3 Yoimiya’s Standing Pose

In Standing Posture 1 (Figure 12A), Yoimiya’s legs are spread naturally, with her toes pointing inwards and her hands slightly raised at her sides. This posture appears approachable and relaxed, conveying a friendly and open demeanor (Isbister, 2022). She exhibits a sense of attentiveness and warmth with a natural expression and level gaze (Figure 12C).

In Standing Posture 2 (Figure 12B), Yoimiya shifts her weight slightly and places her hands on her hips while smiling and squinting her eyes (Figure 12D). This pose may indicate confidence, assurance, and a playful, lively personality (DePaulo & Friedman, 1993). The open-mouthed smile and narrowed eyes convey a happier or more entertaining feeling (Ekman & Friesen, 1969), suggesting a playful and relaxed personality and emphasizing her approachable and friendly nature.
Figure 12

*Yoimiya - Posture and Facial Expression:*

**A** is standing posture 1, the character in an idle state. **C** zoomed in on the face from **A**. **B** is standing posture 2, the character in the Talents section in the game; this posture is frequently utilized during interaction with the player. **D** zooms in on the face from **B**.

### 4.3.4 Yoimiya’s Movement and Facial Expression

**Idle Animation 1.** Movement (Figure 21): Yoimiya’s interaction with fireworks is shown in this animation. Her head and body weight are focused on the fireworks, showing her concentration. The sustained, swift movements of her hands as she waves the fireworks and her small steps as she spins around indicate her enjoyment and satisfaction with this activity (Fagerberg et al., 2003). Her expansive movements convey her extroverted personality (Gallaher, 1992). Facial Expressions (Figure 22): Her smile and narrowed eyes as she waved the fireworks indicated great enjoyment and delight in the event. Her mouth opened when the fireworks went off, followed by a closed-eyed, non-smiling expression, possibly indicating surprise and disappointment at the sudden events. The relaxed expression that immediately
followed indicated a relaxed and flexible attitude towards the surprise of the fireworks going off (Ekman, 2003).

**Idle Animation 2.** Movement (Figure 23): Yoimiya relaxes her left shoulder and stretches her body and arms, suggesting a habit of stretching and relaxation. These movements exhibit expressiveness, coordination (Gallaher, 1992), ease, and contentment. Facial Expressions (Figure 24): While relaxing the shoulders, the natural mouth and slightly closed upper eyelids convey a sense of calm and relaxation. In contrast, the open-mouthed smile and widened eyes at the end of the animation indicate a return to a happy, enthusiastic mood (Ekman, 2003).

Through the standing poses and idle animations, Yoimiya’s non-verbal communication effectively conveys a friendly, approachable, playful, and enthusiastic personality.

**4.3.5 Yoimiya’s Character Analysis**

Yoimiya hailed as the “Queen of Summer Celebrations,” is a skilled fireworks artisan from Inazuma. With strong bonds to her local community, she holds the esteemed title of “hero sister” to numerous children. Yoimiya’s profound affinity for fireworks fuels her belief in their ability to forge everlasting memories. As a passionate and compassionate individual, she cherishes the pursuit of happiness and delights in spreading joy to others through her captivating fireworks and imaginative creations (Yoimiya/Lore, 2023).

The following is the character diamond analysis of Yoimiya, based on in-game textual data from the Genshin Impact Fandom Wiki (Yoimiya/Lore, 2023).

**Motivation:** Yoimiya’s primary motivation is her passion for creating fireworks and intricate knickknacks that bring joy and happiness to others. She is driven by her love for her craft, her community, and her desire to protect the innocent wishes of children.
Ability: Yoimiya is highly skilled in crafting fireworks and intricate knickknacks. She has honed her expertise in handling fire, and the Pyro Vision granted her unique abilities related to fire manipulation.

Morality: Yoimiya embodies kindness and compassion, constantly prioritizing the welfare of those around her. She upholds honesty and integrity, remaining steadfastly true to her promises. Additionally, Yoimiya exhibits a resolute commitment to justice, ensuring fairness prevails in all her endeavors.

Social Competence: Yoimiya has excellent social skills and is able to make meaningful connections within her community effortlessly. She is eager for opportunities to engage with others and enjoys social interaction, and Yoimiya’s energetic and enthusiastic personality makes her a popular figure among her peers.

Flaws: Yoimiya is somewhat scatterbrained and easily distracted, often losing time while chatting or finding inspiration for her creations.

Mask: Yoimiya does not appear to wear a significant “mask,” as she seems genuinely content and happy in her pursuits and interactions.

4.3.6 Yoimiya’s Discussion

In terms of visual representation, Yoimiya’s design cleverly blends circles, squares, and radial triangles, resulting in a delightful portrayal that embodies playfulness, innocence, strength, and energy. The predominant color palette encompasses vibrant shades of red and orange, complemented by white, black, and blue accents. This thoughtful selection of colors elicits emotions of passion, vitality, enthusiasm, and sheer joy. Furthermore, the presence of red and orange resonates with her proficiency in fireworks, symbolizing the fiery essence and brilliance of her pyrotechnic skills.
Yoimiya’s standing poses and idle animations convey her friendly, approachable, playful, and enthusiastic personality. Her animations’ expressive and animated movements also highlight her curiosity, excitement, relaxation, and enjoyment.

Upon comparing Yoimiya’s visual representation with her in-game backstory, we can identify the following potential inconsistencies:

1. While Yoimiya’s visual design effectively captures her passion for fireworks, it may not directly illustrate her expertise in creating intricate knickknacks.
2. The visual representation does not explicitly depict Yoimiya’s strong connection to the local community and her caring nature towards children.

Despite these potential inconsistencies, Yoimiya’s visual design effectively captures her youthful energy, vitality, caring personality, and friendly and approachable nature. While her visual representation may not directly address all aspects of her backstory, it still provides a coherent and engaging portrayal of her character that aligns with her in-game narrative in many ways.

4.4 Fischl

In this section, Fischl’s shape, color, posture, movements, and facial expressions will be analyzed, and a comparison will be made between her visual representation and her background story.

4.4.1 Fischl’s Shape

Fischl’s overall appearance is rhombic, consisting of multiple triangles and arcs (Figure 13). According to Sloan (2017), when two triangles form a quadrilateral with acute angles, the connotations associated with squares, such as security, rationality, and purity, are diminished. In contrast, the overall connotations of the triangle include energy and temperament. Energy reflects vitality, movement, and speed, while temperament projects the concepts of aggressiveness, passion, and sexuality. In contrast, curves are usually associated
with vitality, energy, and nature. Deep curves can emphasize playfulness and joy, while lighter curves can create a sense of softness, gentleness, sensuality, and femininity (Sloan, 2017).

**Figure 13**

*Fischl’s Shape Analysis*

Most of Fischl’s accessories consist of elements of bat wings, which makes her appear mysterious and supernatural. The bat wings reflect her Gothic and magical style; using bat wings as accessories adds a unique touch to Fischl’s design, setting her apart from other characters in the game who typically wear more conventional accessories. Using a combination of triangles and curves in Fischl’s designs, the figure’s visual aesthetic creates a sense of dynamic energy and playful femininity. Fischl’s shapes are almost symmetrical, with only a few accessories presenting asymmetries, such as her stockings and headpiece. In character design, symmetry can convey a sense of order, stability, and formality, but too much symmetry can create a static and lifeless appearance (Bradley, 2017). Fischl’s sharp triangular accessories and hairstyle convey a sense of aggression and power. At the same time, her flowing dresses and the soft curves in her designs add a touch of elegance and sensuality.
4.4.2 *Fischl’s Color*

Fischl has a black and purple color palette on most of her body, except for her hair and adornment, which is yellow (Figure 14). According to Sloan (2017), purple is typically considered a cool color associated with royalty, wealth, power, influence, and ambition. Conversely, yellow is a warm color often used to represent happiness, joy, sunshine, memory, and wisdom. The use of yellow in Fischer’s design creates a complementary color scheme with the purple, with the brighter color contrast and the thin neck, which draws the eye of the viewer towards the head. Overall, its design of Fischer gives off a contradictory feeling of mystery and softness while maintaining a sense of regality.

**Figure 14**

*Fischl’s Color Analysis*

*Note.* The color wheel highlights the primary, secondary, and accent colors and the proportions in which they are represented in the character’s visual design.

4.4.3 *Fischl’s Standing Pose*

In Standing Posture 1 (Figure 15A), Fischl’s legs are naturally spread, with toes pointing inwards and hands on either side of her body. This posture appears neutral and
relaxed, indicating a balanced and composed demeanor. In Standing Pose 2 (Figure 15B), placing hands at the waist could indicate self-assuredness or confidence (DePaulo & Friedman, 1993). Her slightly drooping upper eyelids and forward gaze, combined with her natural expression, suggest an introspective and calm emotion (Figure 15C&D).

**Figure 15**

*Fischl - Posture and Facial Expression:*

![Images of character in different poses](image)

*Note. A is standing posture 1, the character in the idle state. C zoomed in on the face from A. B is standing posture 2, the character in the Talents section in the game; this posture is frequently utilized during interaction with the player. D zooms in on the face from B.*

### 4.4.4 Fischl’s Movement and Facial Express

**Idle Animation 1.** Movement (Figure 25): Fischl raises her right hand above her head, lifts her head and closes her eyes, and places her hand in front of her again, a coordinated sequence of movements that suggests a degree of flexibility or grace and gives a sense of drama (Gallaher, 1992). The covering of her face with her hand and the bright violet light that passes over her right eye create a sense of mystery. Facial Expressions (Figure 26): Her eyes are closed, and her mouth is slightly open, which may indicate a concentration or inner focus.
The final opening of the eyes and a slight smile indicate satisfaction or a sense of achievement (Ekman, 2003).

**Idle Animation 2.** Movement (Figure 27): In this animation, Fischl recites her lines while performing a series of coordinated, expressive movements (Gallaher, 1992), such as turning her body, shifting her weight, and raising her hands, indicating that she is an expressive character. Facial Expressions (Figure 28): Her downward glance and closed eyes indicate deep concentration and engagement in the recitation. When she raises her head while reciting her lines, her expressiveness is at its peak, but she suddenly breaks off, then quickly turns her head and touches her face, which could be a sign of embarrassment or shyness. Such movements are designed to convey her sensitive personality (Ekman & Friesen, 1969).

Fishel’s movements and expressions portray a friendly, confident, expressive, and dramatic but somewhat mysterious and sensitive character.

**4.4.5 Fischl’s Character Backstory Analysis**

Fischl is a member of the Adventurers’ Guild and an investigator in Monstadt. Her original name was Amy, and she was an ordinary girl raised by adventurer parents. At an early age, she became obsessed with a series of fantasy novels about a princess named “Fleischl Von Luftschloss Narfidort,” and Amy came to believe that she was the embodiment of Princess Fleischl. After feeling rejected by her parents and peers, she fully embraces the role of Fischl and acts as a princess, which involves speaking in the ancient third person. Her fervent belief and imagination, combined with her Vision, manifested her pet night raven, Oz. Despite her eccentricities, she is an effective investigator for the Adventurers’ Guild and is highly respected for her ability to handle dangerous tasks (Fischl/Lore, 2023).

The following is the character diamond analysis of Fischl, based on in-game textual data from the Genshin Impact Fandom Wiki (Fischl/Lore, 2023).
Motivation: Fischl is driven by her desire to maintain her Prinzessin der Verurteilung identity and her love for adventure and fantasy. Besides, she desires to find acceptance and a sense of belonging. As an investigator, she is motivated to prove her worth and excel.

Ability: Fischl’s abilities include her keen instincts, sharp intellect, and unique power to see through Oz’s eyes.

Morality: Fischl holds herself to a high standard befitting her noble status, using her unique ability to maintain peace and order in the world around her.

Social Competence: Fischl had a peculiar way of speaking, borrowing heavily from the language and mannerisms of her favorite book series. This can be off-putting to those unfamiliar with her and make her seem eccentric. However, she also had the ability to form deep and meaningful connections, and she valued respect and shared understanding.

The Mask: Fischl’s identity as the Prinzessin can be seen as a mask to conceal her true identity - a girl struggling with loneliness and the need to fit in. Her fantasy self-image helps her cope with these emotions, acting as a kind of emotional armor against the world’s harsh realities.

4.4.6 Fischl’s Discussion

Fischl’s visual design incorporates a blend of triangles and curves, creating a dynamic and playful yet powerful energy. The color palette is predominantly black and purple, with yellow accents in the hair and adornments, evoking a sense of mystery and regality. The shapes, colors, and fabric materials create a feminine and sensual representation, with the outfit resembling a fusion of lingerie and a Halloween costume, evoking witchcraft-like imagery.

Her confident and composed stance matches the confidence of the Prinzessin der Verurteilung she portrays. Probably because the identity she embraces provides her with the confidence that her original character, Amy, lacks.
The expressive but slightly shy demeanor in Fischl’s idle animation is consistent with her backstory. The animation shows her immersed in a fantasy role, with expressive movements and a focused, contented facial expression that reflects her character’s mysterious and dramatic side. Her sudden performance interruption and awkward expression at the end of Idle Animation 2 may imply her sensitive inner personality.

However, the visual design may not fully capture Fischl’s struggles with rejection and loneliness as Amy, as her appearance primarily conveys confidence, power, and regality.

In conclusion, Fischl’s visual design effectively communicates her character backstory, creating a consistent narrative about a sensitive, imaginative, and adventurous individual striving for acceptance and purpose.

4.5 Summary

The analysis of the four characters reveals that Genshin Impact effectively utilizes visual design elements, including shapes, colors, and non-verbal communication, such as postures, movements, and facial expressions, to convey the characters’ backstories.

Shapes: In analyzing the shape aspect of character visual design, it becomes evident that shapes play a significant role in conveying personality and backstory. Male characters predominantly feature straight lines, emphasizing a sense of strength and stability, as observed in Zhongli’s rectangular shapes. Conversely, female characters exhibit a more diverse range of shapes, like Yoimiya, including curves, circles, and arcs, which add fluidity and femininity to their designs.

Furthermore, a general trend of asymmetry is observed across all characters, both in their overall silhouettes and in the intricate details. This asymmetry adds visual interest and dynamic energy to the designs. Additionally, there is a noticeable repetition of shapes, both large and small, throughout the character designs. This repetition creates a sense of unity and rhythm, enhancing the overall visual cohesion.
Colors: The use of color palettes in character design is instrumental in conveying their personality and background. Each character in the analysis possesses a color palette that aligns with their unique traits. For instance, Zhongli’s earthy tones reflect his affiliation with the Geo element, suggesting a grounded and connected nature. Tartaglia’s combination of blue and red colors represents his affiliation with Hydro and emphasizes his dual personality. Yoimiya’s fiery red and orange hues vividly capture her pyrotechnic abilities, exuding energy and passion. Fischl’s purple and black palette contributes to her enigmatic persona, adding an aura of mystery.

Across the analyzed characters, a notable pattern emerges in their color schemes. Most characters favored complementary or split color schemes at low saturation with less intense colors. The accent color is typically the only one used with higher saturation, creating a focal point within the design. This approach allows for a balanced and harmonious visual composition while still highlighting specific elements.

However, it is important to note that there is an exception among the analyzed characters. Zhongli deviates from the complementary or split color schemes and instead favors an analog color scheme. In an analog color scheme, adjacent colors on the color wheel are selected to create a more monochromatic and harmonious palette. This choice aligns with Zhongli’s character traits of stability and composure, as the analog color scheme evokes a sense of balance and tranquility.

Using color in character design enhances their visual appeal and conveys their personalities. By analyzing the color choices of the characters, it becomes clear that the designers have carefully considered how color can contribute to the overall characterization and storytelling within the game.

Postures: The standing posture of the characters conveys their personality traits and demeanor, usually using a more closed posture such as arms crossed over the chest to reflect
the distance of the character, for example, Zhongli’s standing posture which frequently occurs when he is thinking or talking may be intended to reflect the potential habit of being the dominant person. The standing position with the hand at the waist is often used to convey the character’s confidence and more open personality. Male characters generally have one hand on their waist, while female characters have both hands, possibly to further reflect the female character’s playfulness and cuteness.

Movements: The idle animations of the characters also convey their personalities and backgrounds. Within the sample analyzed, calm and composed characters such as Zhongli and Fishl generally have slow and fluid movements. In contrast, active characters such as Tartaglia and Yoimiya have high energy and rapid movements with pauses and accelerations.

The expressive and extroverted characters generally move with variety and occupy more space, such as Tartaglia playing with his weapon with open arms and Yoimiya waving fireworks. Although Fishl also has rich arm movements, she takes up less space, consistent with the backstory that she is role-playing but has a sensitive inner personality.

In the animation of the female characters, a controlled uplifting of the hand on the side of the body is often present, for example, Yoimiya’s left-hand (Figure 21). This movement may reflect femininity. In contrast, the male characters’ free hands hang naturally or are placed behind their bodies.

Furthermore, the animation is often accompanied by external elements associated with the character, such as water, gems, and fireworks, which only appear while the animation plays. The character’s interaction with these elements shows their abilities or preferences.

Facial expressions: Due to the manga-like visual style, Genshin Impact’s characters’ expressions are focused on the eyes and mouth, with the nose and cheeks generally not animated, making the characters’ facial expressions rather subtle. It may not be as obvious and clear for viewers unfamiliar with this style.
The animation frequently employs gazes focused on external elements to show the character’s concentration to convey the character’s fondness for these elements, such as Tartaglia staring at a weapon and Yoimiya’s gaze following the fireworks. When recalling, the character’s eyes often appear to look upwards for long periods. Head down and turning to the side with a look downwards usually implies shyness and embarrassment, while heading down and looking upwards with a smile conveys confidence. Calm characters have less of a smile in animation. In contrast, active characters have more of a smile, and characters with an optimistic and cheerful personality have a smile that also involves their eyes.

The analysis showed that Genshin Impact effectively utilizes visual design elements to communicate the characters’ backstories and that the design of each character is generally consistent with their backstories. However, for characters with more complex traits, the visual design remains challenged to completely convey their backstory, such as Fischl, who has a conflicting personality.
5 Conclusion

The thesis “How does the character’s visual design help convey the character’s background in Genshin Impact?” investigates the relationship between characters’ visual design and their background stories in the game. The main research question addresses how the character’s visual design contributes to conveying their background and personality. This study examines various elements, such as color psychology, shapes, patterns, and non-verbal communication, to uncover how these visual aspects represent a character’s narrative and personality.

The researcher purposefully selected four characters in Genshin Impact, namely Zhongli, Tartaglia, Yoimiya, and Fischl, for data collection and analysis. The selection criteria encompassed factors such as gender, region, elemental affiliation, and release date. These deliberate choices aimed to ensure a diverse representation of characters and capture a comprehensive range of visual design elements for examination. The analysis encompassed a broader spectrum of character designs within the game by including characters with distinct attributes. The analysis was conducted through a formal analysis approach, which involved a comprehensive examination and visual observation of the game’s characters. The data collected encompassed various visual elements, including color choices, shapes, movements, and facial expressions, which were analyzed to understand how they align with the characters’ background stories. By employing a formal analysis methodology, a detailed examination and interpretation of these visual components allowed for a deeper understanding of the relationship between the character’s visual design and their background stories within the context of Genshin Impact.

The analysis results indicate a strong alignment between character design in Genshin Impact and their background stories. The utilization of color psychology, shapes, movement, and facial expressions all play significant roles in portraying a character’s personality and
background. The careful consideration of these visual elements contributes to the overall effectiveness of character design in conveying narrative depth and immersion.

One of the key findings is the strategic use of colors to reflect the characters’ personalities. Warm colors, such as orange and red, are often employed to represent characters with passionate and energetic traits, effectively capturing their dynamic nature. On the other hand, cool colors are utilized to depict characters who are calmer and exhibit a more collected demeanor. This intentional selection of colors enhances the visual storytelling and contributes to a nuanced portrayal of characters within the game world.

Furthermore, the use of shapes and patterns emerges as another essential aspect of character design. Triangles, for instance, are frequently employed to represent aggression and tension within a character’s persona. In contrast, circles are associated with playfulness and innocence, effectively conveying a more lighthearted and carefree aspect of a character’s personality. By integrating these shapes and patterns into the visual design, the characters in Genshin Impact achieve a multifaceted representation that adds depth and complexity to their overall portrayal.

However, it is important to note that while the visual design in Genshin Impact showcases significant strengths in aligning character design with their background stories, there are also potential limitations and challenges. Some characters may exhibit less coherence between their visual elements and narratives, leading to inconsistencies or missed opportunities to fully convey their intended backgrounds. Additionally, individual player interpretations and cultural variations in the understanding of colors, shapes, and symbols may influence the reception and effectiveness of the visual design.

Based on the findings of this thesis, there are several recommendations for further research. First, it would be interesting to investigate how character visual design in Genshin Impact varies across different cultures and regions. This could involve exploring how cultural
values, beliefs, and aesthetics influence design elements. Second, future research could explore the impact of character visual design on player engagement and immersion in the game. This could involve examining how design elements such as color, shape, movement, and facial expression affect player perceptions of the game world and its characters. Finally, it would be useful to investigate how character visual design evolves within a game’s storyline and how this impacts player perceptions and engagement. Overall, further research in this area can provide valuable insights into the role of character visual design in game development and player engagement.
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### 6.1 Ludography

Appendix A

Characters’ Animation Key Frames Screenshots

Figure 16

Zhongli – Idle Animation and Facial Expression Keyframes Screenshot

Note. A is Idle Animation 1. C zoomed in on the face from A. B is Idle Animation 2. D zooms in on the face from B.
Figure 17

*Tartaglia – Idle Animation 1 Keyframe Screenshot*
Figure 18

*Tartaglia – Idle Animation 1 Facial Expression Keyframes Screenshot*

Figure 19

*Tartaglia – Idle Animation 2 Keyframes Screenshot*
Figure 20

*Tartaglia – Idle Animation 2 Facial Expression Keyframes Screenshot*

Note. A is a screenshot of the front view, and B is a screenshot with the camera turned to the front of the character’s face.
Figure 21

Yoimiya – Idle Animation 1 Keyframe Screenshot
Figure 22

*Yoimiya – Idle Animation 1 Facial Expression Keyframes Screenshot*

Figure 23

*Yoimiya – Idle Animation 2 Keyframes Screenshot*
Figure 24

*Yoimiya – Idle Animation 2 Facial Expression Keyframes Screenshot*

Figure 25

*Fischl – Idle Animation 1 Keyframe Screenshot*

Figure 26

*Fischl – Idle Animation 1 Facial Expression Keyframes Screenshot*
Figure 27

*Fischl – Idle Animation 2 Keyframes Screenshot*
Figure 28

Tartaglia – Idle Animation 2 Facial Expression Keyframes Screenshot

*Note.* Most of these screenshots were taken with the camera turned to the front of the character’s face to present a clear facial expression.