

## A Voluntary Descent Into Madness

Bloodborne is an exploration of the flaws of humanity, and through the use of its gameplay systems and environmental storytelling, it exposes how those flaws lead to our voluntary descent into madness. We the player throw morality and logic to wayside and give into all temptation, attempting to understand that which we were never meant to comprehend and personally expemplify every human natured flaw, prescribing unspeakable nightmares to the world as a result.

## Thematically Designed Narrative Structure

In portraying narrative design reflective of its themes, Bloodborne teaches us that video games can benefit from an experimental and nonlinear approach to storytelling should such fit conceptually with the game it is tied to.

## Systems Design As A Tool for Storytelling

Designing gameplay mechanics to match thematic and narrative ideas creates a world that feels cohesive as it lets the player's actions reflect and clarify the story being told even should they choose to ignore the work's other narrative design strategies.

## Narrative By Enviornmental Storytelling

Walking the streets of Central Yharnam on the night of the hunt conveys so much to the player because it lets us feel the terror of the world around us. The cries of civilians as they lose their humanity, the screams of far-off beasts lusting for blood, the footsteps of patrolling Yharnamites in search of us, the unwanted outsider, all come together to build an unparalleled unsettling, and unwelcoming atmosphere. Be it the barks or the sound design, a sense of immersion is created like no cutscene can because we the player experienced those streets through direct gameplay.

## Interactivity That Does The Talking

Straying away from the use of cutscenes in favor of a show, don't tell approach produces an experience that takes greater advantage of the interactive medium's potential for unparalleled artistic heights. Letting the player come to learn a game's world organically creates a lasting impact and grip of interest which gameplay pausing cinematics simply cannot replicate.

## A Combat System With Something To Say

Bloodborne's redesigned take on the Dark Souls combat system forces players to engage in a voluntary descent into madness. In introducing a more risk versus reward approach to battle, Miyazaki intermingles our freedom to plunge into danger with the punishing and calculated battle mechanics the series has become known for. Combat is dangerous, it's risky, and it will get us killed, but we chose to do it regardless and gave into the madness o see what rewards we might reap and what secrets we might uncover.

## Thematic Summary And Narrative Analysis

Bloodborne presents an exploration of humanity's voluntary descent into madness given the hunger for knowledge of that which one yet understands. This thematic intent is achieved at such heights of quality as a result of Miyazaki's nonlinear approach to narrative design. Focusing on environmental storytelling, narrative concepts presented through gameplay, and a story that asks the player to hunt for the knowledge they desire to understand produces an extreme flavor of a show, don't tell design philosophy that enhances the player's sense of immersion and connection with the game's world. A narrative presented this way, even if select players may miss the vast majority of its intents, fits thematically with the games world and thus results in a stronger interactive narative experience.

# Bloodborne

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