CHAPTER 2

Guild Wars 2 and its Virtual Reality

This chapter discusses the game of Guild Wars 2, the Concept of Virtual reality, as well as the Virtual reality found within the game of Guild Wars 2. The game's general knowledge as well as the ongoing events that shines through its virtual lense.

2.1 Guild Wars 2 as a Game

Guild Wars 2 is a full on MMO that has a persistent and large-scale world to explore within it. The game itself is a sequel to the original Guild Wars, which in comparison was an MMORPG that had no true explorable world, only instanced zones that you and your group may enter- with another striking difference of that being the playable races being far more diverse, where as Guild Wars the original game only offered with it human avatars, Guild Wars 2 offered its players the selection of one of five races which include; Humans, Charr, Asura, Norn, Sylvari (V, 2012). Within the scope of the game, there is also the aspect of professions and specialization, in which the game has a base of nine base professions of that being Warrior, Guardian, Revenant, Thief, Ranger, Engineer, Elementalist, Necromancer, and Mirage- Whilst the specialization can be seen as an optional variant of the base class that become available around the level 80 space, which include; Berzerker, Spellbreaker, and Bladesworn for Warrior, Dragon Hunter, Firebrand, and Willbender for Guardian, Herald, Renegade and Vindicator for Revenant, Daredevil, Deadeye, and Specter for Thief, Druid, Soulbeast, and Untamed for Ranger, Scrapper, Holosmith, and Mechanist for Engineer, Tempest, Weaver, and Catalyst for Elementalist, Reaper, Scourge, and Harbinger for Necromancer, Chronomancer, Mirage and Virtuoso for Mesmer (Mia, 2022). Guild Wars 2 to be described is a game where you control your avatar, regardless of

the race, to explore vast landscapes of a myriad of nature aspects from waters to forests, jungles and mountains, deserts and monuments of the games lore, using the WASD key to move and the mouse to move the camera to get a better point of view from your character's perspective.

The Game of GW2 is filled with a variety of content, for when it comes to content, the game generally divides it into 2 sections, PvE and PvP. PvE being the abbreviation of Player versus Environment or Open World (OW) where it is generally known by definition as where one or more players interact with the video games computer generated threats and content, whereas PvP is an abbreviation of Player versus Player, a game mode that pits the players of the game against one another with specific rules and arenas, which is understood as putting players or even pitting them against one another with perceived threats (Duetzmann, 2021).

2.1.1 PvE (Player versus Environment) Game modes consists of;

- Fractals, or fractal of the mists, is a dungeon-esque game mode that requires the max level of 80 to participate in, and requires a maximum of 5 players- where in these players will explore the many parts and timelines of the Guild Wars 2 Universe with scaling difficulty for the chance at better rewards (Whaling, 2022). Through the many challenges and enemies the players must fight through- the extent of the fractal could vary, from short incursions to long-intense fights and puzzles.

- Strikes or strike missions, is a game mode that is advised to not solo, as it is a group centric content that requires 10 people in which said individuals will take part in a battle against a boss, specifically being in the level 80 bracket- with a

requirement of owning a certain expansion named Path of Fire to be eligible for said content (Mia, 2022).

- Raids are 10-man PvE content in which you tackle bosses and encounters for the chance for high tier rewards- or the opening of a path to create legendary tier armor (Purchese, 2015).

2.1.2 PvP (Player versus Player) Game modes consists of;

- SPvP or Structured Player versus Player, is a game mode that consists of either a 5 versus 5 format, a 2 versus 2 format, or the 1 versus 1 format, pitting the players against one another without the worries of level nor current gear being a contributor to their overall performance, with three main submodes within its system such as Custom Arena in which the owner of the match may decide the rules and any options regarding win conditions and status, Unranked in which players may enjoy the mode without fear of losing rank or status, and Ranked, where players pit themselves against one another and earn status and ranks with victories- at the risk of losing such rank if they ever fall lose too many times (Fayiette, 2023).

- WvW or World versus World, is a form of Player versus Player that takes place within a map that supports 300 players, while also having their character (regardless of their current level) be forced into the level 80 position, with plenty of objectives to collect and capture in the form of keeps, camps and towers- however, players do not only contend with the opposing factions, but also contend

with its NPC's in the form of wildlife or objective guards that may cause a nuisance (Purchese, 2012).

2.2 Virtual Reality

The virtual world is often explained within many scopes, however the focus of this study deems it to become the virtual reality of the online world, specifically the game scape. The virtual world of games are social scapes that can mostly be found within games and activities where a festering community may reside. In descriptive essence, The Virtual Reality or Virtual World is comprised of two words, Virtual and World- Where as Virtual would mean a simulated environment that fits the needed framework, and World being a shared space with its inhabitants where you can interact with the environment through the usage of avatars (Girvan, 2018). As such, the Virtual World, or Virtual Reality is a space that is shared among many, a simulated space that allows interactions through the very avatars we create. This is true with the concept of MMORPG's as you create your own characters or avatars to interact with the simulated world of the video game.

2.3 Virtual Community in Guild Wars 2

When it comes to the ideals of views of those who play games, there are various parts and aspects that may be deemed more important to one than the other. For one, Immersion can be a main ideal that players strive for- they want to feel at one with the world they are playing with and any disruption to such a sensation would often sour their mood. But outside of immersion, these views and ideals often form the motivation an MMORPG player has and their reasoning to play the game, Their motivation can come in the form of Social interactions, guilds and groups

that fuels their need for kinship, a communal activity such as raiding or content completion that needs more players that leads to a less lonely world-space, competitive play such as PvP (player versus player) that induces a feeling of competition, a world to immerse oneself and find secrets or even little easter eggs from within it, the franchise- being a long time fan of a certain franchise can lead to playing an MMO of said franchise, which would lean on the loyalty and fanhood for said franchise, and just contributing and helping others within the community (Edwards 2018). As such that is a known motivation, or ideals and views of those who play MMORPG's and MMO's at large.

Realities differ, that of real life being the reality of the outside world. Outside of the anonymity and the freedom of expression the online world has over real life, there is also the aspect of loneliness as a comparison between real life and Online life. WoW players feel less social anxiety and less loneliness in game in comparison to real life instances (Martoncik and Loksa, 2015). The reality of MMORPG's or online is often less anxiety inducing and easier to swim through compared to social interaction in real life, the anonymity helps- as well as the main ways of interaction being that of voice calls and text-based-interactions. In Guild Wars 2, such variables are also shared, as the in-game world is easier to swim-through with the ease of reach and conversation being so locked within the game that outward appearances and expectations are often non-existent, being that they would only interact through avatars. Often this can be seen as a sense of escapism, a break or even a small reprieve from the demanding lives they may live in real life or offline. Within the virtual scape of Guild Wars 2 also exists two main cultures within the game, one that is casual which is the general viewstance for the game- those who see it as casual will set their goals within the gamescape to be only for fun and without the need to try or even put in the effort to improve putting 'casual fun' over the game, and those that are of elitist

mindset, those who have certain expectation within the game and put genuine effort into it but are usually labeled as toxic as having a regards to how people play the game and being disappointed if they do not meet their expectations (Greenrose, 2022), this gives the opposing views of the games culture and its subculture- with the casual perspective being the more dominant culture, and the elitist perspective setting more of a subculture status within the game.