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ENGL 3500

HW #9: The Game (is a) Life

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The development of my game is progressing smoothly, with the accomplishment of many (miniature) milestones. These checkpoints include the brainstorming, creation, and full script of the introductory scene in the game. In this scene, the main character, Le, awakens in his motel room but is in disarray as he scrambles to gather his school items while having a gut feeling that something is amiss. The script included in the Git Repo includes the introductory visual novel segment, where the player is introduced to the character and his immediate motives. Next follows the puzzle segment, with a brief message from the system to provide a tutorial for the player. Thus begins the point-and-click segment of the game in which the player must collect and combine a series of items or solve puzzles to obtain the necessary means to escape the room (level). In puzzle 0, the solution is to retrieve his backpack and the key to the front door; the key to the front door is obtained after gathering the candle from the console and melting it over the stove, revealing that the plate it was on has a key-like protrusion attached to it. The player must use this key on the front door to progress the story and enter the next visual novel portion. Although relatively short, it is also detailed in the script (00_scenes.arc).

In Clune's lens, I aspire to create a game that provides a sense of purpose or exploration to the player that real life tends to lack in that I hope to create an exploration into the definition of humanity, the reason for living, and the struggle between life and death. Much like the "game of

making a life” and Clune’s ideas of open-ended guidance, I wish to implement an open-ended mechanic to my game, while guiding the player to the answer. Some puzzles will contain a clear answer, other adventure based puzzles may leave it up to the player to freely explore the surroundings to advance. Some puzzles may have multiple ways to solve them, or may have optional solutions; one such optional solution can be seen in puzzle 0. When inspecting the mirror, if the player has the wet cloth in their inventory, they are provided with the option to clean the mirror; doing so will trigger a mini visual novel segment that reveals the main character’s face as well as some background information regarding his family. All of these open-ended, yet somewhat guided aspects to the game hope to breathe in fresh air and change each player’s experience, creating a balance between rigid structure and organic discovery. The timeline mechanic also adds to the idea that players may choose their own story while building the story of Le. The game of making a life is shared by both the author and player as we must work side-by-side to develop and uncover the many possible narratives that Le will experience.