Nick Xinyuan Li March 25, 2024

Videogame Design and Critique | CMAC 755S GDD

**Synthesizer**

**Roleplaying in a City of Discontent & Hope, Past & Future, No-one & All-people**

**Game Concept**

The theme of the game is "exploring the possibilities for people to communicate rationally in what is now a very divided reality", and is set in a fictional metropolis (tentatively called MP City) that is somewhat similar to global cities such as Tokyo and Paris, and is largely contemporary in time, but with some features from the last century or near-future. The fun of the game is exploring the story of the city and talking to every NPC (if they're willing to talk to you). The Player takes on the role of one of the members of a girl idol group - there are no pre-determined experiences, everything is defined by the player. It's a game that everyone can pick up quickly, and if you like the cosmopolitan atmosphere or the rich interaction with NPCs, then you'll want to play this game.

**Genre(s)**

Role-playing / Social simulation

**Design Pillars**

* Urbanities and Exploration: Players can explore the city at their own pace, choosing their path and what they want to be.
* Player Choice and Agency: Every decision made by the player impacts the world around them and shapes their experience.
* Immersive Gameplay and Realism: Creating a realistic world with immersive gameplay mechanics that complement the narrative.

**Gameplay Mechanics**

The core gameplay mechanic of this game is that the player learns the full extent of the city or the world through conversations with NPCs and exploration of the city (e.g., collecting items). One of the more interesting gameplay features is the interaction with almost any NPC, although most passersby won't talk to you for no reason (like real-life city dwellers), meaning that most of the interactions take place between primary groups of player-controlled characters. Implementing this mechanic is the game's built-in GPT, so interacting with NPCs can be very interesting in itself.

**Story and Characters**

The player takes on a role similar to that of a narrator or explorer, so the main quests of the game are all NPCs. The following are examples of content for some of the main characters.

**Character One**

* Character Name: Nadya Miyamoto
* Physical Description:
  + Age: 24
  + Gender: female
  + Height: 163cm
  + Body Type: Skinny
  + Hair Color: Black
  + Unique Characteristics: Has a unique mixed face due to her mixed East and Southeast Asian heritage.
* Background History: She has a younger sister at home, and worked hard to get into a university in a big city, but because of her family's poverty, she couldn't continue to support her and her sister's education. By chance she came across a brand new idol group that was recruiting at the time, and decided to apply in order to save money so that she could eat for free, and succeeded in working for the idol group. After working hard for the past six years, she not only had enough to eat, but also earned enough money to support her sister's education and became a popular member of the popular idol group. However, she knew that she didn't want to do that and decided to quit the group completely and retire from the entertainment industry after three months to become a normal person again and pursue her dreams.
* Personality Traits:
  + Tolerant and Restrained: she knows how to control her emotions and remains calm under pressure.
  + Love and Hate: She is extremely loyal to her friends, but she will never condone dishonest or unjust behavior.
  + Decisive: faced with important choices, Nami always makes quick decisions and sticks to them.
* Motivations and Goals:
  + Short-Term Goal: She intends to continue her career as an idol until the end of her contract, while building up as many resources and contacts as possible.
  + Long-term goals: Nami's dream is to become an artist, and she hopes to one day return to college to finish her unfinished business and express her worldview through art.
* Strengths and Shortcomings:
  + Strengths: Her tolerance and self-discipline allow her to stay productive and focused in the midst of her heavy idol workload.
  + Shortcomings: her bluntness sometimes offends people, especially in an environment like the entertainment industry where she needs to be all things to all people, and her outspokenness has earned her some hostility.
* Relationships:
  + Family: Nami's family is her safe haven, especially her sister, who is her motivation to work hard.
  + Colleagues: as a member of a group, she has a complex relationship with the other members, both in terms of rivalry and friendship.
* Character Arc:
  + Beginning: Nami as an ordinary college student who aspires to art and self-expression.
  + Change: After becoming an idol, she experiences a rise in fame along with inner confusion and struggle.
  + The End : Eventually, Nami will find her own path as she balances art and personal authenticity.
* Conflicts and Challenges:
  + Inner Conflict: Nami is in a constant struggle between pursuing fame and following her heart.
  + External Challenge: She must stay true to herself in the competitive entertainment industry and make sacrifices for her dreams.

**Character Two**

* Character Name: Mika Weber
* Physical Description:
  + Age: 23
  + Gender: female
  + Height: 167cm
  + Body type: well-proportioned
  + Hair Color: Pink
  + Unique Characteristics: Being of German descent, she has signature long pink hair and twinkling green eyes, and often draws attention to herself with her unique fashion sense.
* Background History: Mika was born into a very artistic family with parents in the art industry. From a young age she was raised to be an all-around artist, specializing in drawing, playing, and dancing. Despite living in an environment of material abundance, Mika always felt that her life was missing some real challenges and opportunities to prove herself. In a chance encounter, she saw a recruitment advertisement for an idol group and decided to give up the comfortable life given by her family and went to the audition alone, hoping to find her own place in the entertainment industry through her hard work.
* Personality Traits:
  + Independent: Mika has a strong sense of self-awareness and independence, always acting on her own ideas.
  + Artistic Talent: Her talent in art has allowed her to quickly show her uniqueness in the idol group.
  + Courage to experiment: Mika is always willing to try new things and is not afraid to fail, which makes her always bring a fresh element in the group.
* Motivation and Goals:
  + Short-term goal: To prove her worth in an idol group and gain more solo opportunities and fan support through her efforts.
  + Long-term goal: Hope to utilize the idol platform to transform into a multi-disciplinary artist, showcasing her talents in music, dance and visual arts.
* Strengths and Shortcomings
  + Strengths: Mika's artistic background and unique personalities quickly made her stand out in the group.
  + Shortcomings: Her independence can sometimes lead to disagreements with team members.
* Relationships:
  + Family: Although her family initially expressed concern about her choice, Mika earned their support and respect through her persistence and success.
  + Colleagues: there is a close relationship between Mika and her (mostly less well-off) teammates, despite their very different backgrounds and personalities.
* Character Arc:
  + Beginning: Mika feels empty and unfulfilled inside as a rich girl who has everything.
  + Change: After joining an idol group, through constant hard work and challenges, Mika finds a way to prove herself while discovering true friendship and team spirit.
  + Ending: Eventually, Mika not only finds her place in the idol group, but also embarks on a journey to transform herself into a full-fledged artist, all the while forming deep friendships with people from different economic classes.

In this following Flash Fiction, the player is closer to a secondary character like Gloria.

**At the Wake**

Riding the MP City Metro Line 11 to 9th Avenue-1st Street Station, then transferring to Bus #1 for three stops, Nadya arrived at her destination for this dusk trip.

Nadya is one of about 20 members of a female idol group. On this day she met with her colleagues in the group, Mika, Vivian and Gloria, in Sainte-Thérèse, a middle-class neighborhood in the northeast of the city.

Nadya actually kind of despises her coworkers. She joined the idol group just to save money by getting free meals from the company, and knew that she didn't want to be in this business. She decided to quit the group when she's made enough money and quit this entertainment industry to become a normal person again, like going to college or something, or maybe the Communist Party posters that were everywhere in her neighborhood would pique her interest. It was election season.

So Jeane lives in a place like this. Nadya let out this exclamation. But it's no surprise where she lives, right? Mika replied as she helped Gloria seal a button. The Line 11 ran between the neon billboards of the skyscrapers on Eighth Avenue, and the sudden right turn onto 1st Street could have caused some embarrassment. Jeane passed away from a cerebral contusion a few days ago as she was returning home from a convenience store when she fell from the second floor of the staircase to the first floor.

Jeane was in the group for less than a year before quitting, so the other girls have no memory of Jeane in the fall or winter. These five girls performed together regularly as a small subgroup, and Jeane used to be very popular with the fans and with her teammates in those days when idol groups were not influential in the slightest. She was so quirky - a total compliment - and people loved that kind. But after quitting the group it was as if none of this had happened, and she went back to her home town to live her life without being heard from (for those in Capital MP). Until today.

What do we do at funerals? Vivian asked. It's not a funeral; it's a wake. Nadya corrected but did not answer the question. They heard of Jeane's death last night, so everyone had to rush to get ready in outfits that were far from the vibe of the evening. Mika worried about whether her pink hair was too fancy, but Nadya managed to convince her that it's more important to be "sincere".

Mika, as a rich girl who has everything, is as empty and unfulfilled as it has been constructed in fictions over the centuries. The fact that she was able to become best friends with Nadya at the moment was something neither of them expected. Mika came on Line 2, and at that end of the metro is her colonial-style house in Baie du Pomelo (generally the people who go from there to here are white-collar workers coming home from work from downtown). The two girls often talk about the other girls at her house: Nadya once gossiped how Vivian was jealous that her sister was better looking and secretly dated handsome men (something idols are strictly forbidden to do). She despises people who think that a career is inferior to a relationship. Mika actually has reservations about this, she thinks that both are important, even though she's not quite the same as the others. Mika isn't interested in guys, which is another thing she's hiding from Nadya.

After exchanging brief conventional greetings with a receptionist who was presumably one of Jeane's relatives, they entered her home for the first time. They complained about their agent, Mr. Yamada, not showing up while being led by the receptionist to where Jeane was staying.

There was no one else in the room. The wooden coffin was open, and white and other light-colored flowers were clustered above Jeane's body. She was lying with her head to the left besides the aqua blue wallpaper, in front of the four girls. They just stood, until Jeane's parents walked in and instructed them in a simple prayer individually. In the Irish tradition of Jeane's family, relatives and friends would go forward to visit the deceased and his family, who in turn would extend hospitality.

The four girls felt like they had come specifically to eat, but it would have been rude not to. They hadn't been twenty-one when they met, but tonight would be their first drink. They understood that there would be no peace of mind tonight, as there was every night in MP City.

**Art Style and Visuals and Audio**

The visuals of this game are similar to the urban style of Yazuka or Cyberpunk 2077. The soundtrack features a fittingly Japanese 80s techno music (e.g. synth pop).

**User Interface (UI) and Controls**

Since this game is more about immersion, the UI strives for simplicity.

**Technical Requirements**

The game's built-in GPT would be the potential maximum configuration requirement.