**NM3222 Assignment 2 Reflection**

The Time Traveller Who Killed Hitler is a story that explores the possible moral issues behind the concept of going back in time and killing Hitler, as well as the plausible consequences of time travel. In this reflection, I will discuss how I meet the requirements of the assignment, as well as additional features to improve the story, with reference to the readings and play items that have been discussed.

I will begin by explaining requirement 2, as it is not as closely tied to the other requirements. For requirement 2, I have chosen a sentence selection representation. This was necessary to achieve a dramatic effect to target players of “Dramatist” play style, as described in John Kim’s Threefold Model in the Josh and Karen Tanenbaum reading. I would not have been able to achieve the same effect during the ending scene when the player’s character has a conversation with their future self. The scene takes place right after it is revealed that the player’s character is being stopped by a future version of themselves. This results in a conversation between the two iterations of the same character, and because they are the same character, I can let the player “play” as both iterations by requiring the player to do sentence selection, adding to the dramatic effect. Additionally, this allows me to target two of three modes of behaviour, that describe how players engage with the dramatic and narrative aspects of games, as discussed by Craig Lindley in the same reading. Particularly, the performer and the immersionist. This is achieved through role-playing the character in second person, in which the player must act out the role of the Time Traveller who wants to kill Hitler, and at the same time can explore the story and the different roles this time traveller can take.

Requirement 1 consists of two parts, the first is three dialogue choices and the second is at least 2 levels of choices. To meet this requirement and ensure that I had sufficient time to finish the assignment given the shorter time available as compared to the first assignment, I limited the types of conversations that the player could have. I created three topics for the three types dialogue choices, or in my own word, conversations. First is why the player’s character is doing this. Second, how does the player justify their actions. Lastly, what the player’s character hopes to achieve by completing the quest. Each conversation begins with a prompt by a Non-Player Character (NPC), to which the player will choose a response. The first response gives an overview of the player’s character, while subsequent choices reveals the player’s character’s deeper motivations. For example, the first choice involves the player making a choice that determines if the player does this because they are a utilitarian, who believes that overall good increases by killing Hitler, a politician, who wants to kill Hitler to advance their career, or a Jew, who wants revenge for all the Jews who died because of Hitler.

Requirement 3 states that the dialogue choices must depend on some way on the previous choices. I met this requirement through the conversations mentioned in the previous paragraph. Each conversation’s second level of dialogue choices all depend on the first, and this results in a concluding statement to clarify to the player the choice they have made through the conversation and the character that they now play as.

Requirement 4 requires the player feels emotional agency. For this, I refer to the Gregory Weir reading. From the reading, “It presents the player with questions that carry emotional weight and visible consequences that paradoxically have little to no effect on the events of the game. This is emotional agency”. This is what I hoped to accomplish with my three topics of conversation. I tried to bring in heavy conversational topics to create the emotional weight, that is the ethics behind assassinating a person in the past, and at the end of each conversation, I present a slightly varied result to show the players the results of their actions. Despite the choices, there is overall no change to the story. The player will still address each topic, perhaps with different people, but otherwise no difference. The player will still be stopped twice by the other time traveller, and finally face Hitler at the end of WWII. This I feel is similar to the play item Balloon Diaspora, in which you are able to converse with Silas to tell more about your character. However, the “Silas” in my story, spans across different timelines, as you get to know different historical figures and they get to know “you”.

Lastly, I would like to talk about a feature I implemented inspired by a play item mentioned in lecture. The example in Metal Gear Solid 4 used in the lecture is when Solid Snake crawls through the microwave tunnel. The game prompts the player to rapidly mash the triangle button to help Snake crawl through the tunnel. Though the result is the same in that Snake makes it through, there is emotional agency in getting the player to mash the button and crawl through the tunnel. In my story, there are two instances where something similar happens, when crawling to safety in No Man’s Land in WWI and when trying to push Hitler off of you at the end of WWII. There is only one option available to the player, that is to “Crawl” or “Push” but I hope to create the same excitement players feel when mashing the button to get Snake through the microwave tunnel.

To conclude, my story has met the requirements of the assignment through the three topics of conversation, with inspiration from and references to the following play items and readings.

Play Item References:

Balloon Diaspora

Metal Gear Solid 4

Reading References:

Josh and Karen Tanenbaum, "Committment to Meaning: A Reframing of Agency in Games"

Weir, G., "Analysis: Incidental Character Choices in *Balloon Diaspora”*