CIT340 Final Project Deliverable 1:

Game Plan

CURRENT TITLE: Project DIVERGENCE

GENRE: Top-Down, Narratively Driven, RPG

INSPIRATIONS:

* ***Undertale/Deltarune***: gameplay, narrative-structure, art style.
* ***Yo-Kai Watch***: Idea for the “Incorporeal World”(not a die-hard fan, or anything, but it’s the best way to describe my setting).
* ***Jojo’s Bizarre Adventure*** Heritage To the Future: partial gameplay inspiration

SETTING: A city within a Mildly Carbonified version of Modern America (think Earthbound).

PLOT: Stylo was a normal twenty-something just trying to survive his job as unpaid intern. One day, a mysterious figure forces upon him the ability to see the souls and auras of people and objects around him. However, in the process, his very spirit was fractured into two “shards” respectively named Pathos and Logos. Now, Body, Mind, and Soul must all get along and work together to fend off incorporeal threats and navigate the mundane life searching for a way to mend his very being.

STORY-CONCEPT  
Just like Undertale/Deltarune, player choices during both dialogue and gameplay will have a direct impact on the narrative which will allow for multiple branching paths to enhance replayability. However, while those games focus on how the player interacts with external factors like the world and its characters, the ending of this game will be based on how the player manages the two soul shards.

The main story will progress rather linearly for most of the game, but after completing specific milestones, the player will be given a “Development Point” (or “DP” for short). Here, the player must either choose between giving the DP to one of the shards to upgrade them or discarding it entirely. Once the choice is made, IT IS PERMANNENT.

Behind the scenes, the game will track the DP difference between Pathos and Logos, and after it gets large enough, the more dominant shard will become more controlling toward the other during internal interactions. This starts off subtle, but it only gets worse as the difference grows, and by end of the game, it would get the point that the more dominant shard have a direct influence on player’s external choices by overriding or removing dialogue options that they don’t agree with.

Here's an example: At this point in the game, the player has upgraded Logos 7 times while Pathos had only gotten 2. For, the sake of this scenario, let’s say that something in the main story has left our main character, Stylo, feeling troubled and anxious. When talking to an NPC, they notice the expression on his face, and they ask to see if something is wrong. The player is then given the option to either say “No, I’m fine. Sorry for worrying you” or “I mean, now that you mention it…” If player chooses the ladder, the player is instantly to select again; only, this time, the second option is gone. Selecting it displays the message,“…It’s for the best” before continuing the conversation.

At the time of writing, there are 4 planned unique endings that will be based on the DP system + player choices.

1. TRUE NEUTRAL
   * Achieved when the DP difference is 2 or less by then end of the game
   * Closest thing to a “good” ending.
   * Ends with the Fracture in Stylo’s Soul mending and the soul shards fusing to defeat the final boss. (Similar to the Finale phase of the Flowey fight).
   * There might be LOGOS-LEANING, AND PATHOS-LEANING versions of the neutral ending that does not have the two shards fuse. Instead, they’ll simply put their differences aside and work together to fight a harder version of the final boss.\*
   * Might special bonus content if a perfect 0 DP rating is achieved\*
2. LOGOS DOMINANT
   * If the DP difference between Logos and Pathos is greater than 50% the total number of DP in the game, then Logos becomes the dominant shard.
   * In this route, Logos gradually convinces Pathos that his input was at fault for the “Fracture Event”, alluding that his existence is a detriment to Stylo’s wellbeing.
   * The final boss pits an empowered Logos versus Stylo and Pathos.
3. PATHOS DOMINANT
   * If the DP difference between Pathos and Logos is greater than 50% the total number of DP in the game, then Pathos becomes the dominant shard.
   * In this route, Pathos becomes more and more explosive-tempered with any attempts from any attempts from Logos to establish reason backfiring.
   * The final boss pits an enraged Pathos versus Stylo and Pathos.
4. NULL-NEUTRAL
   * Otherwise known as the “Stagnation Ending”
   * The shortest but probably the darkest yet most depressing
   * Secret Ending that requires this specific condition to trigger.
     1. The Stylo must discard every single Development Point they receive; if either of the shards ever gain a DP, the run will be aborted.
     2. By the end of the first chapter NULL-NEUTRAL Dialogue options will begin to appear alongside the normal Logos and Pathos ones, and these must always be selected. Later, the other shards will try to override your choices; Ignore this, it’s for the best. If any other dialogue options are selected during key story sections, the run will be aborted.
     3. Toward the end of chapter 2, it is revealed that all the DP discarded weren’t simply being destroyed; they were being given by an “Intrusive Force” That claims it knows what’s best for Stylo. From this point you now can both disable both Shards but also deal damage directly with Style’s soul core. After this point Stylo must defeat all enemies this way; defeating any enemy with the two shards will now abort the run.
   * The first 1 ½ chapters will progress mostly the same as a normal run, but the game will begin to drastically differ by that point with major sections being either replaced or skipped with shorter ones.
   * By the end of the run, the “Intrusive Voice” takes over Stylo and can even override the player’s choices. When this starts happening, that is the point of no return.
   * At the time of writing, I’m not quite sure how this story will unfold or end, but I do plan for it to reveal about Stylo’s personality and his past and explain why his Soul was fractured in the first place.
   * the final boss of the NULL-NEUTRAL run to be a fight between the Intrusive Force (controlled by you) and Pathos and Logos who are desperately trying to fight to reclaim control over Stylo’s soul.
   * AUTHOR’S NOTE: I want to take a lot of care when writing this part of the game. I know this can easily dip into edgy/cringey territory. For that reason, I REALLY want to make sure that this is proof-read a few other people before I implement it.

Gameplay

NOTE: Items labeled with a “\*” may or may not get into the final game

* The game will feature one playable character (STYLO) and two companion characters (PATHOS & LOGOS).
* In battle, each shard has their own set of unlockable attacks and upgradeable signature trait that changes the way you play; however, only one shard can be ACTIVE at a time.
* During the FIGHT phase (see battle structure below), the ACTIVE shard orbits around the player core (think of the heart from UT or DR) using the mouse to aim in the direction they are facing. The ACTIVE shard can use its equipped attack with [LEFT CLICK] and use its signature trait with [LSHIFT]
  + Attacks are the primary offensive during the FIGHT PHASE; they can be unlocked and equipped like weapons outside of battle. \*
  + A shard’s trait is the unique defensive option
* The ACTIVE shard can be swapped mid-battle during the player’s turn, at the cost of not being able to use items that turn.
* Each Shard is tied to an energy bar that limits how much they can use their attacks and abilities.
  + Using Attacks will be (mostly) free \*
  + Using a signature trait drains the energy bar by a fixed percent (to prevent cheese since they’re so powerful).
  + Energy for each shard Passively recharges a fixed percent each turn
  + Energy of the ACTIVE SHARD will begin to regenerate if it goes below a certain threshold
  + Dealing damage or doing actions with one shard refills the energy of the other.
  + Energy can be regenerated using certain consumable items
* Here is a breakdown of how each member works
  + STYLO
    - Is represented in battle by a little orb that is directly controlled by the player (think the heart from UT or DR)
    - Has HP and takes damage from attacks; Instant Game Over if health reaches zero
    - Active shard hovers around the core but can’t directly block attacks for it.
  + PATHOS
    - Fast Movement Speed and Attacks but has few defensive options outside of..
    - his signature trait: DASH which gives Logos and the core a boost of speed in the direction he is facing. Depending on whether the button is pressed or tapped, it has the following effects
      * If held, it quickly drains energy, but it increases move speed by 1.5x. However, you can still take damage from attacks
        + Can be upgraded to leave a trail of projectiles that damage enemies
      * If tapped, it turns into a short invincible dodge that moves a fixed distance. This drains the energy bar by about 30%-40% and leaves you slightly vulnerable.
        + Can be upgraded to allow for chain-dashes
        + Can be upgraded to end in an attack
    - Starts with a quick melee slash that deals reliable damage in front of him.
    - Can be upgraded to unlock a flamethrower-like attack that sprays projectiles in a cone in front of him.\*
      * Deals HIGH damage but drains energy meter quickly
  + LOGOS
    - Controlled with RIGHT CLICK for all attacks/actions
    - Focuses on a defensive/reactionary playstyle to avoid damage and Uses attacks that are slower but more powerful and usually push enemies back
    - Starts with a projectile attack that deals moderate damage and has slight knockback.
    - Signature trait is SHIELD. At the cost of energy, Pathos pulls out a shield to negate incoming damage. The effects depend on whether the button is pressed or held.
      * If held, Pathos puts up a barrier in front of him that blocks incoming attacks. It can only block attacks that directly connect with the barrier, The more damage it takes the faster it drains, and it reduces move speed.
        + Can be upgraded to not reduce move speed. \*
        + Can be upgraded to have a bigger barrier. \*
      * If tapped, Pathos quickly puts up a “Parrier” that negates all damage and reflects a single attack. This action drains the bar by about 20% and requires timing.
        + Increase reflected projectile speed/damage.
    - Which enemy attacks can be affected by the Barrier and the Parrier are on a case-by-case basis.
* Battles are structured similarly to deltarune, where the play faces a variety of unique enemies with a variety of bullet-hell style attacks; however, there are many key differences to the design and structure of the fights.
* While the game is still technically turn based, attacking is done during the “FIGHT PAHSE.” This means that the player damages enemies with their own attacks while dodging the enemies’ attack patterns.
  + This design change will force us to rethink how the player turn works since the player will no longer choose between either dealing damage or healing themselves during their turn.
* There probably won’t be pacifist options for most of the enemies, so violence is technically required.
  + I might implement secret pacifist options for each boss as an easter egg however they mostly won’t have a major impact on the story. \*
  + There might be ACT commands to add narrative flavor to battles, but not sure what design purpose they would serve without a way to spare most enemies. \*
* Defeating enemies and completing the story grants XP. Upon level-up, the following will happen.
  + The player’s Max Hp and Defense will increase
  + The Attack and Max energy for each shard will increase (possibly based on their CD Level).
* As stated before, CD points are gained at fixed points in the story, and they must immediately be spent or discarded
  + These points are used to unlock and upgrade attacks and abilities in the skill tree for the shard they were given to
  + While Development points cannot be removed or transferred, the player can reallocate the DP for a shard at any given time.

PONY LIST

* Plenty of NPC characters to talk to and objects to inspect with witty dialogue
* At least 4 alternate endings depending on player choices and upgrade paths (including secret ending)
* Scripted Cutscenes
* Currency and Item Shop
* Alternate dialogue/endings depending on how the player balances the upgrades between the Shards

Most actions having custom (or at least alternate )pixel animations and sprites attached

* Controller support
* An Original soundtrack