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**Reflection: Week 7**

This week, we looked at *The Stanely Parable* and how it poses various commentaries on the nature of choice in video games. In addition, Nyguen proposes that part of what makes games appealing is the difficulty inherent in achieving the provided goals. I find this an interesting and accurate assessment of how players interact with the systems of the game. Consider that the Narrator character is a personification of the game itself. He maintains a consistent awareness of your actions, but only in the context of how you appear to him. He cannot appear outside of the game and, as seen with he acts as one part of a much larger system (see “Confusion Ending”), it’s safe to say that he is not an autonomous entity. Like a machine, his actions are deterministic. We provide him with the signal (our physical button presses), and he responds. Whether that response increases or diminishes player agency is irrelevant to the player's ability to induce it in the first place.

For the Inky game I created this week, I opted to distill the essence of my favorite aspect of the dynamic: A player is liable to make choices, even at the cost of themselves. If given the choice between blind obedience to an authority versus acting autonomously, players are more inclined to go for the latter. As with the *Stanely Parable*, more potential interactions from my Ink file come from “incorrect” options. To go deeper into the whole question of agency, I’d propose that another element of the "striving play" idea is that of reactivity. To be a good character in a story, one must be able to change or attempt to change the state of something around their world. However, different inputs with the same result made the experience dull out of its sheer determinism. That said, games maintain their ability to engage so long as the player is presented with different modes of interacting with the presented systems.