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Project 2 Writeup

Abstract

This project is an interactive game intended for millennials and GenerationZ, who will be the next environmental action-takers of the future, and it is intended to be played either at home or an exhibit exploring social justice issues especially regarding environmental crises. I want to focus on climate justice, with a goal of informing others on how it impacts vulnerable communities around the world more than others disproportionately. So to narrow down such a complex issue, I focused on Sacrifice Zones, which are defined as “areas that are targeted for the disproportionate burden of pollution, and for the by-products of consumerism and of industrial regard.” This topic is important to me because I have observed over the last few years that social inequities are intricately tied to the environment now more than ever, with the COVID-19 pandemic amplifying its effects even further. I want to show that justice is a matter of significance to everyone regardless of their age, social circumstance, nationality, etc. I want to also raise awareness on resources such as ***climatejusticealliance.org*** while shedding light on the continued existence of environmental racism.

Project Overview

The game will take place in a "Sacrifice Zone" called Sweetfield City. The main character's goal is to not only survive but to also gather the community to help save where they live. The game's structure will be based on the 8 tiers of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, which is defined as “a motivational theory in psychology that comprises a model of human needs, depicted as hierarchical levels with a pyramid. The anatomy of the eight tiers are as follows, from the lowest to highest level: (1) Biological and Psychological Needs, (2) Safety Needs (3) Love and Belongingness (4) Esteem, (5) Cognitive Needs, (6) Aesthetic Needs, (7) Self-actualization, and (8) Transcendence. As the basis of the game, each tier will serve as one level (with the 7th and 8th levels combined. The premise is that needs lower down in the hierarchy, must be completed before an individual can attend to needs higher up. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs suggests that we are unable to take action and alleviate environmental injustice within, around, and beyond us even when we want to, when we are worried about meeting our most basic needs such as our health, safety, and security.

Narrative

The relentless search for hidden treasures around the world has destroyed the land as we know it. Sweetfield City is now seen as a dangerous, unsafe, and grim place. Once glorious, its sweetfields are now desolate, its air toxic, and its people divided — all thanks to the unrelenting men of its neighboring city of Goldfolk. As a bright and noble young woman, Felicity Walker (the player) is Sweetfield's only hope. As the game progresses through a series of interactions, Felicity hopes to find the courage to start a revolutionary organization called the Freedom Fighters. Armed with newly gained resources, knowledge and their courage, Felicity and the Freedom Fighters try their best to save their hometown, but can they defeat the destructive ways of Goldfolk and restore Sweetfield City to its former glory?

Note: The code structure is explained further in the README file, and some additional notes are included in the sketch.js file.

Aesthetic Approach

For the part of the project that interfaces with the audience, I chose to use avatars that have both realistic and fantastical characteristics, such as having long ears and pointed feet but also having human features such as the hair, face and body. Character design was tricky in this project because there exists a fine line between appropriate representation for people of color as well as having the creative freedom to step away from accurate depictions of the real world, which is why I designed them the way I did. In terms of the aesthetic for the game design including what the world should feel and look like, I have drawn inspiration from flat illustrations that have organic lines and forms (mostly digitally hand drawn) to be consistent with the fantasy city I created. Lastly, the game is structured almost like a fairytale story where the player can follow along with the events that take place, with my intention of simplifying the complex issues of the existence of Sacrifice Zones—hopefully something that even a younger audience can understand.

References

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