Proto Glod - Independent study proposal

Proto Glod is a game about discovering hidden powers and messing with reality. The principal goal of this independent study is to use the intentional direction of Proto Glod's ongoing creative production to continue learning about the Unreal development framework on a practical level, and to document the process under the Games As Research MDM methodology using GitHub.

Artist Statement & Narrative concept:

Proto-Glod is a third-person narrative-fabulative action playground game. The player steps into the shoes of a 5 to 7 year old child in a library, who can change any one object into any other by storing an imprint of the object in a magical book, then targeting another object in the environment. It's all fun and games until you use your powers on a human. Reality-based hijinks ensue, and mystic-cosmic shenanigans emerge out of the chaos. The kid learns that they are a demigod of indeterminacy; offspring of Primordial Chaos, god of non-deterministic fate; Tezcatlipoca.

Divine forces of Order and Chaos, as well as the human police, are alerted to your existence. And step forth to oppose and aid you in your quest of self discovery and rampant reality-exploitative fun. As it turns out, changing the physical world by merely thinking about it --transforming matter and energy-- comes up against detrimental phenomena mediated by laws of conservation. And it really grits the metaphorical teeth of certain entities; auditors of reality, as they are known in Terry Pratchet's Discworld --embodied forces of order and pragmatism.

Our demi-god anti hero can act in small playful ways at first. But, as their power progressively increases; the very fabric and structure of existence is put at risk. Which is maybe not entirely a bad thing. Tezcatlipoca encourages ever-increasing abstraction, human imagination is the limit.

The tone of the game is meant to be comical. Absurd, silly, and whimsical even when dealing with existential themes and potentially disturbing elements of magical violence. It is not meant to be graphic nor explicit, but it does intend to take horror and dread seriously from a storytelling and action-based performance perspective. All the elements of the design, from visual aesthetics, to writing, to interaction mechanics, should be in service of a welcoming and playful atmosphere that invites players to view the conditions of our mortal existence as a source of amusement and dynamic transformation, rather than fear and nihilism.

Core Mechanics:
- Third person CCC (Character, Camera, Controls).
- Dialogue Interactions, and story progression.
- Unlock-flows and environmental puzzles.
- Ability to copy objects of the environment into a magic book and change other objects in the environment into the copied object by targeting them with the book.
- Non-lethal magical combat using object swapping mechanics.

Development Objectives:
The following are tasks ranging in scope and priority, categorized by design disciplines. They are representative of the current Conceptualization and Prototyping stage of production. For a more granular view of the immediate design actions, and to get a better idea of the intended time-bound cadence of development see the Production Schedule.

Level Design:
- Block out prototype level based on library layout.

Visual Development:
- Conceptualize character design.

Gameplay Programming / Narrative Design:
- Implement prototype NPC.
- Implement the dialogue system.
- Implement the targeting system (object detection).
- Implement the mesh swapping system.

Character Art / Asset Creation:
- Model, texture, and rig the main character.

Documentation / Analysis:
- Upkeep of MDM tracking through journal entries, targeted reflexions, bug reporting, and GitHub commit messages contextualizing my design process.

Production Schedule:

Spring Sprint:

Discipline / Week	W1 March 12-19	W2 March 20-26	W3 March/April 26-2	W4 April 3-9	W5 April 10-16	W6 April 17-23	W7 April 24-30
Level Design	--------	level block-out iteration - In-engine layout	--------	-------	------	--------	--------
Visual Development	--------	--------	Main character design - rough concepting	-------	------	--------	Main character design - final key art, turnabout technical drawings
Gameplay Programming / Narrative Design	--------	--------	--------	Targeting system technical investigation - Ray-casting, object detection	NPC technical investigation - extend player class, idle animation	Dialogue technical investigation - proximity + player orientation trigger, UI text box	--------
Character Art / Asset Creation	--------	--------	--------	-------	------	Bug Fixing Void Being feet floating	Experiment with Metahuman character asset creation based on concept art
Documentation / Analysis	Ongoing MDM tracking	Ongoing MDM tracking	Ongoing MDM tracking	Ongoing MDM tracking	Ongoing MDM tracking	Ongoing MDM tracking	Ongoing MDM tracking
Planning	Spring and Summer task planning	--------	--------	-------	------	--------	--------

Note: Classes end April 17

Summer Sprint:

Discipline / Week	W1 May 10-14	W2 May 25-21	W3 May 22-28	W4 May/June 28-4	W5 June 5-11	W6 June 12-18	W7 June 19-25	W8 June/July 26-2
Level Design	--------	--------	Block-out iteration, 'Dungeon' layout ideation - Expand on prototype level thinking about environmental puzzle and exploration mechanics (sketches, grey-boxing)	Stablish DCC integration workflow - Start environment exploration in Blender based on concept art and integrate to engine	------	--------	--------	-------
Visual Development	--------	Interior environment concepting - Create initial concept art trying to build a sese of place.	--------	-------	------	--------	--------	-------
Gameplay Programming / Narrative Design	Targeting system iteration, mesh swapping experimentation - Continue implementation of targeting system - Build mesh swapping controls on targeting system*	NPC/ Dialogue - Continue implementation and iteration of NPC dialogue	Experiment with level transition and trigger volumes	-------	Writing/ story/ fabulative design - Story progression brainstorm/ outline - World building	--------	--------	-------
Character Art / Asset Creation	--------	--------	--------	Experiment with Metahuman character integration	Character Modeling - Blockout	Character Modeling - Refine	Character Texturing - Texture paint and surface maps	Character Rigging and integration
Documentation / Analysis	Ongoing MDM tracking	Ongoing MDM tracking	Ongoing MDM tracking	Ongoing MDM tracking	Ongoing MDM tracking	Ongoing MDM tracking	Ongoing MDM tracking	Ongoing MDM tracking - Independent study retrospective

Note: Concordia Academic Dates Summer 2023: Term 1: May 10 - July 2. Term 2: July 3 - August 10
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◦ Create Static Mesh Getting and Setting system on button press event for targeted objects.

References and inspiration:
- https://steven-universe.fandom.com/wiki/Rose%27s_Room_(location) | Rose's room from Steven Universe can manifest the occupants desires within a computational limit. Prominently featured in S1 E19 of the series. The time travel episode in the same season (Steven and the Stevens) is also representative of the tone I'm aiming for.
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tezcatlipoca | Drawing a lot of inspiration from Mesomamerican mythology. I am adapting and re-interpreting as I come across different interpretations of the significance of Tezcatlipoca, and process them through my brain.
- https://zelda.fandom.com/wiki/The_Legend_of_Zelda:_Link%27s_Awakening | TLOZ: Link's Awakening (1993 and 2019 remake) is about an illusory world dreamed up by the Wind Fish. Waking up the dreamer would end the world, yet that is Link's quest.
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Control_(video_game) | Contro (2019), snappy gameplay featuring supernatural abilities and a really interesting narrative concept.
- https://youtu.be/Fw2XeEvhUA4 | In The Under Presents, your mask allows you to 'craft' potions and magical VFX by combining objects from the environment, snapping your fingers and manipulating time.

- https://everythingeverywhere.fandom.com/wiki/Jobu_Tupaki | Jobu Tupaki from Everything Everywhere All at Once can bend reality to her will.
- https://hades.fandom.com/wiki/Chaos | Chaos in Hades offers powerful boons for unforgiving tradeoffs.
- https://discworld.fandom.com/wiki/Auditors_of_Reality | The Auditors Of Reality are recurring antagonists in Terry Pratchett's Discworld universe.
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Library_of_Babel | Jorge Luis Borges is always an inspiration when it comes to anything related to infinity. In this short story he explores the idea of an infinite library.