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Project 4: AIML

"You won't truly know someone until you fight them," Seraph said in the *Matrix Reloaded*. Surely Street Fighter's Ryu would have the same idea, on which I center my AIML sparring program (spar.aiml). Interactions are created by the user using some kind of fighting verb in a sentence, optionally paired with a directionality statement (e.g. "*I'm going to punch your face off!*" or "*This kick will turn your legs to jelly!*").

The bot introduces and beckons the user to spar, with the user having options to hit (most importantly punching and kicking) high, mid, or low. Each time a user lands a hit, the bot changes its stance (direction in which it is blocking) to prevent a similar attack. The user can even ask the bot what stance it's in to prepare their next attack. This directionality is also translated into face, body, and legs for a more realistic and engaging experience.

This is the first issue I met, requiring me to simplify the directional vocabulary unless I were to have up to seven lines specifying a direction or body part to hit, as AIML lacks a simple "includes" type of method to condense or perhaps create an array for such a vocabulary. Nonetheless, in order to land a hit, it's important to aim first, so when the user <verbs> a body part, they must specify where that <verb> was directed. This helps avoid confusing interactions on the program's end as well as simplify the user's input.

Of course, there is more than just fighting, the user can try chatting with the bot, and the bot ironically responds that when fighting there is no time to chat past a taunt or two. When the user's hit lands, sometimes the bot starts a conversation about where the user learned such a terrifying move.

All of the above were the main points that arose during the peer critique. At first, I had considered creating a simplistic Street Fighter game, whereby the user and bot fought each other as characters Ryu and Ken, respectively; however, the critique confirmed my reservation that this would be quite complex, especially with the narrow coding scope of AIML. The second greatest point made during the critique, directed at everyone, was how engaging the bot should be to entice the user to actually converse with it. They found that having a very assertive (in my case, *taunting*) personality for the bot was the best way to extract the most interest from the user. My diversity of interactions (fighting, blocking, missing, taunting, and other chatting) allows breadth within my fighting-themed scope, and the bot's restlessness when the user doesn't fight moves the user to action.