How can I use an analog game design project to create positive representation of race and sexuality that better reflects the future I wish to see?

**Methods & Inspirations**

- Exploring buildings and liminal spaces at night with friends and my partner (*"this is research!?"*)
- Magical realism, the Welcome to Night Vale podcast; queer culture on Tumblr; as well as scholarly readings

**Specific representation of ethnicity & sexuality**

Asian and African characters are often depicted without the recognition that those categories hold many specific ethnicities. So I created characters specifically Nigerian and Vietnamese, which excited my game to represent the differences.

Similarly, sexuality is often portrayed as either gay or straight. So, I included romantic and sexual orientations such as bisexuality, asexuality, and demisexuality.

**Research & Redesign**

Inspired by the idea that “non-normative temporal acts such as resetting, rewinding” are playfully queer (*Knutson*), and the game *Queers In Love at the End of the World*,

- **Shifting timeline mechanic** - At the beginning of each turn, if the player wants, time shifts and players enter a new timeline with new characters. With this mechanic, I wanted to emphasize the importance of here and now, and how we do our best to enjoy it with the people we love.

Inspired by:

- *Mathis’* radical words on tenderness, healing, & platonic intimacy, and my mentor’s values-based class ARTG 129: Speculative Futures
- *Subverting chrononormativity with the idea of joy in living slowly (Hesse, Popova) and “queered temporality in... unushed pacing and nonlinear structure” of games (Peluron)*

- **Value-inspired gameplay** - Players now work together to create enjoyable dates for both/all of them. The rules state outright that the game is about taking care of yourself and others.

- **Flexible gameplay** - Subverting chrononormativity, the game is as long or short as players want it to be. Players win if they are smiling and enjoying themselves, having crafted an experience that takes care of both/all of them and is wholesome and good.

**Juxtaposition of liminal settings with intimate gameplay and characterization**

- >= Adding more small juicy-feeling choices to queer the time (slower, more pleasurable) and space (joy where you expect loneliness/existentialism)
- >= Keeping consistent endearing and quirky characterization

**Conclusion**

The end goal of the card game is bringing the intimacy during gameplay into the non-diegetic space. A queer game can offer a “hopeful vision of queer living through a kind of queer micro-world building” (*Ruberg, 169*). I hope my game with its positive representation, inherent values, and whimsical space does just that.

I aim to publish the card game by early summer.

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