

INFSCI 1090 - Game Design - Raid 1

THE ASCENT

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Overview

- Shinto gods
 - Luck, fortune, fertility, etc.
 - Mountain God (protects/looks after mountain)
- Combine exploration and puzzle solving
- Experience story through eyes of non-human
 - Use visuals rather than dialogue/text
- Due to spiritual background, add other spiritual-esque ideas
 - possession/body hopping
 - colorful/mystical environments
 - Soul corruption
 - Actions determine whether soul becomes more pure/corrupt

Audience

- Single-player adventure puzzle game (exploration/solution)
 - Similar to Legend of Zelda
 - Antagonist's existence threatens to destroy all life
 - Focuses on puzzles rather than fighting
- Systems - playstation 4, Xbox One, PC
 - With use of controller
- Targeted towards game players of any age above ~10



Story

- Sudden appearance of unknown plague
 - Causing mountain plant life and some animals to die
 - Others turning into violent grotesque creatures
 - Kills the god of the mountain
 - Relinquishing power/role to another
- Cause:
 - Powerful beast who is spiritually corrupt, seemingly cursing all around it
 - Resides at the top of the mountain
- Solution:
 - Newly reborn mountain god must
 - “Discover its calling”
 - Find out what’s happening on the mountain
 - Find a way to save the mountain

Gameplay: Core Gameplay

- During each level
 - Switch between available animals
 - Overcome environmental obstacles
 - using different animals and their abilities
 - Solve puzzles in the ruins
- At the end of each level
 - Uncover story
 - Choose to sacrifice (for power) or free animals used to solve the puzzle/level

Gameplay: Controls



Gameplay: Levels

- Intro:
 - Start out as spirit of the mountain god
 - Inside statue in a small shrine at the bottom of the mountain
 - Mountain god must escape the shrine
 - Only visible way out is an open window
 - Must use cricket, frog, and/or spider to escape

Gameplay: Sound Design

- During calm gameplay:
 - Sounds of nature
 - Birds, crickets, cicadas singing/chirping
 - Running water (if stream/waterfall nearby)
 - Animal activity
 - Weather (wind rustling leaves, raindrops, ect)
- During intense gameplay/cutscenes: (ex. chase scenes, timed levels, ect)
 - intense/frantic instrumental music
 - Increases feeling of anxiousness, being rushed, danger

Gameplay: Characters

Mountain God:

- Protector of the mountain
- Takes on appearance of fox
 - True form is just wisp (spirit)
- Reborn at the start of the game
 - Unaware of its role as a god, mountains current events

Beast:

- Bear whose soul became corrupted
 - Circumstances unknown to player
- God of another mountain
 - Reason spiritual corruption causes destruction (unlike other corrupted animals)
- After own mountain destroyed, moved to mountain game takes place on

Gameplay: Characters Continued

Mountain Animals:

- Oblivious to reasons behind corruption
 - See as nothing other than “danger”
 - Intelligence reflects real world species intelligence
- Includes:
 - Rats, mice, crickets, cicada, foxes, rabbits, snakes, birds, owls, goats, weasels, wolves
 - Ezo momonga (flying squirrel), Tanuki (raccoon dog), giant salamanders, Shima Enaga (bird native to Hokkaido), Asian Black Bears, Japanese macaques, Red Panda

Corrupted:

- Animals which have survived the corruption
 - Transformed appearance
 - Behaviors become extremely aggressive/hostile towards everything/anything

Gameplay: Special Abilities

- Each animal has own single special ability
- Ex.
 - Rat - gnaw through objects like rope
 - Crow/Birds - flight/can carry objects while flying
 - Goat - rams objects
 - Gopher - dig holes

Goals & Objectives

- Uncover (explore/solution) and stop source of destruction
- Must advance from bottom to top level of mountain
 - Each level has different obstacles
 - Requires different skills/approaches

Rules & Procedures

Rules:

- Must be within targetable range of animal to switch
- Can abandon animal's body and return to default form

Procedures:

- Player gets past obstacles and puzzles by
 - Running, jumping, sneaking/crouching, grabbing/moving objects, body switching, using special abilities

Resources

- Resources vary from level to level:
 - Some levels require animal switching
 - Some levels have objects that need to be found, moved, manipulated
 - Some levels have other characters/animals to interact with, avoid, confront
 - Some levels are timed

Conflict/Friction

- Obstacles
 - Environmental
 - Structures
 - Violent NPCs
- Puzzles
 - Multiple ways to solve



The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker

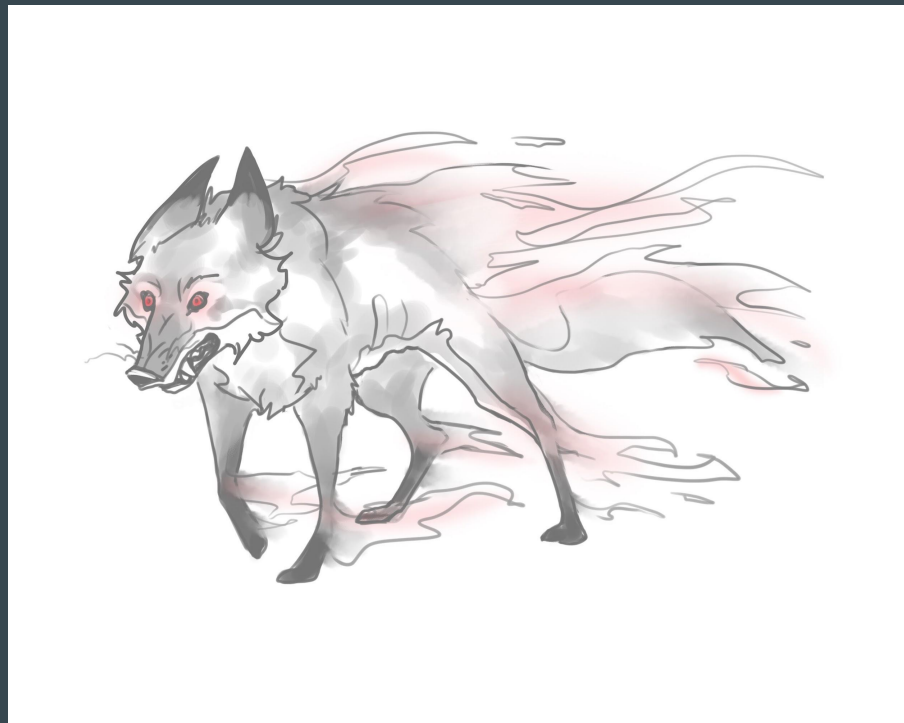
Outcomes

Story Resolutions:

- Pure
 - Mountain god cures the Beast at top of the mountain
 - Restores peace and life to mountain
- Corrupt
 - Mountain god gains enough power from taking animal's life force
 - Kills the corrupted Beast
 - Takes on same role of corrupted Beast;
 - Mountain god's evil presence corrupts rest of mountain
 - Forced to move elsewhere, destroying everything in its path

Feedback

- If player decides to sacrifice animals to gain power:
 - Wispy ball of energy (life force/soul) ripped from body of animal, absorbed into mountain god's body
 - Causes mountain god's body to pulse and result in (gradual) change of appearance
 - Mountain god appearance turns dark/ominous
 - Fur becomes dark/black
 - Emits shadowy tendrils
 - Grows extended spiked spine



Art by Sam Bowen

Feedback Continued

- If player decides to free animals:
 - Mountain god is embraced in pure white light
 - Results in change of appearance towards pureness
 - Mountain god appearance turns pure/angelic
 - Fur turns white
 - Glowing light blue designs appear on fur
 - Emits pure glow



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Feedback Continued

- If player fails puzzle or dies:
 - Failing/death scene fades to black
 - Mountain god wakes up from “dream”
 - Start back at beginning of level
 - Laying on ground, gets up after “waking up”



Game World

- Mountain (fictional) exists in Japan far from civilization
- No interactions with society or culture
 - Aside from Shinto shrines dedicated to mountain god
 - Exist on mountain, built centuries ago
- Each level exists at certain altitude of mountain
 - First level starts at bottom of mountain
 - Last level occurs at top of mountain
- Time controlled by each level
 - Certain levels occur during nighttime and others during daytime
- Physics work normally

Touchstones

- Mushishi - 2 episodes about mountain gods
 - Reincarnation
 - Protecting mountain
- Legend of Zelda
 - Puzzles somewhat similar
 - Must get past environmental obstacles
 - Instead of using different items, use different animals



Prototype (text-based)

Twine: “An open-source tool for telling interactive, nonlinear stories”

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