

This Analysis Doesn't Exist.

Game Analysis: Stealth

Written by: Johnathan Weiner

GAM330: Professor Marquit



http://vignette1.wikia.nocookie.net/vsbattles/images/a/a3/Black-windows_542931.jpg/revision/latest?cb=20150317090032

There is nothing wrong with your computer nor your sight. What you see is a pitch black image, and yet is that all that's there? Only the imagination can say otherwise, though of course by the time one realizes they would be wrong, it's too late. Mankind has always been infatuated with the ideals of camouflage, silent maneuvers, and that which cannot be fathomed. This ideal has been used in history from pranks to full out tactics in war.

To understand and focus on Stealth style games, one has to understand its relations to the real world. The easiest viewpoint of true stealth is by studying the art of espionage and camouflage, best seen in the feudal era's ninjas whom originated in Iga. Ninja's had no name, no identity, and didn't exist. Ninja's were never heard, never seen, voice never spoken. To be known that they exist is death. All of their clothes, weapons, and knowledge was spent on being completely unseen and unheard of. If any of these were to be broken, it would be safer and more honorable to hide and distract or commit suicide instead of being captured. They existed to serve, never to speak, and were the masters of espionage Assassinations and killing is a last minute resort. To a ninja, nothing was considered being a coward, any tactic was fine as long as it accomplished the task, but fighting head on meant you were dead. The thing is, though, that stealth games are based around the concept of being an entertainment value first above realism, appealing to the mass market of individuals. As such, many of these concepts are

diluted and thrown away, with only a few games truly taking inspirations from the true concept of stealth.

Videogames have taken the route of stealth mechanics for a very long time, but nothing was completely focused on stealth until 1981 when the arcade cabinet game 005 was created by Sega. It was the very first game to feature using pure avoidance instead of violence to win the game, maneuvering around enemies and their flashlights to score points. The principle of stealth is rather simple: Avoid being seen, don't cause commotion, and complete your goal in this aspect. The concept is simple but the execution is very challenging. Thankfully, games have made it easier for the average person to feel as though they are a shadow in the night by supplying special tells that other genre's don't display as readily. These include sight boxes, a type of cone or shape that indicates the radius of an enemy's sight and detection; light manipulation, methods of controlling the shadows to hide the character from any presence; and disguises, any method of concealing the character's identity, the best known ones even doing so from the player of the game itself.



<http://vignette1.wikia.nocookie.net/spyversusspy/images/9/9d/Spy-vs-spy.jpg/revision/latest?cb=20120112005128>

Personally, I am not very good at the stealth aspect, even though I am a very cautious and slow paced gamer. A lot of today's stealth games put pressure on time, making it a big impact on the overall grade and score of one's performance as a player. Stealth is also often seen as simply a mechanic in a much larger spectrum and rarely is it used for the entire focus of a game, turning me off from its usage as it breaks the flow of what I'd expect to be something else. Other times, the term stealth is used vaguely as simply being "don't get caught" instead of the realistic aspects of such. Such games use stealth as simply a side mechanic when the main focus is killing everything and being a showboat. A very common example of an additional platform being used as a focus instead of stealth is platformer, ironically. While I want to focus on the stealth aspect of the game, I am a terrible platform gamer and usually can't get very far once the true parkour starts.

Disclaimer: Don't get me wrong, there's nothing wrong with the stealth genre and the games that use it as a sub-genre, it just isn't my kind of style. I can see and feel the appeal when playing the game but eventually the skill level required is beyond my reaction timing. I have tried one or two before, especially when I got my PlayStation binge as a child, but now-a-days I haven't touched on much in the stealth category. I can't exactly comment on what a good and/or bad stealth game is because of that.