

Sean Cain

*The Black Pages* Author's Statement

I had several ambitious ideas for this project. I quickly realized I wouldn't be able to achieve most of them in the allotted time, but I created a rendition that I was very happy with. Originally I planned three distinct paths each with distinct endings to reflect the player's personal philosophy. The game dealt with perceptual reality and monsters that hide themselves by bending existence so I expected player reaction to be varied. I narrowed this down to four main philosophies:

1. These discoveries should be known by the public.
2. I deserve to be rewarded for my trials and tribulations.
3. Above all else, these monsters should be destroyed to protect people.
4. No outcome of this scenario is worth the risk (The player instantly loses if they choose this path)

It's certainly possible to agree with multiple of these but I would imagine one would be the most important depending on the individual. I named each of these philosophies accordingly:

1. The Path of the Intellectual
2. The Path of the Industrious
3. The Path of the Protector
4. The Path of the Reasonable

These distinct paths were ultimately cut and instead represented with the endings. Rather than giving the player the choice of three distinct paths I decided to give them three distinct endings because that required far less time to create. You can still see all of these philosophies reflected in my ending.

1. Releasing the evidence to the public is the Path of the Intellectual
2. Giving the evidence to the mystery man and receiving payment is the Path of the Industrious
3. Destroying the monster is the Path of the Protector
4. Bailing the game out of fear is the Path of the Reasonable

All of these paths all have unique drawbacks that I wanted to illustrate. No ending is perfect.

1. While releasing the evidence to the public may better the world as intended the player is assassinated. They die as a martyr.
2. While the player receives payment, they're left to wonder what exactly the man plans to do with the evidence and how long this information will be hidden.
3. Destroying the monster leaves the player somewhat traumatized and they receive no reward for their victory other than security in knowing the monster is destroyed.
4. Leaving the game early makes the player feel somewhat cowardly.

With this I think I can summarize the largest argument I'm making with this game. Reality is within each individual. Opinions and perceptions make up what each individual considers real. There is an objective reality that everyone draws from but there are nuances between each individual. "I think therefore I am" the only reality we can be certain of is the reality within ourselves. The Reality Check in my game allows us to break away from that. There is a reality external from us that can be revealed by a device. Yet each player can decide what to do with this information and decide what *should* be done. So even though reality is now undeniably objective the outcomes of opinion can differ. There is still a level of internality that comes with individuality and that is something I hoped to capture with my game.