

by northwes:7

on December 11, 2018

under Arts & Entertainment,

Opinion

tagged video game reviews

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VIDEO GAME REVIEWS: "SUPER MARIO ODYSSEY" AND "LEGEND OF ZELDA: BREATH OF THE WILD"



Image courtesy flickr.com

By Jarod Wright

"Super Mario Odyssey" and "The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild" have sold 12.7 million and 10.82 million copies respectively. The average rating by critics for both games are at a 97 out of a 100. So, obviously both are insanely popular, but what makes these games so good? And are they even good?

As a bit of background, my first video game was "Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time" and I played "Paper Mario" and "Super Mario 64" a little later on. I owned nearly every Zelda game and owned many Mario video games. My favorite Zelda game is "Twilight Princess" for the GameCube, and my favorite Mario game is "Paper Mario: The Thousand-Year Door" for the GameCube. In other words, I do have a fair amount of knowledge with both of these series. So, when I say that "Breath of the Wild" (BotW) has changed up the normal Zelda formula in a good way, but Super Mario Odyssey does the exact opposite, I don't say it lightly.

How have I come to these conclusions? Well, BotW was a bit of an uncomfortable change at first, as the majority of the other games are linear, where you'd hop dungeon to dungeon with two swords gained through the story and tools gained in the dungeons that help fight the boss of that dungeon. So an open-world Zelda game, with all the tools unlocked at the beginning and every weapon being able to break after about two fights, feels quite a bit jarring compared to the other games. However, it grew on me; you learn how to fight in such a way that your weapons don't decay as quickly, and there is a charming story to be told within the game. A story one can completely skip if they so desire — instead of roaming to the four cities around the world, one instead can go straight for the last boss whenever they please. The quickest anyone has beaten the game was at 39 minutes and 35 seconds; meanwhile, it took me 85 hours to beat the game. It is very fun and I would definitely recommend it.

Mario Odyssey, on the other hand, has a fastest time to beat it at an hour and a minute. It took me 15 hours. Not because I was enjoying the mechanics and the world, but there wasn't any draw for me to continue or explore, or to do anything for that matter. The game's graphics look amazing, and it improves on the movement and jumping capabilities of previous iterations. The soundtrack is executed perfectly, and there is an interesting new ability for Mario to have; a sort of possession of his enemies. It allows for new movement and abilities such as gliding, standing really tall, becoming a tank to blow up stuff, and more. However, it falters in character and story. The game sets itself up with Mario and Cappy (Mario's new living ghost hat) as the protagonists and main characters, the story follows Mario trying to stop Bowser from forcing Peach to marry him. From this point forward, Mario and Cappy try to stop Bowser's minions in different parts of the world in a flying ship, as the minions gather materials for the wedding. While this idea is definitely unique, it gets stale fast, and there is nothing to add to the entire story; the characters of the world and the story within the areas leave something to be desired. There is nothing substantive in the story besides possessing a person or two, fighting the main boss, winning — but still losing the object you were looking for — and then that area has been "saved" and while they lost whatever object they had, they are grateful toward you for saving them.

BotW, on the other hand, has one big open map, with four main story areas. In those areas you have to work with someone for each fight. To an extent, you work with this person, gain their trust, then go off to fight a boss with this person. Also, there is a lot more at stake for most of the boss fights. For instance, in Mario Odyssey you are trying to save some food from Bowser's minions, but in BotW you are trying to save the entire land from a boss that threatens to destroy everything. This happens more than once, but also it is not stressed that every boss threatens the entire map.

Overall, I do appreciate the improvements and new mechanics they made with Mario Odyssey, but the story left a lot to be desired. While BotW had a few semi-uncomfortable changes, such as and a weapon decay system that take a while to get used to, you begin

to truly enjoy the game and all the effort that went into making it. I'd definitely recommend trying out Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild, I would only say to try Super Mario Odyssey if that kind of game sounds interesting to you.

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