



Gaming's Evil Empire

And How to Get back to the Passion of Creating Great Video Games

By

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Everything on this planet evolves, so do video games. And it's time for some serious evolving in the Video Game Industry these days. Now, before you start rolling your eyes, and thinking "oh gee, it's just another gamer going on and on and on..." Shut up and listen! When I was a kid, video gaming was still in its infancy. I mean, it was a thing; I'm not one of those dinosaurs before it existed, but I've payed my dues. I was poor, so I didn't have the brand-new consoles, and was always behind the proverbial learning curve. That's why when I'm about to name-drop this amazing title, everyone is going to understand where I came from, (well, maybe not all of you, but still). Galaga was my first video game. So this pixilated majesty that I was about to witness when I opened my poor little Irish brain, this wonderful world of disillusion, the moment I popped that game in, hit the power button and heard that "doo-didle-oo!" it was an amazing thing and I was hooked.

For me those early video games had a very loose story, and thus, we were encouraged to make our own. Once we started playing games with in-depth storylines, games changed, and we changed with them. Early gaming it became a contest of who had the biggest, baddest console or platform, as we were seeing the early beginnings of PC gaming as well. At every turn, it was constantly something new, and you were literally traveling through worlds of wonderment, experiencing an enjoyment overload. Honestly, who remembers the first time they popped in "Double Dragon?"

Everyone remembers the sensation the first time they got to transform an altered beast, and everyone remembers the first time they got to watch the cinematic scene of Zerg rip apart an ignorant army private for the first time. But we also remember all the pains and credits that came with it too. We remember having to blow into cartridges or jamming a butter knife into the Nintendo so it would stay down, or playing it so long the damn thing nearly overheats and catches fire.

Remember the first time we experienced bug glitches on the Playstation with Legend of Dragoon, knowing half the world wasn't finished yet. Us older gamers are in an odd place now. Transitionally, for the much, much older gamer, you remember the time before original gaming consoles, or when they were in their infancy, but we're at this crossroads, where we can remember, but not quite sure if we can like the future of gaming we're seeing. This is because we're seeing the plateau, at the tip of the crescendo, and just like we're seeing in mainstream Hollywood, they just keep redoing the same shit. If I see one more mother fucking Spiderman or Batman game, or one more game that rips off Fortnite, PUBG, League of Legends, World of Warcraft, etc., I'm going to freak the fuck out. We have reached a pivotal point in gaming right now. We've hit the point where it's less about the console and more about the game. Don't get me wrong, it's a fantastic thing, but we need that creative boost that comes from competition. Like striving America vs. Russia cold war arms kind of stuff. And I'm talking, console wars back in the day where you would cut a mother fucker for being a Sega fan, - even though Sega is totally fucking awesome and legit. It's like when they were fighting with each other to be the biggest, baddest console, that was when the hype was real. It was real, and serious, and you could cut that shit with a machete, because it wasn't just in the advertisement or the TV commercials, but how they produced games.

A flop in the market could be the end of a company. But now, there is no fear; no fear of the studio dying, no crashing down, they're simply so solidified now. Because there's no fear, there's no creative spark, nothing to lose means no reason to put forth quality. There is some true creative spark out there, but there's not enough of it, -it's not out there breathing fire like fucking Smaug. And when there is any spark, they're clamoring for it, because it is bang or bust! Since there's so little out there, and because of the over commercialization of the gaming industry, the few creative pools are being too vastly drawn upon, so we're left with repetitious pounding of the meat pile that used to be the dead fucking horse... these people are being over tapped and overdrawn, and due to this, you're left with half finished games. Like we have now.

As gamers we are having serious issues with Fallout 76, No-Man Sky, Mass Effect Andromeda, with them being glitchy as hell and downright shitty games...just to name a few over the last few years. The consumers bitch at the studios for having slow, laggy games, but whereas the studio and software companies are bitching at the consumer, they should be going "ya know what, you're right! But we're limited by the

console." And that's the thing. Where the drive ends to be the biggest, baddest console, without that competitive drive there, everything suffers. That's the sure-stead sign that the game has become, in fact, what it has been labeled; an industry. It's no longer a contest, and the fat-cats have all the money. And that's why when you look at the way our games are made now, its all about in-app purchases, VIP exclusive content, and the bigger, badder, triple-platinum-diamond-obsidian, veinier dick like package, so you can get this elusive horseshit that no one fucking cares about at the low, low price of only \$128! And it's just... really? What the fuck?.... I still enjoy going back and playing those really old games, like Diablo II, Starcraft, or Battletoads, or all the original Mario games, or speed twinging my wrists in twisting-rage playing sonic the hedgehog.

I still talk about the amazing precedence of that Metal Gear set. It was all anyone talked about. I remember even the goofiest things like Spyro the dragon and Crash Bandicoot, were playable by all, and much to this old player's delectation, to see them alive and revived today. That's what needs to happen. We need to take that dusty ass hat off the shelf, and not take a look at it to see if we can reinvent it, but rather put that shit on our heads. We need to look at the old way of doing video games, bring them back to life, and retell those games' stories, but evolve the system. Instead of using the same old hack the system of whatever is currently socially popular, (Vikings, special agent bullshit, zombies, anything overplayed right now) and throw that shit to the wayside. We need to get the fuck away from that. No more following the trends; we need to be the one setting the trends. We are now at a time where gaming is literally us making the heroic battle of old. Digital bards and poets of antiquity, a I'm happy to see the gaming style of Assassins Creed Odyssey that just came out to dip into that. But we need to not simply dip our toes, but rather to dive in, head first. Take a risk if yuou now what I mean!

So why not take Galaga, make it a space fighter pilot game, inspired by some of the amazing depictions of battles found in the Hindu faith such as the Bhagavad Gita? Where is the new stuff?? We're at a time where we could be telling these amazing, beautifully depicted stories and be actually experiencing them. That is something they touched on ever so gently in the latest God of War. But instead of seeing the North Nantheon and the Greek Pantheon, show me the pantheons of the middle east, of Asia, of the islanders, Give me something new! The Witcher series has done well to introduce us to Slavic folklore, but the problem is, that the shift we're going towards these days is less storytelling, and the build your own adventure you get from multiplayer.

Would it be so much to ask to get an MMO style game where you are inundated with not only the myths and folklore of Mongolia, where you are one of the soldiers rising through the ranks of the great Genghis Kahn. How difficult would it be to do something like that? Well, you might say it's already been done with video games of

empire, but is it really? You don't see the numbers, attention, or crowd that you're seeing with Skyrim, because they're just not done well. And because they're not done well, they're not getting interesting, and the vicious spiral spins out of control. The biggest obstacle for them to get the attention and quality deserved is because they're being stifled. What needs to happen is we need to revolve ourselves, and out it into a direction where its useful; most of our games these days look like a stupid little app game bleeding people for money, and it's ridiculous. We don't want to pay \$60 to \$200 of hard-earned money to be given the same old thing, with the same graphics we've had for the past six or seven years, and the same retelling of the game that came out ten years ago. And we sure the hell, don't want to pay \$80 to walk around aimlessly in a game and have no direction.

We need to be rebranding and renaming ourselves. We need the resurgence of healthy competition in games. I'm not sure how best this needs to come along, but it needs to happen. But as it stands right now, we're in a very precarious situation. Do we 100% know what that the future of gaming hold...no. I would love to say that in the past ten years that there has been a game that I just can't get enough of and that I could go back to time and time again. And I'm going to. But the reasons that I like these games are not because they impacted gaming in a big scheme, nor were they such amazing blockbusters that they took everyone's breath away, but rather that they simply spoke to me. Assassin's Creed III was just an amazing take on the American Revolutionary War, and it was this game that brought me into the franchise, which is great, because I'm getting the same experience and the same take on the new Assassin's Creed game, and cannot wait to see where Ubisoft takes us next. But in the way of games like Shadows of the Tomb Raider where they have this amazing female lead and an amazing opportunity to sum up everything about her as the heroine she is supposed to be, then the game ends with very little closure and you're left without any form of satisfaction that Lara Croft is the baddest bitch ever. Instead, you end up feeling like she is a meddling white woman interfering in the lives of the indigenous peoples and is directly the cause of the death of hundreds of thousands of people of color, in my humble opinion. What kind of message does that send?

Game designers and developers have the huge responsibility to tell better stories and to expand on our horizon in gaming, not just be degraded by it. We should be pushing ourselves for the biggest and most bad ass experiences gaming can provide us; we are just getting to the point to be doing things in VR, but we've arrived here too late in the game! We should've already been here in 2009! It's 2019, where are my flying cars, why do we still have load screens, and why don't I have VR so realistic that I can feel the blood spray on my face as I splay an Orc with a serrated blade forged in the Dwarven flames Rexus Omega Prime??? The answer to all these questions and more is simple: It needs to stop being corporate and go back to being about passion.