Jimmy

Andy

Others- Elaine

Super Odyssey in Quarantine

Introduction

Welcome to this week's episode of the series, titled "Super odyssey in

Quarantine". And in this episode, we will dive into a game that is widely popular

among households in recent years. The simplicity to follow and strong background development are the first impressions of such a game. But before we deeply dig into the topic, please allow me to first introduce my wonderful team members, who assist me to organize to put all together: Andy Kim, my dear assistant producer, and Jimmy Wang, my fantastic line producer; and I am Elaine Han, today's producer, and in this episode, we are actually introducing the game of *Super Mario Odyssey*.

Main Content

So, I guess, all of us are all not unfamiliar with Mario. What comes up with your mind when knowing we are analyzing *Super Mario Odyssey* this week?

Well, not gonna lie, I think of one's childhood. Yeah, looking at the kids in my host family playing it around in leisure time is definitely the enjoyment and memory of my high school, and I realize the history and wide popularity of this game gradually impact generation and generation.

Well said, thank you Jimmy. That's exactly what I was thinking about. But guess what, this is not the time of the typical old Mario game, this is for the newest version *Super Mario Odyssey*. *Super Mario Odyssey* is a platform game developed and published by Nintendo on October 27, 2017. It is a platform game in which players control Mario as he travels across many different worlds, known as "Kingdoms" within the game, on the hat-shaped ship Odyssey, to rescue Princess Peach from Bowser, who plans to forcibly marry her. The Kingdoms in the game return to the exploration-based level design featured in *Super Mario 64*. Each Kingdom has Mario searching for and clearing various objectives in order to obtain items known as Power

Moons, which are the power sources of the Odyssey and grant access to new Kingdoms. Checkpoint flags littered throughout each Kingdom allow Mario to instantly warp to them once activated. Certain levels feature areas called "flat" zones, where Mario is placed in a 2D side-scrolling environment similar to his appearance in the original Super Mario Bros. In addition to his existing moves, like triple-jumping and wall-jumping, Mario can throw his cap, the physical form of a hat spirit named Cappy, in multiple directions to attack enemies and use as a temporary platform. When the cap is thrown at certain objects, enemies, or non-playable characters, Mario is able to take possession of them, referred to as "capturing", allowing him to use unique abilities. Throughout the game, Mario can pick up coins, including purple ones unique to each kingdom, to spend on items such as new hats and outfits, some of which are required for completing certain objectives. The game uses a health system similar to the *Super Mario Galaxy* games, although Mario has unlimited lives; the only penalty for dying is paying up to ten coins. The player can also collect items known as 'Life-Up Hearts' which grant three extra hit points. The game also features cooperative play, in which a second player takes control of Cappy and can attack enemies independently of Mario.

Before we dig deep into the topic, there are a number of things we could explore from the development of Mario. "Probing" is the thing we are actually doing here. As Steven Johnson mentioned in *Everything Bad is Good for You*, "probing involves a nuanced form of exploration". As for Super Mario Odyssey, it involves a unique process of probing not only itself, but also the river of the long history. Alongside its

development, something new, something remained all reflected in *Super Mario Odyssey*.

Hey Jimmy, would you share something you noticed that remained as Mario spirit in all the games in this series?

Jimmy: Sure! On the plot level, things seem pretty similar to what we have seen in the previous versions. Personally I was looking for some new breaks, but all I found are examples like Bowser has kidnapped Peach and is aiming to marry her, traveling across the world and collecting various wedding sundries along the way. *Odyssey* follows a basic format established by *Super Mario 64*: Mario explores a series of open-ended worlds studded with jumping challenges, puzzles and the like, collecting rewards as he goes: in this case, we're hunting after "Power Moons" to charge up our ship and explore more worlds. It does all of this through a 3D platformer, marking it as the most important Super Mario game since Nintendo used *Super Mario 64* to bust the plumber into 3D and launch the N64 way back in 1996.

Well said, thanks, Jimmy. The spirit contained in every set of games in the series is definitely the key to making it one of the most typical games in one's memories. On the other hand, *Super Mario Odyssey* also made new changes based on the previous versions; Andy, would you share something about that?

Andy: Yes! One of the most significant changes that I noticed is Mario's hat, named Cappy, which can talk and has eyes and is married to Peach's Tiara and sometimes takes the form of a fedora or a helmet. Mario uses it as a standard throw back, but the thing really stands out is when you throw it on potential enemies or

objects, you will know that the sucker is under Mario's spell once it has his signature silly mustache slapped on to its face. Furthermore, the realistic sense defined by this game - different from the previous games, marks a modern progression and takes gamers' emotion into a more recent level: Mario can hop around on billboards, bounce off taxis and climb fire escapes in a constant fulfillment of that childhood fantasy where we can just run and jump through the real world with all the freedom and grace that we can in video games. In one moment, Mario has to fight against a crowd of grey-suited commuters to get to a timed Moon on the other side of an alleyway: he can sort of manage it by bumping in between them, but he's much better off by just being Mario, jumping on their heads and bouncing over the drudgery.

Exactly right, thank you, Andy! The explosion reflected in *Odyssey* connects the older generation's emotion into the modern real world by displaying in a brand new 3D platform that is engaging enough for the younger generation to be absorbed in. By uniting in such a unique way, people in different generations would be able to communicate on the same base, yet keeping slightly different emotions towards the game that belongs to their age and memory. By playing at different times and different settings, we still meet each other, no matter space, time, or anything else we are located in.

Speaking about Mary Flanagan's book *Critical Play*, she points out that "by playing together, people form close communities and develop a group identity and a sense of belonging." The togetherness disclosed here especially has essential meaning toward the global pandemic time. *Super Mario Odyssey* provides players with an

abundant plot that gamers could virtually "earn and shop online" and explore different corners of the world by aiming at a particular goal. While social distancing at home would lack adventure and connection with others, *Super Mario Odyssey* addresses this lifestyle by creating excitement with friends. The photo-taking mode, which includes numerous filters and styles, even makes the double-player game more engaging and artistic. Thus, with such a modern world world developed in *Super Mario Odyssey*, even during Quarantine time, people are still able to search for excitement and craziness because of *Super Mario Odyssey.*

Again our friends, on a long rainy Sunday, we sit down at our desk with a cup of coffee, looking at the world. We feel confused; we feel struggling; we feel the meaninglessness of our current life, and we want to do something to address the status quo. And here comes *Super Mario Odyssey*, a virtual world with complete excitement. Through here, we find exploration, we feel engaged, we find the world is still colorful. The togetherness and craziness of this world have not left.   And we keep our emotion from the history to now, and keep it on and on.

We hope you enjoyed listening to our episode this week, Super Odyssey in Quarantine, produced by Elaine Han, Andy Kim, and Jimmy Wang, instructed by Professor David Morgen at Emory University. Check out the resources listed below in our bibliography, and stay tuned for next week's episode. BYE!

Introduction:

In this episode of the Longest Rainy Sunday, we bring our listeners to *Super Mario Odyssey*, which on one hand connects people's childhood memories and emotions, but also extends horizons to the future modern world. In our podcast, we mainly analyze the elements that remained the same in *Super Mario Odyssey* when comparing it with previous versions in the series and the elements that become new in this newest version. Finally, we connect that with our current social and pandemic time, illustrating how *Super Mario Odyssey* is related to people's daily lives under such a unique circumstance.

Source:

Super Mario Odyssey for Nintendo Switch - Nintendo Game Details, www.nintendo.com/games/detail/super-mario-odyssey-switch/.

Thier, Dave. "'Super Mario Odyssey' Review: A Perfect Game With One Problem." Forbes, Forbes Magazine, 2 Nov. 2017, www.forbes.com/sites/games/2017/11/02/super-mario-odyssey-review-a-perfect-game-with-a-problem/.

Flanagan, Mary. Critical Play. I, "Introduction to Critical Play". MIT Press, 2009.