

Play! Critical Response 3

DOOM & Sonic the Hedgehog 2

My Play! Experience

DOOM

“DOOM” is the classic game anyone born before the late 90’s will tell you is either the original or most iconic first person shooter. While those are both pretty subjective statements, I tend to agree. A game such as “DOOM” that can define an entire genre is definitely worth such titles. It is even more praise worthy when observing the environment it was born in. It found success even though the world was beginning to be dominated by the new console market started by the NES. The gameplay of “DOOM” was unique, having a first person view with multiple weapons to choose from and being able to interact with objects in the world. There was a great sense of feeling like you were the player character, who seems to be only known as “Doomguy” (literally). This kind of interaction in a game was fairly new and still holds up to this day. Even playing the game today I felt immersed in the gameplay. While the graphics are nothing special, the artistic style of them makes the game still feel unique. I never felt like I was playing an old game with terrible controls. Everything felt natural. There was no vertical aiming, only horizontal. This made the game’s controls feel easier given the limitation of no mouse controls at the time. The level design was also exciting as secrets were placed through the game in every level. There was always something to look forward to with exciting combat moments and a 3D world to explore.

Sonic the Hedgehog 2

I never had the opportunity to own a SEGA Genesis or a SNES after my many NES consoles I went through, so I had to take the opportunity to play this game again. I had friends who owned these consoles and we would play these games multiple times. I greatly enjoyed “Sonic the Hedgehog 2” (Sonic 2) for the fast paced gameplay and diverse levels. I remember as a child this game would really immerse me into its world through the fun characters and art design. It made it all the better watching cheesy TV shows like *Sonic Underground* to supplement the whole universe they created. The game itself, while not as worldly popular as “Super Mario Bros 2,” still stands the test of time as a fun game to play. It feels extremely accessible with simplistic gameplay yet it actually has a lot to offer. In this game, they introduce an extra character over the original. Tails plays similar to Sonic with the additional ability to fly. This simple ability made him so much more exciting to play as it unlocked the possibility to find many new secrets throughout the game. While there was no obvious story outside of defeating Dr. Eggman and saving the wildlife, there was always a compelling desire to play the next level and keep experiencing what more there was to be had.

1. *What kind of gameplay experiences do so-called classic games provide to modern players?*

Both “Sonic the Hedgehog 2” and “DOOM” provide unique gameplay experiences that represent their era of gaming. For Sonic, it is a representation of the console style games, which were typically a side scrolling adventure with many unique characters. For “DOOM” it was the PC first person shooters, giving lead to large 3D maps and the first person perspective. Both of these game also give the experience of fast paced gameplay, a long running theme in that time of gaming. While Nintendo focused on appealing to children with fun characters and colours, both SEGA and id Software focused on the young adult and adult markets. They did this by focusing on fast paced gameplay and more mature themes in their games, both reflected in Sonic 2 and “DOOM.” Sonic 2 is a special case where you can see SEGA’s ideology on video games but also their clear attempt to steal the Mario market from Nintendo. Regardless, the biggest experience gained from these games is a very accurate sample of the time period.

2. *Are old games only worth historical analysis, or do they fascinate & hold staying power?*

Sonic 2 and “DOOM” both show historical worth for reasons already stated. This is especially true for Sonic 2 as it shows the struggle between SEGA and Nintendo of the time, competing for market dominance in a new world. “DOOM” can even be looked into further to represent the peak of then-current generation gaming on the PC. 3D graphics were being perfected to an all new level of graphical amazement and an all new genre had been officially established. While not the first of its kind and definitely not the first game by id Software, it was definitely the most representative of their talents. What makes both of these games special is that they still hold staying power even today. Generally classic games this old have far too difficult control schemes compared to what the modern gamer is used to, making the point of entry difficult and resulting in unenjoyable experiences. For example, “Daggerfall” from the *Elder Scrolls* series was a first person RPG made in the same style as “DOOM” and only released three years after. The game was far more difficult to play due to the complex gameplay in both controls and level design. “DOOM” and Sonic 2 on the other hand are simple and artistically appealing, allowing them to still be enjoyed today.

3. *How can we account for nostalgia and one’s personal memories?*

This is especially difficult to account for with Sonic 2 and “DOOM” as both of these games are staple examples of some of both my generation and the prior’s most successful games growing up. It makes it more difficult to separate nostalgia as our generations grew up alongside mass market video games as whole. I remember being born into NES video gaming, then a Genesis, then a SNES, and playing great PC games like Commander Keen, also made by PC game developer id Software. Thus, the answer is twofold. I don’t believe it is possible to account for nostalgia amongst my generation of those who played these games. Going back and playing them again have just reinforced that these games were simply fun and I cannot separate my nostalgia from my enjoyment. That being said, we can still prove these games are as great as they are represented in media by having the next generation of child and young adult gamers play these games and allow them to be the judge of how enjoyable these games are. As they have only experienced high production games, experiencing, by comparison, low production games such as these will give a much more unbiased interpretation of how much enjoyment these games generate based on their gameplay alone.