

Analysis of Mechanics

Štefan Ftorek, xftores00

Title: Hollow Knight

Released: 2017

Author: Team Cherry

Primary Genre: Metroidvania, Souls-like

Secondary Genre: Adventure, Action, Platformer

Style: Drawn, Dark Fantasy, Atmospheric

Analysis

Introduction

Hollow Knight is a 2D side-scroller Metroidvania game developed and published by Team Cherry in 2017. The game is set in a ruined, insect-themed kingdom called Hallownest, which players explore as a silent, mysterious bug knight. Hollow Knight is one of the most well-renowned indie games of the last decade, mainly due to engaging combat, world exploration and overall atmosphere.

Genre and style

Hollow Knight primarily belongs to the Metroidvania genre, this is evident in the principle of exploration, where the player has to find and unlock certain movement abilities to reach previously unreachable places. The game involves a lot of backtracking due to this design, which may deter some players, but for most people this is offset by the intricate world building and design. The game is also regarded as a Souls-Like because of its difficulty, bosses and some similar mechanics. That said, although the combat is challenging, it's also very fair and can be learned to perfection. This makes learning and finishing the game feel very rewarding to the player. As for the secondary genres, they complement the game nicely. Because it's a Metroidvania, platforming sections and difficult parkour are a must and it adds to the difficulty and overall experience. The world of the game is suitably split into action-packed combat sections and serene places that promote relaxing exploration, thus it can be said that the impression of the game can change dramatically from moment to moment, making it an adventure. The one and perhaps the most notable aspect of the game is its art style. The 2D hand-drawn imagery created by Team Cherry is nothing short of breathtaking. This visual aspect and the atmosphere it creates is the core of the game, strongly pulling players into the dark fantasy world of Hallownest. This is also one of the reasons it's considered a Souls-Like, along with very subtle, yet complete lore that can be gleaned from the game's world and weathered signs. Another crucial part that adds to the atmosphere is the universally loved soundtrack of the game. Christopher Larkin, the composer of the soundtrack, has truly composed masterpieces suited for the fictional world.

Conclusion

I believe Team Cherry have made an ultimate blend of genres, styles and game mechanics that make up Hollow Knight. The game is critically acclaimed for a reason - it's because if you get even slightly attached to the game, it will be an experience of a lifetime. Hollow Knight is a somber, yet beautiful world that shows how indie games can rival AAA titles in quality.