My top 5 Shmup ideas:

1. Mirror: a shmup in a fantasy world, where the player character cannot use magic. To combat the evil wizards he encounters, he instead uses a giant mirror. Gameplay would revolve around reflecting of enemy bullets, and a lot of physics-based bouncing and power-ups that can bend the mirror into different shapes for radical effects.
2. Cicada: a shmup where the main character can freely shed its armor, or regrow it depending on the circumstance. Armored mode is much tougher, but slower; while unarmored mode is much more fragile but significantly faster
3. Carve: a drawing-based shmup, where the player "draws" where they want to shoot, instead of just shooting. Drawing different patterns could create different effects (ie elemental damage, black holes, creating walls, etc). Rewards creativity, different approaches to all enemies
4. Big Yell Man: shmup where the player character is more powerful depending on how loudly you yell into your mic. More power could mean: faster, hit harder, more health, damage enemies when running into them, etc
5. Withstand: instead of a storm of bullets, why not a single, extremely powerful shot? Every bullet can be charged, and the longer one charges the more powerful the shot. Each level will have a boss, rewards players for playing evasively and charging up the perfect blast. Getting hit might reset the charge, or reduce the level it has reached. Charging would be exponential, and therefore better than spamming many uncharged shots.

Of all of my shmup ideas, only one has really been sticking with me- the Mirror Knight idea. I think it has the most novel idea (reflecting bullets instead of shooting them), the most interesting/funny theme (a knight that can’t use magic, so he carries a big mirror around to fight evil wizards), and has the most potential for compelling (and unique) gameplay.

As far as Fullerton’s elements go, I think I’ll mostly be tinkering with Procedure. The core gameplay loop of shmups is shooting enemies while simultaneously avoiding their bullets. In my mirror knight game, you do not shoot, but reflect other bullets (or magic, in the theme of the game), and because of this the player will seek out bullets, as opposed to running. I’ll also be messing with Rules- bullets/magic will need to bounce and reflect. Typically in shmups, once a bullet is gone, it’s gone. No ricochet, no bouncing, they just disappear the second something is hit. Having a bit more physics going on will be a small change, but it’s certainly a change. Aside from these two things, I don’t think I’ll be messing with Fullerton’s other formal elements.

I think the biggest puzzle/challenge the player will encounter with this game will be figuring out the physics of the different spells. I plan on making everything color-coordinated, in that a red “spell” might bounce up to three times, and always at an obtuse angle; whereas a blue spell might only bounce a single time, and at a perfect 90 degree angle, etc. I’m also considering having obstacles in the game, which could also reflect magic, allowing the player to bounce the projectiles in fun ways. Along with this, the player can encounter “upgrades” for the mirror throughout the game, which might alter how the player uses the physics. For example, an upgrade that lets the player bend the mirror into a semicircle, which would bounce all magic bullets directly where the player aims for a short time.

So, an overview of the rules:

* The player can’t shoot, instead they have to reflect magic projectiles
* Different colors of magic have different properties, such as # of bounces or bounce angle or increase in speed after bouncing, etc
* Any projectile that bounces will *increase*in damage dealt, encouraging the player to find the best way to bounce a bullet as much as possible
* Upgrades change the properties of the mirror, such as bending it in certain ways, making it larger, making it skip a bounce and cause more damage, etc. Upgrades would also be optional and interchangeable, and the player may even be able to cycle between 2-3 of them as they wish.
* The environment will have obstacles that also reflect bullets. In addition to this, the side walls themselves may be reflective as well.

I think this about covers it, for now. Looking forward to breaking ground on this project!