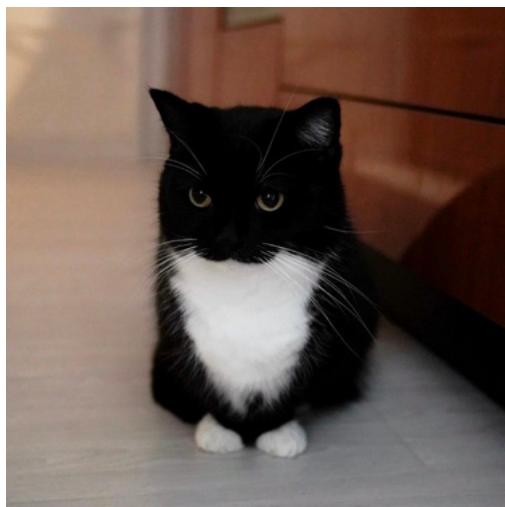# Review Sites and the Fun I Get From Them

Review sites are a staple of the internet. Almost every medium has it's own review site, from movies to books to board games. It makes sense why these are so popular, everyone wants to share their opinion to the world and uploading them online is the easiest way to get people to hear you out. I've used a lot of these, and while I do enjoy reviewing, most of my fun comes from exploring.

One of the more popular sites as of recent is Letterboxd. This was my first taste of review sites, and aligned with my recent interest in movies that I had at the time. The review culture is very quip-centered, for every multi-paragraph review you see there are 5 more reviews that's just a joke about the movie. This is the main critique that I hear about Letterboxd, and while I do find it a little annoying, I don't mind it. I tried to fit in with the culture when I first joined, I wasn't good at writing jokes back then so most of my reviews sucked.
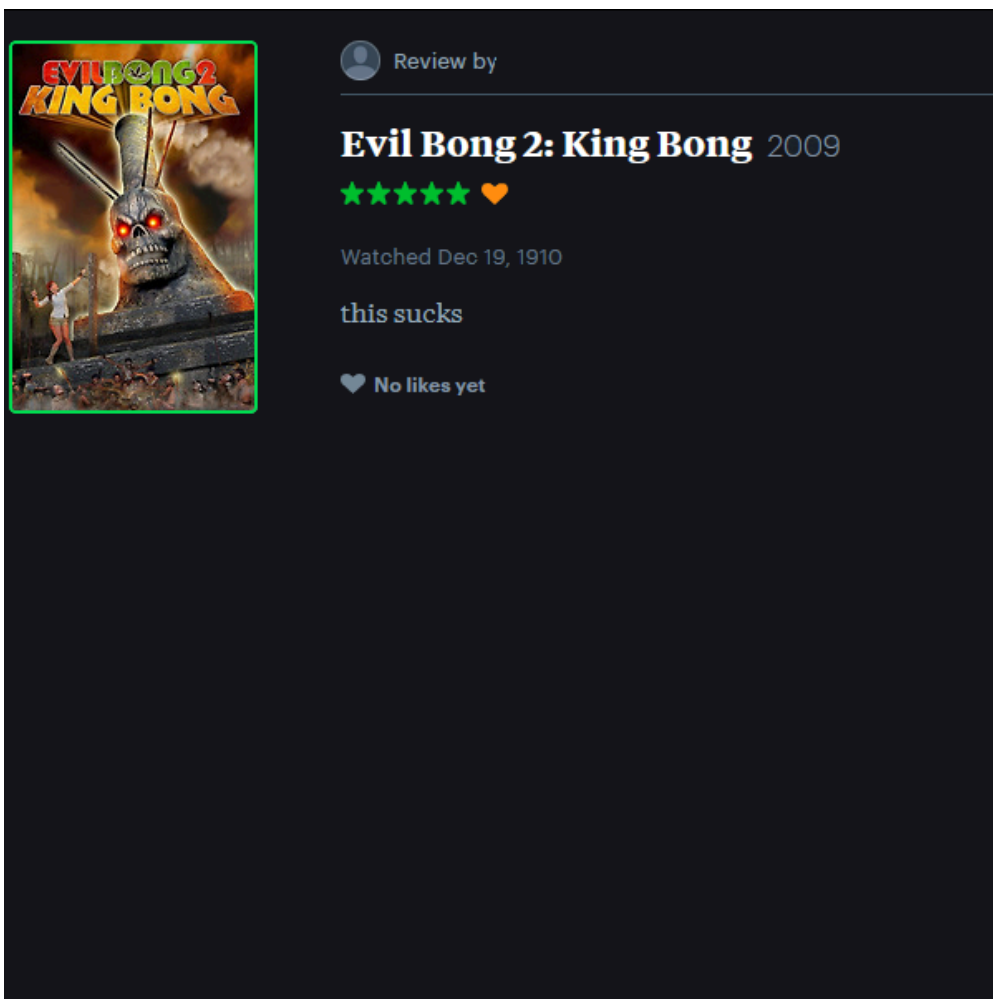
Nowadays I rarely write reviews, and if I do it's just me rambling. A lot of my time on the website now is spent looking around for unknown movies. I'd start off with some random movie, I'd go through the crew's pages for other movies and then I repeat the process until I find something weird. Will I ever watch it? Maybe, but the knowledge of it's existence is enough for me.

Another site I use is the notorious RateYourMusic. There's a lot of additions that I am a fan of, like how the joke review issue from Letterboxd is fixed by adding a comment section and having heavier moderation on the review

section. I'd say the main difference between the two is that RYM has more focus on charts. The all-time top 100 is an interesting mix, it's made up of albums that are considered classics (Dark Side of the Moon, OK Computer, Abbey Road), albums that were popular on 4chan's /mu/ board (Deathconsciousness, Soundtracks for the Blind) and some more modern stuff (Blonde, To Pimp a Butterfly). The userbase cares a bit too much about the charts, occasionally an album tops another on the year charts causing a huge amount of controversy with people review-bombing and arguing in

the comments. One thing I really enjoy about the website is that it is as much of a music database as it is a review site. Every release is user submitted, and things like genres or descriptors are based on vote. I am a big fan of the genre system and how it ties with the charts feature, it makes discovering new music really fun.

These are just some of the ones that I use, I haven't even gotten into the gaming side or the critic aggregate sites. I probably go on these sites too much, occasionally I feel like I limit myself from experiencing stuff just because it has a low score or the people I follow don't like it. I understand why a lot of people aren't a fan of them, the userbase's are very

elitist and some don't like rating in general, but the sense of community and the way it lets you explore appeals to me a lot.
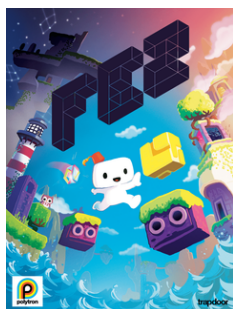
Fez
Game
By: Polytron
Released: April 13th 2012

Fez is an indie 2D platformer developed by Polytron. The game was released in 2012, which was whenever indie games were getting popular on stores like Xbox Live Arcade and PlayStation Network. The game was also featured in the documentary Indie Game: The Movie, which showcased the development process.

The game starts off as a normal platformer up until you get the games titular Fez, which allows you to shift where the camera's facing. This new power reveals platforms that previously aren't visible and lets you play with perspective to get to normally inaccessible places. You explore the map with the goal of finding all 32 Cubes, which opens the final door of the game.

There is a lot of variety when it comes to mechanics, with each area having things like moving platforms, walls that rotate you, platforms that appear and disappear to the beat of a song, and a tide that you have to raise and lower. These make each area of the game feel very distinct from each other. The game also has a great atmosphere, due to its cute pixel art and the amazing soundtrack, which was composed by Disasterpeace.

The game is a relatively normal 2D platformer up until a point. For me, this point was a room with a QR code. When I scanned the QR code, it gave me a button combination, which when executed spawned in an Anti-Cube. There are 32 Anti-Cubes which are (mostly) secretly hidden throughout the game and are all required for the true ending. Many of them require you to learn the games many ciphers and languages, which are only taught through visual cues. These were all solved by the game's community at the time, and while I did enjoy learning about them, it made me realize something: the intended way to play this game was to play at launch. The secrets were intended to be solved as a community, but it has been 12 years since release, and everything that could be solved has been solved.

Despite this, I still enjoyed my time with the game. Even though it is not as talked about now as its peers (Splunkey, Braid, Super Meat Boy) it has shown it's influence with recent indie games like Tunic and Animal Well. A sequel was announced but was quickly cancelled after some drama surrounding its creator Phil Fish (which is a whole can of worms). I recommend this game to anyone who likes platformers or puzzle games, even if the game can no longer be played the way it was meant to be.

World War Z
Movie
Directed By:
Marc Forster
Released: June 21st 2013

I recently read the book "World War Z" by Max Brooks for my English class, and I liked it a lot. It has such a unique structure, with the book being made up of testimonies of peoples experiences with the apocalypse. Throughout reading the book I had one question in mind, how does it compare to the movie?

The film was released in 2013 and was directed by Marc Forster. It stars Brad Pitt as Gerry Lane, who is sent by the Navy to help research a cure for the zombie virus. If you knew nothing about the book, you'd probably think that this film was an alright zombie thriller, if you have read the book, you'll know that there is little to no resemblance between the book and the movie.

An adaptation not being 100% accurate to their source is far from surprising, there's a lot of liberties you have to take to adapt something to film, but I don't think I've seen one that is this inaccurate. The only thing that the movie keeps is Israel being the first to take action, everything else, down to how the zombies act and how the virus works is completely different. The movie also abandons the structure of the original, which was what drew me into the book in the first place. There's a part in South Korea that somewhat does the testimony thing, but it quickly gets dropped.

How's the movie by itself? It's just fine. It's pretty generic and never gets offensively bad. I do feel like they solve the apocalypse too quickly, barely any time passes and just feels like it ends a week after the outbreak. The ending is also really weird, it's a montage showing how other countries are fighting the zombies with Brad Pitt narrating saying that we have to stick together and keep fighting. It made me feel like I was watching one of those propaganda ads that theatres play before movies.

This film disappointed me a lot, it used a source material that was primed for a great adaptation and then squandered it. It feels like an American Psycho 2 situation, where an unrelated film had the World War Z name plastered on at the last minute. The film took 6 years to make, with the original screenplay being far more faithful to the novel, before it went through so many rewrites that it turned into the film we have today. Would I recommend it? Probably not, there are a few unique ideas in there but it's nothing special.

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