



GENERATOR
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PHOTO CONTRIBUTIONS

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Halo 4 Review

by Joe Corato

It's been quite a while since we've heard from the Master Chief and his blue hologram sidekick, Cortana – five years in fact. Last we heard of them, the eight-foot tall cyborg super-soldier was careening through the emptiness of outer space – that is, provided you beat the game on Legendary difficulty. If you didn't, you suck (sorry). Anyway, the Master Chief is once again tasked with protecting the universe from its imminent destruction. Rather than a big scary ring-planet-weapon, you'll be trying to stop a much smaller, but equally scary baddy named the Didact. Sounds badass right? He is.

The Didact is the leader of the Forerunners, and he means business. He's trying to kill everybody because apparently the Forerunners don't like other living things at all. In addition to fighting the super awesome Forerunners, you'll also be fighting the classic Halo enemies: The Covenant. You'll even get to watch a Promethean Knight (a Forerunner enemy) totally bitch-slap a Covenant Elite that tries to run him over with a Ghost. This tried and true story structure of "kill the bad guy, save the world" is what has made Halo so famous before, and is also why Halo 4 feels like it should, which is something many were skeptical about up until launch. Although Bungie is out of the picture, 343 Industries did a fantastic with job with license in this regard.

Upon booting up the game, you'll hopefully notice the lack of Halo's iconic monk chant-esque soundtrack. Instead, you'll find orchestral scores with a great deal more emotion to them. I don't mind it, but growing up playing the Halo games on a regular basis, I'm sad to see the chants go. This, of course, is but a minor gripe.

343 did an absolutely incredible job with the graphics for Halo 4. The game runs on an extensively upgraded version of the Halo: Reach engine, and looks exponentially better than previous Halo titles. Lighting is top of the list here, with the best the series has seen thus far. Animations are smooth, which are showcased in the brutal third-person assassinations. And textures are crisper than ever, making Halo 4 the best looking Halo game to



Top: Master Chief and team gets ready for an invasion by SpicaGames on Flickr

Bottom: Cortana, the AI companion to Master Chief by Corrinne. Yu on Flickr

Right: a scenic shot of Halo 4's combat environment by SpicaGames on Flickr



date, while also being one of this year's best-looking AAA titles.

The sound design in Halo 4 is the best in the series thus far. Every sound from previous Halo games has been trashed and replaced with a punchy, crisp, testosterone-inducing sound effect. Master Chief's armor crunches about as you walk, and the crack of the Battle Rifle or the DMR is satisfying when you're using it, and terrifying when you're on the receiving end. The improved sound makes the entire game feel beefier, in turn making it a much more satisfying experience.

Halo 4 is divided into three distinct sections. There is the excellent Campaign mode, the ever-popular multiplayer option dubbed Infinity, and a cooperative offering entitled Spartan Ops. Each of the three sections is a nicely fleshed out experience, each allowing the player to experience the game from a different angle.

Halo 4's story isn't just about the Master Chief. In fact, this is what makes the game's Campaign so interesting. Your AI partner, Cortana, is experiencing Rampancy. AIs go rampant, meaning they deteriorate and ultimately die out, after about seven years. Cortana is eight years old. See the problem? The game focuses greatly on this fact, and provides extremely interesting emotional interactions between Cortana and the Chief. These are a welcomed breath of fresh air for the series, as well as for the genre, and would frankly be boring without it. At about six hours long, depending on the difficulty you choose to play on, Halo 4's Campaign

is satisfying, albeit a little short.

Halo's multiplayer has been top-notch across the franchise, and Halo 4 is no different. With Halo 2's multiplayer basically serving as the framework of many of today's modern shooters, 343 had some gargantuan shoes to fill. Thankfully, 343's feet fit very well in Bungie's shoes. Halo 4's multiplayer is arguably the best Halo multiplayer experience to since Halo 2, if not better. It offers all of the game modes we've come to love over the years, with Slayer, Capture the Flag, and King of the Hill, while offering some new ones like Dominion. Dominion is a domination-style mode, taking cues from the Battlefield franchise by incorporating heavy use of vehicles, something Halo has always done well.

Another significant change to the formula is the addition of Ordinance Drops, which are 343's version of Call of Duty's killstreaks. Instead of rewarding the player for kills only, Halo rewards you for accumulating score. Things like kills, assists, flag captures, and even distracting an enemy so that a teammate can take him down net you points. These points fill up a little circle on your HUD that, when filled, allows the player to choose one of three different power ups, including power weapons like the Sniper Rifle or the Rocket Launcher, to more passive things like a damage boost or an overshield. This system alters the way players pick up power weapons, changing it from a set location on the map to using the ordinance drops to drop the weapon where the player

chooses. It's a solid addition, and adds a lot of fun to the mode overall.

Lastly is the Spartan Ops mode. This cooperative, story-drive mode replaces the Firefight mode from the last two Halo games, which involved holding off waves of increasingly difficult enemies. Instead, Spartan Ops is a separate story arc, structured in an episodic form. Each week, players will be able to play a series of five missions that further the Spartan Ops story with up to three additional players. In between each episode, there is an extremely well done computer-animated TV show that bridges the gap between episodes. 343 promises ten weeks of content with a show between each episode, making up the first season of Spartan Ops. Moreover, they promise more seasons as time progresses. Needless to say, this is a lot of content, and so far, it's been a blast.

Halo 4 is a complete package. With three fully fleshed-out modes of play, there's a lot to do. Whether that includes smiting your foes and T-bagging their corpses, saving humanity from its approaching demise, or taking down the Covvies with your friends, you'll be having a ton of fun. As was once true, Chief is King. And I'm excited to see where 343 Industries takes the series next.

9.5 out of 10



Happy Whatever Doesn't Offend You

By Katie Craven

Browsing the Internet, as most procrastinating college students tend to do, I came across a tree ornament with the words "Happy Whatever Doesn't Offend You" written across it. A few days later, I hear my parents talking about how people have begun decorating for the Christmas season just a few days after Thanksgiving. Christmas music can easily be found on the radio and on TV this time of year, and I am expecting an influx of commercials shortly. I highly doubt there exists a religious holiday as widely publicized as Christmas. At the same time, I have to wonder, is Christmas really a religious holiday anymore? The giant snarky ornament has a point; tiptoeing around the religious themes of the holiday in order to avoid offending someone seems a bit silly, for some reason. Also, if Christmas has lost some of its religious components, is that really a bad thing?

There are various specials on TV that dedicate their time to explaining the true meaning of Christmas. One of the most famous Christmas specials is of course "Miracle on 34th Street." The movie actually has very little to do with religion (unless you're watching the version where

the motto "In God We Trust" sways the judge rather than piles of mail). The movie instead uses Santa Claus as a symbol of hope and goodwill. Except possibly at the very end, none of the adults in the movie truly believe he is Santa, even the ones defending him. They defend him because he stands for something that goes beyond the seemingly important limitations and rules we place on ourselves in order to accomplish something good. Somewhere along the way, names become irrelevant. Even if it's not implied in the movie, I don't see why that can't apply to religion as well.

I'm not bashing religion, of course. I think it's important to reflect upon your spirituality this time of year. But even if you are public about your beliefs (if any), spirituality is nonetheless a very personal thing, even as it connects us to others. The Christmas season, on the other hand, seems to imply a sort of unity that transcends all else. During this time of year, although we may not be haunted by the ghosts of Christmas, we are nevertheless reminded that mankind is our business, and like Scrooge, we find a new sense of joy and camaraderie as we prepare for a new year and a new future.

Wishing someone a merry Christmas, at least for me, isn't a greeting among Christians this time of year, but an extension of goodwill. In a society where we grow increasingly more accepting of each other's differences, society's view on various topics, including religion, is beginning to shift. Some people are worried this means we'll lose our morals and strong beliefs along the way. I don't believe this to be true. I believe that each household has their own traditions this time of year, and that religious reflection is often a part of these traditions. Just because society's idea of Christmas has grown vague does not mean that it is any less special to us. Regarding Christmas, religion has not become irrelevant to us personally, but rather to society in that one's specific beliefs need not dictate the beliefs of anyone else. I find it very likely that in time, Christmas may very well be redefined to mean a time of spiritual reflection for all religions, and a time of good will and good company. And quite frankly, I think that's okay.

"Christmas day will always be, just so long as we have we." —Dr. Seuss

Service After Sandy

By Lucas Scharf

In the weeks that followed Hurricane Sandy, over \$20 million was raised in relief efforts to assist those who had lost their homes and valuables. About 90% of this money came from private donors in response to nationally syndicated outreach efforts that were broadcast throughout the United States by several mass media outlets. Disney-ABC Television Group helped to raise over \$17 million for the American Red Cross on their "Day of Giving" event that took place on November 5.

While donations and other monetary contributions are always appreciated, sometimes a check in the mail isn't quite sufficient for those who were hit the hardest. In early November, I participated in a community service project with about 17 other students in order to help a Poughkeepsie family move their water-damaged items from the basement of their house, which had been ravaged by the storm.

The mother, who was expecting a child in less than a month, remembers the destruction quite well. "The rain started come through first," she said while pointing to the ceiling. "Then as the upstairs was about to flood, we heard a huge crash, and that thing came through," she remarked as she stood over the massive tree that had leveled the entire northern end of her house.

In a rush to try and save valuable items, the family salvaged everything they could by transporting valuables and necessities down to the basement, which had suffered from flooding as well. When we first entered the basement to survey the damage, the potent odor of bacteria and standing water was enough to warrant a 10-minute delay as we waited for gas masks to arrive.

For nearly four hours, our group of Marist students cleared out the entire basement as we tried to determine what could

be salvaged and what belonged in the dumpster. Within an hour, we came to the realization that almost everything had suffered irreparable damage, so the dumpster quickly overflowed with the scraps and shards of what had once been necessities and important personal belongings.

Although it was a rather humbling experience, there were many positives that arose from the work that we were able to accomplish. The mother told us that our service would allow her to begin the long process of rebuilding and refurbishing. Catholic Charities, the group that organized the event, are actively involved in the day-to-day life of her family, and are constantly putting in hours to help repair walls and clear debris. Hopefully, when the mother brings home her newborn, she will be able to relax and resume her everyday family duties due to the work of volunteers at Marist and around the Poughkeepsie area.

CALL OF DUTY: BLACK OPS 2 REVIEW

By Joe Corato

Call of Duty has been around since the PS2 and original Xbox were the current generation of consoles. The first game in the series was exclusively available on the PC for a long time, until Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2 offered the original title as a bonus to people who preordered the game. Since its inception, the Call of Duty Franchise has evolved from a simple World War II first-person shooter to the highest grossing video game franchise in the world. Each Call of Duty game since 2008 has broken the 24-hour sales record set by the game before it. This past November, Call of Duty: Black Ops 2 sold 220 million copies in the first 24 hours or so. With expectations stupidly high, and a sea of fans foaming at the mouth for their next fix, Black Ops 2 delivers in a big way.

Call of Duty used to be about the single player story mode, but times have changed. Call of Duty is now known almost exclusively for its fast-paced, ultra-competitive multiplayer suite, complete with custom classes, persistent leveling, and the infamous killstreaks fans of the series have come to adore. Black Ops 2 does all of this, but, surprisingly, does so much more than that. In fact, it reinvigorates a series that, in my opinion, was starting to lose its shine.

Let's get the multiplayer out of the way. Black Ops 2's multiplayer is everything fans of the series have come to expect, but it also has one major addition that totally changes the way you play, while still delivering the experience the series is famous for. Enter, the Pick 10 system. Treyarch has introduced a new way to make custom classes. Rather than requiring the player to fill every slot for their class, they have assigned each weapon, attachment, equipment item, and perk a value of one point. It's then up to the player to build a class using all 10 points, or simply use a few. This way, if you don't want to use a pistol, you don't have to. You can also make a class with just a knife as a primary weapon, and load up on perks and equipment rather than carrying a rifle or shotgun. With the Pick 10 system, the player can finally make the class that

truly suits his or her specific play style.

Black Ops 2's single player campaign is without a doubt the best campaign the franchise has ever seen. Rather than the mega-linear, wholly boring shooting galleries the series is known for, Treyarch decided to introduce a lengthy story mode complete with ending-altering (I won't spoil them, promise) in-game choices. The game has six different endings, and the campaign is entertaining enough to warrant the extra playthroughs. The campaign pacing is also the best to date, changing up the objectives and how you fulfill them at the right times, and with the right frequency. At one point you'll be piloting one of the game's many drones, when the next you're playing as the main villain during his blinding rage as you sprint towards your foes with a shotgun. It's serious fun, and it kept me on edge the whole way through.

Something Treyarch has had over Infinity Ward since World at War is the Zombies Mode. This mode pits you and up to three of your bloodthirsty friends against a never-ending series of wave after wave of increasingly resilient undead foes. What started as an Easter Egg turned into something truly spectacular, as Treyarch has introduced a new mode of play, along with more maps at launch than any of their previous titles. In the new mode, titled Tranzit, players take a bus around a large map looking for better weapons and better shelter in an attempt to survive. While not a drastic alteration, it's a nice change of pace. Slaying zombies with your friends

hasn't been this fun since Valve's Left 4 Dead, and I don't see it stopping any time soon.

Now let's talk about what's under the hood. Believe it or not, BLOPS 2 runs on the same base engine that Call of Duty 2 ran on back in 2005. Treyarch has made significant changes to the engine, including replacing the lighting portion of the engine, and totally redoing the rendering. The game looks better than it ever has, and still runs at a buttery 60 frames per second. However, the game's graphics still aren't on par with other AAA shooters, however silky smooth they are. Additionally, the sound design is better than it has been in the past, but is still not top notch. Guns still lack a true sense of power, and explosions sound weak. Nevertheless, it's still a lot of fun to get kill after kill, only to decimate your enemies with one of the game's numerous killstreak options.

Treyarch could've simply made another run of the mill Call of Duty and laughed their way to the bank, but they didn't. Instead, they breathed life into a franchise that frankly, after last year's Modern Warfare 3, looked like it was on its last legs. I can say quite safely that BLOPS 2 is the best game in the series by leaps and bounds. While the fan base is responsible for more broken controllers and fist marks in walls than any other, one cannot fault Treyarch for their own fans. Rather, they should commend them for giving them the best Call of Duty to date.

8.5 out of 10



Photo by ggalvan1800 on Flickr

Once Upon a Time: When the Fairytale World and Our World Collide

By Andrea Capobianco

Once upon a time, a prince and a princess fell in love, but everything changed when the Fire Nation attacked – wait, that’s not right. Once upon a time, a prince and a princess fell in love, but he was a punk, and she did ballet – wait no, that’s a stupid Avril Lavigne song; let’s try again. Once upon a time, a prince and a princess fell in love, but then the evil queen cast a spell and banished every single fairytale character to our world – that’s it! This is the story of the TV show *Once Upon a Time*. The first episode begins half way through the plot of *Snow White*, with Prince Charming searching for Snow White after she had been poisoned. True to the Disney version of the fairy tale, the prince finds Snow White and wakes her from the magic induced slumber with a kiss; then they fall in love and are engaged to married. During the wedding, Snow White’s evil stepmother, the Queen, barges in and says that she will destroy Snow White’s happiness if it is the last thing she does. The Queen then

casts a spell and banishes every fairytale character in the land to the town Storybrooke, Maine.

We then are put back into the real world. On the night of her 28th birthday, bail bonds collector Emma Swan is reunited with Henry, the son she gave up for adoption ten years ago, and takes him back to his hometown of Storybrooke, Maine - a place where nothing is what it seems. Emma lives in Boston, and Henry goes to Boston to tell her that everyone in Storybrooke is under a spell and that it is her destiny to break the curse. Emma agrees to go to Storybrooke and check out what is happening. In Storybrooke are Snow White, Prince Charming, the Evil Queen and other storybook characters including Red Riding Hood, Jiminy Cricket, the Dwarves, and Rumpelstiltskin. There’s just one catch: they do not know who they are. Each episode focuses on a certain character, and you find out which fairytale character is which and also get more

back-story on them. The show has many surprising moments (I can’t say what many of them are because I would give away most of the show.)

The cast brings the characters to life. Lana Parrilla does an awesome job as portraying the Evil Queen/Regina, Mayor of Storybrooke. She makes the character so evil, but you can’t help but appreciate her performance. Actually, in my opinion, she is the best character on the show. Yeah, she’s evil, but once you learn her back-story, she becomes a sympathetic villain. Ginnifer Goodwin brings Snow White/Mary Margaret to life and makes her a very awesome character. Josh Dallas is amazing as Prince Charming/David Nolan. Jennifer Morrison portrays Emma Swan as a badass – which she is. The rest of the cast is simply amazing!

If you found any of the above interesting, just watch the show; it would ruin it to give more of the plot away.



Photo by Christian Ramos

An intense cloud formation
over the Hudson River

Cloud Atlas Review

By Sophia Todeasa

In 2004, award-winning author David Mitchell came out with his novel *Cloud Atlas*, a uniquely structured fiction work that garnered many positive reviews. Mitchell tells the story of the universal quest for freedom and the repetition of human actions throughout history. The novel follows the same person in all his/her forms throughout time. The mutability of the human spirit and the consequences of one person's actions spread like the Butterfly Effect throughout time are thematic elements appearing again and again in Mitchell's story.

This fall, filmmakers Tom Tykwer and the Wachowski siblings came out with the cinematic version of Mitchell's work. As soon as I saw the trailer, I knew that I was going to love it. Nearly three hours in length, the movie follows the book's storyline fairly well; it's bound to please most audience members that read the book previous to viewing. The movie is so long is due to its contents. David Mitchell follows his subject through several reincarnations, taking six separate stories in six separate times and detailing their struggle for freedom. To tell a story that has such broad themes and explores the concept of universality so thoroughly requires time.

Mitchell flips through genres like a teenager flips through television channels; he embodies the current epidemic of ADD-afflicted youth. His novel is organized as six separate and stylistically distinct storylines nested inside one another like a Russian matryoshka doll. Chronologically, he writes of an 1840s American sailing voyage in which a young lawyer helps an indigenous slave escape. Jumping forward, a young musician helps an older composer create a masterpiece that echoes throughout time. Then a lady journalist discovers a plot to cover-up a nuclear power plant instability that could kill thousands. Mitchell tells of the hilarious escapades of an old editor trapped inside a nursing home and his escape. Then the reader is transported into a future dystopia in which a slave-clone begins to rethink the social order. Her words carry into the apocalyptic future in which civilization has decayed back in time and what remains on Earth struggles to communicate with the stars. The way

that Mitchell structures these stories is bizarre: he begins them, lets the reader become involved with the character's life, and once hooked, whisks you to the next story, sometimes mid-sentence. Each story is interrupted until you reach the final one, which is told unbroken. Then, suddenly, all beginnings become ends. Previous tales are revisited and, one by one, Mitchell shut the doors on each of his stories as they find resolution.

I think Mitchell's book works on so many different levels. I love that he can write six different styles and genres so convincingly. He undertakes adventure, drama, dry British humor and slapstick comedy, dystopian societies and science fiction as well as the grade-B mystery novel. His book is a smorgasbord of styles; one is bound to pique your interest. Mitchell impresses me with this ability, and his nesting technique is also central to the book's theme of interconnectedness. There are little hints along the way, as well, that clue the reader into the idea that these events are all happening to the same person. A musical score and a comet birthmark travel across time and space to reappear in the stories again and again. These clues and the nesting technique may seem gimmicky or hard to follow, but in my opinion it is an interesting and creative way to connect disparate stories.

The movie version of Mitchell's tale undertakes the difficult challenge of trying to tell six separate stories in three hours while maintaining the audience's attention and decreasing the level of confusion. I definitely had an advantage coming into the theatre having already read the book. Translated onto screen, the stories overlap and switch back and forth in a less ordered fashion than the book's nested style. There is no way around the fact that there are a lot of characters to remember and action to follow. If you get a little lost, however, you can at least sit back and enjoy the spectacle. The movie is absolutely beautiful, and the variation in settings and times gives the audience a diversity that is hard to beat.

The movie also boasts a superb lineup, cast in several different roles in each story told. Tom Hanks is marvelous as a morally ambiguous doctor, a concerned

scientist, and a devil plagued clansman. Halle Berry is seen as a recurring player alongside Hanks as the nosy journalist, the field-woman, and the stunning wife of the elderly composer. Of course, Hugo Weaving is fabulously cast as every antagonist ever, and Hugh Grant even makes a few appearances as the corrupt politician. Jim Broadbent was my favorite as the sassy editor and the composer, and Jim Sturgess played the young hero type with all of his inherent charm. The idea behind recasting all of these actors into several roles is to show spiritual similarities in the characters through their physical similarities. This both irked and amused me. Of course it is great fun to guess who is who underneath all the make-up (flawlessly done, by the way. Weaving as the middle-aged matron nurse was very convincing). However, what was in the book a subtle trail that gently led the reader to a conclusion of their own formation is done with a much heavier hand in the movie. It's so spelled out for you that it takes away from the transcendent message of the film and brings you thudding back to earth. Some of the disguises were a bit unbelievable; Weaving and Sturgess as Asians gave me a bit of pause along with a slight shudder (but, then again, I think of Weaving as the nurse again and I'm suddenly okay with everything).

I usually try to take movie remakes of books as separate works from their original media. It is only fair, as they are two completely different approaches to storytelling. However, I have to suggest that you read this book as a prerequisite to seeing the film. It will make the film far less confusing, which affords more opportunity to enjoy the fantastic visual artistry and score as well as the film's inherent humor and heart. However, even if you do not have the time to read, I suggest you see this film if you enjoy big, visually satisfying movies. This is exactly the kind of movie you'd want to see on the big screen.

Winter Movie Preview

Hey everybody, Christmas is around the corner, and you know what that means – wasting time over break! Yes, this is the time of year where we prepare to go home, where we will spend a full month doing as few things that could be construed as work as humanly possible. If you are anything like me, that means watching a ton of movies, and this winter season is definitely not lacking in worthwhile movie releases. I will try to give an overview of the most promising movies coming out between when we leave campus this semester and return in 2013, to make sure that you all have a chance to see them before you come back to Marist and start being responsible adults again.

Director Joe Wright teams up for the third time with Kiera Knightley in his adaptation of the Russian classic *Anna Karenina* by Leo Tolstoy. Fans of their previous works, *Atonement* and *Pride and Prejudice*, should be delighted to hear of this new movie, cast with Knightley's romantic interest Matthew Macfadyen in *P&P* returning as her salacious brother, the always wonderful Jude Law, and the young and talented Aaron Johnson. This movie is not your cut and dry period movie, however. The filmmaker decided to go with an entirely different take on the classic love tragedy, taking risks in costume and set. Almost all the action takes place solely in an old theatre, a commentary on the vanity and thin veneer of Russian high society. No comment is made on the setting; an ice rink and a horse race take place inside the theatre as if it were commonplace. In this film adaptation, the world is indeed a stage. A break in tradition will also be made with costume: 1950s style dress combines with 1840s costume in a surprisingly coherent way. I encourage anyone and everyone to view this movie; believe me when I say that this film will not be just another chick flick but an experiment in film that will visually stun and emotionally drain. I have high expectations for this adaptation. Sadly, it will only be shown in select theatres, but I will definitely be making a trip to see how exactly this movie unfolds.

Who isn't excited for *The Hobbit*?

Probably those people that have not yet been exposed to Tolkein's fabulous literary works or their movie adaptations. But, let me tell you, I am ready for that premiere on December 14. The movie is entitled *The Hobbit: The Unexpected Journey*, the first part of a three movie series directed by Peter Jackson. If any of you have actually read the books, it's kind of hard imagining its entire contents stretch into three movies, considering the three book series *LOTR* had the same amount. However, the optimist that I am, I prefer to think that this will allow the filmmakers to really explore backstory and details and please hardcore fans in the process.

The cast list is perfection: Sir Ian McKellan is reprising his role of Gandalf, Andy Serkis will still play Gollum, and Hugo Weaving returns as the elven lord Elrond. Bilbo Baggins will be played by Martin Freeman in the most perfect casting decision ever made. Richard Armitage will play the dwarf troupe leader and Benedict Cumberbatch will voice Smaug and play the Necromancer. The movie boasts a score composed by Howard Shore and will use a lot of the motifs found in the *LOTR* movies. The first movie will follow Bilbo's travels away from the comfort of the Shire into Rivendell, the elven city, and through the Misty Mountains on a quest

to recover stolen treasure from the dragon Smaug with the help of Gandalf and his dwarf companions. The movie will detail Bilbo's encounter with Gollum where he will acquire a gold ring and change Middle Earth forever! (For more detail, watch *LOTR* sometime).

Zero Dark Thirty, coming out on December 21, is the movie that nobody expected would be made – the movie about the killing of Osama Bin Laden. Kathryn Bigelow, Oscar-winning director of *The Hurt Locker*, was rumored to be in the process of making a Bin Laden capture movie as soon as a few weeks after the event actually happened. I personally doubted this news, mostly because I was not sure what the movie could cover about the affair. Especially if the film were to be fictionalized instead of a documentary, I was hesitant to assume that Bigelow would have access to what I would imagine to be very sensitive information.

Keeping in line with my suspicion, very little information about the movie has been released. It seems to focus more on the on-ground decisions and military actions that shaped the ten-year manhunt, as opposed to the executive decisions in Washington (Obama will not be featured at all). The film's creators have expressed that they want to simply tell the story of Bin



Photo by Sarah Ackerman on Flickr

By Sophia Todeasa and John Paul Welsh

Laden's capture with no political agenda. Personally, I think I can take them at their word. The secrecy surrounding the movie, coupled with Bigelow's insistence that the president and his cabinet are not to be the focus, gives me confidence that Zero Dark Thirty will come off as a well-crafted, more-or-less patriotic film chronicling the hunt for the most wanted man of the past decade.

One film that I am particularly excited for is Django Unchained, the newest movie from acclaimed director and madman Quentin Tarantino, to be released on Christmas. With an all-star cast including Jamie Foxx, Leonardo DiCaprio, and Samuel L. Jackson, this movie focuses on a slave in the Deep South who has his wife stolen from him and sold to a ruthless plantation owner. A bounty hunter frees Django, the film's vengeful protagonist, and gives him the chance to hunt down the man who took his wife.

Tarantino has always had a twisted sense of violent humor, as evident in his masterpieces Pulp Fiction and the Kill Bill series, and this film looks to be no different. According to the director, Django Unchained is intended to address America's history with slavery through the eyes of a western instead of a period drama. Honestly, I think he just wanted to make an over-the-top revenge flick through the eyes of a Civil War-era slave, but even this is an exciting prospect in the hands of such a visionary.

Possibly the one film this Christmas break that the most people can be excited about is Les Misérables. Truly one of the most beloved musicals of all time, this epic tragedy about sorrow and redemption set during the French Revolution has captured the imagination of millions. And now, in the very capable hands of Tom Hooper, the director of 2010's winning biopic The King's Speech, the story is being adapted for the big screen.

Now, Les Mis has been made into a movie before, but not like this. For example, many film adaptations to date were brief silent-era dramas or the 1998 Liam Neeson-helmed release, which were based off of the 1862 book rather than the

operatic extravaganza it became. This production, to be released this Christmas, is the first film adaptation of the musical itself, and it has a lot of things going for it. As mentioned earlier, the director Tom Hooper is more than capable of organizing such a sprawling epic into a cohesive, entertaining narrative. His experience with The King's Speech showed that period pieces are no problem for the British director, and his acclaim for his previous films have earned him the freedom to take on such an ambitious picture.

The cast looks to be one of the strongest aspects of this release. The lead cast features Hugh Jackman as the hero and former prisoner Jean Valjean; Russell Crowe as Javert, the policeman hunting him; Anne Hathaway as Fantine, the dying factory worker who sings "I Dreamed a Dream;" Amanda Seyfried as Cosette, Fantine's daughter; and Helena Bonham Carter and Sacha Baron Cohen as the ridiculous Thénardiens. Normally, star-studded casts make for lackluster films (Valentine's Day, New Year's Eve... any holiday movie in the past 6 years actually), but these are all talented actors and surprisingly good singers, so the story and music will be given ample justice.

Really though, the biggest draw for this movie is the music. Considering that most people know of Les Mis by way of the thinly staged, high quality pseudo-opera, Hooper has the difficult task of making a cinematic frame for a story that normally is told exclusively through song. Whether he succeeds is up to the viewer, but I personally think that the songs lend themselves to cinematic spectacle just as well as any other stage musical. I remember back to 2007's Sweeney Todd, a movie that I think perfectly blended the attitudes of the stage play with the gruesome atmosphere that movies can allow for. In Les Misérables, the story is the songs, and as long as Hooper can let the songs do their job, his production will be one of the most impressive and stunning musical adaptations in cinema history.

So there you go folks, some of the most promising movies coming to a theater near you this winter. Get out and see them

while you can, so then you can talk about them to your friends when we come back in January and begin this cycle of madness we call college all over again.

Release Dates

Out Now

- Anna Karenina

December 14

- The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey

December 21

- Zero Dark Thirty

December 25

- Django Unchained
- Les Misérables

Wii U: A Worthy Nintendo Successor?

By John Paul Welsh

Every respectable gamer has at least one issue with Nintendo, the biggest and most successful gaming company there ever was. A lot of it is unwarranted, like the claim that *Skyward Sword* is a blemish on the *Legend of Zelda* franchise, or that the Nintendo 64 was designed with three-handed children in mind (but seriously, look at that controller). Even still, I must admit that Nintendo deserves some criticism for the Wii. Sure, it sold like hot cakes, broke records, got grandmas to go virtual bowling, got out-of-shape moms to tone and flex, and was host to some of the best-reviewed video games in recent memory, but to both the casual and hardcore gamer, the Wii was not taken very seriously. The motion controls were rarely a benefit to gameplay, and although the Wiimotion staples like *Wii Sports Resort* and *Mario Kart Wii* were well constructed, I am remiss to find anybody that whips out the Wiimotes when he or she is looking for a fun way to pass the time.

Understandably, many people (including myself) were unsure about the newest Nintendo console, the Wii U. How was Nintendo going to follow up its *Avatar* (a high-selling landmark that eventually was not taken very seriously by “true” fans)? Anthony Barranco, sophomore, got the deluxe version of the console on release day, and he was kind enough to give the *Generator* some insight into how the new console has been so far.

Generator: How is the new tablet controller, and is it well implemented in games?

Anthony: Nintendo has always tried to be innovative when it comes to controls on their systems. For the first time in a long time, they seem to be giving in to the widely accepted dual analog stick and four-button layout with triggers and shoulders. At least, on the gamepad. So the controls are quite familiar and comfy. Thankfully, the gamepad is very light and ergonomic so it doesn't get in the way.

Playing *Sonic & Allstars Racing Transformed* on the gamepad is the same as it is on the Xbox 360 or PlayStation 3 con-



Photo by wiiu-spiele.com on Flickr

troller. If one doesn't find it comfortable, Nintendo is offering Classic Pro controllers that mimic the Xbox and PlayStation controller design. It is a great improvement over the Wii Classic Controllers and has more compatibility across games.

However, there is a caveat with the controls. You'll find most games requiring using the Wiimotes regardless of the Gamepad. *New Super Mario Bros U* requires the Wiimotes if you plan to play with multiple people. The gamepad cannot be used as a player, so you're stuck with the forever-awkward horizontal Wiimote controls using button 1 and 2. Not fun.

G: How are the games that you have played so far?

A: So far I've played *Zombi U*, *New Super Mario Bros U*, *Nintendoland*, and *Sonic & Allstars Racing Transformed*.

New Super Mario Bros U is classic platforming; side scrolling Mario with a few new twists and abilities. Also, for the first time ever, he's finally in high definition! Mario looks fantastic in 720p graphics and gameplay is smooth even with four people playing. The game has oodles of levels

and new challenge modes to explore. The only issue is that the gamepad becomes a support roll in multiplayer, which is disappointing. Touching the screen adds blocks for the players to jump on throughout the level to collect coins or prevent death. Interesting, but the tablet player essentially watches the four others play. That aside, it's *Mario*. A game like this is a must if you intend on buying the Wii U.

Nintendoland is also a must if you plan on playing with groups of people. It is basically a huge minigame collection of awesome gameplay ideas using the gamepad. For example, in the *Animal Crossing* minigame, the gamepad controls two guards who have to run around a maze to catch the players using Wiimotes. The Wiimote players have to collect a certain number of balls before the gamepad player catches them in order to win. Then there is the *Zelda* minigame, where the Wiimote players have to fight enemies and the gamepad player uses a bow and arrow. Another awesome minigame is *Luigi's Mansion*, where Wiimote players wander a mansion maze in the dark while the gamepad player controls an invisible ghost to track them. As the ghost gets close to the

Wiimote players, their controllers vibrate more and they have to shine their flashlights on the invisible ghost to win. There are a lot other great minigames for two to five people, but if you're looking for single player fun, it just isn't here. The single player minigames are very lackluster and aren't fun for too long. For example, there is a Ninja throwing star game that is fun at first but grows old fast.

G: Was the console worth the price?

A: The price is a bit steep. It comes in either \$300 8GB White, or \$350 32GB Black with Nintendoland. There is no reason at all to buy just the \$300 kit because you're losing out at quadruple the memory and a \$60 game. Which is why the console is very expensive. If you intend to download new games, which clock in at about 6GB-12GB a piece, you're going to need an external hard drive which is even more expensive. You're also going to want to buy \$50 Wiimote Plus controllers so you can play with more people. It just adds up. If you know you're going to be using the console with lots of friends, then you should pony up. Otherwise, I'd suggest waiting or at least waiting on a deal.

G: Nintendo wanted the Wii U to bring back "core" gamers. Do you think it can do this?

A: Nintendo seems to be trying to bring back core gamers. There are a lot of "hardcore" games that are targeting more towards adults like Batman Arkham City,

Darksiders 2, ZombiU, and Call of Duty Black Ops 2. The Wii never really had these kinds of games, and if they did, they were of the poor knock-off or cash-in variety. So in the end, Nintendo is trying to turn over a new leaf it seems. Only time will tell if they're successful. This is because once the new PlayStation and Xbox for the next generation of systems come out, it is quite possible Nintendo's Wii U will be left without any more games if the new systems are much more advanced. That will be a huge problem for Nintendo. But, if the new systems are not as advanced as analysts think they are, then Nintendo will be very popular over the next few years and there will be plenty for "core" gamers to choose from.

As you can see, there are a lot of pros and cons to the new Nintendo console. The multiplayer is phenomenal and the graphics are impressive, but single-player games leave something to be desired and the gamepad has limited appeal outside of the games and situations it was designed to cater to. I now leave it to you, the reader, to decide for yourselves whether the Wii U is worth the buy.

Wii U Specifications

Price

- **\$299.99 (basic, white)**
- **\$349.99 (deluxe, black)**

Best Selling Exclusive Games

- **Nintendoland**
- **Zombi U**
- **New Super Mario Bros. U**
- **Pikmin 3**
- **Wii Fit U**

Other

- **Players: 1-5**
- **HDMI-capable (1080p)**
- **8GB (basic), 32GB (deluxe) internal storage**



Photo by ze_bear on Flickr

2012 Apocalypse: How Will You Prepare?

By John Paul Welsh

As we all know by now, we're doomed. Come December 21, 2012, our world will come to an end in a reign of cosmic fire, resurrected dead, sentient turkey bastards, and a whole manner of indescribable chaos that none of us can anticipate very well. This is real, guys.

But don't fret. The good thing about these grand epochal events is that we can prepare ourselves for them. Enough people have dedicated enough time to studying the planetary alignments, pig entrails, and other indicators of portents that we can pick our favorite from a multitude of apocalypse-aversion techniques. Here I will highlight the most common theories of what will happen, followed by a few popular tactics of surviving doomsday, so we can all be ready for the impending doom that impends on our doomed souls.

The thing about December 21, 2012, is that no one knows for sure what exactly will happen: only that it will threaten the survival of all intelligent life on Earth as we know it. The website survive2012.com features a long list of all the different happenings via which the world could end, ranked by how likely they are to happen this century, in 2012 specifically, and whether the Ancients could have predicted it. The table on this page highlights some of the more likely scenarios.

As you can see, the chances of survival are slim for most scenarios. However, there are a few tactics one can utilize to increase one's survival chances. Following are some of the most viable.

Firstly, you can build your own bunker. For many, this is the most appealing path

to survival. There is a certain pride in knowing that you built your own doomsday hut with the sweat from your own brow, and your sense of diligence and hard work will surely pay off in post-apocalyptic suburbia where you may end up being elected king or something equally as admirable. Regarding the contents and materials of the DIY bunker, it is really up to the individual's budget, time, and sanity constraints. If you want to put in the work to build a nicely constructed concrete underground dwelling with room for two years' worth of food and your entire extended family, nobody will frown upon your sense of dedication. Similarly for if you simply want to line your basement with cinderblocks and call it a day; any effort is good effort, and your neighbors will feel pretty salty when they run to your domicile amid the downpour of flaming asteroids and ask admittance. Oh, you will have the last laugh for sure.

The next option for doomsday survival is only slightly less intuitive than hunkering down at your home: living underwater. Sure, it might not be the most practical avenue of escape, but come late December when all kinds of terrifying airborne debris comes wailing out of the sky at our measly communities, having a couple hundred yards of water between us and the surface looks mighty appealing. I would suggest trying to contact James Cameron and asking to borrow his personal submarine so you can access the secret underwater city that the Russians have been working on since they got inspired by the Gungan City in Star Wars Episode

I: The Phantom Menace. In times of global hardship, the Russians have been known to be immensely welcoming to foreigners. As a more reasonable alternative, try stealing some diving equipment from the local outdoor-sports store and take a swim in the ocean to scout for good hiding places among our fishy friends. Their hospitality is nearly as generous as the Russians'.

Finally, if you happen to be a billionaire, you can opt for the most prestigious preparation of all: underground condos. There is a group of people in the middle of Kansas that have adapted an old Cold War bunker to house dozens of wealthy families, and they have been selling units for upwards of \$7 million over the past few years. This is truly top-of-the-line, and is purported to include a pool, medical center, school, and storage facilities for five years' worth of dry food. I don't see why anyone with the resources would refuse this amazing offer. There are a surprising amount of free spaces in the complex, so grab them soon before all your money will need to be converted to hobo nickels in the post-apocalyptic future.

Let this be a fair warning to all of you: the 2012 apocalypse is a tangible threat that ought not be taken lightly. This article is a service to the Marist community, written and distributed out of the goodness of my heart and because of the emptiness of the pages of this magazine. Hopefully this is a useful resource for those forward-thinking individuals who understand the risk the cosmos are presenting to them. Stay thirsty, my friends.

Scenario	Likelihood (out of 10) this century, this year	Details	Chance of Survival
Asteroid/Meteor	9, 8	Heck, we can't track every meteor in the sky. One might clothesline us	Most people will die
Coronal Mass Ejection from the Sun	10, 8	Sun decides to go insane and shoot radiation at us	Nope
Gamma Ray Burst	7, 7	Nearby star explodes	Unlikely
Nuclear Holocaust	10, 5	Iran is looking pretty shifty nowadays	Australia might be okay
Flu Breakout	10, 6	Remember swine flu? Think of that, but a MIL-LION times worse	Probably not
Rapture	6, 6	It could still happen, guys!	144,000 of us will be fine

Assassin's Creed III Review

By Joe Corato

Fans of the Assassin's Creed series have been jumping off of rooftops and thrusting their hidden blades into their squishy targets since 2008. Over the years, the player has controlled the likes of Altair, the original assassin, and Ezio Auditore d'Firenze, the suave Italian 16th century hit man. Both characters possess super-human climbing abilities, as well as godlike melee combat skills. This is what Assassin's Creed is known for, and AC III has all of that... but better.

First and Foremost, Assassin's Creed III is not the renaissance-era assassination game it used to be. The series has jumped ahead a few hundred years to revolutionary America. Playing as the Native American assassin Connor, you'll help the forefathers and others in their quest to build a better nation while your evil father tries to stop you. Obviously, this story is not historically accurate (or is it?), but it's very well done, and is entertaining throughout. That's mostly facilitated by the improved cut scenes, which feature better facial animation than previous AC titles, as well as better lighting.

This leads me to the biggest problem with the game. While the story is without a doubt the best in the series thus far, it takes far too long to get interesting. The first 4 to 5 hours of gameplay are spent getting to know the characters, as well as teaching the player how to play the game. While players new to the series will find this beneficial, the rest of us will be



Photos by Rooster306 on Flickr

falling asleep. Moreover, all of that initial character development goes to waste, as many of the characters simply fall by the wayside. Thankfully, the game is worlds better after this.

Everything in AC III has been streamlined. Controls are now much simpler than in previous games, and the combat engine is by far the best in the series. Assassin's Creed's combat has hitherto been centered on counter kills, wherein your avatar will parry an incoming enemy strike and retaliate with a killing blow. AC III improves on this by adding significantly more different kill animations, while also making them incredibly satisfying and bloody. For example, you can now counter two enemies at once, using one of them as a human shield and stabbing the other in the face. It's a great time.

Stabbing people in the face isn't the only thing you do in AC III, and that's a good thing. New to the series is hunting, allowing Connor to track and kill animal targets in much the same fashion as his human targets. Killing an animal results in obtaining its meat and pelt, which Connor can use to make items and sell them to merchants to buy better weapons.

Another major gameplay addition is navel warfare. It takes up a surprising chunk of the game, but is so well done that I don't mind at all. My initial apprehen-

sions were dissolved immediately by the fantastic looking water, addicting cannonball-flinging combat, and satisfying ship takedowns. Navel battles serve as a nice change of pace to the run-climb-kill monotony that is Assassin's Creed.

Also included is a multiplayer suite that, personally, I'm not a huge fan of. Every game mode involves hunting a live player in a crowd and trying to take them down as cleanly and as quietly as you can, when all the while you're being hunted yourself. It's fun for a little while, but since it's not that much different at all from the last two Assassin's Creed games, I can't recommend putting a lot of time into unless you're a big fan of the series.

In the graphics department, AC III shines... most of the time. AC III runs on a new engine, and unfortunately, it offers a pretty inconsistent performance. Textures pop in and out, lighting flickers at times, and there are numerous frame rate dips, sometimes to the single digits. These kinds of technical issues are unacceptable in a high budget game like this, so it's very hard to look past it here. It really does detract from the experience.

Overall, AC III is the best game in the series, but that doesn't make it the best game by any means. Its intro is painfully boring, and its engine is unstable (at least on consoles). If the combat and story weren't so compelling, this would be a terrible game. Thankfully, it's a lot of fun, and you should definitely pick it up.

8.0 out of 10





Thanks for reading!

~Generator Staff