

Levity- Critical Gameplay and Collecting

He who dies with the most toys wins. A slogan from the 80's, still in use in games. Capitalistic? Yes. Accurate? Perhaps not.

How would your life change if you learned not to keep such score? More so, how would you be different if you learned that collecting anything was a problem? What if you learned that your collecting slowed you down. It prevented you from doing what you most wanted to do.

Literally, every item you own makes it that much harder to move. Spiritually, all those fears you collect only make you more fearful. They retard your ability to get past them. What if you understood the comic tragedy of the Japanese Katamari? A poor Sisyphus creature, doomed to collecting, and limping about existence with all the things that it has chosen to own. There is little more limiting than the burdens of collecting.

It's such a standard game mechanic you may have forgotten. More coins may not be a reward. More bullets might facilitate your goal, but it might also drive you to solving all your problems with more bullets. When all you have is a hammer, everything seems like a nail. How does everything seem when all you have is your hands?

Collecting is a dense lesson. It is not only a lesson in accumulation; it is a lesson in un-imagination. The solutions seem simpler as you collect. Get more power ups, because they worked last time. Collect the new gun,

it must be better. What if everything put in your path was designed to bait you toward a worse predicament. What if the things you are sold, don't make things better, they just make things seem better. When you collected coins in Super Mario Brothers, did you ever buy anything with them? Or was each coin, merely cashed in for another meaningless system of value – the point? And what about those points? Did he who died with the most points win?

We hold conflicting dichotomies of value. We race to the end to enjoy the experience. We collect because that collecting will give us freedom, happiness, potential, or some type of better. We don't reflect on the better, only on the ways to collect more if it. But in collecting, we learn only the value of collecting more. We learn to dismiss the conflict that collecting is merely a distraction from our goals. If we seek to save the princess, collecting is a diversion from our goal. Even when collecting affords us more lives, we still understand the game ends and we only get to keep the memory of that score. Why not skip the collecting, and go after your objective?

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