

Hello. It's me. Different video format today just because I like to keep you on your toes, you're getting too comfortable it's making you weak, you gotta watch your back buddy or i'm gonna getcha.... I'm gonna *airpunching*

I have never been in a fight in my life

No the reality is that I think i'm multitalented, I can do more things than just fallout. Put me in coach, put me in, I can do more than just mods, i can do it just put me in let me show you what i've got i'm scrappy but i've got heart, you know

I've never played a sport in my li-

I liked a lot of stupid things when I was 14. Most people did. When I was 14 I read the catcher in the rye and went he just like me for real unironically. When I was 14 I didn't really like fallout 1 the UI was too weird and old and nobody really likes this game for anything but nostalgia and the lore really anyway

Stupid stupid stupid stupid stupid stupid

One of the other things I liked when I was 14 was the episodic adventure game life is strange. If you haven't heard of it it's like those telltale games, or those david cage games, you know, the ones people like to say "it's not a game it's a choose your own adventure movie" as though that's a criticism and not a pretty enticing premise actually, like that sounds sick give me 12 of those actually maybe don't

So these games aren't very good. Almost none of them are worth your time. For games where most of what you come for is writing, the writing in most of them isn't very good. Gamer bros dislike these games because there's no gameplay where's the gameplay where's the gameplay where's my soother ahh

Not to say lacking gameplay isn't a problem with this kind of game. It definitely is, but there's more to it than that. There is an exhaustive list of problems these games have, and some of them resolve them better than others, each has a particular strength that pushes it above others in its niche in one category while none manage to resolve all of them. Life is strange resolves..... Well basically none of them

It's gameplay is uninspired. It has a time travel mechanic which was cool once but isn't really utilized intelligently or in any way that I could describe as fun or satisfying . its themes are muddled, its side characters underdeveloped, and the facial animation is really rough.

Oh you thought I was done, no, the writing is also really awkward, people use made up teenager words all the time and a lot of people regard it as annoyingly quirky and edgy.

I loved life is strange when I was 14 and in retrospect, it is cringe- it's high schoolers with nonsensical time travel powers and all of the faces look like mush. It's derivative, it's melodramatic, it's juvenile and because of all that I STILL LOVE IT hold on what

-Life is Strange and Detrimental Authenticity- OR: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Cringe

First, a quick recap. Max caulfield is a photography student at a prestigious boarding school for the arts in oregon. She has no friends except for beta male orbiter warren. She is an awkward small bean and the mean girls aren't nice to her because whatever

Max discovers she has the power to rewind time when a kid tries to shoot blue haired girl and she saves her life discovering later that blue haired girl is in fact childhood friend chloe price. The two have hijinx, homoerotic tension, teen drama, homoerotic tension, and max's time travel powers start to destroy the fabric of the universe and while having her coming of age story about being a quirky photographer in the pacific northwest she has to grapple with that edgelord that tried to kill chloe, mean girls, chloe's fascist cop stepdad, teen mental illness, homoeotic tension, chloe's dead girlfriend, this drug dealer and his dog, whole bunch of other shit I won't get into and an impending hurricane of her own metaphysical creation. Got it? Good, this isn't a retrospective i'm not talking about everything that happens only that which is relevant i only have so much time on this earth and i wanna get to the good stuff and this story.... it isn't it

Let's talk about why though

1. The game is about choice but choice doesn't matter

This is a classic for this genre of game. It was true in the walking dead, it's true in every telltale game, it's true in most parts of david cage's games, and it's true in life is strange. The closest thing to engaging gameplay that these kinds of games have is the promise that your choices matter, what you say will impact the way that the story plays out, x character will remember y snide remark. This is the gimmick, this is the point, this is the idea. It's a movie where you decide what happens. In reality this promise has never fully been delivered. There are a few key choices you make in each chapter that have their consequences within the chapter, and some are even charitable enough to end up being consequential in later chapters, but that hurricane I

mentioned? It shows up bigtime, and your ending is decided by one choice at the very end. Not only are your previous choices irrelevant to the ending you get, the two endings are

A. you let the hurricane destroy everything and everyone. This means that every choice to help kate or to be rude to victoria or to break a rule or to take a picture or to kill a dog is completely pointless because in the end the only people who that choice affected in any way is you or chloe, the two surviving residents of arcadia bay. And even then it's not like they remark on any of it, in this ending the characters drive off wordlessly.

The other ending, ending B involves going back in time to before you made any of those choices so the hurricane never comes to begin with, which once again overwrites every choice you've made this time literally by reverting them through time.

This game is supposed to be about choices having consequences, this is a theme of all coming of age stories and all time travel stories but really the only choices that matter are max choosing to use time travel to begin with and what she ends up choosing to do once the consequences of that time travel reach a fever pitch. Everything past the first 15 minutes of episode 1 and the last 15 minutes of episode 5, no scratch that, last 5 minutes of episode 5 was essentially done for no reason other than to have some things to do while the story chugs along.

2. The immense tonal jump

In their video "Superposition: The Genre of Life is Strange", Innuendo Studios makes a point about the pacing of the game that I hadn't really realized until I went back to play the game for this video: the transition from quirky high school teen drama to psychological time travel world ending thriller is razor sharp. Episodes one and two are pretty much entirely the former while the last 3 are strongly seated in the latter and the transition between the two is not earned or existent at all. The game being split into these two halves diminishes the value of both in a tangible way. Where the game could've been a teen drama with psychological thriller undertones that built and built like all good movies, tv shows or games within this genre do, for the first half it's a teen drama with incidental time travel and in the second half it's a mishmash of mystery thriller and time travel insanity that has a coat of paint on it that just kind of happens to be a teen drama.

3. The cringe

There are a lot of ways that I think life is strange can be called cringe with 100% validity. Namely, the game's technical issues when it comes to character facial expressions. The characters in life is strange look like melting plastic. Their expressions remind me of what faces

look like in my dreams. They're obviously faces for people, but the nuances of expression are off in a way that's hard to pinpoint to one specific thing. My best guess is generally inexpressive eyes and eyebrows combined with poor lip syncing, but it could be other things on top of that.

Worth criticizing too is that the recent remastered editions of all the games prior to true colors do very little to fix it. The remastered faces look better and more expressive, but not any less awkward, any less cringe. True colors, the latest game in the franchise, does look a lot better i'll give that one credit, but it's still well and far behind industry standard for a company with a well known series like life is strange is. It's not Bethesda bad, and it is an improvement on the previous games, but it's not up to par with its genre mates like Quantic Dream's Detroit: Become Human.

Anyway. The technical problems with life is strange do make a lot of the scenes feel kind of cringe, but that isn't what people are really ragging on when they make that criticism, at least not entirely. What they usually mean is the dialogue.

It's been said that the characters in life is strange don't talk like American teenagers do. Rather, they talk like how adult French game developers think American teenagers talk. Characters will use phrases that no American teenagers really do. Everyone is a caricature of themselves, the mean girl is a mean girl stereotype who says, out loud, without pause, "go fuck your selfie" and this phrase is nobody as weird or awkward. Her friends think it's cool and Max is embarrassed by it rather than embarrassed for queen bee Victoria for this absolutely fake-gag-noise inducing witty line. A sticking point for many is Chloe Price for being edgy, and rebellious in an annoying way, and selfish, whatever. People don't like Chloe and think she's cringe. That's most of the major pieces, and in order to respond to them I have to tell you a little bit about myself

As you may have noticed, i'm a quirked up little guy. I'm not "normal". I'm weird. *jughead*
HE'S JUST LIKE MEEEEEEEEEE

I went to an art school when I was in my younger years of teenagehood without any interest understanding or talent in the arts, and that explains everything I am now the end

I have a strong connection to the pacific northwest-y area through family and when I was in high school all of my friends were

How do i say cringe without being mean

So when I went through my first playthrough of life is strange, I felt, seen, not necessarily in the protagonists I relate in basically no way to either of these characters but more so seen by the world, characters at a distance, and the, I hate to say it, the vibe.

That word makes me shudder I feel like I need a shower

To most people, the world, characters, and the third thing i'm not saying again are extremely annoying, or unrealistic, or unsympathetic. But to 14 year old me, this was my world, these people were no more cringe than my real life friends would be not a year later, and I listened to much of the same melodramatic indie music the game's soundtrack hinges upon. Piano Fire by sparklehorse is still one of my favourite songs ever. It's almost as if through my personal experiences of adjacency to this stuff rendered me immune to what everyone else was calling cringe, or fake, or annoying.

What i'm getting at is that this massively formative time in my life basically brainwashed me into the perfect consumer for this experience, and that doesn't sit well with me.

this is a bad game with bad characters and bad gameplay and a bad story but because of my personal experiences growing up in this sort of environment, I still think it's good. Is that really right though? Is it "correct" to say as a guy who analyzes games? Is it, as victoria would say, like, totally valid?

Let's talk about bias for a minute before we close this one out

Is bias bad? Bias is kinda like double texting in that I feel like everyone keeps talking about how bad it is while not actually explaining why or what we should do about it.

you can't explain why Bias is bad because, like, come on what the hell is there otherwise? What "unbiased" means in the modern day is essentially just "within the realm of accepted opinion", the word unbiased establishes an overtone window for any given subject. You stray too far to one end or another and you're biased. You keep within that middle realm you have some supernaturally-granted thing people keep talking about called journalistic integrity I don't trust it I don't like it keep it as far away from me as possible.

If you, like me, believe that the best "analysis" of a work of art is one in which the individual doing the analysis places themselves in the art and finds meaning from that interaction, you logically have to discard at least some of your belief in unbiased writing on games. I don't want a wikipedia synopsis from my youtube creators, I want a unique, passionate perspective informed by a myriad of sources from rigid, typical ones like theory and developer testimony to as subjective things as emotional feeling and life experience. The best analysis, to me, is the one that encompasses all these things while respecting their equality, because at the end of the day it isn't how you engage with a work of art that necessarily matters, as long as you're doing it. That's the bar. It's not good games analysis vs bad games analysis where we're really at is game analysis and book reports. The worst game analysis doesn't even try, it just reads you a summary and follows that summary up with a canned take they formed before they even hit play. And

those takes are just as biased as my takes in this video, but because they're uncontroversial they're working at IGN and i'm complaining about a person I made up in my basemen-

I try to be fair in the videos that I make but I'm under no illusion that i'm any authority on anything first and foremost because I now believe that that urge, the drive to objective critique is bad for art, it misses at least part of the point. The second reason is, well,

When I was 14 I read the catcher in the rye and went he just like me for real unironically, and I'm 20 now and think life is strange is a frustratingly endearing game that I can't force myself to dislike, no matter how much the crossroads sleep paralysis demon of objective game analysis demands it.

So, in conclusion,

I am cringe but i am free, life is strange is good actually and my source is that I made it the fuck up

Special thank you to Spritz can i please borrow 40\$ adam souza ryan little jack bradley meppledude itsducktastic life is strange sucks this motherfu-

Talia hoemke and ryd for pledging to my patreon at the highest tier all of you are amazing. If you'd like to support my work, see behind the scenes updates and exclusive content, link is in the description. you can pay only a few bucks per video, not even per month, just whenever I post anything. Anyway, next video is a fun, fallout-related one so i hope you're looking forward to that, see you soon.