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Make Final Fantasy Great Again: Annotated Bibliography

Hill, Mark. “5 Reasons Final Fantasy Failed Worse Than Any Franchise Ever.” *Cracked.com*, 28 Jan. 2016, [www.cracked.com/blog/5-disappointing-reasons-final-fantasy-losing-all-its-fans/](http://www.cracked.com/blog/5-disappointing-reasons-final-fantasy-losing-all-its-fans/) Date Accessed: 17 May 2019

Summary: Mark Hill’s article “5 Reasons Final Fantasy Failed Worse Than Any Franchise Ever” he analyzes 5 reasons that the *Final Fantasy* franchise has failed its audience. Hill identifies the effects of capitalism combining with the series success as eventually corrupting *Square-Enix (SE).* Using hyperbolic examples, the author states that, things like “Tonberry Vibrators” and a fictional spinoff “Flan Fuckers” as evidence that the developers no longer care about the quality and care that used to define the games. Further criticism is levied at the games recent inconsistencies creating a coherent story, let alone one in a single game. Noting the increasing CGI time with each new entry, Hill posits that SE has confused the games profits with the games visuals which have become increasingly intrusive. The author then notes the increasing sexualization of female characters to the point of absurdity. Comparisons with beloved (and clothed) heroines from previous games shows that scantily clad females and sales seem to be inversely correlated. The last argument made by the author is that the company seems to be putting profit far ahead of quality which is destroying the good memories the fans had of the series in its hay day. Hill notes that the original games in the series shaped his childhood but admits that *Square* (*SE* before merger) no longer makes games like that.

Evaluation: This might surprise you, but I really appreciate and identified with this author. He’s obviously an old school *Final Fantasy* (*FF*) player like myself and shares many of my complaints. He writes a blog on *Cracked,* but I find his honesty and emotion relatable. I agree that profanity and vulgarity for their own sake are generally disagreeable but using them to relay emotion and convey ideas is very effective. I also agree with all his points except the last one, where he gives the impression that it’s time to give up on *SE*. I think virtually all of what he’s saying can be boiled down to an attempt to take art and make it a business model. Tons of spinoffs, lack of care (usually rushed developers), poor writing and sexualized characters are all symptoms of that. The author here is writing an article here the way someone who is suicidal cries for help. Those of us who feel the pain get the message immediately, but it will probably be lost on everyone else. (see *The Last Jedi)* In my presentation I wanted to go over characters lacking depth and relatability which is covered somewhat here. I also plan to go over the correlation between graphics and success, re-use of assets in place of new ideas and cheap cash grabs.

Jurkovich, Tristan. *TheGamer*, [www.thegamer.com/15-things-square-enix-can-do-to-fix-final-fantasy/quickview/1](http://www.thegamer.com/15-things-square-enix-can-do-to-fix-final-fantasy/quickview/1) Date Accessed: 17 May 2019

Summary: In the article “What Square-Enix Can Do To Fix Final Fantasy” Tristian Jurkovich discusses fifteen ideas likely to improve the *Final Fantasy* franchise. The author feels that although *Final Fantasy XV* was an improvement over it’s predecessors that more work is left to be done. Jurkovich declares his biggest fear being lack of clarity on the project’s future. He cites the significant decrease in mainline entries over the last 15 years and the prolific output of spinoffs and rereleases as the primary culprit. Included by Jurkovich is that he was unable to continue counting these spinoffs when his brain suffered an unexpected release of brain material from his skull (1). Despite his unfamiliar physical condition, the author chronicles 15 changes which could improve future titles including: returning the game to a fantasy setting from the futuristic ones (2), bringing back the “job” system and making a new villain be central to the plot. The developers should also avoid “melodramatic” main characters, stop themselves from being distracted by side projects and break the habit of day one patches.

Evaluation: This article was particularly excellent to find as it both proves my concern has merits and comes from a legitimate website. The website *The Gamer* is a website that reports video game news and has opinion pieces like the one I’m referring to. The purpose is quite like my own being that we both want to make *Final Fantasy* good again. The author shares several of my criticisms of the newer titles and it’s always nice to hear how someone else see’s the issue. I would say that the article is geared toward players of the *Final Fantasy* franchise that are disillusioned with the most recent titles and *Square-Enix* as a whole. The source has a bunch of good ideas, but my presentation style is going to be much different. So, it’s nice to have a list essentially of ideas I can use to assert my position.

Kemps, Heidi. “Why Every Final Fantasy Game Is the Best AND Worst in the Series.” Gamesradar, GamesRadar , 5 May 2011, [www.gamesradar.com/why-every-final-fantasy-game-is-the-best-and-worst-in-the-series/](http://www.gamesradar.com/why-every-final-fantasy-game-is-the-best-and-worst-in-the-series/) Date Accessed: 27 May 2019.

Summary: In “Why Every Final Fantasy Game is the Best and the Worst”, Heidi Kemps nerds out and argues in favor of each Final Fantasy game in the series being both the best and the worst. Additionally, her own opinion is added to bridge the gap between such vastly differing opinions. During the article which spans 5 webpages Kemps covers each of the games in the main series starting with the first and ending with the latest. The arguments for each game vary dramatically, but have a general focus on story, traditional gameplay elements, graphical improvements and overall impact for the franchise.

Evaluation: Kemps article does a good job going over each game in the series and making a basic case for its standing. I would have liked to see the author go further in depth and provide a more objective rating for aspects of each game. Instead, we only get a brief paragraph per topic per game. I decided to keep this article, however, because It’s like a case study into opinions on the topic. One person giving extreme positive, extreme negative and personal opinions provides a somewhat objective data set on the franchise. As for her credentials, she goes over 13 titles which some relatively nuanced criticism and praise for each. I think the general purpose of her article was to get paid, really. But the website is basically an internet version of a video game magazine, so I assume it was to entertain gamers.

Lacoma, Tyler. “Final Fantasy: 15 Major Problems Fans Don't Want To Admit.” TheGamer, TheGamer, 20 Nov. 2017, [www.thegamer.com/final-fantasy-major-problems-fans-dont-want-to-admit/](http://www.thegamer.com/final-fantasy-major-problems-fans-dont-want-to-admit/) Date Accessed: 27 May 2019.

Summary: Tyler Lacoma writes a list of things fans won’t admit about *Final Fantasy* in the article “Final Fantasy: 15 Major Problems Fans Don’t Want to Admit.” His article begins with the author noting that it’s easy to reflect on long running series with rose tinted glasses, but that the best way we can show them that we love them is by being tough with our criticism. Lacoma notes that as much as the players of the franchise appreciate attempts to innovate the combat, we all secretly miss the turn-based battles. Sequels, he continues, are another issue as the stories should not be written to go past the credits. Just who are Final Fantasy games made for these days, Lacoma ponders briefly before he discusses increasing objectification of women and simplified gameplay. The author continues by giving voice to fans who miss the class system and he levels heavy criticism of nonsensical stories and cliché’ characters.

Evaluation: Lacoma’s article here is another super helpful resource representing a separate well thought out view point on my topic. The article is based almost entirely on opinion, but so is my topic really. How can you say that one piece of art is objectively better than another? The general thesis of this article is that despite the reverence from certain groups of fans, some serious issues have crept up and are eating the games from the inside. The author works for a game journalism website and although the article is most heavily critical of the latest *Final Fantasy* title various others are appropriately referenced. The audience is strikingly like my own in that he is a long-time fan trying to lobby in his own way to those willing to listen. Many of the ideas he lays out are the same as the idea’s I’m presenting. To be more specific: straying from turn based gameplay, bad sequels, unclear audience, automated combat isn’t fun, terrible spinoffs, loss of identity for summons, futuristic settings, lack of jobs and general ease of the game.

Websell, John. “Not so Final Fantasy - Final Fantasy XV: a Game of Two Halves.” Goomba Stomp, 2 Feb. 2019, [www.goombastomp.com/not-so-final-fantasy-final-fantasy-xv-a-game-of-two-halves/](http://www.goombastomp.com/not-so-final-fantasy-final-fantasy-xv-a-game-of-two-halves/) Date Accessed: 27 May 2019.

Summary: John Websell’s article, “Not So Final Fantasy – Final Fantasy XV” looks at the latest game in the franchise from the perspective of a jaded fan. The article begins with a brief nod to *FFXV’s* prolonged troubled development before delving into his feelings on the title. Websell discusses his tentative optimism driven by the games visuals and the story presented in the tie in CG movie and the pre-released parts of the game that were playable. The author even acknowledges that although the game wasn’t what he wanted, he did find himself enjoying it during the first half of the experience. Ultimately, Websell finds himself disappointed by the sharp drop in quality, the boy band atmosphere of the main protagonists, narrative inconsistencies and the lackluster simplicity of the combat.

Evaluation: This article is interesting because you can tell throughout how badly he wanted this game to be good. Reading it you get the impression of a man who misses his old friend but realizes that the friend has changed. That he’s looking for all the things he used to love in his friend, but they just aren’t there anymore. I get that. The article is clearly written for fans of the series who feel forgotten as the franchise progresses. This article will be useful in my proposal as another opinion on the topic that shares many of the same complaints as me.