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**Platform:** PC

For anyone playing videogames today, we live in an age where modern AAA blockbusters and independent low-fi games are released widely onto the market.

Naturally the videogame industry, like most forms of entertainment, tries to better itself through the advent of technological advancement – seeing a graphical overhaul or adjustment as a sign of progress and improvement.

What has broken this mold is the certain few games from the independent developed market – games that have not strayed far from the graphical aesthetic of the early days of gaming, but have also kept alive gameplay mechanics and storylines that have stood the test of time – **Primordia** is one of those games.



*Primordia* simply put is a point-and-click

videogame graphically and atmospherically influenced by such games as *Beneath a Steel Sky* and the book to movie to videogame adaptation *Blade Runner*. There is countless possible examples of point-and-click videogames I could compare this game to in terms of mechanics, however *Primordia* is special and thus I feel it holds bears relation to a few top gems in the point-and-click genre.

In its simplest form, the world of *Primordia* is based in a dystopian, post-apocalyptic future. The story sees two robots, Horatio Null-built and his sidekick Crispin Horatio-built, who live in the middle of the desert dunes repairing their old broken airship of which they live in.

This is all changed however when an aggressive large robot appears one day, maims Horatio and subsequently steals their ship's power core. Horatio and Crispin set off to track down the robot and to retrieve their power core – taking the duo on a journey from the wastelands to the bustling city of Metropol, a journey that will change both their lives forever.

There is much to say about how wonderful the story of this game is, however most of the plot is too sensitive to mention in a review – a lot of the feeling and emotion would be lost if I spoiled too much of the story, it really is one of those games that has to be played fresh from start to finish to feel the full effect of what was intended by the developers.

I will say however that there are a lot of strong and distinctly magnificent themes throughout the game. All the characters are robots, and it is absolutely charming how robots, both big and small, are portrayed through their distinct personalities.

I also loved the theme of evolution and progress that runs through the game. As the it develops, you will meet many characters and witness events that question the very soul of a robot and their function to live alone. Whilst stories from such movies like *Wall-E* are endearing, *Primordia* adopts a much more serious tone and forgoes the stereotype that all robots are evil and almost realistically depicts a futuristic outcome where robots have to decide evolution and progress for themselves.



Graphically, the game is astounding in terms of artistic grandeur. It takes liberties in being open with its influences, almost paying tribute to the forefather point-and-click games of the past. Many screens in the game are hand-painted and crafted to create a haunting, detailed and gorgeous atmosphere – the type of atmosphere I experienced when watching Blade Runner with its rain drenched steely cold darkness in a dystopian future.

All animation in the game is in old-school sprite form. The effect is integrated so well that it never breaks away from the background of the game itself and looks part of the natural moving painting you are witnessing as you play. In the crowded city of Metropol, many random robotic sprites are even programmed to pass you by. You can interact with each one giving a unique response. I have rarely witnessed this level of detail and care in a videogame and I have to give much kudos to the developers taking the time and effort to create such vibrancy.

Aside from the graphics, *Primordia* boasts an enriching soundtrack that helps bolster the somber yet hopeful feel of the game. I felt there could be a little bit more music, however this is entirely down to my personal preference of taste. Maybe I just missed the music when it was gone as it is very enjoyable and integral to the overall atmosphere of this game. Regardless I definitely implore that you check out the soundtrack.

The voice acting features Logan Cunningham who did some wonderful work in 2011's *Bastion*. The overall voice acting of this game was one of the strongest parts of the game experience. Usually high quality voice acting in point-and-click independent games is very hit or miss (due to budget), however in *Primordia* this is not the case.

The most important part of this whole experience, is of course the gameplay. In terms of point-and-click the interface and playing style of solving puzzles is largely the same as its predecessors. I will say that I loved the inventory screen, as it was actually very accessible and not intrusive in any sort of way.



Another good point is that the two options to interact and look are locked solely to the simplistic form of either clicking with your left or right mouse button respectively. The gameplay is very much refined and helps the player to explore the land much faster than fumbling over what could be seen as “archaic gameplay mechanics”.

My only critique is probably debatable. I also believe that it shouldn't impact the overall experience of the game nor its final score. However the puzzles, although plentiful and for the most part largely logical, are sometimes extremely obscure. They're not unfair in the sense you have to run back in an errand quest of some sort – The game actually makes fun of this in several parts with its witty dialogue (provided by your sidekick, Crispin!). More so the train of thought of some of the puzzles leads you to use your mind in a complex manner, looking sometimes too deeply into the situation and stumping as to what you have to do. For example at one point I found myself walking about Metropol after exhausting every dialogue option I could. I simply couldn't figure out what I had to do, as I needed to find an item to trade with a local important NPC. I found that by simply right-clicking (Examining) one of my old items, I was able to progress the game further. In retrospect, I feel entirely stupid for not doing so and question why I didn't do it earlier.

Having said that, the nature of the puzzles featured vary across the board to test your level of challenge – From logic puzzles, problem solving and puzzles that force you think outside the box in oblique terms. When you do complete a challenge, the satisfaction that is felt is oh so wonderful. Never have I felt this satisfied since the time when I defeated many of the horribly difficult monsters in *Monster Hunter* or completed the fatalistic challenges of *Dark Souls*.

I don't want to paint a picture that shows *Primordia* as having some of the most difficult puzzles in video game history, but I will say that the difficulty is reasonable enough and without it, this game would be just a game you click all the way through to the end with little to no challenge or feeling of satisfaction.

*Primordia* also boasts multiple endings. Many of the puzzles can be solved with multiple solutions. This is also reflected in the game's in-built achievements system. You will obtain achievements for solving puzzles in certain ways which brings a slight form of replayability value to the overall experience. However I believe the true replayability value comes from the fact that the game and its story is just a joy to play over and over again.



Wadjet Eye Games in my opinion have delivered an absolute gem with this one. I played their 2011 point-and-click release *Gemini Rue* and found many of the same loveable aspects to that game that I have now found with *Primordia*. The major difference this time is that there is an overall refinement and stronger voice acting from the production team attached to this game.

In the end, *Primordia* has shown that "old" gameplay mechanics still work to a point that it blurs that stereotype and just makes you accept that this is a game that plays in the way it does and works.

As clichéd and overused within the science fiction genre as it sounds, Phillip K. Dick's "Do Androids Dream Of Electric Sheep?" provides a very meaningful context to *Primordia*, and no doubt a lot of inspiration for the game came from that single question. However this game has evolved the question and now asks "Do the Sheep even matter?"

A fantastic story, graphically gorgeous, an atmosphere that will swell emotions of happiness and sadness, puzzles that will challenge and satisfy, characters that are endearing and memorable, voice acting that is believable and charming and a soundtrack that bolsters the whole package - *Primordia* satisfies on so many levels that in my opinion it is one of the greatest modern day Sci-Fi point-and-click adventures we have seen in a long time.

**Rating: 10/10**

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