CMS.300 – Intro to Video Game Theory

Session 19 – GAMES AND VIOLENCE

Readings

Kutner & Olson, Grand Theft Childhood (excerpt)

Goldstein, Why We Watch (Ch. 3)

Concepts/Keywords

- Media effects
- Aggression
- Aggressive behavior
- Aggressive play
- Media effects
- Aggressive behavior v. aggressive play

Q: Who plays violent Video games? Why do we enjoy it?

AGRESSION – hurting somebody, usually without provocation

vs.

AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR – hostile or violent behavior towards others, threatening or more

vs.

AGGRESSIVE PLAY – play that simulates aggression, pretend violent behavior

relates to PAIDIA (exuberant, even destructive)

MAGIC CIRCLE – kids can tell when violence is for real or not, but not adults

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Q: Why are Video Games associated with children?

- Video Game ads with grandparents
- Arcade games in bars in early days

Protection of children as argument

- US → similar attitudes towards comic in the 50s
- Australia Classification Board → fight to get +18 rating
- Germany → Violent Video Games are banned

Q: Why is Video Game violence a recurring topic?

Media FX → questionable → correlation != causality

BUT - it benefits of games is highlighted (education) why not other way around?

> Yet again, persuasive games are not that persuasive.

Play is an expression of culture

- Video Games as central to boy culture (social life – not playing M-games may be a sign of no friends) (Kutner & Olson)
- Reflection of the world – kids playing violent
    - militarization and violent games after Pearl Harbor (Goldstein)

PROBLEM is stereotypes and profiling

- M-games players more attuned to aggressive behavior
- Becoming desensitized may be the point. (army simulators, dealing with everyday stress)
- Again, most people without mental issues know the difference between reality and fantasy

Differences/Similarities with other media

- Being in Control
- Cause/Consequence (although some games make corpses dissolve)
- Metaphorical violence (clicking is not punching or shooting)

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