Video Game Violence Essay, Research Paper

Gore-Fest: The Next Generation of Violent Video Games

There have been many arguments regarding the violence in television and video games. The current trend is to limit children s exposure to violent material. The belief is that violent material elicits violent behavior. A counter argument states that violent material actually relieves built-up anger innate to humans. I believe that some aggressive activities could be a good stress reliever. Activities such as contact sports, or fantasy video games. The problem is that some video games now are so realistic that they create a virtual bloodlust, desensitize people to death, and devalue human life in the eyes of the player.

Counter-strike is a new game that has recently caught the online gaming community by storm. It is a first-person shooter game dedicated to terrorist/counter-terrorist warfare. Many games have simulated real fighting with modern assault weapons. This is the first that does so in an incredibly realistic fashion. The sounds of the gunshots are quite real, as is the sound of hot lead hitting soft flesh. That sickening sound is hear quite often in the game and is accompanied by massive amounts of blood splatter. The graphics are also very realistic; the movements of the characters and the texture mapping of the models are true to life. The most horrific part is the long stream of blood that follows a headshot, instantly killing the player. Blood is nothing new to a video game, but in this one, it is all too realistic.

Having played this game quite a lot, I know what impact it has on people. A whole community has sprung up around the game. Players from all over the world join together to participate in this killing-fest. Again, this sort of thing is not new, however, the emotion that goes into this game is a bit beyond normal. This is because of the stark realism. I have noticed the negative effects especially with my roommate. When he is losing, he becomes violent, slamming the mouse and spouting curses. When he is winning, he laughs maniacally and talks about wanting to kill more. People who become very attached to the game can t get enough of the feeling that comes along with splattering their opponent s entrails all over the virtual world. I admit that it is very satisfying to riddle your opponent with bullets after hunting him/her down. I find this satisfaction frightening.

Television has long been charged with desensitizing people to violence. Watching the bloodshed of war and the aftermath of murders on the nightly news makes one feel that violence is normal. The problem with realistic video games is that they put the player in control of the gore. If one wants their opponent to have a particularly bloody demise, they can aim for the head, or choose an automatic shotgun as their weapon. Games like this put a person one step closer to the violence. Television is a third person event, it is watched without control of the action. Video games give the player the choice to participate in violence in a virtual way. Constant play in this way makes a person feel that what they are participating in is normal . An avid Counter-strike player would think that hostage situations and terrorist bombings are commonplace and that they usually result in bloody resolutions.

An urge to kill, even virtually, and a comfortableness with bloodshed lead to a devaluing of human life in the mind of the player. During the course of a usually online session of Counter-strike, the death tally is in the hundreds. A player will view many virtual deaths, and his/her character will be killed many times. Over the course of many rounds, this leads to disconnection of the of death and its consequences in the real world. To an impressionable mind, this can devalue human life. So realistic a game just removes even more significance from human life that pop culture removes every day.

Violence in video games can not be stopped. In fact, with the ever-advancing computer technologies, realism and gore will be enhanced further in the future. What needs to happen is education on the difference between real life and virtual reality. For most older gamers the distinction is not a problem, however for children realistic gore can create a desire for more violence and devalue human life.