
Depiction of Crime in Video Games: A Critical Analysis

Aleksandar Filipović

Faculty of Law for Commerce and Judiciary in Novi Sad

Article Information*

Review Article • UDC: 343.9.018:004.42

Volume: 21, Issue: 3, pages: 55–76

Received: October 15, 2024 • Accepted: November 21, 2024

<https://doi.org/10.51738/Kpolisa2024.21.3r.f55>

Author Note

Aleksandar Filipović  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1097-2079>

I have no known conflict of interest to disclose.

Corresponding author: Aleksandar Filipović

E-mail: sasha.filipovic@gmail.com

* Cite (APA): Filipović, A. (2024). Depiction of Crime in Video Games: A Critical Analysis. *Kultura polisa*, 21(3), 55-76, <https://doi.org/10.51738/Kpolisa2024.21.3r.f55>



© 2024 by the authors. This article is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Abstract

The portrayal of crime in video games has become a focal point of academic and societal debate due to its potential influence on players' perceptions of criminal behavior and morality. This paper critically examines how crime is depicted across different genres of video games, exploring the narrative structures, character development, and interactive mechanics that contribute to these portrayals. Through a mixed-methods approach, combining content analysis of popular crime-centered games with a review of player experiences and reactions, we assess the extent to which video games normalize or challenge criminal activity. Additionally, the study considers the implications of crime representation on both individual psychology and broader cultural attitudes towards law, justice, and morality. The findings highlight the complex and multifaceted role that video games play in shaping societal views on crime, with particular attention to the influence of immersive storytelling and player agency. This research contributes to the growing body of literature on the intersection of digital entertainment, psychology, and criminology, and offers insights into the potential impact of video games on social attitudes and behaviors related to crime.

Key words: crime representation, video games, player perception, criminology, cultural attitudes

Depiction of Crime in Video Games: A Critical Analysis

Introduction

According to research by the American Psychological Association (2020), more than 85% of video games on the market contain some form of violence and crime. Analyzing the content of such video games, it is easy to observe a shift in player ethics and to conclude that game plots are abundant with actions that, according to the rules of human society, are considered criminal (Cerezo-Pizzaro et al., 2023). The ontological nature of video games allows players absolute freedom. Through their avatars, they can steal, lie, cheat, simulate, rape, bribe, threaten, blackmail, beat, kill—they are allowed to disregard any moral or other rule (see more in: Filipović, 2022). Unlike real life, where institutions exist to prevent such actions more or less effectively, in video games, there is no one to "catch," accuse, or punish the player and their avatar, which forms the basis of the non-ethics of video games. It is precisely the images of crime, as a consequence of violence and aggression, on which gameplay in video games often insists, that have led to significant public concern and moral panic, which represents the greatest aporia of video games (see more in: Karlsen, 2015).

Video game creators, especially those who profit from game sales, recognized early on the need for uninhibited and unpunished aggression among the gaming population (see more: Bjelajac & Filipović, 2020). It was simultaneously noted that this aggression is by no means exclusive to gamers but rather an innate impulse within humans more broadly. The scientific community has long maintained that aggression and violence are intrinsic aspects of human nature. In *Leviathan*, Hobbes (2013) argues that humans are ontologically predisposed to act according to natural law—that is, according to the freedom granted to each person by birth and mere existence on Earth. This natural freedom allows each individual to make decisions about how best to use their power to preserve their own nature and life. Consequently, each person is free to do whatever they believe is the most suitable means to achieve their goals (Hobbes, 2013: 72–93).

At the international conference titled "Violence in the Digital Age" (Russ. "Насилие в цифровую эпоху"), held in Russia in 2018, an intriguing paper titled "Ontological Ultimacy and the Nature of Violence" was presented. In this paper, author Svetlana Obolkina posits that human aggression and violence—and even causing harm to others—are not matters of personal choice but rather natural impulses deeply embedded in the human ontological being. These impulses make aggression, violence, and harm essential ways of life and expressions of natural instincts that society cannot suppress indefinitely (see more in: Bjelajac & Filipović, 2021). In this context, "human aggression and violence, including causing harm to others," are understood in this work not merely as options but as arguably the most effective ways to achieve success in life, gain much-needed fame, and attain a respectable old age.

Evolution of scientific positions

It seems only natural that these innate human traits would be affirmed in video games, which have progressively become more violent, promoting and affirming aggression not only as a means of playing but as a way to complete games successfully (Adachi & Willoughby, 2011). One of the cornerstones of such a policy by game creators was the public's serious concern, which manifested as moral panic (Markey et al., 2017) surrounding the impact of video games on aggressive, violent, and criminal behaviors in players. Following extensive media reports inspired by murders committed by people who, among other things, played violent video games, moral panic evolved into hysteria, causing a dramatic increase in public concern (Kneer & Ward, 2021). A highly emotional debate on the impact of video games on aggressive, violent, and criminal behavior emerged, leading to the publication of hundreds of studies on the topic. However, the findings were often contradictory: some studies indicated a rise in aggression, while others suggested a decrease in criminal behavior (Fournis & Abou, 2014).

Early research on this topic openly suggested a link between violent video games and aggression, potentially leading to criminal behaviors (Dill & Dill, 1998). Published data indicated an increase in aggressive moods after playing violent video games and suggested that

altered prosocial behavior in gamers was a result of such games. The U.S. Senate, in the Hearing before the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, investigated the underlying mechanisms of video game-induced aggression (The Impact on Interactive Violence on Children, 2000). It was hypothesized that under certain environmental conditions, aggressive behavior might result from desensitization and disinhibition caused by violent video games. Repeated exposure to violent game content was thought to promote aggressive cognitive schemas. Once established, these schemas are reinforced through the process of learning and repeated exposure to video game violence, with particular emphasis on the fact that desensitization to violence may increase the risk of aggression and criminal behavior (Guerra, Huesmann & Hanish, 1995).

However, another group of studies claims that exposure to violence in video games does not always have a negative effect (Panee & Ballard, 2002). Although human or fantasy violence was associated with a stronger effect than violence in sports games, the overall impact on aggression was weak and less significant than that of television violence (Sherry, 2001). These findings led to the rejection of the hypothesis that violent video games inherently provoke aggression and its consequences (Greitemeyer, 2013). Over time, a growing number of researchers expressed skepticism regarding the connection between violent video games and real-life criminal behavior. Some studies (Ferguson & Kilburn, 2009) even suggested that the effects of violent video games on criminal behavior were significantly overstated. When biases in later studies were corrected, the effect of playing violent video games on aggression and criminality was significantly reduced (Ferguson, 2007). Studies that considered other variables, such as domestic violence, found that the correlation between video games and aggressive or criminal behavior could no longer be established (Ferguson et al., 2012).

How video games depict crime?

Video games depict crime in various ways, depending on the genre, storyline, and the intentions of the game creators (McCaffree &

Proctor, 2018). The portrayal of crime in video games often relies on the broader narrative, yet games can offer insight into complex aspects of criminal activities, from their causes to their consequences. While some games may glorify crime, others critique it or present it in an ambiguous and morally complex light (Ward, 2011).

We can highlight several distinct ways in which video games portray crime:

- **Crime as the core of the story:** In games like the *Grand Theft Auto (GTA)* series, crime is central to the narrative. Players take on the roles of criminals, completing tasks such as theft, murder, and corruption. These games often portray an underground criminal structure, including gangs, the mafia, and corrupt police officers. Although these games are controversial due to their moral implications, many play them for the freedom of choice and the open-world experience they offer.
- **Moral dilemmas:** Crime is not necessarily the central element of the video game narrative, but players may face moral dilemmas involving criminal activities. In *The Witcher 3*, the protagonist, Geralt, often has to choose between different morally questionable options, all of which involve criminal actions.
- **Simulation of criminal life:** Games like the *Mafia* and *Yakuza* series provide a more realistic depiction of crime, focusing on organized criminal groups, their internal struggles, relationships with the police, and politics. These games often portray the consequences of crime not only for individuals but also for the wider community.
- **Crime as a means of survival:** In games like *Payday* or *Red Dead Redemption 2*, criminal activities like robberies are essential for the characters' survival. These games often frame criminal acts within historical or social contexts, such as the Wild West or economic crises.
- **Punishment for crime:** In detective games or games that focus on fighting crime (e.g., *L.A. Noire*, *Sleeping Dogs*), players take on the role of those who investigate and punish crime. The

emphasis is on investigation, gathering evidence, and bringing criminals to justice.

- **Humorous approach to crime:** Some games present crime in a comedic or satirical way. For example, the *Saints Row* series is known for exaggerating and satirizing crime, where actions are excessively violent but carried out with a humorous tone.

Does the current depiction of crime in video games have social justification?

The portrayal of crime in video games sparks debates about whether the way it is depicted has any social or moral justification (Schulzke, 2014). Interestingly, opinions are often divided. Authors, in this context, refer to various aspects of the lifestyle and behavior adopted in contemporary human society:

- **Freedom of artistic expression:** One of the main arguments for portraying crime in video games is the freedom of artistic expression. Just like in films, TV shows, and books, video games are a form of art and entertainment, where creators can explore various themes, including crime. In this sense, the portrayal of crime can be part of a broader social commentary, and even a way to present moral dilemmas, the consequences of crime, and the complex relationships within society.
- **Simulation and understanding the consequences of crime:** Some games, while allowing players to engage in criminal activities, also provide an opportunity to witness the consequences of such actions. For example, in games like the *Grand Theft Auto* series, although players are enabled to participate in criminal activities, the game often depicts the dark consequences of such behavior, including feelings of emptiness, loss, or the destruction of communities. This can contribute to discussions about the complexities of crime in the real world.
- **Criticism of society and systems:** Video games use crime as a metaphor for social injustices or corrupt systems. Games like *Watch Dogs* or *Mafia* use crime as a tool to critique corruption in governments, large corporations, or the judicial system. In these

cases, crime is not portrayed as something to be glorified but as a means to highlight systemic issues.

- **Psychological impact and moral concerns:** Critics often argue that games depicting crime may negatively affect young players, encouraging violence or diminishing empathy toward crime victims. Although research on the relationship between video games and violent behavior is inconclusive, there are concerns that exposure to such content could normalize or romanticize crime.
- **Separation of fiction and reality:** Advocates of video games point out that most players can clearly distinguish fiction from reality. Playing video games, including those that depict violence, evil, and crime, can serve as a form of escapism, where players temporarily enter a world with moral rules different from everyday life, but that does not mean they will transfer such behavior into the real world.
- **Social education:** Crime is also depicted through historical or cultural lenses that can broaden players' perspectives on social issues. Games that portray organized crime in the past (such as *Mafia* or *Red Dead Redemption*) provide contextual insight into how crime and society have developed together.

Based on the aforementioned arguments, it can be concluded that the contemporary portrayal of crime in video games may have social justification, provided it serves the purpose of artistic expression, social critique, or education. Such portrayals can offer deeper insights into societal phenomena, stimulate critical thinking about real-world social issues, and contribute to understanding moral dilemmas. However, it is crucial that the responsibility for depicting crime in this context be shared by both game creators and the broader community. Their role includes establishing a balance between the need for entertainment and the potential social and moral implications. In this way, video games can become a constructive medium of communication and influence, contributing not only to entertainment but also to collective social awareness.

Relativization and routinization of evil and crime in video games

It is hard to escape the impression that, regarding evil and crime, the world of video games is merely a harmless and pale imitation of the real world. In an earlier text (Filipović, 2022), we quoted Saint Augustine, who prophetically argued that "the world in which there is evil is better than the world in which moral evil would be impossible. The perfect world requires the existence of free creatures, and some of these free creatures choose evil by their free will. Yet, the world with free creatures, though broken, is still better than a world without freedom and evil" (Saint Augustine, 1960).

The history of human society can be interpreted as the history of human evil. "The creation of the world began with fratricide, according to the Bible. Both Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, as well as Greek tragedies, Roman epic poems, Shakespeare's dramas, all these works are full of scenes of murder and war. These human impulses form the basis for the novels of Balzac, Stendhal, and Dostoevsky, not to mention the infanticide in Goethe and the suicides in Flaubert and Tolstoy. It turns out that the history of world literature, at least its prose, is actually the history of human evil, or more precisely, that evil has always existed and will continue to exist in this new millennium" (Stanković, 2007).

The relativization of evil and crime in video games refers to a set of actions of avatars that depict evil or criminal acts in a way that diminishes their seriousness, harmfulness, and destructiveness, or even justifies their existence and execution. This is often achieved through the game's narrative, mechanics, or character design. The routinization of crime in video games refers to the portrayal of criminal activities as everyday, normal, or routine actions that are an integral part of gameplay, without significant moral reflection or emotional impact (Hayward & Young, 2004). This can lead to desensitization of players and affect how they perceive criminal behavior, even if they do not directly accept it in real life (Engelhardt et al., 2011).

In many video games, the boundary between good and evil is not clearly defined. Characters often act in morally gray areas, where

evil may be seen as justified or necessary. It is particularly visible if the story of the game even most broadly based on religious extremism or terrorism (Zirojević & Bjelajac, 2013).

This approach creates complex moral dilemmas and makes evil not perceived as absolutely negative, but as part of a broader context in which all decisions are morally relative.

In other games, the main characters are not traditional heroes but antiheroes, whose actions often involve evil or violence, but are presented in a way that encourages empathy (Greenwood, Ribieras, & Clifton, 2020). Characters such as Kratos in *God of War* or Arthur Morgan in *Red Dead Redemption 2* engage in morally questionable actions, but players sympathize with their personal struggles or motivations, thereby relativizing the evil they commit. This type of narrative allows players to experience evil as something that depends on perspective.

Characters in games commit evil acts in the name of a greater good or a higher purpose. This may include fighting against even greater evil, protecting family, or seeking revenge for injustice. In *The Last of Us Part II*, Ellie embarks on an emotionally traumatic journey of revenge, committing crimes in the process. The game shows the consequences of her actions, but at the same time fosters empathy for her motivations, thereby relativizing evil as something that can stem from pain and loss.

Some games use humor, caricature, or stylization of crime to diminish its seriousness. In games like *Saints Row*, evil is exaggerated and often humorous, turning negative actions into absurd entertainment. This stylization of evil presents it as something unrealistic and not serious, thus reducing the emotional and moral impact that such actions would have in the real world.

Evil and its consequences, such as crime, are often not portrayed realistically (Elson & Ferguson, 2013). Players can often commit evil and criminal acts without significant consequences, or with the possibility of undoing the evil through restarting or trying again. This reduces the gravity of these actions and creates a sense that evil does not carry weight or real impact. In games like *GTA*, players are free to

commit evil acts, but rarely face long-term consequences for those actions, aside from occasional police confrontations that quickly pass.

In video games, evil is often transformed into an obstacle or challenge for the player, rather than a moral issue. In many action games, fighting against evil enemies is a central aspect of gameplay mechanics, where these enemies are often devoid of moral complexity. Characters like demons, zombies, or soldiers are simply obstacles that the player must overcome, making their evil a functional component of the game rather than a question of ethics.

Many games place crime in fantastical or science fiction worlds where the rules of the real world do not apply. Evil in these games often has no direct connection to the real world, which allows players to experience it as something abstract or distant. In games like *Skyrim* or *Diablo*, crime as a consequence of evil is often personified through mythical creatures or forces, making it easier to dehumanize it and distance it from the moral norms of reality.

Video games give players the ability to decide how evil they want to be and how many criminal acts they wish to commit. In series like *Mass Effect* or *Fallout*, players choose whether to do evil or good, which relativizes evil because it depends on context and the player's decision. Such systems allow for the exploration of different moral paths without real-world consequences, providing players with the opportunity to experience various moral scenarios.

The evil that characters commit can be part of their path to redemption. Protagonists often undergo a personal transformation in which they struggle with their actions and seek forgiveness, making evil part of character development rather than an inherently bad thing. In *Red Dead Redemption 2*, Arthur Morgan starts as a criminal, but through the course of the game, he seeks ways to redeem his past mistakes, giving a more human dimension to his earlier evil actions.

Glorification of crime and romanticization of antiheroes

Video games have inherited the glorification of crime and romanticization of antiheroes from their "older brother" – film, but with a key difference: films have generally been much more consistent and

successful in setting a socially acceptable boundary that should not be crossed. In Western films, the "white hat" always won over the "black hat," bringing justice after much suffering. Gangster films, from their inception, had mandatory censorship. The main character had to fall in the end to prevent the glorification of violence and crime. A good example of this stance is the film *Angels with Dirty Faces*. The criminal and antihero Rocky (James Cagney) is arrested and sentenced to death. Father James (Humphrey Bogart) visits him just before his execution and begs him to die pretending to be a coward so that the boys no longer see him as a role model. Rocky refuses, but in the final moments, he changes his mind, and the guards drag him to the electric chair, crying like a pathetic coward. The boys read in the newspaper that Rocky died crying like a miserable coward and go to mass with the priest (Pavlović, 2017). The same pattern is found in Brian De Palma's 1990 film *Scarface*, and it was also used in *The Godfather*, similar to the first gangster film *Little Caesar* (op. cit., 2017).

This is not the case in video games. The glorification of crime in video games is, more or less, unchallenged. It can be identified in many very popular video games, where criminal activities are a desirable central part of the plot and gameplay. These games often present crime in an attractive light, sometimes even as a desirable or heroic path. They frequently give players a sense of power and control over the world through criminal activities, which may contribute to their popularity but also opens up a debate about the possible negative impact on perceptions of crime, especially among younger players.

The same is true for antiheroes. Antiheroes in video games are most often the player's avatars—characters who act outside traditional moral norms, often with questionable or openly evil intentions, but who remain the main protagonists that players follow and identify with. Their moral dilemmas, complex personalities, and tendency to use unorthodox methods make them fascinating and popular in video games. Antiheroes are popular because of their complexity and realistic moral dilemmas, which allow players to connect with them more deeply while simultaneously questioning traditional definitions of authority and heroism.

The romanticization of evil and, consequently, crime in video games is based on the portrayal of negative characters, evil empires, or dark forces in a way that makes them fascinating, attractive, or morally ambiguous, creating conditions for players to easily and willingly identify with evil protagonists or antagonists, completely relativizing and ignoring their criminal actions (Karkoff, 2014). The narrative of video games often involves themes of conflict, the routine infliction of evil on conscious beings, and the struggle between good and evil, thus creating and developing complex and compelling worlds and characters. This approach creates intricate and widely acceptable narratives but raises ethical questions about the impact of such portrayals.

Video games typically avoid black-and-white depictions of good and evil, introducing characters into situations that contain moral shades of grey, which are very rare in real life. Characters traditionally considered villains, such as antiheroes, are often presented with motivations that make them understandable, even sympathetic. This ambivalence allows players to explore the grey areas of morality, which can be intellectually stimulating and emotionally engaging. Players are regularly placed in the role of an antihero, characters who use violence, manipulation, or other evil methods to achieve their goals but with complex motivations. Examples include characters like Kratos from the *God of War* series, driven by revenge, or characters from the *Grand Theft Auto* series, who are criminals but have personal stories that make them more acceptable than simple bad guys from real life.

Evil is often depicted as aesthetically appealing in video games, with carefully designed antagonists, dark landscapes, and imposing castles, which can be visually and narratively attractive to players (Sicart, 2011). Games like *Dark Souls* and *Bloodborne* feature dark, ominous worlds that, despite being dangerous, attract players with their complexity and beauty. On the other hand, evil in video games often comes with a sense of power. Characters involved in dark magic, crimes, or military conquest have control over the fate of others and their environment. Games like *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic*, where players can choose the dark side of the Force, allow them to

experience the power that comes with choosing evil, making it appealing within the game's context.

Many games use "romanticization of evil" to subvert traditional heroic narratives. For example, in *Spec Ops: The Line*, players slowly become aware that, although they think they are playing the role of the good guy, they are actually committing criminal acts in the name of a higher cause. This deconstruction of the heroic narrative raises questions about who is truly good and who is bad. There are games that use evil characters and narratives to explore the darker aspects of human nature, such as greed, revenge, power, and moral degradation (Fournis & Abou, 2014). In *The Last of Us Part II*, players experience violence and revenge from multiple perspectives, which raises questions about the cycle of violence and whether there is a clear distinction between good and evil. Video games allow players to engage with crime in virtual worlds, undertaking tasks such as robberies, murders, and drug trafficking. (see more: Bjelajac, Matijašević & Počuča, 2012). While characters are often deeply flawed, the narrative allows players to see the world from the perspective of the antihero and explore the consequences of morally dubious decisions. Similarly, in games where players take on the role of assassins operating in the shadows, their goals are often portrayed as justice, but the games simultaneously glorify violent methods and secret conspiracies. The narratives within games sometimes address philosophical themes such as extreme capitalism, objectivism, and totalitarianism, with antagonists who are often intellectually fascinating, like Andrew Ryan from the *BioShock* series, whose ideas about individualism become the foundation of a dystopian society.

Critics of the romanticization of crime in video games argue that playing as villains or viewing evil through an appealing aesthetic can lead to moral desensitization, where players become indifferent to violence or amoral acts because such actions are rewarded in the game or not seen as ethically problematic. This can create a sense that criminal activities are normalized or acceptable in a particular context (Ferrell, 2013). Video games that romanticize crime can send negative messages to younger players, suggesting that crimes and violence are

exciting or even desirable ways to achieve success and power. While most players make a clear distinction between fiction and reality, there are concerns that such narratives can influence attitudes toward legality and ethics. This is especially true for games where players take on the roles of criminals or soldiers engaging in criminal acts, as they may be accused of glorifying violence. In games like *Call of Duty* or *Battlefield*, themes of war and violence are often aestheticized and romanticized, making them appealing but also controversial. Games like *GTA* often critique capitalism, corruption, and social injustice, but some critics argue that such games simultaneously romanticize a nihilistic worldview in which law and morality are relative, and power is acquired through criminal means. Video games that tackle themes of evil and moral ambiguity provide space to explore complex ethical issues and reflect on human nature, which can make them a significant medium for narrative and moral analysis (Fournis & Abou, 2014).

Conclusions

Evil and crime, as a consequence of evil, seem to be inherent parts of human nature, arising from both innate impulses and freedom, which is often regarded as the first core value of human life, after life itself. This paper has shown that depictions of evil and crime are abundant in film, television, literature, theater, and other media. Why should video games be any different? The question of the potential destructive impact of crime portrayed and experienced through video games is highly ambivalent.

This paper certainly does not offer definitive conclusions, but the sources used have reinforced the belief that video games are a valuable location for psycho-criminological research. The paper reveals that crime constructs in video games are complex, primarily focused on the goal of the game, ranging from satire to empathy and education. Research into how video games depict crime shows that there is a formula within video games for creating an ideal scenario that allows individuals, who generally respect the law, to commit imaginary virtual crimes (Brewis, 2019). Identifying conditions that allow individuals to behave in a criminal or deviant way can help in understanding criminal

behavior in the real world. We have shown that video games are powerful media for transmitting political, social, or ideological messages, fostering empathy and understanding, and reinforcing existing ideas about crime. Due to limited space, the potential for video games to take on more ambitious goals beyond entertainment has only been touched upon.

A significant portion of the literature used presents evidence in line with the view that playing violent video games leads to subsequent violent or antisocial behavior. If this were true, crime, especially violent crime, would increase in areas where playing violent games has become more widespread. Instead, newer specifications have found a negative correlation between crime and video game playing. Results show that playing violent video games, and even explicitly depicting crime, increases physical reactions and affects players' attitudes in a way that aligns with violent behavioral changes, but does not per se lead to a desire to replicate what is seen and played on video screens in real life (Ward, 2011).

The relativization of evil with criminal consequences in video games often occurs through complex narratives, moral dilemmas, humor, or distancing from reality. Evil becomes part of the broader context of the story, the game, or the characters, where players can interpret it in various ways. This allows games to explore the complexity of human behavior and morality but also raises questions about how evil in games shapes players' understanding of ethics and morality (Surette, 2018).

The routinization of crime in video games involves creating a pattern of behavior where criminal activities are repeated so frequently that they become part of the basic dynamics of the game. This approach reduces the moral weight of the crime, as players perceive it as part of the "game" or a means of progress. While most players know how to separate the real world from the world of video games, prolonged exposure to criminal actions without serious consequences can desensitize players to violence and lawbreaking in fictional worlds.

When it comes to the routinization of crime in video games, full attention must be paid to the potentially devastating phenomenon of

habitual acclimatization to the existence of evil. The possibility or danger of becoming desensitized to committing evil in real life should be considered. In this sense, the danger of evil in video games can be found in the diminished ability for rational thinking and judgment when players encounter real evil, or in the routinization of evil, which Hannah Arendt refers to as "banal evil" (Arendt, 2000). Routine desensitized evil is generally one of the most destructive forms of evil because it does not come from where evil is typically expected or where people are prepared to defend themselves from it: from monsters, psychopaths, sociopaths, and other marginalized individuals, but from perfectly ordinary people.

References

- Adachi, P. J., & Willoughby, T. (2010). The effect of violent video games on aggression: Is it more than just the violence? *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 16*(1), 55–62.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2010.12.002>
- American Psychological Association (2020). *APA Resolution on violent video games*. American Psychological Association. <https://www.apa.org/about/policy/resolution-violent-video-games.pdf>
- Arendt, H. (2000). *Eichmann u Jerusalimu* [Eichmann in Jerusalem]. Samizdat B92.
- Bjelajac, Ž., Filipović, A. (2020). Perspektive zaštite dece od zloupotreba na internetu [Perspectives of child protection from internet misuse]. *Kultura polisa, 17*(41): 259–271.
<https://kpolisa.com/index.php/kp/article/view/128>
- Bjelajac, Ž., Matijašević, J., & Počuča, M. (2012). Značaj edukacije mladih o zloupotrebama opojnih droga [Importance of education of youth about drug abuse]. *Pedagoška stvarnost, 58*(3): 401–414.
https://pedagogkastvarnost.ff.uns.ac.rs/asb/2012/PS-3_2012.pdf
- Bjelajac, Ž. & Filipović, A. (2021). Artificial Intelligence: Human Ethics in Non-Human Entities. Proceedings of the 3rd Virtual International

Conference "Path to Knowledge Society – Managing Risks and Innovation, 183–190.

- Brewis, E. (2019). *Crime Doesn't Play: A Study of the Construction of Crime in Popular Video Games*. Thesis. University of York. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.23058.89281>
- Cerezo-Pizarro, M., Revuelta-Domínguez, F., Guerra-Antequera, J., & Melo-Sánchez, J. (2023). The Cultural Impact of Video Games: A Systematic Review of the literature. *Education Sciences*, 13(11), 1116. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13111116>
- Dill, K. E., & Dill, J. C. (1998). Video game violence: A review of the empirical literature. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 3(4), 407–428. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1359-1789\(97\)00001-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1359-1789(97)00001-3)
- Elson, M., & Ferguson, C. J. (2013). Does doing media violence research make one aggressive? *European Psychologist*, 19(1), 68–75. <https://doi.org/10.1027/1016-9040/a000185>
- Engelhardt, C. R., Bartholow, B. D., Kerr, G. T., & Bushman, B. J. (2011). This is your brain on violent video games: Neural desensitization to violence predicts increased aggression following violent video game exposure. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 47(5), 1033–1036. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2011.03.027>
- Ferguson, C. J. (2007). Evidence for publication bias in video game violence effects literature: A meta-analytic review. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, 12(4), 470–482. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2007.01.001>
- Ferguson, C. J., & Kilburn, J. (2009). The Public Health Risks of Media Violence: A Meta-Analytic Review. *The Journal of Pediatrics*, 154(5), 759–763. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpeds.2008.11.033>
- Ferguson, C. J., Miguel, C. S., Garza, A., & Jerabeck, J. M. (2011). A longitudinal test of video game violence influences on dating and aggression: A 3-year longitudinal study of adolescents. *Journal of Psychiatric Research*, 46(2), 141–146. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpsychires.2011.10.014>

- Ferrell, J. (2013). Cultural criminology and the Politics of Meaning. *Critical Criminology*, 21(3), 257–271.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10612-013-9186-3>
- Filipović, A. (2022). *Bića i svetovi video igre: teorijska i kulturološka paradigma* [Beings and Worlds of Video Games: A Theoretical and Cultural Paradigm]. Pravni fakultet za privredu i pravosuđe.
<https://doi.org/10.51738/afbsvg22>
- Fournis, G., & Abou, N. N. (2014). Violence, crime, and violent video games: is there a correlation? *Psychiatric Times*, 31(9), 13.
<https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A381751979/AONE?u=anon~8ed37bc4&sid=googleScholar&xid=0b8ee459https://www.psychiatrictimes.com/view/violence-crime-and-violent-video-games-there-correlation>
- Fournis, G., & Abou, N. N. (2020, November 16). Violence, crime, and violent video games: is there a correlation? *Psychiatric Times*.
<https://www.psychiatrictimes.com/view/violence-crime-and-violent-video-games-there-correlation>
- Greenwood, D., Ribieras, A., & Clifton, A. (2020). The dark side of antiheroes: Antisocial tendencies and affinity for morally ambiguous characters. *Psychology of Popular Media*, 10(2), 165–177. <https://doi.org/10.1037/ppm0000334>
- Greitemeyer, T. (2013). Intense acts of violence during video game play make daily life aggression appear innocuous: A new mechanism why violent video games increase aggression. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 50, 52–56.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jesp.2013.09.004>
- Guerra N.G., Huesmann, L.R., Hanish L. (1995). The role of normative beliefs in children's social behavior. In: Eisenberg N., ed. *Social Development: Review of Personality and Social Psychology*. Sage. 140–158.

- Hayward, K. J., & Young, J. (2004). Cultural criminology: Some notes on the script. *Theoretical Criminology*, 8(3), 259–273.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1362480604044608>
- Hobbes, T. (2013). Levijatan ili građa, oblik i moć crkvene i građanske države. Jesenski i Turk.
- Karkoff, S. (2014). *The romanticization of crime: Can hot people get away with anything?* The Observer.
<https://observer.case.edu/the-romanticization-of-crime-can-hot-people-get-away-with-anything/>
- Karlsen, F. (2015). Analyzing Game Controversies: A Historical Approach to Moral Panics and Digital Games. In: Mortensen, T. E., Linderoth, J., Brown, A. M. L. (2015). *The Dark Side of Game Play: Controversial Issues in Playful Environments*, Routledge,
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315738680>
- Kneer, J., & Ward, M. R. (2021). With a rebel yell: Video gamers' responses to mass shooting moral panics. *New Media & Society*, 23(3), 497–514. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444819901138>
- Markey, P. M., Ferguson, C. J. (2017). Teaching Us to Fear: The Violent Video Game Moral Panic and The Politics of Game Research, *American Journal of Play*, 10(1), 99–115.
<https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1166785>
- McCaffree, K., & Proctor, K. R. (2017). Cocooned from Crime: The Relationship Between Video Games and Crime. *Society*, 55(1), 41–52. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12115-017-0211-0>
- Panee, C. D., & Ballard, M. E. (2002). High versus low Aggressive priming during Video Game training: Effects on violent action during game play, hostility, heart rate, and blood pressure. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 32(12), 2458–2474.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-1816.2002.tb02751.x>
- Pavlović, N. (2017). Četrdeset i pet godina „Kuma“. *Kult*.
https://casopiskult.com/cetrdeset-i-pet-godina-kuma/?_rstr_nocache=rstr10167168c6526b8e
- Saint Augustine. (1960). *Confessions*. Image Books.

- Schulzke, M. (2013). Simulating Philosophy: Interpreting video games as executable thought experiments. *Philosophy & Technology*, 27(2), 251–265. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13347-013-0102-2>
- Sherry, J. L. (2001). The effects of violent video games on aggression. A meta-analysis. *Human Communication Research*, 27(3), 409–431. <https://doi.org/10.1093/hcr/27.3.409>
- Sicart, M. (2011). *The Ethics of Computer Games*. MIT Press. <https://mitpress.mit.edu/9780262516624/the-ethics-of-computer-games/>
- Stanković, D. (2007, February 10). Istorija ljudskog zla. *Politika*, <https://www.politika.rs/scc/clanak/21838/историја-људског-зла>
- Surette, R. (2018, September 26). Media, Criminology, and Criminal Justice. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Criminology*. <https://oxfordre.com/criminology/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264079.001.0001/acrefore-9780190264079-e-473>.
- The Impact of Interactive Violence on Children. Hearing before the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, United States Senate, 106th Congress. (2000). <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-106shrg78656/pdf/CHRG-106shrg78656.pdf>
- Ward, M. R. (2010). Video games and crime. *Contemporary Economic Policy*, 29(2), 261–273. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1465-7287.2010.00216.x>
- Zirojević, M., Bjelajac, Ž. (2013). Blisko istočni terorizam i religija u savremenom polisu [Near East terrorism and religion in contemporary polis]. *Kultura polisa*, 10(22): 193–207. <https://kpolisa.com/index.php/kp/article/view/1266>

Prikaz kriminala u video igrama: Kritička analiza

Aleksandar M. Filipović

Pravni fakultet za privredu i pravosuđe, Novi Sad

Sažetak

Prikaz kriminala u video igrama postao je središnja tema akademske i društvene debate zbog potencijalnog uticaja na percepciju kriminalnog ponašanja i moralnosti kod igrača. Ovaj rad kritički ispituje način na koji je kriminal prikazan u različitim žanrovima video igara, istražujući narativne strukture, razvoj likova i interaktivne mehanike koje doprinose ovim prikazima. Kroz metodološki pristup koji kombinuje analizu sadržaja popularnih igara fokusiranih na kriminal i pregled iskustava i reakcija igrača, procenjujemo u kojoj meri video igre normalizuju ili dovode u pitanje kriminalne aktivnosti. Pored toga, studija razmatra implikacije prikaza kriminala na individualnu psihologiju i šire kulturne stavove prema zakonu, pravdi i moralnosti. Rezultati ističu složenu i višeslojnu ulogu koju video igre igraju u oblikovanju društvenih stavova prema kriminalu, sa posebnim osvrtom na uticaj imerzivnog pripovedanja i agencije igrača. Ovo istraživanje doprinosi sve većem korpusu literature na raskrsnici digitalne zabave, psihologije i kriminologije, nudeći uvide u potencijalni uticaj video igara na društvene stavove i ponašanja vezana za kriminal.

Ključne reči: predstavljanje kriminala, video igre, percepcija igrača, kriminologija, kulturološki stavovi.