

Blog Post #7 Do violent video games play a role in shootings? and Counter Argument

After the 2013 Navy Yard shooting that left 13 dead, Brad Bushman tries to answer the question raised in the title of his CNN.com article, "Do Violent Video Games Play a Role in Shootings?" The gunman played video games excessively, sometimes up to 16 hours at a time. Bushman states that well-adjusted gamers will not act out because of the virtual violence, but players who already are predisposed to violence may. If a gamer has a history of mental illness, then violent video games are just one more factor that may be pushing them toward violence. A year earlier, the NRA had the audacity to blame gaming for the massacre of elementary school kids: "The National Rifle Association placed a portion of the blame for the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting on violent video games during a press briefing this morning." (McElroy).

Violence has been blamed on art since time began, be it books, movies, or television. "The role of violence in storytelling is as old as human history, and it has long served a purpose in conveying values of honesty, courage, confidence and perseverance," said Kate Edwards, president of the International Game Developers Association. "If games were the first medium to have a compelling influence over society, I could understand the obsession with imbuing them with powerful qualities of changing human behavior at a fundamental level. But this is not the case." (Crecente). So, basically, blaming violence on video games is just the case of same story, different chapter. Society has always looked to blame crimes on art.

Another argument against blaming violence on games is that video games actually act as stress relievers. According to a study from researchers at Villanova University and Rutgers University violence decreases following the premiere of popular video games. "If violent video games are causes of serious violent crimes, it seems probable that serious and deadly assaults would increase following the release of these popular violent video games," states the report, which compared the release of big Grand Theft Auto and Call of Duty games against crime data. In fact, "aggravated assault... and homicide showed a decrease after the release of these games," and the effects last for up to three months. (Campbell). The only people that would be persuaded by this CNN article by Brad Bushman would be people who have never played video games and know nothing about their entertainment value. Think of what people said centuries ago about books and their dangers to society; now young people are enounced to read and not play video games. One day perhaps video games will be the "books" of their day and another form of violent art will be blamed for society's ills.

Works Cited

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