

MEDIA EDUCATION
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TRANSCRIPT



Challenging media

GAME OVER

GENDER, RACE & VIOLENCE IN VIDEO GAMES

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Gender, Race & Violence in Video Games

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INTRODUCTION

[News voiceover] *The question across America: Do violent video games promote violent behavior in young people?*

[Montage of video game clips]

[ABC News] *Do violent video games make for violent kids?*

[Gamer in Arcade]... *it's cool to kill them and stuff...*

[Montage of video game clips]

[Voiceover montage]

-- *We look for the roots of the senseless violence ...*

-- *The music in Dreamcast is the real Led Zeppelin...*

-- *Because of a video game, or because of a movie, or because of music, people are gonna use guns because they really feel like they just can't handle life.*

LT. COL. DAVID GROSSMAN: Video games give you the skill and the will to kill. They teach you to associate pleasure from human death and suffering, they reward you for killing people. They take healthy play and turn it on its head.

MICHAEL MORGAN: Success in a video game is defined by mastering violence at heretofore-unimagined levels.

ERICA SCHARRER: I think that media violence and video game violence play a very important role, and in combination with a number of psychological and societal factors, can be very damaging.

EUGENE PROVENZO: I think the real challenge for the video game industry is to develop new scenarios, new games. And I think that this preoccupation with ultra violence is something that they really ought to work away from.

NINA HUNTEMANN: The problems that we're seeing in representations and violence in video game has nothing to do with the technology, it has everything to do with how we've chosen to use the technology.

NARRATOR: Most of the discussions people have about media issues, whether the subject is violence or sex, tend to focus on television and movies. And while these are still the dominant media in many people's lives, an important new technology, video games, has been introduced into the media landscape without much discussion. For young people especially, video games are perhaps the media technology they are most familiar with and enthusiastic about. Surveys have found that 90% of households with children have purchased or rented video games. And its been estimated that kids in those homes play an average of an

hour and a half a day. Sales figures are another indication of the popularity of video games. When Sega introduced the Dreamcast console, it sold a half a million units in the first two weeks. In fact, in 1999, 215 million games were purchased, generating over seven billion dollars for the video game industry which is more than Americans spent on going to the movies. Given how prominent video games seem to be, the lack of attention paid to them is surprising. In this program we're going to take a close look at the role they play today.

VIDEO GAMES, THE NEW MEDIA

ERICA SCHARRER: One way that video game violence is actually very different from other types of media violence has to do with how users interact with the technology. I think there are two important ways that video game violence is distinct. One is the level of activity involved. In fact, to the point of interactivity, obviously players interact with the technology so that their motions, their movements, control the characters that they are playing. Meaning that they are very involved with what's going on, they're very sort of into the actions. They can get upset, they can yell, they can scream.

[TV ad] Who's your daddy? Who – is – your – daddy?

NINA HUNTEMANN: You know what's really exciting about video games is you don't just interact with the game physically – you're not just moving your hand on a joystick, but you're asked to interact with the game psychologically and emotionally as well. You're not just watching the characters on the screen; you're *becoming* those characters.

[Interview: Russel Kelban, Disney Interactive]

It really gives everyone chance to sort of extend their relationship with these characters – after you see the film, you can actually become Tarzan.

[Interview: Shellie Sanders, Nintendo of America]

It's actually the game based on the pod race that's in the movie, and Anakin Skywalker's voice is in the game, so as you're racing with his pod, you actually are him, just like in the movie.

NINA HUNTEMANN: One of the ways in which video games engage players as participants, emotionally and psychologically, is through realism and a heightened sense of realism. You could say that realism is the Holy Grail of the video game industry.

[Interview: David Karakka, SEGA]

The key to Saga Dreamcast is the realism, the fact that in a football game, if it starts to rain, the crowd will put on ponchos. In a basketball game, all the faces of the players are actually modeled after the real players.

NINA HUNTEMANN: So for example we see a new level of realism in video sports games where they use live motion capture to capture the movements of real players, and this is important because in order for a video sports game to be popular, it has to give the player of the game a sense that they're really on the court, that they're really on the field. And also give them a sense that they're actually playing their favorite sports hero.

This use of live motion capture and 3-D modeling, we just don't see it in sports games, we see it in a lot of other video games as well. So for example Mortal Kombat has traditionally used live motion capture in each release of its game. The industry has hooked on to something. Realistic games sell, they're seductive, so we should expect to see increased use of technologies of realism, in the video games, and we should expect that the experience of playing video games will also become more and more realistic.

ERICA SCHARRER: The use of realistic graphics, and realistic animation is sort of a bragging rights of sorts for industry, organizations, so that they can say our game is most realistic.

[Interview: David Karakka, SEGA] And then by Christmas we'll have thirty new games for the system, that are so real you won't be able to tell if you're watching a movie or actually playing a game.

ERICA SCHARRER: So we've come a long way since Pong, where there were just rectangular shapes and a bouncing ball. Now we have whole worlds and very realistic three-dimensional types of approaches to violence.

[TV ad] Rainbow Six, so true to life, even the experts can't tell the difference.

MICHAEL MORGAN: Its very easy for people to say, "well, c'mon, what you see in a video game, you know that's not real, kids know its not real" or what goes on in a cartoon whether it's a roadrunner, or some superhero saving the universe, people in the industry, and people who want to defend this will say, this is just make believe, its healthy, its fun, nobody takes it seriously, nobody believes it. Well its not as if we walk around with a little switch in our heads that we can turn off and say fiction – reality – fiction – reality. Over time the distinction between these two things is irrelevant. When it comes to media images, its all representations. It's all manufactured mediated imagery. It all goes into the constant nonstop stream of experiences we store up about the world around us.

NARRATOR: When we look at the large amount of money spent, the amount of time kids play them, and the incredible level of realism they've been able to reach – realism that movies and TV can't even come close to competing with – its important for us to understand this new technology. And although the question of violence is extremely important, we shouldn't let that limit how we understand video games. Because the stories of violence are always told in conjunction with other stories about gender, sexuality, and race. So we have to understand how all these things work together.

PLAY LIKE A MAN – Video Games & Masculinity

MICHAEL MORGAN: One of the especially intriguing aspects of looking at video games is that they are such vivid illustrations of so many cultural messages that sometimes are difficult to discern. That permeate other media, but are often more subtle. Video games have the quality of being so explicit and so blatant in their representations of men, of women, of power, of control. That they lay out some of the key ideologies of the culture in an absolutely unmistakable vivid way.

EUGENE PROVENZO: I think video games are also important because we can see the construction of our culture in the content of the games. And in point of fact, video games to a large degree reflect what's going on in the culture of society. So they can be used as means by which to read the culture. And how gender, race, ethnicity is portrayed in these games I think can be very revealing.

ERICA SCHARRER: A very common image in video game representations is a very hyper masculine male character. Someone who has an extremely imposing physical body, someone who is very muscular, someone who is certainly very aggressive, an affect of this hyper masculine characterization can also be to link being male with being violent. So male players particularly who may be trying to live up to and may be trying to understand what society is saying about what it is to be male, may very well link being masculine with being violent – with using physical force as a way to get what you want.

EUGENE PROVENZO: I think power can be a good thing. You know we're very uncomfortable in the culture talking about power, but in point of fact, we want to empower people, we want to give them a sense that they can do things, that they can act and be understood and listened to, that they can change the world in good ways. But the vehicles for power that we give to children in these games frequently is one of an aggressive masculinity.

NINA HUNTEMANN: This aggressive masculinity that's prevalent in video games, you can see very particularly in wrestling games, where not only do you have the signature moves of the wrestler, but also what is incorporated is their taunts and their bullying as well.

[TV ad] WWF Superstars, all their signature moves and taunts.

NINA HUNTEMANN: I think that wrestling, both on television and in video games, sends the message to mostly young boys, that control and violence is the way to get what you want, and you do that through physical and verbal intimidation.

[TV ad] The Rock is gonna take that little green bag of all those little video games and stick 'em straight up your candy ass!

NINA HUNTEMANN: I think one of the reasons why masculine images are so prevalent in video games is because if you look at who produces video games, the game designers, they're mostly men. So the images and the representations that come out of video games are coming out of a very male culture.

There's a really good example of this in an ad I saw for a game company, and in the front of the ad were the game designers, and all the game designers were men. But in the background there were women but all these women were wearing bikinis and they were faced away from the camera. Their presence is sort of as a backdrop as men who are actually producing the game.

EUGENE PROVENZO: So for example in a game like Duke Nukem, we have a character who is there as the primary character with females surrounding him for his edification, to sort of show off his masculinity, his power, and so forth.

[Video Game: Duke Nukem] *Shake it baby.*

NINA HUNTEMANN: I think one of the most traditional roles for female characters for video games is the damsel in distress. Female characters often need to be rescued. And you see this in games featuring Duke Nukem for example. In fact, women needing to be rescued is the premise of many of the Duke Nukem games. One of the latest games, called, aptly *Planet of the Babes*, begins with the premise that all the men on Earth have been killed except for Duke, and he needs to come and rescue all of the women from these aliens. So here you have the entire role of all of the women on this planet is to be rescued.

[TV ad: Duke Nukem] *One man. One mission. One million babes. Duke Nukem. The king of hard-core action is back. Cocked, loaded, and ready for his hottest adventure yet.*

NINA HUNTEMANN: I think what this says, what it tells us, is the premise of Duke Nukem, rescuing these women, you know, allows him to be powerful, allows him to be the hero. And it reflects the fantasies of the male producers of this game. Through Duke they have the opportunity to be powerful and to be wanted and in these games the women are very grateful to Duke Nukem for rescuing them.

[Video Game: Duke Nukem] *Oh, Duke, I knew you'd ... come.*

NINA HUNTEMANN: One of the other roles for female characters in Duke Nukem games in particular is that of the porn star. In Duke Nukem's Zero Hour, it takes place in a red light district where the streets are filled with strip clubs and porn theaters, and this looks completely normal, this is Duke's world, this is the world, the fantasy world, that he inhabits.

What I think is important to think about in terms of Duke Nukem, is that his world, this pornographic landscape is not presented as extreme, its presented as very normal. His environment and his values that he embodies are presented as absolutely normal.

[Interview: Rich Raymo, GT Interactive] Duke's kind of an every man American hero. He's a Bond for the 1990s and beyond.

BUXOM BABES – The Female Heroine

NARRATOR: While males are still the predominant characters in video games, recently the industry introduced a number of female characters as well. Lara Croft is the most famous of these but there are others such as Rin and Joanna Dark. While more girls and women *are* playing video games, these new female characters were introduced to appeal to the main consumers, boys and men. And just as a very particular story about masculinity is told, characters such as Lara Croft, also help to define femininity in a very specific way.

EUGENE PROVENZO: I think there's some really interesting contradictions operating in terms of how women are depicted in some of the most recent games. These contradictions have to do with the seeming empowerment of women, while at the same time, we have a situation in which I think women are really being exploited in terms of how they're being shown, graphically. You can see this for example with Lara Croft in Tomb Raider where she is this highly energetic muscular character, highly aggressive, and yet the video game presents her as this extremely, I would describe her as pneumatic, very busty, over-exaggerated sexual object.

NINA HUNTEMANN: I think that Lara Croft does challenge traditional roles of female game characters, she doesn't need rescue for example, in her games. But she also is judged by the beauty standard, the same standard by which women and female game characters in video games have always been judged.

For example, we can look at most female game characters' body proportions, they're grossly unnatural. Lara Croft has a large bust size and a very small waist, and she weighs practically nothing, and yet these characters can flip and jump and run in ways that anyone with that body proportion wouldn't be able to maneuver. And this body type doesn't even exist in the real world. We know this is true because the company that makes Lara Croft hires models to represent them at promotional events and they have yet to be able to find a model that has Lara Croft's same body proportions.

Not only do we have a beauty standard of the ideal female body that is impossible to achieve, there's also the sexualization of young women occurring in video games. And Lara Croft provides yet another example. In a recent release of *Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation*, game players can play Lara Croft as a sixteen year old, and yet her body proportions, the way that her body looks is still that of a very developed *adult* woman.

The connection between male fantasy in a video game and male fantasy in the real world becomes really apparent *through* the models that are hired to play Lara Croft at promotional events. At these events, male fans of the video game Tomb Raider, and many other video games, have the opportunity to have their picture taken with the real life model who plays Lara Croft. So the fantasy of

being with someone like Lara Croft becomes reality at least for a brief moment, at these conferences, at these promotional events. And this is really disturbing, I think, because one of the models who was hired to play Lara Croft most recently is sixteen years old. So the sexualization of a young female is happening in real life to a sixteen-year old model who will be at these promotional events and have men putting their arms around her to have their pictures taken.

EUGENE PROVENZO: You know, a lot of what these games are about is sexual titillation for young boys. If you look at a game like Gauntlet, we have portrayed an Amazon goddess type, maybe a Valkyrie, very explicit in terms of her figure sexually and with suggestions showing up in the advertisements for the games, you know, take her home, have her as your own, possess her, things like that.

NINA HUNTEMANN: We're not just seeing male fantasy and the sexualization of female characters in the video games, we're seeing it perhaps even *more so* in the advertising and the marketing for games and on the packaging for video games. Even if it's a game that doesn't have any female characters in it. There's an ad for a racing car game called Destruction. Destruction doesn't have any female characters in it, but the ad for the game shows a woman leaning over the hood of a car. Another example is for Virtual Pool. Again, no female characters are in Virtual Pool, but we see in the ad that there is a woman leaning over a pool table, showing us her cleavage. And this is a game that is a billiards simulation. There is an extreme example of this in an ad for Game Boy. In this Game Boy ad you see a woman tied to a bed, and she's wearing lingerie.

When we see female characters most of those female characters are white. There are black characters in video games but they play particular roles. So for example in King Pin, we see an unusually high amount of black female characters but these characters are prostitutes, they're vagrants.

NARROW VISION – Race in Video Games

NARRATOR: In the debates around stereotyping in the media, many people of color feel that their experiences are not being represented. That someone from outside the community is telling their stories. So in the case of movies for example, it's felt that the stories of the Black and Latino experience are being told by white scriptwriters. To the extent that Black and Latino *video* game producers are few and far between, the same thing is happening, but perhaps at an even more extreme and disturbing level.

NINA HUNTEMANN: You know there's an interesting irony about color and video games. Hardware manufacturers and video game designers pride themselves on the rich textural display but what I find so ironic about this is that the range of colors that may be available in the technology aren't used very much by the game designers and by this I mean that most video games feature white characters.

Of the top selling action genre video games, eight out of ten of those games featured white characters. So we're not only seeing the video game world through male eyes, we're seeing it through white male eyes.

EUGENE PROVENZO: I think its very interesting for example if you look at most of the first person shooters which only show you the hand on the gun, or the weapon, its generally white rather than brown or black.

NINA HUNTEMANN: When we do see race we see it in a very particular moment. Racial stereotypes are evoked to show non-whiteness and that's when race becomes visible. Otherwise its invisible, its normal, but when racialized characters are introduced it becomes quite significant and quite poignant that they're there.

[Video Game: Turok] I am Turok!

An example of this is in the game Turok, the main character, Turok is Native American, and the way that you sort of know that he's Native American is that he wears feathers in his hair, he carries a bow and arrow and he shoots at deer. Throughout the game his adventures are serenaded by tribal drumbeats. So his Native American-ness is made quite obvious through these sort of tried stereotypically notions of what it means to be Native American.

I think an even more blatant example of stereotypical representations of people of color we can see with black characters. In the game King Pin, we see a lot of black characters which is unusual compared to most games overall, most games have white characters overwhelmingly. But King Pin, it takes place in an environment full of black characters. But there's a particular reason *why* there are a lot of black characters. King Pin takes place in an inner city urban ghetto.

Violence and crime is the way in which you get ahead in this environment. You steal, you mug, you're part of a gang, so there's nothing about the environment of the inner city that really challenges the stereotypical notion of the inner city already. Violence and crime goes right along with that. What's ironic about this, is that even though you're in a mostly black-charactered environment, you as the main character are a white guy. So what this conveys beyond just the stereotypes of the inner city being full of black criminals, is that this is abnormal, this is something that needs to be contained, that you as the protagonist and the lead character, need to somehow beat this back into some sort of normalcy. And what you do in this game as the main white character is you try to get to the leadership position of the gang, you try to become the kingpin.

This idea that whiteness is normal and that blackness is exotic, foreign, bizarre, we can see particularly in games like *Akuji* and *Shadow Man*.

[Video Game: Shadow Man] had a dream, *Shadow Man*, a real bad dream. A dead-side dream. *The five are here – the heralds of the apocalypse.*

NINA HUNTEMANN: In these games we see the representation of Haitian culture, which equates blackness with the supernatural. The character *Akuji* is different than most male characters. He has a cat-like physique. He moves in animal movements, he's painted in tiger stripes. He looks unusual to most male white characters in video games. And again this becomes significant because the game is saying something different about this black racialized character than other white characters in most other games.

We see the same thing occurring with *Mike Leroy* in *Shadow Man*, also another game connected with Haitian culture. *Mike Leroy* uses voodoo as does *Akuji*, so again this just sort of emphasizes the difference between the non-white characters and the white characters in video games. And it re-inscribes certain ideas about Haitian culture, about voodoo, about the super natural.

NARRATOR: Video games sell themselves as being able to take us to fantastic worlds beyond our mundane everyday lives. Places where we can have extreme experiences, and there's no doubt that there's a tremendous potential to expand our consciousness. But many people have suggested that we keep a number of questions foremost in our minds as we journey to these new worlds. Who will be our guides, who's eyes will we see the world through? Whose fears and nightmares will we experience? Whose imaginations will we be trapped inside?

VIDEO GAME VIOLENCE

MICHAEL MORGAN: Most of the time in public debate or when people are concerned about the role of violence in the media, or video games or anything else, the natural thing is to think only in terms of people becoming more violent as a result of seeing these images or playing these games.

[ABC News] In the wake of all the violence perpetrated by young people lately, there is an important question on the table. Do violent video games make for violent kids?

MICHAEL MORGAN: But there are some more, perhaps significant, and more subtle consequences on people that has to do with the way they think about the world. When you spend a great deal of time being exposed to violent video games and playing them hour after hour over long periods of time, you begin gradually to think of the world as a much more violent place and to have the images and the concepts of violence permeate the way you think about things on an every day basis.

ERICA SCHARRER: There are a number of elements of video game violence that make it most likely to lead to a negative or anti-social effect. Video game violence tends to be consequence-less. There are often no types of portrayals of grief, of sorrow, of regret or remorse, that may very well characterize real life violence, which a lot of social scientific research suggests is the one that's most likely to be emulated.

[TV ad]

Stop! Don't shoot! Do you have something less painful maybe?

-- Uh, a crossbow?

Uh, too messy.

-- A grenade launcher?

Uh, ouch.

-- How about the Taser?

Yeah, a Taser wouldn't be bad, it might leave a little rash ma...

MICHAEL MORGAN: In playing video games, the violence is not only the whole purpose of the game in most cases, but the rewards one gets for it are very gratifying. They let you play longer, they let you go to new levels, they let you explore new dimensions, new territories, new worlds – the only way to advance and to achieve the goals of the game is to kill ever increasingly larger numbers of people.

When you reach the end of every level one of the main things it tells you is how many of these people you've killed, how many of those you've injured. So at every stage in the game, you have a continual reporting, you have a continual reinforcement – doing great, you're killing more, keep going, here's how many

you killed this time, you ready to go to the next level and kill some more? So there's never any compunction against using violence, there's every stimulation, everything is conducive to using it, the more its used, the more effectively its used, and the more competently its used, the better you're doing.

[Video Game]

You win!

--Yeah!

Impressive.

ERICA SCHARRER: Another reward associated with doing well in terms of actually executing violent assaults on characters in video games has to do with the weapons you use. Low-level weapons, things like pistols, arrows, swords, etc, are used on the first sorts of levels of video games. But the more adept you get, the more sorts of, successful, you are with those low level weapons, the more you get to increase and have escalated and more high tech weapons, larger weapons as well. So you go for instance from a pistol to a machine gun to maybe having grenades or bombs that you can throw. And so again, the reward is sort of giving you other toys, so to speak, with which you can execute your assault.

Video game violence is also very graphic in general. The types of portrayals that occur in video game violence are maybe unparalleled in other types of media violence. Scenarios like decapitation, severed limbs, spurting and splattering blood.

[Video Game] (Groaning)

ERICA SCHARRER: That level of extensiveness and graphic-ness is very troubling for desensitization type purposes. Again, if we are exposed to these sorts of very high level and intense, and very graphic violent representations, it may take more of the same in order for us to have the same sort of response. We become accustomed and maybe even sometimes bored with merely shooting people, we have to blow them up next. We have to, you know, cut off limbs next. So its sort of a one-up-man-ship that the video game industry feeds on.

MICHAEL MORGAN: With the images of violence that pervade most other popular media, one of the main consequences is just to make violence seem normal, make violence seem everyday so that we don't notice it – its not simply desensitization to violence, its where violence becomes assumed to be part of the everyday fabric of life, its how we think about ways of solving problems. Where its difficult to conceive of everyday reality in a way that is not permeated by floods of violence.

SIM VIOLENCE – Teaching Kids to Kill

[News Interview: Doug Lowenstein, Industry Spokesman] There is nothing in the academic research that supports the conclusion that violent video games lead to aggressive behavior, period.

NARRATOR: Is it true that there's no evidence linking video games with violent behavior? Luckily we don't have to speculate about this because over the last thirty years the US military has undertaken perhaps the most elaborate study ever conducted on video games and violent behavior.

LT. COL. DAVID GROSSMAN: It is extraordinarily difficult for a human being to kill a member of their own species. They have to be manipulated into it. And when you look deeper into the battle you'll see that the history of warfare has ever more successful mechanisms to manipulate people into killing. We studied in World War II, the individual riflemen for the first time in history, and we found out that only fifteen to 20% of the individual riflemen when left to their own devices would fire their weapon at an exposed enemy soldier. This is not a good thing. A 15% firing rate among your riflemen is like a 15% literacy rate among your librarians.

So what we did was we went about the process of making killing a conditioned response. In World War II we taught our soldier to fire at bulls-eye targets. And that training was tragically flawed because no bulls-eyes appeared on the battlefield. And what we converted to were pop-up man shaped silhouettes. If you want a person to be able to kill a human being, they have to practice shooting at human beings. A few hundred repetitions of that, and now on the battlefield when an enemy soldier pops up in front of us, boom, a soldier kills and he kills reflexively. It is an extraordinarily effective mechanism. It is basic operant conditioning.

Now we use large screen TVs and soldiers stand with plastic M-16s that fire laser beams that when you hit the target on the screen, the target drops. The law enforcement community extensively uses a device known as the FATS trainer: Fire Arms Training Simulator. You hold the gun in your hand, you pull the trigger, the slide slams back, you feel the recoil, you hit the target, the target drops, you miss the target, the target shoots you. It is a very effective law enforcement training device.

But if you go to the local video arcade, you'll find an almost identical device. A game such as Time Crisis for example, in which you'll find that the pistol, the slide slams back, it recoils in your hand, if you hit the target the target drops, if you miss the target the target shoots you. The only difference is in the FATS trainer, if you shoot the wrong target, you'll be reprimanded, ultimately even fired. But when the kids are playing the game there is no adult supervision, there is no standard, there is no control.

The Marine Corps uses the game Doom as a training device. It is such an effective and efficient tactical trainer, there's limited skill involved with this game. There's a great deal of rehearsal and will processes involved here.

A lot of people when we talk about Doom or Quake or the first person shooter games, they say, well all you're doing is playing with the mouse or with the keyboard, how can that be teaching your killing skills. Well understand that Doom all by itself, even used with a keyboard is good enough that the Marine Corps uses it to script killing in their soldiers. It provides the script, the rehearsal, the act of killing.

We have to understand that the military around the world, and law enforcement organizations around the world do not use these killing simulators and spend billions of dollars on these simulators for fun. They do it because it works. It is their job to condition and enable people to kill. They know what they're doing. They are the professionals. They have had experiment after experiment to show the value of these simulators, but the greatest experiments are things like World War II where only 15% to 20% of the riflemen fired, and Vietnam where 95% of the riflemen fired. It is a revolution on the battlefield and we know it works, and those whose job it is to enable people to kill use it extensively and they do it for a reason. Because if they didn't, their soldiers would die in combat.

One of the questions that arises very commonly is how do soldiers take what they're given and distinguish from killing in combat to killing in the civilian community? When we provide the soldiers with the ability to kill, we also provide them with a powerful set of rules that are ground into them. And so the soldiers and law enforcement officers are taught only to fire at the appropriate targets at the appropriate times, under orders, under the right circumstances. The soldiers go out in the field and we carry our weapons around with a blank loaded in that weapon, in our exercises, and we'll go for days on end and never fire our weapon. And that's part of that discipline. Carrying that weapon for days and months and years on end and only firing it under the exact precise situation that you're given. But as soon as you put a quarter in that video game – you never, never put a quarter in that video game and don't shoot. And the very first thing you shoot at is the first human being that pops up on your screen. And you shoot and you shoot and you shoot. So the safeguards are completely absent and all of the enabling that the military that the law enforcement gets are provided, plus the rewards, the pleasures, the cheers, the laughter, the learning to associate it with pleasure is also there. And so we must think very, very carefully about who we provide this operant conditioning, this training to. And if we provide it indiscriminately to children, it is the moral equivalent of putting a military weapon in the hand of every child in America.

CONCLUSION – Virtual Violence

NARRATOR: As we've seen, the experience of playing a video game is already quite realistic. Force feedback technology for example gives players a real sense of touch as well as the visual realism of the screen. Game pads vibrate in the players' hands, steering wheels gives players resistance as they turn corners, and joysticks shake. But we've only scratched the surface so far on simulating reality.

MICHAEL MORGAN: These technologies of virtual reality, and other things we can't even imagine now, can take us to amazing places that we've never imagined going before. But, what are we going to find there? What's at those places?

LT. COL. DAVID GROSSMAN: The screen today seems like reality to you, you become sucked into that screen, and the large screens you become sucked in more. But what if it was complete? What if you turned and moved and shifted and wherever you turned there was your enemy and you would kill? What if we made killing not some two dimensional process, but a three dimensional process in which you were constantly involved?

ERICA SCHARRER: So virtual reality may well have very important implications for media violence and its effects. Certainly more of a heightened type of interaction effect with the technology and absolutely identification with the character that really has not yet been paralleled in any other sort of media scenario.

EUGENE PROVENZO: Now again, that can often be very beneficial. I get to fly an airplane, that's kind of neat. I get to fly a jet fighter in the appropriate video game. That's kind of neat. I get to murder somebody. Is that very neat?

NINA HUNTEMANN: I think at the moment video games are advancing very limited notions of masculinity and femininity. They're reinforcing the sexual objectification of women. They're reproducing the same racial stereotypes. They're teaching young boys that violence is an appropriate response to any situation. And it's my hope that that's going to change, that video games will challenge our stereotypes and really push us ahead in terms of how we think about each other and ourselves.

NARRATOR: Like all media the question of whether they're good or bad, whether they have positive or negative consequences, can't be answered by looking at the technology itself. There's nothing inherent about video games that makes them violent, sexist, or racist. What's holding us back is not the technology but the values we've privileged as we've designed, produced, and sold it. So if we want video games that are truly cutting edge, that really give us

new experiences, we have to privilege alternative values that will genuinely liberate the technology and possibly ourselves.