Video Games in Education: an Analysis beyond Prejudice

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Video games and aggressive behaviors

The most mentioned theories about this topic are:

- the ***General Theory of Arousal***: video games would increase the level of excitement of the player, who would then transfer this increased energy in the actions he performs in daily life;

- the ***Theory of Social Learning***: claims that behavior is learned through the imitation of attractive patterns and related rewards;

- the ***Theory of Catharsis***: claims that the vision of violent contents helps to inhibit the possibility that aggressive conduct is effectively determined in real life.

Violent video games are not linked to aggressive behaviors, researchers say (1/2)

One longitudinal study (Markey & Markey, 2014), conducted at Villanova University and Rutgers University, analyzed:

- changes in sales of violent video games and in the number of violent crimes from 1978 to 2011;

- monthly changes in sales of violent video games and crimes from 2007 to 2011;

- the volume of online searches for guides and solutions for violent games and the number of violent crimes from 2004 to 2011;

- violent crimes following the release of *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas, Grand Theft Auto IV* and *Call of Duty: Black Ops.*

Violent video games are not linked to aggressive behaviors, researchers say (2/2)

- Children, from the age of 7 years, can distinguish between virtual violence played in the context of a game and that acted in the real world (Malliet, 2006).

- Aggressive behaviors seem to be more linked to competitive video games than to violent video games (Adachi P., Willoughby T., 2013).

- Usually, the aggressive behaviors of the players are analyzed only in the 10/15 minutes following the playing session (Przybylski A., Rigby S., & Ryan R., 2010).

Violent contents in coming-of-age stories

- The use of the aesthetics of violence and immoral behaviors is a constant in the works of Grimm brothers, Charles Perrault and many other authors.

- Violent and cruel images and contexts were used to stimulate ethical or social reflections.

- The violent events experienced by the characters generally correspond to tests to be overcome, from which to learn lessons and recognize, if necessary, their mistakes.

Hansel and Gretel (1812)
by Grimm brothers

This story develops around the topic of **cannibalism**, indeed the witch wants to eat the children.

Little Red Riding Hood (1857)
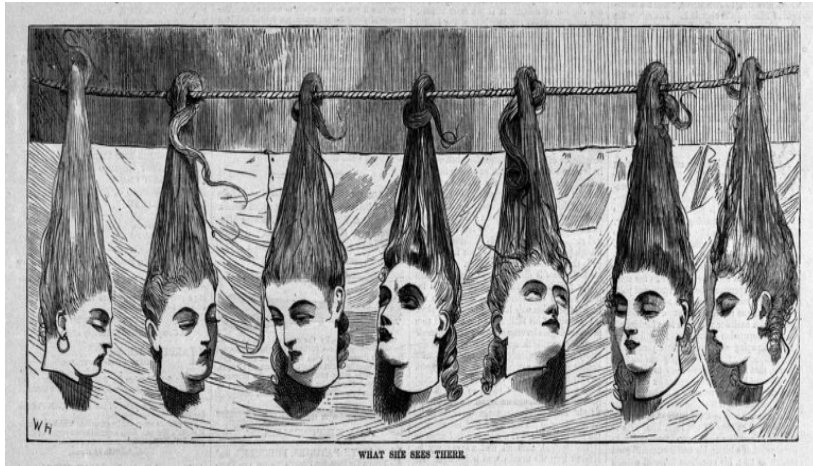## by Grimm brothers

In this story, we can find elements linked to **pedophilia** and **cannibalism**.

Bluebeard (1697)
by Charles Parrault

This story develops around the topic of **femicide**, indeed Bluebeard is the prototype of the perfect **serial killer**.

Violent video games as educational tools

- As well as coming-of-age stories, video games offer the opportunity to the player to **"live" challenging contexts** into a **safe** and **protected environment**.

- Children can explore virtually and without consequences ethical issues such as war, violence, death and war-themed video games can make them more aware of the human and social costs of war.

Fallout (1997-2015)

Fallout: violent action RPG (Role Playing Game), is considered by experts one of the best video games of all time and is set in a post-apocalyptic future, the result of devastating nuclear conflict with which ended a long war to grab the last deposits of oil and uranium.

Undertale (2015)

Undertale: is acclaimed by the critics as one of the most innovative games ever designed, especially for the accurate representation of the characters. The main protagonist is a child, struggling with the exploration of a mysterious underground world, inhabited by monsters that hinder his ascent into the sunlight.

Watch_Dogs (2014)

Watch_dogs: is an open world action game developed by Ubi Soft with a strong cyberpunk connotation and is based on a highly topical plot - the threats to privacy and the importance acquired by sensitive data for the control of people's lives

Call of Duty (2003-2018)

Call of Duty: probably the most popular series of first-person shooter games, in which players are completely immersed in the context of war and have the opportunity to experience it.

In conclusion

- The **high rate of emotional involvement** and the **topicality of the issues proposed** make violent video games **powerful educational and training tools;**

- their **sophisticated architecture** can catalyze the attention of **new generations**;

- this genre of games **deserves greater consideration in the pedagogical field**.

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Thank you
for your attention!

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