

Julieanna Ramos
COM 428
Mrs. Greaves
3/28/22

Chapter 14: 65 Grand Theft Youth

Violence surrounds every environment that you can think of. Every good area has a bad one right next to it. I'm from San Antonio, Texas where there's really no good area. I even live in the country and I grew up around guns and animal cruelty. It's something a person can never escape no matter what. Violence in this world almost seems inevitable at this point. It has always been around since ancient times. Wherever you are violence always seems to be present one way or another. Violence can be created or witnessed. It could appear on television whether that's a movie or series or even in front of your very eyes. Violence is now found in books and in children's video games. I have grown up watching these video games or movies because I have an older brother who loves playing games like *God of War*, *Grand Theft Auto*, and *Call of Duty*.

There has been much scientific research done which now shows a direct correlation between violence found in video games and violent crimes committed by juveniles. "The irrepressible increase in real violent crime, much of it perpetrated by juveniles, often has been linked to video games and the internet. What a juvenile sees, it is argued, too easily becomes what a juvenile does." (261). With video games now taking the blame for violent juvenile behavior, the video game, *Grand Theft Auto*, is taking most of the blame for these kids' actions.

Grand Theft Auto (GTA) is a video game created for young adults which simulates crimes and situations for kids, teenagers, and even young adults. It exposes kids to drugs,

violence, and sex. There are many options to choose from when playing this game. One could drive around and kill civilians, or they could do tasks in which they could either buy, sell, or use drugs. You can race against other people through live play and kill each other through that process just to get a mission done. Lastly they could blow up many objects using a rocket launcher, a grenade launcher and shoot guns that are illegal in the US.

Sometimes kids will want to reenact these moments and try to see how things will play out in real life. However, the difference between the video game and real life is the events that happen in real life come with permanent consequences sometimes. Injury or death is likely to be a main consequence to these juveniles actions.

In 2005, the makers of this game had begun getting accused of ruining our youth and corrupting their minds. People believed GTA “increased aggressive behavior and thoughts” (276) in our youth. They were believed to be at fault for causing an uptick in violent crimes committed by juveniles. The makers of GTA were eventually sued by families of victims of violent juvenile crimes who claimed their actions were because of the video game. Many people considered the video game to be a “virtual reality murder simulator” (276).

GTA's response comes in the fact that they cannot control who plays their games. Which is true, parents buy kids games that they sometimes know nothing about because it'll make their kids happy. The video game is strictly for pure entertainment purposes and should not be played as a simulator for murder. The fact that they have to defend themselves for the actions of juveniles is unacceptable because in no way should a video game be liable for a murderer's actions. As for the young kids getting their hands on and playing the game, GTA follows all of the Federal Trade Commission guidelines for creating the game and it is up to the parents on whether or not they allow their young children to play. GTA suggests that

parents become more active in their children's lives and monitor the video games that they play. These parents should also sit down and have a conversation with their children and remind them this is a video game and there are actual consequences if they were to reenact what they see on television. If parents really want to be involved in their children's lives and monitor what images they should be influenced by, the makers of GTA suggest parents should play these games with their children and make sure whatever it is they are looking at is appropriate for their age at the time. It is about being an active parent and really choosing to be a part of your children's lives.

Personally I do not feel the makers of *Grand Theft Auto* should be at fault for the rise of violent crimes committed by juveniles. While yes these juveniles are using this video game to prepare for their actions before they actually commit them, it is the juveniles themselves who think their own thoughts and create their own actions. This video game company is not the one who should have to worry about whether or not someone is going to take a scene in the video game to the extreme and actually go through with these crimes.

Also, for many people this video game can be very therapeutic. If you are feeling some type of emotion towards other people, instead of expressing anger and grief in public creating an unnecessary scene because they're angry one can simply take their anger out in the video game instead. The person can break some laws, shoot some guns, and crash into things within the video game as opposed to doing any or all of those things in person. If it is done all online it could prevent a lot of crime in the real world over time. Although this game requires much maturity to play this game, if done correctly this game can really help and benefit many people who have enough violence and crime to deal with in the real world.

Violence doesn't always grow from games and movies, it can be from the environment someone surrounds themselves in whether that's friends or family.