

# Crime as dark play

[Linguistics](#), [English](#)



Crime in Dark and Deep Play When humans and animals play, they show off and exaggerate in order to get attention of the spectators. Examples can be drawn both from dark and deep play. In deep play, we can see the exaggeration when it comes to how the cockfighting is an important aspect of the society that even the chief himself is willing to lie to his government about any case regarding cockfighting. Exaggeration explicitly expresses itself in the case in which Balinese residents show no concern at all about visitors within the community. In the case of dark play, exaggeration is shown by the dancer becoming more psyched up by the pleas of both the father and the husband who visualizes her falling at the edge of the cliff. In most types of play, the agreement of all players is necessary in order to let the play progress successfully. In most cases, the players want to capture the attention of the spectators and prove to them their role as players. For instance, the cockfighting by Balinese can be considered as a deep play that involves all the players not only the cocks but also the owners of these cocks (Geertz 56). Children in real life display exaggerations while playing. They will do anything at all cost at school, home, church, or at playing grounds. They always capture their parent's attention and this makes them happy. Players in all kind of plays become happy when they notice they capture the attention of the spectators. Vanishing Point, a 1971 American movie, explores the concept of dark play very well. The movie shows a delivery driver, Kowalsky, who agrees to take a car to San Francisco from Colorado. Kowasky is shown as an aggressive man who has suffered in life and lost all his loved ones. From flash backs in the movie, he has suffered injuries in the war with Vietnam and was convicted of drug charges after he stopped his

partner from committing rape. Tired with life, he hits the road at high speed to take out the frustration he had inside him for so many years. Though his intentions were not to hurt anyone on the road, Kowalsky is portrayed as a rebellious man who is willing to take any challenge as it comes. The police soon learn of a speedy driver on the road and the chase between Kowalsky and police begins. He soon becomes very popular and the media starts reporting him on radio and newspapers. The movie at length shows how he dodges the police and manages to avoid the traps they lay for him. After playing all the catch and mouse game, the man with no purpose in life (Kowalsky) intentionally hits his car against a truck and commits suicide (Berra). Kowalsky hits the road at high speed least realizing the consequences he would have to face. While he does this, he captures the attention of the audience and other spectators forcing them in the play. It soon become a hunt and chase for Kowalsky as he is portrayed as a criminal. Kowalsky did not intend to gain the attention of the cops when he started his journey but the moment he realizes he has their attention he psyches up and make it a game forcing the police to chase him around. He was a player who did not know the kind of mess he would get in. His actions were abrupt and though he later knew it could get him in trouble, he cared less for it as he started to relish the moment he was living in. It made him feel important and popular and he was much happier to be in a risky state like this than to play safe in isolation (Berra). Cape fear is a classic example of a movie that psychologically explores the elements of dark play. Directed by Martin Scorsese, the movie shows an attorney, Sam, defending his family from a man he once defended in court. Max Cady, a tattooed, heavy smoker and a

drunkard was convicted of rape, which he did not commit and was not guilty of the crime. He blamed Sam for his recklessness in handling the case and claimed it was because of Sam that he suffered for 14 years in prison. Once out of prison, Max begins to stalk Sam and his family. It takes a while before Max gets the attention he needs. Sam reports him to police with charges of stalking his family. This infuriates Max even more and he gets more vengeful than ever. Max kills one of Sam's associate with whom Sam is having an affair to capture more of his attention. Sam vacates his home to avoid the psychotic killer. Despite this, Max still follows him and assaults them. It ends up in a mess when Sam's daughter, who he mistook as an accomplice, and is stabbed by her, deceives Max. In the end, Sam manages to get rid of Max by killing him in self-defense to protect his family (Chibnall) Cannibalism is expressed in this movie. As already mentioned, the aim of the player is to attract the attention of the spectator and force him/her into play. Sam does exactly that and invites Max into the play by stalking him. Exaggeration is also exhibited in this play when Sam kills Max's associate (Chibnall). Another movie that beautifully uncovers the meaning of dark play is the talented Mr. Ripley. Tom is shown as a man who has desire to alleviate his social status in society. He neglects everything that comes on his way preventing him from achieving that status. The movie sets off with Tom travelling to Italy to convince a son of a wealthy man to join his father in New York. Tom however gets attracted to Dickie's (the rich man's son) lifestyle, something he has always admired. He kills Dickie and tries to lead a life like him by swapping his identity to Dickie's. This leads to more murders to protect and hide his identity from those who knew it. Tom relished the identity he has adopted so

much that he was willing to cross all limits to protect it. Through his clever planning he gets away with all his crimes and successfully manages to keep the identity, he so much desired (Nicol). Through close analysis of this movie, instances of exaggeration are evident. Tom goes to an extent of killing Dickie to earn his identity due to craving desires of living a flashy and classic lifestyle. As already indicated above, Dickie's death leads to other subsequent deaths to protect Tom's identity. Tom manages to capture the attention of the audience more so because he ends up achieving his mission and desire (Nicol). From the above few stories, we can conclude that most of the players in play intend to earn and capture audience attention since this make them happy. The couple at Balinese witnessed this especially when they fled from the cockfighting arena when the police arrived. The next day the couple was the subject of discussion in the village. In order for a player to attract attention of the audience, the player will most of the time engage in instances of exaggeration despite the risk. The dancer risked her life while she danced at the edge of the cliff in the story of dark play. In almost all, the games performed by the players there must be a winner and the loser. Most of the time the players in the game are winners since they capture audience's attention. However, at some point they can lose. This is evidence in the case of Kowasky and Sam from the movies reviewed above (Schechner 109). Works Cited Bakhtin, Mikhail. "Carnival and the Carnavalesque." In *Culture Theory and Popular Culture*. Ed. John Storey. Prentice Hall, 1998: 250-259. Print. Berra, John. *American Independent*. Bristol: Intellect Limited, 2010. Print. Chibnall, Steve. J. Lee Thompson. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000. Print. Geertz, Clifford. "

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