

# Essay on play

[Entertainment](#), [Video Games](#)



Play is seen by adults as intellectually degrading, which is irrational. Johann Huizinga a play anthropologist suggests that play is central to the formation of culture. Play is essential to civilised society. Throughout the course of this essay I will be highlighting the importance of play in the development of culture and morality focusing on video games and other such media to address this issue and to discuss the issue of any harm caused by games. It is my hypothesis that games are the building blocks of social understanding. Games are interested in the player, they revolve around the player, they cannot exist without you. Here is an understandable predictable world that you control what is not pleasing about that though, what could not be learned from that? Games provide constant reinforcement in terms of rewards like in video games as you progress you receive new weapons, cars, gadgets, levels, skills. Achievements etc, which in some respects mimics life in that hard work and effort is rewarding.

The main concern centred around all media in particular games is that people will learn or develop violent behaviour from playing/watching them. In reality a game has no more power of an individual than a film or a book, it's just information. Obviously it's beside the point, erections don't rape people, people rape people.

That being said although the subject matter of most games may centre around violent activity, games are actually more like sport. In a game the goal is not actually to kill but to win, killing is just the means to an end it's not an end in itself. Although in the game Hitman you are a professional assassin and the objectives of the game are to kill people the pleasure doesn't come solely from the act of killing (admittedly some of it does) the

joy of the game comes from the journey and the eventual conquering of the game, saving the world/princess/Holy Grail whatever it is. Killing is just a minor part of whole game, it can never be the main focus. If there was such a game just about killing you could put all the names of the people buying it on a register because the only people that would play it would be undoubtedly insane and it would probably never make it onto the shelves anyway.

Although we're given the option to be bad, games still deem it necessary to punish us and coerce us in hopes that we will eventually do the right thing. We chose to be bad because it was easy and fun and we were curious and now we get the bad ending and we're left with a bad taste in our mouths. The fear of the bad ending and all the in game characters disliking you for your actions is how a game coerces you into its idea of acting in a moral way. Which is actually a lot like how morality works in the real world, we're good because we want people to like us and we want good things to happen to us. We want the happy ending because we want to be happy, so in this respect games are just as coercive as the real world but sometimes being bad and/or hated is still fun in a place where it has no consequence.

So in a game the fun doesn't come from the swing of a sword, the fun comes from, defeating the evil wizard and saving the village, or doing the opposite and pillaging the village. Both are fun because in one you save the day and in the other you don't. It's all about fulfilling specific roles; it's an extension of the fantasy of being someone else and learning moral objectivity.