

## **Playing Around with Crime and Criminology in Videogames**

*Exploring common themes in games studies and  
criminology*

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### **Abstract**

This article explores how criminal/deviant themes arise in videogames and games studies. It also explores how criminology (virtual or cyber) has examined online criminality/deviance and how it might be applied to videogames. It touches on the 'videogames-cause-crime' debate without seeking to resolve it. It raises the prospect of a ludic criminology and explores potential criminological, crime prevention and criminal justice convergences between 'real' and virtual life. For instance it is safer to play, however criminally, with cars on screen than on the road?

**Key Words:** videogames, virtual criminology, cybercrime, technocrime, hypercrime

### **Introduction**

Video games have been the subject of media censure for some time now. At the time of writing, *Manhunt 2* (Rockstar, 2007) had been refused a certificate by the British Board of Film Classification (*The Guardian*, 20 June 2007). In *JPod*, a novel by Douglas Coupland, his characters - mostly games developers - play existing games such as *Tetris* and invent others. They discuss *Manhunt* in these terms: 'you spend way too much time playing Manhunt, which is the goriest game of all time. It signals your detachment from humanity' (2006:221).

This paper argues that criminology should take video games and online spaces seriously (Whitson and Doyle (2008) have reached the same

conclusion separately). Moreover, Games Studies should recognise that their discussions of how to encourage, or more often prevent, certain behaviours within games might be aided by an engagement with criminology. It concludes that there is a growing convergence between real life (RL) and virtual life (VL) in on/off-line communities and sports and games. It touches on, but attempts no resolution to, the 'video games cause crime' debate. First though some definitions of the terms used, then the video effects furore followed by investigations of criminology, games studies and a possible ludic synthesis. Most criminologists, even the administrative ones, would distinguish themselves from law, if only disciplinarily, but in a contest of the disciplines law has already begun to colonise sport (Greenfield and Osborne, 1999). So it is time that criminology got its virtual skates on.

### **Definitions: Interesting choices**

Throughout a number of videogames will be mentioned as will a few real life versions of those or other games and sports. Within Games Studies, and more widely, there are disputes about precisely what constitutes a game, sport or pastime. For instance, Juul (2005:30) discusses seven definitions of a game in his literature review before elaborating his own, having already mentioned a further definition by Sid Meier. Meier developed simulation games like *Civilisation* and *Railroad Tycoon* and defines a game as 'a series of interesting choices' (*cited in* Juul, 2005:19).

No definition is attempted here so this may be regarded as free play - in an ideas sandbox, if you like - rather than anything as structured and rule-based as a game or, indeed, a proper academic paper. In part no definition is given as that would take us too far into Game Studies but also because none of the argument relies on these definitional issues. Helpfully McFee radically declines to define his terms in a discussion of sport and rules, 'A definition (of sport) is neither possible nor desirable' (2004:22).

However defined, videogames all have rules but also a playful context even when done for money by professional videogames players. It is the existence of rules, the breaking of them and punishments and penalties within the game that should attract criminologists. It is argued here that criminology has largely left these topics to the players, administrators, fans and media.

It may be some criminologists see sport and (video)games as a realm apart, a relief from their criminological concerns, or subscribe to a weak version of Brohm's arguments that, '*sport is alienating. It will disappear in a universal communist society* (1978:52, italics in original). That is games and play are trivial; a distraction from doing research for the Home Office or speaking out on behalf of the criminalised. In economics Castronova (2005), spends time in the introduction, conclusion and throughout his book insisting that synthetic worlds should be taken seriously. He cites rejections by his discipline's journals of his early work.

## **The videogames cause ... argument**

A lot of organised - as in lobbying *and* as in researched - discussion has occurred around games and their potential to cause violence or encourage crime. There is a long history of new media or inventions being subject to 'moral panics' or censure. According to Howitt (1998) a translated Bible, education (for the working classes, for girls), books, music, comics, TV, cinema, video, internet, text messaging etc. have all given rise to public debate which itself is then carried in the media (see also Barker and Petley, 1998). Hagell and Newburn (1994) and research for the Home Office by Browne and Pennell (1995) suggests a direction of causation from violent family and other predisposing factors to an interest in violent videos rather than the other way round. A more recent summation (Millwood Hargrave and Livingstone, 2006) of the evidence is less clear but inclines to the reality of psychological effects whilst recognising the coherence of the largely cultural (and I would add specifically games) studies arguments for zero or even positive effects. For instance, Asi Burak - developer of PC game, *PeaceMaker*, which requires you to make peace between Israel and Palestine - believes that:

we need to 'dismantle the notion of the 'gamer''. 'If you think about it', he says, 'you won't call someone a 'radio listener', or 'TV viewer' - I mean, you might, but everyone is, right? Everyone is a filmgoer. This idea that people are 'gamers' is going to have to change. Everyone should be a gamer!' (Gambotto-Burke, *The Guardian*, 3 July, 2008).

Furthermore Stuart ('A machine gun now comes with a lesson in philosophy', *The Guardian*, 28 June 2007) notes about 70% of all video games are rated as suitable for all ages and predicts the future of videogames is not *Manhunt 2*, *Law and Order: Double or Nothing* (Legacy Games) or *Fall of Man* (Insomniac Games). These games fell foul of media and other censure respectively for extremes of callous violence, the appearance of the James Bulger's iconic CCTV image in the game and the use of a virtual Manchester Cathedral as the site of a gun fight. He suggests games such as *Haze* (Free Radical Design) and *Bioshock* (Irrational Games) offer, 'a 30-hour course in philosophy, social history and the ethics of military intervention'.

Juul (2006) emphasises that games are fictional and that even though his book is not about violence he still feels the need to note the banning of golf in Scotland in 1457 and pinball in New York from the 1930s to 1976 (p21) and that, 'controlling a character that hits a character controlled by another player does not mean that one wants to attack that other player in real life' (p19). So the fight (game?) continues between

supporters and detractors of videogames and is only mentioned here for completeness.

## **Criminology and games**

Clearly the irruption of the internet and email has been noted by the criminological community and some of the flavour of that will be set out below. Generally the method has been to start from the existing crimes and criminological explanations and apply them to internet or cyber crime. They often point out that the crimes are not new but facilitated by the new technology and that, what might be called terrestrial criminology, can get a handle on it even if policing cannot. In some respects this mirrors concerns about globalisation and how transnational policing is to be achieved. Some of these criminological interventions are discussed below; Brown (2006:456) calls these 'virtual criminology'.

Yar's (2006) book is an introductory text on cybercrime that usefully rounds up some of the literature and the main issues of crime online. He refers extensively to the earlier collections of Jewkes (2003) and Wall (2001). All of these have useful accounts - though growing stale through the speed of development in the internet, if not in the criminological study of it - of various old crimes by new means. Jewkes' (2004) own text on media and crime only touches on video games in a discussion of media effects and quotes from a relative's experience of playing *The Getaway* (Sony Computer Entertainment, 2002).

Wall's (2007) latest contribution is the most up-to-date yet hardly mentions games save the thefts of virtual artefacts and mentions an unlockable sex scene in *Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas*. Some of his discussion of the problems of policing third generation computer crime are relevant to video games and worlds and will be discussed later. McGuire (2007) is rightly critical of the excesses of some writers on 'cyber' crime and all the above might be included by implication but it is more popular and commercially interested parties that deserve the fullest criticism.

None of these specifically look at video or online games but Williams' work offers some possibilities. Williams (2006) spent six months in online ethnography and recruited sixty members of an online community called *Cyberworlds* to a rolling 60 day online focus group to discuss crime, deviance and regulation. He combines sociology, linguistics and criminology. The sociology concentrates on what is a community and whether *Cyberworlds*, and the like, are communities. The linguistics concentrates on the fact that most completely intra-cyber deviance is verbal abuse rendered in text.

Williams spends little time debating the full range of potential criminological engagements with cybercrimes. Candidates might be theories that examine gender, and particularly masculinities, given the preponderance of teenage and young men on such sites. Hirschi's control theory (2002) is declared most relevant melded with Sykes and Matza

(1957) on techniques of neutralisation. This meld is deployed sensitively to criticisms of control theory and differences between real life and virtual life.

Elsewhere Williams (2004:24) specifically rejects sub-cultural explanations thus:

Cohen's (1955) and Cloward and Ohlin's (1960) class based explanations which focus on a rebellion against hegemonic middle class culture, motivations behind allegiances to subcultures within Cyberworlds prove quite different. Any class based analysis can be ruled out given the existence of a digital divide of Internet use, meaning that those who inhabit Cyberworlds are likely to be middle class young white males.

I have argued elsewhere for the continued relevance of these sub-cultural theorists re-read through feminism and the masculinities literature (Groombridge, 1997). For instance, Cohen did look at middle class masculinities and their rebellion - taking their parents cars, getting drunk etc. - so might easily now be applied to online vandalism.

Williams discusses real life murders linked to online activity - including games! - but the offences for which players were most often ejected from the game were 'profanity' (52.5%) and harassment (27%); both easily done and easily spotted by the online 'police', the *Peace Keepers* (PK). More difficult, requiring technical skills and therefore rarer, was online vandalism (6.1%) or impersonating a PK (0.8%). Unsurprisingly, perhaps not knowing the rules, 'tourists' were twice as likely to be ejected for profanity though only half as likely for harassment. None were ejected for vandalism.

How is such deviance policed? Initially, and still in some fora, by communitarian 'shaming'. Secondly by the appointment of voluntary or official 'police' and finally by the technology itself - though this may be hacked. The 'automaticity' by which rule-breaking is detected and punished will be discussed more fully later.

Thus in the game *Runescape* players can only kill each other in the Wilderness and are, thereafter, marked with a skull to warn other players. Moreover, if they fail to kill they die and lose most of their virtual possessions. So some measure of deterrence is possible online; but online one can change identities and avatars (one's online representation which may bear no resemblance to you or reality) and re-enter spaces from which one has been ejected. In many games domains come with warnings that there is a war in progress or that player-versus-player mode is enabled allowing you to choose to kill or be killed. Castronova (2006) notes that *Ultima Online* quickly allowed players to 'kill' each other as a means of reducing swearing. It did not work on the language but proved popular. Most of these games charge fees; these commercially viable serial killers are known to gamers as 'griefers'.

However, Williams appears to be onto something when he opines, ‘the understanding that online activity is not ‘real life’ leads some individuals to *play* out scenarios in virtual *arenas* as *games*’ (2006:85, my emphasis). That is, whilst some join online communities to experience and develop those communities, others are more ludic and treat it as a game. Conversely in online games it is possible to meet people, killing and competition are not obligatory. In VL and RL there may be interlocking communities with different ‘takes’ on the game or whether it is a game at all, even where the games are similar.

Thus Juul compares *Quake III Arena* with *Counter-Strike*, both of which call for killing, and how subtle differences in the rules lead to an emphasis on cooperative team play in *Counter Strike*, even though these rules do not demand team play (2005:90). He also notes that as communication and strategic planning are important for victory there ‘is an important incentive to build community and that *EverQuest* promotes this too’ (2005:91).

Neither a criminologist nor games theoretician, Taylor, who identifies as a sociologist of technology, is cited by both Williams (2006) and Yar (2006) and contributes to Wall (2000) and Jewkes (2003). In his book on Hackers he cites Coupland’s *Microserfs* in identifying a type of hacker - sold out to the corporation - and writes, perhaps because of his subject matter, quite ludically. He examines the playful aspects of hacking and notes, ‘cultural theorist have emphasised the ironic and playful nature of hacking’ (1999:167); *but*, cleaving to reality, he notes the irony of their attachment to a modernist piece of kit, the computer. Clearly criminology will need to engage more widely with ICT whether games or business.

These considerations of the sociology of communities and the psychology of games playing are not irrelevant to criminology but cannot detain us here. Having briefly looked at how criminology has (or might have) looked at video games we turn to how games studies have engaged with criminology, or even the sociology of deviance, or of law and criminal justice.

## **Games and criminology**

Criminology appears not to have seen games playing or playfulness within its discipline (though see Williams, 2007). Similarly games studies appears to recognise the significance of rules without seeking to relate that to the studies of rule-breaking and making in RL; that is to criminology and to law, though Lastowska (2006) notes the arguments of Huizinga in *Homo Ludens* on the playfulness of legal contests.

We should not be too critical of criminology’s failures to relate to games. For instance, in the 700 odd pages and 48 articles of the cybercultures reader (Bell and Kennedy, 2000) there is only one sustained discussion of games, and then to relate them (importantly) to hacking (Bukatman, 2000). Just as some criminological work on the internet was

summarised and critiqued above so some recent books on video games are discussed below.

Kerr's (2006) work is a good introduction to digital games (i.e. console or online). It touches on the violence debate but does not engage with the fact that much ordinary gameplay involves what would in RL be called crime or deviance. Similarly Rutter and Bryce's (2006) otherwise excellent collection contains nothing on crime or deviance.

Castronova gives attention to law and governance within online worlds and rightly notes that, 'there is more to the state than just code in these places' (2006:205). Note, just as he treats these games as economies, he refers to them in this discussion as states and implicitly as jurisdictions. Most criminologists are not opponents of good government or appropriate laws but are often sceptical of their capacity to prevent crime or deviance. Indeed some would note the extent to which unwanted behaviours are produced by the labels or discourse. Cyberspace may be the ideal laboratory for theories of governance.

What might be recognised as a criminological discourse can be found in Castronova's discussion of the value of a magic sword and the ethics of looting a foe online versus achieving the same end by hacking the server. Criminologists might recognise that as an ethical issue, but also as a Mertonian 'innovation'. Juul does not call it this but notes that in *Deus Ex* (Ion Storm, 2000) players found they could use 'proximity mines' to climb a wall they should not have been able to (2006:76). That is items for blowing things up were used to climb a wall that the game's code would prevent if just issued the command 'climb the wall'. Such innovation is ludic.

What criminologists might call policing, Castronova calls governing. He notes the extent to which such activities occur is conditioned by the cost of human (customer service) intervention. It is here that the game's code, the self-policing/shaming and voluntary policing, that Williams (2006) discusses comes in. The Community Standards for *Star Wars Galaxy* he exhibits (2006:224-226) can not compare to a penal code, but out-words the Ten Commandments. And, unlike the suppositions of classicist criminology, we are obliged to agree on screen in advance.

He notes the extent to which the capacities of games is now being used by the US military as training, how terrorists might use them as training and how racists have produced a game called *Ethnic Cleansing*, presumably as 'fun' propaganda. Again these should be of interest to criminologists. And, bringing the discussion back to the terrain that criminology traditionally falls back on, crime statistics, Castronova cites Korean National Police Agency figures for 2003 which show that of 40,000 online crimes 22,000 were games related!

*Grand Theft Auto* is most often criticised for its criminal content, yet Frasca (2003) sees freedom in GTA3 to:

... perform a lot of actions in an immense playground. To mention just a few: you can hit and kill people, carjack and drive an enormous variety of vehicles, use several cool weapons, play

vigilante, be a taxi driver, repair and paint your car, listen to several radio stations, have sex with prostitutes and burn people alive. And these are just some of the possibilities.

Such freedoms are more normal in an online RPG (role playing game) and Frasca notes, 'most of the time, I enjoyed using the environment as a giant laboratory for experimentation, where I could test the system's boundaries and set my own creative goals.' Within a game aimed at committing criminal mayhem Frasca is ludic or deviant in just pimping his ride. As a games designer he may be more inclined to play with games and elsewhere he argues for the possibility of using videogames in consciousness raising and education (2001).

In both the section on criminology and that on games I have started to introduce concepts from either side of the disciplinary wall, and to be a little playful. Next we seek to synthesise further but mostly in respect of crime and criminal justice issues.

### **Next level: Ludo-criminology**

McFee (1997) spends some time trying to work out whether he is making a contribution to philosophy that takes sport as its subject or to the philosophy of sport. My intention here is to widen criminology to investigate crime, deviance, and policing and punishment systems wherever they are found including online, on screen and on pitch. I would also hope gamers and Games Studies would not forget the potential in criminology.

Lastowska (2006) makes a pitch for law and games studies to share and learn from each other. Blackshaw and Crabbe (2004), from the direction of the sociology of sport, suggest some ways forward in their engagements with criminology, though they say it, 'has a narrow 'law and order' agenda which is pursued at the expense of exploring crime and 'deviance' in more imaginative ways...' (p.64). So some thoughts on crime policy and criminology follow inspired by the engagement with games.

Juul notes the asymmetry between the simplicity of rules and complexity of outcomes quoting mathematician, Wolfram, 'simple rules can lead to very complicated behaviour' (2006:77). But 'the rules of a video game are automated, video games allow for rules that are more complex ... since the rules are hidden from the player, video games allow the player's initial focus to be on the appearance of the game' (2006:162). That is games have invisible walls (*ibid*, p.165), yet for the best gaming experience it is important to maintain the 'suspension of disbelief' (*ibid*, p.190). That is the narrative drive keeps us going forward and not sideways to take too close a look at, let alone for, the walls.

Translating these insights from VL to RL the classicist and abolitionist criminologist might applaud few and simple laws that enable the complexity of life without overly constraining it. The target hardening



and defensible space theories of situational crime prevention would render the walls very visible and have them covered in anti-climb paint. The micro-management tendencies of New Labour's policies can be criticised from many directions but now additionally as 'not fun', and therefore having no future.

The games literature speaks of 'guilds', criminologists might talk of gangs. Indeed, Williams (2004) uses the expression gangs when discussing online vandalism but in a censorious trope, rather than relating it to the rich criminological literature on the subject. Rather unludicly he argues for a target hardening approach, claiming:

... an effective way of reducing and preventing some cybercrimes rests, perhaps, not in changing existing laws, regulations and moral exhortation against either particular deviant or victimisation oriented social practices, but in designing out the opportunity for crime by developing *toughened technology* (2004:2).

He sets out a very 'official' or 'administrative' view of vandalism and criminal damage that would not admit the graffiti art beloved of cultural criminology nor the sort of 'modding' that happens in games - some gamers hack into systems to *modify* aspects of games or even the appearance of characters. Other games allow some modding and an open source social networking site such as *Facebook* encourages applications from other developers.

Clearly an autocratic games world developer would call such practices vandalism or intellectual property theft and get many lawyers, and some criminologists, to agree. The opposite trend on the web is the Wiki where all material can be vandalized or, put more generously, edited. It is difficult to imagine that a game or an online community could operate to Wiki rules, though Juul points out that Peter Suber, a philosopher, created a game, *Nomic*, in which changing the rules of the game was allowed and indeed was the point of the game. Castronova muses, 'Games are becoming such an integral part of daily life that the distinction between game and life may be fading' (2006:158).

These two points raise the issue of convergence between RL and VL and the 'automaticity' of rule-enforcing in both realms. The use of electronic monitoring of offenders is sometimes credited to a judge's reading of *SpiderMan*. I know of no such founding myth for CCTV and traffic cameras though a trawl through sci-fi should find one. Indeed the cameras and their images appear to have become firmly lodged in popular culture (Groombridge, 2002). Castronova's concern is that RL will intrude too much on VL here, though our concern is in the opposite direction.

CCTV and assorted cameras do not come from games or popular fiction but deploy such technologies. There are many reasons to be against the cameras from civil liberties to their cost and effectiveness (Groombridge and Murji, 1994; Groombridge, 2007). To these might be

added that they render the walls visible; or, contrarily, that the operation of the cameras is treated by some as a lottery, a game.

Driving games are popular and many (the *Grand Theft Auto* series and *Carmageddon*) have been criticized for their general violence and specifically pedestrian killing elements.

Driving is not a game. Yet from the 'careful lady driver' beloved of the stereotype of the car sales person (man?) to the demonized joyrider, enormous emotional satisfaction and identity formation is tied up with our motoring which has similarities with video games (Groombridge, 1998). So here the heuristic of ludic criminology suggests public policy should not blame video games or just young men for bad driving but remind drivers that there is a real world with real world consequences beyond the (wind)screen. Presdee (2000) argues that joyriding and internet use are carnivalesque but carnivals have consequences.

It may be that the 'automaticity' of speed, red light and congestion cameras add to the feeling of being in a game in which getting points on your license is like dying for an RPG player; an inconvenience but no hindrance. Juul notes traffic shares similarities with games but insists the consequences are 'not optional' (2006:43). The trouble is given the construction of modern cars and other road engineering the consequences are not obvious or occur sufficiently often to many drivers.

Finally on the public policy issues we pick up Castronova's point about convergence again. He defends the right of games world authorities to have their own rules, though not compromising 'human dignity' (2006:239), but is concerned that writing the codes to induce 'toxic immersion' (where players may go without food or sleep to keep playing) may require RL to enter VL. Yet his list of rights gamers give up sounds far too like current anti-terrorist legislation. Now RL authorities seek the same automatic/autocratic powers over us as VL ones do.

## **Last level: Beyond the video violence debate**

In part the intention has been to make good the deficiencies in the work of Jewkes (2003), Wall (2001; 2007), Yar (2006) and Williams (2006) by addressing the issue of games online and on consoles (increasingly converging) and suggest some criminological readings of the games literature. But I have strayed well beyond games and crime to the even more fugitive 'play'. No assumption is made that a game is ludic *per se* and RL isn't - indeed I have tried to provide examples of playfulness in both; nor is it assumed that playfulness is always right.

Castronova's (2006) first thoughts on writing about the economy of games were to treat *EverQuest* as a country: and write a World Bank style report on it. He thought better of it. It would be possible to do a Home Office Crime Statistics or British Crime Survey style report on these worlds too. One could even imagine sub-cultural ethnographies of virtual gangs/guilds (Taylor's, 2006 is rooted in game studies). This would not be

my inclination in RL criminology so that is left to others. Such tedious enumeration, even in a games environment, is not very ludic.

So what might be ludic? Even the most playful of theorists tend to ignore crime. Thus in over 400 densely-printed, multiply-footnoted and eclectically-sourced pages Kane (2004) takes time to apply the play ethic to education, art, media, management, politics and spirituality, yet does not touch on crime or criminal justice issues. Perhaps where games are seen as too trivial; crime is seen as too serious.

I hope the discussions of what might be called 'ludo-classicism', convergence/automaticity and the related issue of car use above give some clues - I'm not setting out rules. And if this paper were a Wiki then what follows (and indeed anything in it) might be seen as stubs for others to expand, edit, even vandalise, for instance:

- Merton's Strain Theory is usually presented in positive and negative tabular form which could be rendered into the digital or binary of on/off 0/1;
- ASBOs might be seen as attempts to erect 'invisible walls' round youth regarded as problematic;
- Games might be used in simulation exercises to test knee jerk criminal justice policies - though pessimistically to debug them and still roll them out.

Clearly I propose to go beyond the rote application of existing criminology to the online environment and absolutely wish to transcend the videogames and violence labyrinth, but also note the ludic response of some gamers to claims that the Columbine massacre was due to games playing; they produced an online RPG about it.

Policing and criminal justice systems should not import too freely from games, and I am therefore with Richard MacKinnon in his argument that:

The importation of real life rape into virtual reality poses complex questions and creates complex problems unnecessarily. It would better serve the interest of virtual society to reconceive rape so as to render it less harmful or even irrelevant (1997).

Which is not to say that these matters - and indeed the depiction of women and sex online and in games generally - are not important, but that the unthinking importation of already problematic concepts from RL are not appropriate in VL or VL scholarship. Similarly difficult issues arose recently in the online community, *Second Life* where adults with child avatars were charging other adults with adult avatars to have sex with them online.

But, and briefly to be serious, despite my reservations about the scope of virtual criminology it is clear some important questions are being asked about crime and criminology. Games people and internet purists are

anxious about RL intervention in VL. Virtual criminology has concentrated on seeking to apply conventional criminological tools to VL, but Wall (2007) is right - though coming at it from virtual criminology - in sounding some alarms.

He sees that, however novel, first generation ('crimes using computers') and second generation ('hybrid crimes' - crimes for which computers provide new opportunities) cybercrimes can be understood and subjected to law and policy (and therefore criminological discipline), 'the greater challenge lies with the third generation' (2007:208-9). He is concerned about the ubiquitous policing of surveillant technologies (*ibid.* p.211) - what I have called 'automaticity' - and finally, perhaps ludically, he quotes from *Dilbert*:

... new technology will allow the police to solve 100 percent of all crimes. The bad news is that we'll realise 100 percent of the population are criminals, including the police (Scott Adams, *cited in* Wall, 2007:214).

The worse news is that policing will still apply to the usual suspects and some random luckless others caught with their feet on train seats.

Sociologists are inclined to find the rules beneath the rules or even where there appear to be no rules. My aim has been to playfully engage with some of them but some outcomes might be imagined for a ludic criminology. Some specific examples have been given but also some playful, even aleatory, suggestions thrown in. Had I the skill this paper would be a game.

I have played fast and loose with definitions. There are clear differences between games, sports, real life and their video or cyber versions, even if those are difficult to distil into a definition that all can agree. Sassen is clear on the need, 'to develop analytic categories that allow us to capture the complex imbrications of technology and society (2002:1). I have not managed that, cannot manage that. I cannot be serious.

Situationist crime prevention anyone?

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