

## **Play! Critical Response 5**

### **“McDonald’s Video Game” & “Pipe Trouble”**

*What influences do players take away from video games on a personal level?*

Players can take many things away from video games. Generally it is based on their own experience gained from their play session. In parody or awareness games such as “McDonald’s Video Game” or “Pipe Trouble,” players experiences are generally shocking. These games tend to inspire feelings of disgust either with the game itself or the situation they parody, but more importantly these games tend to succeed in raising awareness of that which they parody. When a player experiences these games, the “shock factor” they receive encourages attitudes to research the issue on their own time. Video games such as these end up being more informative in this way. While not directly educating players about issues, they raise awareness and encourage self education of the topics. As an example, in “McDonald’s Video Game” players will experience a variety of disturbing strategies to succeed in making their fast food business. Players would then be encouraged to see if there is any truth to the mechanics presented in the game.

*Do Players learn from video games? What do they learn?*

Players can learn anything from video games and it, of course, depends on the video game. A video can be treated as a simulation of real world events or mimic important skills in a different, potentially more fun, way. Take “Pipe Trouble” for example. Aside from teaching about social issues such as the oil pipeline debate in a way described in the previous section, it also uses mechanics such as money management and using specifically shaped parts to teach players shortest pathing skills, resource management, and doing so on a time limit to help exercise the brain. While “Pipe Trouble” isn’t the most difficult game, the simple use of these mechanics can help train and condition a person's brain to be better prepared for real life situations that require the same skills in a different way. This is something video games are exceptionally good at. They can teach skills indirectly by using similar situations in a more entertaining way, creating a more easily digested style of receiving information or talents.

*Can a video game influence a player’s view?*

There are two ways to answer this question. One way is to say that people with certain views tend to be attracted to certain video games and thus, no they do not. The other way is that video games do influence those who play them. I believe it is a bit of both. Again, looking at “Pipe Trouble,” the game may draw in those looking for the fun of destroying farm lands for mindless enjoyment, yet they will come to find an educational experience that shows both the benefits and drawbacks of a pipeline being created. Players may unsuspectedly find themselves influenced from their original opinions and form new ones based on the information they did not expect from a game such as this.