



## Ethical Issues That Will Never Get Old: Racism, Xenophobia and Discrimination



**MSc Creative Games**

Cultural Analysis and Applications of Games

Final Project

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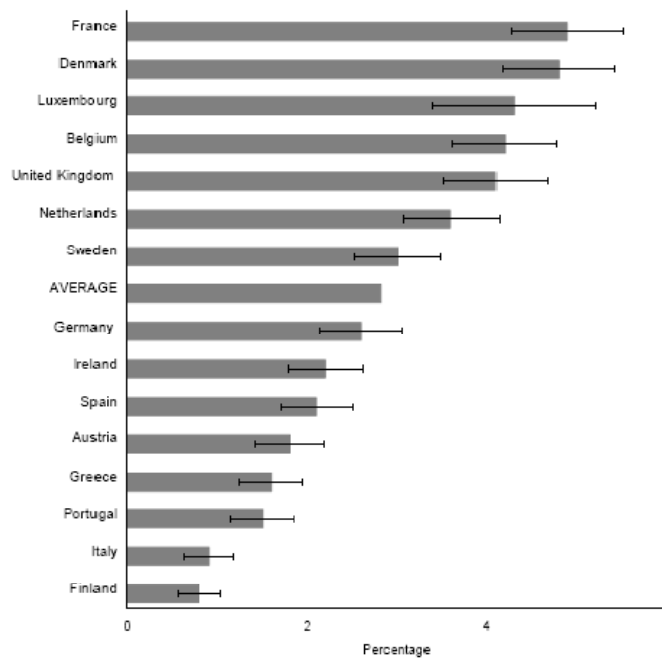
## Introduction

*“All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.*

*Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.”*

(OHCHR)

Although the Universal Declaration of Human rights was stated by the General Assembly resolution 217 A (III) in 1948, racism, xenophobia and discrimination persist today as important and disturbing issues. According to Dijk et al. (2005) 3% of the European population keep on suffering from violence motivated by personal characteristics, usually called *Hate Crimes* (Picture 1). The same survey reports high levels of *Hate Crimes* against citizens of immigrant background, especially in countries like Portugal, Spain, Italy and Greece. Data collected by the Fundamental Rights Agency (Human Rights First) shows that between 2005 and 2006 several countries (Germany, Ireland, Austria, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom) revealed an increase in the overall number of *Hate Crimes*, some of them already showing this tendency since the year 2000.

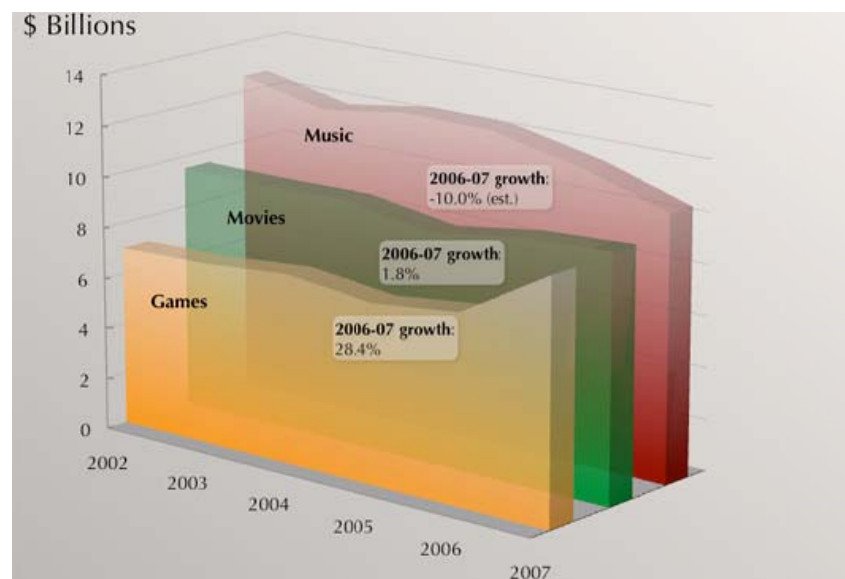


**Picture 1 - Percentage of the population victimized by hate crimes (2004)**

Despite the conceptual differences among these issues (Eckert, 2007) they share one main characteristic: disrespect for the *other*. Although the ideas of racial superiority, foreigner hatred and sexual tendencies discrimination are different, all of them stand for disregard for the equal human being. These thoughts or actions usually are driven by stereotypes.

A stereotype is a simplified and global idea about a group. May have a real basis but they are over exaggerated and applied to the all group, ignoring the individual differences of the members (Dictionary.com). Thoughts of racial discrimination or ethnic superiority generally result from stereotypes because when, for example, a whole race is perceived as inferior there is a generalization to all members of that race. All individual variation is forgotten and every member of that group is recognized in the same way, as an inferior person. This type of beliefs may lead to prejudice against a specific social, racial or religious group and consequently to negative and/or even violent actions against it.

These issues already largely discussed in all sorts of Media have arrived to the video games industry. Nowadays that the videogames industry is already more profitable then the movies and music industries (Bangeman, 2008) the study of topics like racism, xenophobia, discrimination and stereotyping in videogames is quickly becoming a fundamental aspect to bear in mind (Picture 2).



Picture 2 - US Music, Movie and Gaming Revenues (2002 - 07)

At the moment several studies have already been made in this area. According to Burgess et al. (2007) racial discrimination is a constant topic in video games representations: black males despite being underrepresented usually are regarded as aggressive, violent and crime related characters; games involving black characters are perceived as more violent then games only

with white characters. Robert Parungao (Sinclair, 2006) concluded with his thesis that videogames like *Grand Theft Auto III* portrait almost all the non-white characters as criminals and that the *Shadow Warrior* doesn't make distinction between Asian cultures. Dill et al. (2005) referred that several games have a tendency to objectify women and also to represent the eastern minorities as victims of violence.

The following pictures show some examples of games with racist/discriminative content:



**Picture 3 - Kingpin (1996)**

A white male tries to overpower a black crime leader dealing with black prostitutes and thugs



**Picture 4 - GTA: Vice City (2002)**

A white hero tries to succeed in the crime business by killing Cubans and Haitians gangs



**Picture 5 - Ethnic Cleansing (2002)**

A Ku Klux Klan element wander through the city killing African-American, Spanish and Jewish stereotyped characters



**Picture 6 - Postal 2 (2003)**

The white hero can play a game called *Fag Hunter* where he has to kill 20 stereotyped homosexual characters



**Picture 7 - Carnival Games (2007)**

Possibility to change the hair and the clothes of the character but not the race (only white race is available)



**Picture 8 - Resident Evil 5 (2009)**

A white hero must survive by killing an entire village filled with black zombies

The effect of the video games content on the players has also been studied. According to Anderson and Bushman (2001), the exposure to violent content in video games results in more aggressive attitudes of the young players, and Dill et al. (2005) refer that the stereotypical characterization of minorities in video games may lead to more discrimination and racial attitudes.

Combining the success of the games industry with the fact that one quarter of the players is under 18 years old (Entertainment Software Association, 2008), studying the video games content and its influence on the players is a fundamental issue of today's society.

But there is an important question to consider when discussing the racist/discriminative content of video games.

The CEO of *Deadline Games*, Chris Mottes states that in most cases the use of stereotypes is meant to be humorous and harmless, referring as example two Mexican theme games developed by *Deadline Games* (Mottes, 2008):



Picture 9 - Total Overdose (2005)



Picture 10 - Chili con Carnage (2007)

These games, despite the support of several Mexican fans, were heavily criticized about the stereotyped characters and racist content against the Mexican culture.

Mottes (2007) refers that the criticism of video games content has reached an exaggerated and unreal level:

*“Games with minority characters, and especially minority stereotypes—even tongue-in-cheek characters not meant to be offensive—are torn down by accusations of intolerance...”*

In his opinion all the intense and exaggerated criticism of game content is increasing the self-censorship of game developers destroying the creative process involved in the design of video games.

This is the main question addressed in this project. Is it possible to create a video game with stereotyped content without being classified as racist? Or it really exists an over exaggerated criticism of game content regarding racist and discrimination topics?

## The PaKKKman: Racist or Humorous?

The *PaKKKman* is a 2D Flash game intentionally filled with racial, social and religious stereotypes. The concept was designed after reading several criticisms about games accused of racial and/or discriminative content. The list of games included famous controversial titles as the *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City* (from the successful and controversial series *Grand Theft Auto*) and the last game of another well-known series the *Resident Evil 5* (not yet released). In the same list was the *Loco Roco* game (The Boston Globe, 2008).

When reading the arguments used to criticize these games' content it's not difficult to understand why the first the two games were considered as racist games. In *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City* (*GTA: VC*), the player is supposed to kill Haitian and Cuban gangs in order to succeed in the crime business, while in the *Resident Evil 5* the trailer shows a white hero murdering a whole village of black zombies. But one question is why *Loco Roco* was included in lists about the most racist games ever (The Boston Globe, 2008).



Picture 11 - Loco Roco (2006)



Picture 12 - Loco Roco Enemies



Picture 13 - Blackface

*Loco Roco* is a platform/puzzle game where the player needs to help a yellow cartoon character to reach the end of the level while catching the maximum of *Berries*. This game was accused of racism because of the similarity between the enemies (*Moja*) and the *blackface* used by the minstrel performers of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Picture 12 and 13).

Several questions arise from this comparison:

- Should a 2D platform game be compared with a 3D first-person shooter game in terms of racist content and the influence that might have on the players?
- Should a game with the objective of killing black zombies be compared with a game with the objective of reaching the end of the level while escaping the enemies?
- The realism or similarity of the *Blackface* enemies in *Loco Roco* should be compared with the black zombies or the Haitian and Cuban gangs in *Resident Evil 5* and *GTA: VC*?



Another essential question when classifying a game as racist is the context and storyline of the game. One game already referred before was the *Ethnic Cleansing*. This game objective is as simple as wandering in a city killing all the African-American, Spanish and Jewish characters. Everything in this game, from the characters to the actual storyline instigates the player to perform racist activities.

In *Resident Evil 5* the player controls Chris Redfield a former agent of S.T.A.R.S. sent on a mission to an African colony where the virus has been unleashed turning everyone into zombies. In an African village the inhabitants would have a black origin so the zombies would be black too:

- Should the *racist content* of this game be compared with the *Ethnic Cleansing* regarding the storyline and game context?

Following all this questions the objective of the *PaKKKman* was to create a simple 2D Pacman full of stereotyped characters and symbols. The Pacman was chosen because is one of the most classic and famous games ever. This way the *PaKKKman* is, first of all a simple 2D classic game that everyone can play, but also one of the most stereotyping video games that without a specific context or storyline, can recall three fundamental historic events about racism, xenophobia and discrimination.

The *PaKKKman* shows how the inclusion of stereotyped symbols in a simple video game can make it one of the most racist and stereotyping games in history, but at the same time demonstrates the over exaggeration in game criticism because it continues to be a classic 2D Pacman, with a simple objective, gameplay and funny cartoon characters, not even comparable to *Ethnic Cleansing* for example.



## Game Development

*The PaKKKman* was developed using Autodesk Maya 2008 for the 3D modeling, Adobe Photoshop CS2 for the 2D Artwork and the Adobe Flash CS4 for combining all the resources and creating the game file.

The gameplay is equal to the original Pacman from 1980 but with different characters (pacman and ghosts) and specific mazes. The game has three levels about essential examples of racism, xenophobia and discrimination: Ku Klux Klan and the African-American society; Nazism and the European Jewry; Catholic Church and the homosexual "marriage". These three levels were chosen for different reasons.

The history between the Nazism and the European Jewry was chosen because it is the main historical symbol of racism, xenophobia and discrimination issues. The Holocaust represents all this concepts when taken to an extreme level and the tragic consequences that the hatred and cruelty may cause not only to one society but in the whole world.

The events between the Ku Klux Klan and the African-American society were chosen, not only because they are one of the easiest recognizable examples of racism, but also because most of the discussions about these issues in videogames include the African-American stereotyping.

The homosexual "marriage" disapproval by the Catholic Church was also included in order to integrate an example of discrimination not based on the race but instead on personal choices and the Catholic Church beliefs.

## Historical Information

### *Nazism and the European Jewry*

The Holocaust is the worst historical tragedy caused by racist and xenophobic actions. The history starts when Hitler and the Nazi regime reached the power in Germany in 1933 (Leventhal, 1995). By this time the Jewish population was gaining respect and status among the non-Jews.

Since the beginning the Nazi regime took measures to control the Jewish population. It started by creating specific laws, taxes and working conditions only applied to Jews. From these simple



conditions and taking advantage of a German diplomat murdered in Paris by a Jew (*The night of the broken glass*), they evolved to the creation of special places for the Jews to live: Ghettos. These were places surrounded by walls and barb wire with food supplies controlled by the regime.

In September of 1941 the Nazi regime created the *Final Solution* for the Jewish problem: the death camps. From this time on, the Jews were marked with a yellow star and sent to the killing fields where they would end up being shot, gassed (gas chambers) or used in medical experiments. Most of them died before from starvation or diseases.

This brief and simplified history of the Holocaust is enough to demonstrate the atrocities performed by the Nazi regime to the Jewish population. In total, 6 million Jews died in the Holocaust.

### *Ku Klux Klan and the African-American society*

The original Ku Klux Klan was an illegal organization created in the southern American states in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, to confront the period of Reconstruction after the American Civil War. This organization had as main beliefs the defence of the white supremacy and the inviolability of white womanhood. They believed that the blacks were inferior by nature and so couldn't deal with their rise in the society to equal status or the adoption of political positions (Anti-Defamation League).

Their activities consisted in terrorizing the black community in order to prevent them from using the recent social and political rights. They used to burn crosses near the homes of their targets in order to warn them. If the warning wasn't respected the victims would end up being tortured, mutilated or murdered.

In 1869 the Klan activities become so violent that the organization was dismantled by their leader. But in Georgia in 1915, the second generation of the organization was born.

The new generation was called *Invisible Empire, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan*. This new society started a persecution not only to the black community but also to Roman Catholics (threat to the traditional American values and traditions) and Jews. Following the first generation of the Klan, several victims were harassed, tortured, trashed and murdered (Pendergraft).



In 1924 the Klan after changing their method, gains a strong political influence and was counting with an estimation of 3 million members. But this was a brief success. In 1929 the violence and internal conflicts reduced the Klan to some thousands, and in 1944 it was officially dismantled by the federal government. From that moment the Klan continued organized as small illegal societies being accused of several events of racial violence, intimidation and bombings.

In the early 2000s the increasing number of neo-Nazi groups outshined the Klan but with their failure around 2005 gave an opportunity to the Klan groups along with skinhead activity (Anti-Defamation League).

### *Catholic Church and the Homosexual "Marriage"*

Although the Catholic Church defends the human rights of the Homosexuals, their marriage is not supported (Catholic News Service).

The rejection of Homosexuality is found in the Old Testament. According to Genesis 19, Lot from Sodom gave shelter to two disguised angels that were visiting the city. The men of Sodom demand to Lot to deliver his guests for homosexual intercourse. Lot refused and the angels blinded all men from Sodom and city ended up being destroyed by fire (Brom, 2004). Catholics interpret the destruction of Sodom as a response from God to the inhabitants' homosexuality.

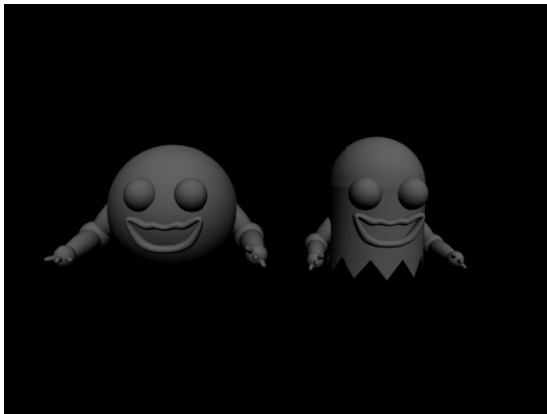
To the Catholic Church genital activities between persons of the same sex is immoral. They argue that God designed the sexual intercourse as a union of two persons in love in order to procreate. This way Homosexual intercourse is considered at least not enough to complete God's design of sexual relations (Sparks).

The Marriage is regarded as a gift from God in order to help men and women to complete their lives by creating a family and descendents. Sexual intercourse should only happen after marriage and with the solo purpose of reproduction. Marriage has a nature, specific properties and a special purpose everything designed by God.

Homosexual marriage is immoral because it doesn't fulfill God's plans for marriage and so it can't be approved by the Catholic Church.

### 3D Stereotyped Characters

All the characters were modelled in Autodesk Maya 2008. First it was built a default model of the Pacman and the Ghost. After defining the basic shape of each character the models were modified according to the different stereotyped symbols and illustrations, representing a specific group or race (Picture 14 and 15).



Picture 14 - Default models



Picture 15 - Final models with stereotyped symbols

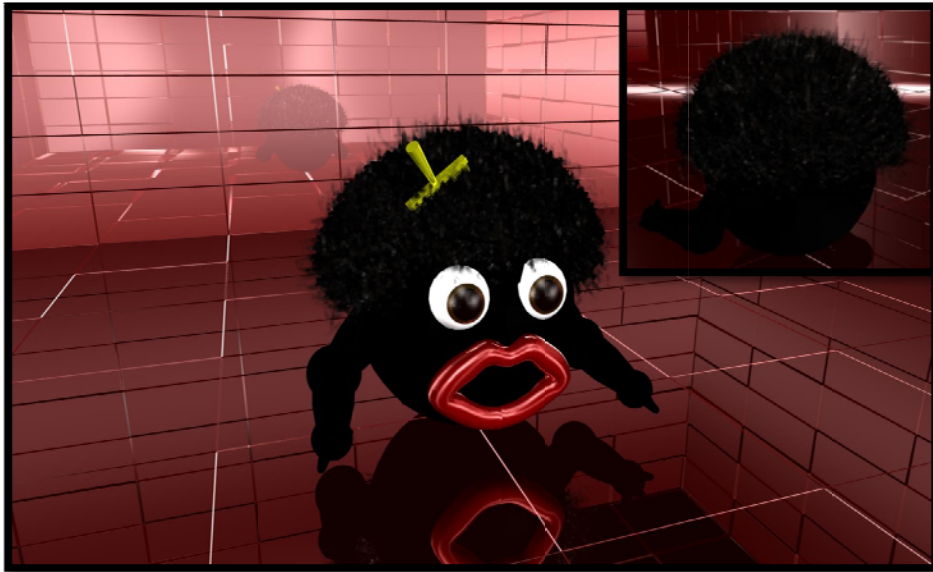
Each character was created according to the stereotyped symbols that represent the minority or the *hostile* group. Although *The PaKKKman* is a two dimensional game the characters were created in three dimensions in order to display with higher definition the stereotyped symbols of each character.

All models were rendered with the Maya Software option with Production quality, except the African-American and the Jew Pacman. These two models were rendered with Mental Ray in order to produce the reflections of the African-American Pacman hair and the Jewish Pacman beard on the walls, floor and ceiling.

Every model was animated with a 360° rotation on Y axis and rendered to Audio Video Interleave format (\*.avi). These movies give a full perspective of the models showing every symbol that was used. All models, except the African-American and the Jewish Pacman, were rendered directly to the movie format and later converted to a Video for Flash Player (\*.flv) using the Free Video to Flash Player Converter 4.1.2.2.

The African-American and the Jewish Pacman were rendered frame-by-frame to *Targa* files (\*.tga) and later combined in Magix Movie Edit Pro 10 in order to create a video. This video was exported in AVI and also converted using the Free Video Flash Player Converter.

### African-American Pacman



Picture 16 - African-American Pacman

The African-American Pacman combines symbols (black face and big red lips) from the *Blackface* caricature (Picture 17) with physical attributes of people with Black African roots.

The *Blackface* is a makeup style used by white performers of the minstrel shows in the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Comer, 2003). These shows consisted in comedy, dance and music acts about black people, stereotyping them as lazy, ignorant and festive. These performances spread a racist and stereotyped image of the black community in the United States and Britain.

The other symbols used in this Pacman were the Afro-hair and the “*Afro Pick*” or *Afro Comb* (Picture 18). For many people with Black African roots, the Afro is just the natural way their hair grows. The *Afro Comb* is based in an African grooming tool used to separate the hair curls. In the 60-70s the Afro happen to one of the images of the *Black Power* movements symbolizing black race pride and several famous artists wore the Afro style, such as Jimi Hendrix (Picture 19) for example (History).



Picture 17 - *Blackface*

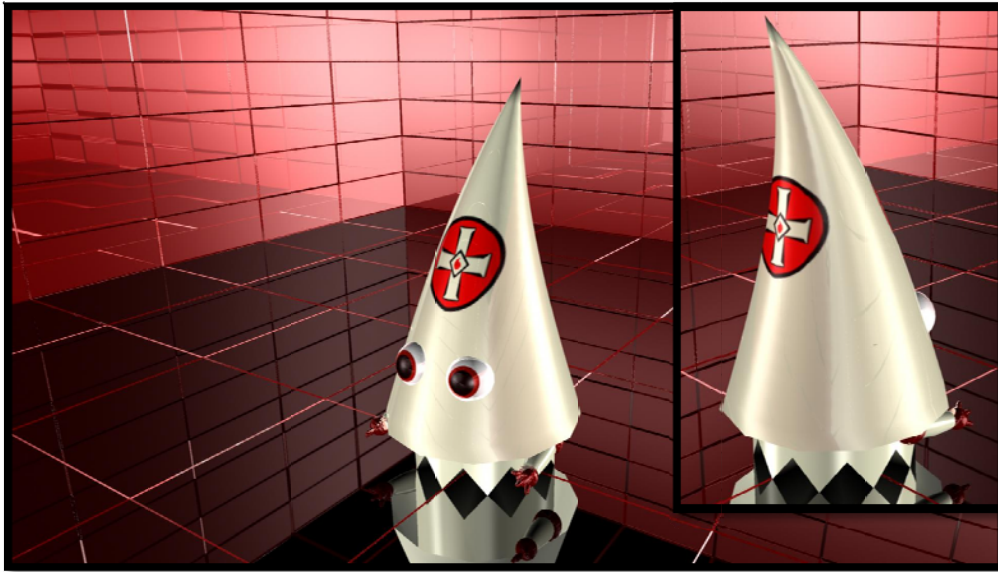


Picture 18 - *Afro Comb*



Picture 19 - Jimi Hendrix

### Ku Klux Klan Ghost



Picture 20 - Ku Klux Klan Ghost

The Ku Klux Klan ghost *wears* the main symbols of the Klan organization: the white pointy hood and the Celtic cross.

The white pointy hood used with a white robe (Picture 21) comes from ancient European rituals. This costume was used to hide the member's identity while doing good works, as a symbol of humbleness (The Official Website of the Knights Party, USA). It also represents the fraternal brotherhood among the rituals' elements.

The Celtic cross (Picture 22) comes from the Ireland and Scotland Celts but it is also used as a Christian symbol. The Klan was the first extremist group to use this cross as a symbol of white pride (Picture 23). Nowadays is generally associated with white extremism movements such as Neo-Nazis and White Supremacists groups.



Picture 21 - Ku Klux Klan elements

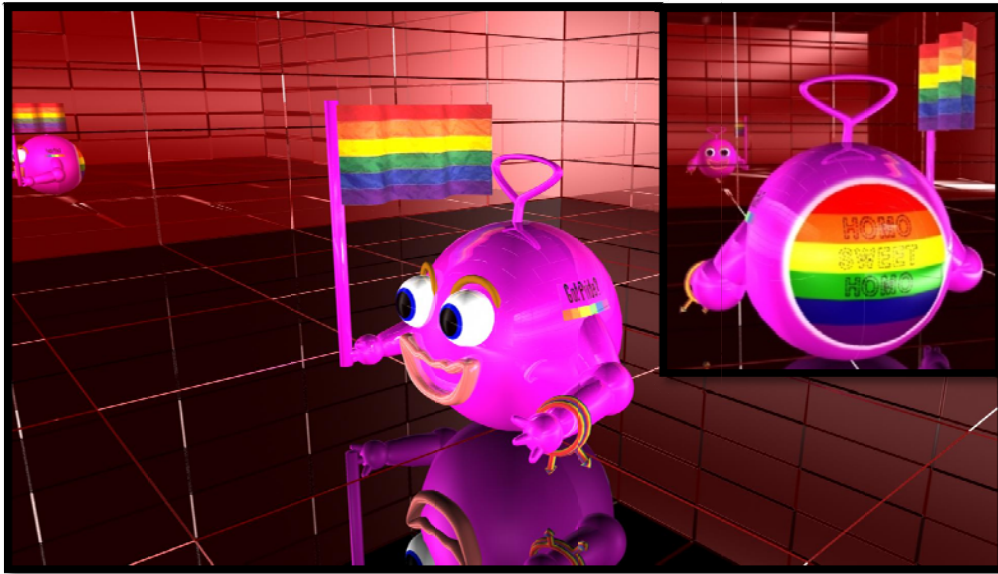


Picture 22 - Original Celtic Cross



Picture 23 - Ku Klux Klan cross

### Homosexual Pacman



Picture 24 - Homosexual Pacman

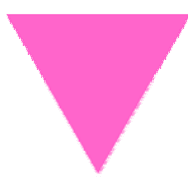
This Pacman uses several symbols to represent the Homosexual community. The Rainbow Flag (Picture 25) is the most recognizable symbol of the gay pride movement. It was created in 1978 to be used as the symbol of the San Francisco Gay and Lesbian Pride Parade. The eight colours are symbols of gay and lesbian life aspects (Riffenburg, 2004). The eight stripes of the flag are also represented in the back of the Pacman with a version of the popular sentence *Home Sweet Home* but with a gay discriminative/fun meaning: *Homo Sweet HOMO*.

On the top of the head, the Pacman wears a Pink Triangle (Picture 26) shape as a reference to the pink triangle used by the Nazis to mark Homosexual prisoners. The Nazis used triangles to clarify the hierarchy among the prisoners. Homosexuals were below the Jewish and the lowest rank was the Gay Jewish prisoner. The triangle was represented on the top of the head also to make reference to the polemic discussion about the homosexual lifestyle of the *Tinky Winky* (Picture 27), the purple character of the *Teletubbies* TV show (Easton, 2007).

On the left hand, the Pacman is wearing a hand bracelet with the shape of the male homosexuality symbol (Picture 28) also associated to homosexual marriage (Riffenburg, 2004).



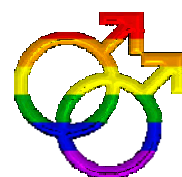
Picture 25 - Rainbow Flag



Picture 26 - Pink Triangle

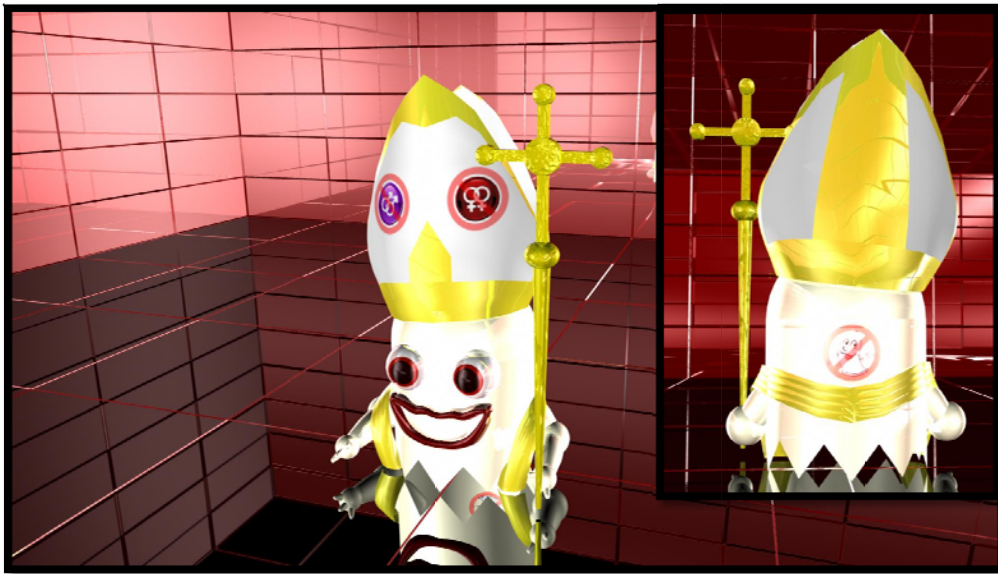


Picture 27 - Tinky Winky



Picture 28 - Male Homosexuality

### Catholic Priest Ghost



Picture 29 - Catholic Priest Ghost

This ghost represents the Catholic Church by impersonating the most important *symbol* of the Catholic Religion: The Pope (Picture 30).

The Pope (from the Greek *papas*, meaning “father”) is the term widely used to designate the Bishop of Rome. The Pope is the chief preacher of the entire Church and the main symbol of Catholicism (Knight, 2008).

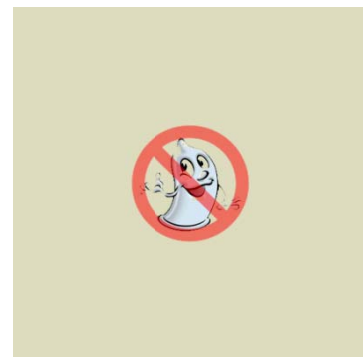
The Pacman also uses three symbols related with Catholic Church beliefs. The two symbols on the hat indicate the anti-gay (homosexual and lesbian) marriage conviction (Picture 31), and the symbol in the back is an image of a condom with a prohibited sign (Picture 32), indicating the Catholic Church position against the use of contraceptive methods.



Picture 30 - The Pope



Picture 31 - Anti-gay marriage



Picture 32 - Anti-contraceptive methods

### Jewish Pacman



Picture 33 - Jewish Pacman

The Jewish Pacman displays several stereotyped symbols usually used in anti-Semitic cartoons (Picture 34). The main symbol of the Jewish origin is the *Star of David* (Picture 35). This symbol is commonly used to represent Judaism and has a religious meaning (Simmons, 2002). The six points of the Star symbolize God's power to rule the World from every direction: North, South, East, West, Up and Down. The name of the star is a reference to King David and it was used by the Nazis to mark the Jewish prisoners.

The other symbols are more related with general stereotyped descriptions of the Jewish Population, and their representation in the cartoons. The Pacman has physical attributes like a big nose and a curly beard and is wearing a Kippah (small hat used during religious events).

The eyes with the dollar symbol and the hand full of money were used to represent the greedy and healthy nature of the Jewish population.

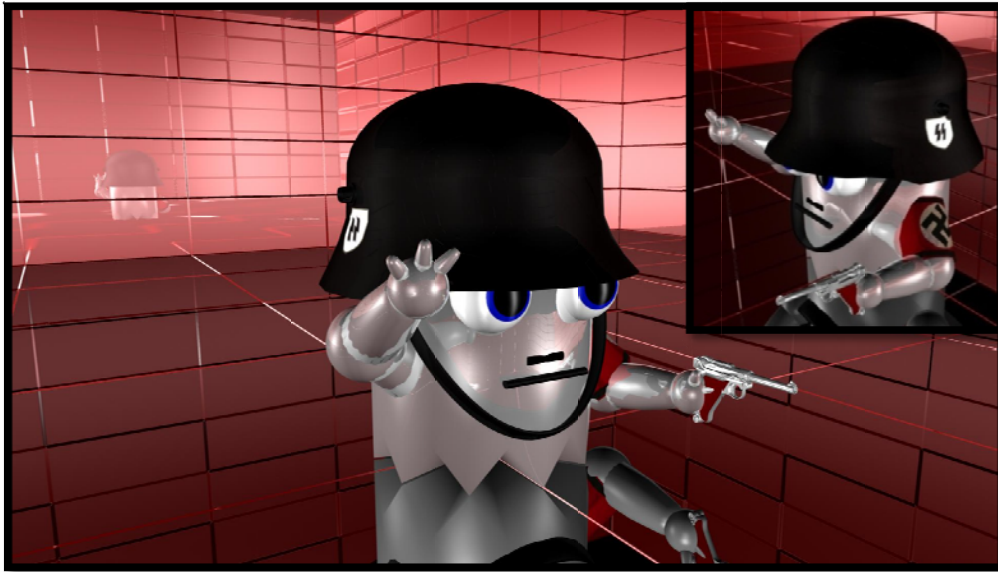


Picture 34 - Anti-Semitic cartoon



Picture 35 - Star of David

### Nazi SS Ghost



Picture 36 - Nazi SS Ghost

This ghost is using symbols that represent a soldier of the Nazi SS organization and the Nazi regime in general.

The SS (*Schutzstaffel*) organization was created by Hitler to become his personal bodyguard unit (Simkin, 1997). All members were volunteers and only the good *Aryan* types could belong to the SS. The ghost is wearing a similar helmet to the SS soldiers (Picture 37) and is carrying a *Luger*, the standard service pistol of the German army (Picture 38). The Pacman is performing the *Nazi Salute*, used as a sign of loyalty to the Fuhrer. On the left arm is using the main symbol of the Nazi regime, the *Swastika* (Picture 39). This symbol was chosen by Hitler to symbolize the Nazi party and nowadays is a racism symbol recognized worldwide (Rosenberg, 1997). The ghost also has physical attributes related to the *Aryan* race – the blue eyes – and with the actual Hitler – the famous moustache (Picture 40).



Picture 37 - Schutzstaffel



Picture 38 - Luger



Picture 39 - Swastika

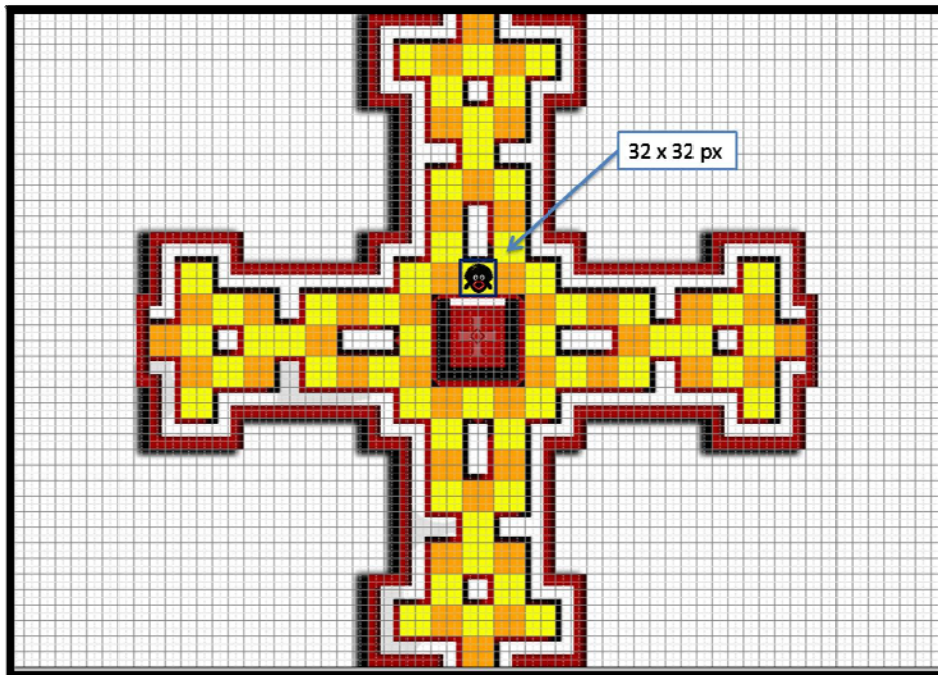


Picture 40 - Adolph Hitler

## 2D Artwork

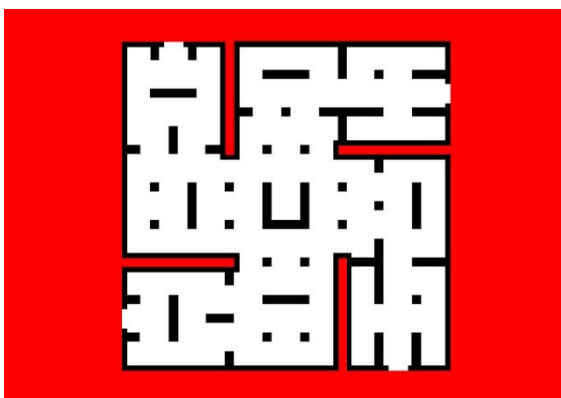
### Levels

The images that define the levels were created using the Adobe Photoshop CS2 and saved as Bitmap files (\*.bmp) in order to import them to Adobe Flash CS4. Each image was carefully *built* using a grid in order to be sure that the path size was enough for the character to move inside without seeming like it was moving inside the walls.

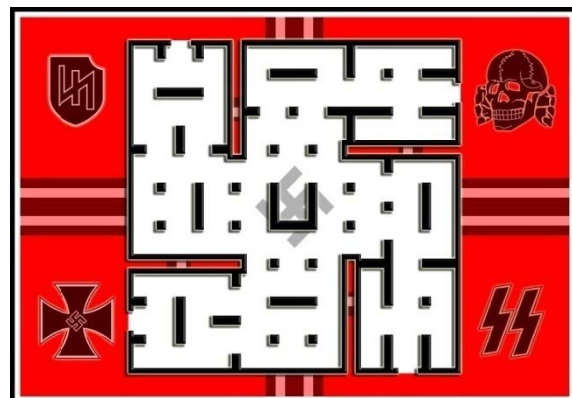


Picture 41 - Level image with grid

After creating the basic image with the walls and the path, several *blending effects* were added giving the maze an impression of depth. The several symbols were added to the *ghosts' house* and the background was designed with symbols related to the respective groups.



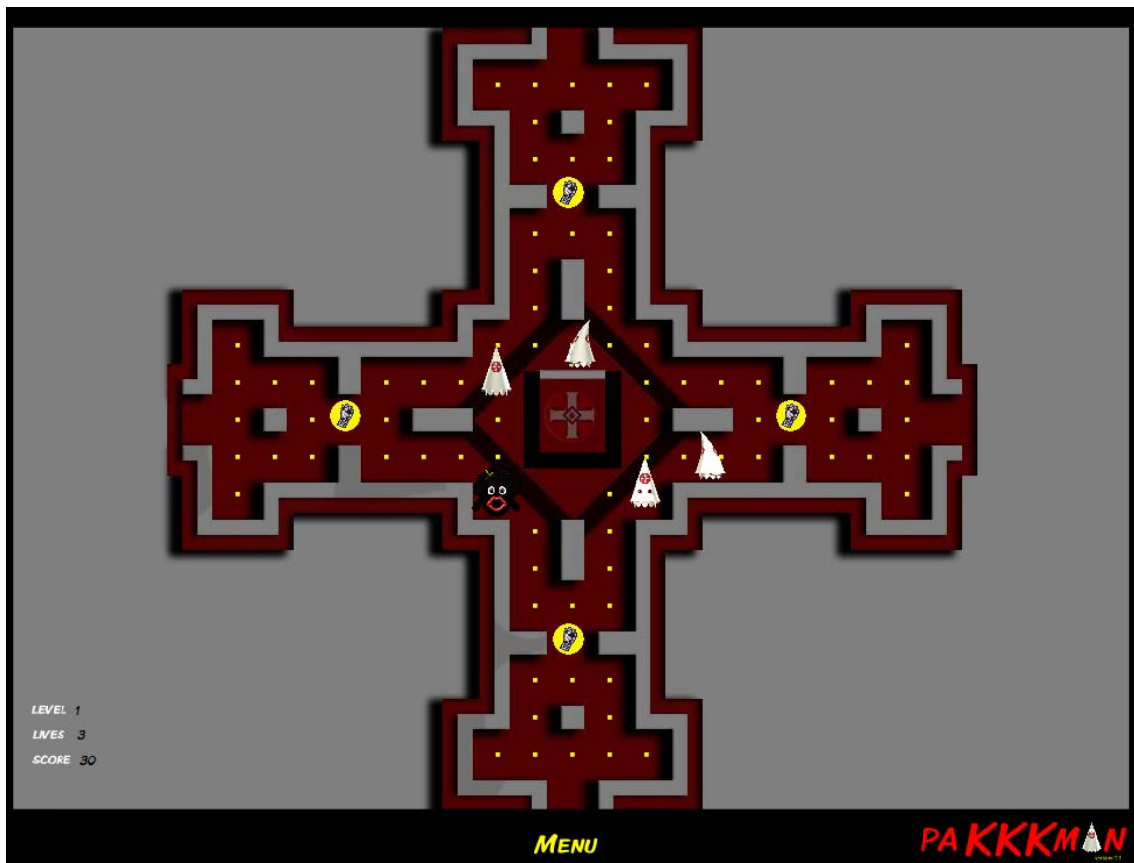
Picture 42 - Basic image



Picture 43 - Image with symbols and effects

The three levels of the game were built according to the groups involved in each level. The images were created using the Adobe Photoshop CS2. Every maze has the shape of the main symbol of the hostile faction and the *Pills* (the ones that allow the Pacman to *kill* the ghosts) display symbols of the discriminated group.

- Afro-American Pacman vs. Ku Klux Klan Ghosts



Picture 44 - African-American vs. Ku Klux Klan Level

The shape of the maze is similar to the Celtic cross (Picture 45) and the *ghost's house* has the cross symbol inside, representing the KKK faction headquarters.

The *Pills* display the symbol of the *Black Power* movement (Picture 46). This symbol was used in the *Pills* to symbolize the ideology of the black minority and the movements that tried to fight the oppression against the racial discrimination.



Picture 45 - Celtic Cross



Picture 46 - Black Power Pill

- Homosexual Pacman vs. Catholic Church Ghosts



Picture 47 – Homosexuality vs. Catholicism Level

In this level the maze is similar to the Catholic cross (Picture 48). The cross is one of the principal symbols of the Catholic religion (reference to the cross where Christ died) and can be seen in almost everything related to Catholicism from the priests' outfits to the candles in the church (similarly to the background of the level).

In this level, the pills have the symbol of the *lambda* (Picture 49), the symbol of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender movements (GLBT). This symbol was adopted by the Gay Activists Alliance of New York in 1970.



Picture 48 - Catholic cross



Picture 49 - GLBT pill

- Jew Pacman vs. Ghosts from the SS Nazi Army



Picture 50 – European Jewry vs. Nazism

The maze has the shape of a Swastika (rotated  $-45^\circ$ ) and underneath the central house there is an image of the real symbol. The background is similar to the Nazi flag (Picture 50) and around the maze there are several symbols of the Nazi SS. Hitler explains in *Mein Kampf* the reasons beneath the Nazi flag:

*"In red we see the social idea of the movement, in white the nationalistic idea, in the swastika the mission of the struggle for the victory of the Aryan man, and, by the same token, the victory of the idea of creative work, which as such always has been and always will be anti-Semitic."*

The pills display the *Star of David* (Picture 51) generally recognized as the symbol of the Jewish community and Judaism, as already stated before.



Picture 51 – Nazi Flag



Picture 52 - Star of David pill

### Characters

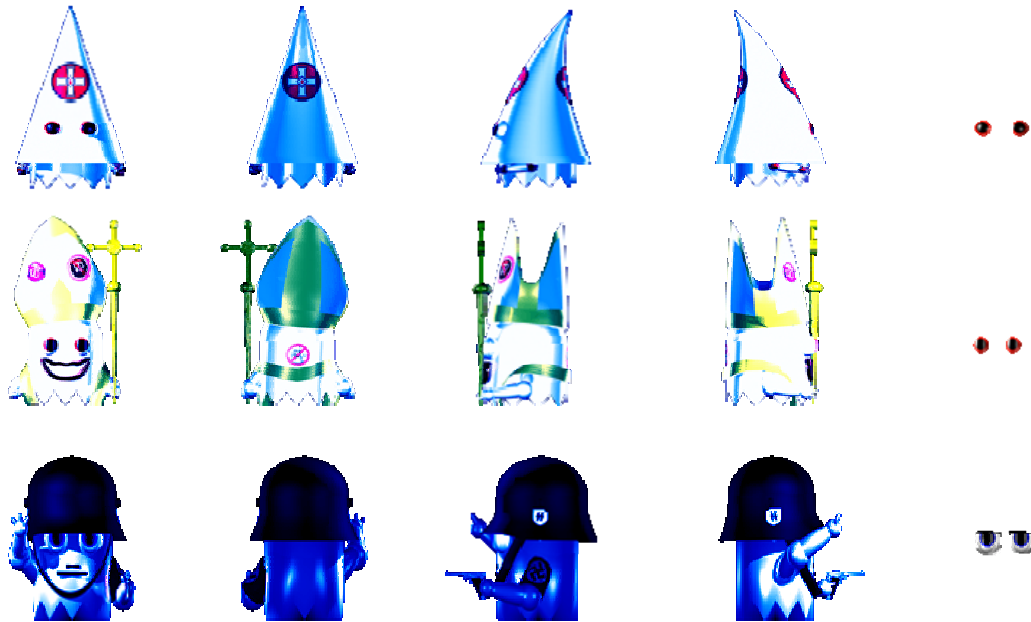
All models were rendered in Autodesk Maya 2008 from four different views: front, back, left and right. The render images were saved as *Truevision Targa* files (\*.tga) with Alpha Channel and opened in Adobe Photoshop CS2.

The images were combined in one single file (to make sure they were aligned with each other) and scaled to 128 x 128 pixels. Using the Alpha Channel it was possible to easily erase the background of the images. After editing, each different face (front, back, left and right) were saved as CompuServe GIF files (\*.GIF) in order to create the different faces of the character when moving in the Flash game.



Picture 53 - Character's orientation

Because the ghosts have the ability to change their appearance when they are vulnerable to the Pacman it was necessary to create five different images to display the defenceless status: a blue version of the front, back, left and right images and an image to demonstrate that the Ghost was killed (only eyes).



Picture 54 - Ghost's vulnerable state



## Flash Project

The final game was created with the Adobe Flash CS4. It was included a brief introduction alerting the players about the game content and also a disclaimer about the coincidence of possible similarities with real persons, assuring that all characters are fictional.

After the introduction it appears the Main Menu and the name of the game (Picture 54). The name *PaKKKman* was created combining the name of the classic game – Pacman – and the short name of the Ku Klux Klan – KKK. Although the game is not exclusively about the Klan, the KKK reference is used as a symbol of the game theme.

The selection Menu allows the player to choose among the three possible characters: African-American, Homosexual or Jewish Pacman. After choosing the character, it appears a *Debriefing* screen. In this screens the player is informed about the main quotes about confronts between the two groups.

In the *Debriefing screen* and in the selection Menu are displayed the 360º rotation of the 3D models. In these screens the player can observe with better detail the several symbols and characterizations of each model.

The background music of the game is from *Prodigy* and it is called *Their Law*. This music was chosen for two reasons. Not only, the rhythm of the music instigates the players to a more aggressive and violent attitude, but also because of the song lyrics:

*“What we're dealing with here is a total lack of respect for the law  
I'm the law and you can't beat the law  
I'm the law and you can't beat the law  
I'm the law and you can't beat the law  
F\*\*\* 'em and their law  
Crack down at sundown  
F\*\*\* 'em and their law”*

The first sentence of the lyric reflects the game theme and the idea that *The PaKKKman* tries to transmit to the players: the lack of respect for the law and the human rights. The song chorus reflects the idea beneath the racist and xenophobic actions. When considering other groups as inferior and a target of violent or discriminative actions, the *hostile* groups are punishing the ones that are different, motivated and guided by *Their Law*.



## Conclusion

The *PaKKKman* is actually one of the most stereotyping games ever made. Everything in the game was thought to be racist/discriminative: Game Title; Characters; Mazes; Pills; Level Backgrounds; Music; Debriefing scenes. But should the *PaKKKman* be in the same list as games as *Grand Theft Auto* (series) or *Ethnic Cleansing*? Despite the content, intentionally used and meant to be humorous, the *PaKKKman* is just a simple 2D Pacman game with simple gameplay and objectives.

When classifying a game regarding its content, it is important to be aware of topics, such as Game Genre, Realism, Context and Storyline. The *PaKKKman* demonstrates exactly the two sides of the question about game content criticism. Using stereotyped content in games might give a racist image of the developers, but not every game with stereotyped content should be considered as racist because it is necessary an in depth analysis of the game structure before accusing a game of being racist.



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