



Candidates must complete this page and then give this cover and their final version of the extended essay to their supervisor.

Candidate session number			
Candidate name			
School number			
School name			
Examination session (May or November)	MAY	Year	2014

Diploma Programme subject in which this extended essay is registered: ENGLISH B
(For an extended essay in the area of languages, state the language and whether it is group 1 or group 2.)

Title of the extended essay: THE SOCIAL IMPACTS OF VIDEO GAMES AND SOCIETIES

very broad title



Category indicated though should be 2a or 2b though this essay includes elements of cat 3 since the books are the source/artifacts. It is appropriate to mix categories if the RQ calls for it.

cat 2

Candidate's declaration

This declaration must be signed by the candidate; otherwise a grade may not be issued.

The extended essay I am submitting is my own work (apart from guidance allowed by the International Baccalaureate).

I have acknowledged each use of the words, graphics or ideas of another person, whether written, oral or visual.

I am aware that the word limit for all extended essays is 4000 words and that examiners are not required to read beyond this limit.

This is the final version of my extended essay.

Candidate's signature:

Supervisor's report and declaration

The supervisor must complete this report, sign the declaration and then give the final version of the extended essay, with this cover attached, to the Diploma Programme coordinator.

Name of supervisor (CAPITAL letters)

Please comment, as appropriate, on the candidate's performance, the context in which the candidate undertook the research for the extended essay, any difficulties encountered and how these were overcome (see page 13 of the extended essay guide). The concluding interview (viva voce) may provide useful information. These comments can help the examiner award a level for criterion K (holistic judgment). Do not comment on any adverse personal circumstances that may have affected the candidate. If the amount of time spent with the candidate was zero, you must explain this, in particular how it was then possible to authenticate the essay as the candidate's own work. You may attach an additional sheet if there is insufficient space here.

managed to find a suitable topic easily and also succeeded in focusing on his chosen aspect. Thus finding a viable research question wasn't a problem for him either. He researched his topic independently and properly. During his appointments with me he appeared very well-informed and was always open to critical questions. He also kept all the given internal deadlines and handed in his Extended Essay before the given time. ✓

Appropriate engagement in the process noted by the supervisor

This declaration must be signed by the supervisor; otherwise a grade may not be issued.

I have read the final version of the extended essay that will be submitted to the examiner.

To the best of my knowledge, the extended essay is the authentic work of the candidate.

I spent hours with the candidate discussing the progress of the extended essay.

Appropriate support

Supervisor's signature:



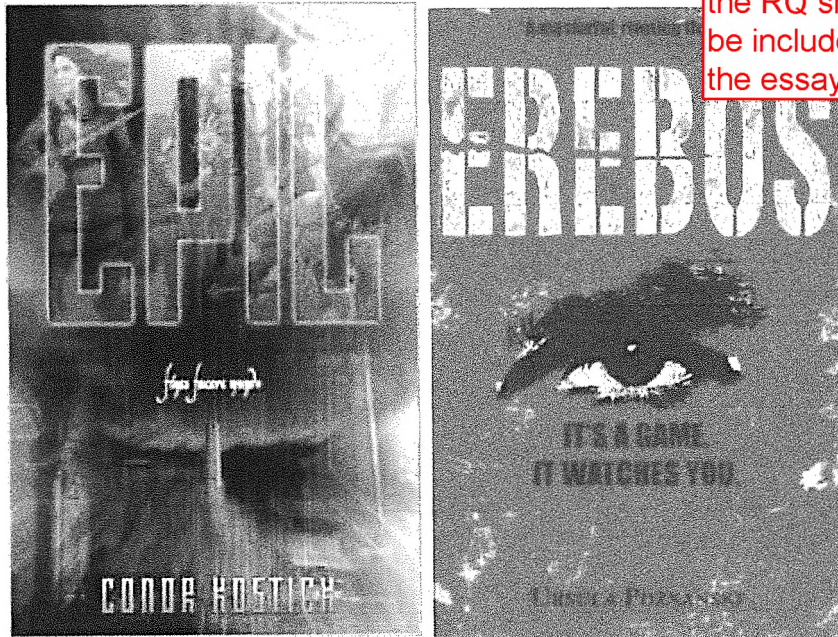
Student advisory exemplar – English B exemplar C

Criteria	Maximum mark	Descriptor level achieved	Comments
A Research question	2	2	The RQ is clear in the Abstract and Introduction.
B Introduction	2	2	The context is given and a connection to the real world shows its significance.
C Investigation	4	3	Appropriate primary and secondary sources are well used and noted.
D Knowledge and understanding	4	4	Very good understanding shown about the works and about the issue generally.
E Reasoned argument	4	4	The argument is clearly set out and logical. It is well supported.
F Analysis and evaluation	4	3	The analysis is generally sound and mostly well integrated.
G Use of subject language	4	3	The language communicates clearly despite some lapses.
H Conclusion	2	2	The conclusion is consistent with what has been presented and brings closure to the argument.
I Formal Presentation	4	3	The essay is well structured and the formal elements are consistent. Reference format, though consistent, is not always complete.
J Abstract	2	2	All three required elements are present.
K Holistic judgment	4	3	Overall, despite some weaknesses, the essay is effective and fairly persuasive.
Total		31/36	
Summative comment			This is not a perfect paper, but overall it is effective for this subject. Though it generally takes up the issue of gaming's influence on society, it is more about literature. The language, though comprehensible, does have errors but rarely do they cloud meaning. The reference form is not always complete, but it is consistent and the general layout of the essay ideas is logical and easy to follow. The strength of the essay lies in the sophisticated ideas tied conceptually to weave a plausible and interesting argument that is well supported with text and good use of secondary sources; thus a low A is a fair mark.

Extended Essay

The social impacts of video games on societies

This is a title- not an RQ, which does come later- it is fine to have a title but the RQ should then be included early in the essay.



These images should have a reference.

Candidate Number:

Exam Session: May 2014

Total Word Count: 3994

English B I

appropriate word count noted- close to maximum, which allows for development of an argument.

Abstract

Abstract comes after title page and labeled- it is not actually part of the essay but must be under 300 words- Here, the RQ, the method and/or approach and the conclusion are all included and are clear.

This essay examines the question "What are the future impacts of computer games on society as depicted in the science-fiction novels *Epic* by Conor Kostick and *Erebos* by Ursula Poznanski?"

It begins by introducing examples for extreme impacts of computer games on individuals: amok runnings and game conventions.

A short overview of the novels is given. Their similarities and differences are named. Moreover, it is emphasized that the science-fiction novels are used as a means of future prediction. Literature here is discussed as a thought experiment of what can happen. Significant actions of the characters and the overall development of the plot are interpreted aiming at an analysis of the message of the authors.

In the main part of the essay, gaming addiction and its impacts on the characters and their environment are analyzed.

Furthermore, the moral deformation of selected characters is outlined. Therefore, the changes in interaction between the characters are shown.

In the next part of the essay, the confusion between game and reality is described. The essay thus adverts to the biological necessity for the human species to think through scenarios, as it is demanded in the games. Problems connected to a confusion of reality and game are pointed out.

The kind of amok running and the influences of the games on reality are briefly explained.

By the end of the essay, the conclusion is reached that the social structures in the books are essentially influenced by the computer games. The games were or became a decisive part of the whole of the societies. The authors warn of the devastating consequences of compulsive gaming and a supervaluing of the game's achievements.

The RQ, is different from title but is clear and precise in naming the novels considered (include year of publication in parenthesis for each novel)

The method and scope is laid out in these middle paragraphs

The conclusion is clearly set out.

Word count: 274

Under 300 -The word count is labeled

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Good detail- this TOC looks like a general outline, which shows good planning. Simply labeling introduction, body, conclusion is not acceptable and may affect criterion C

Section beginning page numbers only for each section- this is correct.

1. Introduction

Section heading placed to the left appropriately and bolded.

This candidate has chosen footnote style-this should be consistent throughout the essay. Other styles for humanities subjects like MLA, are also appropriate.

On a Tuesday, the 20th April 1999 in Jefferson county, Colorado, USA, two teenagers entered the Littleton High-School. They wore black coats and carried duffle bags¹. At 11:19am, witnesses heard the first shots initiating the largest school-shooting in American history². It claimed the life of 15 people and hurt another 24. The perpetrators, Dylan Klebold (17 years) and Eric Harris (18 years) killed themselves after the police had entered the school grounds³. Later several video tapes and journals of the killers were found as well as the first-person shooter game *Doom*. On one tape Harris stated that he 'would like to put everyone into a super *Doom* game and see how the weak died and the strong survived'⁴.

On the 11th March 2009 at 9:30 am, 17-year-old Tim Kretschmer entered the Albertville-Realschule in Winnenden, Germany armed with a 9mm Beretta semi-automatic⁵ and several hundred rounds of ammunition. He then fired his weapon several times killing nine students and three teachers and fled when the police arrived. On his escape he killed three adults, carjacked a man and finally killed himself after a shootout with the police⁶. It was later revealed that he passionately played the computer game *Counter Strike*. When asked why he did this, he answered: 'For fun, because it's fun.'⁷

In 2011 around 21 000 people attended the Dreamhack Winter game convention in Jönköping⁸, Sweden. Over four days the people, averagely aged between 16 and 17⁹, gathered and competed in several fantasy and shooter games. Via a life stream, over one million people from all over the world watched the event¹⁰. The yearly DHW is the largest LAN-party in the world. Approximately 650 500 virtual killings took place.

Rampages and school-shootings have increased in recent years.^{11,12} The perpetrators are averagely 15.6 years old and male¹³.

This intro is attention getting and shows the topic significance- It is an interesting connection to the "impact" part of the RQ-

- 1 http://edition.cnn.com/SPECIALS/2000/columbine.cd/Pages/EQUIPMENT_TEXT.htm.
- 2 <http://thinkprogress.org/justice/2012/12/14/1337221/a-timeline-of-mass-shootings-in-the-us-since-columbine/>.
- 3 http://topics.nytimes.com/top/reference/timestopics/organizations/c/columbine_high_school/index.html.
- 4 <http://acolumbinesite.com/enr/writing/journal.html>.
- 5 <http://www.spiegel.de/panorama/justiz/amoklauf-in-winnenden-protokoll-eines-massenmords-a-612732.html>.
- 6 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7936817.stm>.
- 7 <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/panorama/nach-amoklauf-vater-von-tim-k-will-waffen-nicht-mehr-anruehren-1.396967>.
- 8 <http://www.dreamhack.se/dhw11/2011/11/30/dhw11-slar-alla-rekord/>.
- 9 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DreamHack#cite_note-new_record-3.
- 10 <http://www.dreamhack.se/dhw11/2011/12/06/dreamhack-and-twitch-tv-announce-record-breaking-online-viewership/>.
- 11 <http://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/1871/umfrage/opferzahl-bei-amoklaeuferen-in-westlichen-demokratien-seit-1966/>.
- 12 <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A077>
- 13 <http://www.psychologytoday.com/bl>

Like the bibliography, these references are not complete- author and titles and any publishing info is needed if available. Sites do not always give all this, but get as much information as possible. URL's change often so including just the URL is not preferred. The source can be found more easily by author, title and source type. This is a common mistake- consult your supervisor or librarian. This candidate is at least consistent in the presentation, which is really most important, but it does affect criterion I nonetheless.

After many shootings, ego-shooter games were found in the culprits' homes and many experts claim that the shootings increase due to virtual accustoming and training of killing provided by computer games.

But do the games really *train* to kill? Are they deforming the feeling for life by killing virtual beings?

After every school-shooting there is a new outcry for the restriction of violent computer games.¹⁴ On the other hand there is the billion-dollar industry of game companies arguing that there is no proof of a connection between school-shootings and gaming.^{15,16}

It is indeed impossible to conclusively prove that the computer games trigger the killings or, on the opposite, function as a valve for aggressions. The question arises if the society is turning game-induced increasingly violent.

The context of the essay is laid out in these several paragraphs letting the reader know something about the approach.

This essay is trying to find an answer to these questions by analyzing two literary works.

I chose two novels predicting the influences of computer games on the society. These books allow us to draw inferences from their plots depicting the extreme consequences of computer games on our society.

More precisely, they work as a thought experiment, a future laboratory of the authors trying to figure out what might happen. This will be more in depth elaborated on later, but for now important is the fact that predicting the future is an abstract proposition which calls for unusual procedures.

My research question is therefore:

"What are the future impacts of computer games on society as depicted in the science-fiction novels "*Epic*" by Conor Kostick¹⁷ and "*Erebos*" by Ursula Poznanski¹⁸?"

To answer this question, this essay will examine the changes in the protagonists and their environment and the characteristics of the societies and the people living in the respective structures.

The RQ is explicitly stated in the introduction. Full marks are given for context, and how the RQ is worthy of investigation.

14 <http://stigma-videospiele.de/wordpress/page/112/?p=cacwypeqxkk>

15 <http://stigma-videospiele.de/wordpress/page/112/?p=cacwypeqxkk>

16 <http://www.bulletrun-hq.com/wbb/index.php?page=Thread&postID=7068>

17 Kostick, Conor. 2004, *Epic*. O'Brien Press. Dublin.

all following citations of this novel will be marked with: Kostick, Epic.

18 Poznanski, Ursula. 2011, *Erebos*. Annick Press, Vancouver.

all following citations of this named novel will be marked with: Poznanski, Erebos.

2.1 A closer look at the novels – Summary *Epic* and *Erebos*

The novel *Epic*, by the British historian and author Conor Kostick, was published in 2004 and is the first part of the "Avatar Chronicles". It tells the story of 14-year-old Eric Haroldson living on the planet New Earth and describes his involvement in the computer game Epic and his fight against the regime of "Central Allocations"¹⁹.

On New Earth Epic is more than a game. It determines the social rank, career prospects and wealth in the real world and additionally functions as the legal system. When Eric and his friends manage to kill a virtual dragon and thus become vastly wealthy, things change. They start to think about the injustice system they are living in and decide to fight it. Finally destroying Epic, they open up the possibility for a brighter future.

The novel *Erebos*, by the Austrian author Ursula Poznanski, was published in 2011 and tells the story of 16-year-old Nick Dunmore, his involvement in the fantasy game Erebos and finally his fight against the game and his adherents.

After secretly receiving the computer game Erebos, Nick starts to spend increasingly more time playing it. The extremely sophisticated game talks to him and arranges duties that Nick has to carry out in the real world to succeed in the game. When Erebos commands Nick to kill his English teacher and Nick fails to do so, he is kicked out of the game.

As he realizes how ruthless Erebos is, he starts to investigate about it, finally finding out that its final aim is to kill the powerful CEO of a computer company. Nick and his crush Emily then manage to stop the game's adherents from their deadly mission in the last second.

Since these works may not be well-known, the brief plot summaries are appropriate and helpful. "Brief" is important in such cases.

2.2 A closer look at the novels – Differences between the novels

At first sight the novels appear quite different.

Both stories take place at different times and even on different planets. *Erebos* takes place in the 21st century in London, a metropolis like many others.

New Earth, where *Epic* is set, is the new home of the human species whose former planet was destroyed in warfare. Due to this fact, any violent act is extremely prohibited on New Earth.

Secondly, the majority of New Earth's inhabitants are farmers and miners working with a mixture of advanced (high-performance computers) and simple (donkey carts) technologies.

Finally, Erebos builds up something that could be considered a micro-society and is established in the already existing one.

The heading is a sign that there will be a contrast. The examiner will expect appropriate compare/ contrast language.

¹⁹ A powerful group of nine individuals controlling all of the world's resources and funds the most powerful characters in the game world.

This society follows the rules and commands of the game and its virtual leader, the so-called 'messenger'²⁰. Compared to that, the computer game *Epic* completely determines the society on New Earth as explained in the introduction.

This section could be better developed- it is a bit too short as is. The importance of these differences should be noted.

2.3 A closer look at the novels – Similarities between the novels

In their essence the two novels are quite alike. First of all, both novels tell the story of a male teenager hero who rebels against a definite villain in game and reality and finally manages, at high risks, to defeat this enemy.

The hero destroys the games and thus ends the reign of terror.

Secondly, both protagonists, Nick and Eric face the challenge of their life which causes them to bring forth moral resources: In *Epic*, Eric's father is sent to exile for protecting his wife by beating someone. In *Erebos*, Nick's best friend Jamie has a life-endangering accident caused by a sabotage of an *Erebos*-adherent acting on command of the messenger.

Both protagonists show moral strength in extreme situations which suggests that the authors consider humans to be admirable beings making the right decisions when it comes down to them.

Thirdly outstanding is the fact that no ethical system is mentioned in either of the books. The games substitute religion or any other comparable moral convention. This challenges the protagonists moral strength even more as they have to make their decisions on their own and without a normative value judgement endorsing or warranting their attempts of revolting.

Finally, science-fiction novels are the only literary genre depicting future scenarios. This qualifies the chosen literary works as suitable for my research.

A good point showing some level of evaluation.

All in all, the two novels deal with the same topic but take different approaches. While *Erebos* takes place in the presence or near future, *Epic* is completely set in the far future. This combination shall ensure a diversity in the object of study and thus contribute to my research question.

20 A grim-reaper-like character representing the game and distributing the quests and punishments.

3.1 The influences of the computer games on society – Gaming addiction in real life

Gaming addiction is defined as an excessive and compulsive use of computer games that interferes with an individual's real life. The individual spends increasingly more time with the game ignoring other duties.

There probably should be a source for this definition- but it is important to define terms in the early part of the paper for the reader.

From an average person playing occasionally to a complete game addict lead several states of consciousness.

First of all, the game means fun and relaxation for an individual. Discovering a new, colorful and furious world can be very exciting.

When spending more and more time playing, the computer game replaces activities in real world. The negligence of social contacts and personal needs (hygiene, food, sleep) increases.

Decreasing social interactions make it hard for the gamer to keep in touch with friends and family, which again contributes to a further social decrease²¹. This vicious circle results in an inability to communicate outside of the game and a complete social isolation.

Additionally, mood swings and a diminished imagination occur besides the loss of social contacts and the stress for the body (sleeplessness etc.).

source even though there are no quotes. (paraphrase)

Finally, the gamer is forced more and more into the world of the game, which now replaces essential parts of life.

Motivational psychologist Richard Ryan calls this "a satisfaction of psychological needs" which is not found in the real world anymore: appreciation, excitement, pride, friendships and love can now only be gained and felt in the game²².

good source: this is an interesting point/ Supports the RQ.

A hyper-focus on in-game achievements, that result in the named rewards, is created.

Something that was once a small part of daily life, a fun thing, has become life itself.

The individual is increasingly virtualized as it can now only find satisfaction in virtual accomplishments, in an arbitrary world. It feels nervous and inattentive in the real world, which appears now repugnant.

A little dramatic but the point is well made despite poor paragraphing.

The in the books described development can be observed in *Erebos* and parts of *Epic*.

When Nick first explores *Erebos*, he is impressed by the interactivity and tension of the graphically appealing game. Immediately other things take a backseat, which becomes obvious when his mother talks to him during a virtual fight:

[Mother:] "Have you eaten already?"

[Nick:] "Can't you just leave me in peace for just one minute, for god's sake?"²³

21 <http://www.psychology.iastate.edu/faculty/dgentile/SRCD%20Video%20Game%20Addiction.pdf>.

22 http://ndri.com/article/cause_and_impact_of_video_games_addiction_-211.html.

23 Poznanski, *Erebos*, pp. 62, ll. 17-19.

This sudden outburst of anger is just the beginning. Nick starts to stay up longer at night to play the game and constantly thinks of the next achievement in the game.

Whoever disregards the rules and orders of Erebus is kicked out of the game. The idea of being kicked out of the game appears frighteningly 'humiliating' to Nick.

Erebus has already taken an acquired value in the small society of Nick's school.

When Nick spends increasingly more time in the world of Erebus, the world outside of the game becomes less interesting and important.

The addiction becomes obvious for the first time, when Nick is struggling to eat something.

*Couldn't tear himself away. Something told him that, any minute, something was going to happen.*²⁴

there are consistent attempts to use the text to support the argument. This is crucial for developing and supporting the argument.

Nick is increasingly exhausted and his mood swings, gratuitous outbursts of anger, accumulate.

Jerome barged into him on the way past, and Nick nearly dropped his bag.

'Get lost!' Nick bellowed after him. He wanted to run after him, grab him by the collar and punch his lights out [...]

*Nick turned away and went into the school building. Where did this rage come from? Must have been the half-sleepless night he'd just gone through.*²⁵

It is outstanding that Nick seeks the cause for his uncharacteristic actions everywhere but in the game. His classmates as well show traces of the game as many of them are missing and the majority appears to be dead-tired.

Furthermore, the virtualization of Nick's daily life is evolving steadily.

[While gaming] He's promptly interrupted. As usual, it's the outside world that gets in the way.

His cell.

Jamie.

*Sarius ignores it. He has stuff to do.*²⁶

This is the first time when Nick's virtual avatar Sarius becomes part of the real world. Two realities are overlapping and Nick has problems to distinguish between them.

Then the situation escalates when Nick is ordered to put a cardiac medication to the tea of his English teacher Mister Watson.

Nick is weighing the life of his avatar for the life of his English teacher.

24 Poznanski, Erebus, pp. 164, ll. 16-18.

25 Ibid., pp. 181, ll. 1-10.

26 Ibid, pp. 198, ll. 1-5.

Reality and game are now completely twisted and a life without Sarius is unimaginable for Nick. He is frantically searching for a solution 'that would allow both Watson and Sarius to stay alive'²⁷. Nevertheless, he is tempted to carry out the order:

I could do it, Nick thought. Now. Quickly.

No. He wasn't crazy! What the hell was he doing here at all? [...]

He disposed the pill bottle after class in a garbage can at the tube station and suddenly felt surprisingly lighthearted.²⁸

Although Nick is relieved first, the messenger finds out about his 'betrayal' and kicks him out of the game. Nick's first reaction is showing the all-embracing power the game has over him:

He kept back the rising tears.

Sarius was a part of him; no one was allowed to simply take a piece of his own self away from him.[...] He'd screwed it up. He'd sacrificed Sarius for his stupid English teacher – for someone who just had to go snooping around in other people's business. Would have served him right, getting a bit of a wake-up call. But Nick had been too much of a coward.²⁹

In the time immediately after his exclusion from the game, Nick tries everything to get back in. Like a drug addict, he almost goes crazy when he sees no possibility to play again.

But after sometime has passed, he recovers and starts to live again without the game. It is the turning point in the novel and the time when Nick starts to recall his activities he carried out in service of the game. He takes action against Erebos and its adherents.

Compared to *Erebos*, the Computer game addiction in *Epic* is rather distinct but socially accepted. Since *Epic* has such a high value in the society, spending one's whole free time in the world of the game is often inevitable. The achievements in the game have a direct impact on real life. It becomes visible when Eric's friend finds an object in the game and states that "*This alone could mean a tractor for the district.*"³⁰

Epic could be analyzed further for better balance in the argument-

What distinguishes the effects on the people and thus on the whole society is the manner of virtualization that occurs. Meaning that *Epic* is already a major part determining the life of its participants. As a normal part of the everyday life, *Epic* shows an addiction forced by social conventions. It is a drug everyone *has* to take.

27 Poznanski, *Erebos*, pp. 261, l. 28.

28 *Ibid*, pp. 265, ll. 9-22.

29 *Ibid*, pp. 270, ll. 24-31.

30 Kostick, *Epic*, pp. 129, l. 14.

There is a good balance between the story and the effects on society- the argument is logical and well supported. This essay really could be a category 3 alone, rather than seeing the novels as artefacts reflecting society

3.2 Moral deformation of the characters

The characters in the novels suffer increasingly from moral deformation. It is a clear warning by the author how computer games are able to change the individuals. good lead sentence

All the changes in the characters' moral behavior are a result of their ascending virtualization. The more virtualized a character is, the more he loses his connection to the reality and thus his moral strength. Very interesting concept- very clear and focused

Nick's moral decay can already be seen in the incidents mentioned: He is increasingly aggressive. Secondly, he lies to his parents to satisfy his addiction.

Thirdly, he lies to himself to silence his conscience. Finally, he regrets that he has not killed Mr. Watson. He has reached the peak of moral dissolution and partly lost his ability of normative value judgement as his virtual character seems worth the risk of going to jail for murder.

Other "enemies"³¹ of the game are beaten up or tried to murder: After he started acting against the game, Nick is once pushed in front of a train and can be saved at the last second. His best friend Jamie has an induced bicycle accident which nearly costs his life on the other hand.

Others receive threatening letters or phone calls.

The climax is the attempted murder of the computer company CEO Andrew Ortolan, which is the games greatest "enemy". Erebos' most powerful players and most faithful adherents take Ortolan hostage and almost shoot him in order for in-game awards. a bit of plot summary but all related to moral decline, which is the focus.

However, the author emphasizes that the moral decay caused by the games is not compulsorily permanent. Nevertheless, it is warning of how fast the changes in behavior occur as it takes just an hour of gaming and Nick shows his first signs of aggression.

Compared to *Erebos*, the changes in behavior in *Epic* occur when Eric and his friends manage to defeat a dragon and thus acquire a vast capital.

Suddenly finding themselves as admired dragon slayers, some of them lose their grip on reality. Their reasoning changes as well.

Big Eric (B.E), a friend of Eric reflects upon his change:

*"All the fame and wealth – it was not good for me. I was changing. And I didn't like what I was becoming. [...] I was destined to be a celebrity in Mikelgard³² and Hope³³ suddenly seemed very small and unimportant."*³⁴

Poor paragraphing remains a problem, but while it does not detract from the main idea, the essay could be more effective with the proper format.

31 Individuals acting against Erebos' adherents (knowingly or not) are considered to be "enemies" of the game as they hinder it from reaching its aims.

32 Capital and university city.

33 Eric's home town.

34 Kostick, *Epic*, pp 213-214, ll. 17-4.

Most interesting in terms of morality is the character of Anonemuss.

He is an expatriate, whom the reader gets little information about. However, he stands for a complete counterdraft to the prevalent nonviolent society and admires the philosophy of Machiavellianism.

This political realism developed by the Italian Renaissance writer and politician Niccolò Machiavelli is a system of power politics. It simplified states: "the means excuses, but the result excuses."³⁵

Machiavelli's idea is often considered very extreme as it excuses every form of violence towards subordinates as long as it is useful to the sovereign's aims.

Anonemuss stands for Eric's temptation to adapt the violence of Epic and therefore blend reality and game.

3.3 Computer games as a part of the reality

In his book "The Social Conquest of Earth" socio-biologist E.O. Wilson discusses the importance of man's evolutionary ability to think through different scenarios, as it is commonly practiced in almost every board or video game.³⁶ This phenomenon is known as the *homo ludens*, the Playing Man. Another good reference to an interesting and relevant concept.

Thinking through possible scenarios was inevitable for the survival and, most notably, progression of the human species. However, contrary to board games, video games often provoke thrilling situations (e.g. the fights in the fantasy worlds of Erebus and Epic). This stimulates the amygdala, a part of our primitive brain which is, amongst others, responsible for fear and aggression. The brain's 'emergency room' is triggered, which upstages all other needs and just focuses on the thrill and danger.³⁷ Games consequentially overwhelm and interfere with reality.

The incidents mentioned in sections 3.1.1 and 3.2.1 are examples for the overlapping of reality and video games. Ursula Poznanski thereby warns against the increasing influence of games on reality. To emphasize this, she shows the exaggerated scenario of *Erebus* ordering actions in reality.

As the game Epic is the basis of the society, the most essential part of life on New Earth is a virtual world. Striking is the continuous treatment of Epic as a real matter. Incidents of the game are discussed as if they have happened in the real world.

Some repetition here.
This point has already
been established

35 <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Machiavellismus>.

36 Wilson Edward O. 2013, *Die soziale Eroberung der Welt*. C.H. Beck, Munich.

37 <http://www.nationalgeographic.de/aktuelles/angstzentrum-im-gehirn-entdeckt>,
http://www.focus.de/wissen/mensch/tid-12539/hirnforschung-aggressive-kennen-kein-mitleid_aid_346123.html.

It is early stated that *'the public battle in the amphitheater had become the method of conflict resolution'*³⁸. According to Central Allocations, this is the best way of resolving discrepancies.

Nevertheless, the system adversely affects the majority of the population.

A former member of the Central Allocations is the first to state that the game has become too important and it is *'far too little actual attention is given to the future and too much to the game.'*³⁹

Furthermore, Eric's friend Injeborg perfectly describes the system with all its faults:

*"We spend all our spare time in Epic. Because Epic is our economy and our legal system. To survive individually, we need every copper bit we can obtain from the game, no matter that this will ruin us collectively."*⁴⁰

Again, the author deliberately depicts a society where computer games have an enormous value. The society can be interpreted as a metaphor of an addicted gamer. His reality solely consists of the game. Conor Kostick warns against this future trend.

This word is an adverb, not an adjective- its use here is awkward- it is important because this is a lead sentence. If this is a term that comes from the book, it should be quoted.

3.4 Amok runs in Epic and Erebos

Both examined novels depict amok runs in their respective ways.

Rather obvious is the training of teenage-killers in *Erebos*. The game is completely focused on the killing of Andrew Ortolan and does not hesitate to murder everyone that gets in its way.

Epic on the other hand functions as a valve for the strictly prohibited violence. The inhabitants of New Earth indeed are constantly killing creatures in the game. They are permanently practicing to kill, to ensure that they live nonviolent in the real world. A subtle killing spree is taking place.

Eric and Nick, who both act against the games act symbolic for the brave heroes trying to disarm the amok runner.

The real purpose of this short paragraph is not completely clear. Could it be integrated elsewhere?

3.5 Positive effects of the games

After all, two positive consequences of the games can be traced.

Both games unite their player and often incite teamwork. In both games friendships emerge and in *Epic* even *'many marriages [...] came about from meetings within the game.'*⁴¹

The worlds of *Epic* and *Erebos* are exciting and sometimes Eric and Nick even simply enjoy a great virtual discovery or an epic fantasy battle. Moreover, *Epic* functions as a valve for aggressions.

The society of New Earth is able to function without any violent actions or punishments.

38 Kostick, *Epic*, pp. 49, ll. 6-7.

39 Ibid, pp. 231, ll. 18-19.

40 Ibid, pp 279, ll. 9-11.

41 Kostick, *Epic*, pp. 14, ll. 2-3.

The outstanding contrast of demanded violence in the game and violence as inconceivable in the real world suggest that any form of aggression is compensated by compulsive gaming. The overlapping of game and reality is in this case contributing to a non-violent society.

This concept is also interesting to show the intended consequence of the game- it could be further explained and related to the actual consequences-

4. Conclusion

The science-fiction novels *Erebos* and *Epic* show the extreme impacts of video games on societies. This essay examined two literary thought experiments simulating the extreme impacts of computer games on different societies. Both showed dire influences of the games: gaming addiction and the overlapping between game and reality contribute to violence and moral deformation in very different societies.

Decent quick summary of the main idea.

Ursula Poznanski warns the reader against the replacement and suppression of the daily routine by the game. To emphasize this, she shows a game which only aims at interfering with the reality.

Conor Kostick cautions of the loss of normative value judgement by compulsive gaming. He shows a society, where social and economic values are build up on a computer game.

Therefore, video games are considered to have virtually only negative impacts on societies, no matter how they are composed. This suggests that the problems our society faces connected to computer games, such as the named amok runs, arise from compulsive gaming. Both novels indicate that in the long run, video games are a constant danger to society.

However, these thought experiments are limited. First of all, *Epic* and *Erebos* play through the possible scenarios of what future can bring. Literature can simulate this to a certain extent, but reaches its boundaries at some point. The predicted scenarios are simply one possible result.

By showing credibly how the characters fall for the games, the novels reveal how addictive computer games can be and how they can lead to a moral decay. Of course, the novels are almost solely focused on the unfavorable and 'dark' sides of gaming, since an interesting novel needs a hero and a hero needs a conflict. Therefore, the spectrum of examination is narrowed and too concentrated on the negative sides of gaming.

This is a good summary comment that also shows that the essay belongs in category 3 rather than 2.

Nonetheless, this essay answers my research question by covering all the important effects the video games have on the depicted societies. However, it does not answer if the games wet the appetite for blood. Aggressions are evoked but if they lead to real bloodthirst is unresolved.

Moreover, the essay opened up new questions: How useful is a study of the future? What impact does it have on our life now, if we know more about future perspectives?

And concerning the influence of games on the individual: If games can cause violent actions, could they possibly evoke increased empathy and social skills when altered accordingly?

Nevertheless, the questions and warnings proposed by the novels should be taken seriously and further elaborated on. A science-fiction writer can not give answers, deliver solutions. The society has to.

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This is not a perfect paper, but overall it is effective for this subject. The language, though comprehensible, does have errors but they do not cloud the meaning. The reference format should be complete, but it is consistent and the general layout of the essay ideas is logical and easy to follow. The strength of the essay lies in the sophisticated ideas tied conceptually to weave a plausible and interesting argument that is well supported with text and good use of secondary sources.