



# The Presentation of Chernobyl in Video Games

How habitability-related catastrophes are presented in  
popular culture

# Chernobyl in Video Games

- Video games are explicitly interactive (Cannon, 2022)
- Nuclear becomes directly associated with “deadly” (Cannon, 2022. pp. 22)
- Gamers begin to react “instinctively” to nuclear threats (Cannon, 2022. pp. 6)



# Chernobyl in Call of Duty

- 15.7 million copies of Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare (2007) sold in first 6 years of release
- Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare (2007) set in Pripyat (town linked to Chernobyl). Threats in the game include rising radiation levels and feral dogs.
- Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2 (2009) further explores Pripyat, and the Pripyat level is referred to as a "wasteland". Nuclear reactors can also be seen in the game and there is an option for the player to launch a "tactical nuke" which is launched directly from these reactors.
- Chernobyl connected to the Cold War (a Russian villain)– political connotations (Maloney and Doidge, 2021)
- People who have visited Pripyat have compared it to Call of Duty, despite the game makers editing colour aspects to create a "mysterious atmosphere" (Banaszkiewicz and Duda, 2019. pp. 202)

# Implications



The first-person and interactive nature of video games makes it easier to push certain narratives (Cannon, 2022)



Chernobyl disaster used to influence player's perceptions on political issues, such as the tensions between the Western world and Russia after the Cold War, and a rising threat of nuclear warfare (Maloney and Doidge, 2021)



“Nuclear” therefore becomes a threat, not just physically, but also socially (Banaszkiewicz and Duda, 2019. pp. 202)

# References

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