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SOCIAL SCIENTISTS AS THE ARCHITECTS OF THEIR OWN DEFEAT IN THE STUDY OF VIDEO GAMES

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INTRODUCTION

The media, that being the mass media communications industry, has a long and peculiar history with gaming, often circulating a field of vision that the consumption of them warrants major concern, a view that has gained increasing notoriety alongside technological advancement's subsequent increase in 'real-life'

gaming simulations (Rowlands, Ratnabalasuriar, & Noel, 2016). Essentially, from classic board games such as 'Dungeons and Dragons' (Waldron, 2005) to modern video games that now occupy online spaces, the media has been part of a myriad of groups including politicians and academics in stirring up an aroma of 'danger' towards them (Markey & Ferguson, 2017). Subsequently, academics, through their own curiosity and as a result of political interest (Markey & Ferguson, 2017), have given vast attention towards proving or disproving the notion that video games have a causal relationship with violence. Some discourse coming from social sciences has claimed such a relationship exists (Anderson & Dill, 2000; Anderson & Murphy, 2003; Carnagey & Anderson, 2006), whilst the majority have disputed these claims (Ferguson et al., 2008; Markey & Ferguson, 2017; Unsworth, Devilly, & Ward, 2007; Williams & Skoric, 2005) and even suggested video games rather than causing violence reduces it (Ferguson, 2007; Colwell & Kato, 2003). The latter group have expanded their discussion by offering explanations as to why despite little supporting evidence these views are able to forge. Offering an accumulation of often interlocking ideas formed around the theory that video games causing violence is a 'Moral Panic' (see Drotner, 1992; Ferguson, 2008; Grant, 2018; Markey & Ferguson, 2017; Rowlands et al., 2016; Sternheiner, 2007).

However, whilst branding video games as causing violence is evidently misleading and damaging for social science discourse (Markey & Ferguson, 2017), likewise, it has been the repetitive casting of issues with video games into the faulty realm of the 'Moral Panic'. It is this that the following chapter emphasises. Despite expanding on the points raised above to provide a context of video games and the media, the following does not wish to add to the video game as a violence catalyst debate; the current disputing evidence illuminates perfectly the naivety of such arguments. Thus, this chapter uses Mark Horsley's (2017)

'Forget Moral Panics' as well as other critical commentators to not only highlight the naivety of the moral panic and video games argument but also to systematically dismantle the current academic discourse surrounding 'Moral Panics' in relation to video games and the media and where it now must go.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: THE MEDIA, VIDEO GAME DISCOURSE AND MORAL PANICS

As discussed, despite the lack of supporting evidence, there has been a continuous 'war on video games' (Markey & Ferguson, 2017), seeing the media, politicians and in-denial academics join forces to take down the cultural phenomenon of video games that are embedded with so-called nasties. But how, and why, has this extremely misleading view appeared and generated momentum? These questions, and the answers to them, are essential in providing a historical context of video games and the media – offering a glimpse of where video games and violence discourse has ventured, what it has argued and, most importantly, provide a basis of where these arguments now need to go to generate useful discussion.

The thought that video games act as a catalyst for immoral actions arguably hits a turning point in 1976–1983. Even though violent games existed prior to its release, 'Death Race' gained negative attention because of its violent nature (Rowlands et al., 2016). Likewise, in 1983, US Surgeon General C. Everett Koop suggested video games such as Asteroid should be treated as a major factor in family violence, a concern that fuelled the later Congress attempts to regulate and censor the video game industry (Markey & Ferguson, 2017). However, the most significant ignition of this view came in the late 1990s when a series of school shootings took place generating a media frenzy of who is to blame (Rowlands et al., 2016), in

fact, more often that not it is shootings that generate the discussion about the harms of video games. Typifying this was the 1999 Columbine massacre in Colorado. On 20 April, two teenagers, Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris, attacked their school shooting, killing 12 students, 1 teacher and injuring 21 others, before killing themselves (Markey & Ferguson, 2017). Subsequently, the media focused their attention on what 'other' had caused two teenage boys to commit such a heinous act, conjuring up explanations consisting of vengeance against bullies, antisocial goth music culture and scene reenactment from hit film 'The Matrix' (Markey & Ferguson, 2017). However, it was the fact that the two were avid players of the video game 'Doom' that the media focused upon (Ferguson, 2008), consequently fortifying the idea that teen violence, specifically school shootings, has a causal relationship with video games.

The Columbine shooting was far from an anomaly regarding video games being linked as a catalyst for violence. In 1997, Michael Carneal killed three students and injured five more in his high school in Paducah Kentucky (Newman, 2013), which resulted in video game Grand Theft Auto III being blamed alongside pornography and violet films for generating confusion between real and fantasy for Carneal (Rowlands et al., 2016). Furthermore, in 1998, after killing his parents Kip Kinkel entered his high school in Springfield Oregon, shooting and killing 2 students and injuring 25 (Newman, 2013). Since, there has been nearly 5,000 news articles discussing video games in the context of these shootings (Markey, Markey, & French, 2015). Some headlines include 'Virtual Realities Spur School Massacres', 'Bloodlust Video Games Put Kids in the Crosshairs' and 'All Those Who Deny Any Linkage between Violence in Entertainment and Violence in Real Life, Think Again' (Sternheimer, 2007). Highlighting the depth media outlets has travelled in order to demonise video games.

Even though the research that developed around this time, and still to this day hugely contradicts such claims, these arguments are very much embedded within present media outputs. Kelly, Lynes, and Hoffin (2018) explain that following the 2014 Sandy Hook elementary school shooting in Connecticut, where 20-year-old Adam Lanza shot and killed 20 children and 6 members of staff (BBC, 2015), and the 2018 Santa Fe high school shooting in Texas, in which 8 students and 2 teachers were shot and killed whilst 13 others were wounded (Dart, 2018), the media and the FBI were fast to discuss the perpetrators avid use of violent video games and their alleged link to their actions. It also took just a short time after the recent shootings in El Paso Texas that killed 20, and the Ohio Dayton that killed 9 (Perraudin, 2019), before Fox News aired an interview with the Republican Leader Kevin McCarthy who alluded to video games causing gun violence and being a major issue for future generations (Wu, 2019). Such claims do not go unnoticed and often result in legal proceedings and attempts in regulation and legislation change. Kelly et al. (2018) explain that following the columbine attack, parents of the victims tried to take legal action and sue gaming companies for their products desensitising the shooters to violence, and Rowlands et al. (2016) describe numerous examples of attempts in legislation to restrict video game violence and their use, including the Protect the Children from Video Game Sex and Violence Act, the Safe Games Illinois Act and the Family Entertainment Protection Act. Though almost all failed due to their flawed foundations, they signify the impact the constant evil video game rhetoric can have.

Clearly, there is a nonharmonious relationship between the media and video games that historically, and relentlessly, blame the unimaginable actions of youth violence on the products created by gaming companies. However, as previously mentioned, the media coexists alongside politicians and

academics in the antivideo game discourse, creating research claiming to support the media's concerns. Specifically, Anderson and Dill (2000) examined violent video game effects on aggression-related variables, claiming to have found a positive relationship between aggressive behaviour, aggressive thoughts and delinquency with 'real-life' violent video game play. Similarly, Anderson and Murphy (2003) placed this within the context of young women and once again concluded that exposure to violent video games increased aggressive behaviour.

However, there are just as many that dispute these findings and arguably disprove the idea beyond question. For example, Ferguson et al. (2008) completed two similar studies and found the exact opposite, highlighting that randomised exposure to violent video game conditions or previous real-life exposure to violent video games has no impact on aggression. They also suggested that family violence would be more attributable to the data than exposure to violent video games (Ferguson et al., 2008). In addition, Williams and Skoric (2005) conducted a longitudinal study with a controlled group to examine changes in aggressive thoughts and behaviours, in which participants were subjected to an online video game; likewise, their findings did not support the notion that violence in video games has a causal relationship with real-life aggression. Ferguson (2008) has put the different findings down to obvious errors made by intentionally oblivious academics. He explains that these studies fail to consider any other factors that may contribute to increased aggression, for example, family violence (Ferguson et al., 2008). He adds that most of this research is also conducted with 'normal' children or adults, rather than individuals who might be considered 'high risk (Ferguson, 2008). Such failures are not surprising as they rely on the foundations set by Bandura, Ross, and Ross (1961) and media effects (see Marsh & Melville, 2014) that at best – due to their positivist foundations – can only highlight any surface relationships (Hall & Winlow, 2015).

A bobo doll study by Bandura et al. (1961) observed and measured the impact aggressive films had upon young children by showing them scenes of a person attacking a doll, claiming to have found a causal relationship as the children imitated the behaviour, thus also failing to consider any drives acting as mediating factors such as culture, ideology and socioeconomic conditions (Hall & Winlow, 2015).

Following their important dismissal of the video game causing aggression concept, interest was expanded into why the media, politicians and academics get away with repetitive misleading discussions and sway public opinion. This has resulted in a concoction of ideas forming around Cohen's (1972) 'Moral Panic and Folk Devils'; essentially, reactions to minority and marginalised groups by the public and politicians are needless ones of fear and threat to the values and consensus maintained by that society. This is generated, exaggerated and spun by the mass media who focus on said group and label them as a deviant (Cohen, 1972). Since, this has become one of the 'untouchable' but hindering theories in Social Science (Hall & Winlow, 2015) with 100 citations per year since the early 1990s (Goode & Ben-Yehuda, 2013). For example, Hall et al. (1978) 'Policing the Crisis' highlights the moral panic created at the hands of media overreaction and the consequent overemphasis on policing black offenders. Pearson (1983) makes similar arguments, but in the context of hooliganism, likewise does Waddington (1986) concerning mugging, Watney (1987) with pornography and aids, Nijjar (2015) with rioting youth, Weidner (2009) in relation to illegal drugs, Cavanagh (2007) and Clapton, Cree, and Smith (2013) surrounding paedophilia and child protection, Bonn (2010) with terrorism and Friedersdorf (2015) highlights the rise of panics as a result of smartphones.

As discussed, in an effort to explain the misleading video game concepts circulated by the media, academics have based their thoughts around it being part of an unnecessary and

vamped up fear. Fundamentally, they argue that video games have also taken on the role of folk devil, in which sensationalised and untrue news media spread concerns that video game violence needs addressing to prevent youths from becoming desensitised, aggression fuelled and consequently breaking society's values. For example, Ferguson (2008); Karlsen (2015); Rowlands et al. (2016); Markey and Ferguson (2017) and Grant (2018) all provide instances of when video games have wore the cloak of folk devil and succumb to unprecedented criticisms, including Death Race, Wolfenstein, Doom, Mortal Kombat, Grand Theft Auto and Fortnite. Markey and Ferguson (2017) have explained that this involves a step-by-step process that seemingly intertwines with explanations offered by other commentators. First, 'Extreme Claims Come before Data', then 'Public Calls for Research Supporting the Moral Panic', followed by 'The Goldilocks Effect' and finally 'Save the Children Mentality' (Markey & Ferguson, 2017). Essentially, shocking claims are made regarding video games and their threat to society before any data can prove or disprove it. Followed by further calls for research to 'fix' the alleged issue, exemplified following the Sandy Hook shooting by Senator Rockefeller's calls for research into violence in video games to provide preventative groundwork despite no connection to the shooter and video game use being made (Bachman, 2012). Then, concerns are raised comparing the current overly violent and explicit media with ones of past generations that got it 'just right', resulting in cries to protect the children. This is a problem as it removes the possibility of proving of disproving the legitimacy of the 'panic', instead hurdling to faulty pseudoscience studies to answer the demands of the hand that feeds.

When offering a deeper exploration of why the media, politicians and academics partake in validating, addressing and fuelling the video game and violence moral panic, the discourse

offers up numerous answers situated within the critical and radical constructionist framework stuck in motion since the 1960s and 1970s, thus providing a perfect point to, whilst detailing such arguments, interject Horsley's (2017) critiques as well as relevant others to highlight how by casting video game harms into the realm of the 'Moral Panic', academics – and wider commentators – have become architects of social sciences own defeat in making sense of crime and deviance within the virtual world – specifically video games. Therefore, the second part of this chapter discusses how, despite touching upon very relevant and important issues within the video game blame debate, Moral Panic fanatics have somewhat missed a 'trick' and succumb to the ivory tower comfort zone of the Moral Panic thesis (Kelly et al., 2018) and consequently failed in pushing the discourse in a much needed and suitable direction for the twenty-first century issues relating to video games.

DISMANTLING THE MORAL PANIC EMBEDMENT WITHIN VIDEO GAME AND CRIME/DEVIANCE DISCOURSE

Over the last few years, ultrarealist academics have called for social science to move away from politically influenced theoretical frameworks that have struggled to stand the test of time as society shifted further into liberal capitalism, consequently stagnating social science theory and distracting disciplines, especially Criminology, from solving their 'aetiological crisis' (see Hall & Winlow, 2015). One of these is the Moral Panic thesis. In 2017, Horsley provided a step-by-step critique that arguably exposed the Moral Panic's frailties beyond question from its foundations to its last grasp attempts to stay relevant in the current issues of twenty-first century neoliberal society. Ultimately the paper highlighted the weaknesses of a misguided

but previously 'untouchable' framework susceptive to real critique and Social Scientists as the Architects of Their Own Defeat providing opportunity to progress crime and deviance discussions – an improvement compared to its previous reviews that ridicule but maintains its position within theory (see Carrabine, 2008; Jewkes, 2011; McRobbie & Thornton, 1995).

Essentially, Horsley (2017) agrees with the critical comments that social science discourse overuses 'out-of-time' frameworks such as the Moral Panic, explaining that the concept was set in stone during the mid-twentieth century amidst liberal pluralism and before postmodernism and the overwhelming influence of social and economic liberalism. Subsequently, crime, deviance and harms were assumed to be constructs created by elites, thus having no ontological reality (Horsley, 2017). However, Horsley (2017) argues because of this shift towards neoliberal capitalism, social order is no longer cemented in a win or lose scenario between the elites overt control and those pushing against it, instead it relies on consumer capitalist desires (see Hall, Winlow, & Ancrum, 2012). Essentially, the current processes

> *…expand time and effort simulating and releasing*
> *libidinal forces such as ambition, competition and the*
> *pursuit of individualised desires…whilst…*
> *desperately trying to keep a lid on them*
>
>   (Horsley, 2017, p. 11)

Consequently, as Hall (2012) and Horsley (2017) explain, this creates 'pseudo-pacified sociosymbolic competition' which maintains social order by putting to use the pursuit of lifestyle desires by individuals. Ultimately, Horsley (2017) illuminates that Cohen failed foundationally by not considering such ontological foundations that exist within the current structural processes, and crime, deviance and harm are not the consequences of self-expression against a restraining

ethical order, but they are attributed to the oblivious conformity to the fundamental underpins of late capitalism.

Evidently, those who have placed video game concerns within the Moral Panic group have also inherited Cohen's failures and removed the possibility of any progression within the existing debates – the subject of the panic may change, but its faulty foundations will not. However, the intricacies of the arguments made by such commentaries offer further examples of these failures and warrant further critical debate to progress these discussions properly. Specifically, Grant (2018) has claimed that the constant spinning of video game concerns is a way for politicians to take steps towards a 'China's golden shield' (see King, Pan, & Roberts, 2013) style of control over internet freedom. Though China is currently under a strict authoritarian regime meaning the crime as a batting match between elites and general society argument may be possible, within the context of the United Kingdom and the United States, where most of these discussions contextualise themselves and are two of the most neoliberal consumer capitalists reliant countries, the type of control Grant is referring to would be paradoxical for the current structural processes. Not to mention the arguably increasing influence of neoliberal societies to the nonelite Chinese citizens, who have recently paraded a US flag during violent protests in the name of democracy (*USA Today*, 2019). In addition, upon further investigation, the Chinese governments internet censorship is much more complex and not an issue of simple restriction and instead harnesses potential in aiding neoliberal capitalist systems by clever sporadic releasing of techno grips to allow for certain amounts of consumption (King et al., 2013).

In a similar vein, Miller (2006) argues that video games have simply become the latest panic in a long history of 'mediums' that, during their early days, are portrayed as evil as they challenge the established order. Likewise, Markey and Ferguson (2017) detail that as far back the fifteenth century moral panics

involving advancing technology existed, and seemingly did so with every new art form. They explain that only the religious elite could read the bible as part of an intentional plot to keep 'ordinary' people in line, so when mechanical printing press was invented, society called for versions in their native languages. Consequently, harsh penalties were handed to the producers of such texts due to fears of an uprising against the hierarchy because of misinterpretations of the bible (Markey & Ferguson, 2017). They continue to highlight this trend with other emerging forms, such as the concerns relating to women in the nineteenth century as they allegedly become confused between real and fantasy due to reading, to the increasing panics surrounding young people due to the new concept of adolescence mustered up by the industrial revolution, including hair styles, jazz music, rock and roll music, radio and television (Markey & Ferguson, 2017). Here, Miller, Markey and Ferguson become the perfect examples of not allowing social science to move on from the overreaching Moral Panic. As Horsley (2017) has explained, the established ethical order no longer exists, and instead an ontological structure consisting of libidinal desires has taken its place. So, whilst perhaps being onto something when discussing advancing technology and panics before the turn to neoliberalism, they have since naively followed the moral panic assumptions. At the neoliberal turn, these media are now a fundamental part of the consumeristic desires, not only by increasingly offering the latest tech gadgets but also by allowing for an instant connection to a worldwide cyberspace full of competitive social platforms and advertisements (Hall et al., 2012), all of which twenty-first century video gaming is part of and central to. Games can be purchased and updated, and the playable hardware offers immediate internet access to social platforms and online catalogues. Therefore, rather than providing a threat to the established order, gamers are arguably conforming to the latest symbolisation of 'winning'

(see Hall et al., 2012). Importantly, a point also raised by Hall (2012) who exposed Cohen's misleading label of mods and rockers as nonconformists when their choice of image and style would suggest a conformity to the consumer culture at that specific time.

In addition, it is the general recognition by social sciences that the media portray the negative as it sells, and the moral panic discourse is no different. Something, they argue, has been constantly increasing due to the reliance on social media for our news, as the media have begun to use catchy but misleading headlines called 'clickbait' (Markey & Ferguson, 2017) that results in rapid shares of stories across cyberspace, and unfortunately ones detailing an evil phenomenon creating a generation of psychopaths (as previously discussed, see Sternheimer, 2007) is more attractive than one that might otherwise reveal some form of truth. Ultimately, they argue, this creates and maintains the panic that is eventually used by politicians for their own cause. However, it is likely that the rapid media advancements that have arguably increased this 'panic' have also allowed for cynicism of the media and the elite to garner momentum, as the internet has now made consumers of information also the producers of it (Ritzer & Jurgenson, 2010). Though Ritzer and Jurgenson were referring to how this creates a grey area, a quick glance at recent social media conversations highlight individuals 'calling out' those blaming shootings on video games. This would suggest that the ability for anyone to provide information has allowed for closer examination of truths, removing the chance of a panic entirely. However, Hall (2012) highlights that even before the rise in technology that resulted in easier discussions of truths, an actual cultivated panic never existed. He explains that media representation often provides a resolution to a criminal issue, rather than leave a threat on a cliff-hanger, again, removing the possibility of a moral panic taking place.

Interestingly, this becomes part of maintaining a balance within the 'bassline anxiety' of the public that maintains itself just enough for economic production and political distraction (Horsley, 2017). Which really does offer up one of the biggest questions surrounding the common sense of the moral panic argument: why would it be beneficial for a system that relies so much on placidity for the sake of consumption to create a panic that could provide the spark for realisation? (Horsley, 2017), especially considering the gaming industry currently battles Hollywood as the leading popular culture market (Donovan, 2010).

Politicians also set to gain from appearing to tackle the issue of video games causing violence by boosting popularity, election votes and hiding truths (Markey & Ferguson, 2017). Subsequently, this has been a huge vocal point for the moral panic commentators and one that – at least for a length of time – has significant credibility. They explain that through the conjure of the 'Moral Panic' politicians, the media and ignorant researchers are able to suppress real issues within society that contribute to violence, such as poverty, mental illness, lack of education, family environment and inequality (Ferguson, 2008; Markey & Ferguson, 2017; Sternheimer, 2007). Trump's public annotations (as discussed in the introduction) regarding video games do just this; shadowing the current and long-lasting issues within the United States that such tragedies would otherwise bring to the fore. The perpetrator of the recent El Paso shooting is believed to have posted an online document explaining that his attack was a result of the Hispanic invasion of Texas and is consequently being treated as a 'Domestic Terrorism' incident (BBC, 2019a). A problem that has seen a significant rise since online echo chambers and online hate (see Awan, 2014; Behr, Reding, Edwards, & Gribbon, 2013), filled with white supremacist conspiracy theories relating to immigration, has found its way into political discourse through

figure heads such as Trump and merged with weak and dangerous gun laws (Hoffman, 2019). Instead, Trump has suggested that mental illness needs to be taken seriously in relation to white supremacist terrorism and background checks when purchasing weapons (BBC, 2019a), and tighter regulations need to be placed on video games that 'celebrate violence' (Farokhmanesh & Nicolet, 2019). Not only does this insult victims of racial hate as it excuses it and is a step backwards for discourse on terrorist events (Hoffman, 2019), it is an obvious distraction measure from such issues. Though Trump's protection over gun laws should not be surprising and is simply another issue that has been ignored due to the panic (as Moral Panic theorists would claim), as the United States has a long-lasting economic relationship with the National Rifle Association, so much so that in 2016 they spent $4 million lobbying and contributing to politicians, including an estimated $30 million to help Trump's precedency campaign (BBC, 2019b).

These points certainly carry some creditability and are important. However, all of the stated impacts (mental health, inequality, lack of education and violence) are attributable to neoliberal capitalism and austerity (Hall & Winlow, 2015), and whilst noting the United States, where mass shootings are a regular occurrence meaning the video game violence debate is fought out regularly, is one of the most neoliberal countries (Hall & Winlow, 2015), it is easy to see why there is a need to hide the realities of the toxic system. It is here where the previous discourse seems to lack depth as claiming that placing emphasis on violent video games hides real societal issues may be correct, it misses the important point that it is not just about distracting truths but also about the hidden toxic realties caused by the undercurrent of liberal capitalism (Hall & Winlow, 2015).

Evidently, those casting video game harms into the realm of the moral panic have made a significant error and such arguments no longer make sense in twenty-first century

neoliberal capitalism. But at what cost? It has already been noted that distractions from truths, thus distraction from the harmful processes that lies beneath them, have been an important missing factor within existing discussions. However, Horsley (2017) also explains that when issues are given the moral panic treatment, it often leaves a backdoor open for the harmful subjectivities of liberal capitalism that remain unnoticed, and within the context of video games as a moral panic this has been no different. Arguably, by suggesting video game harms are 'all just a moral panic', commentators have ironically been the architects of their own defeat in its discourse by making the same mistake as the ones they are aiming to call out. They have played dividend to the ability of the moral panic to act a form of fetishtic disavow (Hall & Winlow, 2015; Horsley, 2017; Raymen, 2017), allowing the underpinning structural realities and wider deviance that is played out in video games to be placed into an impossible realm and go under the radar. As the following chapters in this book will highlight in further detail, video games are rife with different acts of criminality and deviance fuelled by the harmful subjectivities of late capitalism that has, for the most part, failed to gather any significant discussion within a loss-lose two-way debate of media effects and moral panics. One example is the special liberty (see Hall, 2012) gaming creators such as the masterminds behind the Grand Theft Auto franchise have, who have not paid any United Kingdom corporation tax in over the last 10 years (Tax Watch UK, 2019).

CONCLUSION

Whilst the debate of whether video games are a catalyst for violence should be long over, discussions are far from where they need to be to begin to provide a more nuanced insight of

the crime and deviance seen within video games. Despite alluding to credible concerns surrounding the attempts made by the media and politicians in shielding real issues within society that may result in crime, such as inequality, poor family relationships, poverty, austerity and mental illness (Ferguson, 2008; Markey & Ferguson, 2017; Sternheimer, 2007), commentators within the video game harms discourse have built arguments upon the faulty foundations of Cohen's (1972) moral panic thesis and succumb to the same criticisms. They have failed to move on from social constructionist views that underpinned social science theory in the 1960s and 1970s and subsequently ignored the increasing shift into neoliberal capitalism (Hall & Winlow, 2015). Within this, society and its issues are no longer a 'zero-sum' match between the ethical order and those fighting against it (Horsley, 2017). Instead, it is based on a structural process that relies on libidinal desires, such as competitive individualism, ambition and greed (Hall, 2012; Horsley, 2017; Žižek, 2000), which account for issues relating to crime. Therefore, rather than media and politicians conjuring moral panics to enact an iron fist of society in reaction to a historical list of new mediums that threat the established order (Markey & Ferguson, 2017; Miller, 2006), this is part of an equilibrium process within the bassline anxiety of society that the ontological processes of consumer capitalist society create to maintain economic production and prevent access to the obscene real (Horsley, 2017), making any possibility of a moral panic impossible and any described 'resistance' nothing but an anxious conformity to the current style essential for competitive victory within late consumer capitalism.

In essence, the video game moral panic fanatics by following the wrongful assumptions set by the previously untouchable moral panic framework have crated their own Frankenstein's monster of video game and crime and deviance discourse that has cast the real deviance seen within video

games into an impossible realm and destroyed any potential in furthering the discussion. To overcome this, the moral panic must be shelved as a theory that may have once had some credibility within a bygone era and video game discourse needs to focus on its crime and deviance intricacies seen within the current neoliberal capitalist society. It is this that the remaining of this book will accomplish, offering specific examples of the previously overlooked issues involved within gaming.

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