

HIST3801 Lecture 4

Jerry Wu

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Contents

1	Violence in video games	3
1.1	Moral panic	3
1.1.1	What is moral panic?	3
1.2	Mods and rockers	3
1.2.1	Deviancy amplification	3
1.3	Revisiting arcades	3
1.3.1	Death race	4

Section 1

Violence in video games

"Today's lecture is about violence and my anniversary is also today, so I really fucked it up!" - E. Moretto 2024

1.1 Moral panic

1.1.1 What is moral panic?

- A theory created by Stanley Cohen
- Moral panic almost always involves a "think of the children" mentality
- Moral panic reveals division within society
- Moral panic thrives on exaggeration of a real issue
- Moral panic is a quick matter which fizzles out, or something that carries long term repercussions

1.2 Mods and rockers

- Working class subcultures of youth during the 1960s
- These two groups rallied around transportation and being able to go places
- A series of brawls between the groups led the British media labelling them as dangerous roving gangs of disaffected youths. These were not violent gunfights or knife fights, but just fist fights
- The media exaggerated the issues, leading to a moral panic

1.2.1 Deviancy amplification

- Form of exaggeration used in creating moral panics. An irrational amplification of threat for unusual behaviors.

1.3 Revisiting arcades

- Arcades were known for gambling, drinking and smoking
- This leads to a large medium for moral panics

1.3.1 Death race

- Death race is a 1975 movie about a dystopian future where managing resources once per year, the government mandates a purge where people race in cars and crashing into people to kill them (especially for the elderly because they would be known as a resource drain)
- Was eventually made into a video game in 1976
- Was worried about for a very short time. People were concerned that the game was to train kids to enjoy the action of vehicular homicide
- Because games with violent content were unregulated for a while, the government wanted to make companies regulate them, thus the ESRB rating system was born