

CULTURAL CRIMINOLOGY

AN INVITATION

JEFF FERRELL | KEITH HAYWARD | JOCK YOUNG

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MEDIA, REPRESENTATION AND MEANING: INSIDE THE HALL OF MIRRORS

There is nothing more to explain ... as long as words keep their meanings, and meanings their words. (*Alphaville*, dir. Jean-Luc Godard, 1965)

A priori, we were being attacked on an image level, and therefore we should have prepared and responded on an image level, on the narrative level, and we could have won that. (Einat Wilf, Member of Israeli Parliament, commenting on the media fallout after Israeli troops boarded a Turkish aid ship bound for Gaza, on BBC2's *Newsnight*, 1 June 2010)

Cultural criminology's sense that the meaning of crime and crime control is always under construction comes into especially sharp focus when we consider our contemporary world of media festival and digital spectacle (see Hayward and Presdee, 2010). For many of us, it is a rare day indeed when we don't interact with the late modern 'mediascape' (Appadurai, 1996: 35), that bundle of media that manufactures information and disseminates images via an expanding array of digital technologies. In this enveloping world of the *Mediapolis* (De Jong and Schuilenburg, 2006), meaning is made in motion. Pervasively popular forms of contemporary communications now constitute the primary gauge by which we assess the value and importance of current events – from the most serious to the most banal. Pop culture blurs with news media reportage, images of crime and war are repackaged as entertaining digital escapism, and unreal 'reality TV' moments shape moral values and social norms. In this world, the street scripts the screen and the screen scripts the street (Hayward and Young, 2004: 259); there is no clearly linear sequence, but rather a shifting interplay between the real and the virtual, the factual and the fictional. Late-modern society is saturated with collective meaning and suffused with symbolic uncertainty as media messages and cultural traces swirl, circulate and vacillate.

These are the conditions that symbolic interactionists and labelling theorists anticipated decades ago, with their sense of transgression as a sequenced negotiation of unsettled social identity (see Chapter 2); only now the situation has

intensified. Enter the theorists of the so-called 'postmodern', that *Boulevard*-wise ensemble of predominantly French intellectuals who sought to understand the fluctuating socio-cultural and epistemic transformations associated with the mediascape. While Jean-François Lyotard, Michel Maffesoli and Paul Virilio have all had their say about this fluid, mediated epoch of 'disengagement, elusiveness, facile escape and hopeless chase' (Bauman, 2000: 120), it was the self-styled 'intellectual terrorist' Jean Baudrillard who was the most influential. Simply stated, Baudrillard argued that society is now constituted around reflexive 'signs' and 'codes' that have little or no referent to a 'reality' other than their own, hence his world of 'hyperreal' simulation – a media-saturated environment of 'connections, contact, contiguity, feedback and generalized interface ... a pornography of all functions and objects in their readability, their fluidity, their availability ... their performativity ... their polyvalence' (Baudrillard, 1985: 126–34; see also 1983, 1996).

Heady intellectual stuff – but if one of the goals of cultural criminology is to move beyond the insightful, yet now dated, interactionist analyses of the 1960s, it is also reluctant to embrace uncritically this post-modern sensibility; while Baudrillard may inhabit a 'void-like world of empty signs and unfilled desires', many others find crime to be painfully tangible and immediate in its impact. Yet, while many criminal acts retain their sensual immediacy, the *culture* of such acts increasingly resembles not so much static entity or domain as *flow*, a flow that carries with it the contested meanings of crime and criminality. To paraphrase Marshall McLuhan, it's this movement that in many ways is the message; this constant flow of collective meaning is itself meaningful, itself a circuitry of meaning, opening up possibilities of social control and social protest unavailable under more solid circumstances. Abuses of legal and political authority defy direct confrontation, slipping away just as we might catch them out, circulating and escaping through skilfully spun press releases and photographs lost and found. Resistance to such authority is no sure thing either, always in danger of becoming the medium through which it is carried out, or even that which it resists – and yet this very uncertainty offers new possibilities for a politics of subversion, for a 'semiotic guerrilla warfare' that fights and falls back (Umberto Eco, as quoted in Hebdige, 1979: 105). Criminals and the crimes they commit likewise often seem on the move, criss-crossing the contradictions of a globalized political economy, other times tangled up in their own mediated representations. The terms of cultural and political engagement, the meaning of crime and resistance and control, remain endlessly unsettled.

This situation is perfectly illustrated when one considers the wave of uprisings, protests and civil disturbances generally referred to as the Arab Spring. In Iran, for example, following the ballot-rigging that saw President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad controversially re-elected for a second term in June 2009, supporters of the opposition candidate Mi-Hossein Mousavi took to the streets – only this

time they were carrying mobile phones and digital cameras along with their placards. Within hours, the first of a series of iconic cell phone videos of Iranian riot police beating down protestors were being uploaded to YouTube. One particular video of the collective punishment of a crowd, including violent attacks on a number of women, showed that 'the once-forlorn slogan of the anti-globalization movement had become a reality: the whole world *was* watching' (Mason, 2012: 35):

By nightfall, that video was zipping around the global Farsi networks via blogs, YouTube, Twitter and Facebook. If it had been taken by a TV cameraman, that 58-second single shot would have won awards. It captures reality in a way you rarely see on TV news: terror, chaos, innocence, the sudden tremor in the policeman's face as he bottles out of hitting the cameraman again. But the point about the video is that it is not shot by a news crew, nor was it shown in full on any TV network. Social media's power to present unmediated reality has never been better demonstrated. (2012: 34)

But lest we forget, these same channels of communication can also be open to manipulation and exploitation.

West of Iran and another crisis of state legitimacy: this time the bloody struggle for power in civil war-torn Syria. In the early stages of the insurrection, the Assad regime banned foreign journalists from reporting on the military crackdown. So, desperate to promulgate their message to a watching world, local activist 'video journalists' (VJs) braved sniper bullets and street fighting to document the crisis. From makeshift broadcast centres, these citizen VJs overcame government attempts to jam Internet connections by using portable satellite dishes smuggled into Syria by pro-democracy campaigners. Yet, whilst their courage and innovation were not in doubt, their approach to newsgathering broke journalistic convention. Hell bent on getting across their message, VJs often carried (and discharged) weapons and used tactics such as deliberately setting fire to car tyres as a backdrop to their reports to suggest they were under direct attack from Assad's forces. In such volatile worlds, self-organized production of news media has obvious benefits, but not if truth and impartiality become just another casualty of the conflict.

If our aim is the development of a critically engaged cultural criminology, we must account for this cultural motion, must imagine ways to track meaning as it moves through the politics of crime and social control. We certainly cannot forget the experiential consequences of crime, nor surrender our critical stance to the seductions of cultural uncertainty or postmodern parlour games. But we can't forget the swirling dynamics of culture, either; a photograph, a freeze frame, can catch a moment in an emerging process, but, ultimately, neither substitutes for a moving picture of the process itself. We must conceptualize the flow of collective meaning, must immerse ourselves in it – and in

immersing ourselves, perhaps discover ways to move this cultural fluidity towards progressive ends.

A key aim of this chapter, then, is to introduce and analyse some of the ways in which the meaning of crime circulates within the late-modern mediascape. After all, while notions of cultural ‘motion’ or ‘flow’ imply instabilities of collective meaning, they needn’t suggest that this motion is random or that this flow is unfettered or unstructured. Far from it – political economies of contemporary culture regularly set meaning in motion and, at least initially, set the terms and parameters of its movement; just as, often, emerging technologies invent new channels through which mediated perceptions can move or be confronted. Even in motion, collective meaning leaves traces of influence and understanding, and offers up trajectories amidst all the movement.

Loops and spirals: crime as media, media as crime

For the cultural critic Paul Virilio (1986, 1991), an axiomatic feature of late-modern life is what he calls ‘the logic of speed’. Virilio’s various writings on so-called ‘speed culture’ turn on the insight that the speed at which something happens ultimately dictates its nature. Consider, as an example, 24-hour rolling news. In this hyper-competitive broadcast environment, it’s obvious that ‘that which moves at speed quickly comes to dominate that which is slower’. For Virilio, then, it is the speed of movement, or more accurately the velocity of circulation, that dictates what he describes as our postmodern ‘logic of perception’. We agree with Virilio – at least when it comes to understanding the remarkable velocity of information in the contemporary mediascape. However, what is perhaps more important is the nature of the circulation itself – that is, the extent to which fast-moving mediated images and bits of information reverberate and bend back on themselves, creating a fluid porosity of meaning that defines late-modern life, and the nature of crime and media within it, more than does speed itself.

Fact or fiction?

A few years back, Jeff Ferrell is being interviewed for a story on urban scrounging by a friendly, decent-minded senior investigative producer for a local television station. After the interview, they’re chatting amicably and the producer says, ‘Hey, do let me know if you have any ideas for local crime stories. We have all those *CSI* [Crime Scene Investigation] and *Cold Case* [police detective] shows from 9 to 10 pm, and we like to use them as lead-ins to crime stories on the 10 pm newscast’.

Loops

From this view, contemporary culture can be conceptualized as a series of *loops*, an ongoing process by which everyday life recreates itself in its own image. The saturation of social situations with representation and information suggests that the linear sequencing of meaning is now mostly lost, replaced by a doppelgänger world where the ghosts of signification circle back to haunt, and revive, that which they signify. Peter Manning (1995, 1998) describes a social world of screens and reflections, and specifically a televised world of 'media loops' whereby one image becomes the content of another; elsewhere, we've described a mediated 'hall of mirrors' where 'images ... bounce endlessly one off the other' (Ferrell, 1999: 397). No matter the metaphor, each catches something of the same process: a circulating cultural fluidity that challenges any certain distinction between an event and its representation, a mediated image and its effects, a criminal moment and its ongoing construction within collective meaning. Importantly, this looping process suggests for us something more than Baudrillard's postmodern hyper-reality, his sense of an 'unreality' defined only by media images and cultural obfuscation. Quite the opposite: we mean to suggest a late-modern world in which the gritty, on-the-ground reality of crime, violence and everyday criminal justice is dangerously confounded with its own representation.

If this sense of cultural looping constitutes a starting point for making sense of contemporary meaning, it marks a starting point for cultural criminology as well. The mediated nature of contemporary culture not only carries along the meaning of crime and criminality; it circles back to amplify, distort and define the experience of crime and criminality itself. Within such circumstances, crime and culture remain hopelessly confounded – and so any criminology meant to make sense of contemporary crime and control, and to move these circumstances towards progressive possibilities, cannot do so by artificially segregating that which is intimately and inevitably intertwined. Instead, we would argue, a useful criminology of contemporary life must be, if nothing else, *culturally reflexive* – that is, self-attuned to image, symbol and meaning as dimensions that define and redefine transgression and social control.¹

And when it comes to crime, transgression and control, this looping circularity offers up dynamics that interweave the ludicrous with the malicious. Consider, for example, *Cheaters*, an American reality TV programme (currently in its 14th season) that (allegedly) exposes extramarital affairs. In one episode, the producers contrive and film from numerous angles a confrontation between an estranged husband and his cheating wife. Stepping outside her workplace to phone police about problems with her husband, she is restrained by a *Cheaters* security guard and confronted by her husband, who, by confronting her, violates a protective order and finds himself charged with third-degree felony assault.

A domestic violence expert subsequently argues in the local newspaper that the programme has 'revictimized' the wife; the husband's lawyer counters that 'the videotape doesn't show an assault, in my opinion'. Meanwhile, more *Cheaters* videotape – this time of the wife consorting with her lover – leads to problems for the lover; he's demoted and suspended from his job ... as supervisor of the police department's criminal investigations division (Boyd, 2005a, b; Branch and Boyd, 2005).

In other news – this time from the world of celebrity – the British supermodel Kate Moss sees her career stock ebb and flow at warp speed as her cocaine proclivities are churned through the spin cycle of the world's tabloid press. The resulting interplay of shock, moral indignation, enticement and ultimate normalization says much about contemporary society's ambiguous, and mediated, relationship to drug use. Moss and her supermodel peers have long made a living pedalling corporate products that trade on edgy notions of the forbidden: perfumes like *Opium*, *Poison* and *Obsession*, Lolita-like sexuality, anorexic aesthetics, allusions to illicit sex and sadomasochism, and the infamous 'heroin chic' aesthetic. Yet, it's not until Moss is secretly filmed snorting cocaine that the media turn on her. With stills from the hidden camera footage splashed all over the British Sunday papers, Moss is publicly pilloried and most of her corporate sponsors drop her like a set of hot curling tongs, claiming her drug-taking image is now inconsistent with the drug-laced messages they purvey to their youthful customers. And the mediated loop of sex, drugs and commodities fizzles on. Moss enters rehab, like a waifish penitent to a late-modern nunnery – and spurred on by the newsworthiness of her publicized contrition and her 'personal battle against drugs', her flagging career is quickly regenerated. A host of multinational corporations now fall over themselves to sign the new and improved 'outlaw' Moss – an odd but marketable embodiment of edgy, street savvy and redemptive.²

Criminal justice likewise stumbles over its own image. For a while now, we have been treated to the spectacle of dashboard-mounted squad car camera footage – a window on crime that turns police officers into performers and traffic stops into vignettes available for the nightly news or later prime-time compilation shows such as *World's Wildest Police Videos* and *Police, Camera, Action*. Along with shows like *COPS*, this form of entertainment claims to represent the 'reality' of everyday policing, and has become so popular that it now constitutes its own genre: the so-called 'criminal vérité' format. Yet, while *COPS*, *Top COPS* and similar 'reality' shows have become television staples – *COPS* alone has been running on and off for over 30 years and over 700 episodes, grossing more than \$250 million in the process – the reality they portray is in fact a looping process constructed in conjunction with television cameras and local police departments.

To start with, programmes like *COPS*, *Border Wars*, *Traffic Cops*, *Cops with Cameras*, *Road Wars*, *Sky Cops*, *Police Interceptors* and *Real Vice Cops Uncut*

(along with bizarre celebrity-fronted versions such as *Steven Segal: Lawman*, *Vinnie Jones' Toughest Cops* and *Armed and Famous*) inevitably record the ways in which the presence of their cameras alters, and exacerbates, the reality of encounters between police and suspects. While lauding the show's supposedly unfiltered realism, the founding producer of *COPS*, for example, admits 'it's like a casting call. We look for the most proactive, interesting cops'. One cop featured on the show argues that 'what you see is what's happening out there ... [people] know exactly what we go through every day', while adding that 'the only problem I had was ... the sound guy kept giving me the signal to keep talking' (Walker, 1999; Mayhew, 2006; Woodson, 2003). Police chases likewise unfold as interactive made-for-television movies; following one deadly chase, in which a cameraman in the squad car's back seat video-records himself urging the cop to 'Go get him!', a wrongful death suit is filed based on the video-recording (Vick, 1997). More worrying still is the way these programmes shape popular views on policing, and so the mindsets of citizens, voters and police academy recruits. As Richard Rapaport (2007) suggests, both the police and the policed now believe that 'appropriate law-enforcement correlates with high-speed chases, blocking and tackling, drawn weapons, and a shoot-first, think-later mindset'.

Meanwhile, in court, American jurors increasingly expect evidence to match that fictionalized in popular *CSI (Crime Scene Investigation)* shows; in response, prosecutors regularly refer to television programmes in their opening statements, alter their presentation of evidence and attend acting classes (Dribben, 2006). Criminologists have even begun to investigate a specific 'CSI effect' – 'jurors who rely too heavily on scientific findings and, conversely, are sceptical about the potential for human or technical error or fraud ... jurors ... who demand that prosecution provide the same type of irrefutable evidence they see on TV' (Mopas, 2007: 111) – despite the fact that many of the forensic techniques employed on *CSI* have been dismissed as 'blatant hokum' (Roane, 2005, cited in Cavender and Deutsch, 2007). In the courtroom as elsewhere, reality and representation blur.

And it's not only jurors who get confused. For example, during the trial of the late rapper ODB (O' Dirty Bastard – real name Russell Tyrone Jones) on charges of illegally wearing body armour, his defence attorney argued that 'due to how famous he is, he's at risk of his life. He's been in gun battles and that's why he was wearing body armour'; the deputy district attorney countered by suggesting that ODB 'heads a street gang named Wu-Tang Clan'! Over a decade later and the confusion continues. In 2012, the attempted murder conviction of New Jersey drug dealer Vonte Skinner was overturned by an appellate court after they found that graphic rap lyrics written by Skinner (long before the alleged crime) had been used as evidence by the prosecution to establish Skinner as a violent criminal in the eyes of the jury. Following the decision of the appeal court that the lyrics were inadmissible, attorneys working on behalf of the American Civil

Liberties Union of New Jersey have written an amicus brief urging the State Supreme Court to 'adopt a more stringent set of standards to guide courts in admitting into evidence a criminal defendant's fictional, artistic expressions'. And it would seem those guidelines are sorely needed – the amicus brief identified a further 18 cases in which prosecutors had attempted to use rap lyrics against a defendant (Peters, 2013). In cases such as these, we witness yet another looping dynamic: that of 'cultural criminalization' (Ferrell, 1998a), where mediated publicity trumps legal proceedings in constructing perceptions of guilt and criminal identity.

Spirals

At times, loops such as these remain relatively self-contained, playing out as little episodes that bend back on themselves; more often, they emerge within larger processes of collective meaning, as but one twist or turn in an ongoing spiral of culture and crime. In this sense, the notion of 'loops', while certainly catching something of contemporary culture's fluid reflexivity, sometimes offers only a few frames from a longer film. The collective meaning of crime and deviance is made not once but time and again, as part of an amplifying spiral that winds its way back and forth through media accounts, situated action and public perception. Spiralling in this way, the next loop of meaning never quite comes back around, instead moving on and away to new experiences and new perceptions, all the while echoing, or at other times undermining, meanings and experiences already constructed. As with Cohen's mods and rockers, today's spirals of crime and culture continue to wind and unwind – only faster and more furiously.

Some of the loops already noted could themselves be reconsidered as spirals. When the cameras of 'reality' television programmes like *COPS* alter the very reality they record, when police officers play to the camera and producers proffer instructions and advice, when all of this is framed and edited and broadcast as the unmediated 'reality' of everyday policing, this is only the beginning. From there, 'best of' reality television programmes and for-purchase compilations are cobbled together from programmes already aired – with still other television programmes claiming, in ironic counterpoint, to expose the growing black market in fake reality video footage. As already suggested, lawsuits for wrongful death or invasion of privacy or false arrest are filed, with video footage offered up as evidence and counter-evidence, and of course full media coverage of the trials themselves. Police departments and police officers in turn utilize such programmes as recruiting tools, and as informational devices to keep up with developments in other police departments; one officer even reports that he uses *COPS* as 'a training thing. It helps me to refer to situations when I'm out on the street' (Woodson, 2003: 11F). Rapaport (2007) further documents how other

popular permutations of ‘criminal vérité’ – police SWAT (Special Weapons And Tactics squads) shows like *Kansas City SWAT*, *Dallas SWAT* and *Detroit SWAT* – have served to ‘culturally consecrate activities that have historically been the province of military engagements in places where the Bill of Rights do not apply’. Such shows, he argues, ‘invite us to celebrate the Heckler and Koch machine pistols, Parker-Hale Model 85 sniper rifles, flash-bang grenades, armoured personnel carriers, and other paraphernalia of what is essentially infantry war-fighting transferred to American streets’. On their own, law enforcement practices that favour confrontation over consultation and risk aversion over risk assessment are bad enough, but when backed up by military-grade weaponry and army-style vehicles it’s hard to imagine that police–community relations will be improved (Balko, 2014).³ Just ask the citizens of Ferguson, Missouri.

When rappers like ODB are put on trial, when district attorneys confuse a multi-platinum selling rap group with a street gang, this is likewise no one-time collision of music and law. It is but one more turn in a now decades-old dance between rap artists, record companies, local prosecutors and moral entrepreneurs, all of whom find both problem and potential in the intermingling of ‘gangsta rap’, gangs and criminal history. For the record companies and the rappers, a carefully crafted outlaw image, even a criminal record, moves product; for local prosecutors and religious conservatives, high-profile public campaigns against such images move product as well, if of a somewhat different sort. For an attorney representing an accused killer, this spiral can even become a defence strategy. When Ronald Howard was convicted of killing a Texas state trooper, his defence attorney recalled his failed defence strategy: not guilty by reason of rap music. ‘He grew up in the ghetto and disliked police and these were his heroes, these rappers ... telling him if you’re pulled over, just blast away’, said attorney Allen Tanner. ‘It affected him. That was a totally valid, serious defense.’ And indeed, just before he shot the state trooper, Howard was listening to a Tupac Shakur rap – the one about shooting a cop and remembering the video of Rodney King (Graczyk, 2005).

Two other spirals are also worth noting for their tragic integration of mediated loops, representational spirals and concrete consequences. In the first, Andrea Yates drowns her five children in the family bathtub and at trial the prosecution, seeking to ensure a conviction, calls on psychiatrist and forensic analyst Park Dietz. A ‘frequent expert witness’ in such cases and a consultant on the NBC television drama *Law and Order*, Dietz is employed to bolster the prosecution’s contention that Yates developed her murder scheme from watching particular episodes of *Law and Order* that fictionalized actual cases of mothers killing their children. When the defence challenges his professional credentials, Dr Deitz responds by outlining in some detail the very episode of *Law and Order* that provided Yates with the perfect script for her actions – except that such an

episode never existed. As it turns out, Dietz had confounded 'the facts of three child-murder cases on which he had worked and the two *Law and Order* episodes based on them'. Because of this, Andrea Yates' murder conviction is overturned on appeal and a new trial is ordered; no word yet on whether Dr Dietz will help convert this second trial, or the first, into an episode of *Law and Order* (Wyatt, 2005).

The second tragedy is of considerably longer duration, spiralling downward for decades now. As with the criminalization of marijuana in the 1930s, the contemporary war on drugs in the USA has from its beginning spun image and ideology in such a way as to construct the very problem it claimed to address – and yet, shaped in this way, the 'problem' has continued to spiral back into the campaign that constructed it. As we noted years ago, the criminalization of drugs creates criminal consequences, consequences that call forth aggressive enforcement and further criminalization (Young, 1973). As Clinton Sanders and Eleanor Lyon (1995) have documented, police officers and prosecutors working under the pressure of contemporary anti-drug campaigns come to define almost all murders as 'drug deals gone bad', almost all assaults as fights over drugs, almost all perpetrators as drug users. As Ferrell (2004b) has shown, drug users in such circumstances sometimes do endanger the public – especially when the police are pursuing them at high speed as public dangers. And so, as the flow of drugs and drug panic becomes self-confirming, fabrications of 8-year-old heroin addicts win the Pulitzer Prize (Reinerman and Duskin, 1999), faked drug mule documentaries harvest international awards, World Health Organization officials suppress reports on marijuana's relative harmlessness, and the spiralling process so constructed continues to put people in prison and politicians in office.

To speak of such loops and spirals is to imply perhaps a certain smoothness of motion, a soft trajectory as the meaning of crime and criminal justice circulates through popular culture. But of course trajectories can change, and dramatically; spiralling movements of meaning can be made to alter course and serve new political masters. Amidst the political rubble of the 2001 World Trade Centre attacks, for example, the spiral that is the war on drugs was spun in a new direction. Playing to public fears, sensing that one war might be made to flow into another, the keepers of the drug war now engineered a cultural confluence of drugs and terror. The White House-based National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign produced a series of print and video ads that coupled recreational drug use with violent terrorism – creating, as Michelle Brown (2007: 13) says, 'linkages by which, semiotically, to chain individuals to the structural concerns of criminality, violence, and terror'. The spiral described by Reinerman and Duskin (1999: 85) – whereby ongoing anti-drug campaigns 'forge a public prepared to swallow the next junkie stereotype and to enlist in the next drug

war' – had now been turned hard right again, this time toward a new war and a new set of stereotypes.

Loops and spirals – case study 1

Rap music and the reconstitution of reality: thinking differently about [media] signs and [street] codes

Language, as a cultural code, relates to a world of meanings. All knowledge and language are culturally coded. Thus, knowledge or even a consciousness about delinquency is a social product. It is precisely here in the realm of knowledge that ideologies are contested, resisted, or accepted. (Visano, 1996: 92)

With its inherently transgressive dimensions, rap music is an obvious place to analyse the selling of crime and the confounding of illicit identity and consumer status. It is also an interesting place to observe the looping and spiralling processes that connect popular culture, urban violence and the war on drugs (see Bogazianos, 2012 for a more detailed cultural criminological explanation).

Since emerging out of the 'hustla' lifestyle associated with 1970s 'Blaxploitation movies', the 'retromack' pimp culture of East Oakland, and the violent street gang wars of the South Bronx, New York City and South Central Los Angeles, rap and subsequently 'hip-hop' music has gone on to become the world's best-selling musical form. Although rap music takes any number of stylistic ('party', 'mack', 'reality', etc.; see Krims, 2000) and regional ('crunk', 'bounce', 'boom-rap') forms, and is principally purchased by white youth, as a sociological phenomenon, rap music is typically analysed as a constitutive element of contemporary black urban culture. For example, in her article on the subject Charis Kubrin (2005) begins by closely associating gangsta rap with the established body of ethnographic work on the way structural conditions in black inner-city communities give rise to cultural adaptations that become embodied within a 'code of the street' (Anderson, 1999). According to this influential but now rather dated body of work, a local, hyper-masculine order develops within disadvantaged black communities, with its own codes and rituals of authenticity: a willingness to use violence in reputation building, a valorization of sexual promiscuity and conquest, conspicuous consumption as a means of establishing self-image and gaining 'respect', and a pronounced antagonism towards the police and other authorities. Building out from here, Kubrin's aim is clear: to examine the extent to which this 'code of the street' is present not only at street level but also in rap music.

Kubrin explains that standard scholarship in this field approaches gangsta rap as an expression of a classical subcultural order, with the existing street code serving as inspiration for rap lyrics, which then reflect this code. Kubrin's approach, though, is more nuanced; she views the culture/music/identity nexus from a 'constitutive' perspective. Gangsta rap, she says, should be understood as an 'interpretive resource', a way of 'organizing' or perhaps more accurately *reconstituting* reality, whereby

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'rappers' accounts ... reflexively accomplish a sense of reality – for themselves and for others'. Rap in this sense 'creates cultural understandings of urban street life that render violence, danger and unpredictability normative' (Kubrin, 2005: 366, 376; see similarly Kane, 1998).

Rather than trying to isolate any pure 'media effect' (see Bandura et al., 1961, 1963; Paik and Comstock, 1994 for classic examples), Kubrin shows how media influence operates alongside related cultural and social practices in a complex process of exchange and interaction. And as regards gangsta rap, other loops and spirals abound as well. Eric Watts (1997), for example, notes the dozens of high-profile rap artists who've been perpetrators or victims of criminal activity – from Snoop Dogg's involvement with Long Beach street gangs to the murder of Tupac Shakur – and so confirms that, in gangsta rap, crime and its representation are irrevocably intertwined. But Watts is more interested in a *material* analysis of rap, exploring how consumerism functions as an interpretative schema for defining and clarifying the relations among hip-hop culture, gangsta rap narratives and the interposition of an expanding rap industrial complex.

Watts focuses on a classic 'old school' rap song/video: Ice-T's 1991 'New Jack Hustla'. Here, we are presented with a familiar slice of '90s rap imagery – Uzi-wielding rappers extolling their commitment to violence as an expression of ghetto power – and so seeming confirmation of rappers as vulgar, barbaric and nihilistic. Careful analysis, though, reveals something more and something different: clues to the close symbiosis between rap and consumer capitalism.

Superficially, 'New Jack Hustla' appears to offer a straightforward validation of Kubrin's (2005) thesis that the 'code of the street' gets integrated into rap music, with the song's lyrical boasts about instrumental violence, weapons, bitches and money. Ice-T's Hustla is justifying his way of life, clarifying his self-image, and most importantly validating his chosen 'Hustla' lifestyle. Yet, Watts argues that this portrait of 'nihilistic bravado' is not all it seems. In other moments, the song offers a peek behind the rapper's 'mask of invincibility'; in fact, a closer lyrical analysis reveals another psyche for the Hustla. Along with the drive-bys and shootouts, Ice-T is keen to articulate what he calls his 'capitalist migraine'. Not for him life working at 'Micky Ds', broke and broken, he assures us. And the solution? His own warped version of the American Dream, where 'the ends justifies the means, that's the system', where 'I had nothing and I wanted it/ you had everything and you flaunted it/ turned the needy into the greedy/ with cocaine my success came speedy'. Watts explains:

Since the Hustler's being is constituted through the pressures of a street code, and since it seems to be a foregone conclusion that one will meet with some kind of untimely death in the ghetto, poverty represents a kind of living nothingness ... [G]angsta rap articulates an important perspective on the sad stasis of discharged personhood – the cultivated refusal by a cannibalistic consumer society to own up to its inability to meet its fabulous promises for livelihood. And so, the Hustler is a spectacular facade whose public performances both refute and sustain his status as a glamorous image (1997).

Or, as Ice-T asks, while posing the central paradox of rap and consumer society: 'Got me twisted, jammed into a paradox ... is this a nightmare or the American dream?'

Lyrics like these offer moments of ‘textual revelation’. Originally, Ice-T’s *Hustla* could only make sense of the world through an internalized code of the street. But as the song continues, a dawning awareness transcends the posturing: caught in the economic claustrophobia of mainstream materialism, the street code makes for a losing game, a trap, and some bad politics to boot.

However, by the start of the twenty-first century, as rap and hip-hop music became more commercial and more mainstream, the paradox that was so apparent in Ice-T’s 1991 song all but evaporated. Old School rappers like Ice-Cube and Tim Dogg used to rap about \$60 Nike trainers and 40oz bottles of Colt 45, but a decade later and the new giants of corporate hip-hop like P.Diddy and Jay-Z preferred to extol the virtues of Louis Vuitton luggage, Cristal champagne and the new Porsche Cayenne. Street-level ‘grinding’ had given way to suite-level commercialization. Advertising, marketing and consumerism were now displayed with a sort of knowing self-awareness, or as De Jong and Schuilenburg (2006) pointed out, so long as ‘the street’ and ‘the urban’ remain referenced for their symbolic authenticity, the rap and hip-hop industry could move high-end product, even as the genre retreated further from the impoverished lifeworlds where it originated. In the video for Snoop Dogg and Pharrell Williams’ hit *Drop it Like It’s Hot* (2004), for example, luxury cars and jewel-encrusted accoutrement seem intended to function as signifiers of both consumerist success and urban life, with transgressive stance and self-worth now conflated in simple commodity codes, as interpretable as a Nike ‘swoosh’ or a Gucci monogram.

But as rap and hip-hop culture grew in popularity, the loops and spirals of this particular fusion of crime and consumerism, transgression and popular music continued to swirl. Across the Atlantic, London’s black youth began to create their own distinctive mode of urban music based on American rap, Jamaican ‘dancehall’ and British ‘garage’ and ‘jungle’ music. Stemming from Bow, East London and based on the early recordings of Wiley, Dizzy Rascal and Lethal Bizzle, the UK ‘grime’ scene began to take off in 2001. Some UK grime rappers followed their American counterparts for lyrical inspiration, referencing violent local ‘postcode’ feuds and ‘flagging’ street gang symbols and signs in their rap videos. The music quickly developed an association with street violence, stabbing and gun crime, thanks in large part to grime artists’ frequent use of information and communication technology as a vehicle to disseminate their often menacing homemade music videos. Nothing new here, you might think – just another international variant of US rap music. But in recent years, parts of the UK grime scene have undergone something of a transformation. As cultural criminologist Johnny Ilan has documented (2012), high-profile grime rappers like Tinchy Stryder and Tinie Tempah have started to discard the traditional street codes of crime and violence, and instead adopt more universal themes of drinking, partying and socializing with the opposite sex. Importantly, this is not simply about embracing or validating the lush life of hyper consumerism, à la American rappers like Drake (‘I get paper’) or Lloyd Banks [ft Juelz Santana] (‘Beamer, Benz or Bentley’). Rather, many grime artists are now championing “‘respectable” entrepreneurial strategies often required to live a sustainable moderately wealthy life: gaining educational qualifications, carefully building a small business from the ground up and dutifully attending to craft’ (Ilan, 2014: 74). If you think this is all a

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far cry from Elijah Anderson's (1999) violent and masculine 'code of the street', it is. Just compare the following lyric by JME, the renowned underground grime MC, with the earlier stanza from Ice-T:

I stayed in school got my degree,
Even if I get a 2.2,
I've done it, time waste for no-one,
This year I was 22-,
My dad wants me to do a masters,
And my mum wants me to too.

(JME, from '123', on 'Famous', *Boy Better Know*, 2008, cited in Ilan, 2012: 47)

With today's grime MCs advocating 'compliant behaviour' and featuring as role models in university alumni magazines, it seems that things have come a long way since Ice-T's 'capitalist migraine' paradox.

But have they really? Travel back to the USA and enter the world of the 'online gangosphere', and it's clear that elements of rap's violent past are still very much alive and kicking. The website *WorldStarHipHop.com*, for example, has recently emerged as the platform du jour not just for the type of DIY, homemade rap videos that propelled UK grime artists to mainstream success, but also for video uploads of inter-gang death threats and the type of violent beatdowns discussed in the next section. On *WorldStarHipHop.com* and similar sites, the distinction between rap, hip-hop and the 'thug' lifestyle are once again indeterminable, as youths record themselves administering beatings or denigrating rival cross-town cliques whilst shouting 'Worldstar' into the camera, all too aware that the website edits together a best-of-the-week fight compilation (Austen, 2013).

In our next case study later in this chapter, we'll delve more deeply into the relationship between crime and violence in the online world where, as we hope to show, the only thing that's certain is change. For now, we'll simply note that the media spirals associated with the signs and street codes of transgressive urban music remain as unpredictable as they are uncontrollable. Which direction they take next is anybody's guess.

The commodification of violence and the marketing of transgression

People had been working for so many years to make the world a safe, organised place. Nobody realised how boring it had become ... Nobody had left much room for adventure, except maybe the kind you could buy. On a roller coaster. At a movie. Still, it would always be that kind of faux excitement ... And because there's no possibility of real disaster, real risk, we're left with no chance for real salvation. Real elation. Real excitement ... The laws that keep us safe, these laws condemn us to boredom. (Chuck Palahniuk, 2000: 59)

There's fast, ... scary fast, ... and then there's 'remember this moment for the rest of your life' fast. Pursue the moment. (Advertising strapline for the Lexus IS 350)

The family board game *Monopoly* has been around for generations. Recently, however, it experienced a number of thematic makeovers. In the USA, *Ghettopoly* is a *Monopoly*-style game in which 'playas' move around from 'Tyron's Gun Shop' to 'Ling Ling's Massage Parlour', building crack houses, 'pimping' and selling guns as they go. Meanwhile, in the UK, one games company recently courted controversy with its *Chavopoly* variant. Here, properties include a 'Dealer's Flat' and 'Vandalized Bus Stop' and the traditional *Monopoly* 'Community Chest' has become a 'Community Pest'! If board games aren't your thing, how about sports and recreation? Fed up with fad diets and celebrity-endorsed fitness programmes? Then why not try an altogether more austere regime. If you're 'a workout lifer', for £10.99 you can pick up a copy of *Felon Fitness: How to Get a Hard Body Without Doing Hard Time* (Kroger and Teufel, 2011). Based on the ideal of 'the jacked-up inmate', the book is the brainchild of LA criminal attorney William 'Bill' Kroger and fitness guru Trey Teufel. When visiting his clients in prison, Kroger noticed that 'they were always in great shape', and so he enlisted Teufel to devise a workout regime based around the following rubric: 'If you're fresh meat looking to tone up, the squats, push-ups, and burpies will get you yard-ready in less than a three-month stint ... Each exercise comes straight from the cellblock and the routines are those of real inmates. It's the workout of a lifetime – from guys serving twenty-five to life.' Prefer the more sedate pace of target shooting? Well, how about ordering the new gun-range target depicting a faceless hoodie-clad figure holding an iced tea and a bag of skittles. If this target sounds familiar, it's because it's meant to. The target is designed to resemble Trayvon Martin, the 17-year-old unarmed black youth gunned down by neighbourhood watch volunteer George Zimmerman in Florida in 2012. Zimmerman's acquittal may have provoked widespread protest and racial tension across America, but it also proved good for business for the anonymous Florida entrepreneur who produced the Trayvon targets: 'The response was overwhelming ... We sold out in two days' (Demby, 2012: n.p.). To the untrained eye, the development of such products might not mean much. However, to cultural criminologists, it exemplifies a more widespread tendency. These examples not only reveal the relationship between criminality and consumer lifestyle, they also illustrate the broader trend towards *the commodification of violence and the marketing of transgression*.

It is a notable irony that the more Western governments attempt to control the youth crime problem by imposing a series of external controls – everything from curfews and exclusion orders in the UK, to the deployment of police patrols in schools and the so-called 'school to prison pipeline' in the USA – the more they engender within young people not compliant rationality but heightened emotionality. Hence, there is an interplay in which the 'irrational responses' of

young people to state control provoke ever more punitive measures from the state, with youth culture thus becoming at once the site of excitement, contestation and experimentation. That this is the case is not surprising. The transgressive nature of youthful cultural practices has long provoked indignation among politicians keen to curry favour with the 'moral majority' by vilifying the perceived immorality of the young. Whether it's needlessly criminalizing more and more young people for minor offences or arresting young school kids for rule infractions in the classroom, Western governments are turning the screw on the young, subjecting not only their oppositional pleasures to increasing state sanction, but also their legitimate cultural practices and everyday round.

All the while, the market feeds into this dynamic, contributing to it and commodifying it. As we have seen, moral panics unfold today in a far more complex series of loops and spirals than was the case when Stan Cohen (1972) first articulated the concept. Now another twist: a decent dose of moral outrage on the part of older authorities can constitute the acid test of a truly oppositional, and therefore worthwhile, youthful endeavour. And as McRobbie and Thornton (1995) make clear, even this response is often co-opted and incorporated, as corporations use manufactured moral panic – the threat of censorship, a suggestion of sexual scandal – for their own profitable ends. In fact, panic-inducing images of crime and deviance are now prime marketing tools for selling products in the youth market. At one level, there is nothing inherently new about this; the compellingly salacious nature of certain criminal acts ensured a ready audience for crime throughout the twentieth century. What has changed, however, is the force and range of the illicit message, and the speed at which it loops and reverberates. Crime and transgression are now packaged and promoted as cool, fashionable cultural symbols, with transgression thus emerging as a desirable consumer decision (see Fenwick and Hayward, 2000). Here, within consumer culture, crime becomes an aesthetic, a style, a fashion – consider, for example, the British fashion labels *Criminal* and *Section 60*, the latter named after the police power to stop and search (see Treadwell, 2008) – and so the distinction between the representation of criminality and the pursuit of stylized excitement, especially youthful excitement, evaporates.

Today, corporations rely more and more on images of deviance as prime marketing tools for selling products, with crime and punishment featuring as regular tropes in major advertising campaigns – again, not an entirely new phenomenon, but one defined by a qualitative shift in the range and tone of advertiser-appropriated violence.⁴ Consider as an example the way the automobile is often advertised in contemporary society. With cars, car culture and car chases such a prevalent staple of the entertainment industry (just think of *The Fast and the Furious* movie series, car makeover shows like *Pimp My Ride*, *Overhaulin'* and *Monster Garage*, and best-selling video games like *Grand Theft Auto* and *Carmagedon*), it was perhaps only a matter of time before car

manufacturers started to employ tropes of transgression and crime, allied with visual motifs of conspicuous disobedience, in their advertising and marketing campaigns (Hayward, 2004: 171; Muzzatti, 2010). Just look at the following list: 'joyriding' (Nissan *Shogun*), terrorist suicide bombing (Volkswagen *Polo*), extreme sports (Nissan X-Trail), reckless driving (Lexus *IS 350*), base jumping (Suzuki *Grand Vitara* and Nissan *370Z*), graffiti (Plymouth *Neon*) and urban car theft (Volkswagen *Jetta*). Even the normally conservative German manufacturer Audi got in on the act, using pyromania (a fascination with fires and fire starting)

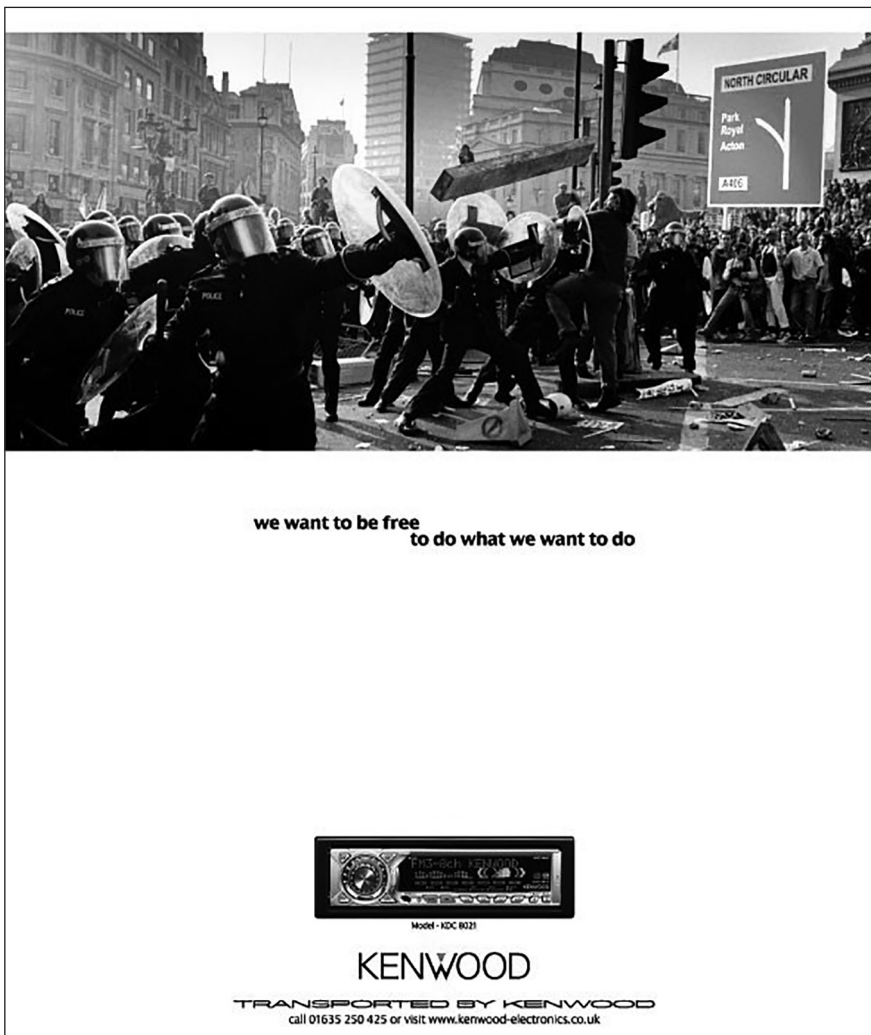


Plate 6.1 Kenwood car stereo poster: 'We want to be free – to do what we want to do'
Advertisement for Kenwood car stereos. Courtesy, Kenwood Electronics.

as a trope in a commercial for their A3 model, and employing British action movie star Jason Statham to reprise his role in car-centric movies like *The Transformer* and *Death Race* in their 2009 A6 campaign.

The advertising industry has, of course, long relied upon explicit sexuality and patriarchal gender stereotypes to move product (Berger, 1972: Ch. 7; Williamson, 1978; Goffman, 1979; Jhally, 1987) – but now women are increasingly portrayed as victims of, or passive accomplices to, crime and violence. In Chapter 4, we saw the FCUK shop window and its display of women violently victimizing one another; Kilbourne (1999) highlights similar cases of violently misogynistic marketing, with men pointing guns at women's heads, or attacking a woman in a jeans ad with the tag line 'Wear it out and make it scream'. A Baby-G watch advertisement on the side of a bus similarly depicts a naked women tied up with giant watches (Carter and Weaver, 2003: 126). More recently, über-trendy fashion house Dolce and Gabbana was forced to withdraw newspaper ads following a public outcry over their violently sexist content. In Spain, an ad showing a woman held to the ground by a half-dressed man was condemned by Labour Ministry officials as an offence to women's dignity and an 'incitement' to sexual violence. In Britain, the Advertising Standards Authority moved to ban another Dolce and Gabbana ad that featured, much like the FCUK window, bloodied women with knives (another ill-judged poster in the campaign depicted a scene that looked suspiciously like a homosexual gang rape taking place in an upscale clubhouse locker room). Such images may or may not directly 'incite' violence in the tradition of the media effects model, but they do clearly contribute to the cultural normalization of violence against women, to a sort of 'epistemic socialization' (Bennett and Ferrell, 1987) whereby viewers and consumers learn to see women as victims-in-waiting.

One final example of the deep, underlying contempt that some advertisers still have for women comes (inevitably perhaps) from the automobile industry. In 2013, the Ford Motor Company and the advertising firm WPP were forced into a series of hasty apologies after mock-up ads for the Ford Figo found their way onto the Internet (Stenovec, 2013). One of the ads featured cartoon caricatures of three women in sexually revealing costumes, with their hands and feet bound and their mouths gagged, stuffed into the back of a Ford Figo. Leering back from the driver's seat (and flashing a peace sign) is a figure that looks suspiciously like Silvio Berlusconi, the former Prime Minister of Italy, who in 2011 was embroiled in the infamous 'bunga bunga' sex party scandal involving underage prostitutes. (A second version featured Paris Hilton similarly kidnapping three members of the Kardashian family – presumably this was OK because it featured girl-on-girl violence!). According to WPP, the ads were not intended for general release, but were rather experimental mock-ups for internal discussion. Be that as it may, they are also illustrative of the willingness of mainstream corporations and their advertisers to commodify sexual violence in a bid to sell products. With dippy

fashionistas like Dolce and Gabbana ignoring the larger meaning of their advertisements, with companies making deals to place their consumer products in misogynistic rap videos and with advertising companies inadvertently revealing the deep-rooted sexism at the core of their industry, a particular interplay of crime, media and profit is made manifest: the willingness of mainstream corporations and their advertisers to portray women as passive, emotionless ciphers on the receiving end of transgressive violence.

The commodification of violence doesn't stop there, of course – far from it. Surf late-night satellite TV and you can experience the televisual sensation of self-styled 'extreme TV'. Here, the emphasis shifts from extreme car culture or advertised misogyny to embodied moments of visceral transgression: broken bones, concussions, lacerations. Unfettered by prime-time censorship restrictions, this now-established genre of youth TV constitutes a storehouse of illicit excitement, a ready resource for the voyeuristic consumption of pain and transgression. The popular TV show and film series *Jackass*, and its many derivative shows (e.g. Britain's *Dirty Sanchez* and the Finnish show *The Dudesons*), mix pop nihilism, pervasive hedonism and extremes of self-destructive violence (self-inflicted cuts, self-administered pepper spray) to create profitable mainstream entertainment. Better yet – or worse yet – is the fusing of extreme 'reality' TV with the *CSI* genre. Now available are explicit crime 'documentaries', such as Bolivia's hyper-violent *Telepolicial* and the Russian prime-time offering, *Criminal Russia*, both of which include graphic crime-scene footage of real crimes – street and gangland slayings in the case of *Telepolicial* and infamous serial killings (both solved and unsolved) in the case of *Criminal Russia*.

But for real extremes of mediated violence, forget television. Bubbling under the media surface is a netherworld of uncensored websites, DVDs and Podcasts that present brutally real crimes as illicit entertainment. From fairly innocuous 'happy slapping' compilations to hardcore 'caught on camera' schoolyard beat-downs and street fight downloads, so much of this material now circulates that 'producers' have begun to stratify their product in a bid to meet niche demands. Alongside standard fare like the *Agg Townz* schoolyard/street fights or the eBay favourite *Beatdowns and Scraps*, consumers can now select DVDs or downloads that feature fights between recently released US federal prisoners (*Felony Fights, Volumes 1–5*), organized street gangs (*Urban Warfare: Gangs Caught on Tape*) and 'all girl' protagonists (*Spotlight Honies vs. Worldwide Honies: Good Girls Gone Bad, Extreme Chick Flicks* and *Queen of the Hood*) (see Slater and Tomsen, 2012). And then there are the infamous *Bumfights* – the undeniable inspiration for most, if not all, of the above titles. Here, the premise is simple: find some homeless folks, maybe drug addicts or alcoholics, persuade them to fight each other for booze or cash, videotape the confrontations, synchronize the blows and pratfalls to a cool skate punk soundtrack and package the whole thing into a series of stylish video releases. Think consumption of this sort of staged barbarism is confined to

a few social outsiders? Think again. It's estimated that, alongside several million online views, over 600,000 hard-copy DVDs (remember them?) of the various *Bumfights* videos have been sold worldwide.

Amidst the contemporary mediascape, then, crime and violence become cheap commodities, emptied of their embodied consequences, sold as seductions of entertainment and digital spectacle. These latest transformations in mediated violence in turn reaffirm gender and class stereotypes, and highlight a mean-spirited contemporary culture of marketed aggression and hyper-violent machismo (Brent and Kraska, 2013). Along the way they obliterate old distinctions between the real and the image, between mediated cause and effect, becoming embedded in the everyday cultures of youth and consumption. And so a troubling question: How might these tendencies develop in the future, as the technology of entertainment becomes ever more sophisticated and pervasive?

Cultural criminology and 'real virtuality': crime, the Internet and the 'will-to-representation'

As the Internet and social networking have transformed society, criminology has been employed to explain and counter the myriad forms of crime, danger and deviance that quickly appeared in the wake of the digital revolution. Some useful work has emerged in the burgeoning field of Internet crime (see Jewkes and Yar, 2010 for an overview). However, whilst 'cybercrime' is now an established area of criminological attention, most research focuses either on explaining and identifying various forms of online crime (e.g. 'hacking', 'scamming', 'identity theft') or on developing ways to combat it, either through regulation and Internet law or by policing the Internet and computer forensics. This is understandable as there are major problems to solve, and moreover these problems are fluid, mutable and constantly evolving, reflecting the 'fast twitch' nature of the Internet and its attendant forms of digital technology. Yet, we would argue that so far criminology has only scratched the surface when it comes to understanding how digital communication is shaping social practice. In this section, we outline some tentative alternative (and hopefully complementary) areas of engagement that could prove useful for criminologists seeking to make better sense of cyberspace and how human beings use and abuse it.

Conceptually, ongoing criminological and legal work on cybercrime is primarily concerned with *diffusion*, whether in terms of the increased criminal opportunities afforded by decentralized networks or the potential diffusion of victimhood associated with digital crimes such as phishing scams or identity theft. Consider, for example, the legal/preventionist response to the compression

and sharing of digital music files. The initial music industry panic was followed by expensive litigation and a subsequent flurry of excessive governmental legislation/prohibition that not only missed the target, but ultimately missed the point: that despite claims to the contrary, media conglomerates continue to grow and profit, largely because they have adopted new business models that work with and not against 'the download generation'.

As cultural criminologists, we're not interested in setting up rigid and ultimately false distinctions between virtual and real-world experience. Rather, as already seen in our other approaches to 'crime and the media', our line of analysis attempts to move beyond old formulae and established dualisms. Consequently, we would argue that, rather than focusing solely on models of diffusion or thinking of the Internet simply as a digital tool, we should instead focus on the *experience of the Internet* – how it functions in particular ways for particular purposes. This in turn allows us to think about digital/online (criminal) activities as a *process*, that is, as phenomena in constant dialogue and transformation with other phenomena/technologies. Here, we enter the familiar territory of Manuel Castells (1996), both in terms of his work on the networked 'space of flows' and, more importantly, his now classic notion of 'real virtuality' – the way our culture of 'embedded media' constantly impinges on physical reality, resulting in the categories of the 'real' and the 'virtual' becoming ever more hybridized. Such thinking allows us to think differently about online space and digital culture, developing concepts such as 'virtuality', 'telepresence', 'convergence' and 'presence', all of which have considerable potential criminological application.

The term 'convergence' will be well known to many cybercrime experts for at one level it describes the straightforward convergence of the technological (the networkable, compressible and manipulable features of the digital format) and regulatory processes associated with the digital media experience. Here, talk is of 'weightless money' (e.g. cash transfers), 'weightless products' (e.g. eBooks, and 'virtual goods' in online gaming platforms) and the 'weightless economy' (e.g. 'intellectual property' and 'information colonialism'). Such areas interest criminologists, of course, because they spawn criminogenic counter phenomena such as 'weightless money launderers', 'weightless counterfeiters' and 'weightless IP and bio pirates'. At another level, however, convergence is a more complex process, especially when considered in relation to the theoretical discourse surrounding *virtuality and the blurring distinction between the virtual and the actual*. Consider, for example, online crimes perpetrated against cyber profiles/identities such as game avatars. Courts in various jurisdictions have already heard numerous cases involving online theft, fraud and even cyber-bullying and assault in multi-player, online role-playing games such as *Second Life* and *World of Warcraft*. Although much-hyped, this blurring of the virtual and the actual is typically limited to

monetary matters, as players find themselves out real money as a result of the theft of, for example, virtual 'goods' or 'land'. However, on occasion this blurring process is more complex and spatially interesting. Recently, Linden Lab, the company behind *Second Life*, found itself at the centre of a media storm after the German TV station ARD claimed that a *Second Life* player paid for sex with underage players or players posing as (digital) minors. Ultimately, it transpired that the players involved in the incident were a 54-year-old man and a 27-year-old woman who used their online avatars to depict a virtual sex act between a man and a child avatar. On a practical, legal level, this incident highlights issues of jurisdiction – the player involved was German and in Germany 'simulated' sex with children is punishable by up to five years in prison (in other countries it is not an offence). However, what is more interesting is how this incident highlights the nature and role of intentionality within virtual space. For some time now, intentionality has been a sufficient cause for prosecution in real-life cases involving the online 'grooming' of minors by paedophiles. However, the *Second Life* case illustrates that virtual actions/intentions can also lead to *actual* consequences. ARD passed the images to a state attorney in Halle, while Linden Lab contacted the authorities and subsequently made it abundantly clear that they would not tolerate 'erotic ageplay' on their site and would do all they could in the future to bring virtual and real-life paedophiles to justice.

Moving beyond legal questions of intentionality, these incidents raise other questions about how online space is navigated and conceived by individuals. Key here is the notion of 'telepresence' that has been used to describe the immersive experience associated with certain aspects of digital culture. Simply stated, communication technologies have the potential to alter the way we experience the sense of *being* in an environment:

Presence is relatively unproblematic in unmediated situations, we *are* where we 'are'... However, when mediated communication or long distance interaction is introduced into the equation, things begin to change. In this situation we gain the ability to simultaneously exist in two different environments at the same time: the physical environment in which our body is located and the conceptual or interactional 'space' we are presented with through the use of the medium. (Miller, 2011: 31)

The 'interactional space' associated with telepresence has interesting criminological connotations. Most obviously, digital technology creates what one might describe as porous *spaces of subjectivity* in which moves made via the rhizomic, hyperlinked Internet appear materially or spatially insignificant, but in reality have tangible consequences. Obvious examples here include surfing for sub rosa sexual imagery (see Jenkins, 2001 on the online subcultural practices associated with child pornography) and the type of hate speech that is such a common feature of 'comment'/'message' boards. Indeed, the 'a-spatial' nature of online

'communities' actually lends itself to 'emotion dumping' and other outpourings of personal self-expression that would never be tolerated in physical space, from 'virtual revenge talk' and 'online vigilantism' (Cottee, 2010) to 'cyber bullying' and 'online stalking'.

Telepresence has been much discussed by sociologists interested in digital culture. However, what is even more relevant to criminologists (especially those concerned with the diffusion of victimization) is the growing interest in digital 'presence' (Licoppe, 2004). Of most significance here is geographer Vince Miller's recent work on how the online self is uploaded and presented via both network profiles, active and non-active forum and chatroom registrations, abandoned blogs and online shopping accounts, and what he describes as 'phatic' communication such as status updates, informationless gestures ('pokes'), microblog 'shout-outs' and other forms of digital interaction that prioritize 'connection and acknowledgement over content and dialogue' (Miller, 2011: 205). Such information, Miller argues, constitutes our digital 'presence', a quasi-private disembodied virtual 'persona' that exists at various points across the architecture of the Internet. If historically, privacy revolved around secrecy, anonymity and solitude, today there is a vast online reservoir of personal information about each and every one of us, from uploaded tagged photographs to our consumer preferences and surfing habits. In virtual space, we never sleep, we are always out there, 'alive' so to speak. What's more, digital 'personal traces', unlike 'hard copy' information, have a permanent life span. As Miller suggests, there is no more 'social forgetfulness'; our virtual 'presence' is there to be trawled, data-mined and profiled by everyone from credit and consumer agencies to anonymous dataveillance and surveillance organizations. Miller's concept of 'presence' has obvious criminological application; not just in terms of specific cybercrimes like identity theft, but in other areas such as the rehabilitation of offenders and how post-release/prosecution identity might be affected by one's residual online presence, or in relation to other areas of digital research such as Mark Poster's (1995) notion of 'the digital superpanopticon' and connected questions about the legal dimensions of privacy and data collection.

This line of thought can be developed by drawing on the work of our colleague Majid Yar (2012) and in particular his important cultural criminological concept of 'the will-to-representation'.⁵ Yar's central point, like ours, is that those interested in studying the relationship between crime and the media must move beyond the idea that the public is simply a passive internalizer of mass communication and recognize instead that large numbers of 'ordinary people' are now primary producers of self-generated mediated representations. Thanks to social networking, handheld cameras, 'webcams', blogs, vlogs and other new media forms, today's subject 'no longer interprets or attends to representations produced elsewhere, but becomes her- or himself the source of

those representations' (2012: 248). Thus, we are confronted with the spectacle of individuals and groups performing, recording, sharing and publishing their acts of deviance – everything from schoolyard bullying to acts of rioting, even terrorism. In itself, this is not especially new, but what is interesting is Yar's claim that the nexus of user-generated content and the desire of individuals to mediate themselves through self-representation might *itself be a motivating factor for offending behaviour*.

This kind of 'will to communicate' or 'will to representation' may be seen in itself as a new kind of causal inducement to law- and rule-breaking behaviour. It may be that, in the new media age, the terms of criminological questioning need to be sometimes reversed: instead of asking whether 'media' instigates crime or fear of crime, we must ask how the very possibility of mediating oneself to an audience through self-representation might be bound up with the genesis of criminal behaviour. (2012: 246)

The will-to-representation, then, becomes crucial for understanding a contemporary world where individuals 'desire to be seen, and esteemed or celebrated, by others for their criminal activities'. Consequently, we now increasingly encounter the criminogenic phenomenon of deviant and criminal acts being engineered or instigated specifically to be recorded and later shared via social networks and other Internet platforms.

This development has quickly become entrenched. For example, in the first edition of this book we discussed the case of the 2007 Virginia Tech University shooting. Our goal then was to highlight the interplay of high-speed digital communications and user-generated websites – our point being that, such was the immediacy of social networking, the students trapped in university buildings were posting digital phone footage of the shootings on the university's 45,000-member Facebook site long before even 24-hour rolling news was effectively covering the story. As a coda to the vignette, we mentioned in passing that the assailant, Seung-Hui Cho, took the step of mailing a videotape of himself outlining his intentions to the national media. Fast forward seven years to another university massacre, this time at the campus of the University of California, Santa Barbara, where 22-year-old Elliot Rodger killed six students and injured 13 others before turning the gun on himself. Rodger had a history of mental health problems, but he also had a history of blogging and posting videos about himself online. Although essentially very similar cases – both Cho and Rodger left recorded video confessions and wrote lengthy 'manifestos' explaining their motivation – it's interesting to note the extent to which the will-to-representation is more explicit in the latter case. Cho's video, albeit chilling, was recorded just prior to the shooting and has an almost perfunctory (if rambling) feel to it. Rodger, on the other hand, having grown up with social

media, was far more aware of the importance of managing his self-image in the media after his suicide. Hence, he produced both a 107,000-word digital manifesto (entitled 'My Twisted World: The Story of Elliot Rodger') and a series of bizarrely compelling video blogs in which he films himself sitting in his car or by the side of the road, calmly discussing his frustration at not being able to find a girlfriend, his virginity and his hatred of ethnic minorities and interracial couples. Rodger is an abject narcissist, of course, and his videos, all carefully framed and beautifully back-lit by the fading California sun, bear testimony to his self-absorption. But they also illustrate something else – a knowing awareness of his non-degradable digital 'presence', his *eternal mediated being*. In other words, they are also a testament to his will-to-represent, both before and after his own physical death.

Rodger is an obvious candidate to illustrate the will-to-representation, but you don't have to look far to find other examples of how violent crimes are not just being committed but *enacted* for the camera. In the world of the Black US street gang, for example, you're now more likely to hear the term 'driller' – a name given to gangbangers who stir up trouble on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram – than you are old school gang labels like 'OG' (Original Gangster). The use of the Internet as a means to start 'beef', enhance 'rep' and 'call out' other cliques is now so common that a video of a gang member 'drilling' a cross-town rival uploaded to YouTube or Instagram in the morning can result in a related shooting later that same day (Austen, 2013). In fact, it has become so common for gang members to post photographs of new weapons or make claims about violent incidents or future acts of retaliation online that police departments now have special squads monitoring the 'gangosphere', looking for evidence to initiate probation revocations. Yar documents a host of other examples, including an assault that took place in the Werribee suburb of Melbourne: 'Here, a group of eight teenagers sexually assaulted a girl, urinated on her and tried to set her on fire. Not only did they film the assault, but subsequently edited the footage and created DVDs, which they proceeded to sell at a number of nearby schools for AU\$5 per copy' (Yar, 2012: 253). But the most egregious example of the will-to-representation is surely found among today's Islamic terrorists and insurgents. It is something of an irony given the anti-Western, anti-modern sentiments of your average Jihadi, that Western supporters of the medieval Caliphate have become so adept at using new modes of digital communication to spread their poisonous message. Whether it's the staggered release of barbaric, if carefully choreographed, beheading videos or the more subtle propaganda of blog and vlog posts uploaded by European Muslims documenting their lives in Syria as a way of enticing others to join them (see Carr, 2014), it's clear that today's Jihad in the Levant and elsewhere relies heavily on mediated spectacle and the will-to-representation.

Loops and spirals – case study 2

Real war news, real war games

This is not a video game. This is real war. (General Norman Schwarzkopf, press conference, First Gulf War, in De Jong and Schuilenburg, 2006: 26)

At least one Marine seems ecstatic about being in a life-or-death gun fight. Nineteen-year-old Corporal Harold James Trombley ... has been waiting all day for permission to fire his machine gun ... Now Trombley is curled over his weapon, firing away ... Trombley is beside himself. 'I was just thinking one thing when we drove into that ambush,' he enthuses. '*Grand Theft Auto: Vice City*. I felt like I was living it when I seen the flames coming out of windows, the blown-up car in the street, guys crawling around shooting at us. It was fucking cool.' (Wright, 2004: 6–7)

In this vignette, we turn to another looping example of violence as commodified digital spectacle: the use of US military and insurgent violence as virtual entertainment in the fast-changing, dangerously creative world of digital gaming. Where better to consider the 'state of suspension' between the real and the virtual?

In *Mediapolis* (2006), Alex De Jong and Marc Schuilenburg investigate what they call the 'military–entertainment complex', showing how the US Army has converted a host of video games, from early 1980s titles like *Battlezone* and *Army Battlezone* to later offerings like *Doom* (1993), *Medal of Honor* (1999) and *Counterstrike* (2001), into simulated combat conditioning exercises for infantry soldiers. That the US Army utilizes video games for training purposes is not especially surprising, given that the majority of young military personnel have been raised in environments where video gaming was commonplace (see Wright, 2004). More surprising perhaps – and certainly more criminologically important – is the extent to which the distinction between simulated, virtual training and real-life, on-the-ground soldiering is evaporating.

This conflation is the result of two now well-established, interrelated processes. First, games industry innovations have facilitated enhanced recreation of real-world environments. Marketed with the tagline 'Real War News, Real War Games', *Kuma War* (2004), for example, incorporated downloadable TV news footage from the war zones of Afghanistan and Iraq. This allowed online gamers 'to participate in the American hunt for members of Al Qaeda in the Shah-i-Kot Valley in Eastern Afghanistan' or to experience the 'bloody happenings at the centre of Fallujah' (De Jong and Schuilenburg, 2006: 21).

Second, the US Army itself has long since experimented with a series of temporally and spatially 'authentic' first-person-shooter games. Not content with simply converting existing video-game platforms, in 2002 the US Army launched *America's Army: Operations* (followed in 2005 by *America's Army: The Rise of the Soldier*).⁶ Costing over \$6 million to develop, *America's Army* became one of the top five





Plate 6.2 Screenshot of 'Special Forces Extraction Alpha' from *America's Army*

Credit: De Jong and Schuilenburg (2006), by permission

online action games during the occupation of Iraq, with over 5.5 million registered users worldwide. Intended as a digital recruiting sergeant, *America's Army* didn't just recreate basic military training, from weapons instruction to rudimentary battlefield medical procedures, it reproduced actual combat scenarios in graphic detail and, importantly, in real time. The primary goal, of course, was to acculturate players to the tactics and nuances of combat. But this was no first-person-shooter free-fire fest. Indeed, one of the unwritten aims of *America's Army* was to encourage players to think more and fire less; trigger-happy gamers were discouraged. Participants were required to adhere to the same regulations that govern all Army personnel. Breaches of the rules saw players banned from the site, while those who successfully passed tests and complied with regulations proceeded to higher levels.⁷

Just one more shoot-'em-up war video game, albeit a particularly realistic one? Or an insidious international recruiting tool, designed to roll out military training and military ethos to a new generation of video gamers? Well, yes. And so another either/or dichotomy gone, as the illusory world of video games flows into the all too violently real world of contemporary warfare. This isn't the last loop in the spiral, either. Like those Internet sociologists who talk about the 'hybridized state of suspension' between real life and cyberspace (Robbins, 1996; Turkle, 1997), De Jong and Schuilenburg (2006: 13) view developments in virtual space as echoes, maybe mirror images, of still other tendencies underway in everyday life. They see *America's Army*, *Kuma War* and similar forms of real/virtual entertainment like the 2006 movie *The War Tapes* (a documentary film directed by Deborah

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Scranton that drew upon hundreds of hours of real-life combat footage of the Iraq War filmed and posted on the Internet by US military personnel Sgt Steve Pink, Specialist Mike Moriarty and Sgt Zack Bazzi [Poole, 2006] as manifestations of an increasing 'militarization of public space':

A military control net has been thrown across the city and the mesh is being drawn tighter and tighter, leading to an altered experience of one's own identity as well as the installation of a specific regime of rules and sanctions. Renowned war games such as *America's Army* and *Full Spectrum Warrior* represent these radical changes better than the last police report or academic manuscript. These games indicate how the militarization of life has become the most important input of a culture that is oriented towards security. (De Jong and Schuilenburg, 2006: 13)



Plate 6.3 Cover of *Under Siege*

Credit: Afkar Media (2004)

In virtual space as in 'real' life, though, every action has a reaction – and so another loop or two unwinds. While the US 'military–entertainment complex' goes about its business, in other parts of the world, huddled around glowing computer screens, small teams of games-savvy programmers use similar technology to pedal their own ideological messages. Even before *America's Army* was available as a download, Palestinian supporters were releasing online video games featuring digital recreations of actual combat scenes from the ongoing Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Their goals with games like *Under Ash* (Afkar Media, 2001), *Under Siege* (Afkar Media, 2004) and *Special Force* (Hezbollah, 2003) were twofold⁸: first, to portray their own account of the struggle for Palestine, and second, to counter the worldwide hegemony of American-designed war games. In one such game – dedicated to Palestinian martyrs – players who utilize only (virtual) stones to take on Israeli soldiers are reminded to take the game out of its virtual environment and onto the streets. 'Isn't this a lesson in the continual movement from the real to the virtual world and back?' ask De Jong and Schuilenberg (2006: 67). 'The logic of the movement rests on the fact that each virtuality eventually becomes reality and that each reality sinks into a virtual world.'

All this may sound like an esoteric exercise in hyperreal theory, but one final looping development surrounding war gaming brings us back to reality with a resounding bang. In 2013, a controversy ensued when a French soldier was photographed on active duty in Mali wearing a skull facemask similar to the one worn by a character in *Modern Warfare*, a subseries of the highly successful *Call of Duty* video game. This was 'unacceptable behaviour' according to a high-ranking French colonel and French authorities quickly launched an investigation. But there was a problem. Combat soldiers have worn skull masks such as these for years; in fact, it has become something of a trend among Special Forces around the world. Moreover, as Luke Plunkett (2013: n.p.) explains: 'the mask was not invented by *Call of Duty*, or its developers Infinity Ward. Indeed, its presence in the game was inspired by the mask's use by soldiers in real life, as it's been worn by US troops – who first took to it as a fashionable alternative to regular gear (it began as a designer ski mask) at the beginning of the Iraq War – for almost a *decade* now, long before development ever began on the *Modern Warfare* series ... the mask is in *Call of Duty* because it's associated with real soldiers, not the other way around'. Just one more loop in the endless spiral by which computer-mediated and Internet-circulated communication explode the barriers between the virtual and the real.

To think critically about 'crime and the media' – to move past simple measures of media content or media effects, and on to a sense of loops and spirals, of fluidity and saturation – is not only to understand the dynamics of crime and transgression in late modernity, it is also to imagine new trajectories towards social justice. When crime policy is made in the media, when courts echo with media-made expectations, when police officers perform for their own cameras, criminologists must find ways to penetrate these dynamics if they're to humanize them. When crime collapses into commodity, war into entertainment, reality into virtuality, criminologists must find new avenues of intellectual inquiry appropriate to these confounded circumstances.

Yet, it's unlikely they'll succeed if they stick to the stale, sanitized sort of social scientific criminology that has dominated the last few decades. Instead, criminologists will need critiques that can converse with the culture at large, methods that can surf late-modern flows of meaning, knowledge that can challenge dominant understandings. Chapter 8 explores the methods by which such dangerous, fluid knowledge might be created. The book ends with an attempt to insinuate such knowledge into the flow of methodological meaning around crime and justice, and so to turn the spiral towards progressive understanding.



A selection of films and documentaries illustrative of some of the themes and ideas in this chapter

***Nightcrawler*, 2014, Dir. Dan Gilroy**

'To capture the spirit of what we air, think of our newscast as a screaming woman running down the street with her throat cut'. So says Rene Russo's character, Nina Romina, to fledgling local news cameraman Lou Bloom (Jake Gyllenhaal) in Dan Gilroy's excoriating film about contemporary American news values. Although *Nightcrawler* has much to say about the problematic state of crime news, it is the overlapping televisual sensibilities of Romina and the borderline sociopath Bloom that is perhaps most revealing.

***Network*, 1976, Dir. Sidney Lumet**

A searing, multi-Oscar winning satire of mainstream media, *Network* tells the story of a fictional television network, Union Broadcasting System, and how it uses morally bankrupt methods to deal with its flagging ratings. 'I'm as mad as hell and I'm not going to take this anymore', screams Peter Finch's character shortly after threatening to kill himself live on air. However, rather than sack him from his job as UBS's news anchor, the network gives him his own show!

***The Pervert's Guide to Cinema*, 2006, Dir. Sophie Fiennes**

The entertaining philosopher Slavoj Žižek takes us on a visual journey through some of the most famous films in movie history – only this time we are asked to delve deep into the hidden language of cinema in a bid to reveal what movies actually tell us about our psychic selves. Skipping effortlessly from The Marx Brothers to Hitchcock to David Lynch, Žižek explains how fantasy, reality, sexuality, subjectivity, desire and materiality are all deeply embedded in the DNA of modern cinema. Screen all or parts of this film and you'll never view movies in the same way again.

Killing Us Softly, 1979, Dirs. Margaret Lazarus and Renner Wunderlich; *Still Killing Us Softly*, 1987, Dirs Margaret Lazarus and Renner Wunderlich; *Killing Us Softly 3*, 1999, Dir. Sut Jhally

Drawing on Jean Kilbourne's academic work on the study of gender representation in popular culture, the *Killing Us Softly* trilogy delves into the world of advertisements and TV commercials (hundreds are analysed) to show how, although the image of women in advertising has changed over the last 20 years, many of the underlying tendencies towards sexism and patriarchy remain the same.

Bus 174, 2002, Dir. José Padhila

Described as 'the trajectory of a tragedy', *Bus 174* is a hard-hitting documentary about the hijacking of a bus in Rio de Janeiro on St Valentine's Day 2000. It tells two parallel stories. The first describes the hijacker's life of social deprivation in Rio's shanty towns and subsequent experiences inside Brazil's brutal prison system. The second is the story of the hijack itself, which was broadcast live on TV for over four hours. Taken together, the two stories illustrate why Brazil and other countries with similar social and economic problems are so violent (see www.bus174.com).

Starsuckers, 2009, Dir. Chris Atkins

One of our favourite graffiti stencils of recent years is the one that simply states: 'Stop making stupid people famous.' The British documentary *Starsuckers* seems to agree, setting out to expose the 'shams and deceit involved in creating a pernicious celebrity culture'. If you're interested in, or fed up with, how we became so celebrity-obsessed, this film is for you.

Further Reading

Hayward, K. and Presdee, M. (eds) (2010) *Framing Crime: Cultural Criminology and the Image*. London: Routledge-Cavendish.

An edited collection of twelve cultural criminology essays aimed at helping the reader to understand the ways in which the contemporary 'story of crime' is constructed and promulgated through the image. Handily, each chapter includes a brief 'methods' section for those interested in undertaking their own media analyses.

Jewkes, Y. (2010) *Crime and the Media*, 2nd edition. London: SAGE.

Clearly set out and crisply written, Jewkes' book breaks down the barriers between media studies and criminology, offering up a series of insights into the role played by power and politics in the crime-media nexus. Highly appropriate for undergraduate students.

Ferrell, J. and Websdale, N. (eds) (1999) *Making Trouble: Cultural Constructions of Crime, Deviance and Control*. New York, NY: Aldine de Gruyter.

Leading cultural criminologists and social constructionists explore the mediated cultural dynamics surrounding a host of contemporary controversies, from tabloid TV crime to the social construction of 'stranger danger'.

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Greer, C. (2009) *Crime and the Media: A Reader*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Easy-to-follow cultural criminologically-infused collection that offers a good starting point to get to grips with the key debates and theories relating to crime and the media.

Young, A. (2009) *The Scene of Violence: Crime, Cinema, Affect*. London: Routledge.

A recent text by Alison Young that stresses the *affective processes* associated with crime representation. Arguing that crime as image connects bodies, Young asks us to think about how visceral crime images affect us not only in terms of social policy or criminal justice practice, but bodily.

De Jong, A. and Schuilenburg, M. (2006) *Mediapolis*. Rotterdam: 010 Publishers.

More suitable for advanced students, De Jong and Schuilenburg's work suggests that developments in virtual space are being echoed in contemporary public space.

Useful Websites

Wall of Films

www.filmsforaction.org/walloffilms/

Website that provides free access to hundreds of political documentaries from some of the world's most influential filmmakers.

Mediastudies.com

www.mediastudies.com/

A website providing hundreds of links to international news media sites.

Visual and Cultural Criminology

www.facebook.com/groups/116285838427174/?fref=ts

For those of you with a Facebook account, see Chris McCormick's visual and cultural criminology page for daily postings about visual criminology, art and crime, and a host of other aspects associated with crime and its representation.

Notes

- 1 We acknowledge, of course, the mass of excellent existing research on the crime-media nexus. However, much of this traditional scholarship relies on relatively formulaic readings of crime's presentation in the media, or alternatively, the 'effects' of this presentation on attitudes and behaviour (see Ericson, 1995; Kidd-Hewitt and Osborne, 1995; Reiner, 2002; Carter and Weaver, 2003; Trend, 2007; Carrabine, 2008; Greer, 2009; Jewkes, 2011; Greer and Reiner, 2012 for comprehensive summaries; for a specifically cultural criminological take, see pages 125–9 of the first edition of the current text, and Yar, 2010). These established approaches (like 'content analysis', 'effects research' and 'media production observation') all have a place within cultural criminology, what with cultural criminology's concern for understanding mediated representations of

crime, their effects within individual and collective behaviour, and their connections to power, domination and injustice. Yet, none of these approaches in and of themselves seems sufficient for untangling the complex, non-linear relationships that now exist between crime and the media in our increasingly media-saturated world of global satellite television and duelling websites, Facebook and YouTube, WhatsApp and Snapchat, Tumblr and Instagram. What is required now are new modes of analysis that utilize aspects of the above approaches without reproducing their old dualisms: too much or too little media content regarding crime, effects or no effects of violent imagery, media coverage of crime that is democratic or elitist. As Carter and Weaver (2003: 16) make clear, the only way forward is to radically rethink 'the terms of a debate that has become intransigently binaristic'. The goal of cultural criminology, then, is to 'intellectually reorient' and 'radically repoliticize' the study of crime and the media, to explore the fluidities of meaning by which the crime-media dynamic 'socializes and directs our thinking and actions in a range of hierarchical, complex, nuanced, insidious, gratifying, pleasurable and largely imperceptible ways' (Carter and Weaver, 2003: 167), hence the more holistic approach to tracing the contemporary flow of meaning between crime and the media offered here.

- 2 Miss Moss's financial accounts certainly make interesting reading. Moss owned 100 per cent of Skate Enterprises, a company established to manage her endorsements and image rights. After the 'cocaine' incident, Skate Enterprises's turnover doubled: 'The accounts are highly significant because the financial year they cover ended five months after the publication of the photographs. They suggest that even during the depths of her brief period of disgrace Moss was prospering' (Prynn, 2007).
- 3 In his book, *Rise of the Warrior Cop: The Militarization of America's Police Forces*, the investigative journalist Radley Balko (2014) estimated that the number of SWAT teams in American municipalities with populations between 25,000 and 50,000 increased by some 300 per cent between 1984 and 1995.
- 4 While this area remains woefully under-researched within criminology, one US-based study is useful in this regard. In 2000 Maguire and associates analysed 1,699 commercials televised between 1996–7, concluding that, while violence in television advertisements was 'generally tame' and innocuous in nature, there had been a '100 per cent increase in violent content in television advertisements in 1997 compared to 1996' (cited in Carter and Weaver, 2003: 120). The limitations of this type of research not withstanding, it is interesting to note that nearly two decades after the Maguire et al. study, this tendency has accelerated, with advertisers now regularly relying upon crime and criminality as central features in their campaigns.
- 5 Yar's concept of 'will-to-representation' is derived from Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation* (1967).
- 6 See also *Full Spectrum Warrior* (THQ, 2004) and its sequel *Full Spectrum Warrior: Ten Hammers* (THQ, 2006); initially developed by the US Army as sophisticated combat simulators, these training aids were also subsequently released to the general public as multi-format video games.
- 7 The use of military video-game simulators also extends to post-conflict rehabilitation. *Virtual Iraq* (2006) is used by US military clinics to help veterans re-experience the sounds and scenes that may have triggered painful memories of their tours of duty in Iraq. It is claimed that exposure to these simulated environments can help combat post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).
- 8 While *Special Force* and the *Afkar Media* games all hail from the same geographic region, they are very different both in terms of socio-political position and game play. While *Special Force* could be considered an Arabic reflection of *America's Army* or *Full Spectrum Warrior*, *Under Ash* and *Under Siege* are different in that they are based on real-life stories of human suffering caused by the occupation.