

Society Must Be Defended: Online Quality of Life, a Foucauldian Case Study of Gamergate

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Abstract: The activity of real-life trolls and the psychological impact on their victims has been the subject matter of recent television drama, such as Channel 4's *Cyberbully* (2015), and horror films with a supernatural twist, such as *Unfriended* (2015). However, this article explores a key transition in the construction of online social power, from its direct, brutal enforcement by the figure of the troll, to a particular example of the online, biopolitical regulation of quality of life using the device of Vivian James: the fictional character, mascot, and figurehead of the Gamergate protest movement.

Keywords: online quality of life, videogaming, videogaming culture, online culture, gamergate, feminism

There is a proverb on the Internet, claiming for the certainty of online anonymity, which runs as follows: "On the internet, nobody knows you're a dog." In other words, so long as you don't disclose personal information to other Internet users, nobody online knows who you really are. The claim of this proverb is contradicted by that of another: "on the Internet, everyone already knows you're a dog." This second proverb alludes to the notion that your protected identity has already and automatically been compromised by your prior online history or "virtual footprint," which can be detected by HTTP tracking cookies (website data that records your internet browsing history), and Exif (Exchangeable Image File) tags attached to any photos you've taken and uploaded to public image-sharing bulletin boards (Exif tags contain metadata about the photo, including the time and date it was taken, and, if

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the camera is GPS-enabled, the location it was taken in).

By following up on these common traces in conjunction with searches of your Facebook posts and tweets, and document tracing or “doxxing” – the act whereby somebody retrieves and publishes online your private or identifying information – other, unscrupulous Internet users can covertly find out who or what you are, what your job is, and where you live. These new powers have the potential to regulate or completely transform the quality of life for netizens – users of the Internet – both online and off. This article will explore notable uses and abuses of online personal data, before analysing a specific example of the regulation of Internet life: the action of Vivian James, cartoon mascot of the videogame protest movement known as Gamergate.

To understand the origins of this life-affecting apparatus, we must turn to the term Human Flesh Search Engine (HFSE), coined in China in 2001. It originally referred to ‘a search that was human-powered rather than computer-driven’,² describing a search engine akin to Google, but of human knowledge that has not been reproduced online and therefore cannot be retrieved via a computerised search. In a human flesh search, it is the knowledge of online users – the human flesh in question – that is searched, rather than internet archives. Conventional human flesh search requests, posted on discussion boards such as 4chan or Yahoo! Answers, are for the titles of obscure books, films and videogames, the names of little-known actors, and other hard-to-come-by facts. However, in the late 2000s, the term Human Flesh Search Engine evolved, gaining an additional, more sinister definition: to refer to the act whereby netizens seek out and expose the identities and private lives of members of online communities whom they (sometimes erroneously) deem guilty of public deception or corruption. Netizens who take it upon themselves to publically prove what they perceive as their targets’ true nature or actions gather online information to support this accusation by using the various methods of personal information retrieval previously described, in the belief that they are defending the integrity of their social world. This social world may be an online community, an institution, or an idea of civilization in adherence to certain ethical or moral precepts. This manner of serving vigilante justice has occasionally been used as a means to achieve positive ends, such as the exposure of government corruption and the preferential treatment of the political class by the law. In China,

² ‘Human Flesh Search Engine’, *Know Your Meme*, (Seattle: Cheezburger, 2011), <<http://knowyourmeme.com/memes/subcultures/human-flesh-search-engine>>, [accessed 20 August, 2014]

in October 2010, a young man named Li Qiming hit two rollerbladers while driving intoxicated through Hebei University. He attempted to flee and when he was stopped by security guards, he yelled out, “Go ahead, sue me if you dare, my father is Li Gang!” who was serving as the deputy director of the Baoding City Public Security Bureau at the time. A HFSE thread [a discussion about the incident on a Chinese online bulletin board] soon led to the personal information and photos of Li Qiming, but also found that his father was involved in corrupt real estate dealings (*Know Your Meme*, 2011).

Despite Hebei University issuing a gag order to its staff and students to silence the accident, Li was arrested by police on October 24, 2010, and on January 30, 2011, after pleading guilty to vehicular manslaughter and drunk driving in light of eyewitness testimonies, was sentenced to six years in prison and ordered to pay 460,000 Renminbi (approximately \$69,000) to the family of Chen Xiaofeng and 91,000 Renminbi (approximately \$13,800) to Zhang Jingjing (the two rollerbladers whom he ran over – killing the former and injuring the latter).³ The stepping forward of the university’s eyewitnesses, upon whose testimony the outcome of Li’s trial was dependant, was galvanised in part by the persistent online attention drawn to Li’s attitude at the scene of the crime.

However, more often than not, online verdicts on individuals’ transgressions are pronounced without satisfactory evidence of their actual occurrence, leading to drastic, adverse affects on targeted Internet users’ quality of life. If suspected wrongdoings remain unproven, yet certain netizens persist in their accusations, does the sustained search for a supposed truth become mere cyber-harassment? The cyber harasser, often called a “troll” in Internet slang, is an Internet user who seeks to anger, intimidate, scare, and ultimately to silence another user, using death and rape threats, often due to the target user’s political views or views on gender issues. Victims of serious trolling attacks are frequently women, of all ethnicities and races, who are straight, gay, or bisexual, sometimes transsexual, and/or feminist. Trolls’ reasons for seeking out, exposing, and harassing their victims are almost exclusively personal. The victim usually represents an identity or cause the troll feels threatened by, or is simply prejudiced against.

The activity of real-life trolls and the psychological impact on their victims has been the subject matter of recent television drama, such as Channel 4’s *Cyberbully* (2015), and horror films with a supernatural twist, such as *Unfriended* (2015). However, this article

³ ‘My Dad is Li Gang!’, *Know Your Meme*, <<http://knowyourmeme.com/memes/events/my-dad-is-li-gang-%E6%88%91%E7%88%B8%E6%98%AF%E6%9D%8E%E5%88%9A>>, [accessed 20 August, 2014]

explores a key transition in the construction of online social power, from its direct, brutal enforcement by the figure of the troll, to a particular example of the online, biopolitical regulation of quality of life using the device of Vivian James (pictured below): the fictional character, mascot, and figurehead of the Gamergate protest movement.



Gamergate is an online collective, formed in late 2014, that claims its goal is to root out corruption within the videogame industry by exposing what they maintain is its source: the personal relations between game developers, the companies that publish their games, and the allegedly bribed or biased journalists who review this output. Taking Michel Foucault's theory of sovereign power and biopolitics as a theoretical model, in which the judgement and direct, brutal punishment of individuals carried out by a monarch or similar central authority cedes to the systematization and regulation of human life as a statistical mass at the outset of modernity in the eighteenth century, I will analyse the movement towards Gamergate's version of biopolitics. I will also investigate Gamergate's regulatory effects on the gaming cultural identity and online quality of life – the freedom for gamers to inhabit freely their gendered, racial, and sexual identities, and to express their opinions without fear of

harassment – and the character of Vivian James through which this is facilitated.

To begin with, then, this article will turn to recent developments within online videogame culture, charting the shift from the figure of the Internet troll to the rise of Gamergate, with reference to Foucault's theory of the transition from sovereign power to biopolitics. Before the formation of the Gamergate movement, a number of notable female participants in the videogame industry, from designers to commentators, were subject to sustained campaigns of vicious harassment by trolls. The reason behind this activity was that these women were aiming simply to highlight inequality in the representation of gender and sexuality in gaming, while suggesting that games pander too often to a minority of straight, white males. In a notable example, two women were subject to extensive harassment by trolls: Zoë Quinn, developer of the independent videogame *Depression Quest* (2013), a title which aims to simulate and enable the player to experience a form of depression based on her own battle with the illness, and Anita Sarkeesian, whose ongoing video project *Tropes Versus Women in Videogames* (2013-present) explores the employment of negative gender stereotypes by videogames. Feeling threatened by this content, and fearful of the possible diversification of gaming brought on by emergent voices dealing with emotions and discourses new to gaming, the trolls resorted to bombarding these women with death and rape threats via email, and document tracing their personal data, including their addresses and the addresses of their family members and loved ones, before posting them in online, public forums. The purpose of this was to belittle the views of these women, force them into exile from the gaming scene, and thereby defend the supposedly "authentic" racial, gender and sexual norms of gaming culture.

This trolling of Sarkeesian and Quinn began when the funding and development of *Tropes Versus Women* and *Depression Quest* began, in 2012 and 2013 respectively. This phase of social control over gaming culture acts as a sort of halfway house between what Foucault calls sovereign power and biopolitics in his March 1976 lecture at the Collège de France entitled 'Society Must be Defended'. Exercising a variant of sovereign power over the life and death of the individual via direct, brutal action, gaming trolls 'c[a]me together to constitute a sovereign [...] because they [feel they] are forced to by some threat or need. They therefore do so in order to protect their lives'.⁴ Here, sovereign power is organised by the community as a form of defence, violently rooting out and castigating individuals who are a threat to the cultural life of what the trolls term the "true" gamer. This idea of sovereign

⁴ Michel Foucault, "Society Must Be Defended": *Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975-1976*, translated by David Macey, (London: Penguin Books, 2003), p.241

power merges with the Foucauldian idea of biopolitics, where doxxing and online threats of physical violence constitute the social control of masses ‘at the level of the mechanisms, techniques and technologies of power’ (Foucault, 1967). The trolls’ attempt here is to silence would-be proponents of aspects of gaming opposed to their narrow view of what comprises the “legitimate” gamer identity, where the victimization of some would-be reformers acts as a deterrent to others thinking of speaking out.

Gamergate does not entirely replace trolling – some critics of the movement have claimed it has instead absorbed trolling, surrounding it with a seemingly respectable mandate of establishing ethics in videogaming.⁵ Nevertheless, the emergence of the Gamergate movement in mid to late-2014 furthers the shift from sovereign power into biopolitics with respect to the defence of a particular gamer identity. The disciplining of individual gamers who do not conform to this – ‘by working at the level of the body itself’ (Foucault, 1976, p.246) through doxxing and threats of physical violence – is a form of sovereign power in that it is directed towards destroying the cultural life of the selected subject, banishing them from gaming through a campaign of harassment. An alternative attempt at control over the gaming identity has sprung up alongside (though without superseding) trolling: the regulation of women-as-species, a form of biopolitics which became prevalent as GamerGate gained steam. In biopolitics, Foucault’s term for technologies of power that emerge at the end of the eighteenth century and are ‘not individualising but, if you like, massifying, [...] directed not at man-as-body but man-as-species’ (Foucault, 1976, p.243); life is regulated at the statistical level: birth rates and the impacts of endemic diseases on populations. Biopolitics also effects the normalisation of knowledge and behaviour, Foucault writes. It is this latter function of biopolitics that is exemplified by Gamergate, which seeks to regulate the cultural identity and practice of gaming, namely its attempts to diversify attitudes to politics, gender and sexuality. Before exploring the limits of this regulated identity, and the particular device of the Vivian James mascot character that embodies the Gamergate struggle to achieve this end, the link between biopolitics and the social terrain of the Internet must be furthered. We can extend into the internet age Foucault’s observations on the domains

⁵ Allegra Ringo, ‘Meet the Female Gamer Mascot Born of Anti-Feminist Internet Drama’, *Vice*, (New York: Vice Media LLC, 28 August, 2014), <<http://www.vice.com/read/meet-the-female-gamer-mascot-created-by-anti-feminists-828>>, [accessed 29 September, 2016]

that appeared in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; many others would appear later – control over the relations of the human race, or human beings insofar as they are a species, insofar as they are living beings, and the environment, the milieu in which they live. This includes the direct effects of the geographical, climatic, or hydrographic environment: the problem, for instance, of swamps throughout the first half of the nineteenth century. And also the problem of the environment to the extent that it is not a natural environment, that it has been created by the population and therefore has effects on that population. This is, essentially, the urban problem (Foucault, 1976, p.245).

The internet, like the late-eighteenth century and early-nineteenth century European city inasmuch as it too is a built environment, is essentially a population problem: a network of the (sometimes violent) relations within the human species. Foucauldian biopolitics unknowingly predicts the Internet age, the virtual world in which many of the different members of the human race live cheek by jowl. In the new, biopolitical regulation of Internet populations, much like the ‘intervention [...] of the birth rate, the mortality rate, various biological disabilities, and the effect of the environment’ (Foucault, 1976, p.245) beginning in the late-eighteenth century and early-nineteenth century,

What we are dealing with in this new technology of power is not exactly society (or at least not the social body, as defined by the jurists), nor is it the individual-as-body. It is a new body, a multiple body, a body with so many heads that, while they might not be infinite in number, cannot necessarily be counted. Biopolitics deals with the population, with the population as political problem, as a problem that is at once scientific and political, as a biological problem and as power’s problem (Foucault, 1976, p.245).

Foucault’s theory of biopolitics will help to analyse and criticise the ways that Gamergate deals with the online, gaming population, this body of uncountable and supposedly discordant heads.

The fictional character and embodiment of the Gamergate movement, Vivian James (whose name is a play on the word “videogames”), was created by the infamous online image board, 4chan.org (a platform for Gamergate-related discussion and organisation, reputed gathering spot for anti-feminists, and the alleged source from which some of the earlier, ruthless trolling of female videogame contributors originated). Vivian James is at once as a showpiece for an ostensibly progressive attitude towards the place of women in gaming

maintained by the site's users to counter the rumours of misogyny that continue to dog them, and functions as a device for the biopolitical regulation of woman-as-species that recalls the regulatory methods Foucault outlines in his lecture. She is a visual and cultural

technology which is centred not on the body but upon life: a technology which brings together the mass effects characteristic of a population [of gamers], which tries to control the series of random events that can occur in a living mass, a technology which tries to predict the probability of those events (by modifying it, if necessary), or at least to compensate for their effects. This is a technology which aims to establish a sort of homeostasis, not by training individuals, but by achieving an overall equilibrium that protects the security of the whole from internal dangers (Foucault, 1976, p.249).

The Vivian James character represents a set of key identity tropes possessed only by some gamers (primarily her creators and supporters), and aims to normalise these social conventions and introduce them to gaming in general, so as to establish an identity's status quo and weed out any internal disruptions to it. The identity the character portrays frames that of the traditional gamer as low-affect and perpetually grumpy. According to Leigh Alexander, journalist and critic of the Gamergate movement, to possess this identity (as Vivian James represents it), one must 'be an outcast. Celebrate that. Defeat anyone who threatens you. You don't need cultural references. You don't need anything but gaming'.⁶ Vivian James is not a device for disciplining or punishing gamers (female or otherwise) who do not possess these characteristics – feminists in particular, so the implicit logic enshrined in the Vivian James representation goes, are overly emotional, too focused on issues of inclusion, threatening, and read games not for what they inherently are but through a network of supposedly irrelevant texts, events and debates outside gaming. Rather, the character avoids perpetuating overt violence by acting as a biopolitical regulatory tool that performs and thus endorses the behaviour and attitudes of a specific set of traditional gamers (again, primarily her creators and supporters), and discourages opposing behaviour and attitudes hinted at by association. Vivian James is depicted as socially awkward and either emotionless or fed up in order to normalise or even celebrate this behaviour – traits which are possessed

⁶ Leigh Alexander, "'Gamers' don't have to be your audience. 'Gamers' are over.," *Gamasutra*, (San Francisco: UBM Tech, 28 August, 2014), <http://www.gamasutra.com/view/news/224400/Gamers_dont_have_to_be_your_audience_Gamers_are_over.php>, [accessed 16 February 2016]

by many of the gamers who maintain her status as an all-encompassing icon for the gaming everyman and everywoman. Not everyone who plays videogames is like this, however. Vivian James' representation of this gaming everywoman is selective in another covert manner: her portrayal of a particular brand of femininity – as an asexualised daughter figure that dresses modestly – reveals her 4chan creators' stance on women in gaming culture, namely that any expression of female sexuality among its players is likely to be damaging to the social group. Finally, and contradictorily, the very thing that is supposed to unite all gamers – the activity of playing videogames – divides them on an ideological basis when filtered through the character: Vivian James' motto is “let's just play [videogames] already,” which, by implication, covertly suggests gamers sidestep the complex and nuanced issues surrounding the representation of gender, race and sexuality in gaming that feminist game developers and critics are asking players to think about, in favour of maintaining the status quo. In short, the Vivian James character protects this status quo – don't be too emotional, don't think too deeply about games, don't read too much into them through other texts or influences (“just play already!”), don't show your sexuality too openly or dress too provocatively – thereby establishing a homeostasis among female gamers through the regulation of their behaviour, attitudes, actions and appearances, and mitigating any aberrations that occur within these norms through the character's symbolic identity.

The figure of Vivian James is a tool well-suited to reflect and dramatize the specific dynamics of the Gamergate group. It is a movement without leaders in the traditional sense (although some prominent Youtubers who command considerable viewer numbers and online social influence are involved in it), and is, like 4Chan, constituted largely of anonymous members. In an online space in which all are ostensibly on equal footing, and can each view and respond to the contributions of others, Vivian James becomes an important visual conduit of democratic, yet regulatory, social power. This final section of the article will analyse a further control of gamers' online quality of life, not through the core characteristics of the Vivian James mascot, but through her various artistic representations authored by Gamergate members. Certain ideological precepts in favour of Gamergate's conception of gamers, gaming practices, and notable controversies are not only articulated, but also anonymised, in various Vivian James artworks. The functioning of this democratisation and anonymisation of online social power among gamers can be understood by reconfiguring as a model of Internet users' relations Foucault's theory of the Panopticon – the modern, circular prison originally conceived by the English eighteenth and nineteenth-century philosopher, Jeremy Bentham, in

which the occupant of a central tower can observe the inhabitants of the cells that encircle it, without being observed by the members in this peripheric ring.

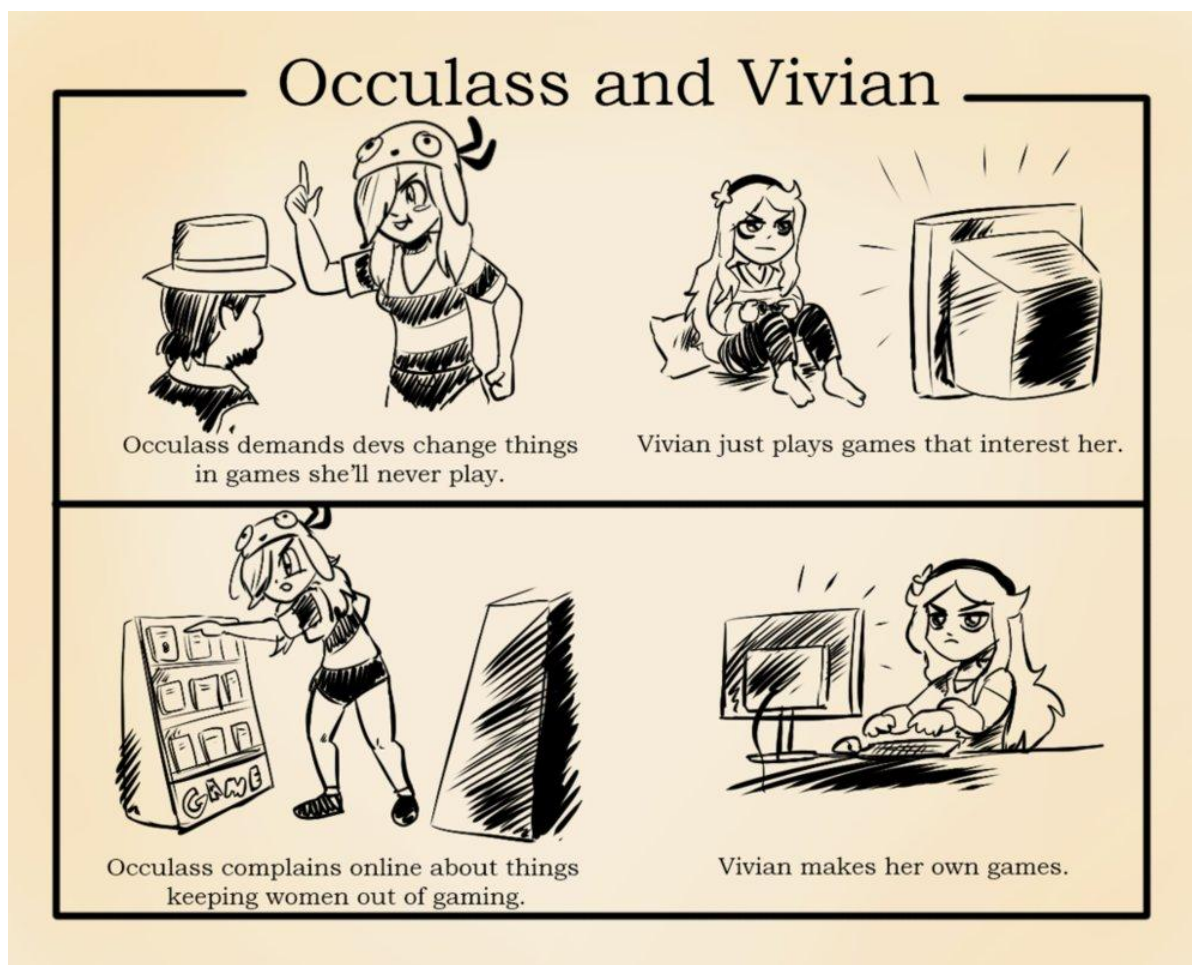
In the hands of the many, anonymous Gamergate members, Vivian James becomes an avatar of observation, a pedagogic machine that, in dramatising pro-Gamergate opinion and ideology, utilizes the virtual architecture that structures power relations on the Internet.



In the above image, attached to an image of Vivian James is the quote of an anonymous female developer criticising Leigh Alexander's controversial assertion that the identity of the gamer is dead in her article, cited earlier, entitled "'Gamers" don't have to be your audience. "Gamers" Are Over'. The picture's anonymously-expressed opinion becomes an expostulation from the entire Gamergate group: the presentation of the movement's name as a hashtag and title to the piece, and of its mascot, Vivian James (pointing in a manner reminiscent of the Lord Kitchener or Uncle Sam army recruitment posters), establish an anonymous, collective authorship over that of an individual. In this and other art featuring Vivian James, it is the character, rather than the individual Gamergate member who creatively employs her, who expresses the power of the movement's ideas.

Like Foucault's theorisation of the Panopticon, the Vivian James mascot is 'an architectural apparatus', 'a machine for creating and sustaining a power relation independent

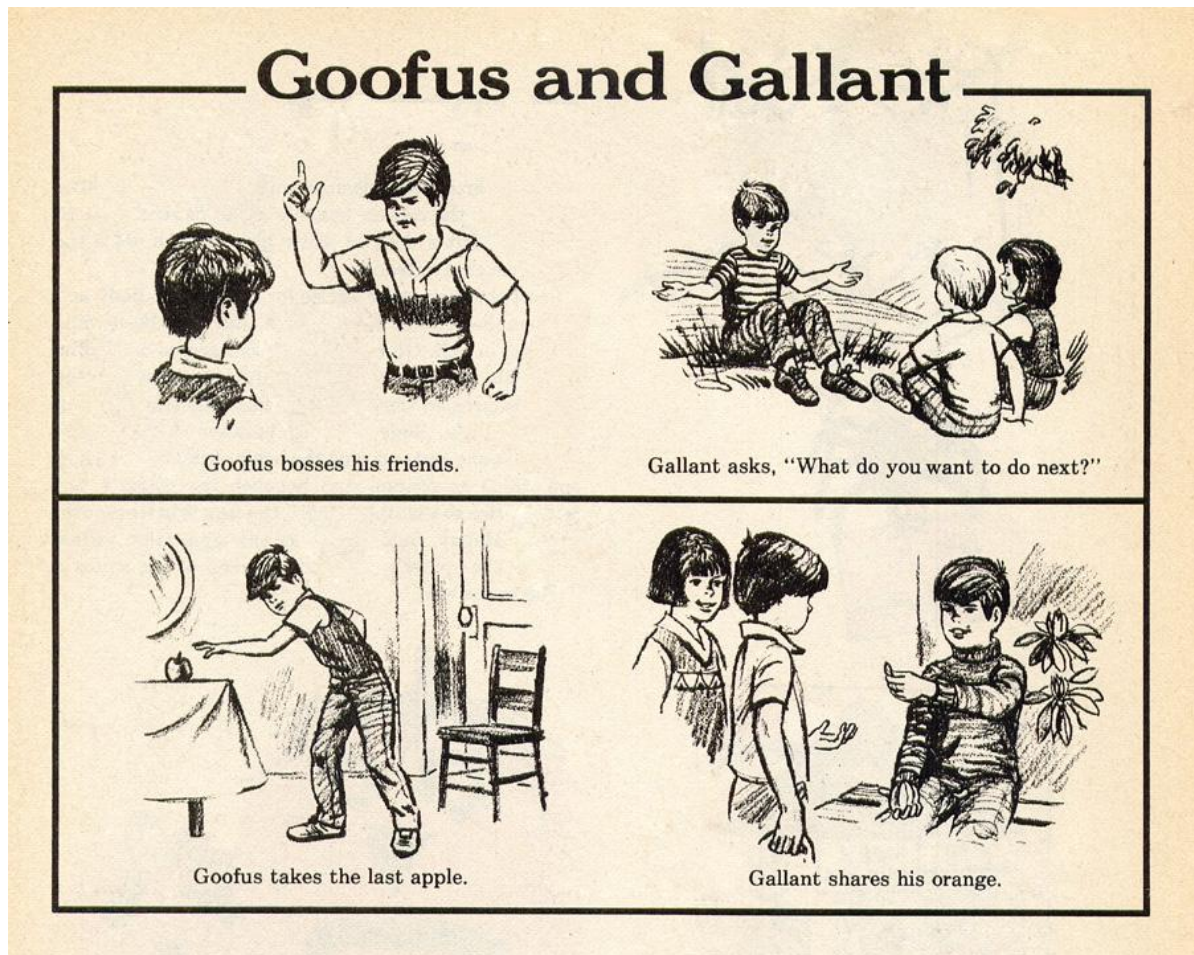
of the person who exercises it'.⁷ Foucault's idea of the panoptic exercising of power in the modern prison is not exclusive to prisons; 'it is in fact a figure of political technology that may and must be detached from any specific use' (Foucault, 1987, p. 205). This political technology can be extended into other disciplinary institutions, then, such as the school, the military college, and the hospital. In the Gamergate movement, examples of Vivian James art dramatize in a political language the split between normative gamer lives and those deemed disruptive to the group's conceived society of gaming.



Vivian's opposite, Oculass (a play on the word Oculus, referring to the Oculus Rift Virtual Reality platform), portrays in a negative light the feminist criticism of gaming, pioneered by individuals like Anita Sarkeesian, which is aggressively focused on the absence of gender inclusion and equality in the development of games' characters and narratives, supposedly, without playing the resulting games themselves. This embodiment of the inauthentic or non-gamer within the gaming community that is shored up by Gamergate is countered with the

⁷ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*, translated by Alan Sheridan, (London: Penguin, 1987), p. 201

group's conception of the "true" gamer: one who does not protest loudly, but plays and makes games suited to their personal tastes. The above image is structured visually and ideologically by a previous illustration from beyond gaming, which aims at teaching children good behaviour via the examples of two contrasting cartoon characters: Goofus and Gallant, who appeared in comic strips in the long-running children's magazine, *Highlights*.



The influence of this particular strip, published in the October 1980 issue of *Highlights*, is used to render a straightforward, good-bad difference between Gamergate's notion of "true" gamers and those who represent threats to this community. By engaging Gamergate politics with this existing comic, the 'Oculass and Vivian' piece aligns gamers who pursue their own tastes and creativity with gallantry. Yet playing and making games that interest them personally in the absence of existing, satisfactory titles promotes a cult of individuality at odds with Gallant's inclusivity and sharing. On the contrary, using the character of Goofus as a basis for Oculass's embodiment of people with strong opinions concerning the representation of women in gaming builds outspokenness onto a basis of bossy and selfish behaviour, creating a simplified form of feminism that ignores the more nuanced feminist

concerns surrounding gaming.

The above, online-circulated images featuring the Vivian James figure demonstrate the functioning of Internet power via their employment of the binary categorisation of the gamer identity. Within Gamergate, anonymity is central to this manifestation of universal power, in which any member of the group, drawing on commonly-held ideological constructions, may exercise the boundary between its standards of “true” gamers and impostors.

In Foucault’s theory of the birth of the modern prison, the power of punishment previously attached to an individual sovereign becomes free-standing. In the Panopticon, ‘it does not matter who exercises power. Any individual, taken almost at random, can operate the machine: in the absence of the director, his family, his friends, his visitor, even his servants’ (Foucault, 1987, p.202). In theory, anyone with access to the central tower of the prison building can wield its power. Ultimately however, such an individual is surplus to requirement in this scheme. The central tower is symbolic for the prisoners in the surrounding cells open to its gaze. Due to a series of blinds within the tower’s windows effecting a one-way observation system – ‘in the peripheric ring, one is totally seen, without ever seeing; in the central tower, one sees everything without ever being seen’ (Foucault, 1987, pp.201-202) – it is irrelevant, from the prisoners’ perspective, as to whether or not anyone is occupying the tower. Power in the modern age, Foucault’s central thesis in *Discipline and Punish* suggests, is internalized by the observed – a functioning derived from their own position in the regulating structure.

Gamergate, as with the Internet’s other powers of observation, such as the snooping tools used to gather users’ personal information described at the outset of this essay, effects a development of Foucault’s model of power organisation. On the Internet, the centralised architecture represented by the tower is collapsed, and migrates outwards, across the expansive, global network of communication that comprises the World Wide Web. Foucault himself hints at this flattening of panoptic power in an open-access mode, extended beyond the disciplinary institution of the prison: ‘The seeing machine was once a sort of dark room into which individuals spied; it has become a transparent building into which the exercise of power may be supervised by society as a whole’ (Foucault, 1987, p.207). Following the Gamergate case study, one can see how anonymous or interchangeable individuals now simultaneously occupy multiple locations of observation – not directly, as in the surveillance techniques of human visual contact or security cameras, but at a disembodied remove,

through graphical, ideological representations of the ideal gamer exemplified by Vivian James, which maintain the boundary between acceptable and unacceptable variants. The upkeep and collective shifting of this border, which renders certain expressions or identities of gamers as transgressive, has therefore the power to affect gamers' quality of life: what was before uncriticised is now an anathema; what was once cast out is now tolerated. Further research, drawing on the extensive posts of Gamergate-occupied forums as a data source, is required to track the transitions undergone by the regulation of the gamer identity by the movement in the two years plus it has so far existed. Such a study would enable an understanding of the ongoing nature of Gamergate as a biopolitical, regulatory phenomenon of the Internet age.

To conclude, this article will now acknowledge associated problems that it does not address directly, and propose further areas of research for the study of Gamergate. Since the inception of Gamergate in mid-to-late 2014, the usage of Vivian James in art supporting the movement's goals has declined considerably – she no longer plays a central role as the mascot or standard-bearer of the movement. Thus, further investigation into the devices that now facilitate Gamergate's influence must occur if the group is still to be studied. Furthermore, this additional research is required to ascertain as to whether or not Gamergate has augmented its ideology regarding its acceptance of a range of gamer identities since mid-to-late 2014 – the period upon which this article was focused. This piece investigated Gamergate's maintenance of a central gaming identity, via its Vivian James character, which the movement held onto strongly around this time. It was primarily in opposition to feminist criticism of gaming's narratives and characters in which an absence of positive female representation is claimed to exist, an argument most notably made by Anita Sarkeesian's ongoing video project *Tropes Versus Women in Videogames*. Further research into Gamergate beyond its life in 2014 is required to investigate whether or not the movement's acknowledgement of the gamer identity has widened, to include not only feminist voices, but also lesbian, gay, and transgender ones; this current research did not investigate Gamergate's regulation of sexual (or racial) identities – only gendered ones along feminist lines.

Nonetheless, this article did investigate an important aspect of Gamergate's social power in relation to Foucauldian theories of biopolitics and the disciplinary gaze: the regulatory mechanisms of online technology and culture employed collectively to shore up an ideal gamer figure, to the exclusion of other, competing voices. As Internet communication and culture becomes more central to a growing online-enabled population's lives, global

machinery with the capacity to secure, regulate, or exclude certain lives is an increasingly apparent social concern worthy of academic study, to which the Gamergate phenomenon provides an important case study.

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