Scary video games

BY TOOBA KHALID SIDDIQUI

IT is difficult to imagine events more horrendous than young people deliberately killing each other. As human beings, we have difficulty accepting such senseless occurrences. The horror of such a happening, together with the desire to understand why it happened, can drive us nuts.

How are we to digest events similar to the one that occurred in Columbia where two boys walked into Columbia High School and calculatingly killed 12 students, a teacher and then themselves.

Reports might describe youngsters like these as outsiders or outcasts. They can say that they are adolescents who are not accepted, teased and that they undergo peer pressure. But how true can this be? Nothing can pass for an excuse for their terrible crime.

While apprehending such happenings, we come up with possibilities such as satanism, witchcraft, parents' fault, moral breakdown, lack of religion, availability of guns or simply, culture. But one of the very important reasons is exposure to media violence.

Children who watch a lot

won't even understand!"

What's so 'cool' about people screaming in pain with blood all over, I wondered. I would never 'understand'.

What advantage can we look for in a "shoot em up" game where enemies bleed everywhere and non-stop.

The game called Death Race was introduced in 1970. It's objective was to drive and kill as many pedestrians as possible. Doom and Quake are some of many such games where reach levels by slaughtering your opponents. Mortal Kombat is another huge game with plenty of violence. Counter strike is highly in demand these days. A bunch of kids, when asked what it is about, said: "Oh, its very easy. We just have to shoot each other. Do you want to play?" In answer to the question, I am writing this article with the hope of minimizing team violence.

A rating system was introduced sometime back for violent video games. 'E' for everyone, 'T' for teens and 'M' for mature. But what good is a rating system if it's not implemented. Parents need to take preventive measures against the purchasing of such video games.

Violent video games not

of TV are prone to see thousands of murders and countless other acts of violence. Such children are mentally very different from children who are not exposed to it. If just watching violence in movies causes aggression, then imagine what effect active participation in violent video games have on these kids.

Images of human beings blown up are common in war. Unfortunately, in the world of video games, these images psychologically teach children that violence is acceptable.

Teens have become completely addictive to violent video games. With improved technology, video game-makers are able to design games that are so real, it is truly scary. A 14-year-old recently bought a game called Resident Evil (a screen version also showing at a local theatre).

"What's it about?" I inquired.

"Fighting," he exclaimed.

"Too bad..." I frowned.

"Hey, do you know anything about it?"

"Have you seen its graphics? It's so real," I argued.

"Forget it! You don't know anything about it so you

only increase aggressive thinking but also promote aggressive feelings. Try telling an early teen to try Brain Lara or Smackdown, and you'll turn into a freak who is living in the '80s. For people who don't know, Brain Lara is a wonderful game on cricket. Smackdown is about wrestling.

It is probably too late to undo the harm these games have already done, but we can start taking preventive measures. Better parenting, stronger regulations and a slower production of such games can help.

Violent video games have the horrifying potential to deaden society and promote acts of violence against real victims. Probably it would help to add scenes in video games such as an ambulance rushing the injured to a hospital or others showing family and friends grieving for the dead. This can educate young teens about the horror of killing a human being.

So, the next time you go shopping for video games and come cross a game which involves some characters trying to harm others, keep your hands off it. ■