The representation of the vietnam war in video games

War, Vietnam War

The representation of the Vietnam War in video games is not always accurate, since video games emphasize particular historical narratives and restrict others. While a video game s historical boundary structure is shaped by what consumers consider to be ' fun' when playing.

Games which are based on the Vietnam War attempt to re-script the war, replacing a period of self-doubt, uncertainty and rapture with the certainty of moral righteousness which is at the heart of a missionary form of American exceptionalism.

In Call of Duty: Black Ops the player spends a considerable amount of time reenacting aspects of the Vietnam War. The game presents a version of history in which the Russians are actively working alongside the Vietnamese, with a chemical nerve agent being stored in Vietnam and Laos (e. g. Mission 8, Project Nova and Mission 9, Victor Charlie). Thus, the actions of the U. S. military are justified throughout the game and ethically problematic actions like the use of Napalm and Agent Orange are not addressed.

' Gamification' in discourses about video games refers to how all elements being simulated or depicted are adapted from their contexts in reality in ways necessary to make them playable as a game and subject to programmable rules and conventions. Gamification of the past refers to how the mechanisms of gameplay shape what historical elements can or cannot be utilized or how engagement is constrained by game playability concerns or entertainment or marketing purposes

Battlefield Vietnam provides the player with more than 20 weapons-from pistols and shotguns to sniper rifles and portable mortars-all of which were used during the conflict. In Vietcong 2 and Men of Valor, the storyline is framed by the Tet offensive of 1968 and the games allow the player to experience the war through the eyes of a soldier fighting.

In terms of violence and the depiction of combat, Shellshock is the most graphic of the Vietnam games. These games do attempt to tell the stories of average American participants and, to a more limited extent, of Vietnamese participants, and do communicate the raw emotional truths of Vietnam by placing the player in the perspective of the soldier. However, when playing the game, one can see guns firing without risk of jamming and tank shells magically reloading themselves. Hence, the variation of representation is very much controlled by an unacknowledged shorthand of reality.

Players not only passively see and hear these representations of the past, but also create within the technological and ideological constraints of the game design their own history. However, these games limit critical engagement with the political, social and economic implications of war. One reason for their popularity is the fact that gamers might ' have no knowledge of, as Eisenhower had said so eloquently in his 1961 farewell address to the nation, the lingering sadness of war and the certain agony of the battlefield'. Video games have certain features that enhance that enhance their authenticity, e. g. they provide the player with period accurate weapons and equipment

In Battlefield: Vietnam, the player can choose between several historically accurate types of soldiers (Scout, Engineer etc.) The amount of ammunition and weapons is limited. During a mission in Call of Duty: Black Ops, a Soviet defector saves the American squad during the Tet Offensive. The game Shellshock includes graphic acts of violence as well as images of dismembered bodies.