Imperialism in the Worlds and Mechanics of First-Person Shooters

Ansh Patel

Abstract

First-person shooters (FPSs) evoke a power fantasy that empowers players with both agency and choice, while problematically reproducing various aspects of imperialism. Specifically, players develop a "heroic" narrative by exploring and conquering game spaces and neutralizing "savage, hostile" enemies. This paper focuses on two highly popular FPS games, Far Cry 2 *and* Far Cry 3*, and examines how elements of their game worlds and mechanics reinforce (and disrupt) imperialist narratives. It looks at the role the military-entertainment complex has played in the evolution of the FPS and how this has led to the proliferation of American military narratives into other games of that genre.*

Imperialism in Game Space

The term imperialism is commonly used to refer to colonialist attempts to gain economic power through territorial expansion, often by using violent force directed at local inhabitants. Postcolonial theorist Edward Said (1994) describes the culture practices of imperialism as affirming "both the primacy of geography and an ideology about control of territory" (p. 61). The FPS is a popular videogame genre that puts the player in control of a first-person perspective with the central objective being generally to shoot at enemies on the screen through a reticle icon on the center of the screen. This genre lends itself well to narratives of imperialism because they are largely centered on violent conflict that often involves the players exploring game worlds that are populated by a disproportionately large number of enemies. By structuring game play around the killing of large numbers of enemies in order to survive, the genre uses what game scholar Ian Bogost (2007) calls procedural rhetoric, which is "the

Author Biography

Ansh Patel is an interdisciplinary artist whose works range from experimental games, digital media installations, performances, visual art, network + data applications, and surveillance interventions. He also writes criticism and his works have appeared in publications such as *Arcade Review, The New Inquiry, Model View Culture, Unwinnable, First Person Scholar, Paste Magazine.*

practice of using processes persuasively" (p. 7). In progressing through the levels of game play in the FPS, this violence is intimately linked to establishing control of geographic territories within the game world. The progression systems of shooters like *Doom (*id Software, 1993) and *Medal of Honor* (Danger Close Games, 2010) reward violence. Players unlock new areas of the game and narrative by slaughtering rooms full of enemies. Progress in the game is thus contingent upon violent behavior.[1] By tying the aspect of neutralizing hostiles with the conquering of territories within the game space as a requisite task for progress, such shooters not only reflect the imperialist drive to extend influence over geopolitical spaces through violence but they also rhetorically justify the imperial project.

No videogame series has so casually portrayed aspects of imperialism in its game world and mechanics than *Far Cry*. In *Far Cry 3* (Ubisoft Montreal, 2012) the player is introduced to a world where they conquer territories belonging to the "local tribe"[2] of the game's setting, a fictional Polynesian island populated by an indigenous culture called Rakyats, which can be both hostile and friendly to the player character. Unlike many FPSs, *Far Cry 3* doesn't restrict the movement of players, instead allowing players to roam freely through the game world both by taking on new missions or by discovering new areas. The world of *Far Cry 3* is littered with native camps called Outposts (marked by negative signifiers like red flags and black smoke), which contain ammunition crates and medical supplies among other valuables. Since the player is always utilizing ammunition and medical kits, *Far Cry 3* rhetorically attributes great value to these Outposts for the resources they contain. The player captures these Outposts by killing all the enemies within it, thus enacting the game's imperialist rhetoric of violence and control. Once they are captured, Outposts and the resources stored within them become the player's property. The conquest of these Outposts also rewards players with experience points that help them achieve skills that aren't available to them at the start of the game. The game then automatically hires the "friendly" Rakyats who are being led by the white imperialist player character. These new hires greet the player with respect when encountered and guard their Outpost from the attempts of hostile "natives" to recapture them.

Far Cry 3's mechanic of capturing the Outposts is presented as an act of expansion and acquirement; missing is the cultural and historical context of imperialism. Critical theorist McKenzie Wark (2007) introduces the concept of gamespace and its relationship to player action by stating, "In gamespace, every concrete, specific action of any kind is also an abstract action, the consuming of a given resource for a given result. And yet gamespace does not encompass and account for every action" (p. 209). Here, Wark means that the concrete and calculable outcomes of player action often have no effects on the greater social and cultural milieu of the game's setting. Stated another way, while the imperialist player acquires resources through violent conquest, the gamespace of *Far Cry 3* does not reflect the problematic neo-colonialist connotations of these actions of expansion and material extraction. Instead, through its game world and mechanics, the game encourages capturing the Outposts as a necessity for player survival.

Far Cry 3 thus conveys an imperialist rhetoric through its procedures of economic gain by territorial expansion. The gamespace of *Far Cry 3* encourages players to acquire "native" territories by denoting a concrete value to them. Aspects of the imperialist process itself are also represented: killing "hostile" Rakyats to capture the local resources and then "civilizing" the rest by transforming them from rebellious Others to subservient troops in the imperialist player-character's army to protect their newly acquired property. This imperialist rhetoric is further supported by the "white savior narrative," that is common to these games.

Figure 1: A friendly native (left) is shown as more "civilized" than the savage, violent depiction of those who oppose the imperialist player (right)

Left image adapted from "Wot I Think: Far Cry 3 (Single-Player)" by J. Rossignol, November 21, 2012, *Rock Paper Shotgun.*

Right image adapted from "Pirates." *Video Games Art-work.*

The White Savior Narrative

The problematic aspects of imperialism in such shooters spread from beyond their mechanics and into their embedded narratives. The elements of imperialism in *Far Cry 3's* mechanics become even more problematic when seen in light of the player assuming the role of a white male character who comes to the island as a tourist. The player is tasked to battle against the "savage natives" who are doing the bidding of one of their own, a psychopathic and villainous leader. The player's goal is to liberate the rest of the natives from the oppression of the antagonist. Other shooters like *Medal of Honor, Battlefield 3* (EA DICE, 2011),

and *Call of Duty: Black Ops* (Treyarch, 2010) provide a similar rationale to the players, who assume the role of a foreign soldier saving the locals by violently destroying local militia. In doing so, such games feed into the "white savior narrative" and the ideas associated with it—namely that "natives" need foreign intervention to help them resolve their own problems (Hunt, 1993, p. 3). The portrayal of "natives" who oppose the player as "savage" are utterly different from the player in terms of dress, behavior, and physiology, is an example of "Othering," defined by Phillip Irving Mitchell (n.d.) as "the social and/or psychological ways in which one group excludes or marginalizes another group." By constructing the indigenous characters as the "Other," such games tend to mobilize easily depicted stereotypes. The Othering of natives is carried out through their portrayal as savages who in need of white European conquest. Here the connotations of the Other are used to justify the player's inevitably violent encounters with the game's indigenous people. In addition, while natives who oppose players are portrayed as irrational savages, those who serve players are shown as "civilized" (See: Figure 1, above). The player character inhabits the white supremacist role of the imperialist who liberates the uncivilized natives by killing their hostile counterparts. Here, the difference in the portrayal of natives is based on their affinity towards player character, which supports the imperialist assumption that any natives not subdued under colonial rule are to be considered uncivilized (Hunt, p. 5).

The innate superiority of the player to the enemy is a common trope of FPS games, and helps to absolve their compulsively violent actions. This is represented in the skills and abilities of the player's character. For example, weapons in shooter games are often acquired by simply walking over them. When this is done, the player character automatically picks up the weapon and equips it. In games like *Half Life* or *Doom 3* (id Software, 2004), the player character is able to immediately equip any exotic weapon they may come across—furthering the white supremacist narrative of white intelligence. Even if the enemy aliens are described as technologically superior to the human player character, this fact is undermined by the imperialist player's seamless adaptability to the complex technology. By allowing the imperialist player character to immediately use the aliens' weapons, the game implies that the human player's technological capabilities are superior. A similar example can be seen in *Far Cry 3*, where the player uses materials found in the local forests to construct tools like blow darts, which are then used to hunt natives stealthily. In all these cases the player is made to reinforce the white supremacist narrative of imperialism where resources and tools indigenous to the natives' environment are to be used to control and conquer them. In doing so, these games communicate a white supremacist narrative in which the imperialist player masters native tools and then uses them with a greater degree of proficiency than the natives themselves.

Colonizing the Wilderness

Another way that FPSs portray and reinforce imperialism is by conveying that the environment is as hostile as the enemies. In *Far Cry 3,* the player is threatened not just by the savage

natives but also by predatory animals like tigers and wild boars (who are native to the forests of the island). Likewise, many other shooters set in alien worlds, like *Doom 3, Unreal* (Epic Games, 1998), *System Shock 2* (Looking Glass Studios, 1999), and *Half Life* (Valve, 1998) represent a hostile environment through rooms filled with poisonous gases and traps. The indigenous people of these game worlds are immune to these dangerous environments while the player is left susceptible, thus reinforcing the hostility of the environment towards the imperialist player and associating the savagery of the landscape with the savagery of the uncolonized indigenous populations. The hostility of the environment is also used as a justification of the violent acts that the imperialist player is asked to perform.

Many shooters formalize elements of hostile environment into gameplay mechanics, reproducing yet another procedural dimension of imperialism. *Far Cry 2* (Ubisoft Montreal, 2008) conveys the hostility of the environment through the Malaria status effect. Here, the player character contracts a randomly intensifying malaria in the opening cutscene of the game that directly affects their vision and reflexes. The intensification of malaria is represented by the player's screen becoming blurry and the player temporarily losing control of the character's actions. By wrestling players' control away from their character at random points, *Far Cry 2* conveys the hostile and alien nature of the malaria mechanic, emphasizing malaria's connection to the savagery of the landscape and its resistance to the imperialist project.

Malaria is also used as a metaphor by *Far Cry 2*'s primary antagonist to describe the violence inherent in the continent itself. Though real-world malaria is mosquito-borne, the game characterizes the disease as an atmospheric condition of the landscape. In doing so, the game constructs a racist narrative that implies that once the player's character contracts malaria their violent actions are attributed to the disease and—therefore, by direct relation—the continent of Africa itself, in which the game is set.

The game equates the constant and violent political strife in Africa with the plague of malaria—the game implies that they both reduce people to primal beasts. Similarly, the choice of setting in the world also helps to further imperialist narratives. For instance, the frequency with which the Middle East is used as a setting in military shooters can be seen as a reaction to political events in recent decades. As game academic Johan Höglund (2008) reflects: "America holds a position strikingly similar to that held by the British Empire of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries." However, most of these games depoliticize their narratives by being arguably oblivious to this trend. For example, one of the early exchanges in *Battlefield 3* (EA DICE, 2011) involves a friendly soldier commenting on the situation in the Middle East as: "How does this part of the world get so fucked up all the time?" Both the soldier and the player character are unaware that their actions contribute to the unrest in the region, and instead characterize the region as being innately problematic, further sustaining the disconnect between player action and the wider cultural and historical contexts of the game world, as noted ealier.

Both *Far Cry 2* and *Battlefield 3* absolve the imperialist player of guilt by making their violence a necessary response to an innately dangerous space. Höglund (2008) explains how exotic settings are imbued with negative connotations stating: "A crucial aspect of this representation is that as long as the Arab city remains essentially Arabic, it will continue to attract the military technologies of the West, thus turning the site into a locale of perpetual war." I have shown here how.

Far Cry 2 uses malaria as a metaphor for violence in Africa, while military shooters like *Battlefield 3* use the recurring frequency with which the Middle East is used as a setting to imply that these problems are inherent with the regions themselves. I argue that these games reinforce the imperialist idea that foreign lands are inherently hostile and need to be tamed by civilization (Hunt, 1993).

In order to fully understand the influence of such problematic narratives associated with specific geopolitical struggles within a modern context, it is important to interrogate the role of the military-entertainment complex on the FPS genre.

The Role of Military-Entertainment Complex

For many critics, the primary concern with such military-centered FPSs is their lack of critical awareness of the role played by the military-entertainment complex in the evolution of the genre, and the medium of videogames more generally. It has been written that, "The military-entertainment complex is a concept relating to the cooperation between the military and entertainment industries to their mutual benefit, especially in such fields as cinema, multimedia and virtual reality" (Kang, 2013). The videogame industry's complicity with the military-entertainment complex has benefited both parties immensely. For the former it has provided publishers the technology with which to market more products and for the latter it has provided an entry-point into the mainstream culture to perpetuate its narratives. McKenzie Wark (2007), quoting former New York Times columnist J.C. Herz, "Most of the technology that's now used in videogames had its origins in military research. When you trace back the patents, it's virtually impossible to find an arcade or console component that evolved in the absence of a Defense Department grant" (p. 95). This is significant as Edward Said (1994) points out how culture is among the chief vectors through which imperialism operates, "All kinds of preparations are made for this idea within a culture and then, in turn and in time, imperialism acquires a kind of coherence, a set of experiences and a presence of ruler and ruled alike within the culture" (p. 11). If videogames today form an important component of Western culture, then the military-entertainment complex can be seen as a way through which imperial narratives continue to circulate.

To provide a small example to illustrate how closely the history of the FPS genre was influenced by the role of U.S Military and reflect its history of intervention in global affairs, we need not look beyond *Battlezone* (Atari Games, 1980), one of the first FPS games (Wolf

25). Atari was approached by U.S. Army to make an alternate version of *Battlezone* called *The Bradley Trainer* meant for targeting training gunners.[3] Even today, it is not uncommon for companies to hire former military personnel as advisers on their design team.[4] It is not difficult to see how the depoliticized perspectives of many of the FPSs become embedded in their rhetoric with the role that military entertainment complex has played in the evolution of the genre.

If we come back to the *Far Cry* series, we can see how American military narratives have seeped into different aspects of the games. In *Far Cry 3,* one of the chief enemy factions called Privateers are a group of mercenaries who are led by drug and weapons militia and a former CIA agent. They are among the most well-equipped enemies the player comes across in the game, suited in body armor and high-grade military weapons. As it has been claimed by many reports, US military aid to countries particularly in Africa in the form of the weapons trade has only fuelled the geo-political conflict in some countries particularly in Africa. These are the weapons used by the Privateers in *Far Cry 3* and it is also reflected in *Far Cry 2,* where the player is cast as a mercenary who is affiliated with characters involved in the weapons trade.

If we invoke Höglund's (2008) argument that America occupies the same role that the European Imperialists did at the turn of the twentieth century, then it is possible to view the efforts of the U.S. Military, particularly after the Second World War as pursuing an imperialist agenda. These go beyond mere geographical occupation. It also follows the path of providing military aid to countries involved in a geo-political conflict, and also through culture in the form of military-entertainment complex.

By acknowledging the role of the military-entertainment complex in the production of games and the adoption of contexts of historical U.S. military conflicts as game settings, FPSs can be seen to convey a rhetoric embedded with imperialist notions. Analyzing this rhetoric, built into the game worlds and mechanics, helps to further understand the depoliticized narratives found in military FPSs like *Battlefield 3* and *Medal of Honor* that we see today. This helps to contextualize the significance of American military aid in fueling the geopolitical conflict through the weapons trade in *Far Cry 2* and equipping the hostile mercenaries aiming to subjugate the local Rakyats in *Far Cry 3*. Through their game worlds and mechanics, these games provide convincing arguments in support of the imperialist project.

Subverting the Imperialist Narrative

Even as they work to depoliticize and conceal the imperialist rhetoric embedded within their game worlds and mechanics, FPS games can be seen as problematic, uncritical portrayals of imperialist narratives and tropes. Some of these issues partly arise from the lack of a critical perspective at the role of the military-entertainment complex in the evolution of the genre, the normalization of violence, and the game mechanics structured around the subjugation

of indigenous peoples and acquisition of territories and resources. However, running along-side these trends to conceal imperialist rhetoric, there is a trend in some games, including *Far Cry 2, Far Cry 3, Spec Ops: The Line* (Yager, 2012), to self-consciously engage with some of these issues. Both of these games provide a critical perspective about the prevalence of imperialist tropes and problematize them by directly affecting the experience of the player either through their narrative or specific scripted events in *Spec Ops: The Line* and through the mechanics and environment in *Far Cry 2*.

In their attempts to be critical while implementing conventional aspects of the genre, they produce a mesh of conflicting rhetoric within the design of the game world and mechanics. For instance, *Far Cry 2* puts the player in the shoes of a foreign mercenary stepping into an African landscape that's in the middle of civil strife. However, unlike *Far Cry 3, Far Cry 2* purposely allows its "white savior narrative" to collapse early on, implicating the player's violent acts as contributing to the strife, and therefore making the situation worse. While *Far Cry 2's* malaria does imply problematic notions about Africa and its geopolitical state on how it treats the disease as a metaphor for the violent, primal urges that drive the geo-political conflict in the region, it also implicates Western intervention as one of the chief reasons behind the conflicts. Foreign ammunition and weapons are smuggled into these regions by foreign traders, which fuel the further spread of the civil strife throughout these regions. *Far Cry 2* is also careful to not paint the player's goals as noble and heroic. Instead, the player character is portrayed as a greedy mercenary, whose only motivation behind every task he undertakes is to earn more diamonds, which are the game's currency. Every mission the player gets in *Far Cry 2* is destructive in nature and generally ends up with the player destroying a base or a convoy. Through such means, the game's narrative transforms the players' actions into outcomes that clearly spread conflict. In doing so, *Far Cry 2* unapologet-ically positions the imperialist player as the carrier of the plague of violence, responsible for spreading violence and civil unrest.

The game also problematizes the success of the imperial project, by showing its inherent limitations. By depicting the imperial project as an ongoing and indeterminate process, rather than as singular moment of imperial domination, *Far Cry 2*, avoids reinforcing some of the problematic aspects of imperialist narrative. *Far Cry 2* depicts the African landscape as hostile, but instead of justifying player violence, it calls into question the feasibility of the imperial project. This is primarily communicated by removing the player's ability to conquer territories. The outposts and camps in *Far Cry 2* cannot be permanently captured. Even if the player neutralizes hostile enemies in a camp, the territory still belongs to the natives. The game's Outposts serve as respawn points—even a recently "cleared" Outpost will be filled with enemies when the player returns. Thus, the game can be seen to critically engage with the notion of imperial conquest as decisive event.

By implicating the player as a metaphorical carrier of a violent plague that only intensifies lo-cal conflict and showing the limitations of the imperial project itself, *Far Cry 2* critiques the

problematic aspects of territorial conquest and white savior complex, which are often blindly embraced by FPS games. As we saw with the contrast and similarities between *Far Cry 2* and *Far Cry 3,* their attempts at self-awareness as well as the lack of it in their adoption of imperial narratives reflected the confluence of tensions inherent in the genre. Some of these are wholeheartedly embraced to the point of self-parody in the expansion *Far Cry 3: Blood Dragon* (Ubisoft Montreal, 2013). Made as a stand-alone expansion of *Far Cry 3, Blood Dragon* explicitly parodies a variety of conventions of the FPS, from in-game tutorials having the player character explicitly ridicule them to loading screen hints that are sarcastic and generally obvious or outright unhelpful in nature. It both alludes to and parodies earlier FPSs. Among its targets, the military-entertainment complex remains a focal point. Critiqued is the genre's macho tone and its fictional setting of a dystopian post-nuclear land. It sometimes even mocks conventional aspects of the *Far Cry* franchise through the aforementioned means of tutorials and hints being delivered with a generous dosage of snark and thus the players' expectations of it. It perhaps leans more toward irreverent parody than self-critical, but it shows a wide range of rhetorics embedded within the different games in the *Far Cry* franchise. It indicates the potential of how games within the same franchise need not reflect a singular, consistent ideology across all the games. As *Far Cry 3: Blood Dragon* showcases, self-referential parodying could be a possible means of criticizing the imperialist rhetoric reflected in many conventions of the genre that the series adopts.

Figure 2

Along a continuum of games critical of imperialist rhetoric, *Spec Ops: The Line* (Yager, 2012) goes further by subverting the popular conventions of military shooters. It does so by pri-

marily abhorring the imperialist player's acts in nearly every aspect of the game by subverting conventional actions associated with the military shooter genre to point a finger at the player's action and their hero complex. Brendan Keogh (2013), talking about *Spec Ops,* wrote: "the player character's arc across the narrative functions to make the player aware of the 'othering' that is required of the player in all shooters, and how this works to perpetuate an ethical superiority of Western militaries. Combined, these conventional subversions attempt to make the player conscious of their complicity in the military-entertainment complex whenever they play a military shooter" (p. 3).

Keogh refers to *Spec Ops'* narrative, which paints the player character's mission as unheroic, self-absorbed and counterintuitive to achieving peace and freedom. The civilians that the player comes across at various points in the game, berates them and their soldier companions by explicitly pinning blame on them for all the wanton destruction. Like *Far Cry 2,* the game makes the player feel unwelcome in *Spec Ops'* setting of Dubai. In *Spec Ops*, the American imperialism that is glorified and celebrated through the military-entertainment complex in other games like *Medal of Honor,* is pushed to the background. The game's narrative casts a critical look at American interventionism and how it affects the situations of those regions, often fuelling their conflicts. The means by which it achieves this is by negating the heroism that players' actions are generally framed as in FPS games through narrative set pieces and wanton environmental destruction caused by the player. The game ties in the player's destructive actions with the image of the city itself (See Figure 2, above). As the player progresses in the game, the city becomes increasingly more ruined, often as a direct result of their actions. This works to critique both the white savior complex and the imperialist rhetoric of the conventional FPS, where "clearing" a level means killing the indigenous characters, and securing their resources and territories, enslaving survivors, etc. In *Spec Ops*, player actions only bring more ruin to everyone other than the player, with the territory becoming destroyed rather than absorbed into the imperialist land grab. It also acts as a counter to Höglund's (2014) earlier point on the military-entertainment complex of such shooters, which casually equates such selfish ventures with an ethical imperative of liberating and civilizing the indigenous characters. All of this reinforces Keogh's (2013) point that *Spec Ops'* procedural rhetoric communicates the selfish and villainous nature of the player's actions through its narrative and visual representation. By dropping the pretense of disguising player character's actions as a mission to save the natives, *Spec Ops: The Line* embraces the inherent political and imperialist aspects of such military shooters. Thus, *Far Cry 2* and *Spec Ops: The Line* problematize many of the imperialist narratives common to the genre by being hostile to the player and negating the heroic nature of their actions, exposing the destructive nature of such narratives. Despite that, both the games achieve that by adopting many of the conventional methods. For instance, in both games, clearing the level still usually implies destroying all hostile forces in the area. The body count in both games is abnormally high, and outside certain narrative set pieces the player is never forced to question the genre's core action of shooting. Both the games problematize, but never completely challenge, the notion of how the very act of shooting that is central to the genre requires Othering the comput-

er-controlled characters. Neither *Spec Ops* nor *Far Cry 2* can widen their critical gaze to shed questions on them let alone challenge such genre conventions that require the player to violently dominate over the Other.

Conclusion

The central role of violent action in shooters is only one of the problematic aspects of the genre. Some of the conventions of shooter games champion aspects of imperialism such as territorial conquest for selfish reasons, be it for progression or economic gain. The negative depiction of natives by Othering them as savages is also deeply problematic, because it reinforces the idea of player characters as superior to non-player characters and enemies, reproducing social and geopolitical stereotypes. By frequently revisiting the white savior narrative and by downplaying the political implications of neo-colonial settings for many FPSs, the genre often casually portrays problematic aspects of imperialism. While a few games like *Far Cry 2* and *Spec Ops* do exhibit better perception, and turn a critical gaze on such conventions, they still employ many of the conventional methods that hold the core basis of the genre as domination of the Other with an unquestioned gaze. As a result, both of the games remain notable subversions of the genre, rather than standout examples of a changing trend in the genre by challenging its conventions.

Endnotes

1. It is notable that some players have managed to undermine these oppressive dynamics by performing no-kill, "pacifist" runs of shooter games. For instance, Youtuber imbreadcat (2013) did a pacifist run of *Far Cry 3: Blood Dragon*.

2. In *Far Cry 3*, the "natives" go by the name of Rakyat, a fictional tribe loosely based of Maori and other Polynesian tribes.

3. In Hague's (2002) interview with the core programmer of *Battlezone/The Bradley Trainer,* Ed Rothberg describes the interest of the US Military during the development of the game.

4. Sulzberger (2010) wrote a *New York Times* article detailing the shock some US Veterans expressed at the realism in *Medal of Honor*, and further, that "Medal of Honor was produced with the blessing and assistance of the military, which allowed Electronic Arts access to a mock Iraqi village used for training purposes at Fort Irwin in California."

References

Atari. (1980). *Battlezone*. Atari 2600: Atari.

Bogost, I. (2007). *Persuasive games: The expressive power of videogames.* Cambridge, MA: The
        MIT Press.

Danger Close Games. (2010). *Medal of Honor.* Xbox 360: Electronic Arts.

EA DICE. (2011), *Battlefield 3.* Xbox 360: Electronic Arts.

Epic Games. (1998). *Unreal.* PC: MacSoft Games.

Hague, J. (2002). Interview with Ed Rotberg. *Halcyon Days.* Retrieved from http://www.dad-
        gum.com/halcyon/BOOK/ROTBERG.HTM

Höglund, J. (2008). Electronic empire: Orientalism revisited in the military shooter. *Game
        Studies 8*(1).

Höglund, J. (2014). IR and the future wars of first-person military shooters. *E-International
        Relations.* Retrieved from http://www.e-ir.info/2014/10/09/ir-and-the-future-wars-of-
        first-person-military-shooters/

Hunt, M. (1993). Racism, imperialism, and the traveler's gaze in eighteenth-century En-
        gland. *The Journal of British Studies 32*(4), 333-357.

id Software. (1993). *Doom.* PC: id Software.

id Software. (2004). *Doom 3.* PC: Activision.

imbreadcat. (2013). Far Cry 3: Blood Dragon Ending [Pacifist Run] [Hard Mode] pt 30/30
        [Video]. *YouTube.* Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DiioV3UqZG8

Kang, I. (2013). Tales of the military-entertainment complex: Why the U.S. Navy produced
        'Battleship'. *Movieline.* Retrieved from http://movieline.com/2013/02/06/military-en-
        tertainment-complex-hollywood-pentagon-relationship-battleship-zero-dark-thirty/

Keogh, B. (2013). *Spec Ops: The Line*'s conventional subversion of the military shoot-
        er. In *Proceedings of DiGRA 2013: DeFragging Game Studies.* DiGRA.

Looking Glass Studios. (1999). *System Shock 2.* PC: Electronic Arts.

Mitchell, P. I. (n.d.) Key terms in post-colonial theory [Web log post]. Retrieved from http://

www3.dbu.edu/mitchell/postcold.htm

Said, E. (1994) *Culture and Imperialism*. London: Vantage Books.

Sulzberger, A. G. (2010). Combat game goes too far for military. *New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/10/us/10military.html?_r=0

Treyarch. (2008). *Call of Duty: Black Ops*. Xbox 360: Activision.

Ubisoft Montreal. (2008). *Far Cry 2*. Xbox 360: Ubisoft.

Ubisoft Montreal. (2012). *Far Cry 3*. Xbox 360: Ubisoft

Ubisoft Montreal. (2013). *Far Cry 3: Blood Dragon*. Xbox 360: Ubisoft.

Valve Corporation. (1998). *Half-Life*. PC: Sierra Studios,.

Tully, J. (1993). Vietnam: War and the environment. *Green Left Weekly 106*. Retrieved from https://www.greenleft.org.au/node/6044

Wark, M. (2007). *Gamer Theory*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wolf, M. J. P. (2012). *BattleZone* and the origins of first-person shooting games. In G. A. Voorhees, J. Call, & K. Whitlock (Eds.), *Guns, Grenades, and Grunts: First-Person Shooter Games* (pp.25-40). London: Bloomsbury.

Yager. (2012). *Spec Ops: The Line*. Xbox 360: 2K Games.