



Using Cultural Representations in Video Games to Confront Stereotypes and Misconceptions About Brazil: *Favelas*, *Futebol*, and *Brasilidade*

72

Daisyane Barreto and Lucas John Jensen

Contents

Introduction	1664
Video Games, Culture, and Cultural Representation	1666
Brasilidade and Brazilian Cultural Signifiers	1668
Brazilian Representation in Video Games	1669
<i>Favelas</i> as Warzones	1670
Characters of Brazilian Origin	1672
Green Monsters and Savages	1672
The Sexualization of Women	1674
The Rise of Brazilian Game Development and Better Representation	1675
Teaching About and with Misconceptions	1677
Conclusion	1680
References	1681

Abstract

Despite being the fifth largest country on earth, Brazil's representation in video games, from stories to settings to characters, has been limited. Brazilian settings in video games include the exoticized Amazon or the famous shantytowns, the *favelas*. Portrayals of the *favelas* turn them into shooting galleries, built on stereotypes of lawlessness and militarism. Brazilian video game characters are built on signifiers of *Brasilidade*, or "Brazilian-ness," including the

D. Barreto (✉)

Instructional Technology, Foundations and Secondary Education, University of North Carolina-Wilmington, Wilmington, NC, USA

e-mail: barretod@uncw.edu

L. J. Jensen

Leadership, Technology, and Human Development, Georgia Southern University, Statesboro, GA, USA

e-mail: ljensen@georgiasouthern.edu

© Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2020

1663

R. Papa (ed.), *Handbook on Promoting Social Justice in Education*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-14625-2_138

hypersexualization of women and futebol (i.e., soccer) fanatic men. Characters originating from the Amazon have been portrayed as exotic literal monsters, electric green men, and fish people. This chapter explores these stereotypes and misrepresentations, as well as recent positive developments in Brazilian video game development that confront these tropes, presenting a richer, more diverse view of *Brasilidade*, or what it means to be Brazilian. Recommendations for how to teach around and with these representations will be discussed as a way to challenge stereotypes and move toward more critical gaming practices that unpack the role global cultural representation in gaming plays in power and social justice in online encounters, and ultimately, with the Other.

Keywords

Video Games · Games · Brazil · Brasilidade · Misconceptions · Stereotypes · Latin America · Representation · Sexualization · Othering

Introduction

Games, whether traditional board or digital, have played a role in people's lives since the early days of human history (Huizinga, 2014; Juul, 2005; Sutton-Smith, 2009). People play for many different reasons, often in the form of playing games: they entertain themselves; they socialize; they practice; and they learn, to name a few (Rieber, 1996; Sutton-Smith, 2009; Henricks, 2008). Since the 1970s, video games have taken an increasingly larger role in our collective playspace, driven in part by technological advancements like faster processors, portability, better TVs, and more. With the prevalence of more powerful computers and mobile devices, such as phones and tablets, digital games are more prominent than ever. The number of people playing digital games is over 150 million in the USA and the average player is 35 years old, demonstrating that video gaming has moved beyond its childlike reputation (Entertainment Software Association [ESA], 2018). According to a study of adults above the age of 18 by the Pew Research Center (Brown, 2017), 47% of men and 39% of women in the USA play video games sometimes or often, though this gender divide grows significantly in younger demographics. A higher percentage of young people play video games regularly, and a quarter of adults over the age of 65 also engaged in video gaming with some regularity (Brown, 2017). A higher percentage of gamers had no or some college experience than those who were college-educated, and the unemployed, looking for work, and part- and full-time employed all played video games at relatively similar levels. The Pew survey breaks gamers down into three ethnic categories: black, white, and Hispanic. Although limited by leaving out many ethnic groups and subgroups, it still presents a compelling picture of gamers' racial makeup, at least in the USA. Though white gamers are the largest group in the aggregate, a smaller percentage of white people play games at least sometimes (41%), compared to Black (44%) and Hispanic gamers (48%). This data suggests a

broader and more diverse body of gamers than is often portrayed, particularly given that games have traditionally been marketed to younger white men and boys (Ramanan, 2017).

Video games are also popular with youth, especially teenage boys (Perrin, 2018). Boys tend to spend more time playing video games (Common Sense Media, 2013) and usually have more access to a game console or playing video games on a digital device than girls (Perrin, 2018). According to Lenhart (2015), video game playing is an essential activity to build and sustain friendship among boys. Interestingly, most children are playing commercial or entertainment games instead of educational ones, with 72% responding “hardly ever” or “never” to playing educational video games (Common Sense Media, 2013).

Independent of educational games, the benefits of playing video games has been associated with a wide range of cognitive abilities such as speed processing, task switching, and increased sensitivity inputs from the environment (Anderson & Bavelier, 2011). Other potential cognitive benefits of video games include problem-solving skills and enhanced creativity (Gee, 2007; Granic, Lobel, & Engels, 2014; Schell, 2015).

In addition to the cognitive benefits, videogames can also be considered a cultural artifact. Cultural artifacts, such as video games, are digital objects that hold a broader cultural significance than is being acknowledged at the time (Styhre, Szczepanska, & Remneland-Wikhamn, 2018). Indeed, games are part of our culture and are being viewed as cultural documents or representation of cultural interactions given the relationship between these artifacts and the broader contexts in which they are played (Salen & Zimmerman, 2004). Video games continue to grow in popularity, and recent sales have shown major growth: players spent \$30 billion in 2016 (ESA, 2017), climbing to \$36 billion in 2017 (ESA, 2018). The overall industry added more than \$11.7 billion to the US GDP (ESA, 2018). Still, most best seller video games are designed to promote ideologies of capitalism, white male dominance, and violence (Dunlop, 2007). For example, most popular video games encourage players to participate in a capitalist ideology of purchasing better equipment, gears, engines, and features to be successful in the gameplay. Additionally, these titles often portray white male characters as protagonists of the game narrative, which can influence the perceptions of youth of color as well as white youth – boys and girls alike (Dunlop, 2007).

As video games emerge and evolve as part of the mainstream culture, cultural representations designed in this medium are reaching a wider audience. Cultural representations in video games can be displayed through: (a) visuals, e.g., game characters, (b) narrative, e.g., the character storyline, (c) gameplay, e.g., what can be done through the interactions with the characters, (d) game space, e.g., setting and geographic location, (e) music, e.g., sound effects, background music, and (f) language, e.g., native language of characters or accents to symbolize a character’s nationality. Thus, analyzing the design of video games is important given it can reinforce or challenge preexisting stereotypes, preconceptions, power structure, gender roles, and other conventional social norms. Depending on how a videogame is designed, the cultural representation within the game space can

influence players' perspectives about certain social groups, particularly minorities who are usually represented in a negative view or context. In other words, the system created within a video game can be biased to favor (or disfavor) certain groups depending on their nationality, ethnicity, or gender. Thus, the purpose of this chapter is to define the concept "video games" and expand its definition in relation to cultural representations and signifiers embedded in the game context. Specifically, this chapter focuses on analyzing the representation of a cultural group, Brazilians, in popular video games currently at the market. Brazil has been ranked 13th in the global market of video games, with a total of \$1.45 million revenue in US dollars, and it is one of the leaders in Latin America rank (New Zoo, 2019). Thus, it is important to analyze how this country and its population are represented culturally in the context of video games. Often, the representations of Brazil and Brazilians in video games are stereotypical, ranging from the exoticism of the Amazon to the exuberance of *Carnaval* and Brazilian women. These stereotypical representations can shape the perceptions of youth who played those video games in assuming that Brazil and its people are composed by superficial, and sometimes exaggerated, representation of the Amazon, *favelas*, *Carnaval*, soccer/*futebol*, and the Brazilian martial art *capoeira*. Overall, the stereotypical and negative representations and messages transmitted from video games to players, including the youth, can influence their behavior and attitudes toward others outside the game context (Glaubke, Miller, Parker, & Espejo, 2001), including school settings. In summary, the goal of this analysis is threefold: (1) to offer a critique of the Brazilian representation in these games, (2) to suggest approaches to improve the design of video games in regards to cultural representations, and (c) to provide strategies for educators when exposing students to these gaming experiences.

Video Games, Culture, and Cultural Representation

To understand the influence of video games in people's lives, it is important to know what games are. Scholars of video games have offered many definitions of video games, and they often differ from one another in terms of main characteristics and attributes of these technologies. One of the main problems found by the authors is the conflict in distinguishing the terms: play and games. In languages such as French and German, the words play and games are not distinctive as they are in English. Due to these differences in languages, these terms may have lost their specific meaning when translated to English. Many videogame scholars also focus on the classification of games as play activities, making the definition broad and putting video games in the same category as toys (Schell, 2015). Toys and games can be included in the same category; however, toys are not systems, which is a feature peculiar to games (Cassie, 2016).

One definition of video games might focus on artificial conflicts (Salen & Zimmerman, 2004) while others, like Schell, focused on games requiring a "playful attitude" (Schell, 2015, p. 37). Games have also been characterized as problem-

solving activities similar to those we face in real life (Koster, 2005). Another definition of games focuses on being a rule-based system with a variable and quantifiable outcome (Juil, 2005). Game designer Sid Meier reportedly defined video games simply as “a series of meaningful choices.” Given this overview, and the prevalence of many more definitions, identifying the “correct” definition of games is impossible. Nonetheless, it is important to recognize and state one’s own definition (Egenfeldt-Nielsen, Smith & Tosca, 2008). Thus, the authors themselves attempted to reconcile these different foci in the many preexisting definitions of “video game” by offering one of their own: “An interactive digital play experience in which the player explores layered systems of game mechanics, visuals, audio, cinematics, narrative, and/or social interaction” (Jensen, Barreto, & Valentine, 2016, p. 28). Even in its attempt at inclusivity, this definition still sidelines common concepts like “conflict,” “play,” and “choices,” which feature prominently in the definitions above.

Just like video games, culture is another term that is difficult to define, and these definitions have shifted over the years, reflecting greater shifts in our understanding of societies: where once there were debates about high art versus low culture, there is now more of an emphasis on culture as reflecting shared set of practices and values (Hall, Evans, & Nixon, 2013). Salen and Zimmerman (2004) also share similar views of culture referring to as the shared knowledge and values by a society or group. Another definition poses culture as a system in which the values are held collective (Hofstede, 1991). Modern definitions of culture are less about things like movies and art and more “concerned with the production and exchange of meanings (. . .) between the members of a society or group” (Hall et al., 2013, p. 2). The authors’ view of culture throughout this piece is similar, examining how video games and their representation of Brazilian culture-and Brazilians-create and share certain meanings and understandings of what it means to be Brazilian. However flawed they may be, it is important to note that many of the depictions of Brazilian culture highlighted here are smaller aspects of larger pieces of work. Many of these representations are well-meaning.

With technological advancement, the idea of different cultural groups sharing stories, opinions, and perceptions became possible. That is, the boundaries that divided our nations have been broken by globalization and technology. Nonetheless, the idea of an unified world is far from a fact. Cultural clashes can occur when misunderstandings or misrepresentation of cultural groups are portrayed in media such as video games. In that sense, it is important to understand culture in the context of games. According to Salen and Zimmerman (2004), games can engage culture on two different levels: (1) a reflection of the culture through images of gender, race, class, etc. and (2) a culture transformation that emerges from the games as players interact and participate in content creation outside of the game play. Although not all games can be classified as cultural transformation, all games reflect culture to a certain degree. It is on the reflection of culture in games that this work seeks to analyze the representation of a particular country, Brazil, and its people in the context of video games available in the market.

Brasilidade and Brazilian Cultural Signifiers

Brasilidade, roughly translated to “Brazilian-ness,” is the notion that there is one shared cultural Brazilian heritage (Eakin, 2017). This idea grew out of the work of Gilberto Freyre and others in the twentieth century. Brazil, the most populous country in South America and the fifth largest country on earth in terms of population, is racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse (Central Intelligence Agency, 2018). Regional variations are immense, from the Interior and the modernist architecture of its capital Brasília to more European influences in southern Brazil. With these regional variations come ethnic divisions, and, in fact, some studies have shown that Brazilians use over 100 self-reported ethnic terms and groupings to describe themselves (Bailey & Fialho, 2018; Harris, 1970; Telles, 2004). Still, the unifying idea of “being Brazilian,” or *Brasilidade*, emerged in the postcolonial and slavery period in the early twentieth century of Brazil’s history, as the sons and daughters of miscegenation were born in the country. This group could not identify themselves – and some might not even wanted to – with their ancestries (i.e., Native Indians or Africans) or with the Europeans in the country, who despised those of mixed race (Eakin, 2017; Ribeiro, 1995). The idea of a monoculture after centuries of colonialism and slavery appeal to many and was given lip service by prominent Brazilian thinkers of the time, notably Gilberto Freyre (Eakin, 2017). Freyre appealed to a unified ideal of Brazilian culture and heritage, arguing that Brazilians, “whatever their genealogical affiliations, were culturally Africans, Amerindians, and Europeans,” (Eakin, 2017, p. 2), a people whose combined heritage was woven into this notion of *Brasilidade*: “every Brazilian, even the light-skinned fair-haired one, carries with him in this soul, when not in body and soul (. . .) the shadow, or at least the birthmark, of the Indian or the Negro” (p. 2). As Brazil’s economic and political prominence in the world grew, so, too, did this notion of a unified Brazilian culture grow, even with some Brazilians (Eakin, 2017).

As a cultural export, “Brazil,” as viewed from the outside, has been this vision of *Brasilidade*, a prepackaged cluster of familiar signifiers portraying a unified culture landscape: Carmen Miranda; Rio de Janeiro; *Carnaval*; *favelas*; crime; beaches; mosaic sidewalks; bossa nova and samba music; Sugarloaf Mountain; *Corcovado*, the Christ statue; the Amazon; and Pele, an avatar for Brazil’s *futebol* (i.e., soccer) obsession. In media portrayals, to portray the whole of Brazil is to use the tenets of *Brasilidade*, and certainly there is truth in much of what falls under the *brasilidade* rubric. After analyzing various foreign media productions about Brazil, such as movies, Amancio (2000) found these similar stereotypical and clichéd patterns about what makes up conceptions of Brazil. Even though the origins of the media analyzed varied, the inclusion of nature, including images of an exotic Amazonic reality, was often present, framing the country as an exotic place. As a cultural and socioeconomic complex country, Brazil should be represented and viewed beyond its exoticism. That is, the geographic composition of the country, including its climate and natural resources, should be examined in the context of the people who lived in Brazil, not from a foreigner’s, and to a certain extent, a colonizer’s view: of an untamed and savage land that can be explored and exploited. Overall,

many of the stereotypes, particularly those involving Brazil's rich cultural history, might even be seen as positive, but other, possibly negative, stereotypes of Brazilian culture also endure, such as the images of high crime and poverty (e.g., media portrayals of the *favelas*) or hypersexualization (e.g., the women of *Carnaval* and *Fast Five*).

Again, it must be reiterated that Brazil is not necessarily the homogenous land that *Brasilidade* describes. Its immense economic, ethnic, and cultural differences that fracture the unified perception of *Brasilidade*, even as this facade of sociocultural and ethnic harmony was brought to the fore in the culture wars surrounding the Brazilian presidential elections of 2018 (Spektor, 2018).

Yet media portrayals of Brazil, particular those from the outside, persist in their reliance of this cluster of signifiers and tropes to present a portrait of Brazil, in the same way that eagles, American flags, and country music are used to depict the USA in pickup truck ads during sporting events. It is not that these kind of stereotypical depictions are totally out-of-line – Americans do love pickup trucks, for example (Bomey, 2018) – but they are grouped together and presented in such a way that does not represent the whole of human experience in these diverse countries. And just as easily as they can be seen as celebratory, these clusters of signifiers, tropes, and stereotypes can be turned against the culture that they are purported to be celebrating. One of the most infamous demonstrations of *Brasilidade* turned on its head, in the service of comedy some might argue, was an episode of the cartoon *The Simpsons*: “Blame It on Lisa.” The title itself is a take on the 1984 sex comedy *Blame It on Rio*, the story of middle-aged men rediscovering their virility in a supposedly hypersexualized Brazil. From there, the episode makes a staggering tour through Brazilian tropes, from super-sweet tropical drinks to monkey attacks to an abundance of sexy women to orphans and child criminals. The episode ventures into more general Latin American tropes and signifiers, like conga lines, which are not derived from Brazil or a part of its culture and learning the *Macarena* which is also not from Brazil (Bellos, 2002). The episode raised the ire of many Brazilians, including then-president Fernando Henrique Cardoso, who said it “brought a distorted vision of Brazilian reality” (Bellos, 2002, p. 1).

Brazilian Representation in Video Games

The treatment of Brazil in video games resembles something along the lines of this *Simpsons* episode. Brazil might be a land of rich cultural export, but like much of the Global South, Brazil hardly features in video games, despite its size and cultural influence. The authors looked at major video games of the last four decades and found very few examples of Brazilian representation in video games, whether it was Brazilian locations or Brazilian characters. Games set in Brazil are mostly driving games on closed courses, and Brazilian characters mostly appear in fighting games.

Much like *The Simpsons* episode, to view Brazil through the lens of video games is to be showered with a “distortion of Brasil’s reality” and a kind of forced *Brasilidade*, images of a brightly colored, sexualized, *futebol*-crazed cluster of

signifiers: *bossa nova* and *samba*, and Brazilian martial art *capoeira* (with no mentions of its origins in slavery). Additionally, the portrayal of the *favelas*, or Brazilian slums and shantytowns, in video games is mostly one of violence and tragedy, without their vibrant and unique individual cultures, to say nothing of addressing the social, economic, and political conditions that birthed those communities.

As global video game audiences have grown, so have the number and quality of Latinx characters in video games, even featuring as major characters in AAA game franchises like *Resident Evil*, *Just Cause*, *Metal Gear*, and *Street Fighter*. However, the representation of Brazilians and Brazil itself lags behind Europe, America, and Japan, even given its large population, and the fact that it is the 13th largest gaming market in the world as mentioned elsewhere in this chapter. Surveying the landscape of Brazilian characters are typically non-playable characters, one part of a roster of playable characters, obstacles to overcome, or part of the backdrop of the story (Aldama, 2013).

Similarly, Brazil as a video game setting rarely figures into a game's narrative or mechanics. The authors used Wikipedia and the Giant Bomb wikis as guides and found 111 games that used Brazil as a setting. However, Brazil mostly provides the setting a number of racing game courses, fighting game arenas, and sports games, particularly soccer/*futebol*.

Many games use their Brazilian setting as a coat of paint, so to speak. For example, an iteration of *Little Big Planet* franchise has a *Carnaval*-themed level that ostensibly takes place in Brazil, wherein players are tasked to build a parade float. Beyond some color choice and general thematic elements, plus the final goal of building a parade float, the game does not do much with its Brazilian setting. *Angry Birds Rio*, a coupling of the *Angry Birds* franchise and the *Rio* movies, melds its Brazilian backdrop of palm trees and beach scenes with the Brazilian wildlife and music featured in the movie. Beyond that, very little of the game deviates from the standard *Angry Birds* formula. Notable exceptions include the educational games *Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?* and *The Amazon Trail* series, whose somewhat dated content matter does a better job of representing a fuller picture of Brazil. However, given the decades-old age of these games, they feature mostly static images and outmoded animation, out of step with modern 2D and 3D game design.

Rarely are gamers given the opportunity to explore and experience Brazilian video game environments in any way that might give them greater knowledge and understanding about the country and its culture(s). One notable setting that has figured into a few major, expensive video games in the last decade is that of the *favelas*.

Favelas as Warzones

Though so-called “slums,” “shantytowns,” and other areas of extreme poverty exist around the world, Brazil is home to the *favelas*, low-income communities that live mostly on the hills of Brazil's largest cities. *Favelas*, known for their cubic houses made from disparate, often scavenged materials and seemingly

stacked on one another, have long captured the attention of the international media, at least as far back as 1950s, when the tragic *favela*-set romance *Black Orpheus* debuted (Barke, Escasany, & O'Hare, 2001). The *favelas* are actually communities with unique names and culture, with different histories, idioms, folkways, and traditions (Perlman, 2010). Life in the *favelas* can be difficult, violent, and lacking in social services, with pervasive poverty problems. But *favelas* are also vibrant communities of people, who contribute more than just drug violence and militarized police actions to the cultural fabric of Brazil in the world. The *favelas* are the progenitors of many genres of music, most notably *baile funk/funk carioca*, a fusion of Miami bass music and Brazilian rhythms that has achieved worldwide success. This fascination continues to recent decades and the present day. From emergence of *baile funk* to their presence in international hit movies like *Tropa de Elite (Elite Squad 1 & 2)*, *City of God*, and *Fast Five* (of the popular *Fast & Furious* franchise), the *favelas* still occupy a place in the global media landscape and consciousness.

These movies almost exclusively present the *favelas* as places riddled with crime and violence, often initiated by gangs and drug kingpins. Similarly, *favelas* and their denizens have not fared well when depicted in video games, which mostly falls in line with overall Latin American settings in gaming (Penix-Tadsen, 2016). Latin American countries, whether real (e.g., Bolivia in *Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Wildlands* and Venezuela in *Mercenaries 2*) or imagined (e.g., Solis in *Just Cause 4*), are depicted as blood-soaked warzones run by dictators and drug kingpins. This is not to say that *favelas* do not have problems with drug trafficking and its attendant violence, but they have rich cultural heritage and overlooked diversity (Perlman, 2010). The *favelas* exist as a "semiotic domain," (Hall et al., 2013) in terms of video game representation, a cluster of emotional and aesthetic signifiers that mostly relies upon the negative aspects of *Brasilidade*, the notions of pervasive crime and severe poverty, while ignoring any positive aspects of it.

The *favelas* make memorable, if problematic, appearances in a few big-budget first person shooting franchises, and in attempting for authenticity, they often fall short, using the negative tropes and signifiers for "*favela*," leaning heavily on the poverty and violence, rather than portraying the more complex realities of these places. In *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2*, the *favelas* are portrayed as hideouts for militarized drug dealers and international terrorists and arms dealers (Penix-Tadsen, 2016). You and your special forces unit of mostly white, European soldiers, descend like an occupying force into the *favelas*. The shooting from all sides begins almost immediately upon arrival, as your team attempts to capture an arms dealer, killing tens, if not hundreds, along the way. Though the *favelas* might bear some resemblance to the real ones, even though they each have their own distinct feel and look (Perlman, 2010), they are merely a set of rooms to clear of enemies and mildly destroy. The game also features a multiplayer shooter map simply called "*Favela*," wherein players attempt to kill each other in an empty *favela*, devoid of life, a heavily populated place with a distinct culture turned into a warzone.

In *Max Payne 3*, the representation of the Brazilian cities and characters are still limited, following stereotypical representations. The developers of *Max Payne 3*

prided themselves on the immersive research they did for the game, touring the *favelas* of São Paulo to incorporate them into the game's story and environmental design ("Rockstar Research," 2012). However, *Max Payne 3* emphasizes the identification of the local spaces through the foreigner's views instead of local people or Brazilians (da Cruz & Pimenta, 2014). This foreigner's view in *Max Payne 3* makes the player an automatic tourist. Even if this perspective is in line with the lead character, American ex-cop Max Payne, it separates and distinguishes themselves from the Brazilian others and views the *favelas* from an outsider perspective. Despite the extensive research that the developers of *Max Payne 3* did, once the gameplay begins, the *favelas* still devolve into a shooting factory filled with seemingly hundreds of interchangeable thugs and drug dealers to kill, albeit one with more realistic environmental design. Given this, it is not surprising that the developers spent just as much time watching militaristic *favela* crime movies, researching *favela* gangs, and studying the armaments and uniforms of the militarized police force ("Rockstar Research," 2012).

Characters of Brazilian Origin

Video games, in general, have a history of portraying characters as clusters of stereotypes, and Brazilian characters are no exception. For example, in an analysis of video games in which Brazilian characters are represented, Madureira (2015) identified 20 characters of Brazilian origin or nationality. The majority of the Brazilian characters in these games were portrayed in stereotypical manner, using previously discussed signifiers. The representation of the Brazilian characters or scenery was limited to stereotypical aspects of Brazil such as *Carnaval*, the Amazon, indigenous peoples, *favelas*, and *capoeira*. Characters wear *futebol* garb, practice *capoeira*, and often dress in a sexualized manner, when they are not criminals or monsters. This stereotypical view of Brazil can contribute to misinformation and misrepresentation of the country in other contexts outside of the game.

Green Monsters and Savages

Possibly the most absurd portrayal of a "Brazilian" in a video game is that of *Blanka* in the popular *Street Fighter* fighting game series. To be fair, almost every character in the most famous *Street Fighter* game, *Street Fighter II*, is based on a stereotype or has an outlandish backstory: a meditating, limb-stretching Indian character Dhalsim; a Japanese Sumo wrestler; a beefy, American-hating Russian wrestler named Zangief; and a handsome blond-haired American everyman named Ken (*Street Fighter II*, 1992). However, no *Street Fighter* character's origin and appearance are more unusual than *Blanka*, a green, electrified, possibly photosynthetic, once-human monster. In one of his earliest origins, *Blanka* began life as a white child named Jimmy – not a common Brazilian name – who was lost in the

Amazon jungle after a plane crash. A chance encounter with lightning and/or electric eels turned Jimmy into the monstrous, feral Blanka, a clawed, hulking fighter who moves like a gorilla and shocks his opponents with electrical powers. In many ways, the transformation of an innocent, meek person into a powerful green monster resembles that of the Incredible Hulk (whose 2009 movie adaptation, incidentally, featured another battle in the *favelas*).

Additionally, Dos Santos (2012) pointed out that characters, such as Blanka and Dhalsim, who are respectively associated to Brazil and India, are not only represented with an exotic appearance but also with a monstrous look or a deformed body. Meanwhile, other characters within the *Street Fighter* franchise have human bodies and features. In addition to this distorted representation of the character, Brazil is characterized by an exotic representation of savage reality, which differs from the representations of other wealthy countries such as the USA and Japan.

The other, conflicting origins of Blanka over the years include his being a Taiwanese boy named Jimmy, captured and experimented on by a shadowy organization in the jungles, turning him into Blanka (de Assis & Costa, 2015; Madureira, 2015). Even his name, Blanka, is a reference to his origins as a white young man, an “hombre blanco.” Regardless of the origin story, Blanka is always the story of a white person turned into a monster by entering the Amazon jungle, the living embodiment of the Amazon as home of “the Other.” According to Hall et al. (2013), The Other is usually a person of color depicted as more primitive and savage than those from civilized European and white culture, often possessed of bloodlust and a need for violence. Young white innocent Jimmy leaves civilization and becomes the savage and beastly Blanka, the Japanese developer’s idea of someone who might come from the mysterious Amazon, made bright green to match the jungle surroundings and feral and imbued with strength and electric powers. To be fair, the producer of the series has even apologized for the portrayal, though many Brazilian gamers have come to ironically embrace the character and its silly depiction of an Amazonian (Azevedo, 2008).

Blanka is actually not the only beastly green character from the Amazon to appear in video games. Another fighting game series, *Darkstalkers*, features Rikuo, a hulking clawed merman from the Amazon who fights enemies with shells, swamp gas, and octopus tentacles – even though the Amazon is not known for its octopi (“Rikuo,” 2019). Rikuo is the leader of a lost civilization of mermen but is still somewhat separated from human civilization, in part because of his appearance.

Finally, there is Rila from *Breakers*, a wild woman who, while more outwardly human in appearance, possesses gigantic muscles and super strength. She, too, has giant claws, which she uses to attack in defense of the wilderness and Amazon. Again, the Amazon jungle – one of the last bastions of indigenous people on earth – is a place for Others, beasts, and savages. While Rila’s skin is not green, she is portrayed as scantily clad and sexy, with an extremely curvy figure, even with her contorted musculature. She is one of the many female Brazilian characters whose sexualization is on display.

The Sexualization of Women

The video game culture is often (and still) dominated by males and to whom these games are designed for. The marketing of video games has targeted to attract predominately male players and has been successful at this task with female characters wearing sexually revealing clothing in hypersexualized bodies. The objectified version of women in video games exposes players to not only the images but also definitions of the gender (Dunlop, 2007). Besides the gender definitions, players can also be exposed to a stereotypical view of female minorities. For example, Latina characters are usually represented as undocumented class (e.g., maids) (Aldama, 2013). These representations of women in popular video games need to be questioned as they perpetuate common stereotypes and create an inaccurate representation of women in games.

In contrast with popular video games, casual games, which can be distinguished by simple rules and are easy to learn to play (Juul, 2010), have shown positive representations of women in their game narratives, which could influence the number of women drawn to these types of games. After reviewing 130 casual games, Wohn (2011) observed the breakdown of primary characters as the following: 84 (42%) had females as the primary character; 25 games (12.5%) had males as the primary character; and 20 games (10%) had two primary characters that were both female and male. Still, the diversity of race in these games was almost nonexistent, as most characters were represented as overwhelmingly White. And only 8 (6%) games had non-White primary characters.

Overall, the representation of main female characters in video games is limited to 10–14% (Beasley & Standley, 2002), and out of 20 Brazilian characters identified in video games, only 7 are women (35%) and their goal in the game is usually superficial, such as a buying Carnaval costume or a dress (Madureira, 2015). This superficial and shallow representation of female characters in video games may influence girl's behavior and perception of society's expectations of them.

From the sensual female outfits and costumes during *Carnaval* to cinematic sex symbols like Sonia Braga and Carmen Miranda, Brazilian femininity and culture have a reputation of being highly sexualized, especially given the country's reputation as a location for so-called sex tourism (Piscitelli, 2008; Williams, 2013). Globally, many countries in South America, including Brazil, have an image of women as joyful, open, and sensual, and this reputation for Brazilian female sensuality has led to harassment issues (Piscitelli, 2008).

Video game representations of Brazilian women – the few that exist, that is – put this stereotype of Brazilian female sensuality up front, much like the previously discussed Rila. Perhaps no greater exemplar of Brazilian female video game character sexualization exists than Natalia of the game *Killer is Dead*, who is the object of desire in one of the game's "Gigolo Missions." These missions exist for the main character to seduce a woman, and the first one of these is Natalia, a Brazilian woman who wears a shirt of the green and yellow of the Brazilian flag, short shorts, and not much else. While staring at her breasts and exposed midriff, the player goes through a mini-game to arouse her, ultimately leading to a racy bedroom scene. The player

then leaves Natalia naked and asleep without saying a word. Natalia represents a flirty object and lusty reward within the game's mechanics but does not have much personality beyond her sexualization.

Similarly unclothed and sexualized is Christie Monteiro, a long-running fighter in the *Tekken* series. While Christie is a popular character, does possess a backstory, and is a powerful fighter within the game, her body, unlike her male counterparts, is on display, with tight pants slit up the side and a barely-there top. Like many Brazilian fighting game characters, she is a practitioner of *capoeira*, the Brazilian martial arts that originated with slaves. What makes her different than the male fighters is what makes Natalia and Rila different as well, an emphasis on sexualization and sensuality as a defining characteristic.

Male characters like Lucio from *Overwatch* and Eddy Gordo – Christie's mentor – in the *Tekken* series avoid sexualization and stereotypes, for the most part. Lucio, especially, breaks from most *Brasilidade* tropes, except for the use of *futebol* as a signifier. *Futebol* – or soccer – is certainly quite popular in Brazil, but for most Brazilian characters, like Natalia above, the use of the colors of the Brazilian flag and/or an outfit featuring a *futebol* jersey is their way of showing their Brazilian-ness. Though *futebol* is perhaps a too-easy instant signifier of a character being Brazilian, it does not bring with it the negative tropes and stereotypes that accompany Brazilian female characters.

The Rise of Brazilian Game Development and Better Representation

A notable factor in most of these stereotypical representations of Brazil and Brazilians is the location of the game developers and publishers behind nearly all of these games. Much like the *Simpsons* episode discussed earlier, these game developers, typically located in the USA, Japan, or Europe, worked from a place where *Brasilidade* and mass market conceptions of Brazil were foundational text. Even the *Max Payne 3* developers, who meticulously researched the *favelas*, consumed a diet of violent *favela*-set movies like *City of God* and *Tropa de Elite 2 – O Inimigo Agora é Outro* that informed, by their own admission, their portrayal of *favelas* in the game.

However, in recent years, more sensitive portrayals of Brazilian lives and cultural myths in video games have emerged, and while limited in number, they are supported and forwarded by a burgeoning Brazilian video game development scene. A good example of this is the BIG (Brazilian Independent Games) Festival, launched in 2012. Its 2018 incarnation brought 36,000 attendees, showing nearly 50 games from Brazilian developers, and bringing in video game industry figures from 53 different countries (“About the Festival”, 2019).

One of these games is *Dandara*, a 2D game with beautiful pixel art in the so-called “Metroidvania” genre, based on exploration and puzzle-solving. In the game, players portray a futuristic version of folkloric Brazilian figure, Dandara. Dandara was a Brazilian woman of African descent who fought on

behalf of a community of free slaves in Palmares, using *capoeira* to defend herself. Her fate, origins, and many details life story are obscured and disputed, but she and her husband Zumbi loom large in Afro-Brazilian consciousness as figures of rebellion and freedom. Inspired by that, developer Long Hat Games chose Dandara as the player-character, though the slavery-fighting aspects of her history are background to the exploration of an organic sci-fi world that happens onscreen. However, dotted throughout the game are references to Brazilian culture, particularly art. One character you encounter along the way is named Tarsila, represented by a character with a giant foot and a tiny body, a reference to the famed Brazilian modernist painter Tarsila do Amaral and her most famous painting, “*Abaporu*.” Tarsila, while beloved in her home country, is only now receiving acclaim outside Brazil (Scott, 2018; The Museum of Modern Art [MoMA], 2018). By presenting Tarsila and Dandara, as well as other allusions to Brazilian history, the game represents an opportunity to discuss Brazilian artists and historical figures that do not usually figure into video games, Brazilian and otherwise.

Another Brazilian-born video game that tackles slavery is *Thralled*, an experimental, narrative game, from a small independent Brazilian studio. In *Thralled*, the player plays, Isaura, an escaped slave in the 1700s, confronting the loss of a child and her freedom (Narcisse, 2013; Campbell, 2014). The game is wordless, so the story is told through on-screen action and metaphor, as Isaura moves through jungles, slave ships, and fortresses (Campbell, 2014). Isaura carries with her a baby, which she must occasionally set down to solve puzzles. When the baby is unprotected, a shadowy version of Isaura appears and tries to take the baby away. Because of this, a lingering dread at losing a child hangs over the already grim spectacle of being an escaped slave (Narcisse, 2013; Campbell, 2014). *Thralled* shows its players that the Portuguese slave trade in Brazil was just as brutal and oppressive as in other countries.

As discussed above, the dominant image of the *favelas* is one dominated by violence and more violence, places that act as shooting galleries of the impoverished more than the communities they are. Possibly more than any game mentioned here, *Papa y Yo* attempts to overturn traditional conceptions of the *favelas* and what constitutes a Brazilian story. Even though the game has fantastical elements, it shows a complex, nuanced, and personal view of life in the *favelas*, unreliant on gang violence and the trappings of *City of God* et al. *Papa y Yo* tells the story of Quico, a young boy with an alcoholic, abusive father – based on the experiences of the game’s lead designer – who escapes to a fantasy realm where he meets Monster (Orland, 2012). Initially helpful, Monster helps Quico traverse the slums, often using the square-shaped *favelas* as puzzles themselves, moving the buildings around and bouncing on their roofs. Monster develops an addiction to eating frogs, and with it, a growing anger problem, and eventually Quico must push him away, as he is now a living avatar of his father’s abuse (Orland, 2012). The *favelas* in *Papa y Yo* serve as more than grim setting; they are places capable of childlike wonder, fantasy, and escapism, even in the face of subjects like alcoholism and abuse.

Brazilian game studios are not simply telling hyper-specific Brazilian stories, and one studio, Behold Studios, is looking to tell universal “nerd” or “geek” stories,

demonstrating that Brazilian youths experience pop culture in much the same way that other countries do. Their games, *Chroma Squad* and *Knights of Pen and Paper* reference global phenomena the *Power Rangers* and *Dungeons & Dragons*, respectively (Frank, 2016; Stanton, 2013). *Chroma Squad* puts the player in a meta-version of a *Power Rangers*-style Japanese TV show, and *Knights of Pen and Paper* simulates the experience of playing a role-playing game with friends, complete with unhealthy snacks and sodas. These stories portray a Brazilian perspective that might also be a European or Japanese perspective, pushing back on the exoticism present in so many other Brazilian video game representations.

As inspiring and diverse as these new offerings from Brazilian studios might be, it is difficult to ignore the disparity in funding, attention, and sales between these games and the likes AAA first-person shooters and their warped *Brasilidade*. Though indie developers have a level of independence that afford them space to tell different Brazilian stories, they lack the budgets and player base of a *Call of Duty* game, where millions of players worldwide destroy the crime-ridden *favelas* with American and European military might.

Teaching About and with Misconceptions

Though the game industry has slowly begun to incorporate people of color and/or women, progress is slow and more needs to happen (Ramanan, 2017). The rise in Brazilian game development and the subsequent examples of more thoughtful portrayals of Brazil and Brazilians in video games show that a more diverse group of game developers might result in more sensitive attempts of representation of authentic cultures and people. Game designers need to understand the culture and the people being represented in their games by researching and collaborating with natives from those cultures. In fact, designers might be aware of the cultural group for whom they are designing; however, their awareness is limited and further knowledge and information could be beneficial (Rogers, Graham, & Mayes, 2007). Otherwise, they will tend to design stereotypical characters and representations of a culture in their video games. As a result, those playing these video games will receive repeated exposure to a characterized and limited version of a group, which can be used to build the schema for processing members of that particular group (Burgess, Dill, Stermer, Burgess, & Brown, 2011). Therefore, given that games are a reflection of culture, game designers need to ask themselves whether they will reinforce the negative representations and stereotypes of ethnic/minorities groups, or break these dominant views and norms.

Despite being a multibillion dollar industry, the debates surrounding cultural representation in video games have often not been as mainstream as those in movies or literature, though this is changing. Video gaming and gaming culture increasingly are homes to these cultural conversations. For example, starting in 2014, a large part of the GamerGate controversy and its attendant harassment campaign revolved around the role of women, minority, and LGBTQ+ voices in both the industry and the games themselves (Mortensen, 2018). As noxious as GamerGate participants

might have been, that and similar controversies have shown that video games are increasingly where people might get perceptions of culture.

Because of this, we as educators see video games as “texts” capable of teaching people, whether children or adults, societal roles, gender representations, ethics, group behaviors, and more. When playing games, gamers engage in a conversation of sorts with their video games, inputting information and receiving feedback in a constant back and forth, using the knowledge and skills they gain to push them further into the game, but also filling them with ideas about culture (Gee, 2016). As players encounter information from video games, they have to judge its worthiness or goodness, so to speak, using something Schon (1983) calls an “appreciative system” (p. 53). These appreciative systems require training as to what constitutes good information, taste, or judgment over time; this happens through experience, socialization with other gamers, and further conversations with the game (Gee, 2016; Schon, 1983). However, media consumers are not often the best at distinguishing whether they received information from the real world or from media, tending to rate the quality of those sources of information the same (Gee, 2016; Reeves & Nass, 1996). Children – and adults, for that matter – might play these video games about Brazil without encountering critical perspectives or developing appreciate systems to judge the worthiness of these cultural representations. They might consume these representations as being truthful or authentic, finding it acceptable to perceive, judge, and even treat certain groups in a certain way based on the stereotypes they have encountered in games and other media.

Further complicating this is the evidence supporting the cognitive bias of the primacy effect, meaning that information encountered first has a better chance of being stored in long-term memory than information presented later (Belmore & Hubbard, 1987; Murdock, 1962; Webster, Richter, & Kruglanski, 1996). The primacy effect is aligned with the concept of the serial-position effect, which posits that the order in which information is encountered matters in terms of recall (Murdock, 1962), and though this usually applies to information learned over a short period of time, dislodging this first information can prove difficult in the short- and long-term. If a gamer’s first impression of Brazilian culture is shooting up a *favela* in a *Call of Duty* game, then that has a good chance of being the information that sticks, so to speak, and subsequent attempts to dislodge it will be difficult, possibly resulting in a permanent misconception.

These misconceptions are borne, in part, through a mixture of poor cultural representations, the primacy of information encountered, and the lack of cognitive systems and experience needed to evaluate their truthfulness. A misconception is a “conception held by a learner that is significantly at variance with that of an expert and, therefore, impedes progress in learning (...) [t]he pedagogical implication is that misconceptions need to be changed into, or replaced by, the ‘correct’ conception” (Kawulich, Garner, & Wagner, 2009, p. 7).

Now we should look back at the misconceptions and stereotypes of Brazil promulgated within video games. Even if Brazil is the fifth largest country on earth, it remains remarkably underserved and mishandled in its representation in video games. Video games have served a narrow view of *Brasilidade*, of *capoeira*, Amazonian monsters, terrorist-populated *favelas*, sexualized women, and *futebol-*

themed outfits. Though an ascendant Brazilian video game industry is trying to tell new stories, both about Brazil's history and its universal traits, Brazilian game developers have thus far been unable to compete with the larger global video game industry, based in Japan, North America, and Europe, that relies on tropes for its version of *Brasilidade*. Certainly, any piece of a video game cannot be expected to cover the entire history of a culture, and selling an exotic, sanitized, or prepackaged version of Brazil is expected from mainstream media. However, having a discussion about something like *capoeira*, a martial art developed by slaves, is difficult without discussing Brazil's history of slavery.

Video game developers avoid these discussions and reuse obvious cultural signifiers most likely because they have limited knowledge about Brazil or what being a Brazilian means. Engaging in these deeper conversations will not happen without the participation of Brazilians in the design and development of game. Brazilian game developers or collaborators should be involved in the game development process to provide context to the country, culture, and people represented in the games. In absence of this sort of collaboration or partnership with natives from Brazil – and other underrepresented countries and cultures – game developers will rely on problematic preexisting media of Brazilian representation to portray in their games.

Given the difficulty in relying on game developers and other media creators to have conversations about these difficult topics, it falls on educators to hold a critical lens to representation in video games about Brazil and other underrepresented cultures. Thankfully, there are more tools available for educators, parents, and guardians than ever before. Finding quality, nuanced, and authentic information and for researching and observing the types of video games that depict Brazil and other countries. Besides the many media outlets that make up the mainstream video game press, there are fan-created wikis of varying quality devoted to almost every video game. Furthermore, there are sites like Twitch and YouTube where stream and record the playing of video games. Many of these videos are called Let's Plays or playthroughs and feature games played through to completion, often divided into sections.

This is one way for educators to see what actually happens in a video game and potentially use that material in a classroom setting. In fact, all of the video games discussed in this channel are available for viewing on YouTube and other video sites, and many have wikis and reviews written about them. This type of information was unavailable to educators, parents, and guardians even a decade ago, making it a recent and powerful tool in fighting misconceptions. For example, searching for “*favelas* video games” in Google immediately brings up playthroughs of the *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 2* level “*Favela*” discussed earlier.

The logistics of playing games in front of students or having them play games is tricky. But these videos and new video game media allow educators to present and critically assess it with learners, tackling what makes so many of these depictions are incomplete, if not poor, representations of Brazil and Brazilians. Teachers can confront the misconceptions with their students by arming themselves with information on how the misconceptions are presented to adequately deconstruct and confront them. A way to gather information about the misconceptions represented in video games is to identify what media is out there about a certain culture and how it is being

perceived. By engaging in this activity, teachers will know what they should be discussing with their students ahead of time. The simplistic and stereotypical way in which Brazil is presented – as well as the lack of overall representation of Brazil – can actually be used as a teaching tool. Misconceptions created from cultural misrepresentations are difficult to dislodge, given the primacy effect and other factors, but they will not be changed without a critical examination of their provenance.

Addressing these stereotypes and misconceptions in the video game space includes developing digital and media literacy in students. This process involves teaching and learning about media, which leads to its outcome, i.e., media literacy. Media literacy can be defined as the knowledge and skills students gain from the aforementioned process (Buckingham, 2003). Meanwhile, according to Gilster (in Pool, 1997), digital literacy involves understanding information and being able to evaluate and integrate it in multiple formats. That is, in addition to process the information being received, students need to assess the value and trustworthiness of the information being presented to them, especially in media such as video games. Otherwise, representations of cultures, people, settings, and other features in video games might be consumed by players/learners without a comprehensive or critical understanding. Thus, the content of video games should be analyzed and evaluated by students, teachers, and parents in the process of developing media and digital literacies across and at a global context.

Conclusion

Hjorth (2011) writes the following about examining global cultural representation in video games from a pedagogical perspective: “Through investigating a context outside the well-known and frequently cited locations such as the U.S., students can gain a clearer understanding of the complex ways in which games reflect social, cultural, economic and political spaces” (p. 6). Teachers can note misconceptions, gaps, tropes, and stereotypes, what they mean in a global context, and how they could possibly be harmful. For example, deconstructing the portrayal of green Amazonian savages might lead to larger discussions of exoticization and the Other. Examining *capoeira* leads to examinations of slavery. Presenting the depictions of *favelas* in video games could open up into larger discussions of poverty and its relationship to policing and militarism (Penix-Tadsen, 2016). The sexualization of Brazilian women in games could be an opportunity to discuss the portrayal and treatment of women in media in general. Even the seemingly anodyne stereotype of Brazil’s *futebol* fandom is an opportunity for unpacking the idea of culture and cultural signifiers, and how countries, like the fifth largest country on earth, are packaged and sold by the media, from movies to music to video games.

Gamers are past, present, and future tourists, students, residents, businesspeople, and even politicians (Nelson, 2018). By tackling these stereotypes, tropes, and misconceptions, we arm them with the fullest picture of what it means to be Brazilian, of a *Brasilidade* that actually resembles the panoply of voices that make up the Brazilian experience – and make better global citizens in the process.

References

- About the Festival. (2019). Big festival. Retrieved 7 Mar 2019, from <http://www.bigfestival.com.br/about-the-festival.html>
- Aldama, F. L. (Ed.). (2013). *Latinos and narrative media: Participation and portrayal*. Retrieved from <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com>. On 14 Aug 2018.
- Amancio, T. (2000). *O Brasil dos gringos: Imagens no cinema*. Niterói, RJ: Intertexto.
- Anderson, A. F., & Bavelier, D. (2011). Action game play as a tool to enhance perception, attention and cognition. In S. Tobias & J. D. Fletcher (Eds.), *Computer games and instruction* (pp. 307–330). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.
- Azevedo, T. (2008). Produtor fala sobre “Street IV” e ‘se desculpa’ por Blanka. Retrieved 31 Dec 2018, from <https://web.archive.org/web/20140301160212/http://jogos.uol.com.br/ultnot/multi/2008/02/23/ult530u5873.jhtm>
- Bailey, S. R., & Fialho, F. M. (2018). Shifting racial subjectivities and ideologies in Brazil. *Socius*, 4, 2378023118797550.
- Barke, M., Escasany, T., & O’Hare, G. (2001). Samba: A metaphor for Rio’s favelas? *Cities*, 18(4), 259–270. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0264-2751\(01\)00018-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0264-2751(01)00018-X)
- Beasley, B., & Standley, T. C. (2002). Shirts vs. skins: Clothing as an indicator of gender role stereotyping in video games. *Mass Communication and Society*, 5(3), 279–293.
- Bellos, A. (2002, April 9). Doh! Rio blames it on *The Simpsons*. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2002/apr/09/broadcasting.internationalnews>
- Belmore, S. M., & Hubbard, M. L. (1987). The role of advance expectancies in person memory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 53(1), 61–70.
- Bomey, N. (2018, November 26). GM to kill Chevrolet Volt, Cruze, Impala as Americans ditch passenger cars [News]. Retrieved 31 Dec 2018, from <https://www.usatoday.com/story/money/cars/2018/11/26/gm-general-motors-chevrolet-volt-cruze-impala/2114114002/>
- Brown, A. (2017). *Younger men play video games, but so do a diverse group of other Americans*. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center. Retrieved from <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/09/11/younger-men-play-video-games-but-so-do-a-diverse-group-of-other-americans/>
- Buckingham, D. (2003). *Media education: Literacy, learning and contemporary culture*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Burgess, M. C. R., Dill, K. E., Stermer, S. P., Burgess, S. R., & Brown, B. P. (2011). Playing with prejudice: The prevalence and consequences of racial stereotypes in video games. *Media Psychology*, 14(3), 289–311. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15213269.2011.596467>
- Cassie, J. (2016). *Level up your classroom: The quest to gamify your lessons and engage your students*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Central Intelligence Agency. (2018). *The world factbook*. Retrieved from <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/>
- Common Sense Media. (2013). *Zero to eight: Children’s media use in America 2013*. New York, NY: Common Sense Media. Retrieved from <https://www.commonsensemedia.org/research/zero-to-eight-childrens-media-use-in-america-2013>
- da Cruz, C. A. G., Pimenta, F. J. P. (2014). *A representação do Brasil no jogo Max Payne 3. Anais do 19 Congresso de Ciências da Comunicação na Região Sudeste*. Vila Velha, ES: Sociedade Brasileira de Estudos Interdisciplinares da Comunicação. Retrieved from <http://www.portalintercom.org.br/anais/sudeste2014/resumos/R43-0484-1.pdf>
- De Assis, B. M., & Costa, L. M. (2015). Homens verdes da Amazônia: O discurso fantástico sobre os “ribeirinhos” nos games “*Darkstalkers: The Night Warriors*” e “*Street Fighter II: The World Warrior*.” *Anais do IV Colóquio Semiótica das Mídias – Centro Internacional de Semiótica e Comunicação*, 4(1), 1–14. Japaratinga, AL: UFAL. Retrieved from http://ciseco.org.br/anaisdocoloquio/images/csm4/CSM4_BrunoMonte.pdf
- Dos Santos, L. V. V. (2012). A nacionalidade em jogo: representações do Brasil em jogos digitais. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Universidade Federal da Bahia. Retrieved from <https://repositorio.ufba.br/ri/bitstream/ri/16633/1/Disserta%C3%A7%C3%A3o%20de%20Leandro%20Viana%20Villa%20dos%20Santos.pdf>

- Dunlop, J. C. (2007). The U.S. video game industry: Analyzing representation of gender and race. *International Journal of Technology and Human Interaction*, 3(2), 96–109.
- Eakin, M. C. (2017). *Becoming Brazilian: Race and national identity in twentieth-century Brazil*. Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.
- Egenfeldt-Nielsen, S., Smith, J.H., & Tosca, S. (2008). *Understanding Video Games: The Essential Introduction*. Routledge: New York, NY.
- Entertainment Software Association. (2017). *2017 Essential facts about the computer and video game industry*. Retrieved from <https://www.theesa.com/esa-research/2017-essential-facts-about-the-computer-and-video-game-industry/>
- Entertainment Software Association. (2018). *2018 Essential facts about the computer and video game industry*. Retrieved from http://www.theesa.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/EF2018_FINAL.pdf
- Frank, A. (2016). Super sentai RPG *Chroma Squad* is coming to consoles. *Polygon*. Retrieved 6 Mar 2019, from <https://www.polygon.com/2016/9/2/12771884/chroma-squad-ps4-xbox-one-vita>
- Gee, J. P. (2007). *What video games have to teach us about learning and literacy* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Palgrave.
- Gee, J. P. (2016). Video games, design, and aesthetic experience. *Rivista di estetica*, 63, 149–160.
- Glaubke, C. R., Miller, P., Parker, M. A., & Espejo, E. (2001). *Fair play? Violence, gender and race in video games*. Oakland, CA: Children Now.
- Granic, I., Lobel, A., & Engels, R. C. M. E. (2014). The benefits of playing video games. *American Psychologist*, 69(1), 66–78. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0034857>
- Hall, S., Evans, J., & Nixon, S. (2013). *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices*. London, England: Sage.
- Harris, M. (1970). Racial ambiguity in the calculus of Brazilian racial identity. *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, 26(1), 1–14.
- Henricks, T. (2008). The nature of play. *American Journal of Play*, 1(2), 157–180.
- Hjorth, L. (2011). *Games and Gaming: An Introduction to New Media*. Oxford, UK: Berg.
- Hofstede, G. (1991). *Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind*. London, England: McGraw Hill Book Company.
- Huizinga, J. (2014). *Homo ludens* IIs 86. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Jensen, L. J., Barreto, D., & Valentine, K. D. (2016). Toward broader definitions of “video games”: Shifts in narrative, player goals, subject matter, and digital play environments. In L. J. Jensen & K. D. Valentine (Eds.), *Examining the evolution of gaming and its impact on social, cultural, and political perspectives* (pp. 1–37). Hershey, PA: IGI Global.
- Juul, J. (2005). *Half-real: Video games between real rules and fictional worlds*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Juul, J. (2010). *A casual revolution: Reinventing video games and their players*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Kawulich, B., Garner, M. W. J., & Wagner, C. (2009). Students’ conceptions-and misconceptions-of social research. *Qualitative Sociology Review*, 5(3). Retrieved from <https://search-proquest-com.liblink.uncw.edu/docview/1002317230?accountid=14606>
- Koster, R. (2005). *Theory of Fun for Game Design*. O’Reilly Media, Incorporated.
- Lenhart, A. (2015). *Teens, technology and friendships*. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center. Retrieved from <http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/08/06/teens-technology-and-friendships/>
- Madureira, E. U. (2015). Estereótipos brasileiros nos jogos de luta. *Revista Jogos Eletrônicos, Educação e Comunicação*, 11, 27–37. Retrieved from <https://www.revistas.uneb.br/index.php/sjec/article/view/1240/837>
- Mortensen, T. E. (2018). Anger, fear, and games: The long event of #GamerGate. *Games and Culture*, 13(8), 787–806.
- Murdock, B. B., Jr. (1962). The serial position effect of free recall. *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, 64(5), 482–488.
- Narcisse, E. (2013). I need this haunting game about a runaway Slave to get finished. *Kotaku*. Retrieved 6 Mar 2019, from <https://kotaku.com/i-really-need-this-creepy-game-about-a-run-away-slave-to-1184668918>

- Nelson, R. (2018). Meet the members of Congress who play video games. *POLITICO Magazine*. Retrieved from <https://politi.co/2wEjtje>
- New Zoo. (2019). *Top 100 countries/markets by game revenues*. Retrieved from <https://newzoo.com/insights/rankings/top-100-countries-by-game-revenues/>
- Orland, K. (2012). Review: Papo & Yo's dreamlike fable will stick with you. *Ars Technica*. Retrieved 22 Feb 2019, from <https://arstechnica.com/gaming/2012/08/review-papo-yos-dream-like-fable-will-stick-with-you>
- Penix-Tadsen, P. (2016). *Cultural code: Video games and Latin America*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Perlman, J. (2010). *Favela: Four decades of living on the edge in Rio de Janeiro*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Perrin, A. (2018). *5 facts about Americans and video games*. Washington, DC: Pew Research Center. Retrieved from <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/09/17/5-facts-about-americans-and-video-games/>
- Piscitelli, A. (2008). Looking for new worlds: Brazilian women as international migrants. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 33(4), 784–793. <https://doi.org/10.1086/528747>
- Pool, C. R. (1997). A new digital literacy. *Educational Leadership*, 55(3), 6–11.
- Ramanan, C. (2017, March 15). The video game industry has a diversity problem – But it can be fixed. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2017/mar/15/video-game-industry-diversity-problem-women-non-white-people>
- Reeves, B., & Nass, C. I. (1996). *The media equation: How people treat computers, television, and new media like real people and places*. Chicago, IL/New York, NY: Center for the Study of Language and Information/Cambridge University Press.
- Ribeiro, D. (1995). *O povo brasileiro: A formação e o sentido do Brasil*. São Paulo, SP: Companhia das Letras.
- Rieber, L. P. (1996). Seriously considering play: Designing interactive learning environments based on the blending of microworlds, simulations, and games. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 44(2), 43–58. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02300540>
- Rockstar Research. (2012). *The Weapon-Wielding Gangsters and Special Police Commandos of Max Payne 3*. Retrieved March 6, 2019, from Rockstar Games <https://www.rockstargames.com/newswire/article/20011/rockstar-research-the-weaponwielding-gangsters-and-special-polic.html>
- Rogers, P. C., Graham, C. R., & Mayes, C. T. (2007). Cultural competence and instructional design: Exploration research into the delivery of online instruction cross-culturally. *Educational Technology Research and Development*, 55(2), 197–217. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-007-9033-x>
- Salen, K., & Zimmerman, E. (2004). *Rules of play: Game design fundamentals*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Schell, J. (2015). *The art of game design: A book of lenses* (2nd ed.). Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.
- Schon, D. (1983). *The reflective practitioner*. New York, NY: Harper & Collins.
- Scott, A. K. (2018). Introducing New York to the First Brazilian modernist. *The New Yorker*. Retrieved from <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2018/02/26/introducing-new-york-to-the-first-brazilian-modernist>
- Spektor, M. (2018). It's not just the right that's voting for Bolsonaro. It's everyone. *Foreign Policy*. Retrieved 31 Dec 2018, from <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/10/26/its-not-just-the-right-thats-voting-for-bolsonaro-its-everyone-far-right-brazil-corruption-center-left-anger-pt-black-gay-racism-homophobia/>
- Stanton, R. (2013). Knights of Pen & Paper review. *Eurogamer*. Retrieved 6 Mar 2019, from <https://www.eurogamer.net/articles/2013-01-25-knights-of-pen-and-paper-review>
- Styhre, A., Szczepanska, A. M., & Remneland-Wikhamn, B. (2018). Consecrating video games as cultural artifacts: Intellectual legitimation as a source of industry renewal. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 34(1), 22–28.
- Sutton-Smith, B. (2009). *The ambiguity of play*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Telles, E. E. (2004). *Race in another America: The significance of skin color in Brazil*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

- The Museum of Modern Art [MoMA]. (2018). *Tarsila do Amaral: Inventing modern art in Brazil*. Retrieved 6 Mar 2019, from <https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/3871>
- Webster, D. M., Richter, L., & Kruglanski, A. W. (1996). On leaping to conclusions when feeling tired: Mental fatigue effects on impressional primacy. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 32(2), 181–195.
- Williams, E. L. (2013). *Sex tourism in Bahia: Ambiguous entanglements*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Wohn, D. Y. (2011). Gender and race representation in casual games. *Sex Roles*, 65, 198–207.