Д. А. Беляев, У. П. Беляева

Видеоигры как экранно-интерактивная платформа исторического медиапросвещения: образовательный потенциал и риски политизации

Среди разновидностей экранной культуры с начала XXI в. особую популярность и массовое распространение стали приобретать видеоигры. Они обладают уникальными интерактивно-процедурными качествами, которые в совокупности с традиционной грамматикой экранной нарративности, создают оригинальный комплекс риторических приемов, эффективно воздействующих на массовое общественное сознание. В свою очередь сюжет и визуальный дизайн видеоигр зачастую базируется на исторических нарративах, становясь платформой для виртуально-интерактивной реконструкции истории. *Цель исследования* – анализ экранного феномена видеоигр в качестве инновационной платформы исторического медиапросвещения, с выявлением его образовательного потенциала и рисков политического искажения истории.

Методологической основой работы являются культурно-цивилизационный, диалектический и исторический подходы, а также структурно-функциональный анализ, компаративно-политологический подход и системный метод.

Проведенное исследование позволило выявить широкий спектр исторических видеоигр и классифицировать модальности реализации в них исторической тематики с ее общеобразовательным потенциалом. Кроме того, определен принципиальный деконструктивный характер актуализации исторического метанарратива в процедурно-интерактивной архитектонике видеоигр. Наконец, были раскрыты три основных стратегии искажения и фальсификации истории в видеоиграх: 1) непосредственные искажения фактуры сюжетного нарратива; 2) фигуры умолчания; 3) программные манипуляции с игровыми правилами.

По итогам исследования было раскрыто, что практически каждая значимая культурно-историческая эпоха, с акцентуацией на военно-батальных сюжетах, имеет свое отражение в видеоигровом формате. Данные игровые проекты имеют серьезный общеобразовательный потенциал, процедурно погружая геймера в контекст основных исторических фактов, культурной эстетики эпохи и внутренних детерминант исторической динамики. В то же время, установлена постмодернистская сущность видеоигр, что создает угрозу инвариантности восприятия истории, латентно поощряя интенции к ее переписыванию. Другие риски содержатся в выявленных примерах политизации исторического нарратива видеоигр, которые конкретизируются в тенденции к принижению роли России на международной арене и европоцентристской ценностной акцентуации.

Ключевые слова: видеоигры, образование, история, просвещение, экранная культура, исторические видеоигры, политизация истории

Ссылка для цитирования:

Беляев Д. А., Беляева У. П. Видеоигры как экранно-интерактивная платформа исторического медиапросвещения: образовательный потенциал и риски политизации // Перспективы науки и образования. 2021. № 4 (52). С. 478-491. doi: 10.32744/pse.2021.4.32

D. A. BELYAEV, U. P. BELYAEVA

Video games as a screen-interactive platform of historical media education: educational potential and risks of politicization

Screen culture today, absorbing verbal-narrative and written culture, is the dominant memorial-representative format for the reproduction, preservation and broadcast of cultural information. Among the varieties of screen culture, since the beginning of the 21st century, video games have become especially popular and widespread. They possess unique interactive-procedural qualities, which, together with the traditional grammar of screen narrative, create an original complex of rhetorical techniques that effectively influence the mass public consciousness. In turn, the plot and visual design of video games is often based on historical narratives, becoming a platform for virtual interactive reconstruction of history. The study is devoted to the up-to-date topic of analyzing the on-screen phenomenon of video games as an innovative platform for historical media education, identifying its educational potential and the risks of political distortion of history.

The methodological basis of the study is cultural-civilizational, dialectical and historical approaches, as well as structural-functional analysis, comparative-political science approach and systemic method.

The study made it possible to identify a wide range of historical video games and classify the modalities of the implementation of historical topics in them with its general educational potential. In addition, the fundamental deconstructive nature of the actualization of the historical metanarrative in the procedural-interactive architectonics of video games has been determined. Finally, three main strategies for distorting and falsifying history in video games have been revealed.

According to the results of the study, it was revealed that almost every significant cultural and historical era, with an emphasis on military battle plots, is reflected in the video game format. These game projects have serious educational potential, procedurally immersing the gamer in the context of the main historical facts, cultural aesthetics of the era and internal determinants of historical dynamics. At the same time, the postmodern essence of video games has been established, which poses a threat to the invariance of the perception of history, latently encouraging the intentions to rewrite it. Other risks are contained in the identified examples of politicization of the historical narrative of video games, which are concretized in the tendency to belittle the role of Russia in the international arena and the Eurocentric value accentuation.

Keywords: video games, education, history, enlightenment, screen culture, historical video games, politicization of history

For Reference:

Belyaev, D. A., & Belyaeva, U. P. (2021). Video games as a screen-interactive platform of historical media education: educational potential and risks of politicization. *Perspektivy nauki i obrazovaniya – Perspectives of Science and Education*, 52 (4), 478-491. doi: 10.32744/pse.2021.4.32

Introduction

The intensification of the technological development of modern civilization has led to the emergence of fundamentally new memorial and representation formats and platforms for broadcasting information. If, before the beginning of the 20th century, the change in the stages of cultural development from the verbal-narrative, as the most ancient, to the written one, which was finally consolidated only after the "Gutenberg revolution" in the 15th century, took place quite smoothly. The cultural assimilation of new modalities of information reflection took place without significant shocks and was quite organically incorporated into the model of enlightenment strategies of a particular era. The last century was not only the time of birth itself, but also the beginning of the mass domination of a new screen type of culture.

So called screen culture has rapidly evolved from the far-fetched marginal entertainment, which was the status the first demonstrations of cinematography often had, to the leading information presentation format that claims to be cultural totality. Accordingly, screen communication began to be mastered as an instrument of educational policy, becoming a carrier of general educational concepts and meanings. Thus, within the framework of the TV-screen format, a significant scientific and popular content base is being formed, the content of which is aimed at mass education in a wide educational spectrum. In addition, the cinema screen culture also occupies an important place in the structure of modern media education. In addition to documentaries that directly implement educational goals, it is important to note art films, which have enormous educational potential. Thanks to its large user base and deep emotional impact, based on the figurative-screen rhetoric, cinema from the second half of the XX century occupies a prominent place in the structure of the policy of enlightenment and mass education, in particular in the field of historical consciousness [16, p. 56-62].

At the same time, the screen culture itself in the context of the dynamics of scientific and technological progress is changing, giving rise to new formats of implementation. These include video games, which appeared in the cultural space in the 70s of the last century, are rapidly gaining user popularity, becoming today the leader of the entertainment industry, having already surpassed, for example, cinema. At the level of public perception of video games until the end of the XX century they were largely in the "entertainment ghetto". At the same time, it was additionally limited by a number of age and gender markers, having, moreover, a partly marginalized socio-cultural status [39, p. 10-12]. All this did not allow video games to act as a new universal platform for media education, but since the beginning of the 21st century the situation began to change.

Video games go beyond their entertainment framework, already being considered as a polymorphic cultural phenomenon, in its various manifestations acting as a sport, a kind of virtual digital art, educational and social communication platform of a new type [41, p. 34-39]. In addition, a separate research program is being formed in the social and humanitarian scientific discourse – game studies, which aims at interdisciplinary scientific consideration of video games. Finally, the principles of gamification, which are implemented in many non-gaming spheres of human activity, are gaining particular popularity today, revealing the potential of their scaling dynamics [13].

As a result, today video games have generally been legitimized as a virtual interactive kind of screen culture. They possess many original rhetorical techniques and immersive

practices that allow them to act as a translator of complex narrative structures and meanings [31, p. 82-87]. Consequently, like cinematography, video games are becoming a highly effective platform for media education. In particular, history, in its event-factual and visual-aesthetic modalities, is often integrated into the plot-narrative and design-graphic architectonics of video games. And here video games act as a screen platform for mass historical enlightenment and, at the same time, an instrument for implementing the politics of memory and forming historical consciousness [14, p. 129-131; 19, p. 130-133].

It is significant that due to the novelty of this cultural phenomenon, no specialized works on this topic have yet been published. This fact additionally actualizes the topic and focus of our consideration, in which video games are analyzed as a special media format of historical education that has a powerful educational potential and risks of politicization. At the same time, within the framework of the foreign discourse of game studies, a number of authors can be distinguished whose articles in publications indexed in the Web of Science Core Collection raise a number of topics related to our research.

The most massive and popular research area in game studies has become cultural studies (A. Meskin [28], R. Guins [20], A. Shaw [40]), this research area examines a wide range of issues related to the cultural influence of video games and their place in the modern socio-cultural space. In addition, in the last decade, the direction of historical studies has been actively developing in the foreign discourse of game studies (L. Traynor [43], E. Wright [47], D. Spring [42]), where the features of the presence and procedural-narrative interpretation of historical plots in video games are analyzed. Finally, the newest direction in game studies is political studies (M. Schulzke [37; 38], N. Robinson [34], M. Salter [35]), which examine the political and ideological component of video games, the possibility and degree of their influence on political consciousness and behavior.

Domestic research discourse devoted to video games began to take shape 5-7 years later than the foreign one. Here, the work of two Russian centers for the study of video games – the Moscow Center for the Study of Video Games at the Faculty of Philosophy of Lomonosov Moscow State University and the Computer Games Research Laboratory at the Institute of Philosophy, St. Petersburg State University.

From the point of view of the main directions, the domestic research discourse on video games as a whole follows in the wake of the foreign one, adjusted for some disciplinary specifics and thematic accentuation. In Russian studies, the philosophical and cultural direction of video game analytics has become widespread (E.V. Galanina [18], V.S. Babinovich [4] and A.S. Vetushinsky [44; 45; 46]) and art history (N.A. Marenich [27], N.A. Moshkov [29] and I.I. Yugai [50]) where ontological, sociocultural, ethical, anthropological, religious studies and artistic and aesthetic issues are raised.

According to our research problems, one can single out the works of D.A. Iglin [22; 23], M.A. Bochanov [11] and V.A. Kalmykov [24], which raises the topic of historical integration in some individual video games, and also concisely points to private politically engaged forms in the structure of their plot narrative and gameplay-procedural activities.

Finally, it is necessary to note the work of a psychological and pedagogical orientation. They analyze the potential risks and developmental opportunities inherent in video games, as well as issues of gamification in education. The works of E.O. Achkelova [2], L.V. Zinovieva [51] and V.A. Pomelova [32].

The purpose of our interdisciplinary research is to explicate and analyze video games as a screen format for the implementation of media education in the field of historical knowledge. In the process of achieving this goal, it is assumed that a comparative consideration of the

modalities of representation of historical themes, plots and images in the mass video game segment is assumed, with the identification of the educational potential inherent in them and the disclosure of examples of distortion (falsification) of history for the sake of political conjuncture and ideological predestination.

Materials and methods

The methodology of the article is conditioned, firstly, by the interdisciplinary research topics at the intersection of pedagogy, history, political science and cultural studies; secondly, the complex technocultural nature of the object and subject of consideration, which determined a single set of methodological approaches and principles.

First of all, it is necessary to take into consideration a number of general scientific theoretical methods: analysis, synthesis, analogy, modelling and comparison. They create a scientific and methodological framework for the entire study. The work is based on the principles of the unity of the historical and logical, socio-cultural and historical conditioning of human practices. The methodological basis of the work is the cultural-civilizational, dialectical and historical approaches. Also, a necessary element of the realization of the goal of the research tasks is the use of a number of special approaches and methods. In particular, structural and functional analysis, comparative political science approach and systemic method.

In addition, the study relies on the narratological concept of cybertextual interpretation of video games by E. Aarset [1] and the principle of "postmodern mess" by J. Bogost [12], and also takes into account certain aspects of B. Latour's theory of irreducibility [26].

Also, to determine the specifics of the impact of video games on public consciousness, it is of fundamental importance to rely on the theory of streaming by M. Chikszentmihalyi [15] and its video game adaptation by R. Holt [21].

In general, depending on the aspect of the topic under consideration and local research tasks, the methodological tools of the work are adjusted, while maintaining the integrity and unity of the research narrative. The synthesis of philosophical, cultural, political and historical approaches and methods is designed to fully implement the interdisciplinary nature of the project topic and contribute to the adequate solution of the set goals and objectives of the research.

Results

First of all, it is necessary to explicate the concept of "historical video games", which is key for our topic, but at the same time, even within the framework of the research discourse, game studies do not have a very clear definition. For example, V.V. Kirichenko is trying to introduce the concept of "encyclopaedic game" into the research discourse, denoting "large-scale reproduction of historical material in the context of mentality, the concept of everyday life and play totality" [25, p. 147], where historical accuracy and fiction are combined. However, in our opinion, this concept is not entirely successful, since it does not reflect the essence of the reflection in video games of historical material.

The story in video games can be integrated in two main modalities – narrative and visual design. In the first case, the plot of the game is based on one or another historical event (fact, personality), which is reconstructed within the framework of the local virtual world.

It is built into the general game architectonics as a content-explanatory component of the game narration. Narrative modality focuses on the transmission of meanings and ideas, suggesting rational-logical reception. In the visual design format, the story is represented primarily through the special graphic performance of the game, which is guided by external, visual authenticity. It is addressed primarily to sensory, emotional perception. Of course, these two modalities of reflecting the historical in video games can be combined, enhancing the overall historical authenticity of the virtually recreated universe.

In addition, an important initial framework for the implementation of historical content in a video game is its genre, which itself forms the original tonality and focuses of the representation of history. The vast majority of conventionally historical video games are made in the genre of strategy or action-adventure (from the first or third person). In strategies, the gameplay is usually measured and tactically oriented, so the emphasis is often shifted towards factual and cartography. Their game mechanics allow the simulation of global historical processes and complex, multifactorial determinants as factors of historical dynamics. In action adventures, the gameplay is based on active action and increased subjective involvement in virtual reality. Here, the external surroundings of locations are of particular importance, and the gameplay dynamics partly absorbs the narrative meanings.

Further on, it makes sense to turn to the consideration of specific game projects to clarify the nature and characteristics of the presence of historical content in them. First of all, it is necessary to note a number of global historical strategies – the series "Civilization", "Europa Universalis" and "Total War".

Global strategy games from the Civilization series, the first game of which appeared back in 1991, are one of the most famous and popular historical games, which laid some of the fundamental foundations of the genre. In "Civilization" the gamer, controlling a separate civilization, guides it through the main stages of historical development – from the Ancient World to the present (with elements of futurology). The game has many development parameters – economy, politics, technology, military force, etc., which simulate the main areas of development of real countries. The general trajectory of its historical development depends on the initial choice of civilization (in the last game of the series there are more than 18), the priorities of its socio-political, economic, scientific and military organization are predetermined. Also, each civilization has its own unique leader (for example, in Russia it is Peter I), military unit and cultural achievements. All of them correlate with historical facts and a well-established social concept (often stereotyped) about a particular civilization. Also quite remarkable is the main game goal in "Civilization" – to achieve world domination. At the same time, it can be expressed in military-political, economic or cultural domination over other states.

The core of the game concept of "Civilization", which consists in presenting world history through the evolution of local civilizations, obviously goes back to the civilizational approach, as well as the historiosophist and culturological ideas of O. Spengler and A. Toynbee. At the same time, there is not a lot of narrative history in "Civilization", its historicity is expressed more in individual facts (often in isolation from the real historical context) and general design solutions for visualizing the architecture of religious buildings. But, I think, the main historical, educational and general educational merit of "Civilization" is the simulation of the dynamics of historical development, taking into account (as far as possible within the framework of the conventions of the virtual world) its multifactorial nature. In other words, this video game is more aimed not at broadcasting a historical narrative, but at a procedurally-interactive demonstration of the principles of historical evolution.

The Europa Universalis series is based on similar game principles, but has a clearly limited historical framework (depending on the part, this interval extends to 300-500 years of world history, focusing on the late Middle Ages and Modern Times), in which gamers will have to implement various strategies world domination. Here, at the start of the gameplay, a historically authentic political disposition in the European region and adjoining neighbouring states is modelled as a whole. The political geography of that time and a certain set of indicators of the development of a particular country are conveyed realistically. This is the basic factual realism of Europa Universalis. After the start of the game session, the dynamics of the optional-interactive historical development is launched, which is modelled taking into account the initial factors of the development of states, program goals and subjective activities of the player. Taking into account the initially set time frame, in "Europa Universalis" in more detail than in "Civilization", multifactorial and non-linear determinism of historical development are worked out. All this allows the player to get an idea of the geopolitical balance of power in Europe in the XIV-XVI centuries, cause-and-effect bases and the logic of the historical process [14, p. 79].

Finally, the "Total War" series is conceptually built on the same foundations, but with an emphasis on the battle-tactical component. So, it contains elements of politics, diplomacy and economics, but they are secondary in the structure of game mechanics. Priority is given to military activities. In "Total War" military-technical and tactical elements inherent in different countries and historical eras are reconstructed in detail. Each part of the series is dedicated to a specific historical period and region – the Trojan War, Ancient Rome, Feudal Japan, Colonial and Napoleonic Wars. Accordingly, "Total War" provides in its own way a unique procedural and game experience of virtual military reconstructions immersed in the context of local historical narrative.

Finishing the topic of large-scale historical strategies, one cannot fail to mention the well-known series "Age of Empires", which, however, unlike the projects discussed above, in its historical component has undergone many simplifications. On the one hand, in "Age of Empires" there are several playable civilizations that have their own design of units and architectural structures, as well as formally unique trajectories of cultural and technological development. On the other hand, these differences are largely decorative in nature, not carrying a deep semantic content. The factors of the development of civilization are schematic and in many respects conditional, absolutely do not reflect the historical reality. Obviously, "Age of Empires" is more focused on screen-interactive entertainment, which is externally (designer) framed by historical elements. However, even so, the video game provides a noticeable educational value, reaching new target groups. Its relative simplicity (at the level of game mechanics) lowers the entry threshold and allows attracting a larger audience, which, along with entertainment, will teach a certain array of historical knowledge. They may well act in the form of a factual framework of ideas about a number of the most important events in world history.

Another popular video game series that features a wide range of historical themes, plots and personalities is Assassin's Creed. According to the genre, this is a third-person action-adventure in which the protagonist will find himself in different historical eras. In particular, through a virtual avatar, the player will be able to become a participant in the Third Crusade, political conspiracies of Renaissance Italy at the end of the 15th century, the War of Independence of the United States and the Great French Revolution, as well as visit Ancient Greece during the Peloponnesian War, Hellenistic Egypt and even lead the Viking invasion into England.

At first glance, "Assassin's Creed" strikes with visual authenticity and attention to private historical details. The game also attracts with the concentration of famous historical figures – military leaders, politicians, philosophers, scientists and artists. Moreover, the gamer has the opportunity to enter into direct interaction with them, becoming an actor and participant in important historical events. However, a fictional plot-motivational political basis is integrated into the "Assassin's Creed" narrative – a global confrontation between the religiously paramilitary organizations of the Assassins and Templars. It acts as a conceptual factor in the teleology of the historical process within the framework of the Assassin's Creed metanarrative. Accordingly, the key facts and events of history, as well as the actions of famous historical figures in this virtual universe, are explained through the influence of this fictional conflict. Real events are superimposed on mythological motivation, through which they are explained.

The next highly popular segment of historical video games is economic strategy. First of all, it is necessary to note the well-known game series "Caesar", as well as a number of projects created according to its templates: "Pharaoh" (1999) "Cleopatra: Queen of the Nile" (2000), "Emperor: Rise of the Middle Kingdom" (2002), "Zeus: Master of Olympus" (2000), "Poseidon: Master of Atlantis" (2001), "Immortal Cities: Children of the Nile" (2004) and "CivCity: Rome" (2006). In video games of this category, basic strategies for the construction and functioning of a complex socio-economic ecological environment of a city / state are modelled, reproduced in a certain cultural and historical temporal reality. So, in the named projects, the chronological frame of the Ancient World, where the Roman Empire, Egypt and Ancient Greece are represented, is especially popular.

This class of video games combines two enlightenment and educational lines. First, they contribute to the formation and development of basic ideas about macroeconomic processes and the principles of social management, as well as the operation of socio-economic determinants in the social and state system. Secondly, these games give an idea of the socio-economic, cultural and partly political functioning of the most influential states of the Ancient World. The gamer visually-interactively, through direct procedural practices, learns the structure and dynamics of social interactions in the societies of the past, and also masters cultural terminology.

The rest of the array of historical video games can be ranked according to specific historical periods, reconstruction and broadcast of which they are dedicated to. The most popular and massively represented among them is the Second World War. More than half of the entire spectrum of historically oriented games is devoted to its events. Such famous series as "Blitzkrieg", "Behind Enemy Lines", "Confrontation", "Il-2 Shturmovik", "Brothers in Arms", "Commandos", "Operation Silent Storm" have been made in the narrative frame and design setting of "World War II", "Hidden & Dangerous", "Sniper Elite", "Company of Heroes" and "Hearts of Iron", as well as parts of the popular "Call of Duty", "Battlefield" and "Medal of Honor" series. In addition, this group includes the most popular multiplayer projects, which daily collect tens of thousands of players, "World of Tanks", "World of Warships", "War Thunder", "Enlisted" and "Day of Infamy".

These games belong to different genres – strategy, shooter, tactical action and simulation. For most of these games, World War II is attractive, first of all, for its relatively relevant combat component. It is the battle components, performed in various procedural mechanics, that often turn out to be primary in these games. Accordingly, their historicism is primarily represented through the external design of the game worlds. At the same time,

in some cases, important meanings and historical messages are contained in their narrative architectonics and story-telling plot.

Incomparably fewer games are devoted to the theme of the First World War, which fully correlates with the peripheral perception of it in the public consciousness as a whole. In this topic, only "Valiant Hearts: The Great War" (2014) and "Battlefield 1" (2016) draw attention to themselves. And if "Battlefield 1" is a fairly typical first-person action game, in which there are several storyline companies from different theaters of war of the First World War, then the narrative design and semantic content of "Valiant Hearts: The Great War" is more historically interesting and noteworthy.

According to its game mechanics, "Valiant Hearts: The Great War" is not a very original platformer with puzzle elements, which, at first glance, do not create expectations of historical profundity. However, in reality, "Valiant Hearts: The Great War" turns out to be a very original project that managed to show the tragedy and anti-humanistic essence of war. The narrative of the game is served through tracing the fate of three heroes who, by the will of external circumstances, were drawn into the events of the First World War. The gamer becomes a participant in a very personal story, which is broken and dramatized by the war. "Valiant Hearts: The Great War" contains a powerful anti-militaristic semantic message, combining elements of the existential tragedy of the novels of E.M. Remarque and E. Hemingway with subtle humor of the works of J. Hasek.

All other historical eras and individual plots periodically find their videogame embodiment in separate projects. The environment of Medieval Europe is especially popular here, which is used in the series "Crusader Kings" and "Stronghold", as well as in "Chivalry: Medieval Warfare" (2012). In terms of visual historicity and the transmission of images of cultural aesthetics, Ryse: Son of Rome (2014), implemented in the setting of Ancient Rome, as well as Way of the Samurai (2002) and, especially, Ghost of Tsushima (2020), effectively reproducing the scenery of feudal Japan.

Finally, video games stand apart, based on alternative-historical plots. These include "World in Conflict: Soviet Assault" (2009) and the famous strategic series "Command & Conquer: Red Alert". Their narratives are based on some initial and quite authentic moments of history, from which a line of alternative development is built. Basing on real historical grounds allows such games to increase their legitimacy in the public consciousness, being perceived as a possible predictive model. At the same time, their plots are often very ideologically tendentious and clearly politicized. [6, p. 11-12; 8, p. 1090-1092]. For example, the plot of these games is based on the concept of the Third World War, initiated by the USSR. Accordingly, this forms a quite definite (certainly negative) mythical image of the Soviet Union, and can also be projected onto the modern geopolitical reality [30, p. 120-122; 33, p. p. 42-45].

And now I would like to dwell in more detail on the problem of distortion and falsification of history in such conventionally historical video games. First of all, there is one fundamental circumstance associated with the nature of the video games themselves, which objectively limits the possibilities of historical reconstruction of video games and creates risks of deconstructing the historical metanarrative and public memory of it. Here we mean the procedurality and interactivity that are immanent in any video game and distinguish it from the array of other on-screen content.

Conceptually, any narrative, even a linear narrative game, is not constant. Its actualization (as opposed to, for example, narratives in films or literature) directly depends on the actions of the gamer. So, even a game mission that does not imply any kind of plot forks

and choices can be failed due to the actions of the gamer. Therefore, starting the quite historically authentic campaign "Battle of Stalingrad" for the Soviet army, the player may not be able to cope with it and lose, which means that its result will no longer correspond to the historical accuracy. In a sense, this situation can be compared with the conduct of gladiatorial battles in ancient Rome based on historical plots. In this case, two groups of gladiators were created, each of which represented one of the opposing sides of a particular historical battle. For example, the reconstruction of the Battle of Zama from the Second Punic War, where the Roman troops under the leadership of Scipio Africanus clashed with the Carthaginian army of Hannibal. At the same time, the result of the battle-reconstruction depended on the specific combat skills of the fighters, which periodically led to situations of violation of historical realities. As a result, "historical memory is actualized, but not as a whole, but in fragments" [17, p. 116], turning into a nomadic fact-event that has arisen variably in the context of the game.

This possibility of non-historical development of events is an inevitable consequence of the architectonics of the video game as a special phenomenon of screen culture. It seems that it is fully understood by the majority of players and is unlikely to seriously affect the perception of history as such. However, there are other, not objectively game-based, but subjective, deliberately initiated by the developers, strategies for distorting and falsifying history in video games. They can be divided into three main categories: 1) direct distortions of the texture of the plot narrative; 2) default figures; 3) software manipulations with game rules.

The first option is the most commonplace and obvious. It provides for the substitution or distortion of historical facts, the introduction of additional semantic structures into the series of events. So, we have already noted that in a number of games (for example, the series "Assassin's Creed") mythological premises are integrated into the historical plot, which leads to a distortion of understanding of the causal bases and engines of the historical process. In the game "Company of Heroes 2", dedicated to the events of the Great Patriotic War, crude technologies are used to discredit the communist system of the USSR and the leadership of the Red Army. The player is shown a series of "facts" (indiscriminate executions of Red Army soldiers, absurd and criminal orders) designed to demonstrate the anti-humanist and totalitarian-repressive essence of the Soviet political regime. As a result, "Company of Heroes 2", clearly distorting historical facts and presenting them in a well-defined ideological tone, procedurally-narratively proves and popularizes the concept of anti-Sovietism. Here, according to S.I. Belov, obviously there is a "reproduction of stable stereotypes included in the paradigm of Western memory politics back in the Cold War" [7, p. 99].

The figure of silence as a strategy for distorting and falsifying history is based on ignoring essential facts and events within the framework of video game reconstruction of historical narrative. In particular, it is often used in games about the Second World War, where references to the actions of the Red Army and events on the Eastern Front are excluded from the general plot. So, judging by the narratives "Medal of Honor" (1999), "Brothers in Arms" (2005) and "Battlefield V" (2018), one may get a deceptive impression that the Second World War was attended by Anglo-American troops and its active the phase began with the Allied landings in Normandy in 1944. At the same time, Russia is actually excluded from the list of participants in the World War. All this is latently anchored in the mass public consciousness and turns out to be part of the American-centric memory policy of rewriting world history [9, p. 56-59].

The third strategy is the most instrumental and implicit. It is based on the programmatic prescription of certain game rules and characteristics, which create a well-defined focus for the perception of historical events. The most indicative of their use in the series "Civilization" and "Europa Universalis". So, in the latter, the player is forced to use the policy of westernization, which at the level of in-game characteristics is presented as the most effective model for the development of the state (regardless of the region and culture). Thus, the priority of the Western (Euro-Atlantic) model of state-civilizational development is latently emphasized.

Discussion

The obtained results of the study confirm the presence of a significant media enlightenment and educational potential of historical video games. Our data correlate with the scientific hypothesis of K.V. Yablokov [48], put forward in his Ph.D. thesis back in 2005, expanding and factually confirming the legitimacy of the historical (educational, general cultural and scientific) modality of considering video games. In addition, the revealed facts develop the research discourse of S.I. Belova [7; 8; 9] and S.Yu. Chernyy on the peculiarities of the development of historical narratives in the screen media platform of video games and their impact on the politics of memory of the Russian Federation. Our results agree with the position of S.Yu. Chernyy, who stated that "the game does not strive to reproduce a single historical metanarrative, but pushes the player to explore historical contradictions, circumstances, conditions and accidents, without completely losing connection with some conditionally objective historical reality" [14, p. 81].

At the same time, we do not fully agree with the categorically negative assessment that F. Furtai gives to the very phenomenon of historical video games. In particular, the researcher argues that "in the process of creating a game reality, human memory loses its logic, integrity, factual immutability, irreversibility, what allows us to characterize it as a perfect reality. It decomposes into elements that are mixed in the virtuality plot arbitrarily, obeying only the will of the authors" [17, p. 116]. It seems that this position encloses historical video games in a simplified linear negative frame, interpreting the characteristic features of game architectonics exclusively in negative modality. However, this does not negate the possible risks of postmodern deconstruction of history, which may well be the conductor of video games.

In addition, our research confirms the spectrum of historical and educational risks associated with uncritical perception of (quasi) historical plots and facts of video games [10, p. 282]. So, all the described historical distortions can be fully explained (and, in part, justified) by the fact that video games do not strive, and even more so do not manifest adherence to strict reliability on historical facts. For them, history is a way to create a recognizable setting and thereby make the project recognizable, to draw more attention to it through the historical context. Here, the historical narratives of video games can, to some extent, be compared to historical stories in fiction. After all, it is rather strange to reproach A. Dumas that he does not quite reliably draw the images of the cardinals A. Richelieu and D. Mazarin, or to criticize A.S. Pushkin and L.N. Tolstoy for their historical inaccuracies in describing the figure of B. Godunov and the events of the Patriotic War. But in literature there is a quite definite marker – artistry,

which removes questions of historical reliability. Video games, unlike literature and films, do not have such landmarks, which creates uncertainty in the modality of video game text recognition.

Accordingly, there is initially no clear focus on the perception of historical narratives of video games. On the one hand, in the mass public consciousness they are often interpreted by analogy with cinema (with which modern video games have the most in common) as an artistic phenomenon (in the sense of “fictional”) order [3, p. 752-756]. On the other hand, the initially well-known artistic distinction between films and literary works absolutely does not prevent them from exerting a direct influence on the formation of historical consciousness, filled with myths and fictions.

Conclusion

The study showed that in the modern space of screen culture, video games occupy a prominent place, being an original virtual-interactive medium. Their methods of information delivery are based on a unique procedural and rhetorical toolkit [36, p. 28-32]. It creates a wide range of educational and general cultural and educational opportunities. For example, in the field of history education and the formation of mass historical consciousness through media education.

A wide range of historical themes and plots are revealed, presented within the framework of video game narratives. Almost every significant cultural and historical era, with an emphasis on military battle episodes, is reflected in the video game format. At the same time, based on the analysis of the procedural-interactive nature of video games, one can draw a conclusion about the postmodern nature of their influence on history. The video game format tends to deconstruct the historical metanarrative and blur its invariance.

Finally, the study identified the main strategies for politicizing and ideologizing historical video games as an instrument of memory politics. They create misconceptions about the facts and dynamics of the historical process, often having an explicit American-centric focus on the representation of historical events. It is aimed at the formation of historical mythology, consolidating in the public consciousness the unconditional superiority of the Western matrix of values.

As a result, it can be concluded that historical video games, regardless of the degree of authenticity of their historical reconstructions, can act as a source of general cultural historical education. This screen medium has a powerful enlightenment potential (in terms of innovative rhetorical techniques), capable of broadcasting not only historical texture, but also interactively procedurally demonstrating the laws and principles of the dynamics of historical development. At the same time, one should bear in mind the risks of politicization and ideological bias of some video game narratives, dedicated primarily to the historical events of the 20th century.

Acknowledgments

The reported study was funded by RFBR and EISR, project number 21-011-31602.

REFERENCES

1. Aarseth E.J. *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature*. Baltimore, 1997.
2. Akchelov Ye.O., Galanina Ye.V., Nikitina K.S. Gamification in education: a new approach to assessing gameplay. *Modern science-intensive technologies*, 2016, no. 12, pp. 103-114. (In Russ)
3. Al-Rawi A. Video games, terrorism, and ISIS's Jihad 3.0. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 2018, vol. 30, no. 4, pp. 740-760.
4. Babinovich V.S. Identity of a gamer in the virtual space of video games. *Bulletin of the Tomsk State University*, 2019, no. 446, pp. 64-67. (In Russ)
5. Bartel C. Free will and moral responsibility in video games. *Ethics and Information Technology*, 2016, vol. 17, iss. 4, pp. 285-293.
6. Bastrykin V.S. Formation of the image of Russia as an enemy in the mass consciousness of Western society: history and modernity. Russian political process in the regional dimension: history, theory, practice. Barnaul, 2012, pp. 10-13. (In Russ)
7. Belov S.I. Computer games as a tool for implementing the policy of memory (on the example of displaying the events of the Great Patriotic War in video games). *Vestnik RUDN. Series: Political Science*, 2018, vol. 20, no. 1, pp. 96-104. (In Russ)
8. Belov S.I. Prospects for the use of video games with a historical plot as an instrument of the politics of memory of the Russian Federation. *Questions of political science*, 2021, vol. 11, no. 4. pp. 1089-1096. (In Russ)
9. Belov S.I., Kretova A.A. Computer games as a resource for implementing the politics of memory: practical experience and hidden possibilities (based on the materials of positioning the events of the Great Patriotic War). *Bulletin of the Moscow State Regional University. Series: History and Political Science*, 2020, no. 1, pp. 54-63. (In Russ)
10. Belyantsev A.Ye., Gershteyn I.Z. The image of the country through a computer game: the historical and political aspect. *Bulletin of the Nizhny Novgorod University named after N.I. Lobachevsky*, 2010, no. 6. pp. 279-283. (In Russ)
11. Bochanov M.A., Iglin D.A., Popov S.I. Computer games as a tool for the potential development of political culture and communication. *Questions of political science*, 2018, vol. 8, no. 5 (33). pp. 7-14. (In Russ)
12. Bogost I. Videogames are a Mess. Available at: http://bogost.com/writing/videogames_are_a_mess/ (accessed 16 June 2021).
13. Bykov Ye. Gamification of scientific research. *Logos*, 2015, vol. 25, no. 1 (103), pp. 180-213. (In Russ)
14. Chernyy S.Yu. Constructing the Past in Video Games: The Player as a Consumer and Co-Author of Historical Narrative (Europa Universalis 4 Project). *Steps*, 2017, vol. 3, no. 2. pp. 77-97. (In Russ)
15. Chikesentmikhay M. *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*. Moscow, 2018. (In Russ)
16. Condis M. The politics of gamer's identity and masculinity in the age of digital media: PhD. Urbana: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2015.
17. Furtay F. The phenomenon of virtuality in popular culture, or "Welcome to our nightmare". *Bulletin of the Leningrad State University named after A.S. Pushkin*, 2009, no. 3, pp. 112-121. (In Russ)
18. Galanina Ye.V. Measurement of the heroic and monomyths in video games. *Bulletin of the Tomsk State University. Culturology and art history*, 2019, no. 33. pp. 34-46. (In Russ)
19. Grishin O.Ye., Iglin D.A. Computer games as an element of political mass culture and communication. *PolitBook*, 2015, no.1, pp. 127-145. (In Russ)
20. Guins R. *Game After: A Cultural Study of Video Game Afterlife*. *Game After: A Cultural Study of Video Game Afterlife*, 2014, pp. 1-355.
21. Holt R. *Examining video game immersion as a flow state*. Washington, 2000.
22. Iglin D.A. Video games as a means of political communication in the post-Soviet space. *Problems of the post-Soviet space*, 2016, no. 1, pp. 128-134. (In Russ)
23. Iglin D.A. Computer games as a means of displaying political reality: experience and prospects. *Youth World Politic*, 2015, no. 4, pp. 73-79. (In Russ)
24. Kalmykov V.A. Video games and patriotism: virtual extrasocial practices in shaping the image of Russia. *Bulletin of the Russian State University for the Humanities. Series: Political Science. History. International relationships*, 2014, no. 1, pp. 296-301. (In Russ)
25. Kirichenko V.V. "Encyclopedic Games" as a Way of Historical Reconstruction. *Media Galaxy: Journal of Media Research*, 2019, no. 4. pp. 130-152. (In Russ)
26. Latur B. *Rebuilding the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*. Moscow, 2014. (In Russ)
27. Marenich N.A. Artistic techniques for constructing an open work in video games. *APRIORI. Series: Humanities*, 2014, no. 1. Available at: <http://www.apriori-journal.ru/journal-gumanitarnie-nauki/id/135> (accessed 14 June 2021). (In Russ)
28. Meskin A., Robson J. Video Games as Self-Involving Interactive Fictions. *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 2016, no. 74 (2), pp. 165-177. DOI: 10.1111/jaac.12269 Citations: 16
29. Moshkov N.A. Evolution of dramatic techniques in computer games. *Izvestia of the Russian State Pedagogical University named after A.I. Herzen*, 2011, no. 131, pp. 295-300. (In Russ)

30. Osekin S.O. Russia as an aggressor in modern computer games. *Culture and civilization*, 2016, no. 1, pp. 116-127. (In Russ)
31. Parker F. Playing Games with Art The Cultural and Aesthetic Legitimation of Digital Games: PhD. Ontario: Ryerson Universities Toronto, 2014.
32. Pomelov V.A. Gamer: Gamer or Creative Personality? *Bulletin of culture and arts*, 2014, no. 3, pp. 76-81. (In Russ)
33. Robertson A. The Unreal Enemy of America's Army. *Games and Culture*, 2011, no. 6, pp. 38-60.
34. Robinson N. Videogames, Persuasion and The War on Terror: Escaping or Embedding The Military-Entertainment Complex? *Political Studies*, 2012, vol. 60, no. 3, pp. 504-522.
35. Salter M.B. The Geographical Imaginations of Video Games: Diplomacy, Civilization, America's Army and Grand Theft Auto IV. *Geopolitics*, 2011, vol. 16, no. 2, pp. 359-388.
36. Schrank B. Play beyond flow: a theory of avant-garde videogames: PhD. Georgia Institute of Technology, 2010.
37. Schulzke M. Interpreting and Reinterpreting the Political Significance of Popular Media: The Importance of Seeing from a Range of Perspectives. *Political Studies*, 2017, vol. 65v no. 4, pp. 930-946.
38. Schulzke M. Simulating terrorism and insurgency: video games in the war of ideas. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, 2014, vol. 27, no. 4, pp. 627-643.
39. Sharov K.S. Turned on the game. On the ethics of modern computer games. *Values and meanings*, 2013, no. 6 (28), pp. 8-21. (In Russ)
40. Shaw A. What Is Video Game Culture? Cultural Studies and Game Studies. *Games and Culture*, 2010, vol. 5, no. 4, pp. 403-424.
41. Soderman B. Interpreting Video Games through the Lens of Modernity: PhD. Providence: Brown University, 2011.
42. Spring D. Gaming history: computer and video games as historical scholarship. *Rethinking History*, 2015, vol. 19, no. 2, pp. 207-221.
43. Traynor L., Ferguson J. Shooting for Accuracy Historicity and Video Gaming. *Historia Ludens: The Playing Historian. Series: Routledge Approaches to History*, 2020, pp. 243-254.
44. Vetushinskiy A.S. To Play Games Studies Press the START Button. *Logos*, 2015, vol. 25, no. 1 (103), pp. 41-60. (In Russ)
45. Vetushinskiy A.S. Study of game spaces meeting of game design and architecture. *Sociology of power*, 2017, vol. 29, no. 1. pp. 258-275. (In Russ)
46. Vetushinskiy A.S., Galanina Ye.V. Ontology of video games: objects, worlds and environment. *Philosophy and Culture*, 2016, no. 11(107), pp. 1511-1516. (In Russ)
47. Wright E. On The promotional context of historical video games. *Rethinking History*, 2018, vol. 22, no. 4, pp. 598-608.
48. Yablokov K.V. Computer historical games of the 1990-2000s: problems of interpreting historical information: PhD. Moscow, 2005. (In Russ)
49. Young G. Violent video games and morality: a meta-ethical approach. *Ethics and Information Technology*, 2016, vol. 17, iss. 4, pp. 311-321.
50. Yugay I.I. Computer game as a genre of artistic creativity at the turn of the XX-XXI centuries: PhD. St. Petersburg, 2008. (In Russ)
51. Zinoveva, L.V., Zinovev, S.A. Role-playing video games in the space of psychocorrection and psychotherapy. *Smalta*, 2017, no. 4, pp. 17-19. (In Russ)

Информация об авторах

Беляев Дмитрий Анатольевич
(Россия, г. Липецк)

Доцент, доктор философских наук, профессор
кафедры философии, политологии и теологии
Липецкий государственный педагогический
университет имени П.П. Семенова-Тян-Шанского

E-mail: dm.a.belyaev@gmail.com

ORCID ID: 0000-0002-8062-1039

Scopus Author ID: 57211658682

ResearcherID: F-8467-2018

Беляева Ульяна Павловна

(Россия, г. Липецк)

Кандидат философских наук, старший преподаватель
кафедры философии, политологии и теологии
Липецкий государственный педагогический
университет имени П.П. Семенова-Тян-Шанского

E-mail: Ulyana-sin@yandex.ru

ORCID ID: 0000-0002-3057-537X

ResearcherID: M-1018-2015

Information about the authors

Dmitriy A. Belyaev

(Russia, Lipetsk)

Associate Professor, Doctor of Philosophy, Professor of the
Department of Philosophy, Political Science and Theology
Lipetsk State Pedagogical P.Semenov-Tyan-Shansky
University

E-mail: dm.a.belyaev@gmail.com

ORCID ID: 0000-0002-8062-1039

Scopus Author ID: 57211658682

ResearcherID: F-8467-2018

Ulyana P. Belyaeva

(Russia, Lipetsk)

PhD in Philosophy Sciences, Senior Lecturer of the
Department of Philosophy, Political Science and Theology
Lipetsk State Pedagogical P.Semenov-Tyan-Shansky
University

E-mail: Ulyana-sin@yandex.ru

ORCID ID: 0000-0002-3057-537X

ResearcherID: M-1018-2015