

Zombies, Vaults & Violence:
Collective Memory and the Representation of Atomic Fears in Video Games

Ryan Scheiding

A Thesis
In the Department
of
Communication Studies

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy (Communication Studies) at
Concordia University
Montréal, Québec, Canada

15 October 2020

© Ryan Scheiding, 2020

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

This is to certify that the thesis prepared

By: Ryan Scheiding

Entitled: Zombies, Vaults & Violence: Collective Memory and the
Representation of Atomic Fears in Video Games

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor Of Philosophy (Communication Studies)

complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to
originality and quality.

Signed by the final examining committee:

Dr. Anita Sinner Chair

Dr. Rachael Hutchinson External Examiner

Dr. Marc Steinberg External to Program

Dr. William Buxton Examiner

Dr. Fenwick McKelvey Examiner

Dr. Mia Consalvo Thesis Supervisor

Approved by

Dr. Krista Lynes, Graduate Program Director

December 15, 2020

Dr. Pascale Sicotte, Dean Faculty
of Arts and Science

ABSTRACT

Zombies, Vaults & Violence: Collective Memory and the Representation of Atomic Fears in Video Games

Ryan Scheiding, Ph.D.

Concordia University, 2020

This dissertation examines the representation of atomic/nuclear weapons and fears within video games through the lens of collective/cultural memory, historiography, game studies and critical theory. These diverse fields are combined into a research typology labelled as discourses of the past which argues that the past is mediated based upon the needs of entrenched power for use in, and the organization of, the present. The study focuses specifically on the representation of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 in both their American and Japanese contexts. The dissertation first engages with key works in the relevant fields. This literature review grounds the work in established theory while also defining and outlining the discourses of the past research typology. The second major section engages in a discussion of the author's positionality and describes the methodological considerations of the typology.

Through a historiographical analysis, the dissertation argues that the dominant discourses of the past of the atomic bombings in the United States/West is to justify the use of the bombs while erasing Japanese victims. This is further examined in three case studies of American games: *Fallout 4*, *Far Cry 5*, and *Far Cry New Dawn*. A historiographical analysis of Japanese sources finds that there is no one dominant collective/cultural memory and, instead, atomic bomb and war memory is diffused into three discourses of the past (a hero/victim/perpetrator memory triad) where no one discourse is entirely dominant or marginalized. Instead, the relative power of each is dictated by person, place, space, and/or temporality. This is further explored in a case study of three Japanese games: *Resident Evil 3*, *Yakuza 6: The Song of Life*, and *Valkyria Chronicles 4*.

Through the combination of theory, historiography, and case studies the dissertation ultimately argues that the selected games mimic the dominant discourses of the past while also adhering to established video game genre conventions and expectations. These findings are then put into contemporary context to argue for the continued relevance of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The researching, writing, and editing of this dissertation has been one of the most fulfilling experiences of my life. The support that I have received in undertaking this endeavour goes beyond words. However, I would like to do my best to thank the following people while also offering my greatest apologies for any potential omissions. Completing a PhD can often be isolating or seen as a solitary endeavour but, luckily, that was not my experience.

First and foremost, I would like to thank Mia Consalvo. You have been with me from the beginning, provided guidance, made sure that I stayed focused, and pushed my work to be the best that it could be. There were several times when this project reached the level of being “good enough” but you pushed me to go beyond that and, I believe, achieve something special. Many people are supervisors, but few are truly mentors. Thank you, Mia.

To my other committee members, Bill Buxton and Fenwick McKelvey, I would like to thank you for your feedback, your time, and your guidance. You were always available when I needed you and I have appreciated working with both of you, both on this dissertation and on other unrelated projects. I was also quite fortunate to have two highly qualified external examiners, Rachael Hutchinson and Marc Steinberg. Your work helped to both define my field and allow for work such as mine to exist. Thank you for your time, feedback, and critique.

I am greatly indebted to the members of the Concordia University Communication Studies department, especially Yasmin Jiwani, Jeremy Stollow, and Sandra Gabriele who have all supported my professional and intellectual development in various ways throughout my time in Montreal. Thank you as well to Mircea Mandache for all of your administrative work and guidance. In addition, I would like to acknowledge the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the organization that funded this research through their doctoral fellowship grant.

I want to thank all of my friends at the mlab for years of support, good times, and intellectually stimulating conversation. Marc, Sarah, Nic, Dan, Robyn, Scott, Courtney, Samia, Annie, Andrei, Jessie, Patricia, Michael, Lyne, Forest, and Tamyres you are all greatly appreciated. I cannot imagine what my PhD experience would have been like without you and I will cherish the times we had and the memories that we made. I also will not forget the non-

mlabbers who helped me through my PhD, Mimi, Luciano, Kalervo, Gina, and Tanya. Thank you for your collaboration, support, and friendship. Finally, thank you, Lychee. You have always seen me for who I am, accepted me, and expected nothing short of my best. You helped me feel seen and grow as a person. I will be forever grateful.

I am greatly appreciative of my ever-supportive, ever-understanding family members. Mom, you taught me the value of hard work, always supported my decisions (no matter how far away they took me) and loved me unconditionally. What more could I ask for? Papa and G, you welcomed me into your home, supported me, and allowed me the time, space, and ability to work and research. Beyond this, you showed the value of curiosity and standing up for what I believe in. Tiffany and Kayla, my dear sisters, through our shared experiences (and shared burdens) you showed me both true strength and the value of laughter. Grandma, you introduced me to historical inquiry and lit the flame that became this project. I love you all.

Finally, I would like to thank my cat Tubba, who passed away before this project could be completed. You were my best friend. You supported me in the ways that only a pet could. I will always miss you. Rest well, dear friend.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES.....	VIII
I. INTRODUCTION	
1.1 The Destruction of Raccoon City.....	1
1.2 Outline of Chapters.....	4
1.3 What is Missing? A Note on Erasure.....	8
1.4 Stylistic Choices & Citation Standards.....	11
II. DISCOURSES OF THE PAST	
2.1 Discourses of the Past.....	13
2.2 Collective/Cultural Memory.....	14
2.3 Discourse/Critical Theory.....	30
2.4 Game Narratives & Game Histories.....	43
2.5 Defining a Discourses of the Past Typology.....	52
III. POSITIONALITY & METHODOLOGY	
3.1 Positionality.....	56
3.2 Methodology.....	61
IV. AMERICAN MEMORY DISCOURSE & HISTORIOGRAPHY	
4.1 Charting American Discourse and Historiography.....	74
4.2 Early Formulations.....	74
4.3 Crystallization into Hegemony.....	82
4.4 Non-hegemonic Views & Discourses.....	99
4.5 Summarizing American Discourses of the Past.....	108
V. AMERICAN VIDEO GAMES AS ATOMIC BOMB DISCOURSE	
5.1 American Video Games as Atomic Bomb Discourse.....	109
5.2 Case Study - Fallout 4.....	110
5.2.1 General Information and Series History.....	110
5.2.2 Setting.....	112
5.2.3 Narrative.....	115
5.2.4 Characters.....	118
5.2.5 Gameplay.....	128
5.2.6 Analysis.....	133
5.3 Case Study - Far Cry 5.....	135
5.3.1 General Information and Series History.....	135
5.3.2 Setting.....	136
5.3.3 Narrative.....	138
5.3.4 Characters.....	145
5.3.5 Gameplay.....	146
5.3.6 Analysis.....	148
5.4 Case Study - Far Cry New Dawn.....	150
5.4.1 General Information and Series History.....	150
5.4.2 Setting.....	150
5.4.3 Narrative.....	152

5.4.4 Characters.....	155
5.4.5 Gameplay.....	160
5.4.6 Analysis.....	163
5.5 Summary.....	163
VI. JAPANESE MEMORY DISCOURSE & HISTORIOGRAPHY	
6.1 Charting Japanese Memory Discourse & Historiography.....	168
6.2 A Fractured Discourse – Hero/Victim/Perpetrator Triad.....	169
6.3 Discourses of Heroism.....	179
6.4 Discourses of Victimhood.....	189
6.5 Discourses of Perpetrators.....	208
6.6 Understanding the Japanese Triad Discourse.....	214
VII. JAPANESE VIDEO GAMES AS ATOMIC BOMB DISCOURSE	
7.1 Japanese Video Games as Atomic Bomb Discourse.....	217
7.2 Case Study - Yakuza 6: The Song of Life.....	218
7.2.1 General Information and Series History.....	218
7.2.2 Setting.....	219
7.2.3 Narrative.....	220
7.2.4 Characters.....	225
7.2.5 Gameplay.....	228
7.2.6 Analysis.....	232
7.3 Case Study - Valkyria Chronicles 4.....	233
7.3.1 General Information and Series History.....	233
7.3.2 Setting.....	234
7.3.3 Narrative.....	236
7.3.4 Characters.....	240
7.3.5 Gameplay.....	244
7.3.6 Analysis.....	250
7.4 Case Study - Resident Evil 3.....	252
7.4.1 General Information and Series History.....	252
7.4.2 Setting.....	253
7.4.3 Narrative.....	255
7.4.4 Characters.....	260
7.4.5 Gameplay.....	263
7.4.6 Analysis.....	265
7.5 Summary.....	267
VIII. CONCLUSION	
8.1 75 th Anniversary Memories.....	271
8.2 Lessons.....	275
8.3 Why Now?.....	281
APPENDIX: List of Video Game References.....	283
REFERENCES.....	286

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1. Mushroom Cloud Over Raccoon City.....	2
Figure 5.1. Irradiated Skyline of the Commonwealth.....	114
Figure 5.2. A Closeup of John Hancock.....	122
Figure 5.3. A Fast-approaching Ghoul.....	126
Figure 5.4. Fishing with Peaches the Cougar.....	137
Figure 5.5. Parachuting into Hope County.....	138
Figure 5.6. Loading Screen Quotes Joseph Seed.....	139
Figure 5.7. First Nuclear Strike Hits Hope County.....	143
Figure 5.8. Driving Through a Nuclear Onslaught.....	144
Figure 5.9. Post-Nuclear Strike Main Menu.....	149
Figure 5.10. The Edge of the Map (Air).....	151
Figure 5.11. The Edge of the Map (Ground).....	152
Figure 5.12. Traveling North via Boat.....	154
Figure 5.13. The Captain's Inventory Screen.....	156
Figure 5.14. Fishing in Irradiated Waters.....	161
Figure 5.15. Fiery Super-punch to the Death.....	162
Figure 7.1. A Selfie of Kazuma Kiryu.....	220
Figure 7.2. A Street Battle Among Youths.....	223
Figure 7.3. The Secret of Onomichi Revealed in Onomichi Harbor.....	224
Figure 7.4. A Date with Sora.....	227
Figure 7.5. Kiryu Knocks Out Amon.....	229
Figure 7.6. Kiryu Feeds a White Cat.....	230
Figure 7.7. Kiryu Gains Experience by Eating a Beef Bowl.....	231
Figure 7.8. <i>Valkyria Chronicles</i> History Book Interface.....	235
Figure 7.9. Claude Learns About the United States of Vinland & Dissuades Minerva.....	239
Figure 7.10. Kai Seeks Vengeance for Stolen Bread.....	245
Figure 7.11. Battle Map Commander View.....	246
Figure 7.12. 3 rd Person Battle Featuring a Tank.....	247
Figure 7.13. End of Mission Results Screen.....	249
Figure 7.14. Riley Laments Her Involvement with the United States of Vinland.....	251
Figure 7.15. Advertising in Raccoon City.....	254
Figure 7.16. A Television Warns Survivors of an Impending Nuclear Strike.....	257
Figure 7.17. A Nuclear Weapon Strikes Raccoon City.....	258
Figure 7.18. Another Mushroom Cloud Over Raccoon City.....	258
Figure 7.19. A Closeup of Jill Valentine.....	261
Figure 7.20. A Licker Viewed in Gallery Mode.....	262
Figure 7.21. Over-the-Shoulder Shotgun Blast.....	264

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Destruction of Raccoon City

On November 11, 1999 Capcom released *Resident Evil 3: Nemesis* for the PlayStation in North America.¹ I do not remember the exact circumstances that led me to getting the game but, November also happens to be my birth month and, as was our tradition, my mom always took me to our local Wal-Mart to pick out any one gift that I wanted for my birthday. Another possibility would be that I saved up Wal-Mart gift cards from Christmas that year and actively disregarded my father's opinion that I should not spend them on video games. Regardless of the precise events, I do remember that I acquired the game brand new at a Wal-Mart and my mom was with me at the time. I also remember one particularly important moment from the transaction; the game was rated M for mature (i.e. recommended for players 17 years of age or older) and the clerk warned my mom that the game might not be appropriate for a child my age (11 years old). I remember telling her that it would be okay and, thankfully, she allowed me to get the game.

Resident Evil 3: Nemesis would become a bit of an institution among the children of the Scheiding household. We had spent the majority of our collective childhoods with console video games in the house, but they consisted mostly of sports simulation games and colourful platformers. *Resident Evil* was different. It had zombies, a storyline with branching paths, mind-bending puzzles, gore, and gunplay. I played the game excessively as my sisters watched (my older sister tried to play once, she took two steps, screamed, and instantly returned the controller to me, content to watch rather than attempting to brave the streets of Raccoon City on her own) and, after too many playthroughs to count, became an expert at the game. To this day I can still solve the game's numerous puzzles as fast as possible (sometimes within seconds) and can verbally take a person through the game beginning to end without the use of any visual aides. I owe much of my continued interest in video games to *Resident Evil 3* and the experiences that I had with it.

The game focuses on Jill Valentine, a police officer in Raccoon City's Special Tactics and Rescue Service (STARS) as she attempts to escape a ruined city overrun by zombies and

¹ *Resident Evil 3: Nemesis* was released in Japan months earlier on September 22, 1999. It would later be released for Windows, the Sega Dreamcast, and the Nintendo GameCube.

other fearsome creatures, including the titular Nemesis, a rocket launcher toting, relentless killing machine with a penchant for showing up at the most inopportune times. A major entry in the popular survival horror genre, the player is tasked with managing items, solving puzzles, and deciding when it is best to fight or run from the game's enemies. The game combined all of these elements to create a gameplay experience that was both frightening and engaging.



Figure 1.1. Mushroom Cloud Over Raccoon City. The mushroom cloud as depicted in the post-credits scene in *Resident Evil 3: Nemesis*. Screenshot by R. Scheiding

Yet, it is the ending of the main narrative that affected me the most at the time and, truthfully, still sticks with me today. At the conclusion of the game, regardless of the player's choices along the branching path of the story, Jill escapes from Raccoon City via helicopter. As she looks back over the city, she witnesses the detonation of a nuclear missile that obliterates the city. The missile hits Raccoon City and a shockwave spreads throughout. Many notable areas from the game are hit before being engulfed in a wall of flames. All that remains of the city is a fiery mushroom cloud. Following the credits, there is a fictionalized news broadcast that laments the loss of the city and the hundreds of thousands of civilians that called it home (see Figure 1.1). The announcer solemnly informs the viewer,

And now we have a rather unfortunate turn of events. It seems that the President and the federal council have passed judgement over the civilians of Raccoon City. The President and the federal council have ruled the bacillus-terminate operation is the best course of action for this extreme situation and have since, executed it.

Based on that fact, the Raccoon City has been literally wiped off the map. Current reports have the death toll surpassing the 100,000 mark. Our hearts go out to those poor civilians of Raccoon City...

Raccoon City, which I had come to know intimately through play, was destroyed.

Despite my age, the ending immediately reminded me of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Even at that age I was able to make a connection between the real past and the allegorical representation of the game. I knew that Capcom was a Japanese company and I knew about the end of World War II, so the connection came to me naturally. Oddly though, I do not know *why* I knew about these things or how I was so readily able to make the connection. Given my age at the time, I certainly did not have much in the way of formal education about the war and the atomic bombs. Both of my grandfathers served in the armed forces (one in the Army and the other in the Navy) and my family was very conscious of the importance of their service, but I do not remember ever being specifically told about Hiroshima and Nagasaki. I was alive for the 50th anniversary of the atomic bombings in August of 1995 but given that I was 7 years old at the time, it is hard to imagine that I was exposed to any of the renewed interest in the atomic bombs that the anniversary brought or, even if I were, that I would remember any of it.

Despite this, I did somehow have knowledge of the significance of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. However, I do not consider my knowledge of the atomic bombs or the ability to recognize references to them in media to be unique. The atomic bombs, and the imagery surrounding them, have created lasting impacts worldwide and have become ubiquitous. Indeed, given the ubiquity of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki both historiographically and within popular culture, I believe that it is not only possible to easily identify references to the bombings within popular culture but that many people will have a *favorite, preferred, or most memorable* reference to the atomic bombs. Examples range from the mainstream, such as the *Godzilla* film series to the obscure, such as the aforementioned *Resident Evil 3: Nemesis*. However, after my experiences playing *Resident Evil*, I came to see that this ubiquity had another function; since “everyone knows” about the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, “everyone knows” about how they were “necessary” (at least as has been commonly taught and argued from an American perspective). Subsequently, very little questioning of the bombs’ use, aftermath, and continued significance (beyond surface level understanding) is typically tolerated.

Yet *Resident Evil 3: Nemesis* left me with mixed feelings. This missile was not a vindicator, but a victimizer and it was the first time that I entertained the idea that the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were not righteous but, instead, were immoral. As a child playing a video game, I recognized a gap between what I “knew” and what was presented to me, but it was beyond my abilities to articulate my objections. All I knew at the time was that I was exposed to a different way of viewing a historical event through a video game that I had enjoyed very much.

It was only in my later studies that I myself came to know more about the bombs and become more critical of their significance both historiographically and within the present through popular cultural representations. This dissertation is an attempt to explore beyond merely identifying references to Hiroshima and Nagasaki within media. Instead, the goal is to trace the origins of atomic bomb memory – in both the United States/the West and Japan – and identify the underlying power systems that have shaped and guided understandings of the atomic past both physically and digitally. This is accomplished through the creation of a typology of analysis that I label as discourses of the past, a historiographical analysis of both American and Japanese sources, and the usage of six video game case studies (3 American and 3 Japanese).

1.2 Outline of Chapters

This dissertation examines American and Japanese video games through the lens of discourses of the past, a typological concept derived from a combination of collective/cultural memory theory, discourse and critical theory, and game studies (especially theories focused on game narratives and games as history). Chapter II of this dissertation examines key works in these fields through a literature review as a way of both acknowledging and commenting on existing theory and blending knowledge from the fields into a typological construct. In terms of collective/cultural memory the chapter examines canonical texts from the inception of the field of study, such as Maurice Halbwachs’ work, through to more contemporary work that better incorporates media, such as the theories put forth by Astrid Erll. Discourse is defined for my purposes through a combination of Michel Foucault’s pioneering works on the concept and Friedrich Kittler’s theories that update the field for the 20th century and beyond. Benedict Anderson’s theories of nationalism and Chomsky’s critiques of American power are also used to enhance this understanding. Finally, key works regarding game narratives, especially those put

forth by Janet Murray and Ian Bogost, are combined with theories discussing video games' interactions with the past, namely Adam Chapman's and Kurt Squire's works, to better incorporate video games into discursive understandings of representing the past.

The closing section of the chapter blends these disparate fields together while defining and describing the function of the typology. Defined briefly, a discourses of the past typology combines the fields of collective/cultural memory, history/historiography, critical theory, and media/games studies to create a research framework that examines how the past is remembered and mediated for use within the present. The typology examines discursive processes of representing and remembering the past and argues that they occur through a three-step process of: historical event → discourses → repetition of discourses. Ultimately, it reveals that we are remembering cultivated constructions of the past for use in the present as structured by entrenched power. Within this construct remembering the past is more about how we shape and understand our present than it is about presenting an accurate picture of the past.

With this typology established, Chapter III focuses on positionality of the author and the methodological concerns of utilizing the typology to analyze video games. In terms of positionality, the primary focus of the chapter is acknowledging and appropriately working through the fact that I, the author, am neither American nor Japanese and can thus be labelled as an "outsider" in my research. This, of course, can be problematic and potentially lead to accusations of Orientalism (among other possible charges). In consideration of this fact, the chapter utilizes theories of "speaking nearby" and "hybridity" as put forward by Trinh Minh-ha and Ien Ang respectively to describe and justify how responsible research and commentary can be conducted by those traditionally labelled as "outsiders."

Furthermore, the chapter explores the complexities of insider/outsider knowledge within collective/cultural memory, specifically the interplay of inward and outward facing memory practices as societies and groups remember both for themselves but also as a way of presenting their preferred versions of the past to outsiders, such as tourists and other foreign interests (i.e. capital, government, etc.). In other words, the past is formulated and represented for consumption to both "insiders" and "outsiders" simultaneously. Further methodological concerns covered in the chapter include source selection (of both historiographical and video game sources) and how video games are "read" via textual analysis through the use of the typology.

Finally, the chapter concludes by providing a generalized model for researching games through use of the discourses of the past typology.

The first two chapters of the dissertation are used to define the typology of discourses of the past and to describe the proper function and utilization of that typology as a research framework. The remaining chapters make use of this framework to study and better understand how video games make use of established discourses of the past in their remediation of the past with a specific focus on the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Within this dissertation, this is broken into two major parts: a historiographical investigation into how the atomic bombs are remembered and subsequent case studies of relevant games. Importantly, these parts are further separated into distinct American and Japanese chapters.

Chapter IV examines the formulation of atomic bomb discourses of the past in the United States/the West starting in 1945 and continuing through to the present. The chapter argues that the United States military, government, and occupation forces had a strong hand in the early formulations of atomic bomb collective/collective memory because they practiced strict control over all data and information regarding the bombs, the bombing, and the aftermath in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Historiographical sources are then used to show how this crystallized into the hegemonic way of remembering the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in the United States and the West. The chapter then dedicates space to non-hegemonic views of the atomic bombs that go against the hegemonic view of the end of the war as a way of acknowledging that “hegemonic” does not mean “absolute” when discussing discursive practices and collective/cultural memory formulation. In summary, the chapter argues that the hegemonic American discourses of the past surrounding the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki view the atomic bombings as necessary, justified, moral, or otherwise acceptable and preferable. Importantly, the chapter also argues that, as a part of this process of legitimization, Japanese victims of the bombs (known in Japanese as *hibakusha*, which loosely translates to “bomb affected persons”) have been ignored, discounted, or disregarded.

With these American discourses of the past established, Chapter V engages in separate case studies of three video games that have been determined to be relevant to understanding how video games remediate discourses of the past of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. These games are *Fallout 4* (2015), *Far Cry 5* (2018), and *Far Cry New Dawn* (2019).

Each case study examines five aspects of these titles: general information and series history, setting, narrative, characters, and gameplay. These elements are then combined for a general analysis of each title and its relation (or unrelation) to established discourses of the past.

To conclude the chapter, all three case studies are combined to make general observations about what they can show us regarding video games' interaction with and representation of the past for use in the present. Generally, the case studies and analysis argue that the games partially remediate established discourses of the past, notably through the "Americanization of victimhood" where fictionalized American victims replace historical victims, but that the games also remediate video game genre standards and expectations. In other words, prominent discourses of the past are replicated and remediated but this occurs in a video game specific way that also involves the inclusion of other elements that are entirely unrelated to the relevant historical pasts.

Chapter VI examines the discourses of the past surrounding the atomic bombs and the war from a Japanese context. Unlike the American example outlined in Chapter IV, Japanese war memory and discourse is much more divisive. As a result, the first part of the chapter, drawing upon the work of Hashimoto Akiko, describes Japan's fractured war and atomic bomb discourse. I develop the idea of a memory triad within Japan where the war and the bombs are remembered within one of three general discourses: discourses of heroism, discourses of victimhood, and discourses of perpetration.

The next three sections of this chapter outline each of the three discourses (heroism, victimhood, perpetration) individually through a historiographical analysis. The heroism discourse focuses on stories where normal people were put in extraordinary circumstances and did the best that they could for their families and themselves. The victimhood discourse concentrates on the deaths of Japanese victims either as combat casualties in deplorable conditions or as civilians caught between a government that disregarded them and the Allied instruments of war (including but not limited to the atomic bombs). Finally, the perpetrator discourse is concerned with Japanese settler colonialism and war crimes.

The last section of this chapter examines how each of these three discourses interacts with one another. I argue that each of these discourses is in perpetual competition with the others while also, paradoxically, relying upon the others. None of the three is entirely hegemonic or

entirety marginalized, instead each has fluctuating influence based upon space, place, and temporality.

The final chapter, Chapter VII, engages in case studies of three selected Japanese games and compares them to established Japanese discourses of the past. The case studies consist of *Yakuza 6: The Song of Life* (2016), *Valkyria Chronicles 4* (2018), and *Resident Evil 3* (2020). As with the case studies of the American games each of these individual case studies examines five aspects of the selected games: general information and series history, setting, narrative, characters, and gameplay. Each case study concludes with a general analysis of the given game and a comparison to established discourses of the past.

The chapter concludes with a combined analysis of all three case studies finding that the games mimic the established Japanese memory triad discourse (i.e. they all have aspects of the heroism, victimhood, and perpetrator discourses) but each has its own particular bent or focus (i.e. each game favors one discourse over the others). Also, I argue that the games, like their American counterparts, engage in a remediation of preestablished video game and genre expectations. Thus, the games represent a video game specific remediation of discourses of the past that is partially influenced by their cultural origins.

The conclusion summarizes the arguments and findings of the previous chapters, discusses wider applications of both the typology and the arguments, and outlines the continued importance of atomic bomb discourses of the past in 2020, the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It is argued that memory of the past is seldom about accurately representing that past but, instead, is an instrument of entrenched power. In other words, the past is remembered for the function and maintenance of established power structures in the present. The conclusion calls for further use of the discourses of the past typology and for consideration of the continued relevance of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, even as the world faces large threats outside of nuclear/atomic weapons (such as climate change, drone strikes, and hacking).

1.3 What is Missing? A Note on Erasure

As with all collective/cultural memory, discourse, history, historiography, and media, what is missing is as important as what is included. Erasure is an ever-present aspect of

remembering and representing the past. As such, having covered what *is* included in this dissertation through the chapter summaries, it is important to also acknowledge what is missing or has been deliberately excluded from this study. Time and resource considerations are, of course, a part of this selection process. However, limitations such as these are true for any project and should not be used as excuses where deliberate choices were made. In other words, while I would have liked to have engaged in as comprehensive and extensive a study as possible, I needed to make decisions about what to include and exclude and, rather than blaming these decisions on scope or resources, I want to acknowledge the thought processes and ideas that guided my decisions.

This study focuses exclusively on the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and their surrounding discourses of the past rather than atomic/nuclear fears in general. This means that other atomic/nuclear historical events have not been considered in my analysis. Thus, landmark nuclear incidents such as those that occurred at Three-Mile Island (28 March 1979), Chernobyl (26 April 1986), and Fukushima (11 March 2011) or the potential use of nuclear weapons such as during the Cuban Missile Crisis (16-28 October 1962) or the ongoing concerns with North Korea's missile program will not be considered within my analysis. This decision was made not to discount the relevance of these events or to argue that they are not influential within the selected media but, instead, to focus on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and examine their continued influence both discursively and within popular culture. Hiroshima and Nagasaki remain as the only events where an atomic or nuclear weapon was deployed on a city and a civilian population. This unique position keeps the events relevant and maintains their importance in contemporary society. They are also the origin for most atomic/nuclear fears and remain a prominent historical referent.

In an American context, the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are important events located at the genesis of the atomic age, but they are not always the starting point for the depiction and memory of atomic/nuclear weapons and issues. This, I believe, is directly connected to how the United States government and occupation forces controlled the original dissemination of information and general messaging of the bombs. Not acknowledging Hiroshima and Nagasaki (and therefore the Japanese victims of atomic warfare) is indicative of larger discourses of the past that have made World War II sacrosanct and aim to legitimize the

“right” of the United States to use military force in the present. I acknowledge the other potential sources of American (and by proxy Western) atomic/nuclear fears (i.e. Three-Mile Island, Chernobyl, the Cuban Missile Crisis, etc.) but I argue that prioritizing these events as a basis for understanding and representing atomic/nuclear issues and fears is part of an established discursive effort to shift understandings away from Hiroshima and Nagasaki (and their non-American victims) towards ideas of potential American victimhood.

Hiroshima and Nagasaki remain as the foundations of American thought about atomic/nuclear weapons. As such, they have provided the basis for many assumptions about warfare and victimhood. Tantalizing among these is the exclusion of Japanese victims as early understandings of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki shifted focus away from Japanese victims who were largely erased from popular discourse. As such, Americans and Westerners were never truly presented with detailed images or stories of these victims and so were unable to examine and consider their plight. Subsequent atomic/nuclear fears could focus on potential American victims only because Japanese victims were deliberately and purposefully removed from collective/cultural memory. This tradition continues today as media presents potential American victims as the basis for atomic/nuclear fears. These representations do not match the historical events of the past, but they do match up with the specific discursive efforts that have taken place since 1945. Instead of confronting victims from the past, it has been easier to lament and fear the potential for future American victimhood. Because of this process, this study prioritizes Hiroshima and Nagasaki as a way of circumventing this erasure.

In a Japanese context, it is much easier to argue for the continued centrality of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to atomic and nuclear discourse. To begin, these attacks happened in Japan to largely Japanese victims which has caused Japanese society to contemplate these victims more thoroughly. While there has been some denial and shunning of Japanese atomic bomb victims in Japan, these practices have never reached the level of erasure that they did in the United States/the West. This combination of Japanese victims and acknowledgement of their (continued) plight has kept the atomic bombings in 1945 relevant to Japanese collective/cultural memory.

In addition, it should be noted that World War II also represents the last time that Japan fought in a major conflict on a wide scale, which has also helped to maintain the relevance of the

bombings.² This does not mean that Hiroshima and Nagasaki are the only events that formulate Japanese atomic/nuclear fears or collective/cultural memory, as the events at Fukushima and the proximity of North Korea's missile program are, of course, relevant as well. Yet, it is Hiroshima and Nagasaki that have remained central to Japanese collective/cultural memory through education, memorialization, and media.

Finally, moving beyond these choices, it should be noted that this study focuses exclusively on video games rather than all media. There are of course numerous examples of atomic/nuclear references within other media (film and comics come immediately to mind), but they are largely avoided within this study. This is not to discount the importance of these pieces of media, as both art and as contributions to atomic/nuclear understandings. Instead, the goal is to focus specifically on video games and the ways that they remediate established discourses of the past. Video games are a unique type of media that combine play, narrative, argumentation, and representation which make them particularly relevant to the study of discourses of the past.

While there are many potential ways to approach atomic/nuclear fears within media, this dissertation explicitly approaches these issues with Hiroshima and Nagasaki as focal points and through case studies of video games.

1.4 Stylistic Choices & Citation Standards

There are several stylistic choices that should be briefly noted here.

Japanese names are listed in their traditional style (i.e. family name precedes given name). This is reflected in the body of the dissertation and within the citation system. Within the references page and footnotes of the dissertation Japanese names are listed without a comma between family name and given name. For example, "Hayashi Kyoko" will appear the same in both footnotes and within the references page. To contrast a Western name, such as "Noam Chomsky", will appear as "Chomsky, Noam" within the references page. In the case of a name

² In the aftermath of World War II Japan was occupied by the United States. During this time, the Japanese Constitution was rewritten and ratified in 1947. Clause 9 of this new constitution officially renounced Japan's right to wage war as a way of solving international disputes. In 1954, Japan established the Japanese Self-Defense Forces, a military organization specifically designed for defense and without offensive capabilities. It was not until 2015 that laws were changed to allow for international deployments of the Self Defense Forces. However, even with the change in laws, there have been few deployments of Japanese forces. Those that have occurred certainly have not been on the level of Japanese deployments during World War II. As a result, World War II is not Japan's last military involvement, but it is the country's last *major* military conflict.

that is indeterminate or of mixed origin, it will appear under Western naming and citation conventions.

The conflicts culminating in the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki have numerous different naming conventions based upon person, place, space, temporality, and many other considerations. For the purposes of this dissertation, the preferred nomenclatures are “World War II” (which refers to the conflicts between the Axis and Allied powers from 1931-1945) and “Pacific War” (which refers to the conflicts primarily, but not exclusively, between the Imperial Japanese Empire and the United States of America from 1941-1945). This decision subverts the typical dating of the war (1939-1945) which coincides with the Nazi invasion of Poland but excludes Japanese aggression in China that started in 1931. The terminologies “World War II” and “Pacific War” and dating conventions of 1931-1945 and 1941-1945 were selected as a way of more precisely dating the war and subverting Westernized standards that discount major battles (and major suffering) in mainland Asia and throughout the Pacific region. Other terminologies (for example “Second World War”) appear only when direct quoting other sources or citing other works (especially titles).

Video games, either individual games or entire series, are presented in the body of the text in italics (for example *Resident Evil 3*). The games are not cited within footnotes; however, they are cited in a separate appendix following the conclusion chapter. This decision was made to avoid numerous identical and unnecessary footnotes, especially in the video game case study sections.

Outside of these minor modifications the dissertation uses the Chicago manual of style standard footnotes and citation system. All digressions, definitions, and explanations appear as footnotes when they do not fit within the body of the text.

II. Discourses of the Past

2.1 Discourses of the Past

The atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 remain two of the most iconic and well-known historical events in human history. With the 75th anniversary of the bombings having just passed the events of those days continue to stimulate public interest across the globe. This “interest” takes numerous forms, whether it be arguments surrounding nuclear weapons/energy, the creation of monuments and museums, the writing of history, or the creation of media representations (both literal and allegorical) of the bombs/victims. Yet, as time passes, there are fewer living witnesses of the bombs and the horrors that came along with them. Indeed, the population of people who were alive when the bombings occurred will continue to decrease. Regardless, there can be no doubt that the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as the first (and currently only) uses of atomic weapons on civilian targets, are important historical events that continue to affect the present.

What is less clear is how memory of the bombings is formulated and how that memory is mobilized and utilized in the present. The ways that a society remembers the past are rarely based upon “truth” or “accuracy”. Indeed, veneration of the past is rarely about the past at all. Instead, the past is often used as a way of perpetuating systems of power in the present. Discovering the underlying systems of power, and the assumptions or ways of thinking that are produced within them, is not an easy task. The goal of this opening chapter is to discern how memory of the past is shaped by systems of power in the present. This is done through the creation of a typology of study that is labelled as discourses of the past. Discourses of the past argues that there are established ways of thinking and mediating the past which are actively created, maintained, and controlled within society over long periods of time based upon, above all else, the interests of entrenched power. These discourses of the past encompass collective/cultural memory, traditional history/historiography, popular culture, and media representations of the past.

This literature review chapter is broken into four parts that, when taken together, develop the typology of discourses of the past with a specific interest in the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, video games, and video game narrative practices. The first section

discusses key texts in collective/cultural memory studies. It outlines the field with particular attention towards defining the memory/history binary that has been prevalent in the field and how theorists have updated the field to include media as an agent of memory. The second section expands the field of collective/cultural memory into relevant theoretical fields that are critical to the typology of discourses of the past. These include theories of discourse, nationalism, and mediation/remediation. The third section shifts focus to the field of game studies. Consideration is given to game narratives, how games make arguments, and how games depict history or the past. Finally, the fourth section combines these diverse fields into the model for discourses of the past. Here the typology is concretely defined and described as a combination of the previously discussed fields.

2.2 Collective/Cultural Memory

The first key component of a discourses of the past model is collective/cultural memory. The field of collective/cultural memory explores how groups of people remember and make use of the past. It can be read, through the works of Maurice Halbwachs, as a response to traditional history/historiography and psychological notions of how memories are formed with roots in the French sociological tradition.³ However, it should also be noted that studies of memory in the German tradition, especially those of Aby Warburg, are contemporaneous to Halbwachs and remain influential.⁴ Despite these beginnings, the field has become largely interdisciplinary, especially in the past 30 years. For the purposes of this literature review focus will remain on general theories of collective/cultural memory, the field's relation to history/historiography, and

³ Numerous authors within the field use different terminology within their works. Rather than use collective memory or cultural memory I have opted for collective/cultural memory. However, when discussing individual works (particularly when quoting) the preferred nomenclature of the original work is used.

⁴ Notable among these early German works are those of Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno. Also, the works of German theorist Aby Warburg were influential in early memory studies, particularly his theory of *pathosformeln*. Unfortunately, according to historian Carlo Ginzburg, Warburg never published a clearly defined methodological or theoretical framework describing his method, so he is best understood through his followers rather than his own works. An example of one of these theorists is Frances Yates. See the following works:

Theodor Adorno, "In Memory of Eichendorff," in *Notes to Literature*, edited by Rolf Tiedemann, translated by Shierry Weber Nicholsen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 55-79.

Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations*, edited by Hannah Arendt, translated by Harry Zohn (New York: Harcourt, Bruce & World, Inc., 1968), 255-266.

Walter Benjamin, "The Storyteller," in *Illuminations*, edited by Hannah Arendt, translated by Harry Zohn (New York: Harcourt, Bruce & World, Inc., 1955), 83-109.

Carlo Ginzburg, *Clues, Myths and the Historical Method*, translated by John and Anne C. Tedeschi (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 18-29.

Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1966).

collective/cultural memory within media as these are the fields of study that most affect discourses of the past.

However, this brief literature review should not be read as an all-encompassing examination of the entire field of collective/cultural memory which includes numerous lines of inquiry. For example, there is an extensive body of work that is focused on methodology within the interdisciplinary field. These works critique memory studies and attempt to create a framework or general practices for the ever-developing field.⁵ Other works have focused on the general uptick in studies of memory and rising general interest in the past within society. Stress is placed upon important historical anniversaries, such as the 40th and 50th anniversaries of the end of World War II and the Holocaust, as catalysts for larger general interest in the past among the general population.⁶ Beyond this, collective/cultural memory theory has been applied more directly to create better understandings of cultural phenomena. Most notably, theorists have used collective/cultural memory theory to describe the roles of memorials/monuments⁷ and to further

⁵ Notable studies on methodology within the field include the following:

Alon Confino, "Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method" *American Historical Review* 102, no. 5 (1997): 1386–1403.

Celia B. Harris, Helen M. Patterson and Richard I. Kemp, "Collaborative Recall and Collective Memory: What Happens When We Remember Together?" *Memory* 16 (3): 213-230.

Jeffrey K. Olick, "Collective Memory: The Two Cultures," *Sociological Theory* 17: 3 (November 1999): 333-348.

Jeffrey K. Olick and Joyce Robbins, "Social Memory Studies: From 'Collective Memory' to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices," *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998): 105-140.

Robin Wagner-Pacifici, "Memories in the Making: The Shapes of Things That Went," *Qualitative Sociology* 19, no. 3 (1996): 301–321.

Eviatar Zerubavel, "Social Memories: Steps to a Sociology of the Past," *Qualitative Sociology* 19, no. 3 (1996): 283–299.

⁶ For a further discussion of the rise of memory, both academically and in popular culture/imagination, see the below listed works. All three authors connect the phenomenon to important events in the 20th century (Huyssen focuses on the anniversaries of World War II and the Holocaust, Maier on the Holocaust, and Nora on the collapse of the Soviet Union).

Andreas Huyssen, "Present Pasts: Media, Politics, Amnesia," *Public Culture* 12, no. 1 (2000): 21–38.

Charles Maier, "A Surfeit of Memory? Reflections on History, Melancholy and Denial," *History and Memory* 5 (1992): 137–151.

Pierre Nora, "The Reasons for the Current Upsurge in Memory," *Transit* 22, no. 1 (2002): 4–8.

⁷ Research into monuments, particularly war monuments, can be found in the works listed below. Abousnnouga and Machin provide a semiotic reading of British World War I monuments. Koselleck examines European war memorials while problematizing the connection between the monuments to the dead they commemorate. Savage provides a lengthy analysis of monument building in Washington's national mall including changes in memorial philosophy and tastes over time.

Gill Abousnnouga and David Machin, "Analysing the Language of War Monuments," *Visual Communication* volume 9, no. 2: 131-149.

Reinhart Koselleck, "War Memorials: Identity Formations of the Survivors," in *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, translated by Todd Samuel Presner (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2002), 285–326.

conceptions of cultural trauma.⁸ The lack of a more in-depth examination of these works, and therefore exclusion from the typology of discourses of the past, from this author's larger discussion of the field of collective/cultural memory should not be viewed as an indictment of the quality or importance of these works. A consequence of working within a large interdisciplinary field is the necessary exclusion of works that fall outside the primary focus of the specific, chosen topic. In this case, discourses of the past is directly related to the foundational theories of collective/cultural memory, the field's interactions with traditional history/historiography through the memory/history binary, and how collective/cultural memory interacts with media/is mediated.

Collective/cultural memory is crucial to the creation of a typology of discourses of the past. As such, the general theory of the field is an essential starting point. One of the seminal works in the field is *The Collective Memory* by the aforementioned Maurice Halbwachs.⁹ Within this book, first translated into English in 1950, Halbwachs developed much of the framework that continues to influence the field. He argues that, as people living in organized societies, we are never alone and, as a result, we formulate our memories collectively based upon shared data

Kirk Savage, *Monument Wars: Washington, D. C., The National Mall, and the Transformation of the Memorial Landscape* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

⁸ Cultural trauma is a particularly well-established subsection of collective/cultural memory. Alexander puts forth a framework for the creation of cultural trauma, contending that societies can define their own suffering and use this knowledge to create empathy with other societies' cultural traumas. Eyerman argues that a theory of cultural trauma can be used as a basis for cultural identity and collective memory. Hacking utilizes a Foucauldian framework of memoro-politics that becomes deeply entwined with musings on trauma and the soul. Hirsch examines the idea of postmemory with a focus on feminist theory and the Holocaust. Sennett, through a case study of laid off IBM employees, describes how groups collectively experience time and loss. Trouillot develops the idea of "abortive rituals" to describe how groups are formulated in the present to deal with actions of the past with a particular focus on the politics of apology that result.

Jeffrey C. Alexander, "Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma," in *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*, edited by Ron Eyerman, Bernhard Giesen, Neil J. Smelser, and Piotr Sztompka (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 1-30.

Ron Eyerman, "The Past in the Present: Culture and the Transmission of Memory," *Acta Sociologica* 47, no. 2 (2004): 159-169.

Ian Hacking, "Memoro-Politics, Trauma and the Soul," *History of the Human Sciences* 7, no. 2 (1994): 29-52.

Marianne Hirsch, "The Generation of Postmemory," *Poetics Today* 29, no. 1 (March 1, 2008): 103-128.

Richard Sennett, "Disturbing Memories," in *Memory*, edited by Patricia Fara and Karalyn Patterson, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 10-26.

Michel-Rolph Trouillot, "Abortive Rituals: Historical Apologies in the Global Era," *Interventions* 2, no. 2 (2000): 171-186.

⁹ This work should not be confused with another major Halbwachs work titled *On Collective Memory*. See: Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, edited and translated by Lewis A. Coser (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992).

or conceptions.¹⁰ This means that memory is not a process that is located in the individual, but rather, *always* occurs through group processes. In Halbwachs' words, "...a person remembers only by situating [themselves] within the viewpoint of one or several groups and one or several currents of collective thought."¹¹ Crucially, Halbwachs argues that individuals believe themselves to be free when they actually yield to external suggestion and obey unperceived social influences. Thus, each individual remembers within a collective memory framework, but those memories can change based upon place, space, and temporality.¹² Contemporary society has, of course, changed drastically in the decades since Halbwachs' formulated his theories, but the creation of memory through groups is a tenet of collective/cultural memory theory that remains unchanged since the original publication of the work.

With the groundwork for collective memory established, Halbwachs turns to larger questions about the relationship between "memory" and "history". He argues that people work within two intermingling memory systems as they become immersed in their time and social milieu. Simultaneous to this, people are influenced by important historical events occurring at the time. This leads to the creation of two distinct types of memory of the past which Halbwachs labels as "autobiographical memory" and "historical memory" respectively.¹³ In other words, Halbwachs argues that people formulate memories about their own experiences while also formulating memories around and in connection to societal events that they did not necessarily experience personally. These systems work together to generate collective memory where personal experiences are remembered using larger more well-known societal events as signposts or memory markers. A contemporary example of this may be positioning personal memories within one's own life in relation to major events such as the 9/11 terrorist attacks (i.e. post- 9/11 travel experiences vs. pre-9/11 travel experiences). A person may not have experienced the attacks personally, but they can formulate their experiences and memories around an important event.¹⁴ Halbwachs refers to this experience as formulating memory on "lived" history instead of

¹⁰ Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, translated by Francis J. Ditter and Vida Yazdi Ditter (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1980), 23, 31.

¹¹ Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 33.

¹² Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 45.

¹³ Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 50-52, 57.

¹⁴ It should be noted that Halbwachs was writing in a time when mass media was much less prevalent than today. As such, mediated experiences of important events did not happen in real time as they did with 9/11 in particular. Regardless, the argument still holds in respect to formulating memory around major societal events.

“learned” history (i.e. traditional history as taught in schools).¹⁵ Halbwachs further argues that “history” is situated external to and above groups.¹⁶ Ultimately, this separation means that, for Halbwachs, collective memory is distinct in function, formation, and purpose from academic history.

From here, Halbwachs argues that, as time passes, events become removed from the collective memory, which he argues only extends to the memory of people living in the society at the time. These unremembered pasts then transition to formal history. This is the point where Halbwachs definitively places a demarcation between collective memory and history.¹⁷ These events do not disappear from society entirely but, through traditional history, remain as temporal markers that help in the further creation of memory.¹⁸ A contemporary example of this would be major historical events that happened before any living person was born but remain part of collective memory through deliberate reconstruction and recall (such as the American Revolution). It may seem that Halbwachs has a positivist view of history, where the most important facts are remembered in an accurate fashion, but this is not the case. Halbwachs argues that pasts are remembered only through reconstructions of the past with data borrowed from the present.¹⁹ He writes, “What becomes fixed in [our] memory are not just facts, but attitudes and ways of thinking from the past.”²⁰ This is an example of what is perhaps Halbwachs’ most important point about the remembrance of the past. Collective memory is not necessarily “accurate” but, instead, represents the wants, needs, and understandings of contemporary society. Society uses the past to explain and order the present.

The Collective Memory serves as an important entry point to collective/cultural memory studies beyond the mere fact that it is one of the earliest works in the field. The book provides a framework for the field that is still used to this day, but it also provides several fundamental problems that must be revisited. Halbwachs provides a clear theorization of collective memory, but he was mainly focused on early 20th century Western Europeans living in small villages. How does the theory change as societies move away from that model? Halbwachs provides a

¹⁵ Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 57.

¹⁶ Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 80.

¹⁷ Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 78-83.

¹⁸ Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 98.

¹⁹ Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 64.

²⁰ Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, 64.

clear memory/history binary that argues for two distinct fields with different ways of representing the past. Yet, even with his caveats about reconstructions, does *The Collective Memory* present a positivist view of history? Are collective memory and academic history actually different? How so? Finally, Halbwachs focuses primarily on the individual and their interactions with society and other people with (understandably given the time period) little regard for media. How does collective memory change in a more heavily mediated world? By providing the basis for the field while also leaving numerous questions open to scholars *The Collective Memory* provides a crucial starting point for an exploration of the field. The remainder of this section does just this as it examines other major works in the field with a particular focus on theories of collective/cultural memory, the history/memory binary, and memory and mediation.

Numerous theorists have revisited the core of Halbwachs' collective memory theory to help better describe contemporary society. A notable example of this is Pierre Nora's *Between History and Memory: Les Lieux de Memoire* which was written in the 1980s as a way of interrogating how societies remember. Nora develops the ideas of *lieux de memoire* (sites of memory) and *mileux de memoire* (real sites of memory).²¹ He uses these ideas as a basis for comparing history and memory as ways of remembering the past, arguing that history is always a problematic and incomplete reconstruction based on something that is no longer while memory is a "perpetually actual phenomenon" located in the eternal present. Thus, for Nora, memory takes root in the concrete while history binds itself to the relation between things.²² In other words, memory attaches itself to sites while history attaches itself to events.²³ Ultimately, this means that lieux de memoire (i.e. history as defined by Nora), "...have no referent in reality; or rather, they are their own referent: pure, exclusively self-referential signs."²⁴ In sum, Nora, perhaps problematically (as discussed below), creates a binary between history and memory in an attempt to better describe and theorize memory. Memory becomes a function of relations between people and a "real" representation of the past, while history is separated from these groups and becomes a tool for power relations. While the creation of memory mirrors the

²¹ Pierre Nora, "Between History and Memory: Les Lieux de Memoire," *Representations* 26, Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory (Spring 1989): 7.

²² Nora, 8-9.

²³ Nora, 22.

²⁴ Nora, 23.

theories of Halbwachs, the acknowledgement of history as a less reliable than memory removes Halbwachs' more positivist views of history and its accuracy.

Eric Hobsbawm's theory of "invented traditions" also came to prominence during the 1980s and it can be placed in direct opposition to Nora's theories on memory. This is mainly due to the fact that he does not view memory to be objective, a better representation of the past or necessarily different from history. The key idea of invented traditions is that traditions are created as a way of ordering or legitimizing the present. Hobsbawm argues, " 'Traditions' which appear or claim to be old are often quite recent in origin and sometimes invented."²⁵ He refers to these traditions as being "invented" and states that any continuity with the past that these traditions have are largely created.²⁶ There are three major types of invented traditions: those that establish social cohesion/group membership, those that establish or legitimize institutions and authority, and those that are used for socialization, inculcation of beliefs, value systems, and conventions of behavior.²⁷ Invented traditions are an important part of understanding the theory of collective/cultural memory because of the way that they attempt to make sense of the past for present purposes. The idea is particularly useful in illustrating the role that institutions have in the creation and shaping of memory of the past as a way of exercising power in the present. This, of course, updates Halbwachs' work by emphasizing the roll of larger institutions, such as governments or education systems, in the creation of collective/cultural memory instead of focusing solely on smaller groups of people or "normal" citizens. In other words, "invented traditions" is a concept that allows collective/cultural memory to better incorporate power structures into larger understandings about how the past is remembered and used in the present.

Terence Ranger, Hobsbawm's co-editor on the volume where the idea of "invented traditions" was first articulated, later revisited the idea in his own work. In a case study and literature review of memory in colonial Africa and the idea of invented traditions, Ranger argues that the idea of "invention" is inadequate to describe traditions in that geographic location. Firstly, he notes that the concept of "invention" is too once-and-for-all an event (i.e. the idea of invention is too concrete and implies a one time occurrence rather than a process that happens

²⁵ Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction," in *The Invention of Tradition*, edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1.

²⁶ Hobsbawm, 2.

²⁷ Hobsbawm, 9.

over time) and does not have allowances for process, reworking of identities, and transformation of institutions.²⁸ Secondly, using the term “invention” assumes an inventor which confines understandings of power to a one directional flow from the colonizers to the colonized which is an oversimplification of colonial relations.²⁹ Ultimately, in a nod to Benedict Anderson’s work (which will be discussed more thoroughly below) Ranger prefers to replace the word “invented” with “imagined”, believing that “imagined traditions” is a better descriptor of colonial relations.³⁰ As a result, Ranger provides a further articulation of collective/cultural memory theory that prioritizes the role of institutions and power structures, especially colonialism, within the creation of memory of the past.

A final major development in the general theory of collective/cultural memory comes from Jan Assmann’s article *Collective Memory and Cultural Identity*. Assmann builds upon Halbwachs’ and Warburg’s early theories of collective memory to formulate a new understanding of how the past is remembered by groups. He labels this new theory as cultural memory (rather than the previously used term collective memory). He argues that Halbwachs’ and Warburg’s theories dismissed turn of the 20th century ideas that conceived of memory as being biologically inherited or racially based and, instead, they shifted collective memory from biological to cultural frameworks.³¹ Building on these theories, Assmann updates the frameworks to better fit contemporary society. He postulates that “objectivized culture,” such as texts, images, rites, buildings, monuments, cities, and landscapes, have the structure of memory.³² In other words, these artifacts function beyond their physical form and help to structure and formulate cultural memory. These artifacts of objectivized culture then become the building blocks of cultural memory, which Assmann defines as:

...that body of knowledge of reusable texts, images and rituals specific to each society in each epoch, whose ‘cultivation’ serves to stabilize and convey that society’s self-image. Upon such collective knowledge, for the most part (but not exclusively) of the past, each group bases its awareness of unity and particularity.³³

²⁸ Terence Ranger, “The Invention of Tradition Revisited: The Case of Colonial Africa,” in *Legitimacy and the State in Twentieth-Century Africa*, edited by Terence Ranger and Olufemi Vaughan, Essays in Honour of A.H.M Kirk-Greene (New York: Palgrave, 1993), 79.

²⁹ Ranger, 80.

³⁰ Ranger, 81.

³¹ Jan Assmann, “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity,” *New German Critique* 65 (1995): 125.

³² Assmann, 128.

³³ Assmann, 132.

Similar to Nora, Assmann updates the early theory of the field to better fit contemporary society. To accomplish this, Assmann more thoroughly incorporates media and cultural artifacts into his theory of how the past is remembered collectively.

Nora, Hobsbawm, Ranger, and Assmann are representative of a shift in collective/cultural memory theory that occurred in the period of the 1980s-mid 1990s. This shift capitalized on canonical works, such as Halbwachs' *The Collective Memory*, to redefine and remake the core theory of the field as a way of making collective/cultural memory more relevant to contemporary society and applicable to current phenomena. This is unsurprising, as the early theory from decades prior remained relevant but had to be revisited and critiqued if it was going to be used to describe individuals, groups, and entire societies in the present. Indeed, even after the revisiting of the field during this time period, the field remains constantly in flux as theorists attempt to articulate (and rearticulate) how memory of the past is formed by groups for use in the present.

Treatment of the memory/history binary is an important example of change within the field that directly interacts with the canon of collective/cultural memory studies. The binary can be understood as any demarcation that is created between "memory" and "history" within arguments about the two fields. Typically, a memory/history binary argues that the two fields function dissimilarly, produce different views of the past, or privilege one of the fields (typically history) as more "factual" or "accurate". This binary was typical of early theory. This was part of the original theory produced by Halbwachs, but it was only tangentially addressed by theorists who were concerned with the general theory of collective/cultural memory in the 1980s-mid 1990s. Instead, a different group of academics directly addressed the memory/history binary as the core or a major part of their work.

Peter Burke, a historian, directly addresses the relationship between history and memory in his work, *History as Social Memory*. Though the primary concern of his work is the role of the historian within the burgeoning field of collective/cultural memory, Burke also provides his view of the traditional arguments made about the two fields. He writes,

[The] traditional account of the relation between memory and written history, in which memory reflects what actually happened and history reflects memory, now seems rather too simple. Both history and memory are coming to appear increasingly problematic... Neither memories nor histories seem objective any longer.³⁴

³⁴ Peter Burke, "History as Social Memory," in *Memory: History, Culture and the Mind*, edited by Thomas Butler (New York: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1989), 97-98.

The language used here is important as Burke notes that the traditional conceptions of history and memory argue that the two processes have a “relation” to one another, but they are still considered to be different. Burke does not believe this separation is pertinent as he argues that neither history nor memory should be viewed as objective as both practices are socially conditioned and involve selection, interpretation, and distortion.³⁵ As a result, Burke attempts to distance himself from traditional conceptions of history and memory by formulating a unique theory that combines the two fields. He labels this as “history as social memory” defining this term as,

[T]he convenient piece of shorthand which sums up the complex process of selection and interpretation in a simple formula and stresses the homology between the ways in which the past is recorded and remembered.³⁶

This both eliminates the dichotomy between history and memory and adheres to theories of collective/cultural memory.

Burke further relates his theory to issues of source selection, source use, memory creation, and collective amnesia, stressing the role of cultural construction within each rather than objectivity or accuracy. He concludes that the role of the historians within this system of “history as social memory” should be that of the “remembrancer”, or the guardians of awkward or inconvenient facts.³⁷ Burke’s work thus represents a counter argument to traditional theory (such as Halbwachs) that separates history and memory into distinct fields with different goals. Instead, the two are a larger part of one system of remembering the past. “History as social memory” can be understood as an expansion of collective/cultural memory theory that redefines problematic aspects of the early works to make the field a more viable option for studying contemporary societies and groups.

Burke is not the only historian that questions his field through the lens of collective/cultural memory. Another example comes from Patrick Hutton’s book, *History as an Art of Memory*. He combines the theories of Halbwachs and Michel Foucault to argue that memory is only able to endure within sustaining social contexts (and therefore individual images

³⁵ Burke, 97-98.

³⁶ Burke, 99.

³⁷ Burke, 99-110.

of the past are provisional) and the past is continually being remolded in present discourse.³⁸ This means that memory will gradually fade as members of groups age and pass on but will remain part of society through history and historians. Unfortunately, this means that only memories enshrined in material forms (such as photographs) can be known to historians and historical memory depends less on inherited wisdom than on reconstructive interpretation.³⁹ This leads Hutton to lament that the postmodern approach to history is based on images and thus can only become a history of images.⁴⁰ Hutton's work can be seen as a call to further integrate collective/cultural memory into historical practices as a way of creating better historiographical practice.

It should be noted that not all theorists argue for an integration of history and memory to create a better understanding of the past. Thomas Butler argues that in all memory we are dealing with invention.⁴¹ This leads him to conclude that history and memory are not the same process.⁴² In a similar fashion, Allan Megill also argues that history and memory are separate. However, he believes that the boundaries between the two cannot be precisely established. He writes,

...if memory is the Other of history it is necessary also to say that history is the Other of memory. The claims that memory makes are only possibly true. In its demand for proof, history stands in sharp opposition to memory.⁴³

This leads to his conclusion that between the "light" of history and the "dark" of memory there is an area of historical unknowability that exposes the arrogance of both fields. In particular, memory's arrogance of authenticity and history's arrogance of definitiveness.⁴⁴ Butler and Megill address the memory/history binary and decide to maintain it rather than argue for a further integration of the two fields. However, this is not done to sanctify one field while vilifying the other. Instead, by making claims that both processes interact with the past in different ways they point to how the two fields can coexist with one another. In doing so, they

³⁸ Patrick H. Hutton, *History as an Art of Memory* (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1993), 6.

³⁹ Hutton, 8, 20.

⁴⁰ Hutton, 22.

⁴¹ Thomas Butler, "Memory a Mixed Blessing," in *Memory: History, Culture and the Mind*, edited by Thomas Butler (New York: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1989), 18.

⁴² Butler, 23.

⁴³ Allan Megill, "History, Memory, Identity," *History of the Human Sciences* 11, no. 3 (1998): 56.

⁴⁴ Megill, 57.

allow the two fields to work along side each other rather than working in unison with an integrated methodology.

Briefly, it is valuable to examine how interaction between history and collective/cultural memory has led to several compelling studies of the past. One emblematic example comes from Lori Ducharme and Gary Allan Fine who combine the two fields to examine how “villains” are remembered through the construction of nonpersonhood and demonization. They argue that negative historical reputations are created through a two-step process where a person’s biography is reconstructed (with emphasis on certain events) and then their motives are evaluated (presented and then ascribed with meaning). The result is demonization of the person followed by “nonpersonhood” which is when the virtuous aspects of a person are denied in favor of remembering negative actions.⁴⁵ Through a case study of Benedict Arnold, Ducharme and Fine show how this process unfolds. In due course they conclude, “The creation of historical reputation is not a discrete event, but a continuous, enduring and potentially contested process; it is a means of perpetual labelling, transforming a person into an object, a moral identity.”⁴⁶

The article, by abandoning traditional types of historical analysis while also questioning popular perceptions of a figure from the past, serves as a germane example of how history and collective/cultural memory can be combined to better describe how society interacts with the past and how that past is used in the present. Traditional historical analysis would tell us that Benedict Arnold was a complicated figure, both a military hero and traitor. Popular perceptions passed down through collective/cultural memory would tell us that he was cowardly, traitorous, and evil; Ducharme and Fine use both fields to present both sides of a complicated figure and move beyond questions of accuracy to show where ideas about the past come from and how they are used in the present.

In contrast, Gladys Lang and Kurt Lang show how a division between history and collective/cultural memory that understands the limitations of both fields can be used to examine the past. Lang and Lang engage in a study of the survival of artistic reputation after the death of an artist. However, in the opening of their article, they make clear that they are taking a

⁴⁵ Lori Ducharme, and Gary Alan Fine, “The Construction of Nonpersonhood and Demonization: Commemorating the ‘Traitorous’ Reputation of Benedict Arnold,” *Social Forces* 73, no. 4 (1995): 1310.

⁴⁶ Ducharme and Fine, 1326.

collective memory approach rather than a more traditional historical approach.⁴⁷ This allows them to abandon traditional understandings of how artistic reputation is made and maintained (i.e. the most talented artists are the most celebrated and remembered) and to construct an understanding of artistic reputation that is grounded in contemporary practices. They write,

This shared image [of collective memory of an artist] is made up of not only what people actually recall and then pass on but also of things that have somehow been recovered, embellished, or even invented to serve some contemporary cause.⁴⁸

They also stress that survival within collective memory is tied to the survival of tangible objects that recall the deceased.⁴⁹ The result of this process is that many great artists are not remembered because they do not leave behind enough of these objects. Given that history and historians rely upon evidence in the form of artifacts or documentation, Lang and Lang show how an understanding of this deficiency and subsequent application of collective/cultural memory methodology can lead to a better understanding of the past.

Moving beyond these considerations of the memory/history binary, the final aspect of collective/cultural memory theory that is central to a discourses of the past typology is how theorists have examined the relationship between memory and media. Unlike the general theoretical considerations of the field or the relationship between collective/cultural memory and history, arguments regarding the relationship between collective/cultural memory and media have been much more unified. In general, theorists have largely agreed that any understanding or reformulation of collective/cultural memory must include media in some way. This had led to many works about the role of media within cultural/collective memory.

An early argument for the inclusion of media can be found in the work of John B. Thompson. In his study of the changing nature of “tradition” within modern mediated society he argues that if we wish to understand the changing character of tradition and self-formation it is necessary to track the development and impact of communication media.⁵⁰ He identifies a decline in traditional authority and traditional grounding of action (i.e. local powers and face-to-

⁴⁷ Gladys Lang and Kurt Lang, “Recognition and Renown: The Survival of Artistic Reputation,” *American Journal of Sociology* 94, no. 1 (1988): 79–80.

⁴⁸ Lang and Lang, 80.

⁴⁹ Lang and Lang, 80.

⁵⁰ John B. Thompson, “Tradition and Self in a Mediated World,” in *Detraditionalization: Critical Reflections on Authority and Identity*, edited by Paul Heelas, Scott Lash, and Paul Morris (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1996), 91.

face communication) noting that this does not represent the demise of tradition but rather indicates that tradition's role is changing as individuals come to rely upon mediated and de-localized traditions as a means of making sense of the world and their place in it.⁵¹ He writes,

In a world increasingly permeated by communication media. Traditions have become increasingly dependent on mediated symbolic forms; they have become dislodged from particular locales and re-embedded in social life in new ways. But the up-rooting and re-mooring of traditions does not necessarily render them inauthentic, nor does it spell their demise.⁵²

Though he does not mention early works in the field specifically, Thompson's work can be seen as an update of early works in collective/cultural memory that focused solely on memory formation of local groups and did not account for mediated experiences.

Later works interacted with the field more directly in their attempts to describe the role of media within collective/cultural memory. Paramount among these works is Astrid Erll's *Memory in Culture*. Erll re-examines cultural memory and updates the field with a particular bent towards technology and media. She argues that, "Memory is constituted differently in different contexts- be they linguistic, historical, social, national or disciplinary."⁵³ Furthermore, she writes that cultural memory is not the Other of history, nor is it the opposite of individual remembering. Instead, it is the totality from which cultural context can originate.⁵⁴ She extends this argument by surveying critical works on historiography that support her view that historiographical practice is a form of cultural memory. Ultimately, she concludes that all history is a constructive narrative process and, as a result, is a type of cultural memory.⁵⁵

With this view of cultural memory established Erll shifts her focus to the role of media in cultural memory. She writes, "Cultural memory would be inconceivable without the role that media play on both levels- the individual and the collective."⁵⁶ For Erll, media become the interface connecting the two levels of memory (individual and collective) within this system. (For example, a news cast of an event helps to structure an individual's memory of that event and works as an intermediary between individual and collective memories.) Erll furthers this

⁵¹ Thompson, 94.

⁵² Thompson, 103.

⁵³ Astrid Erll, *Memory in Culture*, translated by Sara B. Young (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 6.

⁵⁴ Erll, 7.

⁵⁵ Erll, 39-45.

⁵⁶ Erll, 113.

argument by modifying Marshall McLuhan's famous phrase "the medium is the message" arguing that "the medium is the memory."⁵⁷ This implies that media are directly connected to memory and, are thus, instrumental to the creation of cultural memory. Within Erll's theorization cultural memory in contemporary society cannot be created or exist without media.

Numerous studies have deliberated the role of memory within certain types of media. Examples include, Dayan and Katz's study of broadcasting and news media,⁵⁸ Garth Jowett's study of Hollywood film's representation of nuclear weapons,⁵⁹ Marita Sturken's treatment of images,⁶⁰ and Alison Winters' study of Kodak/photography.⁶¹ These works all deal with memory and media, though they make use of collective/cultural memory theory to varying degrees with differentiated understandings of media. Generally, each study attempts to study media through a specific medium rather than attempting to create a unifying theory of media memory. Instead, media/medium is used as a way of studying and describing collective/cultural memory.⁶²

Perhaps the most emblematic case study of collective/cultural memory and its relation to media is Barbie Zelizer's book *Covering the Body*. Zelizer examines the ways that popular culture and media influenced the formulation of memory around President John F. Kennedy since his assassination in 1963. She situates her study directly within the field of collective memory providing the definition, "Collective memory reflects a group's codified knowledge over time about what is important, preferred and appropriate."⁶³ She uses this theoretical background in combination with her case study to describe both how Kennedy is remembered in

⁵⁷ Erll, 113-115.

⁵⁸ Daniel Dayan and Elihu Katz. *Media Events: The Live Broadcasting of History* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1992).

⁵⁹ Garth S. Jowett, "Hollywood, Propaganda and the Bomb: Nuclear Images in Post World War II Films," *Film & History: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Film and Television Studies* 18, no. 2 (May 1988): 26-38.

⁶⁰ Marita Sturken, "Personal Stories and National Meanings: Memory, Reenactment and the Image," in *The Seductions of Biography*, edited by Mary Rhiel and David Suchoff (New York: Routledge, 1996), 31-41.

⁶¹ Alison Winter, *Memory: Fragments of a Modern History* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2012), 162, 171, 175.

⁶² For example, Winter's work engages with memory directly as she develops the theory of "flashbulb memory" to describe how the camera changed the ways that people remember. On the other end of the spectrum, Jowett only tangentially discusses memory in his work on Hollywood film. He instead relies on the term "propaganda". It is also worthwhile to note that each study provides different understandings of "media". Generally, media is not studied in abstract within these studies and each author focuses on a specific medium or mediums. For example, Winter's work describes how memory works within photography.

⁶³ Barbie Zelizer, *Covering the Body: The Kennedy Assassination, the Media, and the Shaping of Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 3.

the United States and to reveal the role of media, especially news media and journalism, within collective memory in general.

In the case of the Kennedy assassination, Zelizer considers the incorporation of technology into the collective memory, with a particular focus on the inclusion of the image into memory via the television and news media.⁶⁴ She found that journalists created for themselves a “rhetorical legitimation” by setting up narratives in which they emerged as authoritative spokespersons on the assassination.⁶⁵ An example of this was television news coverage of the assassination and its aftermath which journalists used to give themselves legitimization over the telling (and retelling) of the assassination story. Zelizer argues, “Television interfered with historical progression by not allowing memories to move beyond the images it repeatedly showed.”⁶⁶ Due to this phenomenon, years later when academic historians attempted to engage the assassination in their own work they found that public interest in the events had, generally, already been fulfilled by these journalists, as well as freelance writers, whom had been attempting, across media, to relabel their retellings as history.⁶⁷ This runs counter to traditional documentation of historical events where, Zelizer argues, journalists typically function as a “first draft” for later historians.⁶⁸ Thus, instead of historians piecing together multiple sources, reference materials, and benefitting from the passage of time to create historical discourse, the Kennedy assassination remained under the purview and expertise of journalists. This leads Zelizer to conclude that the American public is willing to cede retelling and memory to popular culture.⁶⁹ While her work goes into much more depth than is necessary to be discussed here, in general it can be viewed as an emblematic example of how theorists have incorporated media into larger understandings of collective/cultural memory theory. For Zelizer media and memory can override traditional historical methods and practices.

In terms of a discourses of the past typology this brief examination of collective/cultural memory was designed to examine three major points about how the past is remembered. Firstly, in agreement with the early theory that has continued to influence the field, discourses of the past

⁶⁴ Zelizer, 187.

⁶⁵ Zelizer, 44.

⁶⁶ Zelizer, 187.

⁶⁷ Zelizer, 115, 183.

⁶⁸ Zelizer, 177.

⁶⁹ Zelizer, 210.

argues that collective/cultural memory is formulated at the level of the collective. In addition, it argues that the role of power structures, such as governments and educational systems, are central to the formulation of memory of the past. Secondly, discourses of the past disavows a history/memory binary and argues that both collective/cultural memory and history are cultural constructions of the past that are formulated and actuated in the same ways. Critically, it should be understood that these cultural constructions of the past are less about the past than they are about the present, in particular the maintenance of entrenched power. Thirdly, discourses of the past argues that all collective/cultural memory and history is remediated and disseminated through media. Popular media reformulates the raw material of collective/cultural memory into easily digestible and, frequently, allegorical forms.

2.3 Discourse/Critical Theory

Collective/cultural memory theory provides a solid basis for a discourses of the past typology. However, the field raises several theoretical issues, especially those of definition and usage, that must be further accounted for through the use of critical theory. As such, this section explores issues that are tangential to collective/cultural memory theory but do not receive a full accounting within the field. In particular, this section will address issues and definitions of “discourse”, “nationalism”, “the nation”, and “mediation”. This can also be read as a larger discussion on the creation, exercising, and structuring of “power”. While collective/cultural memory theory provides some insight into the role and function of power and how the past is mediated in the present, it is necessary to further define and discuss what “power” is, how it is exercised, and how representations of the past are mediated. It should also be noted that the aim of this section is to provide definitions and explanations for key terminology rather than to provide a thorough accounting, history, and intellectual development of each individual term. In other words, the purpose of this section is to explore critical theory that is central to the discourses of the past typology (especially in connection to the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki).

To begin it is necessary to understand where, and how, systems of collective/cultural memory are created and maintained in the interest of entrenched power. These systems are not created without guidance and forethought of action. Discourse theory, in part, describes what motivates these decisions and formulates collective/cultural memory. “Discourse” has become a

popularized term, and according to David Macey, "... the term is widely, and often very loosely, used to describe any organized body or corpus of statements and utterances governed by rules and conventions of which the use is largely unconscious... Here, 'discourse' easily becomes a near-synonym for 'ideology'."⁷⁰ Given the ubiquity with which the word is used, it is necessary to focus on particular usages and definitions of the term. In terms of collective/cultural memory Foucault's formulation of discourse is particularly valuable and provides a suitable entry point to the larger field because of his theory of discursive formations and their connection to history and structuring the past through archives.

In his book, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault theorizes how knowledge is constructed, the power relations within knowledge production, and the general practices of discourse creation. He argues that discourse is socially constructed but still has defined limits as to what can appear within it. He contends, "...relations are established between institutions, economic and social processes, behavioral patterns, systems of norms, techniques, types of classification, [and] modes of characterization...[yet] they do not define [a discourse's] internal constitution, but what enable it to appear."⁷¹ Social relations and power structures thus define the limits and practice of a discourse. Capitalizing on Foucault's theories, it can be argued that collective/cultural memory systems are a type of discourse that can (and do) only produce certain types of knowledge about the past because they are part of entrenched power systems.

This leads to an obvious question: what exactly defines and creates the outer limits of a discourse? Foucault argues that institutions shape discourse formation. The power of these institutions results in a system of formation that is a complex group of relations functioning as a rule.⁷² Or, in other words, institutions have power which they exercise through discourse to benefit established power structures. This results in the institutionalization of knowledge which, in turn, determines who gets to speak, who is qualified to speak, and who is afforded the prestige, privilege, and presumption of correctness within a discourse.⁷³ These are all important concerns when considering a discourse and its place within society. Foucault teaches us that

⁷⁰ David Macey, "Discourse," in *The Penguin Dictionary of Critical Theory* (Toronto: Penguin Group (Canada), 2000), 100.

⁷¹ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, translated by A.M. Sheridan Smith (London: Tavistock Publications, 1972), 45.

⁷² Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 73-74.

⁷³ Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 50.

discourses are not naturally occurring but are instead deeply connected to institutional power and privilege. When studying collective/cultural memory, use of his theories can help to assess the memory systems that exist, as well as why they exist in the forms that they do. Using Foucaultian analysis can also reveal hidden structures of power that are central to the formation of discourses.

Foucault provides an excellent framework for understanding discourse, however, his work is limited regarding media theory because he focuses primarily on paper archives. As a result, Foucault does not extend his analysis of discourse past 1850.⁷⁴ Friedrich Kittler expands upon Foucault's work in his book *Discourse Networks 1800/1900*. Kittler emphasizes the role of power in the creation of discourse as he argues, "No discourse...can manage without authorized controls. In no culture is the dice throw of discourse not steered and curbed, checked and organized."⁷⁵ In expanding his understanding of discourse into the 20th and 21st centuries, Kittler develops the idea of the discourse network as a way of incorporating new technologies. He defines a discourse network as, "...the network of technologies and institutions that allow a given culture to select, store, and process relevant data."⁷⁶ This expands discourse analysis to include the "second industrial revolution" which includes computational processes such as the storage and transmission of data.⁷⁷ As a result, Kittler provides a theorization of how discourse works within societies that rely upon computational organization of information rather than paper archives. Sybille Krämer describes this process as Kittler arguing for the replacement of "discourse analysis" with "discourse networks" in order to provide an "archaeology of the present" (as opposed to Foucault's archaeology of the past).⁷⁸

In a later work, *Literature Media: Information Systems*, Kittler wrote, "Media determine our situation, which (nevertheless or for that reason) merits a description."⁷⁹ This work has been credited with extending Foucault's early theories on discourse by considering the materiality of

⁷⁴ Friedrich A. Kittler, *Discourse Networks 1800/ 1900*, translated by Michael Metteer and Chris Cullens (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1990), 369.

⁷⁵ Kittler, *Discourse Networks 1800/1900*, 16.

⁷⁶ Kittler, *Discourse Networks 1800/1900*, 369.

⁷⁷ Kittler, *Discourse Networks 1800/1900*, 370.

⁷⁸ Sybille Krämer, "The Cultural Techniques of Time Axis Manipulation: On Friedrich Kittler's Conception of Media," *Theory, Culture & Society* 23, no. 7–8 (December 1, 2006): 107.

⁷⁹ Friedrich A. Kittler, *Literature Media: Information Systems*, edited by John Johnston (Amsterdam: G+B Arts International, 1997), 28.

communication technologies and systems.⁸⁰ For example, computer code or the storage of information on servers were included as part of discourse formation and dissemination. Kittler's expansion of discourse theory into the current century is, therefore, essential for game studies as it allows for an understanding of how video games (from the code to the narrative) can be understood as discourse in their own right, rather than as products of discourse or simply inconsequential entertainment, because they formulate their own discourse (through the process of their creation such as coding and writing of narrative) and disseminate that discourse (through sale and gameplay). For the purposes of analysis in this dissertation, discourse will be understood as systems of information, narrative, or scholarship that put forth a specific argument. As such, historiography, history, memory, and video games are all understood to be types of discourse with each working in specific yet interrelated ways. Of course, these discourses are understood to be heavily influenced by power structures and pre-established norms.

However, before proceeding, it should be noted that an important function of discourse creation and dissemination is that of marginalization, deletion, denial, or erasure. This process is not always explicitly stated within studies of discourse formation, which tend to focus on the entrenched power. However, it is well covered by Noam Chomsky and Robert Herman in their book *Manufacturing Consent*. They argue that media, among its other functions, serve and propagandize on behalf of the powerful societal interests that control and finance them. In addition, these media systems play a key role in fixing "... basic principles and dominant ideologies."⁸¹ As a part of this exercise of power media (which, in this case, can be best understood as media conglomerates or large corporations with a focus on news media) engage in the suppression of stories and facts that do not support existing power structures. In terms of erasure Chomsky and Herman argue, "The beauty of the system, however, is that such dissent and inconvenient information are kept within the bounds and at the margins, so that while their presence shows that the system is not monolithic, they are not large enough to interfere unduly with the domination of the official agenda."⁸² In other words, information and ideas that are counter to established power (such as government or corporate power) are pushed to the margins rather than being fully suppressed, therefore giving the impression that they are being

⁸⁰ Geoffrey Winthrop-Young, *Kittler and the Media* (Malden, Massachusetts: Polity Press, 2011), 59.

⁸¹ Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of Mass Media* (New York: Pantheon, 2002), xi.

⁸² Chomsky and Herman, xii.

acknowledged when, in fact, they are not (at least in a meaningful way). As a way of understanding these processes, Chomsky and Herman develop a propaganda model of media which they summarize as, "... a systematic and highly political dichotomization in news coverage based on serviceability to important domestic power interests."⁸³ While the work is highly focused on the political economy of media (such as concentration of ownership) it contributes to general theory of discourse formation and dissemination as well through the creation of the propaganda model.

A prominent example of the propaganda model at work is found in the idea of worthy and unworthy victims, where worthy victims are those that deserve attention and consideration while unworthy victims are those that do not. Chomsky and Herman argue that, within a propaganda model, media will portray people abused in enemy states as worthy victims while those treated in a similar way by one's own government (or within a client state) will be labelled as unworthy victims.⁸⁴ Chomsky would revisit this idea in a later work, *Because We Say So*, relabeling this general idea with the terms "unpeople" and "unhistory". Unpeople is an adaptation of George Orwell's term unperson from the novel *Nineteen Eighty-four*, which was used to describe a person that was unfit to enter history.⁸⁵ "Unfit to enter history" in the context of Orwell's novel meant people that went against Big Brother and were literally erased from history (for example by being removed from photographs or having their names stricken from official records) to give the impression that they never existed. Chomsky's unperson can be understood as someone that goes against common narratives and, as such, is ignored or marginalized by those in power. Despite the slight change in terminology, the general idea remains the same; within media discourse there will be groups of people that are worthy of concern and other groups that are either unworthy or excluded entirely. A contemporary example of an "unperson" would be the victims of American military aggression that are labelled simply as "enemies" or "terrorists". Specifically, victims of drone strikes in Afghanistan would qualify as unpeople.

Stemming from this argument, Chomsky introduces unhistory which he uses, "...to refer to the fate of unpersons, expunged from history..."⁸⁶ Chomsky contrasts history and unhistory,

⁸³ Chomsky and Herman, 35.

⁸⁴ Chomsky and Herman, 37.

⁸⁵ Noam Chomsky, *Because We Say So* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2015), 26, 29.

⁸⁶ Chomsky, *Because We Say So*, 29.

noting that the unhistory of unpersons is illuminated by anniversaries; where some are remembered and celebrated while others are ignored. For example, Pearl Harbor, a part of “history”, is remembered with solemnity while the American invasion of Indochina, a part of “unhistory”, passes unnoticed.⁸⁷ This leads Chomsky to argue that the core of history is what happened while the core of unhistory is to “disappear” what happened.⁸⁸ In relation to history and power, Chomsky writes, “The ability to ignore unwanted facts is one of the prerogatives of unchallenged power. Closely related to the right to radically revise history.”⁸⁹ The ideas of worthy/unworthy victims and unpeople/unhistory label the practice of discursive denial often afforded to the victims of established power structures.

Chomsky is not the only theorist to directly discuss issues of media, discourse, political language, and power. For example, Giorgio Agamben (*State of Exception*), Harry Frankfurt (*Bullshit*), and Stuart Hall (*Encoding/Decoding*) offer alternative theories for how these systems work.⁹⁰ What makes Chomsky unique is his unrelenting questioning of American media and exercise of power. Using Chomsky’s ideas as a model and examining the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we can describe the Japanese atomic bomb victims (especially survivors affected by atomic bomb sicknesses) as unpeople condemned to unhistory. The erasure

⁸⁷ Chomsky, *Because We Say So*, 29-32.

⁸⁸ Chomsky, *Because We Say So*, 30.

⁸⁹ Chomsky, *Because We Say So*, 154.

⁹⁰ Agamben, Frankfurt, and Hall offer different models for analyzing media and political language. Agamben focuses on the “State of Exception” which is the declaration, by a government or holder of power, of a permanent state of emergency. This, he claims, has become an essential practice for contemporary nations, even those that are supposedly democratic. The declaration of a state of exception allows for the abuse of power by governments. In terms of discourse creation, a state of exception allows for the creation and definition of enemies of the state, as well as extrajudicial systems for prosecution of these people. Frankfurt examines the philosophical issues of “bullshit” and “truth” which can be easily adapted into the theory of discourse creation. Frankfurt argues that the essence of bullshit is an indifference to the way things really are. This leads to a disconnection from traditional ideas of “truth” and “lies” and allows a bullshitter to avoid questions of facts. As such, bullshit can be true or false but is not inherently either. For the purposes of the current study, Frankfurt’s conception of bullshit can be viewed as a theorization of how untruth becomes a part of an established discourse. Finally, Hall offers *Encoding/Decoding*, which introduces audiences more thoroughly into equations of information dissemination. He argues that producers encode media with messages while audiences decode media. The result is not perfect dissemination from encoder to decoder but, frequently, something in between. Hall’s theory is important to keep in mind because it places some power in the audience. For further exploration of these ideas see:

Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception*, translated by Kevin Attell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

Harry G. Frankfurt, *On Bullshit* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005).

Harry G. Frankfurt, *On Truth* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006).

Stuart Hall, “Encoding/Decoding,” in *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972-1979*, edited by Stuart Hall, Dorothy Hobson, Andrew Lowe and Paul Willis (London: Routledge, 1980), 117-127.

of *hibakusha*⁹¹ from American media is an important part of discursive formulations of World War II, the atomic bombings, and the “right” of American military power. American media, which Chomsky is particularly skeptical of, is far from the only system that marginalizes unpeople or makes use of unhistory. Indeed, this practice of erasure is central to the formulation of a discourses of the past typology. Yet, it is increasingly important to any understanding of the collective/cultural memory of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Chomsky’s America-centric critiques of media raise important questions about the importance of the nation and nationalism within the discourses of the past typology, especially in regard to how power functions within the system. Definitions of the “nation” and “nationalism” have a long history. In fact, theorists and philosophers have been attempting to answer questions about the modern (and later postmodern) nation as far back as the 19th century. One particular attempt, by Ernest Renan, remains important within collective/cultural memory studies (though it precedes the field by several decades). Renan, in his essay *What is a Nation?*, argues that a crucial factor in the creation of a nation is the act of forgetting. This “forgetting” consists mainly of ignoring past hatreds such as conquests, differences, and violence.⁹² Therefore, for Renan, “...the essence of a nation is that all individuals have many things in common, and also...have forgotten many things.”⁹³ The essay then discusses and debates the merits/non-merits of several factors that are traditionally believed to be central to the creation of a nation. Renan argues that race, language, material interest, religion, geography, and military are inadequate for the “...creation of a spiritual principle [of a nation].”⁹⁴ Ultimately, he concludes that a large aggregate of people that are “...healthy in mind and warm of heart” create a moral conscience which we call a nation.⁹⁵ While Renan’s work may seem highly romanticized, especially by the standards of 21st century academia, it remains an important example of both early definitions of the nation and the emotional responses that the concept elicits. These emotional responses are

⁹¹ Typically, the translation from Japanese to English for *hibakusha* is “bomb affected persons”. This will be discussed further in Chapter VI.

⁹² Ernest Renan, “What Is a Nation?” in *Nation and Narration*, translated and annotated by Martin Thom, edited by Homi K. Bhabha (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 10.

⁹³ Renan, 11.

⁹⁴ Renan, 19.

⁹⁵ Renan, 20.

particularly important to acknowledge when thinking about the effectiveness of discourse derived from established power structures (such as government and education systems).

More recent, and indeed more influential, is Benedict Anderson's seminal work on nationalism, *Imagined Communities*. Anderson argues that concepts of the nation and nationalism continue to have relevance, he writes, "The reality is quite plain: the 'end of the era of nationalism,' so long prophesied, is not remotely in sight."⁹⁶ Despite this he concedes, "Nation, nationality, nationalism – all have proved notoriously difficult to define, let alone analyze. In contrast to the immense influence that nationalism has exerted on the modern world, plausible theory about it is conspicuously meagre."⁹⁷ He begins his definition of nation-ness and nationalism by referring to these as cultural artefacts that were created through,

...spontaneous distillation of a complex 'crossing' of discrete historical forces; but that, once created, they become 'modular', capable of being transplanted, with varying degrees of self-consciousness, to a great variety of social terrains, to merge and be merged with a correspondingly wide variety of political and ideological constellations. I will also attempt to show why these particular cultural artefacts have aroused such deep attachments.⁹⁸

He ultimately defines a nation as, "...an imagined political community...imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign."⁹⁹ For Anderson, a nation is not a set of national boundaries, a geographical location, or naturally occurring in any way. Instead, a nation (and ensuing nationalism) are manifestations of political thought, ideology, action, and power structures.

Anderson provides an extensive accounting of the rise of nationalism within different global contexts throughout history. The specific nuances of his arguments are beyond the scope of this work, but it is worthwhile to note the significance of his theories in terms of media theory and history. Anderson argues that media forms allow for the representation of imagined communities, in particular the novel and the newspaper which were products of the rise of print capitalism and led to the popularization of both vernacular languages and reading publics.¹⁰⁰ For Anderson, vernacular language, or "print language" helped in the creation and maintenance of

⁹⁶ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), 3.

⁹⁷ Anderson, 3.

⁹⁸ Anderson, 4.

⁹⁹ Anderson, 6.

¹⁰⁰ Anderson, 25-45.

nationalism.¹⁰¹ This leads to a situation where, "... the very idea of 'nation' is now nestled firmly in virtually all print-languages; and nation-ness is virtually inseparable from political consciousness."¹⁰² In other words, Anderson presents a form of nation and nationalism that is inexorably linked to mediation through print.

In terms of the creation of "history" Anderson argues that there must be forced remembering and forced forgetting within an imagined community.¹⁰³ He describes this process: "All profound changes in consciousness, by their very nature, bring with them characteristic amnesias. Out of such oblivions, in specific historical narratives, spring narratives."¹⁰⁴ Thus, even the creation and dissemination of the past, within an imagined community, is connected to mediation. For Anderson, the history of a nation is not based on a true accounting of the past but, instead, on the needs of power with the ultimate goal of serving the nation and nationalism. In sum, Anderson's imagined communities are built through and maintained by media, especially print media. It is not unfair to argue that video games serve a similar role today, though they help to maintain and buttress nationalism rather than create it.

In reviewing Renan and Anderson, it becomes clear that a nation, and subsequent nationalism, are merely creations that serve established power (or powers currently in the process of establishing themselves) rather than concrete, self-evident, physical spaces. It would not be unfair to argue that nations are fabrications, phantoms, or vacant ideological constructs. The nation, in all likelihood, *should* not matter. But, ultimately, nations *do* matter because of the ways that power is exercised by, for, and through them.

Chomsky elaborates upon the importance of the nation and the exercise of power in *Hegemony or Survival* where he expounds specifically upon American power on a global scale. The book, published in 2004, is primarily an artifact from the aftermath of the American invasion of Iraq under President George W. Bush, but also relies upon numerous examples of American abuse of power post-World War II (such as the invasion of Indochina). However, Chomsky still describes American global power, which he refers to as hegemony, in a way that is helpful to understanding nations, nationalism, and power systems in the present. He argues,

¹⁰¹ Anderson, 134.

¹⁰² Anderson, 135.

¹⁰³ Anderson, 201.

¹⁰⁴ Anderson, 204.

“High on the global agenda by fall 2002 was the declared intention of the most powerful state in history to maintain its hegemony through the threat or use of military force, the dimension of power in which it reigns supreme.”¹⁰⁵ This according to Chomsky, was accomplished (or intended to be accomplished) through acts of “preventative war”, US economic penetration, and the expedient use of force over respect for law.¹⁰⁶ These issues are, perhaps, beyond the scope of the current analysis, but they point to larger issues of American national power as a guiding force of international politics. Applying Chomsky’s understanding of American international power, we can see the United States as militarily, politically, and economically more powerful than the other nations of the world. As such, the United States has developed power on an international scale that is all-encompassing. Chomsky labels this power as “hegemony”. In any consideration of discourse, it is essential to acknowledge this overarching power and recognize the influence of the nation on international politics (rather than pure neoliberalism, globalization, cosmopolitanism, etc.).

Chomsky puts forward the idea that the exercise of hegemonic power (i.e. overwhelming military, economic, and cultural influence combined with a righteous willingness to utilize these tools for the exercise, consolidation, and maintenance of power) by the United States, especially post-World War II, has become a historical narrative. Within this narrative, Americans argue that US hegemony is, “... the realization of history’s purpose, and what it achieves is for the common good, the merest truism, so that empirical evaluation is unnecessary, if not faintly ridiculous.”¹⁰⁷ This allows American leaders, following the prerogatives of power, to write history as they so choose with little worry of effective challenge to their narratives.¹⁰⁸ This leads to a “ritual avoidance” of unacceptable or unpleasant facts and a system where victims are ignored because they are of little consequence or concern to American perpetrators.¹⁰⁹ In general, Chomsky describes a system of contemporary actions and historical cover-ups predicated on American attempts to maintain global hegemonic power. He describes this system:

Throughout history it has been recognized that such steps are dangerous. By now the danger has reached the level of threat to human survival. But as observed

¹⁰⁵ Noam Chomsky, *Hegemony or Survival: America’s Quest for Global Dominance* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, LLC, 2004), 11.

¹⁰⁶ Chomsky, *Hegemony or Survival*, 12, 15, 29.

¹⁰⁷ Chomsky, *Hegemony or Survival*, 43.

¹⁰⁸ Chomsky, *Hegemony or Survival*, 167.

¹⁰⁹ Chomsky, *Hegemony or Survival*, 192, 207.

earlier, it is rational to proceed nonetheless on the assumptions of the prevailing value system, which are deeply rooted in existing institutions. *The basic principle is that [American] hegemony is more important than survival.* Hardly novel, the principle has been amply illustrated in the past half-century [emphasis added].¹¹⁰

In the ensuing decade after the publication of *Hegemony or Survival*, Chomsky would elaborate upon his arguments in interviews that were later collected and published under the title *Power Systems*. Chomsky, through the use of more contemporary examples such as the Arab Spring, reiterated the ideas of the US belief in its right to use force at will and to promote “stability” where stability is understood as conformity to US orders.¹¹¹ However, it should be noted, that he acknowledged that the state is only one of two power centres that exist in contemporary society, with the other being private capital.¹¹² This is an important point, as Chomsky acknowledges that private capital plays a role within world power structures, even if he believes that state power, especially US state power, is more predominant. Ultimately, Chomsky displays how ideas of the “nation” and “nationalism” remain relevant because of the importance of the United States on a global scale. It is easy to dismiss the concept of the nation for other theories but to do so disregards the very real uses and abuses of American power on a global scale post-World War II. It is important to remember this when examining discourses of the past because past events are frequently used to justify the present. For example, the atomic bombings are used to justify bombing in the present (through the logic of “if it was justified then, why not now?”). Discourse is formulated to justify the needs of power in the present, so it is important to understand how that power is exercised.

Taken together, Renan, Anderson, and Chomsky provide a basis for the continued importance of the concept of the nation and the role of nationalism in contemporary culture. The nation and nationalism are essential to a discourses of the past typology. Nationalism shapes both mediation and history. History, in particular, is crafted and disseminated along nationalistic lines. All depictions of the past that find their origin in the state, whether they be historiographical, educational, or connected to collective/cultural memory (monuments, media, etc.) serve the interests of entrenched power and are, frequently, ensconced in the idea of nations. We may be in

¹¹⁰ Chomsky, *Hegemony or Survival*, 231.

¹¹¹ Noam Chomsky, *Power Systems: Conversations on the Global Democratic Uprisings and the New Challenges to U. S. Empire, Interviews with David Barsamian* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, LLC, 2013), 59-60.

¹¹² Chomsky, *Power Systems*, 172.

an age of porous national borders and cosmopolitan conventions, but in looking at the actual functioning of power we still find the source of power, frequently, to be the nation and nationalism.

As an example, consider education systems (especially elementary and secondary education). When taught history in school a student learns “their” history, where “their” is defined to be the group that holds power and the actions of that group are presented in a positive light. Negative consequences of those actions, if they are acknowledged at all, are vindicated through the idea that they were the necessary consequence of historical development or higher ideals. Examples of these narratives can be found in Canadian histories that exalt European exploration and settler colonialism, American histories that justify use of excessive military might (such as in Japan, Vietnam, and Iraq among many others), and Japanese histories that disregard colonialist actions dating from the Meiji Era to the end of the Pacific War. Examples of these types of historiographies, as they are connected to the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, will be examined in detail in chapter IV and chapter VI. In the meantime, it is important to remember pro-nation histories are perpetuated through education systems and media and the ideas that they put forth become central to individuals’ understandings of their nations and their place in the world. These ideas are engrained at a young age, reinforced through adulthood, and presented as the “correct” narrative for their nation when, in reality, they are the correct narratives to serve engrained power interests. Nationalism thus becomes a central tenant of dissemination of the past through education and media. This is especially the case when potentially difficult or “controversial” subjects are discussed, such as the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Yet, the acknowledgment of the importance of the nation and nationalism as an analytical tool within a discourses of the past typology does not signify tacit or active approval of the concept or the ideologies that are put forth through their use. The outsider can identify inconvenient facts or problematic narratives disseminated by these systems and analyse them more thoroughly. This, in fact, is one of the primary uses of the discourses of the past typology. Thus, nations and nationalism matter as ideological and analytical constructs and must be acknowledged as such, but they are not infallible. It is only when we completely disregard their

importance *or* give them complete reverence that nations and nationalisms become intellectually untenable.

The final question within a discourses of the past model that must be answered is: how do discourses and narratives transfer to media? Or in other words, how is the past mediated? This can be answered through two key concepts: remediation and premediation. Stated simply, as defined by Bolter and Grusin, remediation is, "... the representation of one medium in another..."¹¹³ They further describe this process stating that when remediation occurs, "The content has been borrowed, but the medium has not been appropriated or quoted."¹¹⁴ In other words, remediation can be understood as the process where narratives, messages, or imagery from one media/medium are altered so that they fit into and can be presented within another medium. For example, a book, a film, and a photograph can all communicate a similar message about the same event, but each does so within their own genre specific way. By drawing upon other media in their own representation, a new piece of media can make its message understandable and relatable to an audience. Video games engage in remediation in their depictions of the past.

In terms of history and collective/cultural memory, Astrid Erll expands this basic understanding of remediation, coining the term "premediation," which she defines as, "... a cultural practice of experiencing and remembering: the use of existent patterns and paradigms to transform contingent events into meaningful images and narratives."¹¹⁵ Thus, according to Erll, historical events can turn into powerful premediators, becoming narrative schemata which can be used to create successful stories. This means that historical events or people can work as pseudo-blueprints that will make new stories about the past more palatable and easily understandable. When premediation occurs, an event or person will be compared to some historical referent in order to shape a narrative. For example, a hated foreign leader can be compared to Hitler or Stalin and the audience will use their knowledge of the past to identify the contemporary leader

¹¹³ Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin. *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1999), 45.

¹¹⁴ Bolter and Grusin, 44.

¹¹⁵ Astrid Erll, "Remembering Across Time, Space, and Cultures: Premediation, Remediation and the 'Indian Mutiny'," in *Media, Remediation and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory*, edited by Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co., 2009), 114.

as “evil”. The new narrative thus grounds itself in the past and formulates how the new events or person will be understood.

This is an explanation of how premediation works in its most basic form. There are numerous complications and nuances of premediation. For example, Erll cautions that when these stories become trans-cultural, they can become decontextualized.¹¹⁶ Ultimately, she uses the theory of premediation to describe how existing collective/cultural memory influences the content of media and how these media then effect and interact with collective/cultural memory. An event that is typically depicted in one way in one type of media will then be depicted in a similar fashion in another media. If this event is well-known, such as the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, it is even less likely to be altered through remediation because significant premediation has already occurred or is culturally expected or accepted.

Incorporation of discourse, the nation/nationalism, and remediation/premediation alongside the use of collective/cultural memory theory are essential to the use of a discourses of the past typology. Discourse allows for both the better understanding of the power systems that affect views of the past and provides a terminology that incorporates history, historiography, collective/cultural memory, and video games into one (discursive) system of output (hence the use of the “discourses” rather than any one of the aforementioned terms). The nation and nationalism, as theoretical concepts connected to ideology and power rather than borders and geography, help to describe the function of the state as a power system that formulates views of the past. Remediation and premediation describe how the established historiographies, narratives, and collective/cultural memory become new media constructions. Using these concepts in tandem fills the theoretical gaps found within collective/cultural memory theory and allows for a better accounting of how the past is remembered, reformulated, reformatted, and disseminated in the present.

2.4 Game Narratives & Game Histories

To best describe how video games function within a discourses of the past typology it is necessary to examine two crucial aspects of the medium: how they create ludic narratives and how they interact with history, memory, and the past. This hyper-focused approach to video

¹¹⁶ Erll, “Remembering Across Time”, 127.

game analysis and game studies should not be taken as discounting other works in the field. However, the current analysis will refrain from comment on the (non) debate that has, at times, dominated the field of game studies: narratology vs. ludology.¹¹⁷ In addition, this dissertation will not attempt to define what a video game is/is not. While these questions are foundational to the field of game studies and, in some respects, continue to dominate the field, the focus of this research is specifically how video games interact with the past and fit into larger discourses through processes of remediation and premediation. As such, some of the works discussed in this section have traditionally been analyzed through the lens of the narratology/ludology binary, but they will not be here. Instead, the methodological lens of discourses of the past will be the primary focus.

To begin, it is necessary to define what is meant by narrative in a video game and, importantly, the implications of how narrative functions within the medium. Janet Murray's *Hamlet on the Holodeck* provides one of the earliest theorizations of narrative in video games (among a variety of other game-centric subjects). While large parts of the book, published in 1997, are outdated today because they focus on technologies and systems that are more than two decades old, Murray's analysis of game narrative remains relevant. Of particular interest to discourses of the past analysis is Murray's theorization of procedural authorship. Murray primarily analyzes "the computer" and its potential for digital narratives, arguing that the computer can be a compelling medium for storytelling if rules are written for it that are recognizable as an interpretation of the world.¹¹⁸ Expanding on this point, Murray writes,

¹¹⁷ Early proponents for a ludological perspective included Espen Aarseth, Jesper Juul, and Gonzalo Frasca. An example of a narratological example can be found from Mary Fuller and Henry Jenkins (among others). Celia Pearce has put forth a rather convincing argument that the narratology/ludology debate never really occurred and, regardless, is a fruitless exercise that does not further the field of game studies. See the following: Espen Aarseth, *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997). Mary Fuller and Henry Jenkins, "Nintendo and New World Travel Writing: A Dialogue," in *Cybersociety: Computer-Mediated Communication and Community*, edited by Steven G. Jones (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1995), 52-72. Jesper Juul, "Games Telling Stories? A Brief Note on Games and Narratives," *Game Studies* 1, no. 1 (July 2001). <http://www.gamestudies.org/0101/juul-gts/> (accessed March 22, 2020). Gonzalo Frasca, "Simulation vs. Narrative: Introduction to Ludology," in *Video/Game/Theory*, edited by Mark J.P. Wolf and Bernard Perron (New York: Routledge, 2003). http://www.ludology.org/articles/VGT_final.pdf (accessed March 29, 2016).

Celia Pearce, "Theory Wars: An Argument Against Arguments in the so-called Ludology/Narratology Debate," in *Proceedings of DiGRA 2005 Conference: Changing Views – Worlds of Play* (2005): n.p.

¹¹⁸ Janet Murray, *Hamlet on the Holodeck: The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace* (New York: Free Press, 1997), 73.

“Procedural environments are appealing to us not just because they exhibit rule-generated behavior but because we can induce the behavior. They are responsive to our input.”¹¹⁹ Thus, for Murray, computers can be used to create environments that are both procedural and participatory.¹²⁰ This is an essential point to consider within game studies as it acknowledges the power of both designer/developer and player in the enactment of digital ludic narratives.

Yet, Murray places more power in this relationship on the designer/developer end, arguing,

In an interactive medium the interpretive framework is embedded in the rules by which the system works and in the way in which participation is shaped. But the encyclopedic capacity of the computer can distract us from asking why things work the way they do and why we are being asked to play one role rather than another.¹²¹

This means that players have agency within digital narratives and environments, but the makers of games maintain a certain level of influence. Murray labels the makers of digital narratives as “procedural authors” and argues that they create both a “set of scenes” and “a world of narrative possibilities.”¹²² These digital narratives allow the audience the opportunity to enact stories rather than merely witness them.¹²³ Murray thus incorporates the nuances of video game narratives into more traditional understandings of literature and story. Her conception of procedural authorship is important to a discourses the past typology because it describes how the makers of games create narratives and play spaces while maintaining a level of control over what occurs in those spaces.

In other words, Murray provides an explanation of how game makers author arguments within their works. Variations of this line of reasoning can be found in numerous later works in the field of game studies. Gonzalo Frasca refers to this process as “simulation” which he defines as an “alternative semiotical structure” used within games (as opposed to traditional media which rely on representation).¹²⁴ Frasca’s conception of simulation assumes that video games are capable of conveying the ideas and feelings of an author, for example. Ideology can be

¹¹⁹ Murray, 74.

¹²⁰ Murray, 74.

¹²¹ Murray, 89.

¹²² Murray, 153.

¹²³ Murray, 170.

¹²⁴ Frasca, 1.

programmed into a game and discerned through simulation.¹²⁵ In describing, this process, Frasca writes, "...the designer's agenda can slip into the game's inner laws."¹²⁶ Though Frasca is skeptical of traditional "narrative", even arguing that simulation is different from narrative,¹²⁷ he still provides a framework for understanding video games as ideological arguments put forth by a designer.

Ian Bogost makes a similar argument in his conception of video game narratives through the use of his own term: procedurality. Procedurality, as defined by Bogost, is the core representational mode of video games and produces procedural rhetoric which is, "... the art of persuasion through rule-based representations and interaction rather than the spoken word, writing, images, or moving pictures."¹²⁸ Procedural rhetoric is a technique both for making arguments with computational systems and unpacking the computational arguments that others have created.¹²⁹ Ultimately, procedural rhetoric can be understood as , "... a general name for the practice of authoring arguments through processes."¹³⁰ Importantly, procedural rhetoric becomes a type of discourse with the same ideological underpinnings that traditionally define discourses. As such, video games are a type of cultural construction that make deliberate and specific arguments. These arguments are then conveyed to the player through play.

A final example or the theorization of game narrative and argumentation comes from Christopher Paul and his conception of wordplay. He describes this term as:

Wordplay uses the tools of rhetorical criticism to examine various elements of games, from the words found within and around them to the design, play, and coding of them. By looking at those elements, wordplay facilitates analysis of how games persuade, create identifications and circulate meaning... Wordplay is a critical approach designed to better understand how video games work, what they mean, and what factors frame how we think about video games.¹³¹

¹²⁵ Frasca, 4-6.

¹²⁶ Frasca, 10.

¹²⁷ Frasca, 2.

¹²⁸ Ian Bogost, *Persuasive Games: The Expressive Power of Videogames* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2007), ix.

¹²⁹ Bogost, 3.

¹³⁰ Bogost, 28-29.

¹³¹ Christopher Paul, *Wordplay and the Discourse of Video Games: Analyzing Words Design and Play* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 2.

Among the frames that Paul discusses is culture which helps to formulate how a game is constructed and played.¹³² Paul then argues for the use of wordplay as a form of critical thinking that allows for an understanding of how the discourse of video games creates and structures experience.¹³³ Interestingly, Paul's wordplay can be read as arguing that game designers put forth arguments within their games, but those arguments are largely contingent upon larger societal discourses. As such, Paul creates a theoretical model for the study of video games that considers both the games themselves and larger cultural influences. In his words, "In analyzing words, design, and play, wordplay offers a way to analyze the whole discourse of video games."¹³⁴ While Paul describes a unique and separate discourse of video games, a discourses of the past model describes these discourses as remediated from larger societal influences, such as collective/cultural memory. Regardless of this difference, wordplay provides a theoretical lens for the study of video games that attempts to connect the medium to larger structures of power. This makes wordplay a useful tool for a discourses of the past typology.

Murray's procedural authorship, Frasca's simulation, Bogost's procedurality, and Paul's wordplay thus all explain similar phenomenon with different terminology. Each theorist puts forth an understanding of video games where designers make arguments through their games and these games have larger societal relevance (either as art, argumentation, or discourse). These are not the only authors that have theorized narrative, larger cultural contexts, power structures (such as colonialism), or other similar issues within video games.¹³⁵ In terms of a discourses of the past

¹³² Paul, 6.

¹³³ Paul, 12.

¹³⁴ Paul, 161.

¹³⁵ It is beyond the scope of this project to cover all of the works within game studies that analyze these issues. However, there are several notable theorists/works that should not be overlooked. Mia Consalvo introduces the ideas of gaming capital and paratexts to describe how cheating and gameplay are connected to larger culture. Dyer-Witheford and De Peuter offer a political economy and Marxist interpretation of the video game industry through the concepts (among others) of empire, immaterial labor, cognitive capitalism, and games of multitude. Alexander Galloway describes video games as algorithmic machines that are algorithmic cultural objects. Rachael Hutchinson, in her study of Japanese video games, offers the methodological approach of discursive cultural readings. Jesper Juul argues for video games to be understood as "half-real", in that they impose real rules while existing in a fictional world. Souvik Mukherjee describes video game storytelling and narrative functions in Deleuzoguattarian terms, thinking of the medium as a multiplicity of assemblages. In addition, Mukherjee offers one of the pioneering studies of video games from a postcolonial perspective, arguing for the potential for subalternity and postcolonial play found within video games and video game players. This is only a small portion of each work's arguments, but taken together they further reinforce video games connection to the larger issues of culture, discourse, power, etc. For further reference (page references are specific to how each work was described within this footnote) see: Mia Consalvo, *Cheating: Gaining Advantage in Videogames* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2007), 2-4, 8-9.

typology the general theme or argument that is taken from larger game studies is that games are not trivial entertainment but, instead, are deliberately designed discursive practice. While video games are indeed entertaining, they are also deeply intertwined with larger societal power structures, discourse, and narrative. Each of the above listed theorists gestures towards this idea through different methodological lenses. In other words, dissimilar methods can lead to complementary theories. Ultimately, it can be argued that the makers of video games author/create arguments through video games and, subsequently, players both play and read these arguments through gameplay. This is how video games can be read as discourse.

Discourses of the past places itself within this larger game studies context but with a greater stress on the connection between video games and representation of the past (through remediation of history, historiography, and collective/cultural memory). As such, it is necessary to review the existing literature linking video games to history, memory, and the past. It should be noted that the focus here is on video games as historiography or video games as historical practice rather than a history of video games or the game industry. As such this section will review works that attempt to link video games, as cultural constructions, to the past and the surrounding play that occurs through them.

Research into how video games interact with the past or as historical practice is not prominent within the field of game studies, however this does not mean that it is non-existent. One of the earliest works in this subsection of game studies is Kurt Squire's Indiana University dissertation, *Replaying History: Learning World History Through Playing Civilization III*. Squire studied how players, predominantly students, could learn world history through playing *Civilization III*. He argues that, through playing the game, students are able to examine

Nick Dyer-Witheford and Greig de Peuter, *Games of Empire: Global Capitalism and Video Games* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 3-33, 35-69, 185-214.

Alexander R. Galloway, *Gaming: Essays on Algorithmic Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 5-6.

Rachael Hutchinson, *Japanese Culture Through Videogames* (London and New York: Routledge, 2019), 2-11.

Jesper Juul, *Half-Real: Video Games Between Real Rules and Fictional Worlds* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2005), 1.

Souvik Mukherjee, "Playing Subaltern: Video Games and Postcolonialism," *Games and Culture* (February 2016): 15.

Souvik Mukherjee, *Videogames and Postcolonialism: Empire Plays Back* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 96.

Souvik Mukherjee, *Video Games and Storytelling: Reading Games and Playing Books* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2015), 10.

relationships among geography, politics, economics, and history over thousands of years from multiple perspectives.¹³⁶ This, according to Squire, allows students to understand social phenomena from deep systemic perspectives and helps them see beyond stereotypes, scripts, or simplifications of complex historical phenomena.¹³⁷ He writes, “This kind of approach to studying history suggests that games could remediate students’ experience of history in fundamental ways.”¹³⁸ Thus video games, such as *Civilization III*, can become valuable teaching tools that help to reinforce students’ historical knowledge through gameplay. Squire labels the game and gameplay that *Civilization III* produces as a “historical possibility space”.¹³⁹ For Squire, historical video games can be seen as teaching tools that help to reinforce previous knowledge of the past through gameplay. In addition to this, video games and gameplay produce their own historical discourses through coded rulesets.

In contrast to Squire, who outlines an interaction/outcome of history and video games that is educational and (to an extent) historically accurate, Matthew Wilhelm Kapell and Andrew B. R. Elliot provide an alternative viewpoint in the conclusion to their edited collection *Playing With the Past*. Kappel and Elliot create a binary between history and myth where the primary difference is that history aspires to be true while myth does not.¹⁴⁰ When applying this to video games they argue that games aspire not to historical accuracy but to historical authenticity. This means that video games do not depict what happened but instead adhere to preconceived audience notions of what the past was like.¹⁴¹ They describe this process, “... it is not and cannot be about ‘getting the historical facts correct,’ but it is about getting the experience and expectations of the past ‘right’.”¹⁴²

For Kapell and Elliot video games act as myth rather than history but also act as a democratization (of sorts) of the past where narrative of the past is no longer the purview of

¹³⁶ Kurt D. Squire, “Replaying History: Learning World History Through Playing Civilization III,” PhD diss., (Indiana University, 2004), 9.

¹³⁷ Squire, 56.

¹³⁸ Squire, 56.

¹³⁹ Squire, 120.

¹⁴⁰ Matthew Wilhelm Kapell and Andrew B. R. Elliot, “Conclusion(s): Playing at True Myths, Engaging with Authentic Histories,” in *Playing With the Past: Digital Games and the Simulation of History*, edited by Matthew Wilhelm Kapell and Andrew B. R. Elliot (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing Inc., 2013), 360.

¹⁴¹ Kapell and Elliot, 361.

¹⁴² Kapell and Elliot, 361.

professional historians. Instead, it is available to anyone who wants to play the past.¹⁴³ This has potentially both positive and negative connotations, as each player, game, and experience will be unique. Regardless, Kapell and Elliot outline how games interact with and depict the past in a unique fashion that has larger implications for how games can be viewed as historical practices.

Robin J. S. Sloan also approaches video game interactions with the past, though he accomplishes this through what he labels as “commodified nostalgia”. In his article, *Videogames as Remediated Memories*, he aims to, “...discuss the ways in which videogames commodify nostalgia to fulfill a consumer need for retrospection, and to examine the extent to which they provide a simulation of cultural memory that blurs historical reality with period modes of representation.”¹⁴⁴ In other words, Sloan is interested in how videogames remediate the past as a way of fulfilling consumer needs and expectations in the present. Through his study of *Far Cry 3: Blood Dragon* and *Gone Home* he finds that both games have a modern core with a nostalgic shell, showcase nostalgic player desires through use of historical referents, and are examples of Baudrillardian hyperrealities rather than historical representations.¹⁴⁵ In general, Sloan’s article provides a framework for the study, commodification, and use of nostalgia within videogames while also recognizing that referents to the past are not always intended to represent history.

More recently, Adam Chapman added to the field with his book *Digital Games as History*. Unlike Kapell and Elliot or Sloan, Chapman attempts to better define how video games can be understood as part of traditional historical methods (i.e. games as practicing the discipline of history). Chapman frames his arguments with the idea that history is a construction that is neither factual nor entirely fictional and, as such, there needs to be a definition of history that extends beyond ideas of accuracy.¹⁴⁶ Continuing this line of reasoning, Chapman states that history, as most people know it, is constructed by historians and multiple cultural products but the past is only relevant to many people when it can be contextualized in the present.¹⁴⁷ This importance in the present can be derived from video games. Chapman argues, based on the sales

¹⁴³ Kapell and Elliot, 363-367.

¹⁴⁴ Robin J. S. Sloan, “Videogames as Remediated Memories: Commodified Nostalgia and Hyperreality in *Far Cry 3: Blood Dragon* and *Gone Home*,” *Games and Culture* 10, no. 6 (2015): 525.

¹⁴⁵ Sloan, 541.

¹⁴⁶ Adam Chapman, *Digital Games as History: How Videogames Represent the Past and Offer Access to Historical Practice* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 8-10.

¹⁴⁷ Chapman, 12-13.

figures of some popular historical video games, that, "...digital historical games [are] amongst the most successful histories of recent years and one of the most popular forms through which the past is engaged."¹⁴⁸ Here Chapman makes a connection between history and historical games where both mediums engage in representing the past on equal terms.

However, despite similar outputs, Chapman does not believe that history and historical games generate historical representations in the same way. He writes that we cannot expect digital historical games to always function in alignment with other narrative forms because games operate differently and offer their own rules of engagement.¹⁴⁹ He offers the idea of *historioludicity* to describe how video games engage in historical practice. *Historioludicity* is the representation of history and thought about it through visual images and ludic discourse (i.e. rules and opportunities for action within games).¹⁵⁰ This describes video games interaction with history from a developer/author perspective but Chapman also acknowledges player agency writing, "...playing historical games always involves the production of historical narrative by players in some way."¹⁵¹ The result of playing a historical video game, within Chapman's theorization, is the creation of a historical ludonarrative.¹⁵² Ultimately, Chapman uses *historioludicity* and historical ludonarrative to argue that digital historical games create new opportunities for making arguments about the past through present actions.¹⁵³ Chapman's work represents a dedicated attempt to theorize video games as *creators* of history and historical discourse rather than *reactors* to preestablished ways of representing the past.

Squire, Kapell and Elliot, Sloan, and Chapman are far from the only theorists to engage in theorizing the interrelation of video games and history/memory/nostalgia/the past. Indeed, understanding historical contexts within game studies has been central to numerous works. For example, Rachael Hutchinson explicitly mentions the importance of acknowledging historical milieus in her work on Japanese video games.¹⁵⁴ In addition, other studies have read specific games through their connections to the past, through numerous methodological systems.¹⁵⁵

¹⁴⁸ Chapman, 14.

¹⁴⁹ Chapman, 21.

¹⁵⁰ Chapman, 22.

¹⁵¹ Chapman, 34.

¹⁵² Chapman, 125.

¹⁵³ Chapman, 271.

¹⁵⁴ Hutchinson, *Japanese Culture Through Videogames*, 8.

¹⁵⁵ See the following:

Beyond this limited literature review, there are, in addition, works that outline the potential connections to analog games such as traditional war games.¹⁵⁶ These works, and many others, have also contributed to the theorization of video games links to the past.

However, discourses of the past builds upon the above discussed theories to argue that video games do not necessarily create accurate histories but instead, more often than not, strive to create authentic feeling histories that follow pre-established discursive forms dictated by the interests of entrenched power systems (such as government, education, or people with cultural capital). Video games capitalize on what the audience already “knows” about the past and as such engage in remediation of dominant discourse (which is contingent upon specific circumstances determined on a case-by-case basis rather than being all-encompassing) instead of traditional history. As such, video games represent their own unique type of interaction with the past that more closely mimics collective/cultural memory creation or discourse dissemination rather than traditional history. Regardless, video games (as a medium and as narratives) represent a form of discourse in the same ways that historiography and collective/cultural memory do.

2.5 Defining a Discourses of the Past Typology

A discourses of the past typology combines the fields of collective/cultural memory, history/historiography, critical theory, and media/games studies to create a research framework that examines how the past is remembered and mediated for use within the present. The final section of this literature review chapter will describe how these disparate fields are used in combination. The goal of this section is to, as concretely as possible, define how the discourses

James Campbell, “Just Less Than Total War: Simulating World War II as Ludic Nostalgia,” in *Playing the Past: History and Nostalgia in Video Games*, edited by Zach Whalen and Laurie N. Taylor (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2008), 183-200.

Aaron Hess, “‘You Don’t Play, You Volunteer’: Narrative Public Memory Construction in *Medal of Honor: Rising Sun*,” *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 24, no. 4 (October 2007): 339-356.

Rachael Hutchinson, “Fukasaku Kinji and Kojima Hideo Replay Hiroshima: Atomic Imagery and Cross-Media Memory,” *Japanese Studies* 39, No. 2 (2019): 169-189.

Johannes Koski, “Reflections of History: Representations of the Second World War in *Valkyria Chronicles*,” *Rethinking History* 21, no. 3 (2017): 396-414.

Joel Penney, “No Better Way to ‘Experience’ World War II: Authenticity and Ideology in the *Call of Duty* and *Medal of Honor* Player Communities,” in *Joystick Soldiers: The Politics of Play in Military Video Games*, edited by Nina P. Huntemann and Matthew Thomas Payne (New York: Routledge, 2010), 191-205.

Dennis Washburn, “Imagined History, Fading Memory: Mastering Narrative in *Final Fantasy X*,” In *Mechademia Volume 4: War/ Time*, edited by Frenchy Lunning (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 149-162.

¹⁵⁶ For more on the history of war games see:

Philipp von Hilgers, *War Games: A History of War on Paper*, translated by Ross Benjamin (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2012).

of the past typology is constructed and functions. Although the typology is designed to be capable of being applied to numerous historical events through differentiated media lenses, this section will focus on the case studies at hand (i.e. the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in both American and Japanese memory and how these events are portrayed in video games).

The discourses of the past typology begins with an event or chain of events (not the recording of an event or its mediation but the event *itself*).¹⁵⁷ The event need not be acknowledged as important at the time that it occurs, but if it is that is certainly helpful in establishing its cultural importance later. In terms of this dissertation the major events would be the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and, to an extent, the larger events and circumstances of World War II (especially in the Pacific theatre). These events were considered monumental at the time they occurred and have retained cultural relevance worldwide in the more than 75 years since.

As an event occurs (or continues to occur as may be the case) it immediately enters into the purview of collective/cultural memory through the personal experiences of those that were involved in the event. At Hiroshima and Nagasaki these would be the victims and survivors of the bombs and their families (even those who died instantly would initiate their family members into collective/cultural memory through the trauma of their passing). Yet, additionally, it would also comprise of those that dropped the bombs, including the pilots, ground crews, military, and government officials. They all become part of the event from the perspective of collective/cultural memory. Regardless of the event, there will always be a certain functioning of collective/cultural memory at its outset.

In addition, major events immediately become part of discourse, especially political and governmental discourses. The moment that the decision was made to drop atomic bombs, first on Hiroshima and later on Nagasaki, American political and military discourse was altered irrevocably. Immediately, the use of the ultimate weapon (at the time) laid bare the willingness

¹⁵⁷ It should be noted that this dissertation examines historical events that certainly did occur. However, a discourses of the past typology could also be based on a mythic event or hoax. The “truth” of the event is inconsequential. What matters is if the event is *believed* to have occurred to the point that it resonates into the present. For example, a discourses(s) of the past typology could be used to examine a conspiracy theory, particularly one that is popular and affects the ways that people view and shape their present.

of American leaders to use overwhelming force when it was deemed militarily, politically, or otherwise “necessary” (or perhaps “expedient” is a better term). From a Japanese perspective the atomic bombs were cataclysmic and continue to affect political stances to this day. As a result of this immediate entering into political and governmental discourse new modes of thought are created. As time passes, they are codified and disseminated through power structures such as, for example, education systems or the passing of laws.

In time, the events will be mediated in some form and, in addition, become the subjects of historical analysis.¹⁵⁸ These first media representations of the events may or may not establish how the events will be viewed henceforth, but it is possible that they will change over time, especially as serves the interests of entrenched power. In time the events will become the subject of historical analysis which, in a professional context, will involve the finding of reliable sources on the event to reconstruct the past in an academic form. In the case of the atomic bombs the first mass mediations occurred through newspaper and other reportage. Mediation (and remediation) of the events continues to occur as does the extensive historiography of the bombs.

Taking this overlapping and continuing discursive process into account is the second step of a discourses of the past typology as it considers the combined processes of collective/cultural memory, political discourse, mediation, and history described above in order to examine how the past is remembered and used in the present. “Discourses” is the chosen nomenclature instead of any one of the above listed terms as a way of acknowledging the shared positions within a group’s vision of a vaguely defined “past” that these processes share. All history, memory, and mediation work in combination to formulate how the past is remembered. This creates a dominant discourse and several sub discourses of varying cultural relevance. In terms of the atomic bombs, these discourses will be examined through the use of historiographical methods more fully in chapter IV and chapter VI.

Finally, in understanding the established systems of power and discourse within given societies, a discourses of the past typology can contextually analyze cultural artifacts to assess

¹⁵⁸ It should be noted that, throughout most of human history, mediation did not occur simultaneously to an event. Many people would learn of an event only after it occurred, for example, through a newspaper the next morning. It was not until recently, with the establishment of 24-hour news cycles and the expansion of cell phone/internet infrastructures that major events could be mediated as they happen. A major example of this (among many others) would be the 9/11 terrorist attacks as opposed to Japan’s raid on Pearl Harbor in December 1941 which did not become widely known to many Americans until it was reported the next day.

how they represent the past, why they represent the past in specific ways, and where these ideas/depictions originate. For this dissertation, the chosen cultural artifacts are video games that represent the atomic bombs in some way. These will be explored in detail in chapter V and chapter VII. From here it is possible to identify dominant ideas and, crucially, what has been erased, changed, or discarded in the maintenance of a past. Thus, discourses of the past does not search for “truth” or “lies” in the depiction of the past. It searches for power; especially abuses of power.

In summary, the discourses of the past typology uses an interdisciplinary approach to examine depictions of the past and analyze how that past is used in the present through relevant cultural artifacts. This occurs through a three-step process of: historical event → discourses → repetition of discourses. Ultimately, it reveals that we are remembering a cultivated construction of a past for use in the present as structured by entrenched power.

III. Positionality & Methodology

3.1 Positionality

This chapter focuses on positionality and methodological issues as they pertain to the study of video games, historiography, and collective/cultural memory. As such, this chapter is divided into two parts: a brief description of the author's positionality (and how this affects the study of the selected games) and an explanation of the methodological issues connected with using the discourses of the past typology. The chapter is designed to acknowledge and discuss specific positional and methodological issues while defining a framework for using discourses of the past to study video games.

The positionality of an author is important to consider within any academic study. While it can be tempting to hide behind ideas of "objectivity" or "belonging" in a study, notions such as these are ultimately dissatisfying, difficult to defend, and obscure potential biases on the part of the researcher. As such, this section will discuss my positionality in three ways. Firstly, it will examine who I am from an autobiographical and demographic context. Secondly, I will take this established positionality and place it into research context via the use of Trinh Minh-ha's theory of "speaking nearby" and Ien Ang's conception of hybridity. Finally, the specific complexities of insider/outsider knowledge within collective/cultural memory studies will be outlined as they pertain to positionality.

In terms of my own positionality (in autobiographical and demographic terms) I will focus only on the aspects that are most important to the present study. While my age, gender, political affiliations, personal beliefs, etc. certainly help to formulate my worldview and scholarship, a full autobiographical analysis of my life is beyond the scope of this study. As a result, I will focus specifically on the aspects of my research that are most relevant to the current study: my race, citizenship/residence, and language skills.

I am a Canadian citizen of mixed-race, half aboriginal (Algonquin and Iroquois) half European (English, Scottish, Irish, German, and Dutch).¹⁵⁹ I self describe myself as a bi-racial

¹⁵⁹ I am greatly indebted to both of my grandmothers, Nelda Reid and J. Elizabeth Scheiding, and their efforts to preserve our family history through storytelling, record keeping, and genealogical study. Their collective work has granted me access to my family history and allowed me to work through what it means to be a bi-racial indigenous person in a settler colonial state. My late grandmother, J. Elizabeth Scheiding, had her genealogical study published. See:

native or as bi-racial indigenous, but it is important to note that the Canadian government does not consider me to be an “Indian”¹⁶⁰ and, in terms of physical appearance, I am what is generally referred to as “white passing”. I have lived my entire life in Canada (Southern Ontario and Quebec) but I have visited both the United States and Japan on numerous occasions. My native language is English, I have a limited understanding of French and I have extremely limited Japanese language skills (some speaking/common phrases but no reading or writing).¹⁶¹

Given this positionality, there are several potential blind spots within my scholarship that must be both acknowledged and treated with care. Firstly, though I am a racialized person, I am still a “Western” scholar examining an East Asian nation, which can lead to simple charges of “Orientalism”. Japan’s relation to Orientalism is complicated at best, as outlined by Nishihara and Tanaka, because of Japan’s unique historical position of both being colonized yet later becoming a colonizer and thus the country/polity can be interpreted as both an object and subject of Orientalism.¹⁶² Despite this historical context, it is still necessary to acknowledge that I am a Western scholar writing about a nation with an Asian-majority population. (Although, even this simplification is wrought with intellectual intrigue and ignores notions of the “in-between” and

J. Elizabeth Scheiding, *Langford, Westman and Related Families: Their History and Genealogy*, in collaboration with Peter D. Bela Merey (Toronto: Pro Familia Publishing, 1999).

¹⁶⁰ In Canada, the Indian Act determines official status. I use the term “Indian” in this context in relation to this government document. I do not choose to self-describe as “Indian”, nor do I judge those that do.

¹⁶¹ My experience with French and Japanese varies. As a public-school student growing up in Ontario, I took courses in French starting in the 3rd grade until the 10th grade. Despite this experience, my French language skills are far from fluent. I have undertaken three Japanese language courses (one at Renison University College in Waterloo and two at the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre in Toronto). From this experience I was able to learn some Hiragana and basic speech, such as greetings, numbers/counting, beginner vocabulary and grammar structures. I am far from fluent, but I have been able to piece together some basic phrases while conversing with Japanese people. However, I do not possess the skills to either read or write in Japanese, especially at a university/scholarly level.

¹⁶² Nishihara and Tanaka provide much more thorough accounts of Japan’s position within Orientalism and colonialism. Briefly, Nishihara, a literary critic, focuses specifically on how Said places Japan within *Orientalism*, writing, “It can be said that Said’s reference to Japan is fragmented. It is also true that he focuses on Japan solely as a member of the Orient and neglects its other side: Japanese imperialism... Japan has characteristics of both the Orient and the Occident. This is the reality of Japanese history. There is no doubt that the country is geographically situated in what is known as the Orient, but in a political sense it has tried to become a “Western” nation” (p. 244). Tanaka also identifies a Japanese subject/object relationship within Orientalism, though he accomplishes this through an investigation of Japan’s relationship with China, particularly during the Meiji Period (1867-1912). He argues that Japan/Japanese people created a discourse that separated themselves from China/the Asian mainland while simultaneously developing an Otherness to the West. See: Nishihara Daisuke, “Said, Orientalism, and Japan,” *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics* Volume 25, Edward Said and Critical Decolonization (2005): 241-253.

Stefan Tanaka, *Japan’s Orient: Rendering Pasts into History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.

hybridity that is prevalent in a postmodern world.¹⁶³) Secondly, in a similar vein, though I have been heavily influenced by American culture, media and hegemonic power, I am not an American citizen, nor have I ever lived in the United States. This is a significant fact that should also not be overlooked even if Canada and the United States have similar colonial histories and a (relatively) shared geography. Finally, it should be noted that I do not have the requisite language skills to practice my research and scholarship in any language other than English, despite undertaking some formal Japanese language instruction. This, rather obviously, means that I must rely upon translation of texts, most notably those originally written in Japanese, but also those written in numerous other languages such as French, German, and Italian.

When considered together, my race, citizenship, and language skills qualify me as an “outsider” in the context of both Japanese and American society and culture. This must be acknowledged but, crucially, should not be seen as automatically disqualifying me from conducting research about Japanese and American society in both past and present contexts. To avoid the potentially problematic, incorrect, or oversimplified readings often linked to outsiders studying a culture that is not their own it is necessary to define my positionality and, furthermore, set-up specific research methodologies that attempt to best mitigate reductionist or harmful cross-cultural readings. With this in mind, I position myself as an outsider of the cultures/societies/temporal spaces that I study. Yet, simply acknowledging myself as an outsider is only the first step of an effective positionality statement. It is also necessary to define how I function as an outsider within my research.

Within my scholarship as an outsider to my chosen subjects I choose to better position my research through postcolonial theory. This includes foundational works such as Said and Spivak, who provide essential understandings of Orientalism and the Subaltern, respectively.¹⁶⁴ Beyond these texts, more specifically, I utilize the idea of “speaking nearby”, as articulated by filmmaker Trinh T. Minh-ha. Minh-ha defines speaking nearby as,

¹⁶³ Ien Ang provides an important argument for the role of hybridity in understanding the differences between “Asian” and “Western”. She views hybridity as a means of bridging and blurring the multiple boundaries which constitute “Asian” and “Western”. See:

Ien Ang, *On Not Speaking Chinese: Living Between Asia and the West* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 193.

¹⁶⁴ Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. “Can the Subaltern Speak?,” in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, edited by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 271-315.

...[A] speaking that does not objectify, does not point to an object as if it is distant from the speaking subject or absent from the speaking place. A speaking that reflects on itself and can come very close to a subject without, however, seizing or claiming it. A speaking in brief, whose closures are only moments of transition opening up to other possible moments of transition — these are forms of indirectness well understood by anyone in tune with poetic language.¹⁶⁵

In other words, speaking nearby acknowledges the subject position of the researcher as an outsider without fully separating the researcher from their research object or making claims of objectivity. Speaking nearby does not attempt to create knowledge that speaks *for* or speaks directly *to* the research object. Instead speaking nearby entails accepting one's position as an outsider and respecting/treating with care the research subjects before using research "as a point of departure for cultural... reflection."¹⁶⁶

Specifically, within my research, I place myself as an outsider of both Japanese and American society but, through thoughtful consideration, create knowledge that is not meant to speak *for* either group. I have a respect for both American and Japanese culture, hence my decision to research the collective/cultural memory of these two societies and groups of people. As such, I have carefully selected sources through historiographical research based upon my expertise of the time period, used responsible methods, and always considered my positionality so that I can speak nearby and, thus, practice responsible academic work.¹⁶⁷ As a result, I believe that I make valuable cross-cultural readings that help to describe how collective/cultural memory of the atomic bombs functions in both Japan and the United States. These are not the conclusions of a cultural insider and they should not be read as such. However, they should also not be dismissed or considered less valuable or valid simply because they are coming from a positionality of speaking nearby. Indeed, Ien Ang has argued for the value of outsider knowledge and abandoning ideas of cultural purity in general. She writes,

¹⁶⁵ Nancy N. Chen, "'Speaking Nearby': A Conversation with Trinh T. Minh-ha," *Visual Anthropology Review* 8, No. 1 (Spring 1992): 87.

¹⁶⁶ Chen, 87.

¹⁶⁷ A further discussion of my historiographical processes and source selections can be found briefly below but also in Chapter IV and Chapter VI. Briefly, I am trained in historiographical methods and have existing expertise in the literature surrounding the Pacific War and atomic bombs. As a result, I am able to identify credible sources and place them within larger historiographical contexts. For the purposes of this positionality/methodology chapter, I wish to stress that the sources used were selected critically based upon my expertise, rather than randomly or through basic key word searches.

...by recognizing the inescapable impurity of all cultures and the porousness of all cultural boundaries in an irrevocably globalized, interconnected and interdependent world, we may be able to conceive of our living together in terms of complicated entanglement, not in terms of the apartheid of insurmountable differences.¹⁶⁸

I believe that “speaking nearby” and “complicated entanglement” help to both position my research and describe my upbringing in Canada as a bi-racial indigenous person playing American and Japanese video games.

As a final note on positionality, it is necessary to note the unique role that the outsider plays within systems of collective/cultural memory. One of the fundamental questions of collective/cultural memory is: who is collective/cultural memory for? The default or most common answer would seem to be that collective/cultural memory is for the people or society that is remembering (either on the individual level of remembering a personal event or at the institutional level of controlling discourse). Yet, this answer is simplistic and, upon reflection, dissatisfying. As societies have become increasingly less insular and further incorporated into a global community (terms and ideas such as cosmopolitanism, the global village, or globalization come to mind here), collective/cultural memory has become outward facing with a focus on foreign tourists, capital, and sensibilities. As a result of this, collective/cultural memory has become easier to interpret and perceive for the outsider because memory cultures are designed to be simultaneously inwardly and outwardly facing. Collective/cultural memory is used by a group to create a specific vision of the past, but that vision is created for the benefit of both insider and outsider. Insiders create collective/cultural memory both so they can remember their past and so they can inform outsiders of the “proper” way of viewing that past. This creation and curation is not necessarily nefarious but, given the overarching influence of established power structures like governments and education systems, outsider interpretation is both possible and necessary for both understanding and maintaining healthy collective/cultural memory systems. In particular, the aspects of the past that are “forgotten”, often as a matter of convenience or shame, are the most important aspect of a collective/cultural memory system to be questioned, considered, and reincorporated by the outsider. It is essential to acknowledge the potential pitfalls of working as an outsider and appropriating collective/cultural memory, but it is equally

¹⁶⁸ Ang, 194.

important to recognize that insider knowledge can, and often does, contain engrained biases and willful omissions, especially within collective/cultural memory.

3.2 Methodology

The purpose of this methodology section is to describe the rationale and proper function of the discourses of the past typology that was developed within chapter II. As a result, this section will focus on historiographical source selection, video game selection, defining how video games are “read” through the typology, and a generalized model for researching games through use of the typology. The larger methodological issues of the fields chosen or rationale for not using other fields will not be covered as these questions are addressed to some extent in chapter II. For example, this section will not cover questions of historical accuracy or how power is defined within theories of discourse. Instead, this section is designed to show how a typology of discourses of the past can be established and read into media (i.e. video games) within the pre-established fields of collective/cultural memory, history/historiography, discourse theory, and game studies.

Historiographical source selection is typically a difficult undertaking. In general, the more thorough and expansive a historiography is the stronger the arguments that can be made from it. More sources equal more points of view or reveal the *same* points of view that are indicative of a virtual consensus of thought. Yet, it is, of course, impossible to consult *all* sources on a given historical event, time period, or temporal space. Indeed, if an event is well-known enough or deemed “important” by power structures or public interest, it may be impossible to consult even all the foundational, essential, or controversial texts. The question thus becomes how many sources are enough in creating a meaningful historiography? Or, in the context of this dissertation, how many sources are necessary to effectively argue for a hegemonic discourse of the past? Beyond this, source selection becomes equally important. Which sources should be included, and which should be excluded?

In considering these issues for the present study, it was necessary to engage in two separate historiographies: one based on American memory of the atomic bombs (centered primarily on the decision to drop the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki but also taking into consideration the larger war effort in general) and one based on Japanese memory of the atomic bombs (centered on *hibakusha* and larger questions of Japanese war memory). Consideration

was initially given to use one historiography of how the atomic bombs are remembered but it became evident through cursory preliminary readings that there were distinct differences between American and Japanese atomic bomb memory. Engaging in a single historiographical study would have produced a discourse of American vs. Japanese media and thought that only considered hegemonic positions within each society's collective/cultural memory with a heavily American bias. An artificial adversarial relationship would have been created that disregarded marginalized positions within both larger discourses.

Having decided on two historiographical studies (which became chapter IV and chapter VI) it was necessary to select suitable texts. To comment briefly on this process, previous expertise on the field (i.e. two MAs, one in history and one in communication and culture) helped to guide source selection, as I was already aware of numerous canonical texts by professional historians and other authors. In addition, particular attention was given to professional historians, textbooks, and memoirs of war participants. This led to the discovery of other texts (some of which were referenced in those that I was already familiar with) that also became part of the study. Taken together, these sources provided a representative view of how the atomic bombs have been placed within the collective/cultural memory systems in both Japan and the United States. In general, it was found that Americans (and other Western authors influenced by them) tended to defend the use of the atomic bombs while, in Japan, the atomic bombs have become a part of a larger serpentine debate about the meaning of the Pacific War.

The selection of video game sources (*Fallout 4*, *Far Cry 5*, *Far Cry: New Dawn*, *Yakuza 6: The Song of Life*, *Valkyria Chronicles 4*, and *Resident Evil 3*) was simpler than the selection of historiographical sources. Originally the study was intended to be split between two series that were seen as emblematic of American (*Fallout*) and Japanese (*Resident Evil*) video games. The intent was to examine two long running series and how they connected to larger discourses of the past over a period of decades (late-1990s to the present). However, this plan was abandoned due to being too large of a scope for the research and in an effort to examine how various video games have been interacting with larger discourses at the time that the research for the dissertation was being conducted. The list of six titles (3 American/Western, 3 Japanese) was selected based on recency of release (all the games were released between 2015-2020 which coincides with the completion of this dissertation) and the relevance of their content. Each of the

selected titles refers to atomic bombs or weapons of mass destruction either literally or allegorically. These examples are thus not an exhaustive accounting of atomic bombs within contemporary video games but, instead, are emblematic of how video games interact with the collective/cultural memory of the atomic bombs in both the United States and Japan.

With the historiographical and video game sources identified and rationalized, it is possible to describe how a discourses of the past typology can be used to “read” video game content and interactions with larger collective/cultural memory. It should be noted that, despite the order of the chapters of this dissertation, the typology of discourses of the past was developed and created after the observation of atomic bomb narrative phenomena within video games (and other media). The identification of references (both literal and allegorical) to the atomic bombs in media is something that I observed quite readily. This raised questions about why these references were found and what influenced their creation. This dissertation represents an attempt to describe why and how atomic bomb references are observable in Japanese and American media and what ends these references serve. The result was the creation of a research typology and methodology that, with some minor changes, can be used to describe how collective/cultural memory interact with media and, crucially, the importance of power structures and hegemonic discourse within these systems. In other words, a discourses of the past typology is a tool developed to interrogate and explain readily observable phenomena found in media sources that have been influenced by collective/cultural memory.

To use a discourses of the past typology to “read” video game content, as defined and described in chapter II, there are several important steps that must be taken. To begin, it is necessary to identify and describe the existing discourses surrounding a selected event/place/temporal space. My research is primarily interested in the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and their position within collective/cultural memory in the United States/the West and Japan. In defining the surrounding discourses of the atomic bombs, attention was given to historiographical accounts of the bombings as well as memoirs and other survivor accounts. Additionally, careful attention was placed upon the role that power structures (namely government censorship and education systems) helped to formulate and guide formal histories of the atomic bombs (and, more widely, the Pacific War). Historiographical research elucidated the dominant/hegemonic ways of remembering the events in both the United States/the West and

Japan (further outlined in chapter IV and chapter VI). The exact findings of these historiographical inquiries are outlined in later chapters but, are not essential to describing the methodology of a discourses of the past typology. All that needs to be understood at this point is that extensive research needs to be done into the chosen subject to establish the dominant/hegemonic discourses surrounding the subject as well as any counter discourses that may exist. These ways of thinking, which are enacted through power structures and collective/cultural memory systems before being remediated into media, are labelled as discourses of the past.

With a specific definition for what the discourses of the past are that surround an event, it becomes possible to “read” these discourses within video games (or any other media). This reading is accomplished through a process that resembles traditional textual analysis. Alan McKee provides a good working definition of textual analysis in his work, “When we perform a textual analysis on a text, we make an educated guess at some of the most likely interpretations that might be made of that text.”¹⁶⁹ In a game studies specific context, Clara Fernandez-Vara writes, “Textual analysis is the in-depth study of a text...using the text as a sample or case study to understand a specific issue or topic.”¹⁷⁰ What differentiates my methodological practices from a traditional textual analysis is my use of discourses of the past as a wider context for the content of a game. Instead of focusing only on a given text (or small group of texts) and attempting to provide a likely or reasonable reading of that text, a discourses of the past typology attempts to both provide a reasonable interpretation of a given text and contextualize the links between the text and larger discourses, historical events, and power structures operating within society. All texts have cultural context; a discourses of the past model prioritizes cultural readings in its reading of video games.

This system of analysis and interpretation is not entirely unique. Rachael Hutchinson puts forward the idea of discursive cultural readings of video games in her book *Japanese Culture Through Videogames*. She argues that games are discursive structures in themselves and that the importance of historical and cultural context within Japanese games should be accounted for in analysis. My analysis follows Hutchinson in the understanding that “...to examine the cultural

¹⁶⁹ Alan McKee, *Textual Analysis: A Beginner's Guide* (Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications Inc., 2003), 1.

¹⁷⁰ Clara Fernandez-Vara, *Introduction to Game Analysis* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 9.

meaning of a videogame is to analyze the ways in which players might encounter and understand it, which necessitates an understanding of the historical milieu.”¹⁷¹ She further describes her method as follows:

If games are part of social discursive structures by virtue of their commentary on that society, they are also products of society, and betray the power structures of that society in their narrative, theme, tone, representation of people and identities, and hierarchical structures embedded in the game’s behavioural rules and software. As discursive structures, games are cultural products that carry ideology and political dynamics within them; as discursive practice, games connect deeply with the player who enacts their ideology with every step of progress towards every point.¹⁷²

Discourses of the past emulates Hutchinson’s discursive readings in the way that it analyses video games as culturally influenced pieces of collective/cultural memory practice.

Textual analysis and discursive readings help to define what guides a discourses of the past model, but they do not describe its actual functioning as a research methodology. It is simple to state that a video game will be “read” but much more difficult to specifically describe, define, and delimit how this is accomplished. There are several prominent issues that need to be addressed: what device/console is the game being played on? Which version of the game is being played? What aspects of the game are crucial for analysis (e.g. story, setting, gameplay, genre, etc.)? What or how much needs to be experienced within the game to claim that it has been “played” to the point that analysis can be completed (e.g. number of hours played, percentage completed, story experienced, etc.)? The final part of this chapter will briefly address these methodological questions.

All the games selected for this study have been played on a PlayStation 4 (hereafter PS4) console. In some cases, the games were only available through the console (such as *Yakuza 6: The Song of Life*) but in others the games were available on multiple home consoles and personal computers (such as *Fallout 4*). The decision to play the games on the PS4 was made for several reasons: most prominently for the accessibility and popularity of the console. In terms of my own technical knowledge and financial means, a PS4 was the best available option. I grew up playing console video games and, while a semi-proficient user of PCs, I have never built my own

¹⁷¹ Hutchinson, *Japanese Culture Through Videogames*, 8.

¹⁷² Hutchinson, *Japanese Culture Through Videogames*, 10-11.

gaming PC or had access to the finances to have one built for me. As a result, I never became a PC gamer. I believe that these restrictions are not limited to my own experience and in fact mirror those of many contemporary gamers. This led me into my second justification for selecting PS4 versions of the games for my case studies (i.e. popularity of the console). Since I am attempting to connect video games to larger systems of power and, as a result, show their effect on popular memory of the past, I wanted to select games that were widely played and disseminated to the gaming public. By selecting popular series (*Resident Evil*, *Fallout*, *Yakuza*, *Far Cry*, and *Valkyria Chronicles*) on a popular console, I believe that I have best identified games that are widely played, well-known and, most importantly, affect the way that players view the past through video games.

Defining the “version” of a game has become much more difficult in the age of digital distribution, live updates, micro transactions, and extensive downloadable content. Stated simply, it has become nearly impossible to define a standardized version of a game or, beyond this, to determine what parts of a game are essential to the experience. Despite this, there are some aspects of a game’s version that can be stated definitively within this study. For example, I have selected/played the North American version of each title. This means that *Fallout 4*, *Far Cry 5*, and *Far Cry: New Dawn* were played in their “original” form while *Resident Evil 3*, *Yakuza 6: The Song of Life*, and *Valkyria Chronicles 4* were played after they were localized for English-speaking audiences. *Resident Evil 3* and *Valkyria Chronicles 4*’s localization process included the recording of English voice-overs, as such both games were played in English. *Yakuza 6*, as with many games in the series after the first, did not receive an English-voiceover track as part of localization. Sega’s localization team typically does not include English language voiceovers due to fan demands for “authenticity”. This makes sense, as the *Yakuza* series is set in facsimiles of Japanese cities, relies upon Japanese cultural touchstones, and stars an almost exclusively Japanese cast of characters.

The selection of North American versions of the Japanese games is potentially problematic for analysis and, as a result, is worthy of further explanation. Before discussing the games specifically, it is worthwhile to examine the works of Carmen Mangiron and Minako O’Hagan, who have extensively written about translation and localization of Japanese video games. They approach issues with localization through a combination of game studies and

translation studies arguing that video game localization is unique to other types of translation work. They write that the commonly accepted game industry principle is to retain the look and feel of locally made products, which is contrary to traditional translation studies practices that argue for the basic notion of source/target texts and the idea of equivalence. In addition, they note that, due to the need to fit strings of texts within strictly defined software systems, localizers of video games gain freedom not usually allowed in translation practices. As a result, they engage in an activity that Mangiron and O'Hagan label as "transcreation".¹⁷³ Transcreation can be understood as a type of artistic license within video game localization that allows translators the flexibility needed to make changes to games while preserving the gameplay experience and systems found within the original. Mangiron and O'Hagan summarize this process as follows:

The main priority of game localisation is to preserve the gameplay experience for the target players, keeping the 'look and feel' of the original. The brief of the localiser is to produce a version that will allow the players to experience the game as if it were originally developed in their own language to and provide enjoyment equivalent to that felt by the players of the original version.¹⁷⁴

In a later work, O'Hagan would expand upon these ideas, again arguing that entertainment value is given top priority in video game localization and is the factor that most influences the overall translation and localization strategies.¹⁷⁵ However, in addition, she argues that Japanese games required a complex mixture of foreignization strategies to retain some of the "unique Japanese flavour".¹⁷⁶ This "foreignization" is not standardized and the balance between domestication and foreignization in translation differ game to game, genre to genre, and publisher to publisher.¹⁷⁷ O'Hagan consequently lays out a framework for understanding Japanese video game localization where gameplay and the "look and feel" of a game are preserved at the cost of a translation that is "true" to the original text. Also, crucially, within this system she notes that standardization has not been achieved or pursued because of the nuances of the medium. This means that it is necessary to examine each localized game specifically and

¹⁷³ Carmen Mangiron and Minako O'Hagan, "Game Localisation: Unleashing Imagination with 'Restricted' Translation," *The Journal of Specialised Translation* 6 (July 2006): 11.

¹⁷⁴ Mangiron and O'Hagan, 14.

¹⁷⁵ Minako O'Hagan, "Putting Pleasure First: Localizing Japanese Video Games," *TTR: Traduction, Terminologie, Redaction* 22, No. 1 (2009): 152.

¹⁷⁶ O'Hagan, 152.

¹⁷⁷ O'Hagan, 152

individually to understand the significance of the translation and localization process has had on a given game.

In terms of this study, *Resident Evil 3* provides the least difficulty in assessing the localization process because there is little difference (from the perspectives of language and translation) between the North American and Japanese versions.¹⁷⁸ This is primarily because they were (seemingly) developed at the same time and received simultaneous release dates in all regions (as opposed to the more “traditional” release schedule where a Japanese version of a title is typically released six months to one year, or longer, in advance of North American and European versions). This simultaneous development cycle has resulted in a North American version that is remarkably similar to the Japanese version. My comparison research into the two versions reveals that, aside from the obvious language difference, the only major difference between the two versions is censorship of some of the violence and gore in the Japanese version.¹⁷⁹ The argument here is not that the language differences are inconsequential or unimportant but instead that the versions are the same or similar in story, content, visuals, and gameplay. *Resident Evil 3* would seemingly be an example of a Japanese game where localizers exercised little “cocreation”.

Using the North American versions of *Yakuza 6* and *Valkyria Chronicles 4* is more complex than the choice to use the North American version of *Resident Evil 3*. Both of these games underwent extensive localization after an initial Japanese release and, therefore, could be argued to be much different from the original Japanese release. However, despite the long localization process, I argue that these games are not irrevocably changed or entirely different from the original Japanese releases because of the localization philosophies of the localization teams. In interviews, representatives of both teams stress the importance of adapting content to

¹⁷⁸ This was verified through viewing YouTube comparison videos. (An example, that utilizes the demo rather than the final version of the game, can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OK6F8pc-cjg>). Interestingly, the player can choose between Japanese subtitles/audio and English subtitles/audio regardless of the region that their version of the game originated from.

¹⁷⁹ Specifically, there are two Japanese versions and one North American version. The three versions are referred to as the “normal” version, the “Z” version, and the “North American” version and are differentiated by the amount of violence and gore that they depict. The normal version has the least and the North American version has the most. The different versions are compared in detail here: Resident Evil 3 Remake (RE3) Walkthrough Team, “Different Versions of Resident Evil 3 Remake | Resident Evil 3 Remake (RE3),” *Game8*, August 28, 2020. <https://game8.co/games/resident-evil-3-remake/archives/285709> (accessed September 22, 2020).

an English-speaking audience while not removing the cultural contexts of the original Japanese version. Both teams spent a great deal of time making sure that translations of voice and text make sense to English-speakers, fit the original intention of the Japanese authors, and work with the existing animations and UI of the games.

For example, the localizers of *Valkyria Chronicles 4* first translated the Japanese text literally before massaging it to make sense to English-speakers, fit the tone of the scene, match the personality of the character, and work within the animations of the game's engine.¹⁸⁰ Similarly, the localizers for *Yakuza 6*, when faced with translating Japanese poetry decided to forgo a literal translation to better fit the original "feel" of the piece and poetry style.¹⁸¹ Scott Strichart, head of *Yakuza 6*'s localization team, summarizes the localization process, "That's kind of my attitude toward it. You need us to put the words into English, but at the same time, we should be a kind of invisible process. It's not about us."¹⁸² While I believe that the idea of being "invisible" may be an exaggeration (or potentially problematic), this sentiment speaks to the team's larger goals of adhering to the original Japanese version rather than authoring their own Westernized version. To borrow from O'Hagan, these games would seem to be titles where the publisher decided to forgo "domestication" as much as possible in favor of "foreignization".

Furthermore, playing the games reveals that the strategy of attempting to remove "Japanese" elements (such as cultural references like foods, histories, and relationship honorifics) to make a piece of media more palatable to Westerners is not present within *Yakuza 6: The Song of Life* or *Valkyria Chronicles 4*. Cocreation through localization has undoubtedly occurred in these games but not to the point that the games have been stripped of key cultural contexts. It is because of this strategy of localization that I feel comfortable using the North American versions of these games in my study. The games, due to their English language localization, are both accessible to me and, I believe, do not compromise the content of the

¹⁸⁰ Jen Glennon, "'Valkyria Chronicles 4' aims to go 'back to the roots of the series,'" *Newsweek*, October 21, 2018. <https://www.newsweek.com/valkyria-chronicles-4-sega-interview-localization-1133340>

Jonathon Stebel, "How Valkyria Chronicles 4's localisation team nailed the JRPG sequel's English voice-over," *PlayStation Blog*, July 31, 2018. <https://blog.eu.playstation.com/2018/07/31/how-valkyria-chronicles-4s-localisation-team-nailed-the-jrpg-sequels-english-voice-over/>

¹⁸¹ Kathy McCarthy, "Inside Yakuza 6's In-Depth Localization," *US Gamer*, February 7, 2018. <https://www.usgamer.net/articles/inside-yakuza-6s-in-depth-localization>

¹⁸² Stephanie Chan, "Yakuza 6: The Song of Life's localization philosophy," *VentureBeat*, February 11, 2018. <https://venturebeat.com/2018/02/11/yakuza-6-the-song-of-lifes-localization-philosophy/>

games in a way that would be detrimental to my study. The localizers attempt to adhere to the cultural contexts of the games rather than changing elements to make the games palatable for an English-speaking audience. The North American versions represent a genuine attempt to portray the ideas of the original creators rather than a process of re-authorship and Westernization. The games are, in the very least, connected to their Japanese origins and can still be read as cultural artifacts. In other words, while the language may have changed, the plots, characters, cultural references, etc. that are essential to a discourses of the past typology are still present in the North American versions of *Yakuza 6: The Song of Life* and *Valkyria Chronicles 4*.

Yet, despite this, it would be irresponsible to completely disregard the question of language within my methodology, as language is, undoubtedly, one of the most important parts of a culture. In addressing a similar issue within her own work on Japanese video games, Mia Consalvo writes, “[My] project instead focuses on what happens when Japanese games travel outside their country of origin and are used, thought about, and transformed by individuals, companies, and groups in the West.”¹⁸³ My work echoes this sentiment. As an outsider without Japanese language skills, I do not claim to be observing these games from a Japanese perspective or to be making specific comments on Japanese culture connected to language. Instead, I analyze these games, from a position of speaking nearby, as a way of critiquing collective/cultural memory and the influences of established power structures found within these games. While it would be ideal to have the requisite language skills to play these games in the original Japanese, I am comfortable in my positionality as an outsider that is speaking nearby and analyzing games through a lens of cultural collision wherein cultural artifacts have meaning to both insiders and outsiders. I believe that the important elements of a discourses of the past typology found within specific pieces of media (in this case Japanese video games) are still both present and discernible, even to (or perhaps, especially to) an outsider.

As a final note on version selection, it should be noted that I did not play any mods or fan-created content despite the popularity of these features to some of the selected games (e.g. *Fallout 4* and *Resident Evil 3*). I decided to ignore this type of content because of my focus on settings, characters, and storylines connected to/depicting the atomic bombs. Popular mods such

¹⁸³ Mia Consalvo, *Atari to Zelda: Japan's Videogames in Global Contexts* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2016), 14.

as the *Resident Evil 3* “*Dino Crisis*” mod and the *Fallout 4* “Randy Savage Deathclaws” have not been considered as they are more for comedic appeal rather than fitting into the universe that the original developers created.¹⁸⁴ The decision to not include modded gameplay and other player practices should not be viewed as discounting these forms of play. These are indeed important play practices, but they lay beyond the intended scope of this dissertation. Aside from these considerations, for the purposes of this study, the “version” of the game used will include: the original release (either digital or on physical disc), all mandatory patches/bug fixes, and all narrative-focused downloadable content (hereafter DLC).

Within this study, using a discourses of the past methodology, the major aspects of each case study game that will be considered are the narrative, the setting, the characters, and gameplay. In terms of narrative the focus will typically be on the “main” story or campaign but some side-missions or DLC content will be considered depending on their relevance vis-à-vis atomic bomb discourses. Setting will be extended to include both the parts of the game world that the player experiences as well as the larger world and lore of the game. As an example, *Valkyria Chronicles 4* occurs during the events of an alternate reality version of World War II. The player does not travel to all parts of the world that are mentioned in the story, but they remain important parts of the setting. In simple terms, setting extends beyond the physical play space. Character will mostly focus on narrative-centric and playable characters, though important non-playable characters (hereafter NPCs) will be considered if they have clear connections or illusions to atomic bomb memory. Characters are picked or excluded on a case-by-case basis based upon their perceived relevance to the study. Gameplay (i.e. what the player does, how they navigate the world, what they are provided as tools, and game design/rules) is included in terms of what the player is allowed to perform within the game world (or not allowed as the case may be). Gameplay is perhaps the hardest aspect of a video game to incorporate into a “reading” of a video game due to the uniqueness of gameplay to the medium. However, careful consideration of gameplay can reveal the intentions of developers and help to show how they make arguments

¹⁸⁴ The *Dino Crisis* mod of *Resident Evil 3* makes changes to the original game that make it resemble *Dino Crisis*, another of Capcom’s survival horror franchises. Notably, Jill Valentine is modified to look like Regina (the protagonist of *Dino Crisis*) and the zombies have been replaced with dinosaurs. The *Fallout 4* Randy Savage Deathclaws mod changes the skin of the iconic Deathclaw enemies so that they vaguely resemble 1990s WWE wrestler Randy “Macho Man” Savage. It also replaces the roars of the powerful and fearsome Deathclaw enemies with quotes from the popular wrestler.

through their creation. Taken together narrative, setting, character, and gameplay each provide crucial elements to performing an acceptable reading of a video game.

The important aspects of a game and amount of these aspects that need to be experienced to perform a good faith reading of that game are related issues. Given the breadth of content in contemporary games many games take upwards of 40 hours to “complete” and, even then, there may be endless post-game content designed to retain the user base. This means that there is no one way to play a game and, because of this, no one way to research a game. For the purposes of this study, given the goal of analysing the narrative, setting, characters, and gameplay, I have decided to play my selected games in the style of the “trophy hunter”. Every game released on the PS4 comes with a list of trophies (bronze, silver, or gold) that are awarded to the player based on the completion of certain tasks. If all trophies are collected, the player receives a platinum trophy. All trophies are permanently connected to the player’s account on the PlayStation Network and, if the player chooses, can be viewed publicly. The tasks given to the player vary based on the title but usually include the completion of the story, completing the game on high difficulty levels, finding collectible items, or completing difficult tasks (such as exploring the entirety of the game world, dying in specific ways, or finding rare items). Collecting as many trophies as possible has become a popular way of playing games, with numerous websites, walkthroughs, FAQs, and videos being dedicated to earning trophies. Trophy hunting has become a popular and distinct way of playing a game and attempting to “complete” all of its content. I have chosen to play my case study games as a trophy hunter for two reasons: 1) trophy hunting encourages exploration in gameplay and typically encourages the player to play a great deal of a game’s content and 2) the practice of trophy hunting is quite popular and this style of playing a game potentially mimics the way that many players will play the selected games.¹⁸⁵

Taken together the above arguments are combined into a research framework. This four-step methodology that can be summarized as follows:

¹⁸⁵ This is not to imply that all players play as trophy hunters. Yet, certainly, players will not (and in some cases cannot) actively avoid earning trophies while playing.

- 1.) Positionality is defined. Personal experience and demographic data are used in combination with postcolonial theory, specifically Minh-ha's speaking nearby and Ang's complicated entanglement to address issues of insider/outsider, orientalism, and cultural hybridity.
- 2.) Prominent discourses of the past connected to the atomic bombs in both the United States and Japan are defined through historiographical research.
- 3.) Case study video games (*Fallout 4*, *Far Cry 5*, *Far Cry: New Dawn*, *Yakuza 6: The Song of Life*, *Valkyria Chronicles 4*, and *Resident Evil 3*) divided into two groups (American and Japanese) are analyzed through a process of textual analysis and discursive readings. Particular attention is given to how they interact with pre-established discourses of the past.
- 4.) The similarities, differences, and omissions between the discourses of the past and the video games are considered in terms of their relevance to power structures in the United States, Japan, and globally. Additionally, the wider implications of the study are considered.

IV. American Memory Discourse & Historiography

4.1 Charting American Discourse and Historiography

To properly chart the discourses of the past surrounding a particular event it is necessary to examine the established historiography of the subject. Once this is completed, it becomes possible to connect discourses of the past to other media forms such as video games. Certain events, such as the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, have expansive historiographies that are continually updated, changed, and revisited. As a result, no historiography can ever be deemed “complete”. Instead, the best that one can attempt to be is “extensive”.

This chapter attempts to do just this. In addition, it attempts to provide an answer to the question: how can we define/identify the American discourses of the past surrounding the atomic bombs?¹⁸⁶ I argue that, in general, the dominant American historiography of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki argues that the bombs were justified, necessary and, perhaps, altruistic. This has been partially achieved through early government censorship but has been continued through to the present in both academic and popular works. However, I also examine other works that argue against this hegemonic view. The end result has been the establishment of a discourses of the past model where pro-bomb discourse has a hegemonic position and anti-bomb discourse exists but has been marginalized.

4.2 Early Formulations

American discourses of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki started to develop in the direct aftermath of the bombings. Indeed, the first reports of the use of the bombs came the day after the bombing of Hiroshima. However, as one would expect, the reporting was lacking in detail. *The New York Times*, in its first article about the bombing of Hiroshima,

¹⁸⁶ For the purposes of this dissertation, “American” discourses of the past is the preferred nomenclature. However, it should be noted that “American” does not necessarily refer to the United States as a physical space or to Americans as individuals. “American” is used due to the hegemony of American viewpoints, historiography, discourse, and collective/cultural memory. As a result, “American” discourses of the past can originate from non-American sources, for example in British scholarship or Canadian media, especially in cases when these sources replicate established hegemonic American viewpoints. Consideration was given to using the term “American/Western” discourses of the past, but this terminology was found to be imprecise, especially given the dissertation’s focus on sources that are “American” in a traditional sense (i.e., written by Americans, originating in the United States, or heavily influenced by American hegemony).

promised to give more detail on the destruction caused by the “Cosmic Bomb” as official reports became available.¹⁸⁷ It was not until 9 September 1945, one month after the bombing of Nagasaki, that the initial first-hand account of the atomic bombings was made available to the public. *The New York Times* published an article, “Atomic Bombing of Nagasaki Told by Flight Member”, by war correspondent, William L. Laurence. The article lists all the members of the crew along with their places of birth and provides a brief description of the bombing, especially of the mushroom cloud.¹⁸⁸ As evidenced by these two early articles, little information about the atomic bombs was provided to the public. This was largely by design.

As outlined by Lifton and Mitchell, the early atomic-bomb discourse was highly structured and limited by censorship that had been orchestrated in tandem by the American government and occupation forces. Indeed, early reporting on the bombs had to rely solely upon government-sanctioned information.¹⁸⁹ Gar Alperovitz points specifically to three prominent American politicians, Henry Stimson, Harry Truman, and James F. Byrnes, as central forces behind early attempts at engineering American public opinion towards the bombs.¹⁹⁰ In addition to these measures, General Douglas MacArthur denied journalists access to both Hiroshima and Nagasaki, even going as far as to deny gasoline to planes after two reporters broke the ban.¹⁹¹ These tactics allowed the government to control all outgoing information about the bombs and the victims. This control allowed for an official discourse of the atomic bombings to be established and become the only substantial discourse in the direct aftermath of the bombings.

The examination of -- formerly classified but now easily accessible -- government documents helps to elucidate the official positions on the bombs, as well as the general concerns surrounding the bombs in the months directly after the bombings. As a sample, we can examine a small selection of the official reports of three government agencies that were allowed access to

¹⁸⁷ Douglas Brinkley, ed. *The New York Times Living History: World War II: The Allied Counteroffensive, 1942-1945: The Documents, Speeches, Diaries, and Newspaper Reporting That Defined World War II*, edited with Chapter Introductions by David Rubel (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2003), 362-367.

¹⁸⁸ Brinkley, 376-381.

¹⁸⁹ Robert Jay Lifton and Greg Mitchell, *Hiroshima in America: Fifty Years of Denial* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons New York, 1995), 11.

¹⁹⁰ Alperovitz covers each of Stimson, Truman, and Byrnes extensively, giving each their own chapter in his book and describing their respective roles in the manipulation of public opinion about Hiroshima both during and after the war. See:

Gar Alperovitz, *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995) 448-457, 460-465, 499-570, 571-588.

¹⁹¹ Lifton and Mitchell, 47-49.

Hiroshima and Nagasaki for research purposes: the United States Strategic Bombing Survey, the United States Naval Technical Mission to Japan, and the British Mission to Japan.

The United States Strategic Bombing Survey was established by the Secretary of War on 3 November 1944. According to the final published reports,

Its mission was to conduct an impartial and expert study of the effects of [America's] aerial attack on Germany, to be used in connection with air attacks on Japan and to establish a basis for evaluating the importance and potentialities of air power as an instrument of military strategy, for planning the future development of the United States armed forces, and for determining future economic policies with respect to national defense.¹⁹²

Its headquarters in Japan was established in September 1945 -- located in Nagoya, Osaka, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki.¹⁹³ The final output of the Survey numbers in the hundreds of volumes. However, for the purposes of this dissertation, the focus will be on one volume: *The Effects of the Atomic Bombs on Health and Medical Services in Hiroshima and Nagasaki*. While the findings of this volume are far from exhaustive when considering the sheer volume of the Survey's output, they still elucidate early American thinking about the atomic bombings and the Japanese victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The report is divided into eight sections and focuses mostly on health/medical issues such as atomic-bomb casualties, sanitation, nutrition, communicable diseases, and hygiene.¹⁹⁴ The report relies heavily upon collected statistics and photographs (of both destruction caused by the bombs and victims of the bombs) as it contains 13 charts and 54 photographs. Understandably, given that this was a military report researched and written soon after the war, there was no discussion of the necessity of the use of the atomic bombs. It was made clear at the outset of the study that the bombs were necessary. As a result, the report, in a rather matter-of-fact manner, relays statistics and provides little opinion.

Beyond this lack of discussion about the necessity of the bombs there are two notable aspects of the report that were important to early discourses on the bombs. Firstly, the report seemingly treats Japanese civilians with contempt. In discussing the early medical care after the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima the Survey reports, "The care of the wounded

¹⁹² United States Strategic Bombing Survey, *The Effects of Atomic Bombs on Health and Medical Services in Hiroshima and Nagasaki* (N. p.: Andesite Press, 2015), iii.

¹⁹³ United States Strategic Bombing Survey, iii.

¹⁹⁴ United States Strategic Bombing Survey, v-vi.

immediately after the bombing was essentially nil in Hiroshima. Beyond the sphere of family ties *there seemed to be little concern for their fellow man* [emphasis mine].”¹⁹⁵ This statement seems to put some of the blame for atomic bomb deaths on Japanese survivors, a problematic idea in its own right.

Secondly, the report seems to have a fundamental misunderstanding of the impact of radiation and its long-term effects. Indeed, the report goes so far as to claim that most deaths due to flash burns and secondary injuries occurred within a few days after the bombing and, by 1 October 1945, “very few cases suffering from radiation” died.¹⁹⁶ Today we know that this statement is false and that many people continued (and continue to this day) to suffer from radiation-based sicknesses (such as higher cancer rates and increased complications from infections). This lack of knowledge about radiation in the report can be partially attributed to an understandable lack of scientific data. However, it is also connected to a larger issue within early atomic-bomb discourses: the idea that the use of the bombs had been swift, decisive, and admittedly violent but was ultimately not harmful in the long term. This idea, as we shall see in this chapter, would become central to understandings of the atomic bombs and the decision to unleash them upon Japanese civilians.

Examination of *Miscellaneous Targets: Atomic Bombs, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Article I, Medical Effects*, the report submitted 15 December 1945 by the United States Naval Technical Mission to Japan reveals a similar early narrative of the bombs with some small differences. To begin, there is a discussion of the necessity of dropping the bombs, but it is limited to one paragraph and is quite unsatisfactory to the contemporary reader because it does not deal with the issue in any depth or length. Indeed, the paragraph reads as an unimportant afterthought where the writer of the report merely relays that some of the committee assigned to the study (composed of five US officers and one Australian officer) were against the use of the bombs and considered them to be on the same level as poison gas. Others in the group believed that, if one subscribed to total war as a legitimate strategy, then attacks against civilians were to be expected.¹⁹⁷ Ultimately, the report abdicates any responsibility to provide an answer to the troubling question of Allied culpability. It states:

¹⁹⁵ United States Strategic Bombing Survey, 19.

¹⁹⁶ United States Strategic Bombing Survey, 20.

¹⁹⁷ U. S. Naval Technical Mission to Japan, *Miscellaneous Targets: Atomic Bombs, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Article I, Medical Effects* (N. p.: BiblioGov Project, 2013), 17.

The crux of the matter is whether total war in its present form is justifiable, even when it serves a just purpose. Does it not have material and spiritual evil as its consequences which far exceed whatever the good that might result? When will our moralist give us a clear answer to this question?¹⁹⁸

Thus, the report raises an important question but does not seek a satisfactory answer. This may be viewed as a subtle questioning of the use of the bombs, but it also represents a dereliction of a moral duty by not providing a concrete answer. Whether it was the duty of these men to deal with the difficulties of Allied culpability is, of course, debatable. It could be argued that they had a duty to examine this issue in their investigation of medical effects. What better remedy for future casualties then to question how present casualties were created? On the other hand, the immediate concerns of dealing with thousands of sick and injured may have precluded short-term investigation or further comment on the nature of war and bombing. A final answer on this issue is beyond the scope of this chapter and is, perhaps, ultimately unsolvable. However, the lack of further discussion of the morality or righteousness of the bomb does reveal the unwillingness of American authorities to deal with an important moral issue. This framing of the bombs as necessary, almost by default, is indicative of larger American atomic-bomb narratives.

In regard to radiation the report is mostly concerned with residual radiation that would affect American servicemen and other personnel working in the area. It concludes that “only negligible danger to personnel existed after the explosion.”¹⁹⁹ However, unlike the United States Strategic Bombing survey report, the Navy’s report acknowledges that Japanese victims of the bomb were still dying from radiation effects and that there would be other potential long-term effects such as “abnormal offspring” and sterility.²⁰⁰ This represents a departure from the idea that radiation would have no long-term effects but the report still downplays the effects of radiation in general. For example, the report claims that general malnourishment among Japanese victims likely led to greater death tolls (as opposed to radiation).²⁰¹ While the report does represent a step towards a better understanding of radiation and its long-term effects, it still attempts to downplay its significance.

Finally, contempt for Japanese victims is on display both in writing and visually within the report. The writers of the report lament their need to rely upon Japanese research and

¹⁹⁸ U. S. Naval Technical Mission to Japan, 17.

¹⁹⁹ U. S. Naval Technical Mission to Japan, 1.

²⁰⁰ U. S. Naval Technical Mission to Japan, 1.

²⁰¹ U. S. Naval Technical Mission to Japan, 15.

statistics early in the report. They write, “In considering the Japanese data, due allowance must be made for the backward character of Japanese medicine and the natural desire of the Japanese to color the truth for propaganda purposes.”²⁰² In terms of visuals, there are several pie charts within the report used to visually display data. Each of the pie charts utilizes caricatures of Japanese people. One drawing shows a slant-eyed, buck-toothed, and bow-legged Japanese man getting hit in the head with a brick to display “Injury” among the victims of the bombing of Hiroshima.²⁰³ The general distrust of Japanese scientists by the American report writers and the use of caricature are understandable when we consider that a long vicious war had just been fought between the two nations but this does not mean that we can discount the role that this contempt played in early formulations of atomic-bomb discourses in the United States.

The reports of the Strategic Bombing Survey and the U. S. Naval Technical Mission outlined here can be considered as emblematic of the general early discourse of the atomic bombs in the United States. However, it is important to remember that the Americans were not the only Western people studying the bombs at the time. Indeed, the British (and by virtue of their position within the commonwealth Canadian and Australian) militaries also had access to Hiroshima and Nagasaki for research purposes. As a result, it is fruitful to examine the report published by the British Mission to Japan.

Unsurprisingly, the British Mission’s report, which was researched for three months starting in November 1945,²⁰⁴ differs in tone from the two American reports, but it does not go so far as to condemn the use of the atomic bombs. The stated intentions of the British report differ in tone from that of the Americans, “His Majesty’s Government consider that a full understanding of the consequences of the new form of attack may assist the United Nations Organization in its task of securing the control of atomic energy for the common good and in abolishing the use of weapons of mass destruction.”²⁰⁵ This at least shows some empathy towards the victims of the bombs and gives the impression that the gravity of the destruction was grasped on some level by the British. Indeed, the report encourages the reader to picture the destruction as if it occurred in a city that they know well stating, “The reader [of this report]

²⁰² U. S. Naval Technical Mission to Japan, 5.

²⁰³ U. S. Naval Technical Mission to Japan, 26.

²⁰⁴ The British Mission to Japan, *The Effects of the Atomic Bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1946), vi.

²⁰⁵ The British Mission to Japan, iii.

should picture the destruction here set down as it would strike a city which he knows well, in its people, its houses, its public buildings, its factories and its public services.”²⁰⁶ Unfortunately, the report ultimately concludes that the most important lesson of the bombs is the estimation that 50,000 people would die if a similar bomb were dropped in a British urban area.²⁰⁷ Thus, while the British report does not show the same contempt for the Japanese as American reports of the time did, it still relegates Japanese victims to the background while more “important” issues, such as future potential American/British/Western casualties, are deemed more integral for study.

Due to tight restrictions, it was mostly military-sanctioned researchers that were writing about the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in detail. However, two American journalists, John Hersey and George Weller, managed to produce manuscripts about the bombs in the early years after the atomic bombings. Hersey’s book, simply titled *Hiroshima*, was the first large-scale public account of the atomic bombs. The book, which was originally published in full as a special issue of *The New Yorker*, is based upon survivor testimonies including several Japanese doctors and a German Jesuit priest/missionary named Father Wilhelm Kleinsorge. The work is known for its visceral descriptions of the bomb including: people burning to death in rubble,²⁰⁸ clothing patterns being burned into victims’ skin due to the intensity of the flash,²⁰⁹ skin slipping off of people in “huge, glovelike pieces”,²¹⁰ the eyes of victims melting and running down their cheeks,²¹¹ and silhouettes of people being baked into concrete.²¹² The descriptions were so intense that they forced people to rethink the popular life-saving arguments for Hiroshima (i.e. that the bombs had saved both Japanese civilians and American servicemen by shortening the war.)²¹³

In fact, the book was so troubling to those in power (it led to some grassroots criticism of the bombings)²¹⁴ that official action was taken. The first part of this action was the publishing of an article in *Harper’s* magazine by the U. S. Secretary of War Henry Stimson. According to the

²⁰⁶ The British Mission to Japan, vi.

²⁰⁷ The British Mission to Japan, 19.

²⁰⁸ John Hersey, *Hiroshima* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 28.

²⁰⁹ Hersey, 29.

²¹⁰ Hersey, 45.

²¹¹ Hersey, 51.

²¹² Hersey, 73.

²¹³ Lifton and Mitchell, 88.

²¹⁴ Alperovitz, *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb*, 437.

works of both Lifton and Mitchell and Alperovitz, this article invented the claim that the bomb had saved one million American servicemen (with dubious statistical evidence to back up this claim) and became *the* Hiroshima narrative from that point forward.²¹⁵ Stimson's claim that the atomic bombings saved lives and quickened the end of the war remains the major narrative of the bombs in the United States to this day (at least at official levels).²¹⁶ The Stimson article was far from the only official (or perhaps semi-official) state attempts to justify the bombs to the public, yet it can be understood as, "the culmination of a powerful collective rearguard action on the part of the atomic-bomb decision-makers to maintain their control over [the public] consciousness."²¹⁷

Another consequence of Hersey's book was the placing of tighter restrictions on the American press. While early efforts had been made to censor the Japanese press and victims of the bombs (this will be expanded upon in Chapter VI) from publishing accounts of the bombs, it was Hersey's book that caused an expansion of restrictions on the American press. An important example of this can be found in George Weller's experience in Nagasaki. Weller, winner of a Pulitzer Prize in 1943 for his work as a war correspondent, was able to sneak into Nagasaki four weeks after the bombing and produce a manuscript in a similar fashion to Hersey. However, unlike Hersey's work, Weller's dispatches were censored and destroyed by General Douglas MacArthur. It was only by chance that his son, Anthony Weller, was able to find carbon copies and of them and to publish the work in 2006.²¹⁸

As a result, the content of Weller's book did not have any effect on early discourses of the bomb, but its troubled publication history reveals important information. Hersey's book had been dangerous to official narratives that wanted to stress that the use of bombs had been just, that radiation had no long-term effects, and, to some extent, that Japanese victims were worthy of contempt. When this narrative became untenable a shift (as indicated by Stimson's *Harper's* article) to arguing that the bombs had shortened the war became the new official discourse of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Thus, the terms of the Hiroshima debate were formed in

²¹⁵ Alperovitz, *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb*, 448-497. It is notable that Alperovitz not only describes the genesis of Stimson's *Harper's* article but he goes so far as to refute its arguments point by point.

²¹⁶ Lifton and Mitchell, 103-108.

²¹⁷ Lifton and Mitchell, 113.

²¹⁸ George Weller, *First Into Nagasaki: The Censored Eyewitness Dispatches on Post-Atomic Japan and Its Prisoners of War*, foreword by Walter Cronkite, edited by Anthony Weller (New York: Three Rivers Press, 2006), ix.

the early months after August 1945 based upon, as summarized by Alperovitz, "...a process guided not by the vagaries of the inevitable march of time through history – but rather by conscious human attempts to control information..."²¹⁹ To summarize, in the apt words of Lifton and Mitchell, "From its very first words, the official narrative was built on half-truth."²²⁰

We can understand the early formulation of atomic-bomb discourse in the United States as being heavily based on official narratives where little information was provided to the public and censorship was extensive. The lack of information should not be taken as a sign of a weak discourse. Foundational ideas, such as the necessity of ending the war as soon as possible, the saving of American lives, the triumph of science and American ingenuity, and American altruistic aims, were established in the direct aftermath of the bombings through to the end of the American occupation of Japan. Indeed, the early formulation of discourses of the past in regard to the atomic bombs in the United States has proven to be resilient and has heavily influenced historiography in the decades since the end of the war.

4.3 Crystallization into Hegemony

Eventually, scholarship on the atomic bombs was allowed to take place and a robust literature on the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki grew from this endeavour. However, despite the seeming vastness of literature on this subject, the result has been a solidification of the early discourse of the bombs rather than a radical re-questioning of the early views of the bombs. This can be seen through a brief analysis of scholarship that focuses solely on the atomic bombs and an examination of how the bombs have been written about in general histories (either of World War II, the Pacific War, studies of American propaganda, or biographies of prominent historical figures from the time).

Barton Bernstein provides a good primer for understanding the ways that American historians have written about atomic bombs. He grounds his argument in the idea that atomic bombs helped to bring a quick end to the war. He argues that it was far from definite that a combination of non-nuclear options could have ended the war. For Bernstein, the result of the gap between "likely" and "definite" opens the possibility of a brutal alternate history where the

²¹⁹ Alperovitz, *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb*, 275.

²²⁰ Lifton and Mitchell, 5.

war was extended and resulted in many more battles and many more deaths.²²¹ However, he notes that this possibility of an extended war does not provide an ethical justification for the bombs.²²² To answer the question of ethics Bernstein turns his analysis towards some of the issues surrounding the bombs, with a stress on historiography. To do so he identifies two schools of thought about the atomic bombings: the orthodox school and the revisionist school. Bernstein adheres to traditional definitions of the two schools where “orthodox” refers to those that support the use of the atomic bombs while “revisionist” refers to scholars that are against the use of the bombs.²²³ In other words, the orthodox historians adhere to earlier formed ideas about the bomb (like those outlined above) while revisionists attempt to create new interpretations.

With this dichotomy created, Bernstein provides his interpretation of the bombs. He argues that the use of the bombs should be considered using moral standards of the time. According to Bernstein the “older morality” of sparing civilians was disregarded in the total war into which World War II developed.²²⁴ The logical conclusion from this line of argument is that atomic bombs were justified by moral standards of the time. Or, as summarized by Bernstein,

To judge [the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki] by a set of ethical standards usually abandoned in World War II and sometimes revived in later years is appropriate. But to ascribe those moral standards to the leaders and citizens of the United States, or the other major powers, during World War II is to distort the history of that terrible war and to misrepresent the decisions made in it.²²⁵

While he does admit that it is appropriate to question the bombings, he ultimately supports their use based on the idea that different systems of thought existed. This is his right as a historian and is a perfectly legitimate way of practicing historical analysis. However, in a discourses of the past model we can see his abdication of determining responsibility as highly supportive of established discourses of the bombs and, in the very least, dismissive of alternative interpretations.

Herbert Bix, a prominent scholar of both the atomic bombs and Emperor Hirohito, makes similar arguments within his works. He argues that the Japanese context of the bombs should

²²¹ Barton J. Bernstein, “Understanding the Atomic Bomb and the Japanese Surrender: Missed Opportunities, Little-Known Near Disasters, and Modern Memory,” in *Hiroshima in History and Memory*, edited by Michael J. Hogan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 39.

²²² Bernstein, 39.

²²³ Bernstein, 40.

²²⁴ Bernstein, 76.

²²⁵ Bernstein, 79.

lead to the conclusion that the Japanese, particularly Emperor Hirohito, should be blamed for the use of the bombs.²²⁶ It is important to note that he describes Hirohito as, "...one of the most disingenuous persons to ever occupy [Japan's] modern throne" and is generally hyper-critical of him.²²⁷ This argument is outlined in great detail in his Pulitzer Prize winning biography of Japan's wartime Emperor, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan*. To summarize briefly, Bix argues the idea of a "delayed surrender" on the part of Hirohito and the military leaders of Japan. Specifically, he claims that Hirohito was a weak leader and continued the war (or at least did not act to stop it) in a vain attempt to save the Imperial *kokutai*.²²⁸ This dithering led to the American decision to use the bombs.²²⁹ This interpretation, which is not unique within historiography of the atomic bombs and Emperor Hirohito's involvement,²³⁰ is notable because it not only removes blame from American decision makers but it also avoids key issues such as Hirohito's actual power within the Imperial system and the threat of unconditional surrender that the Americans had imposed upon the Japanese.²³¹

Additionally, in an earlier work, Bix invokes the idea of hindsight within historical writing, especially when considering atomic bombs, but claims that it does not always work.²³² He thus presents a two-pronged argument where the Japanese should be blamed for the use of atomic bombs and re-interpretations should be allowed but not given the same credence as traditional interpretations. Given the prominence of his work, as a Pulitzer Prize winner and historian, Bix's works should be viewed as highly influential. It is unfortunate that his works are

²²⁶ Herbert Bix, "Japan's Delayed Surrender: A Reinterpretation", in *Hiroshima in History and Memory*, edited by Michael J. Hogan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 80.

²²⁷ Herbert Bix, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan* (New York: Perennial, 2000), 5.

²²⁸ Loosely translated this can be understood to mean the sovereignty of Japan under Hirohito's Imperial rule.

Although there are other more complex definitions.

²²⁹ Bix, *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan*, 487-530.

²³⁰ Paul Manning, in his biography of Hirohito, notes that President Truman laid the blame for the use of the atomic bombs on Hirohito and the Japanese military leaders for not accepting Allied surrender terms promptly enough. Additionally, Manning notes that Truman ordered the atomic bombs dropped to bring about unconditional surrender and save American lives. These arguments are used in a similar fashion to Bix to lay partial blame for the dropping of atomic bombs on the Japanese. See:

Paul Manning, *Hirohito: The War Years* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1986), 3, 141.

²³¹ Edward J. Drea argues that Hirohito was not appraised of military events and planning. As a result, his influence has been overstated in some works, such as Bix'. Drea offers an alternative interpretation of the end of the war where the Japanese military leaders were seeking a "decisive victory" in the closing stages of the war in order to bring about more favorable peace negotiations. See:

Edward J. Drea, "Chasing a Decisive Victory: Emperor Hirohito and Japan's War with the West (1941-1945)," In *In Service of the Emperor: Essays on the Imperial Japanese Army* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 169-215.

²³² Herbert Bix, "Japan's Delayed Surrender: A Reinterpretation", 80.

derisive of reinterpretations and, to some degree, contemptuous of Emperor Hirohito and other Japanese leaders. This is not unique in the American historiography of atomic bombs.

A more vehement defense of *status quo* interpretations comes from Charles T. O'Reilly and William A. Rooney in their examination of the controversy surrounding the display of Enola Gay in the Smithsonian Museum in 1995, the 50th anniversary of the atomic bombings.²³³ For the 50th anniversary of the bombings an exhibition was planned at the Smithsonian with the plane as the central piece. The organizers planned to have a section of the exhibit that would display what happened on the ground to Japanese victims. This decision incited outrage among Americans and, eventually, the exhibit was changed to not include this section.

O'Reilly and Rooney are interesting from a historiographical perspective because of their book on the subject, *The Enola Gay and the Smithsonian Institution*. This work is a model example of the defense of traditional opinions over reinterpretations within American atomic bomb historiography. The authors create a strict dichotomy between “true” history based upon “facts” and “revisionist” history based upon “distortions” in which the true history justifies the atomic bombs being dropped and false history reinterprets this traditional view.²³⁴ O'Reilly and Rooney outline their argument as follows, “We prefer to see the controversy as one in which revisionist ideology was going to trump the factual record and ought to be challenged.”²³⁵ This problematic framing of the issue leads the authors to discount sources that do not support their argument while elevating sources that do support them to the status of indisputable fact. This is poor practice in terms of historical research that borders on irresponsible propaganda. This level of defense of the use of the atomic bombs is uncommon within traditional historiography, as a result, O'Reilly and Rooney are notable as an extreme example of the American defense of the use of the atomic bombs.

Outside of a fanatical fear of revisionism, there are other ways that the atomic bombs have been justified within American historiography. The works of Richard Frank, an “amateur” or “popular” historian,²³⁶ are perhaps emblematic of this trend. In his 2001 book, *Downfall: The*

²³³ The Enola Gay, piloted by Paul Tibbets, is the Boeing B-29 Superfortress bomber that was used to drop the atomic bomb on Hiroshima.

²³⁴ Charles T. O'Reilly, and William A. Rooney, eds., *The Enola Gay and the Smithsonian Institution* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2005), 1-16.

²³⁵ O'Reilly and Rooney, 2.

²³⁶ The use of amateur and/or popular should not be viewed as prejudicial against the work of Frank. I use the term merely to indicate that he is not an academic/ scholar working at an institution. In fact, Frank's books are typically

End of the Japanese Empire, Frank examines the end of the war in depth. He argues that when historians have examined the end of the war, the atomic bombs are typically considered to be “the hub around which all considerations orbit”.²³⁷ This leads Frank to utilize an alternative analysis where several other prevalent issues such as firebombing,²³⁸ kamikazes,²³⁹ the position of Japanese civilians,²⁴⁰ and a potential American invasion of the Japanese home islands are considered as important factors on the minds of war planners at the end of the war.²⁴¹ The work is based on extensive research, and demonstrates both thought and vigor but ultimately has an unsatisfactory, and familiar, conclusion. Frank writes,

Thus alternatives to the atomic bomb carried no guarantee that they would end the war or reduce the amount of human death and suffering...Had American leaders in 1945 been assured that Japan and the United States would pass two generations in tranquility and still look forward with no prospect of future conflict, they would have believed their hard choices had been vindicated- and so should we.²⁴²

Despite his research and unique perspective, Frank manages to find a way to defer to American leaders from the past and justify the use of the atomic bombs. In fact, Frank, in considering alternatives, such as firebombing or the starvation of Japanese civilians through blockade, doubles down on the idea that the bombs were justified by attempting to show that they were the most humane solution. This is notable because it reveals a predisposition to adhere to past ideas; particularly that American leaders needed to win the war by force and that negotiation was impossible. Also, the additional caveat of friendly relations between the two nations since the atomic bombings is used as further justification for past American aggression.

In an update (of sorts) to his book, Frank again tackles the issue of ending the war. Through the use of archival records, he discounts theories that argue the bombs were used to justify the extremely large expenditure of funds used to research and build the bombs, for intellectual curiosity, due to a bureaucratic empire, or as way of intimidating the Soviets.²⁴³

easier to find and are, perhaps, more widely read than the aforementioned professional historians found within this chapter.

²³⁷ Richard B. Frank, *Downfall: The End of the Japanese Empire*. (New York: Penguin Books, 2001), ix.

²³⁸ Frank, *Downfall*, 3-19.

²³⁹ Frank, *Downfall*, 178-187.

²⁴⁰ Frank, *Downfall*, 188-190.

²⁴¹ Frank, *Downfall*, 117-131.

²⁴² Frank, *Downfall*, 360.

²⁴³ Richard B. Frank, “Ending the Pacific War: No Alternative to Annihilation,” in *The Pacific War: From Pearl Harbor to Hiroshima*, edited by Daniel Marston (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2005), 227.

However, he once again finds a way to argue that the bombs were the best solution to end the war. He writes:

Without an organized capitulation, it is not clear whether the final end of the war would have come in months or years. Thus, [Secretary of War Henry] Stimson articulated the grim reality of how the Pacific War ended: the atomic bombs were awful, but the alternatives were much worse.²⁴⁴

These “alternatives” are, once again, fully military solutions that discount the possibility of other solutions or potential endings to the war. Frank is thus a unique example within American historiography as he adheres to traditional defenses of atomic bombs despite having a highly different methodological perspective than other works. Frank acknowledges the potential of non-atomic solutions and accounts for Japanese civilians within his work, yet, he ultimately defends the use of the bombs. This is an indication of the hegemonic strength of the ideas of American innocence and/or justification within the established historiographical discourse of the atomic bombs.

These ideas of innocence and justification can be found in other works. There is a specific type of American atomic bomb historiography that formulates its discourse around ideas of morals or just-ness. This is on display in the title of Francis X. Winters’ book *Remembering Hiroshima: Was it Just?* Winters, a professor of ethics and international affairs, structures his arguments around answering the question of whether the use of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima was just. He begins his narrative at the opening of Japan by American Commodore Matthew Perry in 1853, which he believes led Japan to initiate an imperial contest with the United States.²⁴⁵ This contest led to conflict between the two powers and culminated in the Pacific War. This is already a problematic argument as Winters seemingly blames the soured relations between the two countries on Japan despite the fact that it was American encroachment into Japanese affairs (and onto Japanese lands) that forced Japan into a greater role on the international stage. This allows Winters to utilize a narrative in which the two countries have a long, drawn-out rivalry where both parties participated on more or less equal terms; this is

²⁴⁴ Frank, *Ending the Pacific War*, 245.

²⁴⁵ Francis X. Winters, *Remembering Hiroshima: Was it Just?* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2009), ix.

patently false. Unfortunately, examining this narrative point by point through nine-plus decades is beyond the scope of this simple historiography.

Eventually, Winters works his way to the atomic bombing of Hiroshima where he argues that any of the options open to the United States' leadership, such as dropping the atomic bomb or an invasion of Kyushu and/or Hokkaido, would have involved the targeting of civilians.²⁴⁶ He thus finds justification for the bombing of Hiroshima, despite not considering non-military solutions. He writes, "...the conviction seems to be inescapable that, failing such a surrender, the Japanese unprecedented commitment to a suicidal war may eventually have called for an ethically sound exception to the prohibition against direct targeting of civilians."²⁴⁷ Missing from this analysis is an explanation for why a second atomic bomb needed to be dropped on Nagasaki. Regardless, the Winters narrative of the end of the war finds a way to twist logic in order to find that the use of the atomic bombs was "just". Apparently, Winters has a different than normal definition of that term where "just" is shorthand for "justification of American imperialism and hegemonic power".

Moral arguments about the bombs are not always as biased towards the exercise of American hegemonic power or as willing to discount non-military options. Michael Burleigh, in his work *Moral Combat*, examines the entirety of World War II (i.e. both in Europe and the Pacific) to determine how concepts of morality affected both Allied and Axis powers. The divide between "Allied" and "Axis", rather than individual nations/empires, is important here as it places Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan (as well as other Axis powers) into a bloc that is compared against the British Empire, the Soviet Union, and the United States (and other Allied powers). Thus, Germany and Japan ostensibly become one pole in a strict dichotomy. This is especially important because Burleigh, who has mostly focused on Nazi Germany and the Holocaust in his works, argues that the Nazis located, "...their murderous depredations beyond law, but within a warped moral framework that defined their purifying violence as necessary and righteous."²⁴⁸ He criticizes Japanese conservatives that, "...have for a long time practised what they call 'anti-masochistic history' which insists from 1931 to 1945 Japan sought to liberate Asia

²⁴⁶ Winters, xiii.

²⁴⁷ Winters, 235.

²⁴⁸ Michael Burleigh, *Moral Combat: A History of World War II* (London: Harper Press, 2010), x.

and the Asians from European colonialism when in fact they enslaved them.”²⁴⁹ This leads Burleigh, despite his reservations about the conduct of the Soviets, to defend the conduct of the Allied war effort.²⁵⁰ This reveals the problem with the Axis/Allies dichotomy as diverse, and highly differential, war experiences get placed into one of two large groups rather than as more individualized, nuanced, and unique experiences. Soviet conduct during the war tells us as little about the American experience of the war as Nazi conduct tells us about the Japanese experience.

This defense of the Allies is not solely focused on the bombing campaigns against Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan. However, Burleigh’s chapter on this subject is most relevant to this study. I will focus on what he writes about the American bombing campaign over Japan. He devotes a small section of his book to the firebombing of Japanese cities, the development of the atomic bombs, their use, the personalities surrounding them, and the aftermath of the bombings.²⁵¹ Given the initial framing of his study where Allied = Good and Axis = Bad, Burleigh remains surprisingly neutral in this account with no clear favoritism as to whether the bombs were justified or not. Instead, he focuses on numerous different men involved in the dropping of the bomb, such as President Harry Truman, Secretary of War Henry Stimson, Army Air Force General Curtis LeMay, and the atomic scientist in charge of the development of the bombs, J. Robert Oppenheimer. He does note that the Americans were quick to point to Japanese war crimes to justify their use of both incendiary and atomic bombs. Yet, most importantly, he notes, “Last but not least, the Americans had come to hate this enemy.”²⁵² He thus skirts the issue of whether the bombs were moral or not and provides a fact-based narrative with no real discussion of the moral issues that are ostensibly the intention of the work.

Yet, it is Burleigh’s concluding chapter that is most revealing in terms of atomic-bomb historiography. In this chapter he briefly outlines Italian, German, and Japanese war crimes and subsequent trials.²⁵³ This is interesting because he refrains from mentioning crimes committed by Allied powers (of which the bombing of civilians could certainly be considered). By omitting these crimes, Burleigh gives his tacit/implicit approval of Allied actions during the war. His

²⁴⁹ Burleigh, xi.

²⁵⁰ Burleigh, xi.

²⁵¹ Burleigh, 514-532.

²⁵² Burleigh, 525.

²⁵³ Burleigh, 533-562.

discourse on the war and war crimes *assumes* all Allied actions to not be war crimes at the outset. As a result, there is no discussion or analysis of Allied actions as possibly being war crimes because they have been pre-judged to be just/moral. Ultimately, this allows World War II to be read as a righteous war fought by the Allies against an evil set of Axis powers. Within this framework the Allies may have committed questionable acts (such as the atomic bombings) but they were justified by the enormity and importance of their mission. This view is fair to some extent, but it prevents questioning of problematic Allied actions and ignores the plight and suffering of victims, especially civilians living under Axis powers.

Burleigh's position on the morality of the atomic bombings is only possible because of his positioning of the atomic bombings within a larger context of World War II. In other words, it is possible to justify singular actions/decisions made during World War II when they are considered as part of a larger picture, rather than as individual moments. This phenomenon is important to consider in the American historiography of the atomic bombs. In many cases the atomic bombs are an afterthought, or a much smaller piece of a larger historical narrative. It is possible to examine this phenomenon through analysis of historical texts that tell general histories or have other primary focuses. These can include, but are not limited to, histories of the United States, histories of Japan, histories of World War II, biographies of historical figures involved in the atomic bombs, and larger studies of tangentially related issues.

An emblematic way of examining how Americans view World War II is outlined by historian Susan Brewer in her study of American propaganda throughout history. In her chapter on World War II she writes,

Americans preferred to remember the propaganda version of a noble war fought for democracy and freedom by innocent people forced to defend themselves against a vicious enemy, a war fought overseas by decent men while on the home front everyone contributed, a war in which the Americans played the starring role and the Allies had big parts, a war that delivered a better life.²⁵⁴

This provides an excellent starting point for examining American views of World War II and, by extension, the atomic bombs. As seen in Burleigh's work, this type of general view of the war allows for the justification of individual actions or, in some cases, the "glossing over" or

²⁵⁴ Susan Brewer, *Why America Fights: Patriotism and War Propaganda from the Philippines to Iraq* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 140.

ignoring of events that would be problematic or inconvenient to this larger narrative. The killing of civilians through incendiary and atomic bombings certainly qualify as such.

This logic can be seen in John Patrick Diggins' book *The Proud Decades: America in War and Peace, 1941-1960*. This is evident even in the structure of the book as Diggins uses the title "From Pearl Harbor to Hiroshima" for his first chapter, which inexorably links the two events together.²⁵⁵ Thus, the attack on Pearl Harbor is linked to the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and allows for a "they started it" styled narrative rather than viewing Hiroshima as a preventable disaster and/or war crime. Additionally, it should be noted that Hiroshima is chosen rather than Nagasaki as even these types of historical narratives have difficulty with explaining or justifying why a *second* atomic bomb was necessary.

In terms of content, Diggins relies upon the typical hero narrative of the war. He writes, "Above all, the sneak attack [by the Japanese Navy at Pearl Harbor], launched without a declaration of war, united Americans and enabled the country to enter the war to vindicate its honor."²⁵⁶ He adds, "World War II was the most popular war in American history. Outraged by the attack on Pearl Harbor, fearful of Hitler's conquest of Europe, people everywhere wanted to do what they could... It was truly a people's war."²⁵⁷ Diggins does acknowledge some of the larger issues confronting American society during the war, such as rising racial tensions, but ultimately relies upon a stereotyped version of a good war.

Finally, in his description of the bombs, Diggins informs the reader that American casualties would have been high if an invasion of the Japanese home islands had been attempted. He writes,

Because of the heavy resistance with which Japan defended Iwo Jima, Okinawa, and Tarawa, battles in which some 50,000 American soldiers died, it seems likely that an invasion would have meant a prolonged and bloody war in which the

²⁵⁵ John Patrick Diggins, *The Proud Decades: America in War and Peace, 1941-1960* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1989), 3-53.

²⁵⁶ Diggins, 5.

²⁵⁷ Diggins, 14-15. It is also prudent to acknowledge the importance of the examples "Pearl Harbor" and "Hitler's Conquest of Europe". This creates a definite link between Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan and, in a roundabout way, connects Japan to the Holocaust. If one considers the war in this way (i.e. Axis vs. Allies) rather than as two separate wars (i.e. European and Pacific fronts) then the atomic bombs were dropped on a nation that fought on the side that perpetrated the Holocaust. This connection is tenuous but historiographically useful to defenders of the "good war" point of view.

Japanese and Americans would have suffered far more casualties than the lives lost at Hiroshima.²⁵⁸

The specific wording here is also notable. Firstly, he mentions Hiroshima while neglecting to mention Nagasaki. The use of a second atomic bomb is difficult to explain in a narrative of heroism and saving American lives. Secondly, “lives lost at Hiroshima” suggests a lack of agency on the part of American war planners while also intentionally avoiding the abject horror experienced by atomic-bomb victims.

Despite this, Diggins devotes some space to a discussion of whether the bombs were necessary. He notes that the American policy of unconditional surrender prevented a negotiated peace that would have been acceptable to Japan and that Oppenheimer was against the use of the bombs.²⁵⁹ Yet, he ultimately informs the reader that 75 percent of Americans approved of the use of the bombs.²⁶⁰ Taken together, Diggins provides a brief narrative that makes an admirable attempt to show both potential sides of the decision to drop the atomic bombs. Unfortunately, his wider goal, writing about the entire 1941-1960-time period, prevents him from engaging in a deeper analysis. As a result, Diggins relies on the common, heroic narrative of the war and refrains from condemning the use of atomic bombs. This, of course, is not something for which Diggins himself should be condemned, but it serves as an example of how hegemonic narratives of the war and atomic bombs affect other historiographical fields.

Another example is Larry H. Addington’s work *The Patterns of Warfare Since the Eighteenth Century*. This book covers an even longer period than Diggins work, so it works as an extreme example of how the bombs are depicted within a grander narrative (in this case the patterns of warfare over a two-hundred-year period). Given the extended period covered and the sheer mass of information that must be included in a work such as Addington’s, the atomic bombs receive only a two-page mention. Addington’s account, quite understandably, lacks depth and frames the bombs as being necessary to end the war. He writes, “Assuming the invasion of the home islands could be launched in the late summer or fall of 1945, [the American leaders] believed the battle might not be concluded before 1947 and might inflict a million American

²⁵⁸ Diggins, 49.

²⁵⁹ Diggins, 49-51.

²⁶⁰ Diggins, 51.

casualties.”²⁶¹ He then mentions the Japanese misunderstanding of unconditional surrender, provides some statistics on death tolls, informs about the Russian invasion of Manchuria, and provides some concluding statements about the Pacific War; all within a two-page span.²⁶² This, obviously, precludes a deeper analysis of the decision to drop the bombs and neglects to provide a description of Japanese civilians. These issues are, of course, outside of Addington’s larger ambitions. Instead, he wants to briefly write about warfare over a two-hundred-year period so that he can identify larger trends and point out their significance to the reader. This is a legitimate historiographical process/project. However, it is still important to note that Addington’s analysis relies upon hegemonic historical discourses, and, as a result, helps to reinforce hegemonic ways of viewing the past. His work can be seen as an example of how, even without malice or intent, a historian can reinforce hegemonic discourse and fail to engage in critical thought about a subject as important as the use of the atomic bombs.

This phenomenon can be found within histories that focus solely on World War II, which is still in itself a massive undertaking with an extensive amount of ground to cover and potential content. Murray and Millett, in their single volume text *A War to be Won: Fighting the Second World War*, face the issue of placing the atomic bombs within a much larger narrative of the war. They are able to devote a chapter to the end of the war in the Pacific but, even then, need to cover many major events that occurred in 1945 in the leadup to the end of the war including: The Battle of Iwo Jima, The Battle of Okinawa, the final sortie of the battleship Yamato, and Kamikaze actions.²⁶³ This shortens the amount of space that could be devoted to the atomic bombings. Murray and Millett introduce the idea that American leaders thought the use of atomic bombs could be used to forestall Soviet ambitions and that the bombs were viewed as a way of saving American lives.²⁶⁴ Additionally, and perhaps unfortunately, the authors frame the bombing of Nagasaki as a sort of final blow that led the Japanese leaders to capitulate.²⁶⁵ This, of course was the last major action of the war, but to place a direct causal relationship between the two ignores that the dropping of the bomb on Nagasaki did not guarantee or presuppose Japanese

²⁶¹ Larry H. Addington, *The Patterns of War Since the Eighteenth Century*, 2nd Edition. (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), 261.

²⁶² Addington, 261-262.

²⁶³ Williamson Murray and Allan R. Millett, *A War to be Won: Fighting the Second World War* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001), 509-516.

²⁶⁴ Murray and Millett, 520-521.

²⁶⁵ Murray and Millett, 524.

capitulation. Indeed, the bomb was dropped on Nagasaki on 9 August 1945 but Hirohito's Rescript on Surrender (the official end of hostilities in Japan) did not occur until 15 August 1945. The book thus introduces some questions about American intentions when using the bombs but eventually relies upon the idea that the bombs saved American lives and shortened the war. As a result, Murray and Millet provide a further example of historians that embrace a hegemonic view of the past when crafting a larger historical narrative.

This issue of working the atomic bombs into larger narratives extends into the literature that focuses exclusively on the Pacific War. Once again, a one-volume work on the Pacific War must be expansive and has much ground to cover with quite a bit of potential content. The result can be a reliance on entrenched narratives, even though the bombs can typically receive more focus than works that focus on larger historical narratives. John Costello's *The Pacific War 1941-1945* can be used as an example of this. Costello considers the financial and moral issues with the use of the bombs but ultimately relies on the "saving American lives" argument. He writes,

Two billion dollars had already been invested on the war's most expensive project. Truman, as the former chairman of a committee probing the rumors of arms contract waste, knew that whatever the moral issues involved, neither the Congress nor the public would forgive him if he abandoned the project or hesitated to use the bomb. If it worked, it would save the lives of hundreds of thousands of American soldiers.²⁶⁶

Costello is not negligent in his moral analysis, arguing that the Interim Committee that advised President Truman about the bombs was less concerned with moral issues than with when the bombs would be used.²⁶⁷ In other words, American leaders were concerned with *when* the bombs would be used, not *if* they would be used. Yet, these considerations do not lead Costello to argue that the bombs were unjust or that they should have been reconsidered. He argues,

If moral issues had been weighed only lightly in the minds of the President [Truman], the Prime Minister [Churchill], and the Secretary of War [Stimson], whose 'mature consideration' had counted most in the by now irreversible momentum toward actually dropping the bomb, it must be seen in the context of a war in which the enemy was regarded as guilty of unparalleled slaughter and atrocities. Faced with the overriding desire to bring about a quick end to the fighting, President Truman rested his decision on the simple but bloody arithmetic

²⁶⁶ John Costello, *The Pacific War 1941-1945* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2009), 568.

²⁶⁷ Costello, 568.

of death, calculating that the bomb ‘would save many times the number of lives, both American and Japanese, then it would cost.’²⁶⁸

Once again it should be noted that adding personal moral considerations into a historical analysis is not common among historians and it is far from mandatory. Costello is working within perfectly acceptable historiographical practices. However, relying upon arguments that only consider potential ways of thinking from the past can be equally problematic. For example, how do we know what the major actors were truly thinking and how that affected their decisions? This reveals the *subjectivity* of Costello’s ostensibly *objective* analysis. This leads to yet another example of the hegemonic narrative being favored over reinterpretations as a way of protecting a favored narrative.

A further example of this can be found in Ronald H. Spector’s single-volume history of the Pacific War, *Eagle Against the Sun*. Like Costello, Spector dedicates a chapter to the end of the war. He covers the Battle of Okinawa, kamikaze attacks, and the last sortie of the battleship Yamato.²⁶⁹ This is used as a backdrop for why the American leaders decided to drop the atomic bombs. Spector writes, “The general feeling was one of anxiety and dread before the tasks that lay ahead. If the capture of a base in the Ryukus had been this bad, what would the assault on Japan itself be like?”²⁷⁰ He also covers potential American losses in an American land-based invasion of Japan and the problems of an extended bombing campaign.²⁷¹ Finally, and most interestingly, he introduces the idea that Truman felt political pressure to enforce the tenets of unconditional surrender upon the Japanese because of American public opinion.²⁷²

Spector then discusses the use of the atomic bombs in detail. He argues,

There was never any doubt that the bomb would be used. Years of American talk about the Japanese as savage fanatics who cared nothing about human life had prepared the way for such a decision. The ‘sneak attack’ on Pearl Harbor, accounts of Japanese atrocities in prisoner of war camps and in occupied Asia, the kamikazes, and the bloody last-ditch resistance on Iwo Jima and Okinawa had confirmed and hardened these beliefs.²⁷³

²⁶⁸ Costello, 582.

²⁶⁹ Ronald H. Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun: The American War with Japan* (New York: Vintage Books, 1985), 532-540.

²⁷⁰ Spector, 540.

²⁷¹ Spector, 542-543.

²⁷² Spector, 546.

²⁷³ Spector, 555.

He does dedicate some space to historians that have argued against the use of the bomb, noting that they accuse American leaders of being unable to rise above wartime emotionalism, and even points out that some military men disapproved of the bombs in favor of traditional aerial and naval bombardment. Yet, Spector argues that it cannot be proven that these bombardments would have been effective, or if they would have saved lives when compared to the atomic bombs.²⁷⁴ He conveniently refrains from commenting on the charges of emotionalism, concluding, "... none of the critics of the atom bomb decisions has been able to demonstrate how the Japanese high command might have been induced to surrender without the *combined* shock of Russia's entry into the war and the use of *two* atomic bombs."²⁷⁵ Therefore, Spector argues that since it cannot be proven conclusively that other methods would have worked, which it should be noted is an impossible task, that the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were the best course of action. This is a tortured analysis, as it seems that Spector has considered other theories and laid considerable groundwork to argue against the bombs earlier in the chapter, especially when discussing American wartime hatred of the Japanese. Unfortunately, Spector instead opts to argue for an understanding of the past that falls in line with hegemonic historiographical thought where a re-interpretation could have easily occurred.

Yet another Pulitzer Prize winning book, John Toland's *The Rising Sun: The Decline and Fall of the Japanese Empire, 1936-1945*, examines the Pacific War and the atomic bombs, albeit from a claimed "Japanese perspective".²⁷⁶ Toland's extensive one-volume history (including notes, the book is 929 pages in length) covers a longer time frame than most works and devotes more space (two full chapters and a portion of two others) to the atomic bombs. Toland's choice of perspective, length of analysis, and the general notoriety of the work make the book a valuable source for any historiography of the war.

²⁷⁴ Spector, 558.

²⁷⁵ Spector, 559.

²⁷⁶ For the purposes of this study, I have categorized this work as "American" even though it focuses on a self-proclaimed "Japanese perspective" of the war. This classification was chosen for two reasons: 1) Toland is an American scholar and, most likely, intended his work for primarily American audiences and 2) the book won a Pulitzer Prize and was a national bestseller, which gives it instant credibility and notoriety among a large audience in the United States (this is not to comment on the quality of the work but only to point out its perceived value based upon a widely recognized and well-known award as well as high sales). Taken together, I believe that the work was written by an American scholar, for an American audience, and gained notoriety in the United States.

Toland, after an analysis of American-British-Russian relations in the closing months of the Pacific War, refers to the use of the atomic bombs as “inevitable” with the real question being whether the Russians would declare war before the bombs could be used.²⁷⁷ He elaborates on this position, “Rather than explore peace with a Japan that desperately sought it, American leaders were resolved to bring a summary end to the war – and avenge the humiliation of Pearl Harbor as well as the countless atrocities committed throughout the Pacific – with a weapon already weighted with controversy.”²⁷⁸ In making this argument, Toland acknowledges that American decision-making had more to do with *when* the bombs would be used and that thoughts of politics (i.e. the Russians) and revenge were tantamount to the process. Additionally, he notes that, “...Americans as a whole regarded the atomic bomb primarily as a deliverance from four costly years of war.”²⁷⁹ Finally, he mentions that no high-level meeting had been convened to discuss the necessity of a second atomic-bomb attack because President Truman was prepared to continue dropping bombs if it meant saving American lives.²⁸⁰

A close examination of Toland’s work reveals the author’s critical view towards the bombs. Toland can be seen as supporting the hegemonic historiographical view of the bombs, simply because he categorizes their use as being “inevitable”. Yet, through his deeper analysis of victims (he devotes a comparatively large amount of space to the experience of Japanese civilians on the ground including anecdotes about a soldier, a mother and her daughter, a telephone employee, students from the Girls Commercial School, two student nurses, and a doctor),²⁸¹ Toland breaks the traditional mold of historiographical analysis of the atomic bombs found in American discourse. In the end, Toland occupies a space that is still very much a part of the hegemonic view but manages to be critical of the use of the bombs.

Toland is not entirely unique within American historiography of the atomic bombs. In fact, other authors that have adopted a “Japanese perspective” of the events of the Pacific War have also been able to stray from the most hardline support of the decision to use the atomic bombs while still staying well within the hegemonic discourse of the atomic bombs. Meirion and

²⁷⁷ John Toland, *The Rising Sun: The Decline and Fall of the Japanese Empire, 1936-1945* (New York: Modern Library, 2003), 774.

²⁷⁸ Toland, 776.

²⁷⁹ Toland, 798.

²⁸⁰ Toland, 798.

²⁸¹ Toland, 783-785.

Susie Harries, in their book *Soldiers of the Sun: The Rise and Fall of the Japanese Army*, argue that the American decision to drop the bombs was political, rather than being motivated by concern for loss of life. They write:

Looking to the future, the Americans wanted to bring about a Japanese surrender by any means at their disposal before the Russians had time to invade, while the Russians brought forward their invasion in an attempt to forestall a surrender induced by the A-bomb, which would leave Japan largely in American hands.²⁸²

This clearly falls outside the traditional view that the bombs were justified for altruistic reasons. Yet, Harries and Harries fold back into the traditional hegemonic view of the atomic bombs in American historiography in their conclusion where they link Japanese pacifism to the atomic bombs. This attributes a positive outcome to the use of the atomic bombs. Furthermore, they link the atomic bombs to Japanese war crimes, stating that Japanese victimization by the bombs has been used politically to avoid discussion of Japanese crimes.²⁸³ This argument provides further justification for the use of the bombs by reminding the reader that “the Japanese” had committed war crimes.²⁸⁴ Thus, Harries and Harries are able to move beyond explanations for the use of the atomic bombs that provide simple justifications yet still place their arguments within the established and hegemonic American discourses of the atomic bombs.

When examining this sample of American post-war historiography it is possible to identify several ideas that continuously inform how the atomic bombs are viewed. These can be generally categorized as positive or in favor of the bombs. There is a reliance on deferring to decisions made by wartime leaders in the past in order to avoid critical questioning of the use of the bombs. Alternatively, the atomic bombs have been justified morally for a variety of reasons mainly the idea that the Allies were fighting a just war against an evil enemy. Taken together, it

²⁸² Meirion Harries and Susie Harries, *Soldiers of the Sun: The Rise and Fall of the Imperial Japanese Army* (New York: Random House, 1991), 453.

²⁸³ Harries and Harries, 490.

²⁸⁴ The argument that “the Japanese” committed war crimes or “the Japanese” bombed Pearl Harbor and thus the atomic bombs were justified is quite common in both historiography and popular memory of the Pacific War. This is problematic because “the Japanese” fails to differentiate between the Japanese military/government leaders and the Japanese people. It is important to recall that the Japanese political system during the war stifled dissent from the people and that Japanese civilians were, largely, victims of their own leaders. This should not be taken as an argument that Japanese war crimes should be forgiven, only that there are larger issues of definition that extend beyond a generic label for a group of people that “the Japanese” represents.

can be easily argued that American historiography is in favor of or defends the use of the bombs and provides a variety of different justifications.

4.4 Non-hegemonic Views & Discourses

To this point, the focus of this chapter has been on the American hegemonic historiographical discourse that supports the use of the atomic bombs (with varying explanations or justifications). However, this should not be taken as an argument that *all* American historiographical discourse of the atomic bombs falls into this hegemonic view. Quite to the contrary, there is a rich scholarship and body of writing that argues directly against the hegemonic view that the dropping of the atomic bombs was necessary or justified. Yet, it is important to remember that the existence of this counter discourse does not undermine the power of the hegemonic view. Indeed, some of the works that are most critical of the hegemonic discourse lament the fact that the atomic bombings retain as much support as they do, especially in the United States.

Perhaps the most important scholar writing against the hegemonic grain of American atomic bomb discourse is Gar Alperovitz. His research into the decision to drop the first atomic bombs is oft cited as the prime example of “revisionist” scholarship on the bombs. He first wrote about the atomic bombs and their relation to diplomacy in his Cambridge University doctoral dissertation, *Atomic Diplomacy: Hiroshima and Potsdam* which was published as a book in 1965.²⁸⁵ The book was updated and republished twice, once in 1985 (as a major update based on new source material) and again in 1995 (to mark the 50th anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki).²⁸⁶ While notable, *Atomic Diplomacy* is less important to understanding anti-atomic bomb discourse than Alperovitz’s later book, *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb*, which was also first published in 1995.

Alperovitz splits *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb* into two “books” which he titles “The Decision” and “The Myth”. “The Decision” makes use of newly available (at the time) historical materials to further the argument that the atomic bombs were not necessary, did not save American lives, and were used as a part of American diplomacy at the end of World War

²⁸⁵ Gar Alperovitz, *Atomic Diplomacy: Hiroshima and Potsdam – The Use of the Atomic Bomb and the American Confrontation with Soviet Power* (East Haven, Connecticut: Pluto Press, 1994), 3.

²⁸⁶ Alperovitz, *Atomic Diplomacy*, xi-xii.

II.²⁸⁷ More detailed descriptions of how these arguments are made and the sources consulted are beyond the scope of this work. Yet some focus should be paid to how Alperovitz covers numerous issues that have affected research and contemporary understanding of the decision to use the atomic bombs in this section. This includes the role of classified documents and the tendency of American leaders to make decisions orally (thus not leaving records for historians) which has had an adverse effect of histories of the atomic bombs.²⁸⁸ This part of the book can be largely read as a continuation of his earlier work to argue that the decision to use the atomic bombs was influenced by American political aims rather than the more commonly held “saving American lives” argument.

However, it is the second section, “The Myth”, that Alperovitz makes a major contribution to understanding how American memory of the bombs was forged in a deliberate fashion by influential American politicians. As noted above, Alperovitz dedicates this part of the book to debunking myths about the decision to use the atomic bombs by a close examination of major American politicians, mainly Harry Truman, Henry Stimson, and James F. Byrnes, and their deliberate actions to control how Hiroshima was remembered in American collective/cultural memory. This led to misinformation being relayed to many Americans through mass media. Alperovitz comments on this situation,

It is certainly the case that we Americans have been badly served by our leaders in connection with the promulgation of various Hiroshima myths – that we were systematically misled about many of the basic facts. Furthermore, an entire generation of soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines (and through them, their family and friends) were taught that their lives were saved by the atomic bomb; their understandable relief based on this false information has added to the strength of the myth.

Thus, Alperovitz shifts from studying only the past into attempting to make sense of contemporary understandings of the atomic bombs. Yet, it is notable that he dedicates the entire second half of his book to describing the creation of, what he labels as, a myth. This displays Alperovitz’s understanding that his ideas are against hegemonic discourse and popular perceptions. As a result, the second half of *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb* can be read as a lamentation of the continued strength of the support to use the atomic bombs in American

²⁸⁷ Alperovitz, *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb*, 15-420.

²⁸⁸ Alperovitz, *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb*, 29, 99, 200, 306, 414, 494, 613.

discourse. Acknowledgment of the hegemonic discourse that justifies the use of the atomic bombs is common in anti-atomic bomb discourse.

Lifton and Mitchell, two of the most ardent opponents of the hegemonic historiographical view, preface their book on Hiroshima with the argument that the bombing of Hiroshima elicited feelings of both satisfaction and deep anxiety among Americans and that these feelings have coexisted ever since.²⁸⁹ They extend this argument when they write, “But instead of attempting to come to terms with the atomic bombing, on all its levels of meaning, Americans continue to treat Hiroshima, above all else, as a threat to our national self-image.”²⁹⁰ This “national self-image” can be understood as the feeling that Americans have that they are “good”, “just”, or “moral” and that they have acted righteously throughout history, especially in this time frame. This statement not only voices the authors’ opposition to entrenched views of the atomic bombs among Americans but is also strongly indicative of their knowledge that their arguments may not be well received because they go against the established hegemonic perspective. More importantly, it shows that Lifton and Mitchell believe that the ways that the atomic bombs are written about, and remembered, have less to do with analyzing what happened in the past than they do with defending American self-perceptions in the present.

Richard H. Minear provides a more thorough analysis of the issue that Lifton and Mitchell hint at. In his article, *Atomic Holocaust, Nazi Holocaust*, Minear describes the issues of remembering the atomic bombs within American discourse. He notes that there are no American museums that commemorate the victims of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.²⁹¹ This leads him to argue that, “Monuments in this country to Hiroshima and Nagasaki take the viewpoints of the victimizers.”²⁹² Minear does not find this to be particularly surprising, as he notes that nations do not commemorate their own atrocities.²⁹³ He thus provides a reasonable explanation for the deficits of atomic-bomb memory in America and the West. Indeed, his argument is like Lifton and Mitchell’s and could be described as an “atomic bombs as (potential) shame” model of remembering in which American historiography vehemently

²⁸⁹ Lifton and Mitchell, xi.

²⁹⁰ Lifton and Mitchell, xiii.

²⁹¹ Richard H. Minear, “Atomic Holocaust, Nazi Holocaust: Some Reflections,” *Diplomatic History* 19, No. 2 (Spring 1995): 349.

²⁹² Minear, 350.

²⁹³ Minear, 351.

defends the use of the bombs because they conflict with popular self-images of America and Americans as benevolent and good.

However, Minear does not conclude his analysis of the issue with this brief observation. Instead, he examines why Americans do not consider the Japanese victims of the bombs. The first part of this, according to Minear, is that Americans have not engaged with the most important sources of these stories: the writings of Japanese survivors. Minear attributes this perpetual ignorance to three factors: 1) the “accident” of language (i.e. many materials are untranslated, and few Americans can read Japanese), 2) a lack of identification with survivors and, 3) a general lack of interest.²⁹⁴ In addition to this, Minear argues that, for most Americans, Hiroshima has become a part of a matched pair of bookends with Pearl Harbor where the Japanese started the war via a sneak attack and Americans ended it at Hiroshima and Nagasaki with atomic bombs.²⁹⁵ In Minear’s words, “[For most Americans,] however brutal, Hiroshima was fit punishment for Pearl Harbor. The equation was not merely, or even primarily historical; it was moral.”²⁹⁶

Minear concludes his article by framing the atomic-bomb debate and commemoration in its American context. He writes, “The only American memorials to Hiroshima and Nagasaki are to the victimizers, not the victims, and there is no debate.”²⁹⁷ Minear, and to some extent both Alperovitz and Lifton and Mitchell, typify a major aspect of non-hegemonic American discourse of the atomic bombs. As writers that oppose the way the bombs are framed in American historiography a major part of their scholarship is devoted to arguing that there are other ways to interpret the dropping of the atomic bombs that extend beyond mere acceptance or justification of their use. This is a necessary caveat for anti-atomic bomb historiography in America and the West because of the overwhelming influence of the hegemonic view.

Howard Zinn addressed the moral issues of the atomic bombs directly in 1995, the fifty-year anniversary of the end of the war, in his pamphlet *Hiroshima: Breaking the Silence* (later reprinted as a book under the title *The Bomb*). Zinn, a B-17 bomber crew member over Europe during World War II, begins his account of the bombs by revealing that he was initially happy

²⁹⁴ Minear, 358.

²⁹⁵ Minear, 363.

²⁹⁶ Minear, 363-364.

²⁹⁷ Minear, 365.

about their use. The use of the bombs and subsequent surrender of the Japanese prevented Zinn from being redeployed to Japan. Yet, Zinn reveals that he did not truly understand the bombs, or what they did to the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, at the time. He describes his understanding of the bombing of Hiroshima as “an abstraction”.²⁹⁸ This, Zinn argues, is still how Americans experience news of bombings. He writes, “To this day, the vicious reality of aerial bombing is lost to most people in the United States, a military operation devoid of human feeling, a news event, a statistic, a fact to be taken in quickly and forgotten.”²⁹⁹ This point is important personally for Zinn but also becomes part of his larger argument against the atomic bombs.

Zinn positions the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki among other 20th century examples of state-mandated violence. These include the Nazi extermination camps at Auschwitz, the American atrocities at My Lai, war crimes committed in Chechnya, and the ATF assault at Waco.³⁰⁰ This positioning may seem extreme, or perhaps unfair to some, but it is indicative of Zinn’s position that the atomic bombs were not justified and were indeed, criminal. This goes against the hegemonic view of World War II as a “good” war and is extremely critical of the idea that the atomic bombs were justified or necessary. Zinn criticizes the feelings of moral righteousness amongst the Allied leaders stating that they produced a righteousness that was, “...dangerous not only to the enemy but to ourselves, to countless innocent bystanders, and to future generations.”³⁰¹

From here, Zinn examines key issues surrounding the decision to drop the bombs. These include: the idea that the bombs were dropped to make a point,³⁰² the argument surrounding potential American casualties (which he dismisses),³⁰³ Nagasaki as a test of plutonium bombs,³⁰⁴ the “technological fanaticism” of atomic bomb scientists,³⁰⁵ and the American “mood of retaliation.”³⁰⁶ He also traces these ideas to weak historiographical defenses of the bomb that are

²⁹⁸ Howard Zinn, *The Bomb* (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2010), 17-18.

²⁹⁹ Zinn, 18.

³⁰⁰ Zinn, 26.

³⁰¹ Zinn, 29.

³⁰² Zinn, 45.

³⁰³ Zinn, 47.

³⁰⁴ Zinn, 51.

³⁰⁵ Zinn, 54-55.

³⁰⁶ Zinn, 59.

used today.³⁰⁷ Zinn connects these ideas to decisions to use mass violence today and, thus, thoroughly and vehemently argues against the atomic bombs. He writes,

We can reject the belief that the lives of others are worth less than the lives of Americans, that a Japanese child, or an Iraqi child, or an Afghani child is worth less than an American child. We can refuse to accept the idea, which is the universal justification for war, that the means of massive violence are acceptable for ‘good ends,’ because we should know by now, even though we are slow learners. That the ugliness of the means is always certain, the goodness of the end always uncertain.³⁰⁸

Zinn provides, perhaps, one of the most critical examinations of the atomic bombs within American historiography, as he refuses to give even the smallest credence to arguments justifying the mass killing of civilians that the atomic bombs ultimately represented.

Michael Walzer also uses the atomic bombs as examples in his moral argument about just and unjust wars. Walzer relies upon numerous historical examples within his work but, for the purposes of this dissertation, it is only necessary to examine how he frames the use of the atomic bombs. He describes the use of sliding scales and utilitarian calculations within war decision-making. For example, it may be generally considered to be repugnant to attack civilians in peace time, but then, during a protracted war this belief may be abandoned. Generally, the idea that using the atomic bombs “saved American lives” has been considered as an example of a sliding scale that resulted in a utilitarian decision to drop the atomic bombs.³⁰⁹ However, Walzer argues that the decision to drop the bomb on Hiroshima was a utilitarian calculation without the sliding scale. Instead, it was, “...a claim to override the rules of war and the rights of Japanese civilians.”³¹⁰

The reason that the sliding scale cannot be applied to the use of the atomic bombs, according to Walzer, has to do with American war aims. He points out that Americans were not faced with the threat of “a butchery” that someone else was threatening (i.e. the loss of American lives in a planned invasion) but instead were threatening mass violence that had already been started (i.e. the saturation bombing of Japanese civilians).³¹¹ Instead, the perceived threat to

³⁰⁷ Zinn, 61.

³⁰⁸ Zinn, 63-64.

³⁰⁹ Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), 264.

³¹⁰ Walzer, 266.

³¹¹ Walzer, 267.

Americans lives was caused by American war aims (i.e. unconditional surrender) which made it necessary to choose between two options: the atomic bombs or full-scale invasion.³¹² Walzer further argues that it is necessary to question war aims and that the Americans leaders owed the Japanese people, in the very least, an attempt at diplomacy.³¹³ Ultimately, Walzer dismisses all claims that justify the use of the atomic bombs. He concludes,

Utilitarian calculation can force us to violate the rules of war only when we are face-to-face not merely with defeat but with a defeat likely to bring disaster to a political community. But these calculations have no similar effects when what is at stake is only the speed or scope of victory.³¹⁴

As a final example of American historiography that resists the hegemonic narratives of the atomic bombs, it is valuable to examine some of the works of historian John Dower. Dower occupies a unique position within atomic-bomb historiography because he is an American historian who frequently, and effectively, writes from a Japanese perspective. He accomplishes this by using Japanese sources and disconnecting himself from American preconceptions. Dower's works that take the Japanese perspective will be discussed in a later chapter. For our present purposes, this chapter will examine two works that are written from a more traditional American perspective.

One of Dower's early works, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*, examines the war through a unique lens. Rather than relying on the myth of the "good war". Dower directly calls out war memory in the United States, stating, "We can never hope to understand the nature of World War Two in Asia, or international and interracial conflict in general, if we fail to work constantly at correcting and re-creating the historical memory."³¹⁵ With this in mind, he introduces the idea that race played a major role in the Pacific War and the use of the atomic bombs. He argues, "...it is easy to forget the visceral emotions and sheer race hate that gripped virtually all participants in the war, at home and overseas, and influenced many decisions at the time...Such dehumanization, for example, surely facilitated the decisions to make civilian populations the targets of concentrated attack, whether by conventional or nuclear

³¹² Walzer, 267.

³¹³ Walzer, 267-268.

³¹⁴ Walzer, 268.

³¹⁵ John W. Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), ix.

weapons.³¹⁶ The rest of the work is divided into two sections that describe American and Japanese propaganda, respectively. The bombs themselves are not discussed in further detail but the framework that Dower uses opens a non-hegemonic historiographical interpretation of the decision to use the atomic bombs: that they were used largely due to deeply engrained racial hatreds, rather than for any over-arching political or altruistic reasons.

In a work that is more directly concerned with the atomic bombs, *Cultures of War: Pearl Harbor/Hiroshima/9/11/Iraq*, Dower raises several points that are important to understanding the continued position of the bombs in American collective/cultural memory. The book was written in response to the use of history by American media in the wake of 9/11 and the Iraq War. Though the work covers numerous aspects of this issue in many different contexts, for the purposes of this dissertation it is Dower's arguments about history that are most relevant. Dower argues that Americans, Japanese, and Islamists all have used history to propagate crusades by picking up shards of a useable past while ignoring inconvenient information that does not suit the needs of power.³¹⁷ The importance of grouping American leaders with the country's historical enemies should be immediately evident. The mere mention of America alongside Japan and radical Islamists instantly distances Dower from the hegemonic view of American's past, especially regarding the Pacific War and the use of the atomic bombs.

Dower is not unaware of the position that he has staked out for himself. He notes that World War II is still viewed as the last "good war" by Americans and that, in the wake of 9/11, plundering from that viewpoint was "natural, irresistible [and] almost addictive".³¹⁸ Dower's analysis of the misuse of World War II history leads to, perhaps, his most valuable concept for collective/cultural memory, "the cracked mirror". Dower writes, "History misused is a cracked mirror, and tragedy can ensue from failing to recognize this. In this case it did."³¹⁹ In this quote, Dower offers the reader the idea that Americans have a skewed version of World War II that they prefer to remember and that this view has had disastrous consequences for the nation and its people (in this case the quagmire of the Iraq War).

³¹⁶ Dower, *War Without Mercy*, 11.

³¹⁷ John W. Dower, *Cultures of War: Pearl Harbor/Hiroshima/9/11/Iraq* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2010), xxxi.

³¹⁸ Dower, *Cultures of War*, 11.

³¹⁹ Dower, *Cultures of War*, 14.

Dower does not pursue the idea of the “cracked mirror” of history throughout his work. Instead, he focuses on a more traditional historical analysis for large sections of the book. The result of this is one of the most thorough descriptions of the United States strategic-bombing campaign and the decision to use the atomic bombs.³²⁰ Dower, rather than relying on *one* reason for the use of the atomic bombs, provides a list of *nine* reasons that the bombs were used while also providing an analysis of each.³²¹ This, once again, distances Dower from a hegemonic view of the decision to use the atomic bombs where ultraistic and monolithic interpretations are favored.

Another aspect of the book that distances it from traditional historiography of the atomic bombs is the goal of the work. Dower actively attempts to create linkages between past and present and to show how the past is used. He argues that linking terror to Islamist, un-Christian, or non-Western people displays a wilful neglect of terror bombings’ historical contexts and deep connections to American and British actions during World War II.³²² However, it is how Dower criticizes American memory of the Pacific War and the atomic bombs that is most emblematic of the non-hegemonic historiographical view of the past. He writes,

It is testimony to the impressive defense mechanisms of popular consciousness in general, and patriotism in particular, that most Americans managed to embrace the resurrected images of Ground Zero, the mushroom cloud, and shock and awe without giving much if any thought to the contradictions among them, or to the fact that it was the United States itself that, in the final five months of the war against Japan, perfected the policy and practice of destroying cities and enemy populations with weapons of mass destruction.³²³

I can think of no other statement that better critiques both the skewed American collective/cultural memory of the war and the continued abuse of this memory to suit contemporary power structures. Undeniably, Dower’s work points towards the general issues of an American war memory that frequently crystalizes into the justification of American war aims

³²⁰ Dower, *Cultures of War*, 162-285.

³²¹ Dower, *Cultures of War*, 222-223. Dower’s list is as follows: 1) ending the war and saving American lives 2) fixation on deploying overwhelming force 3) power politics in the emerging Cold War 4) domestic political considerations 5) scientific “sweetness” and technological imperatives 6) the technocratic kinetics of an enormous war machine 7) the sheer exhilaration and aestheticism of unrestrained violence 8) revenge 9) “idealistic annihilation” i.e. the idea that excessive violence on human targets would prevent future wars.

³²² Dower, *Cultures of War*, 299.

³²³ Dower, *Cultures of War*, 156.

and atrocities such as the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (but also the continued use of air power against civilians today).

4.5 Summarizing American Discourses of the Past

American discourses of the past regarding the atomic bombs are generally in favor of the decision to drop the bombs. This is not the *only* way of viewing the past, but it is indeed the most common. We can say that the hegemonic view of the past in American discourse argues in favor of the use of the atomic bombs on Japanese civilians at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. As seen throughout this chapter the bombs are defended in numerous ways including, most importantly, the saving of American lives. This, I believe, is connected to an entrenched American need to defend World War II as a “good war” and proclaim that American historical figures from that time were altruistic and heroic. This allows for, and sometimes even forces or mandates, arguments that find ways to justify the bombs either by deferring to leaders of the past, creating moral systems that allow for the killing of civilians, or relying purely upon pre-existing historiography and attacking reinterpretations.

There are examples of writing that combat the hegemonic view, but they are marginalized by the sheer power and influence of the justification narrative. Writers in this vein face an uphill battle when attempting to argue their points and, seemingly, know that they will be judged for straying from the entrenched view. The fact that these works exist does not undo the hegemony of pro-atomic bomb discourses of the past.

In attempting to establish an American discourses of the past model of the atomic bombs, this chapter has focused primarily on historiography rather than popular culture sources. This decision is deliberate but should not be viewed as discounting the power of media to become part of an established discourses of the past of the atomic bombs in the United States. The next chapter will examine how American video games, in particular *Fallout 4*, *Far Cry 5*, and *Far Cry New Dawn*, interact with, influence, and replicate established discourses of the past.

V. American Video Games as Atomic Bomb Discourse

5.1 American Video Games as Atomic Bomb Discourse

Careful historiographical analysis reveals that, in an American context, the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are generally argued to have been justified or are defended as necessary in some way. This chapter examines three video games, *Fallout 4* (2015), *Far Cry 5* (2018), and *Far Cry New Dawn* (2019) to examine how they interact with these larger discourses of the past. None of these games are directly concerned with depicting World War II in the Pacific theatre or the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Instead, they include references to Hiroshima and Nagasaki or representations of fictional nuclear strikes. Thus, these games do not represent history directly, but rely on referents to real pasts in their settings, narratives, characters, and gameplay. While it would have been possible to select games that referenced Hiroshima and Nagasaki directly these games have been specifically chosen because they do not.³²⁴ When video games rely upon allegory, fiction, or pseudo-historical events it becomes possible to see how existing discourses of the past are remediated through the medium.

Each case study is based upon “trophy hunter” style playthroughs, meaning that the goal of each playthrough was to experience as much content as possible based upon trophy challenges created by the developers. Each case study, based on the collected data from these playthroughs, will examine five aspects of each title: general information/series history, setting, narrative, characters, and gameplay as defined in the methodology chapter (chapter III). This will be followed by an analysis of the significance of these elements as they specifically pertain to discourses of the past of the atomic bombs in American contexts. While each of these case studies is designed to be self-contained, the chapter concludes with a broader analysis of the combined lessons of the case studies in aggregate. The combined conclusion examines the cultural significance of each title arguing that the video games do not perfectly replicate the

³²⁴ For an analysis of how *Call of Duty: World at War* (2008), a game that does reference the bombs directly, fits within discourses of the past see:

Ryan Scheiding, “‘That’s Not Real Victory’: Atomic Bomb Collective/Cultural Memory in *Call of Duty* and *Valkyria Chronicles*,” *RePlaying Japan 2* (2020): 135-146.

For a further example of allegorical representations of the atomic bombs in video games see:

Ryan Scheiding, “‘The Father of Survival Horror’: Shinji Mikami, Procedural Rhetoric, and the Collective/Cultural Memory of the Atomic Bombs,” *Loading: The Journal of the Canadian Game Studies Association* 12, no.20 (2019): 1-14.

established discourses of the past but instead support and interact with these systems in a video game specific way. *Fallout 4*, *Far Cry 5*, and *Far Cry New Dawn* do not attempt to recreate real pasts, but they engage in ways of remembering the past that allow for them to be understood as part of established systems of collective/cultural memory, history, and discourse.

5.2 Case Study - Fallout 4

5.2.1 General Information and Series History

Fallout (1997-present) is a long running series with a diverse list of publishers and developers. The first title of the series, *Fallout: A Post Nuclear Role Playing Game* (1997), was developed and published by the California-based company Interplay Productions. Since that release, the intellectual property has changed hands or been contracted out to numerous other American companies. Games in the series have been developed by Interplay Entertainment, Black Isle Studios, Micro Forte, Obsidian Entertainment, and Bethesda Game Studios. They have been published by Interplay Entertainment, 14 Degrees East, and Bethesda Softworks. The most recent title, *Fallout 76* (2018) was published by Bethesda Softworks and developed by Bethesda Game Studios. Full histories of each of these companies (and how they interact with one another) are complicated but, for the purposes of this analysis, the important factor is that each is an American company. As such, the *Fallout* games are part of, and subject to, larger American discourses of the past. Throughout the series, the player navigates different American cities in the aftermath of the nuclear fallout. Currently, the series consists of 10 games (4 in the main series, 4 spin-offs, and 2 non-canon). *Fallout 4*, the subject of this case study, was released 10 November 2015. It was developed by Bethesda Game Studios and published by Bethesda Softworks.

The 1997 *Fallout* title largely established the lore and universe that the series has followed up to the present. Generally, the *Fallout* games take place in a parallel timeline that diverges from our own circa 1950. In the *Fallout* universe the transistor is never invented and, as a consequence, technology relies more on 1950s standards which results in a retro-futurist aesthetic. A major part of this aesthetic are the multiple companies and corporations that exist in universe. Many of these companies are sarcastic or whimsical in nature and include Nuka Cola (which combines the look of Coca-Cola with a 1950s nuclear weapon/space theme, for example all the cola bottles are shaped like a rocket ship), Vault-Tec (a government defense contractor

that creates large-scale public bomb shelters which are typically a cover for grim experiments), and RobCo Industries (a computer and robotics firm that produces enormous MS DOS style computers and humorous butler robots). These companies, due to their borderline cartoonish commitment to unfettered 1950s-style capitalism (i.e. extremely anti-Communist and inherently jingoist) become a conduit for criticism of the precise systems and timeframes that *Fallout* depicts (i.e. World War II and postwar America). In addition to these ironic depictions of corporate America, the series also, of course, deals with questions of nuclear war and its aftermath. Within this universe, competition for natural resources leads to “the Great War” between the United States and China. This conflict ends abruptly when both sides launch massive nuclear strikes on one another in 2077. The combination of sarcasm with more serious issues has allowed the series to depict the horrors of nuclear war through a unique lens that can be colloquially labelled as the equivalent of “gallows’ humor”.

This combination of elements, especially the idea of the past colliding with the present and future, has made the *Fallout* series popular within game studies. The series has been studied as an example of Baudrillard’s simulacra,³²⁵ as an example of counterfactual history,³²⁶ and as a case study of “appropriated” musical nostalgia.³²⁷ While these studies elucidate the attempts of the series to connect a real past with a post-apocalyptic universe, they do not consider the larger historiographical connections that the series has with the past or its interrelation with established collective/cultural memory. The series has a unique relationship to established discourses of the past of the atomic bombings because parts of the series (i.e. nuclear war, fallout, radiation, etc.) are directly connected to real-life events while others (i.e. the science fiction and fantastical elements) are not. As a result, tracing the connections and disconnections between *Fallout* and established discourses of the past reveals much about how video games remediate real pasts into allegorical fictions.

³²⁵ Kathleen McClancy, “The Wasteland of the Real: Nostalgia and Simulacra in *Fallout*,” *Game Studies* 18, no. 2 (September 2018): n.p.

³²⁶ Samuel McCready, “Playing the Past and Alternative Futures: Counterfactual History in *Fallout 4*,” *Loading: The Journal of the Canadian Game Studies Association* 12, no.20 (2019): 15-34.

³²⁷ Andra Ivanescu, “Temporal Anomalies: Alternative Pasts and Alternative Futures,” in *Popular Music in the Nostalgia Video Game: The Way it Never Sounded* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 109-143.

5.2.2 Setting

The main story of *Fallout 4* is set in the Commonwealth; the remains of the pre-war city of Boston. However, later DLC releases expanded the setting to Far Harbor, an island in Maine, and an abandoned theme park named Nuka World which was in proximity to Boston but not within the city. All of these locations are part of the same world story-wise (but are three different open-world maps gameplay-wise) and represent the post-apocalyptic nuclear wasteland in a similar fashion. In *Fallout 4* the nuclear post-apocalypse is depicted in a way that blends the true-to-life experiences of Hiroshima and Nagasaki with more fanciful aspects. For example, the Commonwealth is filled with scorched landscapes and many gutted buildings which resembles Hiroshima and Nagasaki (excepting cultural, geographical, and architectural differences) in the aftermath of the bombs. There is limited flora, none of which would be classified as “normal” or “healthy” which also makes the Commonwealth resemble Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August of 1945. This follows established American discourses of the past, such as those established by the American government directly after the bombings, that readily depict the destruction of cities via atomic attack while omitting the human victims. This depiction of atomic holocaust has been recreated in numerous forms, in both historiography and within media, and is on full display within *Fallout 4*.

Yet, at the same time, *Fallout 4* differs from the historical record in the permanence of the destruction. Whereas Hiroshima and Nagasaki recovered both naturally (through the dissipation of radiation and the recovery/regrowth of plants) and through human intervention (through economic recovery and rebuilding efforts) the Commonwealth is destroyed and, as revealed in the narrative of *Fallout 4*, remains a radiation-riddled nuclear wasteland for over a century. For example, the majority of the fauna has been mutated and become monstrous (discussed below in the Characters section). In addition, radiation is a continuing problem in the Commonwealth, as it is ever-present even centuries after the dropping of nuclear weapons. The end result is a set of wastelands full of debris, partially destroyed buildings, permanently scorched landscapes, and numerous enemies which presents a blend of historically accurate aspects with ahistorical touches that make *Fallout 4*'s world interesting to explore and fun to play in for the player.

Within these large maps are several locations that are taken from real-life Boston, including Diamond City (Fenway Park), the Institute (MIT, though driven underground), the USS Constitution, the Freedom Trail, and Spectacle Island. Also, the game draws upon some of the history of Boston in the naming of its factions with the Minutemen (a Massachusetts-based militia with roots dating back to the 17th century) and the Railroad (a reference to the Underground Railroad and slavery) serving as prominent examples. It should be noted that the “history” that *Fallout 4* tends to rely upon - references to the Underground Railway notwithstanding - are typically white, Anglo-Saxon, and male centric. They also tend to stress and highlight American-ness, the American Dream, and the American ideal. This can possibly be read as a critique of those ideals through irony, humour, or satire, but they remain present and relevant.

In addition, the player can find numerous underground bunker systems referred to as vaults throughout *Fallout 4*'s open world. These areas are the remains of nefarious, or sometimes comical, experiments undertaken by the aforementioned Vault-Tec Corporation, an in-universe company with a cartoonish blue and yellow aesthetic that provides much of the iconography for the series. In *Fallout 4* this is mainly through 1950s-esque “educational” videos that inform the player about aspects of the world and gameplay systems. Finally, as the player progresses, they discover areas where they can establish settlements that act as basecamps for the player's continued adventures (this is further explored in the Gameplay section). The post-apocalyptic setting of the game is one of the series' distinguishing features and has been the focus of academic inquiry in the past.³²⁸ In terms of post-apocalyptic settings, *Fallout 4* provides what would be generally expected of the genre which can be described broadly as an open-world role-playing game (RPG). The highly irradiated, largely destroyed, and genuinely unpleasant feel fits typical visions of what a city would look like after a nuclear attack. *Fallout 4*'s post-nuclear

³²⁸ Two examples of this type of analysis can be found in the works of Johnson & Tulloch and Perez-Latorre. Johnson & Tulloch analyze video games and their connections to Dystopian literature and media, arguing that *Fallout 3* transports the player into the future but forces them to question their present and past. Perez-Latorre traces post-apocalyptic fiction to the post-WWII era and describes *Fallout 4* as a piece of fiction that is dystopian with a utopian enclave. Ultimately, he argues that post-apocalyptic video games are metaphorically connected to contemporary society. See: Craig Johnson and Rowan Tulloch, “Video Games and Dystopia: Total Cities, Post-cities and the Political Unconscious,” *Journal of Gaming & Virtual Worlds* 9, no.3 (2017): 243-256. Oliver Perez-Latorre, “Post-apocalyptic Games, Heroism and the Great Recession,” *Game Studies* 19, no. 3 (December 2019): n.p.

Boston looks similar to Hiroshima and Nagasaki in many ways (see Figure 5.1) while also fitting expectations for what the post-apocalypse would look like as established by other pieces of popular culture.



Figure 5.1. Irradiated Skyline of the Commonwealth. The Sole Survivor looks across irradiated water at the Commonwealth's ruined skyline. Screenshot by R. Scheiding.

The setting of *Fallout 4* is relevant to this study because of its unique blend of the historical and ahistorical. The game directly references the atomic bombings of Japan in its introduction (via a recreation of Lt. Charles Levy's iconic photo of the mushroom cloud over Nagasaki) before transitioning to its own in-universe history and lore. This immediately blends the "real" history with the in-universe history within the player's thinking. Though they know (or should know) the difference between the two, they are immediately informed of the connection. Setting a game in a post-nuclear wasteland easily lends itself to comparisons to Hiroshima and Nagasaki yet the blending of ahistorical elements of the setting can be equally thought-provoking.

What is unique, and important to consider, is the fact that the Commonwealth is a distinctly *American* city, based upon a real-world counterpart. The use of real-world landmarks places the player in a (potentially) familiar position and results in the creation of an American victimology where *Americans* are the victims of nuclear attack. The result is a commentary and

condemnation of the use of nuclear weapons that originates not from a historical perspective (i.e. Hiroshima and Nagasaki) but from a theoretical lens where Americans *could* become victims. *Fallout 4*'s setting mourns *potential American* victims rather than *historical Japanese* victims despite its direct reference to the historical atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. While the game is under no obligation to present an accurate history – it is a fictional world after all – the focus on American victims in an American city is an important design/narrative choice to consider in analyzing the other aspects of the game.

5.2.3 Narrative

The main narrative of *Fallout 4* begins on 23 October 2077, the day that China attacks the USA with multiple nuclear weapons (and presumably when the USA responds in kind). The player created character, referred to as the Sole Survivor, (whom will be discussed in detail below in the Characters section) escapes the blasts by fleeing to Vault 111 with their spouse (either a husband or wife depending on which gender the player has chosen to play as) and infant son, Shaun. Vault-Tec personnel in Vault 111 quickly hand out blue and yellow vault suits to all of the survivors and ferry them into “decontamination pods”. The survivors soon discover that the pods are, in reality, cryogenic freezing devices and that they are to become unwilling test subjects in a Vault-Tec experiment. The player character watches from their own pod as their spouse is cryogenically frozen while holding Shaun in his/her arms. At some point, the exact timeline is deliberately unclear for the purposes of the narrative, the three family members are briefly unfrozen by unknown assailants. The player watches from inside their pod as their spouse is murdered and Shaun is kidnapped before they are quickly refrozen. The player character is then unfrozen sometime in the year 2287 with the goal of avenging their dead spouse and finding their kidnapped child somewhere in the Commonwealth (i.e. postapocalyptic Boston).

From here, the main narrative branches into several different paths, dependent upon limited player choice. However, all players, through the game's first story missions, will be forced to join the Minutemen, a local militia group that is attempting to rebuild the Commonwealth for the good of all ordinary citizens. This narrative event becomes essential to playing the game as it unlocks the settlement system that is central to gameplay and player progression. Thus, all players playing an unmodded version of the game will join the Minutemen and become responsible for helping to rebuild the Commonwealth. After a brief set of tutorial

missions centered on learning the game's building mechanics, the Minutemen point the Sole Survivor in the direction of Diamond City, where a detective who they believe can help locate Shaun, named Nick Valentine, can be found. Adventuring Southward through the Commonwealth towards Diamond City introduces the Sole Survivor to the game's three factions: the Brotherhood of Steel, the Railroad, and the Institute. The player must then pick one faction which will determine how they experience the rest of the main narrative of *Fallout 4*.

The major plot point that links these factions together is the creation of lifelike androids known as Synths. Synths are so lifelike that it is impossible, even for relatives and close friends, to discern if someone is a human or a synth until they are dead, and their corpse can be searched for synth parts. The Institute's scientists created these beings postwar in their hidden underground research center as a way of repopulating the Commonwealth, creating cheap labor, and spying on the civilian population (which they frequently do by kidnapping people and sending lookalike synth replacements to live in their place). The Railroad wants to find and free the Synths because they respect artificial intelligence and believe that the Institute is treating Synths as slaves. The Brotherhood of Steel, a large expeditionary military force, is focused on cleansing the Commonwealth of all non-humans including all super mutants and other monsters. They are especially interested in eradicating the Synths because they realize that they are being used to infiltrate the human populations of the Commonwealth. These differing views of the synths place the three factions in direct conflict with one another.

Given the diverse goals of each faction, the player can only join one group and, as a result, is locked out of the storyline of the other two.³²⁹ Complicating this choice is the revelation midway through the story that Shaun was kidnapped by Institute-hired mercenaries and raised in the Institute's underground laboratory complex. Given that the Sole Survivor was cryogenically frozen, Shaun is actually now older than his parent, has become head of the Institute, and is hoping that the Sole Survivor will take over for him when he dies from a terminal illness. The three groups, prior to the arrival of the Sole Survivor, have been locked in a three-way battle for

³²⁹ Savvy players can look up the mission flows for each faction and chose not to complete any mission that will lock them out of the other factions' missions. Using multiple game saves a player can then experience all three faction storylines without needing to start a new game. However, they will eventually be forced into choosing one of the factions for any post-narrative play. In other words, regardless of player choice, only one faction will survive. This is how I chose to play *Fallout 4* which allowed me to experience all three storylines but then lock into the one that I preferred (The Railroad).

control of the Commonwealth. When a player chooses a faction, they will become the leader or most influential member of the group and become the deciding factor in the conflict. Regardless of the faction the player chooses, the result will be victory for that faction through the completion of missions to wipe out the other two. For example, if the player chooses the Railroad, they will destroy the airship that the Brotherhood of Steel uses as a primary base before infiltrating the Institute and setting off a nuclear device. This results in the freeing of the Synths and the defeat of both the Institute and the Brotherhood of Steel. The end result of every narrative is the death of Shaun (by various means) and the player character dominating the Commonwealth as head of their chosen faction after the destruction of the two non-chosen factions.

This only covers the main narrative of *Fallout 4*, but it should be noted that there are numerous side missions, areas to explore with their own environmental storytelling,³³⁰ NPCs to talk to, etc. that expand the story of the game. What is important to consider is that the primary issues that the main narrative focuses on, the kidnapping of Shaun and the moral issues of artificial intelligence, have little to do with nuclear war. The nuclear bombs that start *Fallout 4*'s main narrative become nothing more than framing devices for a story that does not contemplate the significance of nuclear war. However, this does not mean that *Fallout 4* does not contain any commentary on nuclear war. This commentary is simply not found in the main narrative, instead it can be found in the characters and in gameplay.

³³⁰ Environmental storytelling is used in the context of this chapter to describe the idea that a game can tell small stories to the player through its environment. This can be achieved in numerous ways, such as leaving documents for the player to read or voice recordings for the player to listen to that describe what occurred in an area/building/place before the player arrived. In addition, objects can be placed around an area in a way that communicated something to a player. For example, two skeletons could be found with their arms wrapped around each other as a way of indicating that they were once people embracing one another as the nuclear bombs hit. Environmental storytelling is not unique to *Fallout*, in fact it can be found in numerous games and within different genres as a way of providing information to the player about the world that they are exploring. Henry Jenkins argues that, "Environmental storytelling creates the preconditions for an immersive narrative experience in at least one of four ways: spatial stories can evoke pre-existing narrative associations; they can provide a staging ground where narrative events are enacted; they may embed narrative information within their mise-en-scene; or they provide resources for emergent narratives." See:

Henry Jenkins, "Game Design as Narrative Architecture," in *First Person: New Media as Story, Performance, Game*, edited by Noah Wardrip-Fruin and Pat Harrigan (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004), 118-130.

5.2.4 Characters

After *Fallout 4*'s opening cinematic the first activity that the player undertakes is the creation of their avatar, officially referred to as “the Sole Survivor” but the player can name their character whatever they please. This system allows the player to select the gender, race, body type, eyes, hair, etc. of their avatar. The Sole Survivor is fully voiced with one voice track available for each gender. This allows for a great deal of customization and player choice; however, the game also locks the player into several predetermined elements, most notably the central narrative and general personality type. Once the player starts the game, they must join the Minutemen and search for Shaun if they wish to progress. In addition, regardless of customization selections, the player will be limited in dialogue options throughout the game. When the player interacts with NPCs they are presented with a limited number of similar options. Generally, these options are “good” options rather than “evil” and, essentially, lock the player into playing a good character when they are engaging in any event that requires voiced dialogue.

For example, in my playthrough I created a Chinese American woman named Meihui to see how other characters would react to her ancestry. In particular, I was interested to see if NPCs would blame her for the nuclear attacks on Boston or be otherwise racist towards her as the lore of the series would indicate. This did not occur, as differential reactions to the protagonist based on racial differences selected by the player were apparently not coded into the game in any way. This can be partially attributed to the fact that the game has fully voiced protagonists which means that for each dialogue choice that the player makes there are only four potential options. There are no choices (as far as I could find in my playthrough) that are specific to player race or appearance because of the range of these that could be possibly selected in character creation. Likewise, players cannot decide to play as an evil character as they could in previous games in the series as the series staple karma system was removed (this is discussed further below in the gameplay section). In addition, players could not even be indifferent to finding Shaun or rebuilding the Commonwealth because they were locked into these activities by the narrative and gameplay systems. The player must play as a concerned parent and good Samaritan unless they want to aimlessly wander the Commonwealth (while being locked out of a great deal of the game's content).

These limitations are understandable in terms of game development as it would be impossible to cover all possibilities and, importantly, would be a waste of development time and resources on aspects of the game that few players would experience simply because of the variation of their characters. In other words, since each player's Sole Survivor will be customized with unique physical attributes (including race), recording specific dialogue based on those traits is not financially feasible. In my character's particular example, only a small group of players would create a Chinese character (presumably) and as such that content would only be relevant to them.

In terms of being locked into a "good" character, the same argument holds. Recording dialogue for a range of differently aligned characters (i.e. good, evil, indifferent, comical, whimsical, etc.) would represent an immense financial and time investment. As a result, it makes more sense, from the standpoint of development resources, to create content that is more generic so that it can be generally applied to all players. This is supported by a 2012 study of *Fallout 3* players which revealed that the majority of players preferred to make moral decisions within their gameplay (or in the terms used in this chapter, they played as "good" characters).³³¹ As a result, it makes sense from a development perspective to focus resources on designing a "good" character; however, it also limits the impact of the character on the story and world. The Sole Survivor is, paradoxically, both a blank slate and a finished canvas. The player has great freedom in creating their character and playing the game but, narratively, most of the story progression is predetermined as all players will be forced to join the Minutemen, have to look for Shaun, and play as a good character.

In terms of discourses of the past, the Sole Survivor is still relevant despite the narrative's focus on issues that are mostly outside of nuclear warfare. The first events that the Sole Survivor experiences are the nuclear attacks and the desperate escape to the local vault. They instantly become a victim of nuclear war. After this, the Sole Survivor spends their time, narratively speaking, helping the Minutemen rebuild, searching for Shaun, and determining their favored faction to guide the Commonwealth into the future. While it is true that the character's goals and motivations throughout the story do not entwine with the deeper questions of nuclear war and its

³³¹ Andrew J. Weaver and Nicky Lewis, "Mirrored Morality: An Exploration of Moral Choice in Video Games," *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking* 15, no. 11 (November 2012): 610-614.

morality, this does not stop the character from being deeply affected by the bombs. One of the first actions that the player can take as the Sole Survivor is to search the cryogenically frozen corpse of their spouse. If they do this, they will find a wedding ring that matches the one that they already have in their inventory. The item, which is an equipable armor piece that is visible on the character model, becomes a memento of their pre-war life and, in part, symbolizes their victimhood. From this point, everything that the Sole Survivor experiences is because of the bombs. As such, it can be argued that nuclear warfare is the catalyst for their actions, but not the focus, throughout *Fallout 4*. The Sole Survivor becomes a victim of nuclear war that is simply attempting to move forward with their life.

This victimhood is important from the perspective of American discourses of the past of the atomic bombs because of how it is presented and what it represents discursively. Within American memory cultures Japanese victims of the atomic bombs have been, generally, ignored. This is mostly out of necessity, as making arguments about the need to drop the atomic bombs makes acknowledgment of Japanese victims inconvenient, difficult, or counterintuitive to the argument. As a result, when a game like *Fallout 4* is creating its narrative (centered on atomic or nuclear warfare) there is no readily available premediated content/context regarding victims. The Sole Survivor, as a victim of nuclear warfare, is a product of remediation of established discourses of the past that represents an innovation or insertion designed to fill in critical gaps found to be lacking in the original discourse. This creates an American victim/victimization that also provides the player with a conduit to be empathetic towards. As a result, the American victimization that the Sole Survivor (or many other NPCs in the game) embodies is “ahistorical”, yet it represents an important allegorical function of remediating American discourses of the past of the atomic bombs through video games.

The Sole Survivor is far from the only character that interacts with discourses of the past of the atomic bombs in *Fallout 4*. Of particular interest are the “ghoul” characters of the world. In the *Fallout* universe a ghoul is a person that survived the nuclear attacks (or encountered massive amounts of radiation in some other way sometime afterwards) and was mutated by the subsequent radiation. A ghoul retains their mental capacities, but their bodies and faces are horribly disfigured, and their voices become much hoarser. In addition, a person who has become a ghoul will no longer age and, seemingly, cannot die of natural causes. For example, in

the side mission *Kid in a Fridge* the Sole Survivor rescues a child that has been stuck in a fridge since the bombs were dropped. The child, named Billy has remained child-sized and has survived in the fridge (without food, water, or other necessities of life) for over 100 years. Billy serves as a reminder that in *Fallout 4*, due to the time skip the player experiences because of their cryogenic freezing, all of the ghouls that remain in the Commonwealth from the war period are over 100 years old and many, such as Billy, lead torturous lives.

Eventually, a ghoul may become “feral” which entails losing all reasoning and turning into a viscous, unthinking monster that attacks other non-feral ghouls and humans on sight. Narratively, feral ghouls serve as an unpleasant reminder of the constant suffering, often over the course of decades, that radiation victims experience after surviving an atomic or nuclear blast. In terms of gameplay, they become a memorable group of enemies that are similar in nature to fast-moving zombies found in wider popular culture. As such, they can be seen as a blend of historical victims and popular culture references. Ghouls, given this interpretation, are particularly important to discourses of the past surrounding the atomic bombs. To further illustrate this, it is insightful to examine other specific ghouls from *Fallout 4* that are emblematic of their general representation within the game. In particular, the companion character John Hancock, the NPC Zao, and the feral ghoul enemy type are worthy of further analysis as they provide insights into how radiation victims are depicted in *Fallout 4*.

John McDonough, pseudonym John Hancock, is the de facto mayor of the city of Goodneighbor when the Sole Survivor enters the city for the first time (see Figure 5.2). If the player so chooses, Hancock can be recruited as a companion character (i.e. he will fight alongside the Sole Survivor and travel with them throughout the Commonwealth) and can become a love interest. Goodneighbor was founded in 2240 by criminals and others that were not welcome in the largest city in the Commonwealth, Diamond City. In 2282, the mayor of Diamond City, John’s brother, decreed that all ghouls (the population of which is unclear but would consist of a significantly sized non-majority) were banned from the city and they were subsequently chased out by the non-ghoul inhabitants. After this event, many ghouls decided to move to Goodneighbor. Sometime in the five years between this event and when the Sole Survivor meets him (it is unclear exactly when), John, became a ghoul when he tried an experimental radiation-based drug and he was, subsequently, banned from Diamond City as well.



Figure 5.2: Closeup of John Hancock. A closeup of *Fallout 4*'s John Hancock, the de facto ghoul mayor of Goodneighbor. Screenshot by R. Scheiding.

Hancock fell deeper into his drug habit after leaving Diamond City and made his way to Goodneighbor where Vic, a mob-boss, was exercising control of the city. One night, Hancock witnessed the death of a fellow drifter at the hands of Vic's henchmen and coped with the trauma by going on a drug-fueled bender. When he regained consciousness, he found himself in a museum that displayed the real clothing of American Revolutionary Patriot John Hancock. This is when John McDonough decided to steal the clothes and adopt the moniker John Hancock, or Hancock for short. From this point on Hancock dedicated himself in the short-term to overthrowing Vic and maintaining order in Goodneighbor with the long-term goals of protecting innocents and punishing the wicked. These goals are, eventually, what attracted him to traveling and fighting beside the Sole Survivor. Given that much of this backstory is hidden within collectible files, the player will either 1) not find the files and view Hancock as a charismatic leader or 2) read these files and discover that, despite his past transgressions, Hancock is a righteous man. Either way, Hancock is portrayed as desirable as either a character with a heroic arc or a redemption arc.

Hancock becomes a fascinating character when analyzing him within the established discourses of the past of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Visually, Hancock

resembles an atomic bomb victim, albeit in an exaggerated form, because of his disfigurement. His hardened discoloured skin resembles the keloid scars which were common among survivors of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. His rasping voice also echoes the experiences of some Japanese survivors. Indeed, the permanence of his suffering has some symmetry with real-life survivors (as many Japanese atomic bomb survivors continue to suffer to this day). Hancock embodies generalized, transcultural fears of death, suffering, and disfigurement caused by atomic or nuclear war. In fact, based only upon his physical depiction, he is both historically accurate (to a degree) and culturally relevant as a representation of atomic or nuclear fears. However, these exaggerated physical symptoms are the only overlap with Japanese atomic bomb survivors.

It is important to recognize that, not only is Hancock an American, but he has also adopted the clothing, name, and righteous patriotic attitude of an American Revolutionary figure. In other words, he is not only an American, he is a representation of a specific type of American (white, Anglo-Saxon, male, patriotic, nationalist, etc.). Stated bluntly, a person such as Hancock has historically been the least likely to be targeted by atomic or nuclear weapons (and in our contemporary moment, drones). Hancock is exactly the type of person that was not targeted with atomic weapons in 1945 (and very infrequently thereafter by other types of weapons), yet he is one of the most prominent representations of victimhood and triumph of an indomitable spirit within *Fallout 4*. The permanence of his victimhood is tragic, but Hancock represents an overtly ahistorical representation of victimhood where potential American victims are mourned instead of real historical victims or potential future victims. *Fallout 4* creates a fiction where white Americans are in the most peril of attack and the most victimized, a proposition that runs contrary to both historical fact and contemporary military and geopolitical realities.

This, in itself, is not an issue as *Fallout 4* is a work of fiction that is under no obligation to and does not purport to (despite its references to Hiroshima and Nagasaki) maintain historical accuracy. However, the ahistorical nature of this depiction is significant because it is indicative of adherence to larger established discourses of the past. Much of American discourses of the past of the atomic bombs have, as a matter of convenience or shame, discounted and excluded discussion of atomic bomb victims in their arguments. This, I argue, leaves a gap for fictional (allegorical) representations of that past because there is no established way of including victims.

Fallout 4, as evidenced by characters such as Hancock, fills this gap with distinctly American victims. In a system where, to borrow Chomsky and Herman's terminology, historical Japanese victims are unworthy victims it becomes necessary to create examples of worthy victims. John Hancock is a worthy victim.

Fallout 4 seemingly doubles down on this narrative in the form of the NPC character Captain Zao. When exploring the Commonwealth, the Sole Survivor can come across rumors of a sea monster just off the coast of the city which triggers a mission called, *Here There be Monsters*. When the player decides to explore these rumors, they will discover that the "sea monster" is actually the Chinese submarine that launched the nuclear attack on Boston at the beginning of the narrative. As the crew attempted to escape, the submarine struck a mine and became stuck in the harbor. Upon exploring the submarine, the player meets Captain Zao whom was "ghoulified" along with his crew after damage from the mine caused a radiation leak in their nuclear reactor. He has since remained on the submarine and is the last of the crew to avoid becoming feral.

At this point the player can either pick a fight with Zao and kill him or help him repair the submarine and return to China. This binary decision allows some player choice yet there is not a defined "good" vs. "bad" valence to the possible choices. The player, through their own moral reasoning, can decide that Zao is evil for bombing Boston or that he is just a soldier with a family at home. Whichever stance the player takes allows for the Sole Survivor to remain "good" regardless of the player's ultimate decision. Deciding to undertake the mission involves killing the feral ghouls to get to the damaged equipment which is framed as a merciful action towards the grieving Zao since he cannot bring himself to kill his former crew. If the player decides to help Zao he will reward the player with his personal sword along with some beacons that can be used to call down tactical nuclear strikes anywhere on the map at a later time.

Zao is important within the framework of this study because he represents the antithesis of Hancock. Whereas Hancock was an American victim, Zao is a Chinese perpetrator. This is ahistorical (in terms of real-world geopolitical and historical verities) as it creates an Asian instigator of nuclear war against (predominantly white) American victims. The ahistorical nature of this depiction is, once again, unimportant on its own. Its significance is found in the further insight it provides into the influence of discourses of the past on the way that *Fallout 4*

represents nuclear war. Given that American discourses of the past have 1) argued for the necessity and legal, military, or moral right of dropping the bombs and 2) generally discounted the victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki within these arguments, there has been little discussion of the place of victims, especially radiation victims. When a video game remediates these discourses of the past there is no framework for the inclusion of radiation victims and that information must be filled in by the creators. So, the question for creators becomes: how do we represent victims? Or, how do we make our audience empathize and care about victims? While it is impossible to speak to the intentions of creators, we can examine the output, in this case *Fallout 4*, and see that these questions are answered through the creation of *American* victims and non-American (notably Asian) perpetrators.

In addition to this, given the *Fallout* series' general admonishment of warfare in general (but especially nuclear war), it is particularly interesting that, though he shows contrition for his past actions if the player decides to help him, Zao unlocks the power to rain down further nuclear attacks on the United States. Zao becomes a physical manifestation of a category of American nuclear fears, where Americans are victims or potential victims. These representations can be understood and categorized as "ahistorical representations" derived through the remediation of discourses of the past. The fact that the fictional aggressors are Asian is further important because it follows historical fears of "the yellow peril" and interacts with/supports the idea, often acted upon in American history,³³² that the use of force in the region is justified. *Fallout 4* makes Zao, the only overtly Chinese character (and one of the few Asian characters) in the game, an aggressor that is responsible for the bombing of Boston and also potentially allows the player to order future strikes. This option builds upon two of the identified themes or elements found in American historical understandings of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by adding other historical fears (i.e. the yellow peril) as well.

There are numerous enemies in *Fallout 4* that are ahistorical but offer an insight into how American video games draw from American beliefs about what nuclear war "should" look like. Many of the non-human enemies in the game are mutated versions of animals, such as

³³² American military involvement in Asia, of course, extends well past the Pacific War and the atomic bombings of Japan. This includes, but is not limited to, colonialism within former Spanish-held territories post-1898 (especially in the Philippines), involvement in the Korean War (1950-1953), the invasion of Vietnam (1955-1975), and the illegal bombing of Laos and Cambodia that became part of that conflict.

crustaceans (mirelurks), cockroaches (radroaches), bears (yao guai), and cows (brahmin). Generally, they are larger, hyper-aggressive, and mutated (brahmins, for example, have two heads) versions of pre-war animals. This, generally, does not follow how radiation exposure affected living organisms at Hiroshima and Nagasaki. However, these enemies offer challenging and aesthetically interesting interpretations of what a more fantastical version of radiation-based mutation could look – and act – like. These depictions are more functional than a historically based representation, especially in the context of a video game, because they pose a threat to the player and therefore offer the player more traditional gameplay expectations (kill or be killed) than a more true-to-life representation would. The common enemies show how an understanding of radiation mutation based in larger understandings of a true past can be remediated into video games in a functional, interesting, and challenging way.



Figure 5.3: A Fast-approaching Ghoul. The Sole Survivor draws their weapon on a fast-approaching feral ghoul. Screenshot by R. Scheiding.

Despite the link that most of the common enemies represent to the historical past, it is the aforementioned feral ghouls that are most essential to a discourses of the past reading of *Fallout 4*. As mentioned above, feral ghouls are former humans that were ghouled by radiation and later “went feral”. Going feral is generally described as when radiation poisoning overwhelms a ghoul and turns them into a dangerous monster devoid of thought and feeling. Becoming a feral

ghoul is a one-way process. A human can become a ghoul and then a feral ghoul, but they cannot revert back as each progression is permanent. A feral ghoul resembles a ghoulished human with some notable differences (Figure 5.3). Feral ghouls rarely wear clothing of any kind, but when they do it is the remaining rags of their pre-feral state. In addition, feral ghouls can sometimes change in colour (usually a pinkish red or a green radioactive glow). Aside from these minor differences they resemble ghoulished humans.

The resemblance between ghouls and feral ghouls is telling as the ghouls are the *Fallout* universe's stand-ins for radiation victims. Once again, the feral ghouls, as with the example of Hancock previously outlined, are American victims. But their feralization holds increased significance. The monstrous fate of the radiation victims, wherein the ghouls become aggressive, vicious, unthinking, and unfeeling, is important within the context of American culture. Americans were, largely, not the victims of atomic attacks and, as a result, there is not a large population of American radiation victims still living today. In addition, as outlined in Chapter IV, deliberate efforts were undertaken by those in power to remove the discussion of Japanese victims from larger questions of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Discursively, this has allowed for the complete separation of Japanese victims from analysis of the atomic bombs in the United States. Given this reality, it is much easier for popular culture representations of atomic/nuclear warfare to create victims for their fictional representations. It can be reasonably inferred that these discursive practices influenced a game like *Fallout 4*. As a result, when creators hope to design empathetic victims, the decision to make the victims Americans is not only "natural" but it has a discursive backing dating back decades. This process can be labelled as "an Americanization of victimhood". In addition, it also results in the unsophisticated depiction of radiation poisoning in *Fallout 4*.

When there is limited risk of offending a real-world group of human beings (such as *hibakusha* in Japan) it becomes easier to take artistic license with allegorical depictions of a group.³³³ Once again, the developers of *Fallout 4* are under no obligation to depict radiation

³³³ Though the *Fallout* games are international releases, past games have been censored for Japanese audiences. Most famously this included the changing of the name of a weapon that launched mini nukes, the "Fat Man" a reference to the bomb dropped on Nagasaki, and the removal of the ability to detonate a nuclear device in *Fallout 3*. There is some evidence that this type of censorship occurred in *Fallout 4* as well, with the release of the game being uniform worldwide with the exception of Japan which received the game on December 17, 2015 (more than a month after the rest of the world). Beyond this, in the absence of concrete sales numbers (a common problem in game

sicknesses accurately. Yet, the depiction of survivors as permanently traumatized and monstrous represents a distinctive way of understanding (or lack of understanding) of the impacts of atomic bombs. In a system that has generally disregarded historical victims there are no premediated examples to be remediated. When allegorical representations are created, they have no starting point to be based on and they are largely created (in this case through the creation of fictionalized, white American victims). The result with feral ghouls is a depiction that discounts the trauma of Japanese victims in favor of the creation of a challenging and aesthetically enticing enemy as the primary design goal. The discursive importance of this group of design decisions, however, should not be disregarded. The fact that fictionalized American victims stand-in for historical Japanese victims signals a connection to larger discourses of the past where Americans largely fear their own *potential* victimhood over remembrance of *actual* victims.

Hancock, Zao, and the feral ghouls represent each type of character in *Fallout 4*: a companion/potential love interest, a NPC, and an enemy type. They also, through their appearances, functions within the game, and personalities, reveal the more complex ways that *Fallout 4* remediates discourses of the past. A general acceptance or excusal of the atomic bombs by Americans, and subsequent dismissal of Japanese victims that is necessary to prop up these assertions, means that potential American victims (like Hancock) are the focus of fictional concerns about bombing. This leads to a situation where a fictional enemy (like Zao) is created that does not match the experiences of the past. Finally, real-world victims of tragedy become lost as design choices are made (like the feral ghouls as enemies). Alone, these narrative and design choices may or may not be significant, but when considered together they are indicative of the influence of established discursive practices that have shaped American memory of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

5.2.5 Gameplay

The settlement building tools that *Fallout 4* offers are an essential aspect of the gameplay experience that has been, to this point of this case study, only briefly touched upon as part of the

studies), it can be safely assumed that the Japanese audience of the *Fallout* games is only a small portion of the player base. See:

Andrew Webster, "Fallout 3 censored in Japan, quest removed," *ars Technica*, November 11, 2011. <https://arstechnica.com/gaming/2008/11/fallout-3-censored-in-japan-quest-removed/>

setting of the game but not as a gameplay system. While settlement building has some story function (the player is tasked with rebuilding the Commonwealth as a member of the Minutemen) the extent that the player engages in this activity goes far beyond this minimal narrative justification. Throughout the Commonwealth the player will find small areas that can become settlements. The player will typically be given a small task, such as killing all the creatures in the area or completing a small quest, before they gain ownership of the area and can start building. Generally, the player must recruit potential residents through building a radio signal beacon before planting crops and building homes. From here the player assigns jobs, such as farmer, merchant, doctor, or security, to the residents as a way of establishing a functioning settlement. Eventually, the player can build supply routes that connect their settlements which creates a network of safe areas where the player can rest between missions, sell unwanted items, and forge or upgrade equipment. Though entirely “optional” settlement building becomes an essential part of playing *Fallout 4* conveniently and effectively.

The settlement system helps to establish the general gameplay loop of *Fallout 4* which can be described as follows: the player begins somewhere on the map (probably one of their custom-built settlements) → they travel to a location, either story-related or a non-story explorable area (for example an abandoned store or house) → they clear the area, mostly via killing hostile inhabitants via gunplay → they collect scrap materials which can be used to build settlements → they travel back to settlement → they use scrap to enhance settlement. From here the player would start the process again by venturing back into the Commonwealth. All of these activities (discovering areas, killing enemies, building in settlements) provide experience points that are applied to the player’s global level.

Each time the player levels up they earn a point that can be assigned to one of the categories in S.P.E.C.I.A.L (an acronym where each letter represents a character skill trait; the categories are Strength, Perception, Endurance, Charisma, Intelligence, Agility, Luck). As points are assigned to each category, they unlock the ability to assign future points to perks within each category which will grant a special skill (such as picking locks, weapon proficiency, etc.). By progressing through this gameplay loop of exploration, killing, scavenging, and building the player character becomes stronger and can move deeper into the Commonwealth which will allow them to fulfill their central quest (as outlined above). In general, the intended goal for the

player in *Fallout 4* is completed through two major objectives: killing monsters or enemy humans and rebuilding small sections of the city for peaceful settlers.

The settlement building system represented a brand-new gameplay system within the *Fallout* series; however, the game is also defined by systems that are not included from previous titles. Most prominent among these is the removal of the karma system. (This is unfortunate from the perspective of game studies because the karma system has been particularly relevant in game studies literature focused on the series.³³⁴) Previous games in the *Fallout* series included this system which tracked everything that the player did and effected the game world. For example, in *Fallout 2* the player could gain a reputation title called “childkiller” if they chose to kill children in the game world. This title had a negative effect on how NPCs reacted to the player (regardless of the particular NPC’s alignment) and even made the player susceptible to attacks by bounty hunters. While this is an extreme example, there were many such titles and perks that could be acquired by the player through gameplay which allowed the player to roleplay certain types of characters through deeply engrained gameplay systems. Titles such as childkiller unlocked negative effects that made the game more difficult for the player but could be actively sought after, especially if the player decided to roleplay as an evil character.

Fallout 4 removed the karma system. While the game tracks murders, assaults, and robberies, engaging in these activities does not affect the protagonist’s role within the world. Within my own gameplay I accidentally killed several civilians which the game tracked as “murders”, mostly due to splash damage from explosive weapons, but there was no negative effect equivalent to the childkiller perk. Instead, I was still viewed as a hero by the population of the Commonwealth. Thus, with the karma system removed (along with its negative consequences) the player is locked into the main quest and will always be a hero. In the original release version of the game, the player could not side with anyone other than the Minutemen. This was later changed when the Nuka World DLC was released which allowed the player to side with the Raiders. However, even this DLC locked the player into the main narrative of

³³⁴ Schulzke provides a particularly in-depth analysis of the karma system and its effects on player’s moral decision making. In a similar vein, Piittinen has examined how *Let’s Players* make moral decisions within the series which she connects to the karma system. See:

Sari Piittinen, “Morality in *Let’s Play* Narrations: Moral Evaluations of Gothic Monsters in Gameplay Videos of *Fallout 3*,” *New Media & Society* 20, no. 12 (2018): 4671-4688.

Marcus Schulzke, “Moral Decision Making in *Fallout*,” *Game Studies* 9, no. 2 (November 2009): n.p.

trying to locate Shaun. As a result, the player cannot play a truly/fully evil character in *Fallout 4*; they must save Shaun and, to a certain extent, must help to rebuild the Commonwealth.

Within the confines of the current study, the gameplay loop can be interpreted in some important ways. By encouraging (or perhaps forcing) the player to rebuild the Commonwealth through a complex set of interconnected bases, *Fallout 4* makes the player explore the ruined parts of the map more carefully. In their quest for important pieces of scrap and more ideal locations for bases the player is forced to experience the devastation of pre-war Boston. This is most prominently seen early in the game at Sanctuary Hills, the Sole Survivor's pre-war neighborhood. The player will experience parts of this neighborhood prior to the nuclear attacks in the beginning phases of the story before they flee to the vault. When the Sole Survivor emerges from the vault the first area that they explore is Sanctuary Hills which has been largely destroyed. This area then becomes the tutorial space for settlement building and, as a result, becomes the first base for many first-time players. The player thus experiences pre-nuclear strikes, post-nuclear strikes, and rebuilding all within the same area.

Many other examples of this can occur within the game when the player finds landmarks based on real-world Boston buildings, statues, and architecture. Personally, as a baseball fan and staunch anti-Red Sox fan, I was interested in finding Fenway Park, a beautiful and iconic baseball stadium that I had seen on television and experienced in other video games (i.e. baseball simulation games like *MVP Baseball 2005* or *MLB The Show 20*). Finding it partially destroyed and serving as a friendly settlement provided me with a similar experience to playing within Sanctuary Hills. *Fallout 4* is filled with experiences like this that encourage the player to venture into a familiar space (or a space that is at least designed to feel familiar) and experience the devastation of the nuclear attacks. The fact that much violence is entailed in this exploration (even a stealthy player will find that they need to engage in combat) also draws attention to the violence and destruction of nuclear war.

Fallout 4 also contains mechanics for radiation. The player can come into contact with radiation in several ways (such as eating irradiated food or taking drugs) but the most common way of encountering radiation is through exploration of highly irradiated areas. As a game mechanic, radiation damage does not directly harm the player in the same way as other types of

damage (i.e. by removing health points from the player's health pool). Instead, radiation both damages the player and minimizes their maximum health. For example, if a player has 100 HP and they take radiation damage of 5 HP they will lose those health points and their green health bar will be reduced by 5 HP. This means that the player cannot heal up to 100 HP anymore, they can only heal to 95 HP unless they use an item that heals radiation damage (most commonly RAD-away). This, rather clearly, does not mimic real-life radiation sicknesses which, at high doses, have permanent effects. Instead, *Fallout 4*'s radiation system (from a non-narrative, gameplay perspective) represents a lore-friendly gameplay mechanic that mimics RPG genre conventions (i.e. poison damage or status effects).

This raises an important point as the radiation system clearly shows that not all aspects of the gameplay systems are connected to discourses of the past. The radiation system is not the only example of this; *Fallout 4*'s inclusion of a levelling system and assignment of perks follows pre-established RPG genre conventions (some of which were originally developed and popularized by previous games in the series). The same argument can be applied to the exploration and building systems. *Fallout 4*'s open world map navigation/gameplay, where the player navigates a large continuous space and slowly uncovers new areas and gameplay content, also follows pre-established genre conventions that can be seen in numerous other open-world games. The building gameplay also mimics numerous survival games where the player is expected to gather materials, build bases, and manage resources so that they can both survive and push further into the map. The point here is that, even when using a discourses of the past typology to analyze a game, it is important to acknowledge that many parts of a video game will not be connected to discourses of the past but will instead be influenced by genre conventions. *Fallout 4*'s gameplay systems are deeply influenced by RPG, open-world, and survival game genre conventions.³³⁵ Retaining these conventions can be seen as a necessary function of remediating discourses of the past into video games.

³³⁵ This follows James Campbell's analysis of World War II First-Person Shooter games. He finds that these games represent World War II era combat in terms of established genre conventions rather than with regard to historical realism. See: Campbell, 189.

5.2.6 Analysis

In examining the series background, setting, narrative, characters, and gameplay of *Fallout 4* it becomes clear that the game is influenced by American discourses of the past of the atomic bombs while also relying upon allegorical inventions and numerous video game genre conventions. Subsequently, this means that *Fallout 4* relies upon historical pasts to help ground and render its fictional post-nuclear wasteland but simultaneously departs from real experiences to create its fictional world. The result is a blended depiction of real historical pasts (i.e. Hiroshima and Nagasaki) with a fictional game world (i.e. post-nuclear Boston and Maine). A consequence of this practice of blending the historical with the fictional is the creation of ahistorical content within the game. It would be simple to accuse *Fallout 4* of historical inaccuracy and suggest a more accurate depiction of the past (even if allegorical or fictional) based on more thorough research or rigour.³³⁶ Yet, this would miss the point of a discourses of the past analysis.

Instead of arguing for what could enhance the game or preaching for more historical accuracy, the goal here is to assess why what has appeared has been enabled to appear. This is a delicate process, as developer intentions will always be unclear or unreliable. They are rarely stated and those that are may or may not be genuine and, more problematically, may not acknowledge larger cultural influences and assumptions that effect the creation process. As such, a discourses of the past research typology does not argue causation, only correlation. Fortunately, finding a correlation to established discourses of the past, especially hegemonic discourses such as those connected to the atomic bombs, can be enlightening. Numerous aspects of *Fallout 4* can be regarded as highly influenced by American discourses of the past surrounding Hiroshima and Nagasaki, especially those that have justified the use of the bombs and, as a side-effect, are lacking in regard to the consideration of Japanese victims. The game's history, lore, and setting are all obviously connected to atomic and nuclear discourses. The *Fallout* universe quite literally examines the fallout of nuclear war both in terms of human consequences and nuclear fallout. In doing so, it cannot help but reference Hiroshima and Nagasaki. For example, in rendering a landscape post an atomic or nuclear attack, the largest/most readily available data points and

³³⁶ This is not to imply that the developers of the *Fallout* series do not engage in research. In fact, it is well-known among the fan community that they research the landscape and geography of their selected cities as a way of rendering a more accurate depiction for their games. The research I am specifically referring to here is historical.

visual references come from Japan in August 1945. The game and series cannot help but rely upon these historical experiences.

However, not all aspects of *Fallout 4* are directly borrowed from the past. Discourses of the past, above all else, help to represent the past for use in the present. As such, they do not represent the past accurately but rather they represent it in convenient ways for the organization of the present. Atomic bomb discourses of the past in the American context have largely, by necessity, excluded Japanese victims. As such, when a game like *Fallout 4* remediates this content, there is no premediated depiction to rely upon and developers are left to create their own answers or depictions. Within the game we can identify the general disconnect from true-to-life victims. This reveals that nuclear war can be admonished in American videogames but not through an accounting of foreign victims of the past. The atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki have been, and to a large extent still are, justified by Americans.

Taking this into consideration, when creating a post-nuclear hellscape, fear and admonishment of nuclear war in *Fallout 4* must then be constructed through the lens of potential American victims located in American cities. Established discourses of the past in the United States lead to the creation of *Fallout 4*'s American victimology. Furthermore, it should be noted that discourses of the past do not fully guide the creation of allegorical depictions as other influences are likely to be present as well. This can be found in *Fallout 4* in the gameplay and game systems that are clearly influenced by established genre conventions. As much as a game such as *Fallout 4* is influenced by discourses of the past it is still a game and, as a result, relies upon expectations and conventions of the medium.

Taking this altogether it is possible to answer the question: how does a fictional game, like *Fallout 4*, fit into established discursive practices that have helped to formulate understandings of the past? Discourses of the past provide a framework for allegorically representing the past or guiding the creation of a historically grounded fictional universe, but they cannot guide the entire process of remediation because they leave intentional gaps. These gaps are necessary for the proper functioning of discourses of the past as they follow internal logics. (For example, ignoring Japanese radiation victims within atomic discourses to help further the idea that the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were necessary or justified).

However, these gaps also represent issues that need to be addressed when remediation occurs. Where there is no premediation there can be no remediation which leads to fictionalization, fabrication, and creation. In *Fallout 4*, this results in a blending of the historical, ahistorical, collective/cultural memory, and genre expectations that represents a video game specific form of remediation of discourses of the past where clear links to the past are supplemented by allegorical creations. This results in a remediation of the past that more closely resembles generalized American nuclear fears of potential victimhood than it does accurate historical representation. *Fallout 4* references the past as a way of shaping American thought about nuclear war in the present.

5.3 Case Study - Far Cry 5

5.3.1 General Information and Series History

The *Far Cry* series (2004-present) began as a tech demo for German-based developer Crytek's proprietary game engine software, CryEngine. This tech demo was expanded into a full game which became the original *Far Cry* (2004). After the first *Far Cry* game, Crytek stepped away from the series to focus on other projects. Subsequently, they sold the rights for the *Far Cry* series to the publisher of the first game, the French company Ubisoft. Since this time Ubisoft has both published and developed all of the titles in the *Far Cry* series. Development has primarily occurred in Canada through Ubisoft Montreal and Ubisoft Toronto. However, Ubisoft frequently employs some of their smaller studios to help in the development of the games. For example, *Far Cry 5* was co-developed by Ubisoft Montreal and Ubisoft Toronto with assistance from Ubisoft Kiev, Ubisoft Shanghai, and Ubisoft Reflections (which is based in Great Britain). Given that the games have always been published by a Western company and that the majority of development occurs through Western studios, *Far Cry*, as a series, can be judged to be a Western series that is subject to larger American discourses of the past.³³⁷

³³⁷ Discourses of the past of the atomic bombs in Canada (and many other Western nations) are largely dominated by American scholarship and collective/cultural memory to the point that they can be categorized as "American". In this context "American" should be understood as the dominant viewpoint based upon the hegemony of American power on a global scale rather than as being derived from a geographic location. In addition, it should be noted that Canadian sources (and those produced in other Western countries) typically recreate American discourses. For example, as discussed in chapter IV, early atomic bomb studies carried out by the British Mission to Japan (of which Canada was a participant and signatory) largely reflect their American counterparts. This close relationship has not experienced major change since that time and, as a result, it is fair to categorize the discourses as "American" and to

The first *Far Cry* game established the general formula for the series. The games in the series occur in a common universe and are linked through common themes, locales, and gameplay experiences rather than narrative or characters.³³⁸ Generally, the player is tasked with surviving in a hostile environment (such as a militarized island) while gradually gaining new abilities and weapons which are used to take over the map. Common activities include taking over enemy outposts, hunting, fishing, and traversing the area with vehicles. The games encourage mass destruction on an enclosed (yet still sizable) area where the ultimate goal is to conquer the map and defeat a villain (such as a warlord or cult leader). At the time of writing the *Far Cry* series spans 13 games (5 in the main series, 3 spin-offs, and 5 expansion pack/re-releases). The subject of this case study is *Far Cry 5* which was released on March 27, 2018. It was published by Ubisoft and developed in tandem by Ubisoft Montreal and Ubisoft Toronto.

5.3.2 Setting

All of the non-DLC content of *Far Cry 5* takes place in the picturesque Montana mountains in a fictional rural county called Hope County (see Figure 5.4 and Figure 5.5).³³⁹ Hope County is based off of real-life Southwestern Montana geography and landscape. The sparsely populated area is located in a valley and includes numerous natural landscapes to explore like mountains, caves, forests, rivers, and lakes, as well as man made settlements ranging from small farms and houses to large towns and missile silos. In addition, the county is evidently populated by doomsday preppers (a group of people who stockpile supplies in fortified locations in the hope that they can survive varied potential calamities such as nuclear war, widespread civil unrest, pandemics, invasions, etc.) leading to an abundance of underground shelters and bunkers. Finally, Hope County is dotted with para-military compounds and bases set up by the Eden's

consider media, such as video games, produced in the West as remediations of these largely “American” discourses. For more see:

The British Mission to Japan, *The Effects of the Atomic Bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1946).

³³⁸ Each game in the series features a new playable character who is unrelated to the previous protagonists. One of the few characters that appears in multiple *Far Cry* games is Hurk Drubman Jr. Hurk is an NPC in *Far Cry 3*, a co-op playable character in *Far Cry 4*, and a partner character in *Far Cry 5* and *Far Cry New Dawn*. Hurk, though primarily a comic-relief character, can be cited as evidence that the games in the series occur within the same universe.

³³⁹ *Far Cry 5* came with an arcade mode where players could create their own maps for multiplayer matches and custom solo missions. In addition, a season pass included 3 side stories that were set in Vietnam, Mars, and the imagination of a movie director (depicted as a series of movie pitches featuring zombies). As a result, a large amount of ancillary content takes place outside of Hope County, however, it will not be considered for this case study.

Gate cult. These locations are particularly haunting as they are typically filled with grim reminders of the cult's violent activities such as an abundance of hostages, slaughtered animals, or human corpses that shows signs of having met an especially gruesome end.



Figure 5.4. Fishing with Peaches the Cougar. The player character engages in fishing in one of Hope County's numerous lakes at the base of a mountainous forest. The partner character, Peaches the Cougar, swims nearby. Screenshot by R. Scheiding.

This combination of elements gives Hope County a realistic feeling while clearly establishing it as fictional. For the player, it “feels” like a rural American town that has found itself in extreme circumstances. Thus, the setting of *Far Cry 5* on its own does not have any deep connections to American nuclear discourse or collective/cultural memory of the atomic bombs. Unlike *Fallout 4*, a post-nuclear hellscape that can be easily connected to the atomic bombs, there is nothing inherent about Hope County that connects it to nuclear weaponry in general, or the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki specifically. To find these connections it is necessary to examine the other aspects of the game, beginning with the central narrative which more directly implicates Hope County into wider discourses of the past of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

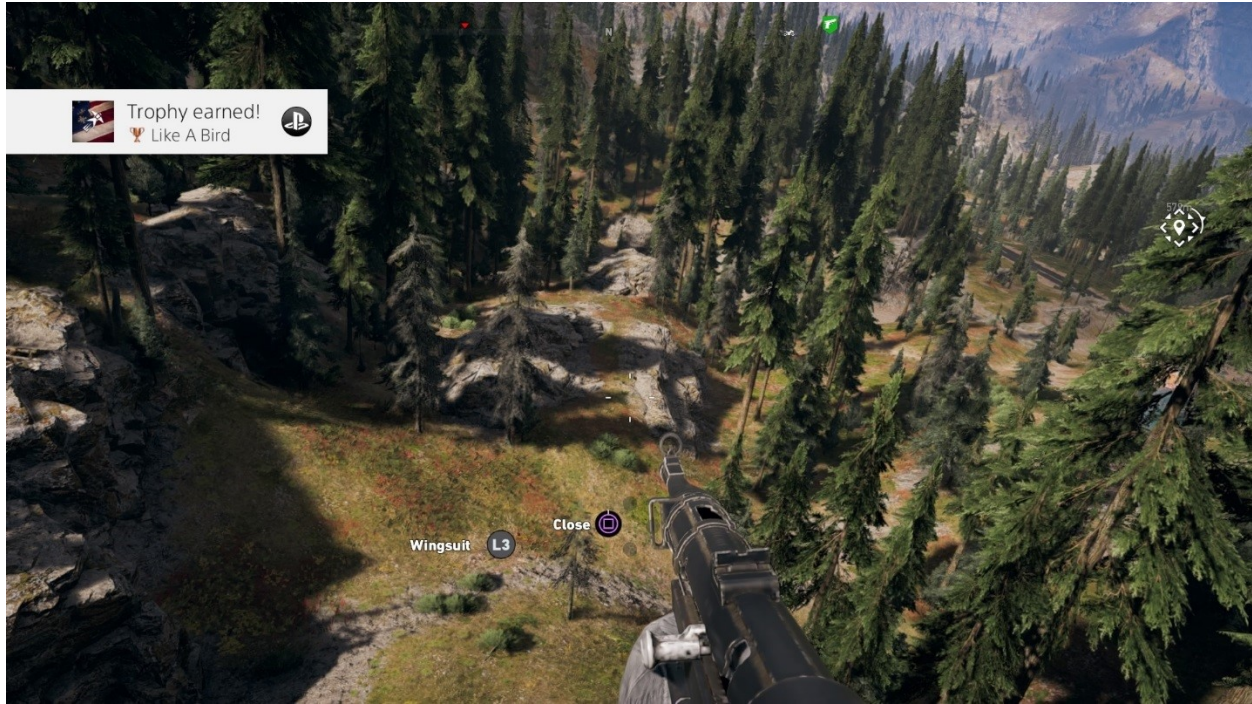


Figure 5.5. Parachuting into Hope County. Hope County as seen from the air. The player character parachutes into a forested mountain grove. Screenshot by R. Scheiding.

5.3.3 Narrative

Far Cry 5's main narrative begins with a team of US Marshals and local police flying into Hope County via helicopter. This is viewed from the first-person perspective of the game's silent protagonist, "Rook" (later also referred to as "Dep", "Deputy", or "The Deputy"). The player learns that the team is flying towards the compound of the Eden's Gate cult so that they can arrest the group's leader, Joseph Seed. Seed, along with his brothers (Jacob and John) and "sister" (Faith), have been growing Eden's Gate by preaching an impending doomsday which has allowed them to recruit many followers and to acquire numerous properties through manipulation and intimidation. They have also been extensively arming themselves, building para-military compounds and bases, and abducting citizens for numerous reasons (i.e. slave-labor, forced "military" service, and experiments involving hallucinogenic drugs or psychological priming).

It is notable that many elements of Eden's Gate have connections to the Bible and Christianity. In particular, the Seeds seem to have adapted portions of the Book of Revelation which detail the (Old Testament) Christian conception of the end of the Earth. However, Joseph's teachings are kept (deliberately I believe) nebulous. In addition, the significance of the

names of the antagonists (Joseph, Jacob, John, and Faith) is never stated. These names are all biblical, but the player never discovers if they are in fact the real names of the characters. This means that “Joseph Seed” may have just coincidentally been the name of a man who started a cult rather than a pseudonym that was deliberately chosen. Ultimately, however, such clear connections to Christian beliefs are not meaningfully explored as elements of the game, instead they are perhaps used to give the cult and its characters a readily recognizable and coherent identity.

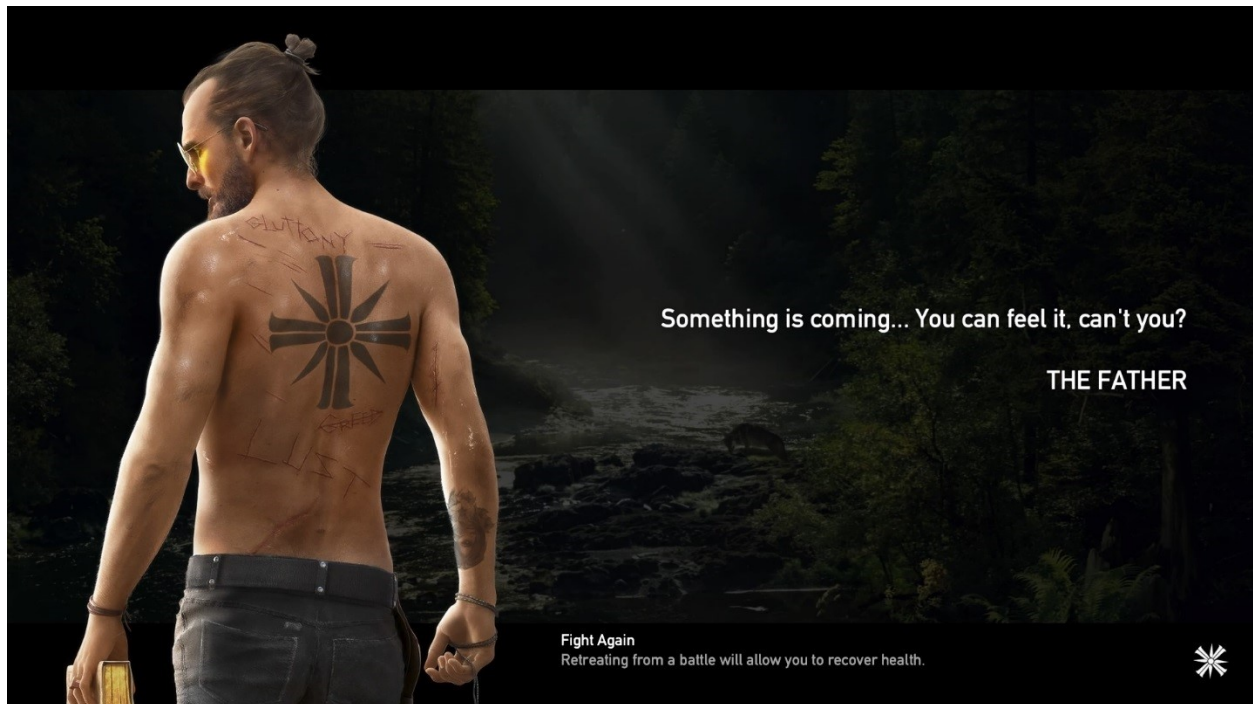


Figure 5.6. Loading Screen Quotes Joseph Seed The loading screen used to remind players of Joseph Seed’s (also referred to as “The Father” by Eden’s Gate cultists) cryptic first words. Screenshot by R. Scheiding.

When the officers arrive at the Eden’s Gate compound, they slowly advance through a tense population of cultists as they head to Joseph’s church.³⁴⁰ Upon entering, Joseph is heard preaching to his inner flock, “Something is coming. You can feel it, can’t you? That we are creeping toward the edge... and there will be a reckoning.” The beginning lines of this speech

³⁴⁰ Eden’s Gate resembles multiple real-world groups and organizations, ranging from heavily armed militias to doomsday cults to domestic terrorists. These references are certainly worthy of a discourses of the past analysis; however, they fall beyond the scope of this dissertation and my own expertise. For the purposes of the present study, acknowledging other, non-nuclear, influences on *Far Cry 5* help to illustrate that, even when using a discourses of the past typology, it is necessary to recognize that not all parts of a remediated video game will be drawn from one type or set of discourses.

become important later in the story because they are revealed to be a prophecy of nuclear annihilation. However, at this point in the story they serve only as a warning of sorts; periodically, the player is reminded of them through a loading screen featuring Joseph Seed (see Figure 5.6). Immediately after being approached by the officers, Joseph willingly surrenders and is escorted to their helicopter.

Unfortunately, as they take off, Joseph's followers throw themselves upon the vehicle and, after one hurls himself into the blades, it crashes. The pilot dies instantly and three of the officers are taken prisoner while the Deputy and the US Marshal escape and make their way through the woods on foot. This, eventually, leads to a desperate chase that ends with the Marshal driving a vehicle off of a bridge into a lake. The Marshal and the Deputy are separated as they swim to shore with the Marshal getting captured by the cultists and the Deputy being taken by a character named Dutch to his fortified bunker. Dutch, an anti-cult fighter, sets up the deputy with their first tools/weapons and informs them that they need to "change their clothes" (a euphemism for launching the game's character creator). After completing a short mission for Dutch, the Deputy is set loose in *Far Cry 5*'s open world.

From here the player learns that the map of Hope County is split into three regions. Each of Joseph's three siblings control one part of the map. As the player completes missions and objectives within each region of the map, typically through the use of immense firepower and much violence, a progress bar will fill up. At certain pre-determined points this will trigger a story mission in which the Deputy directly confronts the leader of the area. Given the open-world gameplay of the *Far Cry* series this system makes sense but, from a narrative perspective it is less than ideal.

There are particularly high levels of narrative dissonance created when the player completes a "wacky" mission, like punching cows as a way of herding them into their pens, or has just taken over an Eden's Gate base through excessive violence, such as throwing Molotov cocktails from a helicopter into the base below before parachuting out and finishing off stragglers with a rocket launcher, only to trigger a story mission that is more narratively weighty and strips them of all their weapons and gear. For example, in one such story mission the player learns that Joseph Seed's pregnant wife was killed in a car accident and Joseph, upon learning that his baby daughter was saved, decided to suffocate the child by squeezing its breathing tube.

His justification for this action is not explicitly stated, but through a rambling monologue he provides the vague explanation that it is necessary to prove to God that you are ready to serve no matter what he asks. Joseph states that he discerned God's plan by praying with his infant daughter and "hearing" the Lord's plan through this activity. This is framed through the general idea that, "the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away", though it is up to each player's own critical thinking whether they believe Joseph and think his motivations are sincere or not. Regardless, the player experiences a large tonal swing from wacky, humorous, or fun to deeply disturbing and unsettling. This example is highly emblematic of the player's engagement with the Seeds as each of their stories is dark or violent and reveals each to be exceedingly vicious.

Regardless of this dissonance, the player will progress through each region in whichever order they like until they defeat Jacob, John, and Faith. Each has their own substory that the player works through until they defeat and kill them. Jacob, in his attempts to build an army for the post-apocalypse, kidnaps potential soldiers and forces them to prove their strength by fighting to the death or killing a person close to them (such as a family member). He also uses brainwashing and conditioning techniques to make people into sleeper agent soldiers that can be activated at a later time and thus forced to kill certain targets. John, based on his assessment of a person, physically carves one of the seven deadly sins into his victim's skin with a knife. (This reference to the seven deadly sins is one of several to Christianity and Christian beliefs in the game.) He then absolves them of this sin through a ceremony where he cuts the skin off of them as a form of acknowledgement and atonement for their sins. (He accuses the deputy of the sin of wrath). Faith, who it is revealed is not Joseph's blood sister and is not even the first "Faith", plies her victims with a fictional hallucinogenic drug called Bliss which allows her to manipulate them to do her bidding. Once all three regions have been conquered and each of Jacob, John, and Faith have been killed, Dutch informs the Deputy over the radio that they can now travel to Joseph's compound to initiate the final battle.

This begins one of the most controversial ending sequences in recent gaming history. In fact, the story of *Far Cry 5* is so reviled that John Walker of *Rock Paper Shotgun* has referred to it as having the worst endings in AAA gaming history. Expanding upon this he writes,

Far Cry 5 has a bad story in the same way that the bubonic plague has a bad bacterium. It is, by a considerable stretch, the most abysmally written narrative in AAA gaming. Not just in how it so idiotically interrupts you in the middle of other scripted missions to force you to play through hideously badly written

enforced semi-playable cutscenes, but in every word uttered by every character from start to finish. And wow, does it reach its subterranean nadir when it comes to the finish.³⁴¹

Once the player confronts Joseph Seed, they are given the option to “resist” (i.e. fight him) or “walk away” (i.e. leave him and escape). If the player chooses to walk away, they are given the non-canonical bad ending. In this ending the Deputy and the other officers get into a pickup truck and begin to drive out of Hope County. As they drive the song that Jacob used to brainwash the Deputy begins to play on the radio and the screen fades to black. This implies that the Deputy “activates” (because of their previous mental conditioning by Jacob) and kills all of the other officers though it is unclear how they accomplish this task. As the “bad ending”, it is expected that the player will reload their save file and complete the “good ending”.

If the player chooses to resist, they engage in a final battle with Joseph and, upon defeating him, trigger the canonical good ending. “Good ending” is a misnomer in *Far Cry 5* because the narrative has given every indication that Joseph and his disciples are fear-mongers and charlatans that use lies, violence, and drugs to persuade their flock and therefore their claims should not be taken as truthful. Yet, despite this, a series of nuclear devices strike Hope County (see Figure 5.7). Importantly, the player never learns who exactly detonated these devices. Given the player’s experiences travelling throughout Hope County, it can be reasonably assumed that it *was not* Joseph Seed or his followers who did it, as they, quite simply, had no access to nuclear weapons.³⁴² Thus, the player is faced with the confusing realization that, despite every indication that the Seeds and Eden’s Gate are a murderous, fear-mongering, and violent cult, Joseph Seed somehow managed to correctly predict the end of civilization via nuclear destruction. Thus, the “good ending” not only involves the defeat of the player (narratively) but also results in a nuclear holocaust that destroys the entirety of the land that they were defending and most of the residents living within the area.

³⁴¹ John Walker, “Far Cry 5 has the worst endings in all of gaming history: The End is Nigh-tmarishly Bad,” *Rock Paper Shotgun*, April 11, 2018. <https://www.rockpapershotgun.com/2018/04/11/far-cry-5-has-the-worst-endings-in-all-of-gaming-history/>

³⁴² As will be discussed below, the sequel, *Far Cry New Dawn*, confirms that the nuclear devices were not detonated by Joseph Seed or Eden’s Gate but were part of a larger unexplained nuclear war that spanned the globe.



Figure 5.7. First Nuclear Strike Hits Hope County The first of numerous nuclear detonations creates a mushroom cloud in the moments after Joseph Seed's defeat. Screenshot by R. Scheiding.

The detonations trigger a vehicle driving sequence where the player must race the other officers and an arrested Joseph Seed back to Dutch's bunker as further nuclear strikes happen all around them (see Figure 5.8). Unfortunately, the car crashes just outside of Dutch's bunker, killing the officers and leaving the Deputy stunned and unable to escape the vehicle. Joseph Seed pulls the Deputy from the car, kills Dutch, and handcuffs the Deputy to a bed. Joseph then begins monologuing about how he was right, and that the Deputy is his only family now. Russ Frushtick, a game journalist and senior editor for *Polygon*, summarizes the ending, and feelings around it, as follows, "That it's a dark conclusion is not even the problem. It's just dumb. Pointless. It feels like all my efforts were for naught, and it even tarnishes a lot of the fun I had, since it all got blown up anyway."³⁴³ This conclusion to the game is both haphazard and genuinely confusing as it actively negates much of the story (along with the player's actions) without providing coherent explanations or justifications.

³⁴³ Russ Frushtick, "Let's talk about the ending of Far Cry 5: Warning things get pretty ridiculous," *Polygon*, April 2, 2018. <https://www.polygon.com/2018/4/2/17188486/lets-talk-about-the-ending-of-far-cry-5>



Figure 5.8. Driving Through a Nuclear Onslaught The player character frantically drives through Hope County as nuclear weapons strike all around them in a timed driving sequence. Here a mushroom cloud is seen in the distance as the forests, and an unfortunate deer, start to burn. Screenshot by R. Scheiding.

From the perspective of a discourses of the past analysis the haphazard, confusing, or contradictory way that the central narrative unfolds in *Far Cry 5* (or the negative critiques surrounding the narrative) is less important than how nuclear explosions are used in the story. Yet, even discerning how they function within the narrative is difficult. For the most part *Far Cry 5* is not a story or game about nuclear war or weapons. It is a story about a single heavily armed deputy fighting a cult assembled by a homicidal maniac with a messiah complex. Yet, with very little foreshadowing,³⁴⁴ the game culminates with a devastating nuclear explosion that wipes out all of Hope County, an area that the player has become intimately familiar with and potentially quite attached to through the course of their 20+ hour playthrough.

Thus, it can be argued that, from the perspective of discourses of the past, the most notable narrative function of the nuclear strikes at the conclusion of *Far Cry 5* is that they are a

³⁴⁴ Outside of the aforementioned opening lines spoken by Joseph Seed there is a vague mention of escalating conflict in the world that can be heard through in-game radios and a sequence in Faith's story arc where Joseph appears in the Bliss-fueled hallucination of the player in front of a mushroom cloud. However, even these brief mentions are cryptic or, in the case of the radio broadcasts, easily missed.

culmination of the events in the game with the ultimate set piece. In other words, the nuclear strikes take the gratuitous violence (described further below in the gameplay section) of the game and raise it to its highest conceivable level. In a game where the player has navigated the game world like a 1980s action-hero and utilized helicopters, bloody melee attacks, machine guns, explosives, and any other number of armaments to take down a cartoonishly evil set of villains, the nuclear weapons become the explosive crescendo that represents the height of violence and carnage. *Far Cry 5*, through its setting in the outwardly “innocuous”, “familiar”, or “normal” Hope County, Montana, sets up a conclusion where nuclear strikes function as the shocking pinnacle of an ever-expanding and gratuitous violence.

5.3.4 Characters

The ability to make a custom character in *Far Cry 5* was new to the series. The player is able to customize their own version of the protagonist, who is nameless and usually referred to by nicknames such as “Rook”, “Dep” or “The Deputy”. Avatar customization is limited during the creation phase as the player is given the option of choosing a gender and race as well as hair and a face from a limited selection of pre-made options. There is no voice selection as the character is silent, however the character will be heard grunting when exerting themselves or screaming when attacked during the game. These sounds are based on the character’s gender with one track each for male and female. During the initial creation of their character the player is given numerous clothing choices, though they are mostly generic t-shirts or hunting garbs. As the player progresses in the game, or spends real money on micro-transactions, they unlock more diverse clothing options. There is an interesting amount of variety, especially given the fact that, as a first-person shooter, the player never sees most of their outfit.

In terms of characterization, The Deputy is a rather uninteresting blank slate. The Deputy does not utter a word of dialogue, even at times when this seems impossible, such as when they are being tortured or just witnessed something traumatic like the death of an ally. Regardless of what customization decisions the player has made, The Deputy will be treated in the exact same manner by both friends and enemies. The writers use this to humorous effect, for example when Hurk suggests to The Deputy that they should pick up some women or men or whichever they prefer while professing to not assume and support their preferences regardless. Ultimately, The Deputy becomes less of a main character than they do a witness to the plot of *Far Cry 5*. In other

words, The Deputy drives the narrative forward, but they never become fully integrated into the plot. It is only a slight exaggeration to argue that if The Deputy were replaced by a bear or other apex predator the plot of the story would not change dramatically. The only role of The Deputy in the narrative is to bring destruction upon Eden's Gate.

This analysis holds less true for many of the other residents of Hope County. There are many interesting characters to be found in the game. For example, Hurk Drubman Sr. (the father of the aforementioned Hurk) is a right-wing politician running for office and is an obvious reference to Donald Trump as he threatens to build a wall (along the Canadian border) and sends the player on a mission called *Make Hope Great Again*. Another character, Wendell Redler, is a veteran of the Vietnam War who tasks the player with finding several of his dead comrades' lighters throughout Hope County. The lighters each have a number carved on them that can be used to unlock Wendall's stash of weapons and ammunition that he has prepared for emergencies. Finally, Guy Marvel, an obvious homage to Marvel Studios, is a film director taking advantage of the situation in Hope County to get inexpensive footage for his action film. Hurk Sr., Wendall, and Guy are only three of the NPCs that make Hope County an interesting place for the player, but they are emblematic of the cross-section of citizens in the game (a mix of contemporary, historical, and satirical references).

Thus, the characters in the game do not directly reference atomic/nuclear historical pasts on their own. However, the "ordinariness" or "non-remarkable" nature of the characters helps to build *Far Cry 5*'s nuclear discourse. Given that the nuclear strikes at the conclusion of the game are shocking (or in the very least not guaranteed or expected) the game taps into some of the predominant nuclear fears regardless of place, space, or temporality; a sense of defencelessness and the unease of knowing that the world is perpetually a phone call or button push away from nuclear annihilation. The fact that these "normal" everyday citizens can become victims of nuclear weapons draws on American nuclear fears of potentially becoming a victim in a blink of an eye.

5.3.5 Gameplay

Analyzing the gameplay of *Far Cry 5* is, perhaps, more important than many other games because of the overall experience of playing the game. *Far Cry* games are much more focused on the moment-to-moment gameplay and experience of play than they are on story, character, or

plot. The games allow for the player to engage in violent exploration of the setting with access to numerous tools, weapons, and navigation options that make the player feel powerful. This is particularly the case for *Far Cry 5* with its weak, inexplicable narrative. As mentioned above, in *Far Cry 5* interacting with the open world progresses a bar in each section of the map in order to unlock story missions. This means that completing random side missions, hunting, fishing, and defeating enemies are all directly tied to progression in the game.

The general gameplay loop of *Far Cry 5* can be summarized as: complete non-story content to advance the mission progression bar (usually through gunplay and use of force) → unlock story mission → complete story mission. In addition to this, the player must also earn money to buy new weapons and upgrades and complete side tasks (such as getting a certain number of kills with a specific weapon type) to unlock skill points that are used to unlock new abilities and perks (such as slots to carry more weapons or larger ammunition bags). *Far Cry 5* synergizes story/world advancement with underlying progression systems to create an enjoyable video game or gameplay experience.

A typical play session of *Far Cry 5* could progress somewhat as follows: player goes fishing in a Hope County Lake → player sells fish to weapon vendor and buys new scope for their weapon of choice → player completes non-story sky-diving side mission → player uses helicopter to kill cultists at outpost before taking it over → story mission unlocks → player completes story mission → player is returned to open world. Generally, the player is encouraged towards ever-escalating violence and mayhem as they play in Hope County's open world environments. This is epitomized by the upgrade system which provides the player with a bevy of weapons, vehicles, and abilities that are typical of the first-person shooter and action game genres. *Far Cry 5* can be described as similar to playing an action movie hero as the player is much more powerful than their foes and, as a result, can be much less concerned about skill-based gameplay even on normal difficulty levels. Instead, the player can mow through enemies at a brisk pace while creating chaos and mayhem in the open world map.

This gameplay loop, which bundles together unique and differentiated content, encourages player exploration of Hope County while also moving the narrative along at a reasonable, yet uneven, pace. These progression systems manifest themselves on the game's map where it becomes visually evident through small icons that Hope County is slowly being taken

back from the cult by the player and their allies. When considered together these gameplay systems and elements encourage the player to move the story along through visiting violence upon the Eden's Gate cult. *Far Cry 5*'s gameplay and systems follow preestablished genre expectations rather than nuclear discourses or established collective/cultural memory. In other words, the premediated content that the game relies upon is other video games rather than discursive processes derived through traditional power structures (such as government or education). As such, the gameplay and systems of the game are an example of video game specific remediation of the past where industry standards, perhaps rightfully, override concerns of representing the past (either historically or discursively through processes of collective/cultural memory).

5.3.6 Analysis

At first glance, *Far Cry 5* seemingly does not draw from historical understandings – American or otherwise – of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Indeed, aside from its surprising (and confusing) narrative conclusion featuring nuclear strikes, the game has little direct connection to the atomic bombs at all. However, the fact that there are nuclear strikes at all and the circumstances that introduce them into a game that is seemingly unconcerned with atomic/nuclear discourses (historical or otherwise) opens the game up to questions of how it connects to historical pasts and how it can be connected to discourses of the past of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Even if the game is not directly concerned with specific historical events, the end product can be analyzed through this lens to help describe and theorize the discursive through-lines that connect *Far Cry 5* to larger discourses of the past.

As a starting point, much like *Fallout 4*, an argument could be made that *Far Cry 5* creates an American victimology because it is an American city (Hope County) full of mostly white American victims. However, this interpretation does not fit as well with this game because, unlike in the *Fallout* series, *Far Cry* does not have explicit connections to questions of atomic or nuclear warfare. Therefore, the player does not need to confront the victimhood of the citizens of Hope County in connection to atomic bombs while playing the game. Tellingly, when the player completes the game's story for the first time, they are able to reload their save data and return to a pre-nuclear strike Hope County and finish any side content that they missed before the story's conclusion. There they will find all of the citizens of Hope County are alive and well and the

landscape restored to its previous beauty. The only major change comes on the game's loading screen which replaces the green, lush, and healthy Hope County with a post-nuclear depiction (see Figure 5.9). Thus, even if the player is disturbed or upset by the ending of the game, it is physically undone the next time they load their save which could be literally minutes after they have seen the ending. Nuclear destruction in *Far Cry 5* is not only non-permanent, it is fleeting.



Figure 5.9. Post-Nuclear Strike Main Menu. After completing the story of *Far Cry 5* the player is greeted with a new main menu screen. The formerly lush and green Hope County is replaced with a destroyed and blackened version. Screenshot by R. Scheiding.

Yet, even though *Far Cry 5* lacks obvious connections to American discourses of the past surrounding the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki it can still be read through the typology. The questions become: why does *Far Cry 5* end with a nuclear attack? And, why are the bombs depicted in the specific way that they are? It is important to put the nuclear strikes at the end of the game into their gameplay context. The nuclear strikes against Hope County, while narratively ludicrous, actually fit quite well in the *Far Cry* universe and are quite emblematic of the series' gameplay loop. In *Far Cry 5* nuclear strikes are the crescendo of an action-oriented experience. The ever-escalating violence and mayhem that the player and their enemies have wrought upon Hope County is capped with the ultimate weapon, a nuclear strike.

The game thus indulges in an American victimology of sorts but, ultimately, it is largely not serious enough in tone or sophisticated enough in narrative to be judged solely on this metric. For *Far Cry 5* nuclear war is the ultimate set-piece event in a game that embraces violent excess. This is largely enabled by established discourses of the past that have argued for the justification of bombing Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the expense of thinking of moral obligations and numerous Japanese victims. American discourses of the past of the atomic bombs have been about the science and technology of the weapons, the military success of the Allied powers (against a loathsome foe), and the “right” or “morality” of the use of the bombs. Within these discursive practices there has been a deliberate erasure of victims to the point that the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki can be remembered both fondly and *with an absence of victims*. In a system where victims are forgotten, ignored, or erased it is possible to frame atomic or nuclear attacks as spectacle. *Far Cry 5* follows American discursive traditions about the atomic bombs to create a narrative where nuclear strikes become visual spectacles rather than human tragedies.

5.4 Case Study - Far Cry New Dawn

5.4.1 General Information and Series History

Far Cry New Dawn is a spin-off title based on the canonical ending of *Far Cry 5* (i.e. Hope County is destroyed by nuclear strikes as part of a worldwide nuclear war). The game confirms that the events at the end of *Far Cry 5* were not isolated to Hope County as much of the world’s nuclear arsenal was unleashed simultaneously, though it is unclear why this occurred. There is one hidden document found in an optional side mission that informs the player of this; the author writes, “Korea, Israel, [and] Pakistan have all been wiped off the map. Large chunks of China, Russia, Central Europe and the US are gone. The greatest fear of the atomic age has come to pass.” Given that this game is a direct sequel the general information and series history outlined in the *Far Cry 5* section above remains relevant for *Far Cry New Dawn* and will not be reiterated. In addition to this, it should be noted that *Far Cry New Dawn* was developed by Ubisoft Montreal and published by Ubisoft. The game was released on February 15, 2019.

5.4.2 Setting

As a direct sequel to *Far Cry 5*, *Far Cry New Dawn* maintains Hope County as its primary setting. However, given the nuclear strikes that occurred at the end of the previous

game, Hope County has undergone a large transformation. Firstly, it is much smaller in size as large parts of Hope County have become nuclear wastelands that are too irradiated for the player to survive in.³⁴⁵ The result is a game map that is roughly one-third the size of the original game. It features scorched mountainsides with valleys that are experiencing super bloom (a phenomenon where landscapes are particularly lush with vegetation), derelict buildings, and a Northern section that features a river with numerous small islands (see Figure 5.10 and Figure 5.11).³⁴⁶ In addition, the player can also travel on expeditions that take place in much smaller maps (such as the infamous Alcatraz prison or an abandoned theme park) which have also been affected by nuclear attacks.



Figure 5.10: The Edge of the Map (Air). The edge of *Far Cry New Dawn*'s map as seen from the air. The rivers alongside the scorched mountains act as a barrier that cannot be circumvented, even by flying over top. Screenshot by R. Scheiding.

The changes that occurred within Hope County because of nuclear strikes give *Far Cry New Dawn* a much clearer connection to discourses of the past surrounding the atomic bombings

³⁴⁵ The much smaller map can also be attributed to *Far Cry New Dawn* being a deliberately smaller spinoff title with a much shorter development time than the previous title. It released just 11 months after *Far Cry 5*.

³⁴⁶ It is beyond my own expertise to verify if nuclear weapons would create super bloom, however, in *Far Cry New Dawn*, super bloom is directly presented to the player as being caused by nuclear attacks. The result is an explosion of lush and colorful vegetation.

of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Regardless of where the player travels, either within Hope County or on an expedition, they are faced with depictions of nuclear destruction. These depictions may take the form of a world experiencing super bloom and, as a result, have a bright and cheerful color palette, but they are representations of a post-nuclear attack world, nonetheless. This grounds all of the narrative, characters, and gameplay of *Far Cry New Dawn* within a distinctly atomic/nuclear context.



Figure 5.11: The Edge of the Map (Ground). The edge of *Far Cry New Dawn*'s map at ground level. Note the stark contrast between the scorched mountainside in the background and the lush playable space in the foreground. Screenshot by R. Scheiding.

5.4.3 Narrative

The narrative of *Far Cry New Dawn* begins in 2035, 17 years after the conclusion of *Far Cry 5*. The survivors of Hope County have emerged from their shelters and started to rebuild their communities but find themselves in a precarious situation following the arrival of a post-apocalyptic gang known as the Highwaymen. (Despite the gendering of the name, the gang is run by a set of female twins named Lou and Mickey and includes both men and women within its ranks). The citizens of Hope County appeal to a man named Thomas Rush who has become renowned throughout the United States because of his efforts to rebuild numerous communities. Rush and his group have become famous for moving across the country via train and helping

people to defend themselves while they rebuild. Unfortunately, upon the arrival of Rush's train, his group is ambushed and nearly eradicated by the Highwaymen. One of the few survivors is "The Captain", who escapes when Rush pushes them off a ledge into the lake below as a way of sparing them from execution. The Captain, Rush's second in command, then becomes the protagonist of the game. As with *Far Cry 5*'s "Deputy", the Captain (sometimes referred to as "Cap") is a silent protagonist and customizable character.

Having escaped the Highwaymen's initial ambush, The Captain travels to the walled town of Prosperity (formerly the opulent hunting lodge and home of Jacob Seed, one of the sub-bosses from *Far Cry 5*). It quickly becomes evident that Prosperity will be unable to defend itself for long and The Captain is tasked with the dual responsibility of further fortifying the town and finding allies. Unfortunately, the only suitable potential allies are the citizens of the city of New Eden who are all former members of Joseph Seed's Eden's Gate cult. The Captain, upon gaining entrance to New Eden is instructed by Ethan Seed (Joseph Seed's son) to go to Dutch's bunker to obtain the writings of his father. The Captain accomplishes this task with the help of a masked character known as "The Judge" (the identity of this character is supposed to be secret but it is evident that it is the playable character from *Far Cry 5*, The Deputy, who has been rendered permanently mute and psychologically broken after being forced to stay in Dutch's bunker as Joseph Seed's captive).

Upon returning to New Eden, The Captain is instructed to travel North on a pilgrimage that will apparently grant them special powers. This is contrary to Ethan's wishes, as he realizes that it may lead to a reduction of his power within the cult. Regardless, The Captain then embarks on a mission up an irradiated river to the extreme North of the playable space (see Figure 5.12). Here they discover that Joseph Seed is still alive, having sequestered himself in a cabin nearby to a tree that produces magical fruit. The fruit, which Joseph refers to as "Eden's Gift", gives The Captain superpowers such as super strength and double jump. With these new powers, The Captain decides to confront Lou and Mickey, who have been holding Thomas Rush hostage. The Captain is captured and forced to watch as the Twins execute Rush. This activates The Captain's super strength which manifests as an extreme rage. The Captain is finally able to defeat the Twins before learning that Ethan has traveled North in an attempt to receive Eden's Gift for himself. Despite Joseph's protestations, Ethan eats the fruit and transforms into a

monster. The mutated Ethan is quickly dispatched by the Captain in a nearby cave while Joseph Seed watches.



Figure 5.12. Travelling North via Boat. The Captain travels Northward on a quest to receive Eden's Gift from Joseph Seed. It remains unclear if the condition of the area is caused by radiation, the drug from *Far Cry 5* (bliss), or a combination of the two. Screenshot by R. Scheiding.

The narrative ends with a heartbroken Joseph Seed setting the magical tree on fire and lamenting the fact that his visions have cost him his entire family (Jacob, John, and Faith in *Far Cry 5* and Ethan in *Far Cry New Dawn*). He then asks the Captain to kill him and puts the barrel of a gun to his chest. At this point the player is given the option to kill him or spare him. This choice, ultimately, has little effect. If he is executed his body will be visible, if not he simply vanishes from the map.

The narrative of *Far Cry New Dawn* is much more connected with the characters of the previous game than it is with discourses of the past of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The player finds themselves ensconced in a post-nuclear environment but there is seemingly little that connects the narrative to the environment. Aside from the irradiated river areas in the North of the map, much of the central narrative is not directly connected to nuclear strikes. For instance, the Highwaymen invading the area could have been given any narrative

explanation to set up the rest of the story, it is not contingent upon nuclear strikes (and is certainly not a commentary on historical uses of the atomic bombs). Thus, *Far Cry New Dawn* has a post-nuclear setting, but it is not a post-nuclear narrative.

5.4.4 Characters

Following *Far Cry 5*'s example, *Far Cry New Dawn* requires the creation and customization of the game's silent protagonist, The Captain. Once again, the player is given the option of selecting the hair style/colour, race, gender, and clothing of their custom character. A subtle but important change to this system is the incorporation of brightly coloured and whimsical clothing, such as florescent unicorn onesies, to better fit the game's vibrant aesthetic (see Figure 5.13). Additionally, clothing is more visible in game because short cutscenes have been added that showcase the character (such as a close-up when an outpost is captured). However, it should be noted that the enhanced customization is directly tied to a micro-transaction system where players are encouraged to spend extra real-world currency on in-game items.

In terms of characterization, The Captain remains on a similar level to *Far Cry 5*'s main protagonist, The Deputy. The Captain does not utter a word throughout the game, being limited to grunts and shouts. It is notable that The Captain roars when activating their rage-induced super punching power which fits well with the gameplay. Unfortunately, these roars are the only audio cues emanating from The Captain that can be interpreted as conveying emotion. This type of characterization is not unique among video game protagonists. Adapting Jaime Banks' player-avatar relationships typology, The Captain could be categorized as an example of an Avatar-as-Object where the avatar acts as a tool for gameplay rather than as a "partner" or a fully fleshed out character.³⁴⁷ As a result, the Captain is a slightly more interesting character than The Deputy but mainly represents a conduit for the player to experience emergent gameplay in Hope County's open world. Once again, aside from, assumedly, being a victim of nuclear warfare, The

³⁴⁷ Banks provides a four-point typology of player-avatar relationships (PARs) governed within the "constrained freedom" of character creation and game allowances. She argues that PARs are molded by, "...patterns of self-differentiation, emotional intimacy, perceived agency that give rise to variations in socialness and align gameplay with motivations." The four PAR types of her typology are: Avatar-as-Object, Avatar-as-Me, Avatar-as-Symbiote, and Avatar-as-Other each of which represents a differing amount of player identification with their avatar in combination with gameplay goals. See:

Jaime Banks, "Object, Me, Symbiote, Other: A Social typology of player-avatar relationships," *First Monday* 20, No. 2 (2 February 2015): n.p. <https://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/download/5433/4208>.

Captain is not connected to the discourses of the past surrounding the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

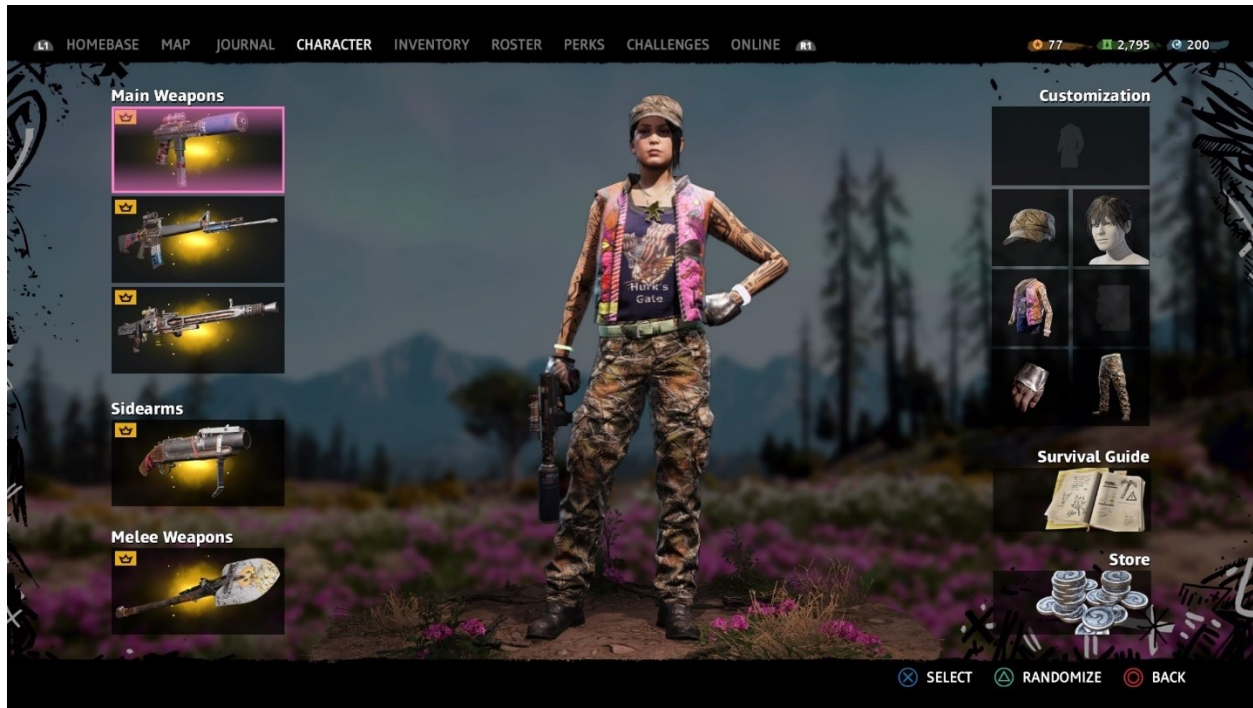


Figure 5.13: The Captain's Inventory Screen. The inventory and character customization screen of *Far Cry New Dawn*. Note the makeshift construction of the weapons and the focus on bright colours in the character's clothing. Screenshot by R. Scheiding.

The other characters in the game are much easier to connect to established discourses of the past. Of course, all the characters in the game are survivors of nuclear strikes or, if they are younger than 17, at least have the experience of being forced to live in an irradiated post-nuclear strike world. This does not mean that all characters have been affected by their situation in the same way. Characters in *Far Cry New Dawn* can be generally characterized as falling into one of two categories: those that have been largely unaffected by the nuclear strikes and those for whom the nuclear strikes have become the seminal event of their lives.

An example of the first type can be found in Hurk Drubman Jr. The tragedy of nuclear war has, seemingly, not affected Hurk greatly. He remains a comedic character focused on offbeat shenanigans, such as becoming a post-apocalyptic “gentleman moonshiner” or liberating his stolen car “the Gifthorse” from the Highwaymen only to decide to blow it up once it has been recovered (after great effort by the player). In this way he can be seen as an audience surrogate as he partakes in the “fun” aspects of the post-apocalypse with little regard for the weight of the

situation in which he finds himself. As such, he seems largely unaffected by the trauma of the nuclear strikes. He becomes a “fun” part of the game world and design, rather than a serious depiction of nuclear tragedy.

On the opposite end of this spectrum is the aforementioned character, The Judge. The Judge is a gun for hire character (an NPC that can be recruited to fight alongside the player) and ultra-ego for the playable character from *Far Cry 5*, The Deputy. Through finding in-game documents near Dutch’s bunker the player learns that, after the conclusion of *Far Cry 5*, The Deputy became trapped with Joseph Seed. Joseph allowed The Deputy to live and, with time, The Deputy came to feel an immense amount of guilt for their previous actions (though this was probably the result of trauma inflicted by Joseph). As a result, they begged Joseph to give them a mask so that they could become reborn without sin. From this point on, The Judge serves as a bodyguard for Joseph and carries out his bidding.

Analysis of The Judge is difficult for several reasons. To begin, the numerous plot holes from *Far Cry 5* affect any reading of the character. *Every* action taken by Joseph Seed and his family/cultists indicates that they were despicable human beings engaging in kidnapping, drug dealing, slavery, torture, and murder. The fact that Joseph was right about the bombs being dropped (while having no hand in their use) should not, one would conjecture, affect the way that he is viewed. However, for some unexplained reason The Judge regrets their, largely justified, violent actions against the cult. Thus, the player either needs to “buy-in” to the idea that Joseph was justified in committing atrocities on a massive scale because he “knew” that the world was going to end or consider that The Judge is suffering from trauma caused by the events of the first game. If one argues that the latter is more likely or true than the former, then The Judge represents a unique type of victimhood. In *The Judge Far Cry New Dawn* offers a character that is deeply scarred by the nuclear strikes and is subsequently characterized and guided by that experience even though they are not a fully “innocent” character.

The Judge, unequivocally, committed acts of wanton violence against a contemptible foe before the nuclear missiles hit Hope County. They acted righteously and later became a victim which raises important questions: were they guilty? Were they ultimately powerless? How can we categorize their victimhood? Ultimately, these questions force the player to confront ideas of right/wrong, justified/criminal, and perpetrator/victim that can typify atomic discourses of the

past. This allows *The Judge* to be read as an allegorical representation of real-world victims of the atomic bombs and a personification of the larger discourses of the past surrounding the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The enemies of *Far Cry New Dawn*, interestingly, follow a similar pattern to the NPCs. There are, once again, two categories: those, seemingly, unaffected by the nuclear strikes and those fully shaped by them. The wildlife of Hope County serves as examples of this. There are many animals that are unchanged by the nuclear strikes, such as rabbits or wolves. However, the game introduces “monstrous” animals which are irradiated and hyper aggressive versions of animals. These four animals (a bear, cougar, bison, and boar) serve as the game’s ultimate open-world fights. They show clear signs of mutation and irradiation, such as pulsating/glowing scars, and have more health and deadlier attacks than normal animals of their species. These monstrous animals, much like many of the animals found in *Fallout 4*, exhibit their trauma through their disfigured appearance and aggressive actions.

They also represent an important aspect of video game remediation of the atomic bombings in that they serve a gameplay-centric purpose. Namely, the realities of radiation-based mutation are bent to create visually interesting and challenging enemies that fit the game world both aesthetically and tonally. While the average player may be quite aware that radiation would not create the monstrous animals of *Far Cry New Dawn*, this does not stop the player from seeking out and enjoying the combat experience of fighting these creatures. The monstrous animals are unrealistic in their depiction, but they fall well within the realms of possibility and believability as defined by the game design and world. The monstrous animals serve as examples utilizing discourses of the past of the atomic bombs as a starting point for the creation of gameplay, assets, settings, etc. while not relying entirely on these discourses. As such the monstrous animals showcase wounds and growths that resemble atomic bomb victims (such as torn flesh, keloid scars, etc.) while combining these features with more fantastical, popular cultural, in-universe, and stylistic flourishes. The monstrous animals provide an example of how real pasts are remediated in unique non-historical ways for gameplay purposes.

Overall, the characters of *Far Cry New Dawn* draw from the accepted American version of the atomic bombings of Japan in varied ways. The game characters most greatly traumatized by the events share similarities with real-world victims. Yet, importantly, these victims are

American, ignoring (or failing to acknowledge) foreign victims through the creation of fictional attacks that occur within the United States. This is not to argue that Japanese victims should be the only victims depicted in media, especially when a fictional world without direct concerns to Hiroshima and Nagasaki is being created. Instead, the creation of fictional American victims continues the process of erasing key historical differences in who has suffered from the use of atomic weapons. *Far Cry New Dawn* instead inserts predominantly white Americans into the role of victim. This erasure need not be read as entirely problematic (there are indeed logical reasons for it) yet it still represents an elimination of difference with decidedly racial undertones (the erasure of Asian victims for White American victims). Turning specifically to *Far Cry New Dawn*, the characters that are totally unaffected by the nuclear strikes showcase a lack of empathy echoing the general lack of recognition of victims that also originated in the larger American discourses of the past of the atomic bombs.

Once again, the importance here is not to simply point out the historical inaccuracy of having American victims or to argue that all victims of atomic weapons in media should reference *hibakusha* in some way. Instead, attention should be paid to the engrained discursive practices and circumstances that allow for this type of depiction. The erasure of Japanese victims has deep roots within established discursive traditions surrounding the atomic bombings to the point that it has become the “default” to think of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in the United States and the West without acknowledging Japanese victims. Hiroshima and Nagasaki can, and have been, conceived of as scientific achievements, military necessities, and visual spectacles. As a result, in video game remediation of atomic discourses of the past of the atomic bombings there are also no references to past victims. This is indicative of larger power structures (supported by discursive practices) and reveals deeper systemic issues of collective/cultural memory. *Far Cry New Dawn* is under no obligation to “historical accuracy”, yet it is not immune to analysis that reveals deeper connections to discursive traditions that have been used to justify the unfettered use of American military power.

Yet, it is also necessary to acknowledge that other aspects of the depiction of atomic/nuclear war survivors and victims, namely the comedic aspects, fit with the overall tone of the *Far Cry* series. These less historically based or discursively influenced aspects represent a video game specific type of remediation of discourses of the past. While discourses of the past of

the atomic bombs are clearly influential, they are not sacrosanct to the game's creators. *Far Cry New Dawn* remediates discourses of the past surrounding the atomic bombs by making them fit into the *Far Cry* series rather than making *Far Cry* fit into the preestablished historically based discourses. This means that the game capitalizes on distinctly American fears of nuclear holocaust that do not mourn the victims of American military power but, instead, fear the potential of Americans to become victims of others' nuclear capabilities.

5.4.5 Gameplay

As a spinoff title, *Far Cry New Dawn* is much smaller in scope than its predecessors and contains some noticeable changes to gameplay from *Far Cry 5*. The first is the way that the player experiences content. There are no longer separate regions with progression bars as all but the irradiated Northern region of the map is instantly open to the player. This means that the player can access content as they choose and will not be interrupted by un-skippable story sections. The story unfolds at a pace of the player's choosing because they choose exactly when they wish to trigger a story-mission.

The second way that gameplay has changed is the focus on a new crafting system. In *Far Cry New Dawn* all weapons, vehicles, ammunition, clothing, etc. are acquired through random drops or are crafted through this new system (or real-currency purchases outside the game world). As a result, most of the game's map is populated by destroyed buildings that serve as explorable areas offering scrap parts. This encourages the player to spend a majority of their time looting these areas which becomes a central aspect of gameplay.

The third, and final way, that the game diverges from the previous titles is through the inclusion of expeditions. It is immediately evident to the player that the game map is small and has clear barriers. Indeed, the edge of the map is almost comical in its demarcation as the player can catch plentiful amounts of fish from a healthy river while observing that less than a hundred feet away the landscape on the opposite riverbank is barren (see Figure 5.14). To supplement Hope County the player can go on short missions called expeditions. From the player's home base in Prosperity, it is possible to enlist the services of a French-Canadian helicopter pilot who will fly them to numerous remote locations including Alcatraz prison or an abandoned theme park. This triggers a mini mission where the player must steal a hidden item before calling for extraction. These missions serve primarily as a unique way of acquiring rare scrap.



Figure 5.14. Fishing in Irradiated Waters. The player engages in the fishing activity at the edge of the map. Note the stark contrast between the water and the hills which are just beyond the playable area. Screenshot by R. Scheiding.

The gameplay loop of *Far Cry New Dawn*, largely due to the aforementioned changes, revolves around traveling to and from loot-able areas and heading out on expeditions. At any point, the player can trigger story missions based on their preference (or they can largely ignore the story if they so choose). While engaging in this gameplay loop the player is encouraged to explore the map, loot areas, hunt animals, go fishing, conquer outposts, and generally cause chaos as they slowly attempt to defeat the Highwaymen and discover Hope County's secrets. This, once again, is achieved from a first-person perspective and includes gunplay, air, land, and sea vehicles and light platforming. However, gameplay is supplemented by the inclusion of superpowers which make combat and traversal easier and unique in comparison to *Far Cry 5* (see Figure 5.15). These superpowers serve to make *Far Cry*'s traditionally over-the-top combat system more chaotic, violent, and visceral.

Paradoxically, the gameplay of *Far Cry New Dawn* both engages with established discourses(s) of the past surrounding Hiroshima and Nagasaki while also circumventing them. The game encourages exploration of Hope County's open world which leads the player to experience a post-nuclear landscape complete with destroyed buildings and many vestiges of the

past. This version of Hope County is partially recycled from the previous game. Given that many players will have also played *Far Cry 5*, the player is constantly reminded through their gameplay experience of the tremendous destruction of the nuclear strikes. In addition, discovering which characters survived the blast and which ones did not, adds some emotional weight to the gameplay experience. Finally, in an emerging theme of the games in these case studies, the gameplay experience drives home the idea of American victims in an American city (i.e. erasure of difference by inserting predominantly White American victims when historical victims are overwhelmingly Asian/Japanese). These factors keep the gameplay experience of *Far Cry New Dawn* very much in tune with American discourses of the past.



Figure 5.15. Fiery Super-punched to the Death. The player gains access to over-the-top superpowers. In this screenshot The Captain, who is on fire, punches an enemy so hard that they instantly die and fly into the air. Screenshot by R. Scheiding.

Yet, the gameplay also removes the ability for the type of solemn reflection typically reserved for topics such as nuclear war and radiation victims. The moment-to-moment emergent gameplay pulls the player away from this type of reflection as it causes severe tonal shifts. The experience of finding a barely recognizable important building from *Far Cry 5* within *Far Cry New Dawn* loses its impact when the player immediately needs to clear the area of enemies possibly by super-punching them all to death with the help of a giant boar named Horatio. This is

not to the detriment of the game, as it is clearly designed to be inclined towards preposterous emergent gameplay rather than solemn reflection about nuclear war and radiation victims. The important point, in terms of gameplay, is that *Far Cry New Dawn*, perhaps inadvertently, allows for some reflection on larger issues underneath its over-the-top gameplay.

5.4.6 Analysis

Far Cry New Dawn, despite its clear connections to nuclear strikes and issues, does not overtly connect itself to established discourses of the past surrounding Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Instead, the game uses a post-apocalyptic, post-nuclear game world as an emergent gameplay playground for its players. To put this more directly, the game, because of its setting, narrative, and characters, associates itself with established discourses of the past by necessity but commenting or deeply interacting with these systems of thought is not its primary goal. A game set in a time directly after a nuclear strike will, of course, remediate other media (including historiographies) of the genre but that does not mean that it necessarily focuses on this aspect of itself. *Far Cry New Dawn* is a video game about fun moment-to-moment emergent gameplay in an open world sandbox that just so happens to be set in a post-nuclear world.

The game, as a result, does not have much to contribute to understandings of the past. However, this does not mean that it is discursively insignificant. *Far Cry New Dawn* is not a historical or educational game, but it is influenced by underlying discursive assumptions. For example, the nonchalant attitude towards victim populations in favor of a focus on the physical destruction caused by nuclear weapons is indicative of a focus on gameplay that is afforded to a game developer when there are no victim populations to serve as reminders of a dark, unpleasant, or inconvenient past. *Hibakusha* have been erased from American discourses of the past which has allowed for the creation of a collective/cultural memory minus victims. As a result, it becomes much easier to create a fictional game world that focuses on the “fun” gameplay aspects of a post-apocalypse while also capitalizing on American fears of potentially becoming victims of atomic/nuclear weapons.

5.5 Summary

These case studies analyzed the series background/history, setting, narrative, characters, and gameplay of three American video games: *Fallout 4*, *Far Cry 5*, and *Far Cry New Dawn*.

Specifically, the analysis examined how these games mimicked or countered the established American discourses of the past surrounding the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Each game did interact with the larger discourses of the past, but they did not map onto them perfectly. In other words, each game had some overlap but did not become a 1-to-1 copy. This is unsurprising, as processes of remediation (and premediation) explain the discrepancy. *Fallout 4*, *Far Cry 5*, and *Far Cry New Dawn* represent a remediation of established discourses of the past surrounding the atomic bombs into a video game specific model.

As previously argued, the hegemonic way of representing the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in American historiography (and surrounding discourse) is to defend the bombs as necessary, moral, or preferable to other potential outcomes (regardless of how likely or unlikely these outcomes were) (see Chapter IV). This representation is based on (sometimes biased) historical research as a way of creating a way of thinking about the past for use in the present. A significant result of these discourses is that the bombings are remembered and presented as spectacles or scientific achievements rather than as human tragedies. Video game representations of atomic bombs do not rely upon the same historical research and are not typically subject to concerns about “accuracy”, yet these case studies show that they are still *shaped* by established discourses of the past in their representation of atomic and nuclear warfare. This can be seen in fictional and allegorical representations of atomic or nuclear weapons.

Taking these three case studies together, similarities can be identified that typify what a remediated video game specific discourses of the past of the atomic bombings looks like. Phrased differently, when video games allegorically represent atomic or nuclear weapons and warfare, they remediate existing discourse and make use of four major patterns. The first, and most prevalent, is the creation of an American victimology that ignores foreign or historical victims. American video games lament *potential* American victims over *real historical* foreign (mostly Japanese) victims. In *Fallout 4* it is Boston, and its primarily white American population, that is victimized by China. Likewise, in *Far Cry New Dawn*, Hope County is populated by predominantly White American victims. This creative bit of discursive shorthand conveys a simple message: nuclear war should not be remembered for what it has been but should be feared for what it could be (specifically what it could be for *you* and *me* but not *them*).

This largely conveys the “function” of discourses of the past of the atomic bombs in the United States. A horrific past is reformulated and reorganized to be used in the present.

Well-known historical referents are also an important part of video game remediations of discourses of the past. In terms of the atomic bombings, radiation and mutation serve as the best examples of this. The ghouls of *Fallout 4*, such as John Hancock, typify American general attitudes and fears towards becoming a victim of radiation and being subject to horrid mutation. Likewise, for the monstrous animals of *Far Cry New Dawn*. These referents show a generalized understanding of established discourses which are, of course, based on extensive research and data. Video games then apply these aspects to their allegorical representations as a way of making them more authentic.

Beyond this, American videogames make use of post-atomic or post-nuclear settings, or the use of atomic/nuclear weapons in general, as *setup* rather than as *argument*. For example, *Fallout 4* and *Far Cry New Dawn* use post-nuclear open worlds as their settings but the narrative, characters, and gameplay are not necessarily connected to the issues of nuclear warfare that the games’ settings would suggest. In *Fallout 4* the player is encouraged to follow a narrative where they must locate their missing child. Likewise, in *Far Cry New Dawn* uses a post-nuclear world as an emergent gameplay playground. In a different, yet related, vein, *Far Cry 5* uses nuclear strikes as a violent climax for a non-sensical narrative that featured ever-escalating violence rather than for commenting on the nature of nuclear war and its victims. In all three examples nuclear strikes and post-nuclear settings are used as interesting hooks to entice the player rather than to analyze the past realities of using atomic/nuclear weapons. In this way, discourses of the past are used as setup rather than argument.

Finally, as a function of this setup rather than argument, it would be remiss to ignore that these games, while engaging in discourses of the past surrounding the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki also include numerous elements that are *entirely unrelated* to them as well. To read every element of any of these games as somehow intrinsically tied to established discourses of the past would be folly. Sometimes a comedic character, such as *Far Cry*’s Hurk, is included because it follows series traditions and is a fun in-joke for long-time fans. Likewise, radiation-induced super enemies (a common genre trope) are included not because they are historically accurate, but because they are believable within the established fictions, fit tonally

within the game, and provide an aesthetically interesting and challenging enemy for the player to fight. In these ways, *Fallout 4*, *Far Cry 5*, and *Far Cry New Dawn* display the unique discursive contributions of video games to the larger discourses of the past (i.e. making a post-nuclear landscape and world playable, explorable, and fun).

Additionally, video games constantly borrow or follow genre conventions. Regardless of series history, narrative, setting, characters, and gameplay, each video game is developed and published under the weight of genre conventions and standards. This ranges from something as simple as pressing the square button to reload a weapon (a relatively common default mapping on a PS4 controller) to modelling gameplay systems based upon genre and player expectations (such as progression systems, UIs, etc.). Conventions such as these are, of course, disconnected from discourses of the past of the atomic bombs. It may be obvious, but is worth stating, that video games that remediate specific discourses of the past do not *only* remediate those discourses of the past. Yet, this does not subtract from their value as media objects engaging in established, hegemonic discursive practices.

Thus far, this summary has discussed *how* these case studies follow established discourses of the past surrounding the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. However, *why* this occurs is as interesting, and important, to the overall analysis. To begin, it should be noted that this section is not making any claims about author intentions. This is partially due to the fact that each of these games represents the collective efforts of hundreds of people but also to avoid arguing for causation when we can only see correlation. In general, my argument is that established discourses of the past are extremely influential because of their ubiquity and connections to entrenched power systems (such as government and education). As such, when discourses of the past are firmly established (like those surrounding Hiroshima and Nagasaki) it is possible to answer the *why* by understanding the originating discourse. The standard way of presenting the past becomes a *default* that can help to describe why a video game interacts with the past in certain ways.

With this in mind it is possible to argue *why* the above selected case studies remediate discourses of the past in the genre specific ways that they do. In the United States, the discourses of the past are firmly established; they generally justify the bombs as necessary and/or moral. This has led, perhaps not “naturally” but certainly deliberately, to a system that disregards past

victims, especially Japanese atomic bomb victims because their existence is counterintuitive to presenting the bombs in a purely positive fashion. In other words, if the bombs are to be presented as scientific achievements, moral responsibilities, politically and militarily necessary, or technologically impressive it becomes mandatory to erase, ignore, or downplay the horrific experiences of victims. Yet, the tragedy of these victims is not unknown, and it becomes thinly veiled in allegorical or fictionalized depictions of atomic/nuclear war. In an American collective/cultural memory system that remembers the bombs but forgets their historical victims it is only natural that, when fictionalized victims need to be created, it is potential American victims that fill the void. This capitalizes on traditional American fears of potentially becoming victims of nuclear attacks. For many Americans, the atomic bombs must be remembered as justified, or perhaps even moral, but they also must be feared through the lens of this potential American victimhood in the present.

VI. Japanese Memory Discourse & Historiography

6.1 Charting Japanese Memory Discourse & Historiography

Without a discernable dominant or hegemonic discourse, the creation of a discourses of the past model is greatly complicated. When a group or society does not have one general way of thinking that borders on consensus numerous discourses arise. As a result, it becomes difficult, or perhaps even impossible, to identify the most prevalent discourse and the relative position of other ways of thinking in regard to it. In other words, when there is no dominant discourse there cannot be a marginalized position placed in binary to it. Yet, this does not mean that power is not a part of these discourses. Instead, it is veiled, and requires deeper analysis to identify, describe, and place discourses in relative position to one another.

Unlike the American example discussed in chapter IV, the discourses of the past surrounding the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (and the war in general) in Japan are far less unified. In the American example it is easy to define a dominant discourse (i.e. support or defense of the use of the atomic bombs) and a marginalized counter discourse (i.e. questioning of the use of the atomic bombs). This is not the case with Japan. Instead, there is a much more fractured collective/cultural memory that can be traced to several intertwined causes including American censorship, a lack of unity within memory systems, a politics of apology, and the effects of losing a war on a society at large. This is not to say that there are not discernable patterns within Japanese discourses of the past; for example, Japanese official government discourse is highly cultivated with a tendency towards conservatism. Yet, despite these patterns, no memory discourse has achieved a level of acceptance that could be deemed hegemonic. This chapter represents an attempt to identify, discuss, and position the numerous discourses of the past surrounding the atomic bombs in Japan.

The chapter is organized into five parts. The first section examines existing literature that attempts to discuss/organize/theorize Japanese war memory. This section relies upon both Western and Japanese scholarship, however, preference is given to Hashimoto Akiko's work *The Long Defeat*, which argues for a system of competing discourses within Japanese war memory. Hashimoto's theory is slightly altered to argue that the Japanese discourses of the past are principally defined through a triad of hero/victim/perpetrator where each discourse works in perpetual competition with the others. The following three sections examine one of each of the

three discourses (heroism, victimhood, and perpetration) to define what they are and how they function. Each of these sections uses historiographical analysis of selected Japanese sources (found in English translation) that are emblematic of the larger field. These are analyzed to establish patterns of how each discourse functions *in isolation*. The final section describes how each of the three discourses combine to better illustrate how each discourse exists within Japanese war memory systems in perpetual competition/conversation with the others.

6.2 A Fractured Discourse – Hero/Victim/Perpetrator Triad

Just as they did for their American counterparts, Japanese discourses of the atomic bombs (and atomic bomb victims) started in Japan in the direct aftermath of the bombings. One prominent example of this occurred between 1947-1949 when newly elected Hiroshima mayor, Shinzo Hamai, declared, and then passed into law, that Hiroshima would be rebuilt as a peace city.³⁴⁸ However, these discourses were largely stifled by American censorship. This is mentioned in many sources, for example, the *Hiroshima Peace Reader* notes that official relief measures for *hibakusha* did not start until 1953 because of, “... the fact that strict control by the U.S. over the release of information on the A-bomb and the publication of medical research kept anything from being done for the *hibakusha* until Japan became free when the [San Francisco] Peace Treaty went into effect in 1952.”³⁴⁹ Obviously, this example only discusses medical payments for victims rather than collective/cultural memory at a societal level but it does reveal that information controls were tight enough to hide the suffering of *hibakusha* and stall medical attention.

The wider issues of American censorship directly after the war have been examined by Lifton and Mitchell. They explore American reaction to, and memory of, Hiroshima in *Hiroshima in America: 50 Years of Denial*. Despite the America-centric focus of their work, they outline American censorship of the bombs within Japan quite well. Key to American censorship of the bombings, and the suffering of the victims of those attacks, was the strict denial of access to the cities in the direct aftermath of the bombings for all non-military personnel and the suppression or any printed or artistic works depicting the bombings. Early press, both American

³⁴⁸ Kosakai Yoshiteru, *Hiroshima Peace Reader*, translated by Akira and Michiko Tashiro and Robert and Alice Ruth Ramseyer (Nakajima-cho, Naka-ku, Hiroshima: Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation, 2017), 46.

³⁴⁹ Kosakai, 41.

and Japanese, had to rely solely on military information regarding the bomb.³⁵⁰ On top of this, General Douglas MacArthur denied journalists access to both Hiroshima and Nagasaki and, when two journalists broke this ban, he refused fuel to planes to prevent further breeches.³⁵¹ These actions largely prevented Americans from learning about the bombs and their effects. However, these policies extended out to Japanese publications as well. Japanese newspapers were both censored and forbidden from indicating they were censored. Additionally, from the period of 1945-1948 only 4 books and 1 poetry collection about the bombs were allowed to be published in Japan. The bombs, according to Lifton and Mitchell, were virtually a forbidden subject in Japan.³⁵²

Thus, the collective/cultural memory of the atomic bombs in Japan did not develop in a traditional way. It can be said that discourses about the bombs did start in Japan in the direct aftermath of the war as evidenced by Hamai's efforts in Hiroshima. Additionally, it must be remembered that thousands of victims, of course, remembered their experiences and started to form collective/cultural memory at a more grassroots level. Finally, it should be noted that publication of materials was severely restricted but writing (i.e. letters, diaries, and fiction), drawing, and painting started in the direct aftermath and were later made available, when it was legal to do so. Despite these efforts by Japanese survivors (and non-survivors as well) the censorship was effective in stifling Japanese collective/cultural memory. Indeed, many early sources were written by American occupation personnel in their attempts to research and record the Japanese experience of the war for military purposes. While more Japanese sources have become available in the decades since the war, many English language sources written by Westerners remain important in describing Japanese discursive practices surrounding memory of the war.

This points to another important factor in atomic bomb memory discourse in Japan. Japan's war lasted around fifteen years starting with the annexation of Manchuria in 1931 and ending soon after Emperor Hirohito's surrender broadcast in 1945. Many Japanese cities (not limited to Hiroshima and Nagasaki) had been destroyed by bombing and thousands had been killed both in the fighting and at home. In addition to this, many had faced hunger and other

³⁵⁰ Lifton and Mitchell, 11.

³⁵¹ Lifton and Mitchell, 47-49.

³⁵² Lifton and Mitchell, 56.

personal hardship due to severe food shortages at the end of the war. Thus, when the war ended and the occupation began, many Japanese people simply wanted to move on with their lives rather than dwelling on the past.

This, of course, was not possible for atomic-bomb victims that were continuing to suffer. This led to a divide in the population that was easy to ignore when censorship blocked information. However, this situation would change when the occupation ended, and knowledge of the atomic bombs was formally allowed into the public's view. Other factors, such as a war guilt based upon Japanese atrocities committed during the war or the loss of meaning that occurs when a country loses a war, further fractured Japanese discourse. In the end, a combination of American censorship, (non-*hibakusha*) Japanese willingness to "move on" from the war and these other factors meant that atomic bomb discourses, and memory of the war in general, grew in Japan with a much different trajectory than they did in the United States. The results of this censorship, in combination with Japan's complicated relationship with a disastrous war, was a fractured discourses of the past.

Despite the inherent difficulties of organizing and making sense of this discourse, there have been several attempts to theorize how memory of the war is constructed by Japanese people. David Stahl navigates the topic through an analysis of what he labels as "critical postwar war literature." In his chapter on this body of works he examines, "... Japanese war literature as critical counter-narrative to official master-narratives of the Asia-Pacific War."³⁵³ In short, Stahl argues that official versions of violent pasts appropriate complex traumas and render them into over-simplified master-narratives designed to depict the state in the best light possible. In response to this, serious works of Japanese war literature, grounded in the lived experiences of the writers, serve to critique these state narratives and aid in the creation of more truthful histories.³⁵⁴ Critically, for the present analysis, Stahl identifies four master-narratives concerning the war, Japan's defeat, and the postwar period: 1) Asian liberation 2) national victimization 3) domestic rescue and conversion and 4) a "metanarrative" of modernization.³⁵⁵ All of these narratives serve to buttress ideas of Japanese good intentions and eventual suffering. For Stahl,

³⁵³ David C. Stahl, "Critical Postwar War Literature: Trauma, Narrative Memory and Responsible History," in *Routledge Handbook of Modern Japanese Literature*, edited by Rachael Hutchinson and Leith Morton (Routledge, New York: Routledge, 2016), 169.

³⁵⁴ Stahl, 170.

³⁵⁵ Stahl, 170.

the central issue of these narratives is the Japanese state not recognizing its past as an aggressive victimizer during the war.³⁵⁶ He examines how these narratives are challenged throughout the rest of his chapter. However, for the purposes of this dissertation his most important contribution is the identification of power structures within the Japanese discourses of the past through the creation of over-arching master-narratives. For Stahl, critical postwar war literature becomes an example of a marginalized discourse attempting to combat a more powerful entrenched discourse. He thus makes a valuable contribution to understanding Japanese discourses of the past surrounding the war.

Stahl's work is important in understanding Japanese discourses of the past, however, it only covers one type of literary narrative of the past (i.e. critical postwar literature written by war survivors) while leaving others unexplored. This should not be read as a criticism of Stahl's work, as other types of narratives and memory-making practices were clearly outside of the scope of his study. Fortunately, other scholars have written about the additional ways that Japan and Japanese people have formulated their collective/cultural memory. Ran Zwigenberg focuses on how Hiroshima has been remembered in his book, *Hiroshima: The Origins of Global Memory Culture*. Zwigenberg's principle argument is that, "...Hiroshima's tragedy was rendered harmless to the status quo by the particular way in which it was remembered."³⁵⁷ In response to this, Zwigenberg's main objective is, "... to bring Hiroshima back into the conversation about tragedy and mass killings; to explore the ways we dealt with these as a global community and not as the isolated nations that we never were."³⁵⁸ In other words, Zwigenberg believes that the tragedy of Hiroshima was "cleaned up" or perhaps rehabilitated in a way that obfuscates its true meaning and does a disservice to humankind's understanding of mass violence to this day. This begs the questions: how does Zwigenberg characterize memory practices around Hiroshima and what can this tell us about Japanese discourses of the past?

As previously noted, Hiroshima's first democratically elected Mayor, Shinzo Hamai, formulated a plan to rebuild Hiroshima as a peace city. Zwigenberg argues that, by the late 1940s, the rebuilt city of Hiroshima's meaning (and the official memory of the atomic bomb it

³⁵⁶ Stahl, 171.

³⁵⁷ Ran Zwigenberg, *Hiroshima: The Origins of Global Memory Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 2.

³⁵⁸ Zwigenberg, 9.

represented) was being equated and given the official interpretation of the pursuit of peace and modernity. As a result, commemoration of the bomb followed a future facing peace narrative emphasizing transformation, rebirth, and progress rather than focusing on grief and loss.³⁵⁹ Interestingly, Zwigenberg ties these commemoration decisions to the larger economic concerns of the city. He argues that severe financial difficulties led to the emphasis on the transformation narrative over other explanations of the tragedy while noting that Hiroshima lost 80% of its tax base because of the atomic bomb and disbanding of the military, leaving the city with an acute need of tourism income.³⁶⁰ The 1949 Peace City Memorial Law, according to Zwigenberg, helped to erase the past and commemorated the bomb without mentioning who dropped it while also transforming the former military capital of Japan into a city of peace.³⁶¹

Zwigenberg focuses the rest of his work on how the Hiroshima peace movement developed over time, the active role of *hibakusha* within that movement and how the movement interacted with other historically important geopolitical events (such as the 1954 Bikini Atoll hydrogen bomb tests, the movement to send atomic bomb victims to the United States for plastic surgery, the Korean War, the 1962 Hiroshima-Auschwitz Peace March, and the Adolf Eichmann Trial).³⁶² Thus, beyond exploring Hiroshima as a peace city, it becomes clear that the goal of the work is to connect Hiroshima's active peace culture with other worldwide memory movements, especially Auschwitz and the Holocaust. This makes Zwigenberg's work unique.

However, it is his description of the early years of Hiroshima's peace movement that are most notable. While what he describes is akin to Stahl's master-narrative argument because it stresses official narratives that work in the service of power, the peace movement does not easily fit into any of Stahl's four master-narratives. This is especially the case when we consider that *hibakusha* became a part of the official movement, through a multitude of activities such as writing or participation in official memory creation via state-funded museums, rather than countering it with their own narrative. In other words, the peace movement outlined by Zwigenberg is a master-narrative, but it was largely adopted by the people (i.e. *hibakusha*) that would typically create a counter-narrative in Stahl's theorization. As a result, the peace

³⁵⁹ Zwigenberg, 23-24.

³⁶⁰ Zwigenberg, 24, 39-42.

³⁶¹ Zwigenberg, 46.

³⁶² Zwigenberg, 66, 77, 80, 82-83, 95, 176, 182.

movement outlined by Zwigenberg reveals an important, and unique, type of narrative that helps to characterize how Japan and the Japanese people remember the past.

Both Stahl and Zwigenberg offer compelling theorizations of Japanese memory of the war and the atomic bombs, yet their systems are not quite comprehensive. One particular issue that becomes apparent when reading through both works is the disconnect between “war” memory and “atomic bomb” memory. This is, seemingly, a larger tension within Japanese memory cultures as the war and the atomic bombs can be separated (or one of the two can be severely discounted when considering the other). This, of course, is much different from the hegemonic discourses of the past discussed in the American model (Chapter IV) where the link between the war and the atomic bombs is so important that the two are rarely, if ever, separated. This raises an important question about Japanese discourses of the past: How are memory of the war and the atomic bombs separated and what does that mean for the larger discourses of the past?

To answer this question, it is best to examine two works: Igarashi Yoshikuni’s *Bodies of Memory: Narratives of War in Postwar Japanese Culture, 1945-1970* and Hashimoto Akiko’s *The Long Defeat: Cultural Trauma, Memory, and Identity in Japan*. Igarashi’s work studies the early postwar period of Japan, focusing mainly on the 1950s and 1960s while Hashimoto’s book is perhaps the most comprehensive attempt to categorize and understand how Japan and Japanese people remember the war period.

Igarashi characterizes his work as an attempt to read, “...the absent presence of [Japan’s] war memories.”³⁶³ He argues that postwar Japanese opted not to face the memories of their war loss but instead attempted to displace them through gaining material wealth. This was accomplished through a contradictory dual process of forgetting and remembering simultaneously.³⁶⁴ In other words, instead of remembering a past based on traumatic memories, a more forward-facing collective/cultural memory was constructed through popular media. This collective/cultural memory could not be described as being based upon myth or nostalgia but instead it could be characterized as being based on optimistic or incomplete remembrances of the

³⁶³ Igarashi Yoshikuni, *Bodies of Memory: Narratives of War in Postwar Japanese Culture, 1945-1970* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000), 3.

³⁶⁴ Igarashi, 9-10.

past. Igarashi describes this as the nation's contradictory desire to both remember and forget the past.³⁶⁵

One may ask: how does this work? How can a nation both remember and forget simultaneously AND develop a coherent and functional narrative or discourse? To answer this, Igarashi offers the idea of the “foundational narrative”. Briefly summarized, Igarashi argues that the atomic bombings coupled with the American occupation of postwar Japan provided the impetus for the countries to reconfigure their collective/cultural memories. Within this new system, it was clear to many Japanese that they were in a subject/inferior position, so a new national identity was forged through popular culture rather than abstract political discourse.³⁶⁶ In Igarashi's words, “The foundational narrative was generated by the two countries' efforts to render understandable the experiences of the atomic bomb and the ensuing transformation of their relationship.”³⁶⁷

In other words, both Japanese and Americans forged memory based upon their readings of the past, despite the fact that those readings were contradictory to each other (i.e. Americans pro-atomic bomb, Japanese anti-atomic bomb). Japanese people, understanding their inferior position to the Americans, as made abundantly clear by the disasters of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, created memory based upon an incomplete vision of the past. This, Igarashi argues, could only be accomplished through popular culture, rather than within traditional politics or power structures. As such, Igarashi studies popular culture sources, including film and literature, in his theorization of Japanese war memory.

Igarashi divides the rest of his book into chapters examining the immediate postwar period (i.e. the 1950s and the 1960s). He focuses on popular culture sources ranging from the *Godzilla* films to the writings of Mishima Yukio, tying all of these diverse works back to Japan's complicated memory of the war. Ultimately, he presents a sort of progression whereby Japanese war memories were first sanitized and eventually mobilized into a way of looking positively at the present and future. Igarashi writes, “Japan's struggle to redefine itself by revamping the memories of its war loss culminated in a peaceful, prosperous everyday life in the 1960s. The shattered image of the nation was reassembled, sutured and rehabilitated during the quarter

³⁶⁵ Igarashi, 12.

³⁶⁶ Igarashi, 12-13, 20.

³⁶⁷ Igarashi, 20.

century following defeat.”³⁶⁸ He further argues, “...Japanese people avoided facing the defeat by deceiving themselves that what the defeat brought was actually what they had wished for.”³⁶⁹

Igarashi’s analysis helps to describe early war memory in postwar Japan, but the work has some flaws. To begin, it should be noted that by focusing on popular culture sources, Igarashi ignores more formalized systems of official memory creation by the government that clearly helped to shape Japanese war memory. When government initiatives (such as education reform) are not examined a key aspect of the discursive act of memory creation is left out which can lead to confusion in regard to how war memory is constructed and by whom. In addition, Igarashi’s analysis ends in the early 1970s (by design of course) which means that he leaves out almost five decades of war memory development at the time of this writing. This is not an issue on its own; all works need clearly defined boundaries, but Igarashi does come close to “closing” postwar memory in Japan, rather than leaving it open to further development. He characterizes one popular song as, “... a closure to the postwar struggle with war memoirs.”³⁷⁰ Luckily, he seemingly backs off from this claim in his conclusion by outlining developments post-1970. Ultimately, the most important contribution of Igarashi’s book is the idea that Japanese postwar memory discourse was partially shaped by American hegemony and came to rely upon the idea that past trauma (i.e. mass destruction of Japanese cities and losing a war catastrophically) paved the way for a better present and future Japan.

Thus, Igarashi provides a theory of how memory of the atomic bombs and the war at large have been reconciled into a discourses of the past for Japan. However, the work still relies on one model or hegemonic way of remembering the past within Japan. This is not the case; there are in fact a plurality of memory systems and discursive practices in postwar Japan. To examine this further it is necessary to consider Hashimoto Akiko’s study of Japanese collective/cultural memory of the war *The Long Defeat*. Hashimoto examines “Japan’s culture of defeat” summarizing her work as follows,

I survey the stakes of war memory after the defeat in World War II and show how and why defeat has become an indelible part of Japan’s national collective life, especially in recent decades. I probe into the heart of the war memories

³⁶⁸ Igarashi, 199.

³⁶⁹ Igarashi, 207.

³⁷⁰ Igarashi, 197.

that lie at the root of the current disputes and escalating frictions in East Asia that have come to be known collectively as Japan's "history problem".³⁷¹

The use of this method allows Hashimoto to collect diverse ways of remembering the war and organize them into a more understandable and comprehensive categories.

Hashimoto identifies three "trauma narratives" within Japanese war memory. The first category of narratives emphasizes the stories of fallen national heroes. The focus of these narratives is the justification of past sacrifice by Japanese soldiers, sailors, pilots, and civilians that is claimed to have brought contemporary peace and prosperity to Japan. (This, of course, partially follows Igarashi's argument that Japanese people have purified the past by arguing that it paved way for peace and prosperity in the present.) These narratives conveniently ignore state culpability in the eventual defeat of Japan in the war. The second category promotes empathy and identification with victims. The catastrophe and carnage of total war is a major part of these narratives. (It is within this category that Hashimoto locates Hiroshima and Nagasaki peace narratives). Finally, the third category counteracts the first two by placing emphasis on Japan (i.e. the Japanese government and military) as a perpetrator during the war. The crimes of the Japanese government and military are the focus of this final category.³⁷² These three types of narratives co-exist with one another and none of them occupy either a purely hegemonic position or a purely marginalized position. Indeed, within different temporal spaces and the memories of individuals any one of the three types of narratives can dominate. Importantly, none of the narratives dominates or finds itself marginalized everywhere.

Hashimoto summarizes the issues of these diverse memories within Japanese society, "This cacophony of memory narratives, far apart in moral sentiments and interests, accounts for the disarray in the nation's representation of its metahistory."³⁷³ She adds that the system is not, as oft-claimed in the West, about leaving the past unexamined, arguing, "...it is not about national amnesia but about a stalemate in a fierce, multivocal struggle over a national legacy and the meaning of being Japanese."³⁷⁴ Crucially, in the consideration of this model it should be noted that, Hashimoto does not consider war memories to be fixed recall but as, "...subjectively

³⁷¹ Hashimoto Akiko, *The Long Defeat: Cultural Trauma, Memory, and Identity in Japan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 2.

³⁷² Hashimoto, 8.

³⁷³ Hashimoto, 8.

³⁷⁴ Hashimoto, 9.

constructed in particular present conditions.”³⁷⁵ She thus presents a system of discourses that are in perpetual struggle with one another as their proponents attempt to put forth their preferred discourse as the correct, dominant or hegemonic discourse wherever possible (i.e. textbooks, popular culture, etc.). Despite this struggle each discourse also continually interacts with the others and is thus constantly building/reconfiguring/rebuilding.

Through this careful categorization Hashimoto offers an answer to the question of how “war” memory and “atomic bomb” memory function. They can indeed be understood as separate categories of memory, but they are contained within a larger, much more complicated, structure of Japanese wartime discourses of the past. Furthermore, her model, which places several parallel narratives of the same period into a sort of direct competition, reveals the need to consider all narratives of the war period together rather than one hegemonic and unified narrative. In Japan, unlike the United States, there is no dominant narrative of “the war” where specific ideas dominate and perpetuate themselves into a nearly monolithic system. Instead, nuance, positionality, and particular focuses/lenses typify Japanese war memory. Historiographical analysis could examine only Japanese discursive practices connected to the atomic bombs while avoiding other types of memory (victimization, Japanese war culpability, heroism, trauma, etc.) but to do so would fail to recognize the stakes within Japanese discourses of the past. Focusing on only one subsection within the larger structure of Japanese postwar memory would leave out important power relations within this competitive and contentious system.

The rest of this chapter engages in a historiographical analysis of Japanese war memory and navigates its structure, while relying upon Hashimoto’s helpful characterizations. This is done to define what a Japanese discourses of the past model looks like and how it functions. Primarily the chapter argues that the Japanese discourses of the past is principally defined by the hero/victim/perpetrator triad where each discourse works in perpetual competition with the others. While one discourse may be favored among certain populations or within certain temporal spaces, none of the three can lay claim to a true hegemonic position. Yet, given the

³⁷⁵ Hashimoto, 19.

focus of this research, prominence will be given to Japanese discourses of the past connected to the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki whenever possible.

However, before continuing it should be noted that, due to the author's language deficiencies, that this historiography is constructed with only English-language sources. Thus, even when Japanese authors are cited, it is English-language translations that are used. While this does come with some obvious issues these are mitigated slightly because of the field of study. Interest in World War II in the Pacific theatre has always been high, initially due to US military interest in Japanese wartime intelligence and later due to general public interest, leading to a large number of professionally translated documents, memoirs, and Japanese war literature. Furthermore, an active role has been taken by Japanese authors and organizations to help shape a specifically *English*-language version of Japanese history and memory. In particular, the efforts of the atomic-bomb peace movement, both in translation and production of English-language materials, cannot be discounted. It is undeniable that a major part of the peace movement has been dedicated to fostering cross-cultural dialogue, especially with English speakers, as evidenced by the large amounts of English-language materials that have been created and distributed as part of the movement. In sum, the author admits to the difficult, and potentially problematic nature, of writing this chapter without Japanese-language skills but believes the analysis, if done thoughtfully through processes of speaking nearby and with the aforementioned deficiencies in mind, can produce a valuable perspective on Japanese discourses of the past based on a wealth of available sources.

6.3 Discourses of Heroism

Within the triad of Japanese war discourses of the past, discourses of heroism are the most disconnected from atomic-bomb memory as they typically focus on soldierly narratives and military operations. The bombs may receive some mention in these works, but they are far from centrally important. Yet, it is still necessary to examine this discourse so that it can be compared, contrasted, and understood in parallel to Japanese atomic bomb memory narratives.

Discourses of heroism are perhaps the closest to being “universal” or, in the very least, the most commonly found when studying war memory regardless of culture/time/place/space. For the purposes of this historiography, the materials consist of war memoirs, autobiographies, and biographies of fighting men that generate heroism narratives. Yet such texts raise the

question of how to create narratives of heroism among those on the losing side of history. Put bluntly, the catastrophic and utter defeat of the Imperial Japanese armed forces has made it next to impossible to avoid discussing failure within these texts. Thus, bravery in the face of certain defeat, and often death, is stressed in the creation of the “heroism” branch of the Japanese discourses of the past model of war memory. However, despite this unifying theme individual texts create this narrative through different methods and means. This section briefly examines eight memoirs, autobiographies, and biographies of Japanese fighting men to clarify how the heroism narrative is crafted within Japanese war memory discourses of the past. These sources were selected due to their pertinence to the subject/genre and their availability in English translation.

One prominent way of creating the heroism discourse within Japanese discourses of the past is the focus on tactics and strategy by former commanders. This can be illustrated by briefly examining the memoirs of three Japanese military leaders: Yahara Hiromichi (Army Colonel during the Battle of Okinawa), Hashimoto Mochitsura (Navy Submarine Commander), and Hara Tameichi (Navy Destroyer Captain). All three men were mid-level officers who survived the war and later wrote books about their experiences that received English translations.

Yahara’s work, *The Battle for Okinawa*, is emblematic of these types of memoirs. Yahara was the Imperial Japanese Army officer in charge of planning the defense of Okinawa in the closing stages of the Pacific War. For the purposes of this historiography, there are three aspects of his work that are of particular interest: 1) Yahara’s reasoning for writing the book 2) Yahara’s opposition to high command and 3) the resulting narrative of his doomed garrison. Yahara states his motive for writing the book rather simply in his prologue, “... I present my appeal to the facts about the battle of Okinawa. Here I must say, ‘This is how it really was.’”³⁷⁶ This invocation, in combination with his position of authority as a former Army Colonel, lends credence to his version of events during the Battle of Okinawa while also indicating to the reader that he has important information that was unknown before he published his work. Establishing this authority lends credibility to the work.

³⁷⁶ Yahara Hiromichi, *The Battle for Okinawa: A Japanese Officer’s Eyewitness Account of the Last Great Campaign of World War II*, introduction by Frank B. Gibney, translated by Roger Pineau and Masatoshi Uehara (Toronto: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1995), xiv.

Yahara informs the reader that he had a military strategy based upon the use of fortified defensive positions and attritionary offensive tactics.³⁷⁷ This, according to Yahara, would have been much more effective for the Imperial Army both tactically and in terms of human cost. Indeed, he devotes the entire opening chapter to his plan, which called for a measured battle of attrition aimed at delaying American progress as long as possible, and the way that this plan was altered/abandoned by high command.³⁷⁸ Yahara returns to this argument throughout his work, concluding his book with the assertion that the General in command of the island admitted that the Japanese forces were doomed regardless of how well they fought but that Yahara's plan would still have been more effective.³⁷⁹ Additionally, Yahara claims, "In a battle of attrition we could have saved at least one-quarter and perhaps even a third of our forces until the end of hostilities."³⁸⁰ This is an important claim, even if it is simply conjecture, because surviving until the end of war was perhaps the only way to save these men due to the Japanese military's indoctrination that disallowed surrender while encouraging the use of desperate suicidal tactics, such as *gyokusai*.³⁸¹

The combination of Yahara's authoritative position and his assertions that the battle had been mishandled by those above him creates a narrative where doomed soldiers bravely fought an unwinnable battle. This, of course, creates sympathy for these soldiers without raising important questions: What were these men fighting for? How were they treated by their own military leaders? And, given the complicated colonial history between Okinawa and Japan,

³⁷⁷ Post-1943 the Japanese Army and Navy suffered defeat after defeat in the Pacific theatre. They had based their early strategy (1941-1943) in the region around invading numerous islands. They would then build airstrips and garrison the islands with troops to create what were colloquially referred to as "unsinkable aircraft carriers". Through a strategy called "island hopping" the Americans slowly invaded some of these islands while skipping others. After the Battle of Midway (4-7 June 1942) the Americans methodically moved closer and closer to the Japanese home islands and did not experience any major defeats. This, in combination with Japanese suicidal tactics and refusal to retreat, led to a realization among Japanese military planners that they were fighting doomed battles. As such, planners like Yahara developed strategies that would not bring victory but, rather, attempted to lower Japanese casualties in the closing stages of the war. In sum, Japanese military planners recognized the inevitability of their defeat and the inability to surrender or retreat from distant strongholds. Some, like Yahara, made vain attempts to save the lives of as many of their soldiers as possible.

³⁷⁸ Yahara, 3-27.

³⁷⁹ Yahara, 191.

³⁸⁰ Yahara, 192.

³⁸¹ *Gyokusai*, more commonly referred to as a Banzai Charge in English, is a charge *en masse* into enemy lines when a unit is near the end of its fighting capacity or cut off from the rest of their own forces. The misnomer "Banzai Charge" was coined by Americans because Japanese soldiers would typically scream "*Tenno Heika Banzai*" or "*Banzai*" (loosely translated "May the Emperor live forever") at the outset of the attack. *Gyokusai* occurred frequently throughout the Pacific War and were accompanied by other types of suicide by Japanese soldiers who chose death over the shame of capture.

where/who were they fighting for? It is, perhaps, not Yahara's job to account for these questions within his work as he had a specific issue to discuss (i.e. his own involvement in the planning of the battle and how it was negatively affected by high command) but, nevertheless, he creates a narrative where the bravery and tragic heroism of Japanese soldiers is highlighted at the cost of important larger questions.

This narrative of tragic heroism is not unique to Yahara's work. Other works follow a disconcertingly similar format where a formerly mid-ranking Japanese military official (i.e. not part of high command but in charge of military decisions, strategy or tactics at a local level) leverages their authority to tell their story of the war while creating a tragic narrative. Other examples even lament the poor decisions of the Japanese high command that ignored their expert opinion. Hara Tameichi's, *Japanese Destroyer Captain*, does precisely this, suggesting that "... Japanese destroyers fought gallantly and valiantly until the end of the war. I think their records deserve a full presentation for posterity... I have decided to challenge [the] precept [that 'Defeated men should not talk about their battles'], not for myself, but to give proper credit to the destroyers and the men who sailed them."³⁸²

Hara's book differs from Yahara's because he covers his life in the lead-up to the war. This gives the book a more autobiographical tone and includes interesting anecdotes, such as Hara's failed romance with a geisha and his experiences during the 1923 Tokyo/Yokohama earthquake.³⁸³ However, Hara eventually turns his focus to the war, depicting himself as "gloomy and pessimistic"³⁸⁴ in light of his knowledge of American industrial capacity (which would make Japanese victory virtually impossible) but, ultimately, "...grimly determined to carry out orders."³⁸⁵ These feelings only intensified in the early stages of the war when Hara identified numerous mistakes made by his colleagues that he bluntly categorizes as "stupid."³⁸⁶

What follows is a detailed account of Japanese Naval combat through the entirety of the war with particular focus on the role of destroyers in the battles of Pearl Harbor, Guadalcanal,

³⁸² Hara Tameichi, *Japanese Destroyer Captain: Pearl Harbor, Guadalcanal, Midway - The Great Naval Battles as Seen Through Japanese Eyes*, translated by Fred Saito and Roger Pineau (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2011), xi-xii.

³⁸³ Hara, 15, 19-22.

³⁸⁴ Hara, 40.

³⁸⁵ Hara, 47.

³⁸⁶ Hara, 52-53.

Midway, and Okinawa.³⁸⁷ Hara reinforces the idea of a hopeless war and inept leadership throughout his book. For example, he shares a story of a pilot that, after ditching his aircraft in the ocean, was brought aboard Hara's ship and died tragically calling out for his mother.³⁸⁸ He also criticizes numerous members of the high command including Admiral Yamamoto Isoroku, Navy Minister Shimada Shigetaro, Chief of Staff Nagano Osami, and General Tojo Hideki, specifically referring to Yamamoto as a gambler who did not play his cards for all they were worth.³⁸⁹

This dual narrative comes to a crescendo in his conclusion where he details his final mission in which he captained his destroyer, *Yahagi*, alongside the super-battleship *Yamato* on a suicide mission to help defend Okinawa. The plan called for *Yamato*, the largest battleship ever built, to beach itself on Okinawa and use its massive guns to defend against the American attack. This was a suicide mission by design; there was only enough fuel for a one-way trip. Hara outlines his opposition to this strategy and his alternative (where the *Yahagi* would instead attack American supply lines) that was ultimately denied as a way for the Japanese Navy to save face.³⁹⁰ The result was the loss of *Yamato*, *Yahagi*, and numerous other ships soon after they left the relative security of the Japanese home islands. Hara's narrative concludes with the image of hundreds of doomed sailors singing a patriotic song as they slowly lose their strength and drown. Hara shares his thoughts at the time,

I knew I was going to die. The distant melody, wavering like a lullaby, brought back my childhood and my mother's songs, my grandfather, school days, the Academy world cruise, shopping in a New York department store, young officer days, my affair with the geisha girl. This kaleidoscope changed into a vivid picture of my mother, overlapped by one of my wife, and then my last formal officer portrait, which was replaced by the faces of my children.³⁹¹

Hara would, of course, be saved rather miraculously. Yet the tragedy of his personal narrative and the perfectly avoidable deaths of the doomed sailors serving under him creates a specific narrative of heroism in the face of certain defeat. As with Yahara, it is possible to question this narrative, how it was crafted, what it avoids and whether Hara had a duty to explore these

³⁸⁷ Hara, 35-289.

³⁸⁸ Hara, 123.

³⁸⁹ Hara, 106-107.

³⁹⁰ Hara, 262-263. The Navy leaders were concerned that they would face criticism and shame if the war ended and they had many undamaged capital ships.

³⁹¹ Hara, 285.

questions. However, what is most important in regard to Japanese discourses of the past is *that* the narrative of heroism was created here not *how/why* it was created or how Hara approached the subject.

Hashimoto Mochitsura, one of the Japanese Navy's few surviving submarine officers, provides another example of a narrative that promotes heroism among fighting men in the face of certain defeat. Hashimoto positions himself similarly to both Yahara and Hara while also criticizing Japanese high command, "Throughout the war the whole submarine fleet was in reality a special attack force in which, in the absence of scientific weapons, the crews were just so much human ammunition... I have taken up my pen to try to record something of the unknown hardships and successes of our submarines."³⁹² Similarly to the other authors in this genre, Hashimoto's narrative criticizes the Japanese high command and focuses on the plight of Japanese fighting men.

Hashimoto provides several particularly poignant examples of the suffering of Japanese fighting men and their valor in the face of defeat. For example, he writes about submarine missions to re-supply Japanese soldiers on the island of Guadalcanal. When the Japanese Navy lost access to both traditional air and water-based supply lines they decided to have submarines supply food to the stranded garrison by firing modified rice bags out of torpedo tubes.³⁹³ This previously unheard-of technique coupled with easily perceivable naval losses throughout the fleet disheartened the submariners. Yet, Hashimoto writes, "In I-176 [Hashimoto's submarine] there was no such word as 'can't'... To those ashore the bags of rice brought by I-176 were their means of subsistence, and they regarded us as a god of rescue."³⁹⁴ As the war continued, and Japan's eventual defeat became increasingly evident, Hashimoto describes the plight of soldiers in increasingly tragic terms, referring to the Japanese soldiers on Tarawa and Makin as, "...engaged in a forlorn struggle"³⁹⁵ because of the inevitability of their defeat and death.

³⁹² Hashimoto Mochitsura, *Sunk: The Story of the Japanese Submarine Fleet 1941-1945*, translated by Commander E. H. M. Colegrave, introduction by Commander Edward L. Beach (Joshua Tree, California: Progressive Press, 2010), vi.

It should be noted that "special attack unit/force" was a Japanese euphemism used during the war that meant suicide tactics.

³⁹³ Hashimoto, 96-98.

³⁹⁴ Hashimoto, 116.

³⁹⁵ Hashimoto, 152.

Yet, it is in the descriptions of the struggles of submarine combat that the heroism, and disgust with those in power, where Hashimoto's heroism narrative becomes most evident. Hashimoto believed Japanese submarine operations, due to the lack of radar equipment, to be "plain suicide". He even informed the Admiral commanding submarines of this in a conversation. The Admiral's response, as recorded by Hashimoto, was "The admiral, however, disagreed, saying that even though the boats failed to return, they were playing their part just the same."³⁹⁶ Hashimoto would later personally research radar equipment after gaining limited access to a rudimentary set during the war. He found that submarine performance and survivability were greatly improved when using radar. But the higher-ups at the Research Bureau denied his request for radar and instead increased the allotment for binoculars by one pair for each submarine. The reader can sense Hashimoto's disdain for the Japanese high command as he traces this decision to outdated scientific research policies within the Japanese naval hierarchy.³⁹⁷

But it is in his description of the *kaiten* program that the tragedy of doomed soldiers is most thoroughly addressed. A *kaiten* was a manned torpedo launched from a submarine; it is akin to the more famous *kamikaze* aircraft that fell under the Japanese category of "special attack units". Hashimoto devotes an entire chapter at the end of his book to describing the development of the weapons and their tragic implementation that led to numerous fruitless deaths.³⁹⁸ He ultimately concludes that the *kaitens* were ineffective, especially when used against heavily fortified anchorages.³⁹⁹ Hashimoto thus weaves a narrative where brave submariners were not given the proper resources because of outdated procedures put in place by the Japanese high command. Eventually, suicidal tactics were used to make up for these deficiencies. As a result, Hashimoto calls for contemporary Japanese to acknowledge the heroism of the lost, "Let the spirits of the eighty departed warriors of the *Kaitens* and midget [submarines] bear witness! Our country will have to follow a difficult road and the ordeal imposed by heaven on our nation and people continues."⁴⁰⁰

Once again, Hashimoto creates a specific type of heroism narrative where common Japanese fighting men were let down by their superiors. Nevertheless, these men fought bravely

³⁹⁶ Hashimoto, 154.

³⁹⁷ Hashimoto, 166-169.

³⁹⁸ Hashimoto, 176-193.

³⁹⁹ Hashimoto, 209.

⁴⁰⁰ Hashimoto, 236.

in the face of certain death. This is a common narrative put forth in each of the works by Yahara, Hara, and Hashimoto, but there is an important element to these narratives that must be considered. Each of these men question the decisions and abilities of those in the highest positions of power by making specific claims about equipment, tactics, and strategies. This gives the impression that they are questioning the war but none of the three men question either the legality of the war or, fundamentally, if it should have been fought in the first place. This is, perhaps, beyond the scope of their arguments; these were military men tasked with fighting a war. Yet, by not questioning the war or the non-Japanese victims of that war *during the postwar period*, the authors are creating a heroism narrative with no aspirations towards the creation of an in-depth historical understanding. The argument/narrative has a façade of questioning power but instead it asserts the authority of an established governmental/military power structure.

Beyond these works there are others that craft narratives of heroism without major questioning of those in positions of power. These narratives ultimately depict a type of nebulous heroism through tragedy and sacrifice *without* major attempts to connect to larger questions of military command decisions and structures. Analyzing these examples in greater detail is beyond the scope of this dissertation, however it is helpful to briefly mention some examples of this type of heroism narrative.

A unique example of this is *No Surrender*, the memoir of Onoda Hiroo. Onoda became an international sensation when he became one of the last Japanese soldiers to surrender in 1974 - nearly thirty years after the conclusion of the war. His book is a fascinating account of how he lived in the Philippine jungle including drawings depicting numerous survival strategies, such as how to sleep in the open, construct a hut during the rainy season, trap rats for food, and store ammunition.⁴⁰¹ Onoda refused to surrender both because of his training and his steadfast refusal to believe that the war had ended. Eventually it was arranged for his superior officer from three decades prior to bring him official written orders, as this was the only way to convince Onoda to emerge from the jungle and return to Japan.⁴⁰²

⁴⁰¹ Onoda Hiroo, *No Surrender: My Thirty-Year War*, translated by Charles S. Terry (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1999), 145, 149, 153.

⁴⁰² Onoda, 210-213.

Despite being partially a story of perseverance and survival, Onoda upholds the ideals of a heroic soldier in an impossible situation determined to fight against long odds. He writes, “I had expected a friendly army to land at almost any time, but there had been no further word... If I ever did manage to return to Japan, I would still have to work and sweat every day, and I could do that just as well on Lubang. Staying here even had one advantage: if I died, it would be a death in the line of duty, and my spirit would be enshrined at Yasukuni Shrine. The idea appealed to me.”⁴⁰³ The book, through its celebration of Onoda’s struggle and commitment to duty, represents a different type of heroic narrative where the focus is solely on a single soldier’s tribulations outside of larger geopolitical and wartime contexts.

Inoguchi Rikihei and Nakajima Tadashi, two surviving officers of the *kamikaze* units, craft a similar narrative in their book, *The Divine Wind*, including an evocative final section composed of final letters home written by *kamikaze* pilots.⁴⁰⁴ Similarly, *ohka* (piloted rockets) suicide pilots are lamented in Naito Hatsuho’s *Thunder Gods*. Here the author focuses on the idealism of these pilots and their unnecessary loss of life for paltry results due to difficulties with the technology.⁴⁰⁵ Finally, Mitsuru Yoshida, creates a tragic heroic narrative in *Requiem for Battleship Yamato*, based on his experiences on the final voyage of the titular ship. The book was initially refused publication under the American occupation for displaying too much “militaristic spirit”.⁴⁰⁶ While it does acknowledge some opposition to the battle plan on behalf of the commanders,⁴⁰⁷ it is more focused on the tragic stories of sailors engaging in an impossible mission. For example, Yoshida shares the melancholy experience of writing a last letter home to his mother, “My parting emotions are clear in the letter; she will grieve for me. I can only submit and die. I can only hope that my death will bear fruit. Rejoice, mother, if I am lucky enough to die a death of which I need not be ashamed.”⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰³ Onoda, 207.

⁴⁰⁴ Capt. Inoguchi Rikihei, Cdr. Nakajima Tadashi and Roger Pineau, *The Divine Wind: Japan’s Kamikaze Force in World War II* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1958), 196-208.

⁴⁰⁵ Naito Hatsuho, *Thunder Gods: The Kamikaze Pilots Tell Their Story* (New York: Kodansha International, 1989), xvii-xviii, xix, 158.

⁴⁰⁶ Yoshida Mitsuru, *Requiem for Battleship Yamato*, translated by Richard H. Minear (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1985), xxix-xxxii.

⁴⁰⁷ Yoshida, 13.

⁴⁰⁸ Yoshida, 27-28.

In all three examples, heroism in the face of defeat is the larger narrative of the books. Yet an opposition to authority is either omitted, is mentioned only in passing, or is not a central theme. As a result, a heroism narrative is created but this heroism becomes nebulous and ungrounded from larger contexts. This is not necessarily the intent of the authors, though they are obscuring larger issues to focus on their own tragedy. Yet, it is not the intent of the authors that is at issue here but, instead, the ways that they tell their stories and the overall contribution that makes to the creation of discourses of the past connected to Japanese war memory. With this in mind, a pattern emerges where an individual heroism outside of broader contexts of war becomes prevalent. It should also be noted that, while only some authors state it explicitly, all of these works imply that the sacrifices of the past have led to peace and prosperity in the future. All, in some way, want the reader to think about and revere the fallen heroes of the past. In addition, as postwar publications, they are being read in a peaceful world,⁴⁰⁹ with the implication that this should also be credited to the heroes of the war. These discourses of heroism are an important component of the triad of Japanese war memory.

Although this section has focused exclusively on memoirs, autobiographies, and other similar historiographical pieces, it should be noted that the narrative of heroism is not limited to these sources. Indeed, these types of narratives have become central to understanding other aspects of Japanese heroic war memory. One prevalent example of this, that is well-known in the West, is the Yasukuni shrine. In the Japanese nativist religion, Shinto, Yasukuni is the place where the souls of Japan's war dead are enshrined as *kami*. The shrine is a continuing source of political conflict because it houses the souls of *all* Japanese war dead, including those that were convicted as class A war criminals after the conclusion of World War II. The full extent of the issues, which have been outlined by numerous authors including John Nelson, Michael Pye, and Miyamoto Yuki, surrounding the shrine are beyond the scope of this historiography.⁴¹⁰ The

⁴⁰⁹ "Peaceful" in this sense is relative as the world has been far from peaceful post-1945. In relative terms, it could be said that the world is more peaceful then during World War II (the deadliest conflict in human history) and that Japan is certainly more peaceful and prosperous than during the period 1931-1945.

⁴¹⁰ Briefly, Pye argues that the Yasukuni shrine capitalizes on traditional Japanese reverence for heroes, even when they fail, especially if they are seen as sincere in their goals and actions. Additionally, Nelson notes that the shrine has a historical role of giving legitimacy to politicians dating back to the Meiji Emperor and is a continuing source of conservative collective memory, especially of the period from 1931-1945. Miyamoto provides a comparison of the commemoration practices in Nanjing, Hiroshima, and the Yasukuni Shrine, arguing that Yasukuni Shrine has deep ties to the Japanese nation-state and is an example of religion being used in the service of the state. For a more extensive analysis of the significance of the Yasukuni shrine within Japanese discourse, memory and politics see:

aforementioned memoirs in this section and memory cultures emanating from Yasukuni can be seen as similar manifestations of the heroism narrative where dead soldiers should be revered, particularly for the prosperity of the present age.

Finally, it should be noted that the most right-wing ultra-nationalist or extremist views of the war usually fall into this section of Japanese war memory as well. However, the most extreme of these writings are typically not meant for non-Japanese audiences and, as a result, rarely receive translations into other languages. Sheng-Mei Ma provides an example of this in her study of Japanese manga based on the war. She examines individual works by three authors, Nakazawa Keiji, Tezuka Osamu, and Kobayashi Yoshinori, noting that Nakazawa and Tezuka appeal to world-wide manga readership and are thus translated widely. Kobayashi, however, is not translated because of his characterization of Japanese colonial ambitions in Asia, which Ma describes as “right-wing reactionary Japanese politics.”⁴¹¹ This is only one example of this phenomenon, but it speaks to the insularity of ultra-nationalist memory communities. They are present but represent a minority of works that is not indicative of all Japanese war memory or even all of Japanese heroic war memory (as evidenced by the works selected for this section). In other words, ultra-nationalist discourses exist, and receive much attention in the West due to their controversy, but they are far from the norm within Japanese discourses of the past as shown throughout this section. They are, like the memoirs of Yahara, Onoda, and the other aforementioned authors, simply one part of the discourses of heroism that make up one branch of the Japanese tripartite discourses of the past.

6.4 Discourses of Victimhood

Within the Japanese war memory triad most atomic bomb memory is housed within discourses of victimhood. This should not be considered surprising because of the hundreds of thousands of victims, the majority of which were Japanese, that suffered through the bombings

John Nelson, “Social Memory as Ritual Practice: Commemorating Spirits of the Military Dead at Yasukuni Shinto Shrine,” *The Journal of Asian Studies* 62, No. 2 (May 2003): 443-467.

Michael Pye, “Religion and Conflict in Japan with Special Reference to Shinto and Yasukuni Shrine,” *Diogenes* 50, no. 3 (August 2003): 45-59.

Miyamoto Yuki, “The Ethics of Commemoration: Religion and Politics in Nanking, Hiroshima and Yasukuni,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 80, No. 1 (March 2012): 34-63.

⁴¹¹ Sheng-Mei Ma, “Three Views of the Rising Sun, Obliquely: Keiji Nakazawa’s *A-bomb*, Osamu Tezuka’s *Adolf*, and Yoshinori Kobayashi’s *Apologia*” in *Mechademia 4 War/Time*, edited by Frenchy Lunning (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 194.

of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It should go without saying, but bears repeating, that Japanese narratives of the atomic bombs are, by default, about victimhood because of the lived experiences of the victims. While the Japanese government and military held at least some power (though even this is debatable in the later stages of the war) the civilians in Hiroshima and Nagasaki most certainly did not. Indeed, *hibakusha* are the only people to fully experience the power of American atomic supremacy firsthand. This powerlessness in the face of overwhelming destruction and death is nothing short of tragic. This has led to an abundance of literature, scholarship, and memory communities centered around remembering both the bombs and the ongoing suffering of *hibakusha*.

This section focuses primarily on the discourse that surrounds the use of the atomic bombs on Japanese civilians in August 1945. There are four major types of writing that help to buttress this discourse: literature written by survivors (hereafter *hibakusha* literature), literature written based on research into the atomic bombs (for example when an author creates a work of fiction based upon the experiences on *hibakusha* but did not directly experience the bombing of either Hiroshima or Nagasaki themselves), printed materials produced and distributed by the peace movement, and scientific research into the suffering of *hibakusha* (such as radiation effects research).

However, it should be noted that not all discourses of victimhood involve the atomic bombs. Given the almost complete destruction of Japanese cities through conventional bombing and the near eradication of Japanese soldiers, sailors, and pilots in numerous far-flung locations during the war, there are numerous discourses of victimhood housed within Japanese discourses of the past. This section briefly considers some examples of these narratives, but the primary focus is directed towards atomic bomb memory. This section does not argue that all discourses of victimhood are based on memory of the atomic bombs only that atomic bomb memory is highly emblematic of this discourse.

Memory of the atomic bombs has a prominent place within Japanese discourses of the past. In fact, the bombs are closely connected to one of the earliest acts of collective/cultural memory creation in postwar Japan: Emperor Hirohito's *Imperial Rescript on Surrender*. On 15 August 1945, Emperor Hirohito addressed the Japanese people via a radio broadcast. This was a monumental moment in Japanese history because it was the first time that an Emperor addressed

his people directly. In addition, the message of the broadcast, that of Japanese surrender, signalled the end of over a decade of fighting by the Japanese Empire.

There are many aspects of the broadcast that are interesting for scholars of collective/cultural memory and history, beyond the obvious importance of the message itself.⁴¹² However, it is the direct reference to the atomic bombs that is most important for the present analysis. Hirohito states,

Moreover, the enemy has begun to employ a new and most cruel bomb, the power of which to do damage is, indeed, incalculable, taking the toll of many innocent lives. Should we continue to fight, it would not only result in an ultimate collapse and obliteration of the Japanese nation, but also it would lead to the total extinction of human civilization.⁴¹³

With these words Hirohito placed the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the centre of Japan's surrender while deftly avoiding the government's, and his own, culpability in the catastrophic defeat of the empire. Indeed, this phrasing attempts to make Hirohito and Japan seem benevolent, as if the surrender of Imperial Japan was the only action that could save the entire world from atomic destruction. While Hirohito's representation of the end of the war as a benevolent Japanese action would not become the sole way of remembering the war, as seen throughout this chapter, it did in the very least begin an affiliation between the atomic bombs and official war memory.

As previously outlined, Japanese discourses of the past were stunted in the early post-war years by American censorship. Historian John Dower argues that, while the trauma of nuclear devastation and unconditional surrender reinforced a sense of victimization and vulnerability, the Japanese did not begin to visualize the human consequences of the bombs in concrete and vivid ways until 3-4 years after the cities were destroyed.⁴¹⁴ This was compounded by the fact that anything connected to the bombs, including effects of radiation on survivors, was a closely guarded military secret. However, while American censorship (and the willingness of many Japanese to move on from the war) delayed the widespread public development of

⁴¹² Emperor Hirohito, "Imperial Rescript on Surrender," in *Sources of Japanese History Volume Two*, edited by David John Lu (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1974), 176-177.

One particularly interesting issue within Hirohito's speech is the clever use of language that never actually uses the term "surrender" while also glossing over Japanese imperialism throughout Asia.

⁴¹³ Hirohito, 176.

⁴¹⁴ John W. Dower, "The Bombed: Hiroshimas and Nagasakis in Japanese Memory," in *Hiroshima in History and Memory*, edited by Michael J. Hogan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 123, 128.

collective/cultural memory associated with the bombs, it did not prevent it permanently. In the ensuing decades many works in numerous media have been created that attempt to tell the stories of the victims of the atomic bombs. These include those written by *hibakusha* but also other authors who may not have experienced the bombs directly but based their work on extensive research or interviews.

Works written by *hibakusha*, ranging from fiction to basic memoirs or interviews, have been published quite extensively and are frequently translated into English.⁴¹⁵ For the purposes of this study, two authors will be examined in depth: Hayashi Kyoko and Nakazawa Keiji. These authors have been selected for multiple reasons: both are highly renowned/well-known and have extensive works that have been translated into English. In addition, they write about different events (Hayashi writes about Nagasaki while Nakazawa focuses on Hiroshima) and use different media (Hayashi writes fiction and memoirs while Nakazawa writes and draws *manga*). Finally, both Hayashi and Nakazawa do not shy away from visceral descriptions/depictions of the suffering of atomic-bomb victims, which is an essential facet of *hibakusha* literature. Both authors are victims of the bombs that established powerful voices and helped to mould Japanese discourses of the past. Using these two authors allows for a brief study of *hibakusha* literature that covers as much essential terrain as possible. While no two authors can fully characterize an entire genre and its nuances, Hayashi and Nakazawa's works are highly emblematic of *hibakusha* literature and its unique styles/perspectives.

Authorship is a key component of *hibakusha* literature. Aside from the mere fact that one must have survived one of the bombings (or be the child of a survivor) to be a *hibakusha*, the trauma of surviving factors in heavily within the genre. As a result, it is important to know some of the background of an author in the genre when assessing the literature and its impact. Hayashi Kyoko was at work (as a 14-year-old conscripted student worker) in the Ohashi Factory of the

⁴¹⁵ For example, see the following works which fall into the three types of written works. The Hara and Ota are fictionalized stories, Tada is a memoir, and Tomonaga, Yamamoto, and Yamawaki are interviews. These are a small sample of *hibakusha* writings available in English rather than an extensive list.

Hara Tamiki, "Summer Flowers," in *Hiroshima: Three Witnesses*, edited and translated by Richard H. Minear (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990), 45-113.

Ota Yoko, "City of Corpses," in *Hiroshima: Three Witnesses*, edited and translated by Richard H. Minear (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990), 153-273.

Tada Makiko, "My Husband Does Not Return," in *The Atomic Bomb: Voices from Hiroshima and Nagasaki*, edited by Kyoko and Mark Selden (Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, Inc., 1989), 173-181.

Tomonaga Masao, Yamamoto Sadao and Yamawaki Yoshiro, "After the Atomic Bomb: *Hibakusha* Tell their Stories," *International Review of the Red Cross*, no. 87 (899): 507-525.

Mitsubishi Munitions plant when the atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. This put her 1.4 kilometers from the epicentre of the bombing.⁴¹⁶ She managed to escape the city by fleeing over Mount Konpira to her family's home outside of the city.⁴¹⁷ Though she escaped Nagasaki relatively unharmed, she had received a massive dose of radiation and, as a result, suffered from radiation sicknesses including infections, diarrhea, hair loss, weakness, and increased bleeding from wounds that both retained heat and attracted green-bottle flies.⁴¹⁸ Despite this, she managed to recover though, tragically, she lived in fear of a slow death caused by radiation until she died in 2017. She once wrote, in reference to radiation-induced cancer and other diseases, "What I dread most is not being able to die easily."⁴¹⁹ Despite these difficulties, Hayashi had a celebrated literary career that established her as one of the prominent voices within *hibakusha* literature.

Hayashi did not start to write and publish her work until 1962 (or 1975).⁴²⁰ She decided to start writing about the bombs and the postwar experiences of *hibakusha* partially because she had a son and she wanted to help him come to terms with being a 2nd generation *hibakusha*, which came with its own set of increased medical risks.⁴²¹ Her works ranged from memoirs, as in her debut piece *Ritual of Death*, to fictionalized accounts of the bombing partially based on her own experiences, such as the short stories *Two Grave Markers* and *The Empty Can*.

The "accuracy" or "inaccuracy" of Hayashi's works is questionable, but she was once quoted, "Because *hibakusha* had no precedent or reference, I worried that if I fictionalized August 9, people might still read it as true. So, I decided to write only what I remember and what

⁴¹⁶ Hayashi Kyoko, "Ritual of Death," in *Nuke-rebuke: Writers & Artists Against Nuclear Energy & Weapons*, edited by Morty Sklar (Iowa City, Iowa: Spirit That Moves Us Press, 1984), 22.

Hayashi Kyoko, *From Trinity to Trinity*, translated by Eiko Otake (Barrytown, New York: Station Hill Press, Inc., 2010), ix-x.

⁴¹⁷ Hayashi Kyoko and Kyoko Selden, "Dear Friend," *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* 11/12, Violence in the Modern World Special Issue (December 1999-2000): 101.

⁴¹⁸ Hayashi Kyoko and Kyoko Selden, "Masks of Whatchamacallit (Nanjamonja no men, 1976)," *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* 16, Women's Voices, Past and Present: Twelve Japanese Stories (December 2004): 73.

Hayashi, *Ritual of Death*, 52.

⁴¹⁹ Hayashi and Selden, "Masks of Whatchamacallit", 87.

⁴²⁰ The date is disputed. One of Hayashi's English translators, Eiko Otake provides the date of 1962 in the introduction of *From Trinity to Trinity*. Yet another translator, Kyoko Selden, refers to *Ritual of Death* as Hayashi's literary debut in 1975 in her "Note on the Author" for the publication of *Masks of Whatchamacallit*. *Ritual of Death* won the prestigious Akutagawa award in 1975 which certainly led to Hayashi's works becoming better known and more accessible. Regardless of the true date, it seems likely that Hayashi started to write (and perhaps even publish) well before 1975 but the 1975 date can be considered the point that her work became widely known to the reading public.

⁴²¹ Hayashi, *From Trinity to Trinity*, xvii

I heard from others.”⁴²² Yet, it should be noted that Eiko Otake, one of the English-language translators of Hayashi’s work, reveals that parts of the work *From Trinity to Trinity* are historically inaccurate. Regardless, Otake argues that minor errors in memory should not detract from the power of Hayashi’s work as a piece of literature. She notes, “The power of [Hayashi’s] work is in the authenticity of her mind, which is layered with memories.”⁴²³ Indeed, it is the limited use of artistic license in combination with her experiences that makes Hayashi’s works compelling, raw, and passionate. For the purposes of this historiography two works, *Ritual of Death* and *Two Grave Markers*, serve as examples that are emblematic of Hayashi’s corpus which emphasized the suffering of *hibakusha* both during and after the war.⁴²⁴

Ritual of Death, published in 1975 and translated into English in 1984, was Hayashi’s first widely published work. It won the 1975 Akutagawa award and helped to establish Hayashi as one of the most prominent authors of *hibakusha* literature. The piece is a unique combination of memoirs and historical research, as it begins with a telegram dated 9 August 1945 from two American scientists addressed to a Professor R. Sagane at Tokyo University before transitioning to Hayashi’s own experiences and feelings regarding the bombing of Nagasaki.⁴²⁵ The telegram, which was a warning to Professor Sagane of the dangers of atomic weapons issued *after* the bombing of Nagasaki, functions as a framing device that Hayashi can direct her disdain, pain and suffering towards. She writes that she cannot read it calmly, as the effect of the warning was supposed to be heightened by the deaths of people she knew.⁴²⁶ Furthermore, she laments, “Most of [the victims of Nagasaki] did not even know why that rage should be directed at us, and we thought we were going to live tomorrow and the day after tomorrow.”⁴²⁷ This helps to set the tone of the work, which while being highly critical of the hypocrisy of the Americans,⁴²⁸ has two

⁴²² Hayashi, *From Trinity to Trinity*, xi.

⁴²³ Hayashi, *From Trinity to Trinity*, 60-61.

⁴²⁴ It should be noted that the aforementioned short story, *The Empty Can*, remains as another powerful example of Hayashi’s literary prowess. See: Hayashi Kyoko, “The Empty Can,” in *The Crazy Iris and Other Stories of the Atomic Aftermath*, edited by Kenzaburo Oe (New York: Grove Press, 1985), 127-143.

⁴²⁵ Hayashi, *Ritual of Death*, 21.

⁴²⁶ Hayashi, *Ritual of Death*, 21.

⁴²⁷ Hayashi, *Ritual of Death*, 22.

⁴²⁸ Hayashi, *Ritual of Death*, 37-38.

Hayashi makes two particularly critical comments of Americans writing, “The children of God conducted all kinds of experiments on burns and human bodies, it seems.” And “When I read the results and statistics on the bombing, I don’t understand why such a shattering weapon was necessary to kill men.” While these comments are interesting, they are rather unique in both *hibakusha* literature and Hayashi’s later works, as the Americans typically do not feature there, and stories instead focus on victims. Also, it should be noted that Hayashi seemingly does not blame

additional distinct features that are important to understanding both *hibakusha* literature and its impact on Japanese discourses of the past.

Firstly, the work focuses on the suffering of victims on the day of the bombing. This includes graphic descriptions of the suffering of atomic-bomb victims. Hayashi writes, “Instant death is best if it is an atomic bomb. A worker who lived a day or two after the bombing tore off his own flesh out of suffering.”⁴²⁹ She provides another example, “The victims stood on the field, drapes of flesh hanging all over their bodies.”⁴³⁰ These types of graphic descriptions are common within the genre of *hibakusha* literature. Whereas in other narratives or genres this type of depiction may be seen as gratuitous, they are important in conveying the sheer horror of the situation that victims faced.

However, this was not the end of the suffering for *hibakusha*, which leads into the second important feature of Hayashi’s work. She focuses part of her narrative on the continued struggles of *hibakusha* both physically and within the realm of popular culture. Hayashi reveals that it is difficult to get government medical assistance because of laws that require at least three witnesses to verify a claim.⁴³¹ This is impossible for many survivors, especially if they found themselves in particular areas with low survivability rates. But, beyond the physical struggles of atomic-bomb illnesses and obtaining adequate medical care, Hayashi discusses issues of representation of victims. She is in favour of any depiction, even comics that convey the victims as monsters or monstrous in form, as long as they also convey the pain of victims.⁴³² However, she worries about the future, writing, “What hurts, however, is that the flow of time – Oblivion – washes away the details of an extreme situation, while only the most sensational parts are remembered.”⁴³³ Overall, Hayashi’s debut piece is uneven as it jumps from topic to topic mixing memoirs, historical documents, and the current struggles of *hibakusha* into one serpentine narrative. However, this should not discount the work in terms of its ability to describe the suffering of atomic bomb victims.

American citizens any more than she does her own government throughout the piece and does not advocate any sort of continuing animosity to Americans, writing, “...I felt sad to see the strength of the heart ready to turn mourning into desperate revenge.” These comments are interesting, and perhaps worthy of further exploration elsewhere, but they are not essential to the basic understanding of *hibakusha* literature being argued within this historiography.

⁴²⁹ Hayashi, *Ritual of Death*, 32-33.

⁴³⁰ Hayashi, *Ritual of Death*, 34.

⁴³¹ Hayashi, *Ritual of Death*, 34.

⁴³² Hayashi, *Ritual of Death*, 34.

⁴³³ Hayashi, *Ritual of Death*, 41.

Hayashi concludes *Ritual of Death* by revealing that she has been certified as a “special atomic bomb victim” by the Japanese government. This meant, at the time, that upon her death she would receive 16,000 yen.⁴³⁴ She planned to leave a will stating that all of this money should go to flowers for her funeral.⁴³⁵ While seemingly innocuous, this statement helps to reinforce both the suffering of victims and their battle to be remembered as human beings. By stating that she hopes to have the meagre sum put towards flowers Hayashi is drawing attention to both the tragedy of her life/death as a *hibakusha* and to the ineffectual responses to that tragedy by the Japanese government, American perpetrators, and perhaps, even the reader of the piece themselves.

The tragedy and continued suffering of *hibakusha* are further explored in Hayashi’s fictionalized works as well. *Two Grave Markers* is the story of two girls, Wakako and Yoko, who attempt to flee “N City” after it was hit by an atomic bomb. The story mirrors parts of Hayashi’s own experience, for example, the girls are 14 years-old and were working in a munitions plant when the bomb hit. However, large parts of the story have been fictionalized. Within the story, it is revealed that Wakako and Yoko flee together into the mountains on the outskirts of the city where Wakako abandons Yoko to die.⁴³⁶ Wakako then returns to their village outside the city and starts to recall the situation. Hayashi writes, “Wakako did not think that what she had done to Yoko in the mountain where they took refuge was wrong. However, if she faithfully described to the villagers what had happened, they would probably condemn her as heartless. How could anyone who had not been there understand?”⁴³⁷

Throughout the rest of the story Wakako is harshly judged for her actions, particularly by Yoko’s mother, who blames her for her daughter’s death. On top of this, Wakako starts to die from radiation sickness (unknown to the characters but well known, perhaps painfully so, to the reader). It is not until this part of the story that it is revealed that Wakako left Yoko on the mountainside because Yoko was badly wounded and had maggots growing under her skin. Seeing the maggots for the first time, Wakako became convinced that Yoko would die and become reincarnated into flies that would attack her. This causes Wakako to flee in terror,

⁴³⁴ Accounting for inflation, at the time of this writing in September 2020, 16,000 yen in 1975 would be about 31,700 yen in 2019. This is roughly \$401 CAD or \$300 USD.

⁴³⁵ Hayashi, *Ritual of Death*, 54.

⁴³⁶ Hayashi Kyoko, “Two Grave Markers,” in *The Atomic Bomb: Voices from Hiroshima and Nagasaki*, edited by Kyoko and Mark Selden (Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, Inc., 1989), 30.

⁴³⁷ Hayashi, *Two Grave Markers*, 30.

consequently leaving Yoko to die alone on the mountainside.⁴³⁸ As Wakako's radiation sickness worsens, flies become attracted to the wounds and swarm around her. Her mother watches helplessly, as Wakako drifts slowly into death surrounded by flies that she is convinced are vengeful reincarnations of Yoko.⁴³⁹ Hayashi describes Wakako's mother observing the body,

Tsune kept fanning Wakako's body which was starting to become cold. Why Wakako had feared flies so much remained unknown to her mother. Once in her delirium she had said, 'Mother, flies have teeth, so they bite me.' Tsune could not understand the terror Wakako had suffered from being condemned by something. She did not want to think that it was Yoko.⁴⁴⁰

In defiance of Yoko's mother, Tsune has Wakako buried on the mountainside beside Yoko as a final attempt at absolving her daughter of guilt. She even warns Yoko's mother against spreading rumours, as it will not allow Wakako to rest in peace. When the wind blows near the graves Tsune thinks that she hears Wakako and Yoko laughing.⁴⁴¹

Once again, in *Two Grave Markers*, we see Hayashi's attempts to convey the suffering of victims (both at the time of the bombing and afterwards) as well as a distinct concern for how the bombing of Nagasaki will be remembered. The story contains both a description of victims at the time of the bombing and a visceral, horrifying account of a young girl slowly dying from radiation poisoning. Yet, it is the way that these victims interact with non-survivors that is most impactful. Wakako, a victim herself, is vilified for leaving Yoko and feels unable to make anyone understand what it was like on the mountainside. Eventually, this guilt amplifies a physically painful death with emotional trauma. After Wakako dies, Tsune becomes concerned about how her daughter will be remembered and has her buried on the mountainside to symbolize the girls' friendship. In Hayashi's story, as is representative of the larger genre of *hibakusha* literature, the victims suffer both physically and emotionally in life and death. When they are gone, they can only hope that their stories will be understood and, only then, can they rest in peace.

One critique of Hayashi, and *hibakusha* literature in general, is that a larger context of the war or the politics between Japan and the United States is absent, leading to a discourse that is purely about and for Japanese victims. This leads to the creation of a specific discourse that

⁴³⁸ Hayashi, *Two Grave Markers*, 47.

⁴³⁹ Hayashi, *Two Grave Markers*, 52-53.

⁴⁴⁰ Hayashi, *Two Grave Markers*, 53.

⁴⁴¹ Hayashi, *Two Grave Markers*, 54.

leaves out non-Japanese victims of the bombs (and the war if viewed cynically). Yet, given the traumatic experiences and seeming goals of an author like Hayashi, it is understandable that the narratives of *hibakusha* literature focus primarily on the personal experiences of the authors.

Hibakusha literature, such as Hayashi's, can be read cynically as an attempt to create a Japanese victimology of the *entire* experience of war, but to do so fundamentally misses the point of the genre, which is about conveying the suffering of a particular group, without discounting others.

Nakazawa Keiji is another notable author in the genre, however, unlike Hayashi, Nakazawa depicted his narratives through the medium of manga. Nakazawa survived the bombing of Hiroshima at the age of six. He was a little over a kilometre away from the epicentre of the blast but survived because he was shielded by a concrete wall of a local school. He lost his father and two siblings in the bombing as well as an infant sister that was born on the day of the bombing but died soon thereafter.⁴⁴² Nakazawa survived and went on to write and illustrate several manga stories about the bomb. His most famous was *Barefoot Gen*, a multi-volume work that focused on the story of the titular character Gen, whom Nakazawa has described as his alter ego with a family based upon his own.⁴⁴³ For the purposes of this historiography, the first two (of ten) volumes of the English translation will be covered.

Barefoot Gen differs from other works of *hibakusha* literature because of its scope. Instead of focusing solely upon the event of the atomic bombing or the time periods immediately before and after, the story starts by establishing Gen and his family within Hiroshima. Their everyday lives are shown and Gen's relationship with each family member, and many of the citizens of Hiroshima, is depicted. Indeed, the bombing of the city does not occur until the closing pages of the first volume.⁴⁴⁴ This narrative decision works to make the bombing have a greater impact upon the reader. Through the first 250 pages of the story, the reader has witnessed Gen's wartime life and has come to know many of the people living in the city. As a result, when the bomb is dropped, to devastating effect, it is fleshed out "real" characters/people that are being victimized rather than nameless, unknown, and narratively unimportant entities.

Despite potential stereotyped assumptions that one may have about the story's medium (*manga*), after the bomb is dropped visceral depictions of victims appear. The funny/cute cartoon

⁴⁴² Nakazawa Keiji, *Barefoot Gen: A Cartoon Story of Hiroshima Volume One*, translated by Project Gen (San Francisco: Last Gasp of San Francisco, 2004), v.

⁴⁴³ Nakazawa, *Barefoot Gen Volume One*, vii.

⁴⁴⁴ Nakazawa, *Barefoot Gen Volume One*, 250.

faces of the early parts of the story are instantly transformed into melted, horrific forms.⁴⁴⁵ As Gen runs through the city he is accosted by disfigured people begging for water, he witnesses an unfortunate horse that is engulfed in flames and finds a young girl with glass shards embedded in her face and eyes screaming desperately for help.⁴⁴⁶ He is able to make it back to his home, only to find that his father, brother and sister have been pinned under the collapsed beams of the house. He and his mother attempt to free them but the beams are too heavy and a gradually approaching fire slowly engulfs the rubble. Gen and his mother are forced to watch as the flames burn their family alive in front of them. This, once again, is shown quite graphically, as several panels focus on Gen's screaming younger brother as flames methodically envelop his body.⁴⁴⁷ The volume closes with Gen's pregnant mother giving birth to a girl after shock-induced labour.⁴⁴⁸ The trauma, suffering, and pain of the victims is clearly and prominently on display.

However, this is not the end of Gen's story, indeed it is only the end of the first of ten volumes. The second volume depicts the immediate aftermath of the bombing before leading into Gen's experience of the early postwar era. It opens with several panels explaining how the second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. Nakazawa writes, "As it has always been, it is the powerless, nameless, ordinary people who die in wars waged by a handful of men in power..."⁴⁴⁹ Gen, once again, witnesses numerous horrors as he, his mother and newborn sister attempt to flee the city. Notably, Gen is almost burned alive when a group of soldiers mistake him for dead. Gen is burned in the ensuing fire and one of the soldiers offers to carry him to an aid station. Over the course of a few panels the soldier goes from perfectly healthy to dead because of radiation poisoning. He loses his hair, vomits blood, becomes cold, experiences diarrhea, and then dies.⁴⁵⁰ This is the beginning of Gen witnessing many victims with inexplicable (to him, but not the reader) illnesses caused by the bomb.

Over the course of the volume there are depictions of wounds full of maggots, the development of purple spots all over the body, and skin peeling to the bone.⁴⁵¹ This culminates with one minor character attempting suicide because of severe facial wounds that will prevent

⁴⁴⁵ Nakazawa, *Barefoot Gen Volume One*, 253.

⁴⁴⁶ Nakazawa, *Barefoot Gen Volume One*, 254-257.

⁴⁴⁷ Nakazawa, *Barefoot Gen Volume One*, 260-273.

⁴⁴⁸ Nakazawa, *Barefoot Gen Volume One*, 279-284.

⁴⁴⁹ Nakazawa Keiji, *Barefoot Gen: The Day After Volume Two*, translated by Project Gen (San Francisco: Last Gasp of San Francisco, 2004), 5.

⁴⁵⁰ Nakazawa, *Barefoot Gen, Volume Two*, 33-37.

⁴⁵¹ Nakazawa, *Barefoot Gen, Volume Two*, 40, 81-83.

her from achieving her goal of becoming a famous dancer.⁴⁵² These events act as harbingers of the future; it is clear that the suffering of the *hibakusha* will not be limited to the day of the event of the bombing, but instead will continue indefinitely. The volume concludes with Gen and his mother being chased out of the home of a friend because of the perceived inconvenience that they have caused and a false accusation of stealing.⁴⁵³ The final frame finds Gen, his mother and sister cast out into the rain with the caption, “The atomic bomb created hell for the dying, and hell for the living. The bitter tears of the survivors fell throughout the land...”⁴⁵⁴

Thus, the volume ends, having made explicitly clear that the suffering of atomic bomb victims continued beyond the days of the bombing themselves. Nakazawa shows the reader the horror of the physical injuries of the atomic-bomb victims with his graphic depictions of injuries, yet it is the continued narrative of Gen’s journey that exhibits how atomic-bomb victims experienced extended anguish beyond the first days of the bombing. The display of early radiation sickness-related deaths reminds the reader of the years of trauma that would face those that survived the initial impact. This tragedy is heightened when the reader realizes that Gen, and those around him, have no idea that this fate awaits them. Additionally, through the early discrimination that Gen and his family experience, the reader is again forced to contemplate the outsider status that many *hibakusha* experienced at the time of the bombing and continue to experience, in different forms, to this day.

The parallels between Hayashi and Nakazawa’s works are clear: both use their personal experiences as influences to tell semi-fictional stories about atomic bomb victims. The results are deeply personal narratives of loss, pain, and suffering that is not confined to the initial events themselves. This is a unique and traumatic suffering that is seemingly without end, or short of that, certainly without closure. These works are emblematic of *hibakusha* literature and have helped to forge discourses of the past that focuses on Japanese victims of the war. Once again, this can cynically be read as a way of removing non-Japanese victims from Japanese war memory, but given the deeply traumatic experiences of the authors, it is difficult to fault them for not focusing on the larger geopolitical contexts of the war. These are the stories of survivors attempting to convey their personal experiences to the world.

⁴⁵² Nakazawa, *Barefoot Gen, Volume Two*, 40, 91.

⁴⁵³ Nakazawa, *Barefoot Gen, Volume Two*, 200-233.

⁴⁵⁴ Nakazawa, *Barefoot Gen, Volume Two*, 234.

Yet, we may ask, what about atomic-bomb narratives not written by survivors? How do they function and what is their place within Japanese discourses of the past surrounding the atomic bombs? To examine this, it is best to turn to specific examples of works about the atomic bombs written by authors who are not *hibakusha*. While these works are less common, especially in English translation, there are some notable examples of atomic-bomb literature written by non-survivors, including the Nobel Prize winner Oe Kenzaburo.⁴⁵⁵ For the purposes of this historiography, one prominent work will be examined as representative: Ibuse Masuji's novel *Black Rain*. Ibuse was not a *hibakusha* but he was a talented author and *Black Rain* became his most noteworthy work. John Bester, the English translator of *Black Rain*, notes in his preface to the work that the narrative is based upon "actual records and interviews" to the point that the work could even be called a "documentary novel".⁴⁵⁶ Despite this assertion, *Black Rain* is still a work of fiction based upon the experiences of *hibakusha* rather than an account of a single person or group of survivors.

Black Rain takes place a few years after the bombing of Hiroshima and focuses on the character Shigematsu. Shigematsu is a *hibakusha* who has a dual purpose in his life. On one hand, he is attempting to write his memoirs of the bombing, while on the other, he is attempting to arrange a marriage for his adopted niece, Yasuko (with the help of his wife Shigeko). Narratively, this allows for the story to fluctuate between the bombing itself, through Shigematsu's memoir-writing, and the present day, through his attempts to find a suitable husband for his niece which has been difficult due to Yasuko also being a survivor of Hiroshima affected by the titular "black rain".⁴⁵⁷ This also allows Ibuse to show the reader how *hibakusha*

⁴⁵⁵ For example, Agawa Hiroyuki was conscripted into the military during the war but returned home to Hiroshima where his parents had experienced the bombing before writing his work. Kenzaburo Oe, a Nobel Prize winner for his fiction works, also wrote about Hiroshima. However, his *Hiroshima Notes* is not a work of fiction but rather a portrait of the city and *hibakusha*. See:

Agawa Hiroyuki, "August 6". In *The Atomic Bomb: Voices from Hiroshima and Nagasaki*, edited by Kyoko and Mark Selden (Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, Inc., 1989), 3-23.

Oe Kenzaburo, *Hiroshima Notes*. Translated by David L. Swain and Toshi Yonezawa (New York: Grove Press, 1996).

⁴⁵⁶ Ibuse Masuji, *Black Rain*, translated by John Bester (Tokyo: Kodansha International Ltd., 1969), 6.

⁴⁵⁷ "Black rain" (in Japanese *Kuroi ame*) refers to a phenomenon that occurred in the surrounding areas of both Hiroshima and Nagasaki shortly after the atomic bombs were dropped. The blasts caused numerous radioactive particles to be blasted into the atmosphere which mixed with clouds and caused radioactive rainfall. The raindrops were a distinctive black color and were known to cause radiation sicknesses, hence the name and negative connotation of black rain in postwar Japan.

suffered both during and after the bombing; a trait that he shares with *hibakusha* authors such as Hayashi and Nakazawa.

Ibuse details the horrors of the bombing of Hiroshima through the narrative device of Shigematsu's memoir writing. The attack on Hiroshima is described as one that, "...instantly plunged hundreds of thousands of blameless residents of the city into a hell of unspeakable torments."⁴⁵⁸ Afterwards, Hiroshima is described as, "...a burnt-out city, a city of ashes, a city of death, a city of destruction, the heaps of corpses a mute protest against the inhumanity of war."⁴⁵⁹ But the destruction of the city is only the beginning of the vivid descriptions of the bombing. A particularly haunting passage describes a severely injured horse standing beside a dead soldier (who can only be identified as such by his riding boots). The horse is futilely seeking signs of life from the dead soldier. Ibuse (through Shigematsu) writes, "How immeasurable the pain it must have felt, with the west-dipping sun beating down unmercifully on its burned flesh; how immeasurable its love for the man in the boots."⁴⁶⁰ The vivid imagery of a wrecked city filled with tormented victims (both animal and human) effectively conveys the tragedy and the horror of the bombing of Hiroshima to the reader.

However, this is only one half of the narrative. The other half concerns Shigematsu's attempts to find a suitor for his adopted niece as well as his own struggles as a *hibakusha*. Radiation sickness is prominent in the story as Shigematsu definitely has it, while the potential that Yasuko may have it after being exposed to black rain creates tension throughout the narrative. Radiation sickness, within the story, is typified by lethargy and heaviness of the limbs, with victims requiring rest and a healthy diet to avoid sudden death.⁴⁶¹ This required sedentary lifestyle leads to tension between the *hibakusha* and the people of Ikemoto leading one *hibakusha*, Shokichi, to complain that the people of the city have forgotten that Hiroshima and Nagasaki were bombed.⁴⁶² While this lack of understanding between the residents and the victims is troubling, it is Yasuko that faces the most discrimination for being a *hibakusha*.

Throughout the early parts of the narrative the reader is not explicitly told whether or not Yasuko has radiation-induced sicknesses from being exposed to black rain. What is known is

⁴⁵⁸ Ibuse, 12.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibuse, 18.

⁴⁶⁰ Ibuse, 109.

⁴⁶¹ Ibuse, 14.

⁴⁶² Ibuse, 29-30.

that she cannot find a husband because of discrimination based on the fear that she *might* suffer complications from the bomb at a later date. Despite this, unexpectedly, Yasuko finds a quite favourable match and an engagement is made. Unfortunately, she starts experiencing symptoms of radiation sickness soon thereafter and the engagement is broken. The event is so traumatic to Shigematsu that it is described as equal to the bombing, “When she first told me about it, in the living room, there was a moment when the living room vanished and I saw a great, mushroom-shaped cloud rising into a blue sky, I saw it quite distinctly.”⁴⁶³ The breaking of the engagement is thus symbolic of the continued suffering of *hibakusha* even many years after the bombing itself.

It can be said that Ibuse, a non-*hibakusha*, depicts the bombing and postwar experiences in much the same way as *hibakusha* authors such as Hayashi and Nakazawa. Once again, this can be interpreted skeptically, as a way of creating a discourse that eliminates non-Japanese as victims of the war. Or, in this specific case, the work could be read as a way of building fame or a career by profiting off of the pain of others. One can never prove or disprove this of Ibuse but, given the clear amount of research he put into the novel along with the deft and thoughtful depiction of *hibakusha*, this seems unlikely. Indeed, Ibuse, writing in 1965, was more than likely filling a need for literature about the atomic bombs in postwar Japan. While there may have been thousands of *hibakusha*, not all of them were willing or able to record their experiences for mass consumption. As a result, we can argue that writers such as Ibuse were utilizing their talents to further knowledge of the atomic bombs. This, I believe is how they are located within, and essential to, Japanese discourses of the past surrounding the atomic bombs.

There are numerous additional examples of works, both fiction and non-fiction, that can be categorized as part of the Japanese discourse of victimhood. These works, of course, are not all connected to the atomic bombs as they expand out to soldier narratives (that do not fit the discourse of heroism mentioned above such as being taken captive, or simply depicting fruitless deaths), stories of other wartime hardships (in particular surviving conventional or fire bombing) and numerous other subjects.⁴⁶⁴ However, to further examine the discourses of victimhood, and

⁴⁶³ Ibuse, 219.

⁴⁶⁴ The following texts serve as examples of this. Mizuki, a famous *manga* artist who lost one of his arms during the war, provides an example of the tragic and largely pointless/futile deaths of Japanese soldiers in his sarcastically titled, *Onwards Towards Our Noble Deaths*. The edited collections of Cook and Cook and Gibney both contain numerous chapters that fit within the victim discourse; however, these will be explored in more depth in the conclusion to this historiography. Kuribayashi, a famous Japanese general tasked with defending Iwo Jima during

more importantly the way it functions within Japanese society, it is beneficial to move away from these types of sources. Memoirs and literature are an essential component of Japanese discourses of victimhood and they are important works within Japanese historiography of the war (particularly where history textbooks have been inadequate), yet they do not provide a full picture of Japanese historiography.

In regard to victimhood within larger Japanese discourses of the past, the development of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in the postwar period as tourist sites is essential to understanding the larger discourse. Yoshida, Bui, and Lee engaged in a study of the two cities that examined their relationships to “dark tourism”⁴⁶⁵ as well as how they presented themselves in both tourist brochures and governmental policies. They found that there are,

...four themes aligned in two pairs: tourism-education and war-peace. These themes are intertwined with the historical context of the two cities. As a tourist destination, conservative Hiroshima centers on the remembrance of the atomic tragedy and the traditional or nostalgic aspects of Japanese culture, whereas relatively liberal Nagasaki presents itself as a melting pot of cultures. Both cities retain their central role of publicly commemorating the victims of the atomic bomb for the Japanese.⁴⁶⁶

This is a fair summary of the roles that have been designed for the cities by government officials and the larger tourism industry.

the American invasion in the closing stages of the war, wrote and illustrated numerous letters to his family that were collected into a volume and used to portray a tragic narrative of soldierly deaths. Kakehashi later used these letters as the basis for her book on Kuribayashi and the doomed defense of Iwo Jima. All of these works fit into a larger discourse of victims within Japanese war memory. See:

Haruko Taya Cook and Theodore F. Cook, “Lost Battles,” in *Japan at War: An Oral History* (New York: The New Press, 1992), 259-336.

Haruko Taya Cook and Theodore F. Cook, “One Hundred Million Die Together,” in *Japan at War: An Oral History* (New York: The New Press, 1992), 337-400.

Frank Gibney, ed. “The Bombing of Japan,” in *Senso: The Japanese Remember the Pacific War, Letters to the Editor of Asahi Shimbun*, translated by Beth Cary (Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1995), 201-214.

Frank Gibney, ed. “‘We are All Prisoners,’” in *Senso: The Japanese Remember the Pacific War, Letters to the Editor of Asahi Shimbun*, translated by Beth Cary (Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1995), 215-262.

Kakehashi Kumiko, *So Sad To Fall in Battle: An Account of War* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2007), ix-203.

Kuribayashi Tadamichi, *Picture Letters From the Commander in Chief*, edited by Yoshida Tsuyuko (San Francisco: VIZ Media, LLC, 2007), 1-225.

Mizuki Shigeru, *Onwards Towards Our Noble Deaths*, translated by Jocelyne Allen (Montreal: Drawn & Quarterly, 2012), 9-369.

⁴⁶⁵ “Dark tourism” is the act of traveling to places not for pleasure or relaxation but for curiosity towards a traumatic past. For example, going to Hiroshima or Nagasaki would qualify as “dark tourism” because of the history of the bombs.

⁴⁶⁶ Yoshida Kaori, Huong T. Bui and Timothy J. Lee, “Does tourism illuminate the darkness of Hiroshima and Nagasaki?” *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management* 5 (2016): 333.

However, it is the active role that the cities take within historical education, mostly through monuments, museums, and media related to these places/spaces, that is most interesting in terms of Japanese discourses of the past. As part of this educational effort, there has been a large number of publications that have, perhaps inadvertently, become part of the discourse of victimhood within Japanese war memory. These publications, usually connected to the museums or monuments in some way, are designed to augment the teachings at these sites. The sites, and by extension the publications, aim to teach both Japanese and foreign tourists about the atomic bombs with a focus on the suffering of victims and survivors of the bombs. The overarching contemporary goal at both Nagasaki and Hiroshima is to put forward a message (or plea) for peace through a depiction of the traumatic past.

Pamphlets for the atomic bomb museums and related monuments are an example of this phenomenon.⁴⁶⁷ The main/primary pamphlet for the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum provides basic information about the museum (i.e. address, directions, prices, etc.) and a floorplan. Section A is labelled simply, “August 9, 1945”, Section B is, “Damage Caused by the Atomic Bombing” and Section C is, “Toward a World Free of Nuclear Weapons”. Each section has a brief description and some pictures, yet it is a simple description in the introduction that best sums up the museum and its goals, “An atomic bomb exploded in the air above Nagasaki at 11:02am on August 9, 1945. The most part of Nagasaki was destroyed, and a tremendous number of lives were lost. People who narrowly escaped death suffered physical and psychological damage. Even now, many A-bomb survivors are suffering.”⁴⁶⁸

Another pamphlet is available at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, which is designed in a similar fashion. However, its position on peace is more explicitly stated as the pamphlet reads, “Having now recovered from the A-bomb calamity, Hiroshima’s deepest wish is the elimination of all nuclear weapons and the realization of a genuinely peaceful international community.”⁴⁶⁹ A pamphlet for the Hiroshima National Peace Memorial Hall for the Atomic Bomb Victims (located across from the main Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum) provides a final example. It also places stress on both victims and a plea for peace. The Hall of

⁴⁶⁷ Note: These examples are from my personal collection and were acquired when visiting the cities. Notably, all pamphlets are available in numerous languages including Japanese, English, Mandarin, Korean, and others. The sites themselves are setup to be tourist friendly, especially for English speaking audiences.

⁴⁶⁸ *Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum* (Hirano-machi, Nagasaki, Japan: Publisher Unknown, 2018).

⁴⁶⁹ *Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum* (Nakajima-cho, Naka-ku, Hiroshima City, Japan: Publisher Unknown, 2019).

Remembrance, the main part of the building, is described as, "... a place to quietly mourn the atomic bomb victims and think about peace," while the hall itself is described as a place, "...to remember and mourn the scared sacrifice of the atomic bomb victims. It is also an expression of Japan's desire for genuine and lasting peace."⁴⁷⁰

These are hardly the only examples of this type of literature, as there are numerous other works that are published by the peace movement to depict the museum's main message (i.e. suffering in the past and the hope for peace in the present/future). In addition, other works that fit this message are sold within the museum gift shops.⁴⁷¹ Yet these publications all portray the atomic bomb in a similar way, mirroring *hibakusha* literature by depicting the destruction of the cities and the ongoing suffering of victims, as they also explicitly expand the narrative to create a message of potential peace in the present/future. Thus, these materials are an important part of the discourse of victims within Japanese discourses of the past.

This discourse of victims also finds its way into more scientific literature, although in ways that are perhaps less interesting than the aforementioned examples. The well-known work *Hiroshima and Nagasaki: The Physical, Medical, and Social Effects of the Atomic Bombings* is a massive compilation of data about the atomic bombings and effects on victims. There is perhaps not a more accessible volume to answer basic questions about the atomic bombs such as: what was the blast radius of the bomb dropped over Hiroshima? Or, what are keloid scars? Indeed, the volume works as an encyclopedia, of sorts, for atomic bomb-based knowledge. Yet, despite the primary focus on scientific data and medical treatment of survivors, even this volume reserves space for the discussion of the abolition of nuclear arms through peace movements and peace

⁴⁷⁰ *Hiroshima National Peace Memorial Hall for the Atomic Bomb Victims* (Nakajima-cho, Naka-ku, Hiroshima City, Japan: Publisher Unknown, 2019).

⁴⁷¹ For example, see the following. The Coerr work is a children's story about a famous case of an atomic bomb victim. The edition listed below is also designed to be used as a school activity book. The Hiroshima-Nagasaki Publishing Company work is a pictorial history designed for mass consumption. The Kosakai book is a history of Hiroshima with a stress on the movement for peace after the war. All of these examples were acquired by the author at either the Nagasaki or Hiroshima atomic bomb museums.

Eleanor Coerr, *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*, edited by Hideko Midorikawa (Tokyo: Yamaguchi Shoten, 1984), 1-55.

Committee of Japanese Citizens to Send Gift Copies of a Photographic & Pictorial Record of the Atomic Bombing to Our Children, and Fellow Human Beings of the World (Abbr. Hiroshima-Nagasaki Publishing Committee), *Days to Remember: An Account of the Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki* (Tokyo: Hiroshima-Nagasaki Publishing Company Heiwa-kaikan, 1981).

Kosakai, 1-100.

education.⁴⁷² Once again, the focus is primarily on Japanese survivors which places this volume squarely into the discourse of victimhood. This is less than surprising, as a largely scientific volume based on atomic bomb victims in Japan would, of course, focus on Japanese victims of the bomb.

These differentiated works, taken together, typify the Japanese discourse of victimhood. However, it should be noted that, though these works covered throughout this chapter have been characterized as being victim-centric, they should not be exclusively understood to be *only* about the victims. Miyamoto Yuki argues that *hibakusha* memory is a self-critical process that acknowledges that they too have done wrong and are thus incapable of judging others.⁴⁷³ As a result, “The hibakusha’s message is not characterized by divisions between victims and victimizers.”⁴⁷⁴ Instead, *hibakusha* focus not on retaliation but on reconciliation.⁴⁷⁵ Unfortunately, she laments that, “The current atomic bomb discourse is largely confined within a nation-state framework and figured by the image of the mushroom cloud. Consequently, there is no room for the hibakusha’s message to be heard and examined as an alternative framework.”⁴⁷⁶

While Miyamoto’s critique is directly more squarely upon American memory of the atomic bombs and lack of receptiveness of *hibakusha* literature and messaging, the larger point, remains: Japanese victim-centric narratives are not only about the victims themselves because they are, at least partially, designed to make larger arguments about the nature of war and the future use of atomic or nuclear weaponry. Recognition of this point raises an interesting set of questions about the discourse of victimhood within Japanese war memory. A scientific volume is, almost by default, going to focus on one set of victims. But do the other examples within this section also need to focus solely on Japanese victims while leaving out others, such as forced Korean labourers, American POWs, members of foreign governments, and Western missionaries? It seems almost cruel to tell *hibakusha* to include larger geopolitical considerations into their work or risk being labelled as creating a Japanese victimology, but what about authors like Ibuse? Notably, peace education has included larger contextualization of the war (the

⁴⁷² The Committee for the Compilation of Materials on Damage Caused by the Atomic Bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, *Hiroshima and Nagasaki: The Physical, Medical, and Social Effects of the Atomic Bombings*, translated by Eisei Ishikawa and David L. Swain (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1981), 503-608.

⁴⁷³ Miyamoto Yuki, *Beyond the Mushroom Cloud: Commemoration, Religion, and Responsibility After Hiroshima* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), 4.

⁴⁷⁴ Miyamoto, 4.

⁴⁷⁵ Miyamoto, 13.

⁴⁷⁶ Miyamoto, 14.

Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum dedicates significant space to Korean victims of the bomb for example), but should it go further to incorporate Japanese wartime aggression? These questions are an interesting and important part of the Japanese discourse of victimhood that make up one part of the larger tri-partite discourses of the past of Japanese war memory.

6.5 Discourses of Perpetrators

The final part of the Japanese war memory triad are discourses of perpetrators. These are narratives that focus on the role of the Japanese government and military in the perpetration of colonialism and war crimes. Undeniably, Japan practised colonialism (in both mainland Asia and throughout the Pacific) and perpetrated war crimes (for example the Rape of Nanking, the experiments of Unit 731 in China, forced labour of non-Japanese subject peoples, and the practice of forcing Korean women to travel with the military as “comfort women”). But these historical events have not always been a part of mainstream Japanese war memory, and they are noticeably absent from many (but not all) history textbooks. In fact, it has even been argued that the dominant source for learning about wars in Japan is through popular culture.⁴⁷⁷ This has led some academics to take extraordinary actions. Indeed, historian Ienaga Saburo has gained notable fame from his repeated lawsuits against the Japanese government over the censoring of his textbook that covers the most unfortunate parts of the Japanese war effort (i.e. war crimes). A full accounting of the history of the Japanese textbook controversies is beyond the scope of this historiography.⁴⁷⁸ However, it has been summarized, in part, by Nozaki and Inokuchi, who write,

Because of the [Japanese] state’s strict, often violent, oppression, counter-narratives...were unable to redirect the nation’s course. Throughout the postwar era, education would become a hotly contested arena between competing social forces and their visions of Japan’s future. Ienaga Saburo has been a crucial figure in that political struggle for counter-narratives and identities for the last fifty years.⁴⁷⁹

⁴⁷⁷ Watanabe Morio, “Imagery and War in Japan: 1995,” in *Perilous Memories: The Asia-Pacific War(s)*, edited by T. Fujitani, Geoffrey M. White and Lisa Yoneyama (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2001), 129.

⁴⁷⁸ Nozaki Yoshiko has written an excellent single volume text outlining the postwar Japanese textbook debate with a focus on the court challenges of historian Ienaga Saburo. He argues, “While a single war in the sense of actual military conflict usually ceases at some point in history, the same war in the arena of representation and consciousness can continue forever” (p49). See:

Nozaki Yoshiko, *War Memory, Nationalism and Education in Postwar Japan, 1945-2007: The Japanese history textbook controversy and Ienaga Saburo’s court challenges* (London and New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2008).

⁴⁷⁹ Nozaki Yoshiko and Inokuchi Hiromitsu, “Japanese Education, Nationalism, and Ienaga Saburo’s Court Challenges,” *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 30, No. 2 (1998): 37-38.

Nozaki and Inokuchi further characterize Ienaga as a countervailing force in the struggle over Japanese national narrative and identity construction. They categorize his lawsuits as his personal way with dealing with Japanese war crimes and war responsibility.⁴⁸⁰ For the purposes of this historiography it can be said that, within the field of textbooks, Japanese war crimes have been avoided within official narratives and a counter-narrative has been partially established through decades of struggle. This counter-narrative can be understood as the basis for discourses of Japanese perpetrators within the Japanese war memory triad.

An examination of discourses of Japanese perpetrators would be remiss if it did not consider at least one of the works of Ienaga Saburo. Rather than examining one of his textbooks at the center of the somewhat notorious lawsuits, this historiography utilizes one of his other works, *The Pacific War: World War II and the Japanese, 1931-1945*. The title alone reveals a part of Ienaga's viewpoint on the war. Typical dating of the war in the United States/the West puts the beginning of World War II in 1939 (when Nazi Germany invaded Poland) and the beginning of the Pacific War in 1941 (after the Imperial Japanese Raid on Pearl Harbor). Ienaga, a Japanese historian, of course would not be expected to use these start dates but he very easily could have. By selecting 1931-1945 as his time frame for the "Pacific War" Ienaga is able to include several key events of Japanese colonialism and war crimes within a single narrative of the war rather than as separate prior events to a showdown with the United States. This is an important, and perhaps overlooked, aspect to the work that helps to establish Ienaga's perspective before reading a single page of the work.

In terms of less macro-level considerations, the ways that Ienaga incorporates the atomic bomb into his account of the war are particularly notable. He groups together the gas chambers at Auschwitz, the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the human experiments conducted by the Japanese military's Unit 731 into the category of "rational atrocities."⁴⁸¹ He describes these as, "...atrocities carried out far from battlefield dangers and imperatives and according to rational plan [that] were acts of evil barbarism."⁴⁸² This is an interesting categorization because of the larger implications that it has in interpreting Ienaga's work. By placing the atomic bombs within the same purview of other atrocities that occurred during the

⁴⁸⁰ Nozaki and Inokuchi, 44.

⁴⁸¹ Ienaga Saburo, *The Pacific War: World War II and the Japanese, 1931-1945*, translated by Frank Baldwin (New York: Pantheon Books), 187-188.

⁴⁸² Ienaga, 187.

war, Ienaga does not privilege Japanese suffering or victims. Also, importantly, by including Japanese war crimes in parallel with other atrocities (particularly the Holocaust) Ienaga directly acknowledges Japanese war guilt rather than avoiding it. Whereas other Japanese narratives avoid the larger geopolitical picture of the war Ienaga directly engages in it. By doing so, he does not discount the suffering of Japanese people during the war (in fact he admits that Japanese civilians had no power to stop the destruction of their nation)⁴⁸³ but he does place that suffering into context. This “context” is the Japanese state’s aggression, war crimes, and ultimate war responsibility/guilt.

Ienaga is not the only Japanese scholar to directly confront the issues of Japanese education avoiding Japanese aggression and war crimes. Hayase Shinzo, a university professor, frames his own book about Japanese war memory around the idea that Japanese youth do not know enough about the war. As such, he argues that they need to be educated, especially if they plan to travel abroad. He writes,

The Japanese youth have been criticized here and abroad for their ignorance of the past war. The Japanese, in general, hardly know the historical fact that Japan engaged in war with China and the United States, much less Japan’s role in converting the Southeast Asian region into battlefields, destroying the local people’s daily lives, snatching away valuable lives, and destroying their historical and cultural heritage.⁴⁸⁴

He argues that this has isolated Japan, particularly from other Asian nations, due to a lack of Japanese historical awareness.⁴⁸⁵ Ultimately, Hayase unveils the stakes of war memory in Asia (i.e. Japanese diplomacy and the image of Japanese people abroad) by acknowledging Japanese war crimes and war responsibility.

Hayase is particularly critical of Japanese memory practices in the postwar period. He argues that historical facts abound, but they are either naturally or intentionally forgotten. However, he believes that memory can be used to build future relationships.⁴⁸⁶ This, of course, is partially the point of his book. Alas, according to Hayase, this is an opportunity that has been largely missed by postwar Japanese. An emblematic example of this is a Japanese monument in Thailand for wartime railway workers (of which there was a mix of both Japanese and non-

⁴⁸³ Ienaga, 97.

⁴⁸⁴ Hayase Shinzo, *A Walk Through War Memories in Southeast Asia* (Quezon City, Philippines: New Day Publishers, 2007), v.

⁴⁸⁵ Hayase, vii.

⁴⁸⁶ Hayase, 1.

Japanese workers) that is largely ignored by locals. Hayase describes, “It reflects the way of thinking of the postwar Japanese: thinking little of other Asian people.”⁴⁸⁷ Issues such as this tie into a larger cultural friction between Japan and Thailand largely caused by Japanese ignorance of history.⁴⁸⁸

The rest of Hayase’s work covers other areas of Asia that experienced Japanese aggression during the war. Notably, Hayase argues that relations between Myanmar and Japanese are to the point that Myanmar, “...seems to have no interest in the past war with Japan. Or... the government is consciously trying to avoid discussing it.”⁴⁸⁹ Hayase reveals that there is nearly no memory remaining of the Japanese occupation in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam.⁴⁹⁰ Worse still, he relays a story from the Philippines of a body being skewered on a sword by a Japanese soldier during the war. Whether this story is true or false is unimportant to Hayase; what is important is that Filipinos held such a negative image of Japanese that they *thought* it was true.⁴⁹¹

Overall, Hayase paints a grim portrait of Japanese war memory and postwar relations with Asia. He ties this to the idea that perpetrators (i.e. Japan/Japanese) forget while victims (i.e. Asia/other Asians) do not.⁴⁹² Ultimately, he argues, “We [Japanese] must have a new historical awareness beyond a selfish view.”⁴⁹³ Hayase attacks the issues of Japanese war memory differently than Ienaga by placing war guilt more squarely on Japan. In addition, he puts emphasis on the need for *Japanese* efforts to rectify this situation through the forging of a new historical understanding based upon empathy rather than victimhood. This perspective fits Hayase squarely into the discourses of Japanese perpetrators section of the larger Japanese war memory triad.

Other contributions to the discourse of Japanese perpetrators can be found in the works of Japanese expatriates or other authors who may be considered as “outsiders” (i.e. biracial, 2nd generation immigrants, publishing solely in English, etc.).⁴⁹⁴ In fact, the status of the outsider

⁴⁸⁷ Hayase, 74.

⁴⁸⁸ Hayase, 113.

⁴⁸⁹ Hayase, 124.

⁴⁹⁰ Hayase, 141.

⁴⁹¹ Hayase, 155.

⁴⁹² Hayase, 175.

⁴⁹³ Hayase, 176.

⁴⁹⁴ For example, Ikeda offers a retrospective on Okinawan literature as a response to a lack of Japanese acknowledgement of crimes against the colonized Okinawan people during the war. Toyonaga examines issues with Korean survivors of the atomic bombs. Namely, the Japanese government has not acknowledged their war crimes

perhaps allows for the writers to write about potentially upsetting or controversial points of view that typify the discourse. One prominent example of this is Eri Hotta's book, *Japan 1941: Countdown to Infamy*. Hotta was born in Tokyo and educated in Japan, the United States, and Britain, before teaching at Oxford, in Japan, and in Jerusalem.⁴⁹⁵ This combination of perspectives allows Hotta, an international-relations specialist, to formulate a unique central argument for her work. Hotta has the "insider" knowledge needed to translate documents and understand cultural nuances combined with "outsider" knowledge that openly questions Japanese motives for the war while also being open to harsher interpretations of Japanese leaders during the war.

Hotta specifically examines the Japanese decision to attack Pearl Harbor and thus enter into war with the United States in 1941. She argues that, emboldened by previous successes in the Sino-Japanese and Russo-Japanese wars, Japanese leaders felt a reckless war that they knew they would most likely lose was worth the risk; she likens this to a gambler's high.⁴⁹⁶ Hotta is, understandably, critical of this type of decision-making, stating,

People are entitled to waste their own money at casino tables. But Japan's national gamble risked the lives of its own people, as well as of those in the countries it attacked and invaded. To explain a decision of that magnitude simply by saying that the war was 'inevitable' [as many Japanese leaders did] is utterly inadequate.⁴⁹⁷

This quote reveals Hotta's position that the Japanese government both abused its power and risked the lives of thousands.

Hotta also explicitly states that the Japanese state engaged in war crimes throughout the book. For example, she refers to Japanese atrocities and bombings in China in 1937 as "not only inhumane but also self-destructive."⁴⁹⁸ Additionally, she does not shy away from describing

against Koreans during the war, in this case forced labor in Japan, and the resulting issues with Korean atomic bomb victims attempting to get adequate medical treatment. See:

Kyle Ikeda, "Writing and Remembering the Battle of Okinawa: War Memory and Literature," in *Routledge Handbook of Modern Japanese Literature*, edited by Rachael Hutchinson and Leith Morton (Routledge, New York: Routledge, 2016), 184-197.

Toyonaga Keisaburo, "Colonialism and Atom Bombs: About Survivors of Hiroshima Living in Korea," in *Perilous Memories: The Asia-Pacific War(s)*, edited by T. Fujitani, Geoffrey M. White and Lisa Yoneyama (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2001), 378-394.

⁴⁹⁵ Eri Hotta. *Japan 1941: Countdown to Infamy* (New York: Vintage Books, 2013).

⁴⁹⁶ Hotta, 20.

⁴⁹⁷ Hotta, 21.

⁴⁹⁸ Hotta, 32.

Japanese conquests in China as colonialism (while also noting the hypocrisy of the Western powers in this regard).⁴⁹⁹ Yet most damning is her assessment of whether or not the Japanese officially declared war with the United States by having their ambassadors deliver a message prior to the attack. She argues that this is an interesting debate, but that it is ultimately unimportant because even if the document was handed over to the Americans before the attack it would not have changed the fact that the Japanese attack was illegal.⁵⁰⁰ Hotta's continued willingness to not only point out Japanese aggression and war crimes, but to condemn Japanese leaders for them, certainly places her well within the bounds of the discourses of perpetrators within Japanese discourses of the past.

Yet, it is Hotta's view of Japanese war memory that is most illuminating in terms of this present historiography. She writes that Prince Higashikuni, who was selected to be Prime Minister two days after Emperor Hirohito announced the surrender, addressed parliament with a convincing speech encouraging all of Japan to ignore questions about how the war was started and instead accept collective blame and repent.⁵⁰¹ This led to the development of an official position that neglected the question of war responsibility and, eventually, many other important aspects of the war as well. Hotta elaborates, "But this neglect, legitimized as a matter of official policy, in turn encouraged the general temptation to do away with various other kinds of responsibility, such as coming to terms with [Japan's] war crimes and remembering the war after it was over."⁵⁰² She concludes, "Despite the efforts of some individual citizens, academics, and journalists to have a more honest debate, it is difficult to deny that Japan's official impulse has been to look away from what is undesirable and unpleasant in its history."⁵⁰³ Through this final section, it is possible to discern that Hotta's goals extend beyond historiography and into memory. This allows her work to be read as a direct response to a lack of Japanese war memory; this is an essential aspect of discourses of perpetrators.

It is works like Ienaga's, Hayase's, and Hotta's that make discourses of Japanese perpetrators perhaps the easiest to track and separate from the larger morass of Japanese war memory. Each of these authors typify this branch of the Japanese memory triad through their

⁴⁹⁹ Hotta, 63.

⁵⁰⁰ Hotta, 283.

⁵⁰¹ Hotta, 291-292.

⁵⁰² Hotta, 292.

⁵⁰³ Hotta, 292.

commitment to discussing, and exposing, Japanese war crimes and war responsibility. Yet this is only one half of the importance of this discourse. In addition, these works are explicitly, and perhaps inherently, about responding to a perceived lack of knowledge within Japanese memory practice.

6.6 Understanding the Japanese Triad Discourse

To this point, my historiography has focused on each of the three branches of the Japanese memory triad: discourses of heroism, victimhood, and perpetrators. The goal of this analysis was to establish what each argued, who put forth these ideas and, to some extent, the potential issues with each discourse. However, defining and exploring each discourse singly removes an important feature of how each function; each discourse operates within the same system, paradoxically in perpetual competition while also supporting and buttressing one another. In her work, Hashimoto argues for a similar system to this, further adding that there is no “collective” memory of the war in Japan - only these competing systems.⁵⁰⁴ I disagree, instead I argue that there is indeed one collective/cultural memory in Japan but it can only be understood through a (fractured) discourses of the past model. Within this system there are hegemonic systems of thought, and marginalized discourses, but they are heavily guided by context, changing identities, and temporal spaces. All three discourses exist at all times in a state of perpetual conversation and reconfiguration, largely depending upon person, place, space, and time.

There is perhaps no greater example of the Japanese war memory triad in action than examination of large-scale Japanese war memory projects. Emblematic examples of this include Cook’s and Cook’s oral history project, *Japan at War: An Oral History* and *Asahi Shimbun’s* letters to the editor, later translated and collected under the title, *Senso: The Japanese Remember the Pacific War*. Cook and Cook engaged in hundreds of interviews of Japanese citizens, asking them about their war memories. These interviews were transcribed, translated, and organized roughly chronologically before being published. Cook and Cook stress a lack of understanding among Japanese people about why the war started and a refusal to speak for others (often stating

⁵⁰⁴ Hashimoto, *The Long Defeat*, 4.

that they could only speak for themselves) going so far as to argue that there has not been a full accounting of the war in Japan.⁵⁰⁵

In a separate project, *Asahi Shimbun*, Japan's newspaper of record called for letters from their readers reminiscing the war. The project started on 10 July 1986 and ran until 29 August 1987 before the letters were eventually compiled and published as a best-selling book. The editor of the English translation of the collection, Frank Gibney, informs the reader that the editors of the newspaper were shocked by the candour of the letters, viewing them as heartfelt attempts by the very old to express their memories openly before they died.⁵⁰⁶ Thus, both projects collected hundreds of war memories from as many participants.

A reading of the volumes reveals no generalized, hegemonic version of the war. Where one might expect to find a unified narrative (and may have experienced this type of narrative in their own education/culture) there is none in Japan. Each of the three branches of the Japanese memory triad is well represented. There are stories of heroism, helpless Japanese victims, and vile Japanese war crimes. None is given precedence over the others, none is delegitimized or shouted down, none is denied its space. These volumes thus come to symbolize the serpentine, entangled, morass of Japanese war memory.

But how does this system function and how can it be identified within media sources such as videogames (especially in allegorical fashion when the author may or may not even deliberately be referencing the past)? To answer these questions, one must take temporal space into account. The "where" and "when" can largely determine which discourse will have precedence. For example, visiting the "peace city" of Hiroshima, especially the multiple atomic bomb museums and monuments, certainly gives precedence to discourses of victimhood. Yet one can find themselves in a toy or model shop in Osaka surrounded by model Zero fighter planes and feel the presence of discourses of heroism. This may be followed by a reading of one of Ienaga Saburo's history texts which force a personal confrontation with the discourses of perpetrators.

Each of these examples, coexist with one another but each site is heavily charged to favour one of the discourses. While it is true that a *hibakusha* or war veteran or academic may not be convinced by the other discourses, and may as a result read them cynically, there can be

⁵⁰⁵ Cook and Cook, 3-20.

⁵⁰⁶ Gibney, vii-viii.

no consensus on which discourse is “correct” or “true”. As a result, there is no dominant discourse with a marginalized counter-discourse. Instead, there is only an endless, unwinnable struggle among codependent discourses. The existence of the others both strengthens and weakens a discourse.

In terms of how we can identify these discourses within popular media, a key component is knowing the discourses - and the stakes, claims, and arguments of these discourses - before engaging with media content. Story tropes, narrative configurations, genre selections, and gameplay mechanics can then be partially read (or played) with an understanding of their cultural origins. In other words, once a larger system of discourses has been identified, described, and defined, it can be more easily unveiled, uncovered, and understood within popular culture sources. This is exactly what the next chapter intends to accomplish through its analysis of several prominent Japanese video games.

VII. Japanese Video Games as Atomic Bomb Discourse

7.1 Japanese Video Games as Atomic Bomb Discourse

Historiographical research reveals that, in Japan, the war is remembered through a system of discourses of the past that can be labelled as the hero/victim/perpetrator triad. This triad represents three diverse yet codependent ways of remembering the war. None of the three branches of the triad holds a fully hegemonic (or fully marginalized) place within war memory and each exists in perpetual competition with the others. This system is much different from the American model discussed in the previous chapters. The goal of this chapter is to examine three Japanese video games via case study, *Yakuza 6: The Song of Life* (2018), *Valkyria Chronicles 4* (2018), and *Resident Evil 3* (2020), to determine how they interact with and remediate established discourses of the past. As with the American examples from Chapter V, none of these games are directly connected to or about the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Instead, each game depicts uses of atomic/nuclear weapons and their aftermath allegorically or through the creation of fictional/parallel universes. This was a deliberate decision, designed to test how exactly Japanese video games remediate discourses of the past.

As outlined in chapter III (and utilized in chapter V), each case study will be based upon “trophy hunter” style playthroughs. The goal of each case study was to experience as much of the content of the game as possible using developer-programmed trophy challenges as a guide. Each case study is designed to be self-contained and is based on the collected data of these playthroughs. They examine five aspects of each title: general information/series history, setting, narrative, characters, and gameplay. This is followed by an analysis of the significance of these aspects of the games in relation to established discourses of the past. The chapter concludes with a larger analysis of the games and the messages that they attempt to communicate to their audiences in combination.

I argue that, much like the larger established hero/victim/perpetrator triad of Japanese war memory, the games attempt to fit into established war memory but, ultimately, are fractured in their depiction of the war and the atomic bombs. However, even though these games largely fit into and replicate established discourses of the past, they still represent a unique video game remediation of them. *Yakuza 6: The Song of Life*, *Valkyria Chronicles 4*, and *Resident Evil 3* are

not video games about World War II in the Pacific or the atomic bombings that ended that war, yet they have much to say about the war, memory, and the victims of the past.

7.2 Case Study - Yakuza 6: The Song of Life

7.2.1 General Information and Series History

The *Yakuza* series (2005-present, known as *Ryu Ga Gotoku* in Japan), though less well-known than series such as *Sonic the Hedgehog*, is one of Sega's more popular intellectual properties. Every game in the series has been published by Sega. Typically, the games have been internally developed by Sega-owned studios (first at New Entertainment R & D Dept and then at Ryu Ga Gotoku Studio), however, the PlayStation Portable spin-off games were developed by another Japanese company, Syn Sophia. In addition, English localization of the games is handled by Sega-owned subsidiaries such as Atlus West; the studio that is currently responsible for the translation and localization of *Yakuza* titles.⁵⁰⁷ *Yakuza* games are developed and published in Japan, by Japanese companies, before they are translated and localized for other regions.⁵⁰⁸ As such, for the purposes of this case study, the games will be considered to be largely Japanese and, therefore, connected to Japanese discourses of the past.

The mainline *Yakuza* games take place in facsimiles of real-world Japanese cities, such as Kamurocho (real-world Kabukicho district of Shinjuku, Tokyo) and Sotenbori (real-world Dotonbori district of Osaka) among others. They feature open-world gameplay that combines street-fighting with numerous, differentiated side activities as diverse as running a hostess club via real time strategy gameplay or managing/playing for a baseball team via sports simulation gameplay. The games are highly cinematic and melodramatic in their storytelling as they rely upon long cutscenes and numerous plot twists. The games offer a multitude of experiences that encourage the player to engage in all of their content in order to progress. There are currently 20

⁵⁰⁷ Atlus West is a subsidiary of the Japan-based Atlus Co., Ltd. which is a subsidiary of Sega.

⁵⁰⁸ In terms of localization, it should be noted that:

- 1) Five of the games in the series, all spin-offs, were not localized in any way and remained Japan-exclusive.
- 2) All of the main series titles and remakes have been fully localized and released in the West.
- 3) After fan backlash to the first game in the series, *Yakuza*, the series has almost exclusively focused on utilizing English subtitles with the original Japanese voiceovers instead of recording English language voiceovers. An exception to this is the spin-off title *Judgment* which received English language voiceovers when it was released worldwide in June 2019. Additionally, in July 2020, Sega announced that *Yakuza: Like a Dragon* would include English voiceovers when released in the West. However, both of these games included (or will include) the original Japanese voiceovers as well.

games in the series including 8 in the main series, 8 spin-offs, and 4 remakes with the most recent game, *Yakuza: Like a Dragon* being released in Japan on January 16, 2020 and scheduled for a localized worldwide release on November 13, 2020. *Yakuza 6: The Song of Life*, the subject of this case study, was released in Japan on December 8, 2016 and worldwide on April 17, 2018. It was developed by Ryu Ga Gotoku Studio, localized (for English-speaking audiences) by Atlus West, and published by Sega.

7.2.2 Setting

Yakuza 6's main setting is split between the neon streets of Kamurocho and the sleepy seaside town of Onomichi. Both of these open world maps are designed to mimic real-world Japanese cities (Shinjuku's Kabukicho district in Tokyo and the city of Onomichi in Hiroshima prefecture respectively) and contain a great amount of detail including recreations of real buildings, locations, landscapes, and, because of sponsorship agreements, advertising and retail chains.⁵⁰⁹ These spaces are designed to be as accurate to real-life as possible, however, some of the iconic parts of real-world Kabukicho are omitted from Sega's Kamurocho for licensing reasons. For example, the famous Toho Theatre with its giant Godzilla are absent from Sega's re-creation instead replaced by a giant Club Sega building (see Figure 7.1). Outside of these main maps the player also has access to several other areas designed for specific mini games. These include a section of ocean where the player spearfishes and a baseball diamond where the player manages and plays for a local baseball club.

Despite the focus on accuracy to real-world places within the game's map creation, *Yakuza 6*, or any other game in the series, should not be considered as presenting an "accurate" depiction of Japan or Japanese life. The series takes place in numerous facsimiles of Japanese cities and follows the exploits of Kazuma Kiryu, a former yakuza member who is constantly trying (and failing) to leave a life of organized crime behind. As a result, the "Japan" that the player experiences is rife with street fighting, blatant organized crime, and humorous (yet ludicrous) side quests that provide a sense of levity. In terms of discourses of the past of the atomic bombs there is little in *Yakuza 6*'s setting that is directly applicable. Even though large

⁵⁰⁹ For example, in February 2019 I was able to visit a Don Quixote (a popular Japanese chain store) in Shinjuku, Tokyo that is located in the exact spot in real-life that it is in the *Yakuza* series. Outside of some small visual changes, such as advertising, the store is the same virtually as it is in real life.

sections of the game take place in Hiroshima prefecture, they do not take place in the same city where the bomb was dropped and, therefore, are not inherently connected to the August 1945 bombing.⁵¹⁰ In summary, *Yakuza 6* provides an open-world gameplay experience that is partially grounded in real-world Japan but does not present itself as a true-to-life or 1 to 1 experience of contemporary Japan. Kazuma Kiryu lives in a violent, melodramatic, humorous, and sometimes patently absurd version of Japan.



Figure 7.1. A Selfie of Kazuma Kiryu. A picture of Kazuma Kiryu taken in front of Club Sega in Theatre Square using *Yakuza 6*'s photography/selfie mechanic. Screenshot by R. Scheiding.

7.2.3 Narrative

Yakuza 6: The Song of Life is the seventh title in the mainline *Yakuza* series (the titles were numbered 0-5 with 0 being a prequel entry) all of which starred (or co-starred within an ensemble of protagonists) the titular yakuza, Kazuma Kiryu. *Yakuza 6* was especially exciting and significant for fans of the series because it was marketed as the end of Kiryu's story (meaning that the series was planned to continue, but without its iconic main protagonist). Each of the games in the series are narratively dependent on one another and assume that the audience

⁵¹⁰ Onomichi and Hiroshima City (the capital of the prefecture where the atomic bomb was dropped in August 1945) are approximately 80km apart. For context, the Canadian cities of Toronto and Hamilton are around 70km apart.

knows at least some information about Kiryu and his friends, allies, enemies, and world. In fact, each game typically includes a video gallery recapping the previous games to help new players catch up on the story and the universe so that they can fully understand the narrative implications of each subsequent game.

To recount the entirety of *Yakuza*'s lore, or even just Kiryu's place within it, is far beyond the scope of this case study. To very briefly summarize, the first six games of the series follow the trials and tribulations of Kazuma Kiryu and his dealings with various yakuza clans, foreign mafias, and shadowy corporate, police, or government powers. There are several important plot points from the first six games of the series to understand for the purposes of this case study. The first game in the series, *Yakuza*,⁵¹¹ begins with Kiryu taking responsibility for a murder that he did not commit to save his blood brother from a prison sentence. At the end of his sentence, he returns to Tokyo and immediately becomes embroiled in a yakuza dispute centered around 100 million yen that has mysteriously gone missing. This, through numerous, circuitous plot points and characters, brings him into contact with a young girl named Sawamura Haruka (the daughter of Kiryu's childhood love, Sawamura Yumi). Haruka becomes orphaned at the conclusion of the first game and Kiryu adopts her. He decides to leave the yakuza to raise Haruka; meaning that subsequent entries in the series had to find increasingly unlikely yet logical ways to draw him back into the criminal underworld.

The father-daughter relationship between Kiryu and Haruka becomes one of the most important in the series and forms much of the emotional base in subsequent games. In *Yakuza 3*, Kiryu moves with Haruka to Okinawa and opens an orphanage where he raises both Haruka and a group of orphans. The plot of *Yakuza 5* finds Haruka having grown up and attempting to become a teen idol while Kiryu takes on an assumed identity and works as a taxi driver. (He does this hoping to hide his yakuza past from public view because it had the potential to create a scandal that would prevent Haruka from becoming a famous idol). However, unsurprisingly, Kiryu is coerced back into yakuza life and, by the conclusion of the game, Haruka has sworn-off becoming an idol due to her love for her adopted father. For his part Kiryu finds himself facing yet another prison sentence. This is where the narrative of *Yakuza 6* begins.

⁵¹¹ *Yakuza* (2005) was later remade and released as *Yakuza Kiwami* (2016). The graphics and gameplay were updated but the main story and plot points remained intact.

Kiryu accepts a three-year prison sentence which the game skips through relatively quickly but uses as the backdrop for the new story. Haruka returns to Okinawa to run the orphanage while Kiryu is incarcerated but she discovers that the press has followed her and is reporting on her connections to Kiryu (and thus the yakuza). This raises concerns that Kiryu and Haruka's past will negatively affect the orphans and their opportunities (specifically a potential baseball scholarship for one of the orphans). Haruka tells the other orphans that she is leaving and promptly disappears. Fast-forward to three years later and Kiryu is released from prison and returns to Okinawa only to discover that Haruka is missing.

After a brief section of gameplay in Okinawa, the central plotline of *Yakuza 6* begins with Kiryu, once again, returning to Kamurocho. Upon his arrival in the city, he discovers that Haruka has been the victim of a hit and run by an unknown assailant and is comatose in a local hospital. Shockingly, when he visits her in the hospital, he learns that Haruka has an infant son, Haruto, that Kiryu was totally unaware of before this point. Since there is nothing for him to do at the hospital, Kiryu decides to attempt to find Haruto's absentee father so that the infant is not forced into the care of child services. His brief investigation reveals that Haruka had moved to Onomichi in Hiroshima prefecture to escape the public eye after ending her career as an idol.

Kiryu, with Haruto in tow, immediately travels to Onomichi and attempts to locate Haruto's father, who remains a mystery for much of the game. It is revealed that one of the low-level yakuza that Kiryu meets (by chance) at the beginning of the game is not only Haruto's father, but coincidentally is the heir to a gang of Chinese Triads located in Kamurocho. Through his discovery of this fact, Kiryu is subsequently drawn into a massive conspiracy involving the highest reaches of power in Japanese society. This conspiracy is referred to as "The Secret of Onomichi" and is based in the ashes of the Pacific War. During, and in the direct aftermath of, the war black markets run by organized crime thrived. In addition to this, other forms of gang violence also rose to prominence. During this time, a young boy named Hirose Toru started his own street gang after finding himself orphaned and homeless by the bombing of Hiroshima. After breaking into what he thought was an abandoned building and fighting with some yakuza, he was recruited into the yakuza by a man named Iwami Heizo, chairman of the Yomei Alliance (see Figure 7.2). Iwami also founded Iwami Shipbuilding, a cartel of sorts, that became influential during the war and remained that way through to contemporary times.

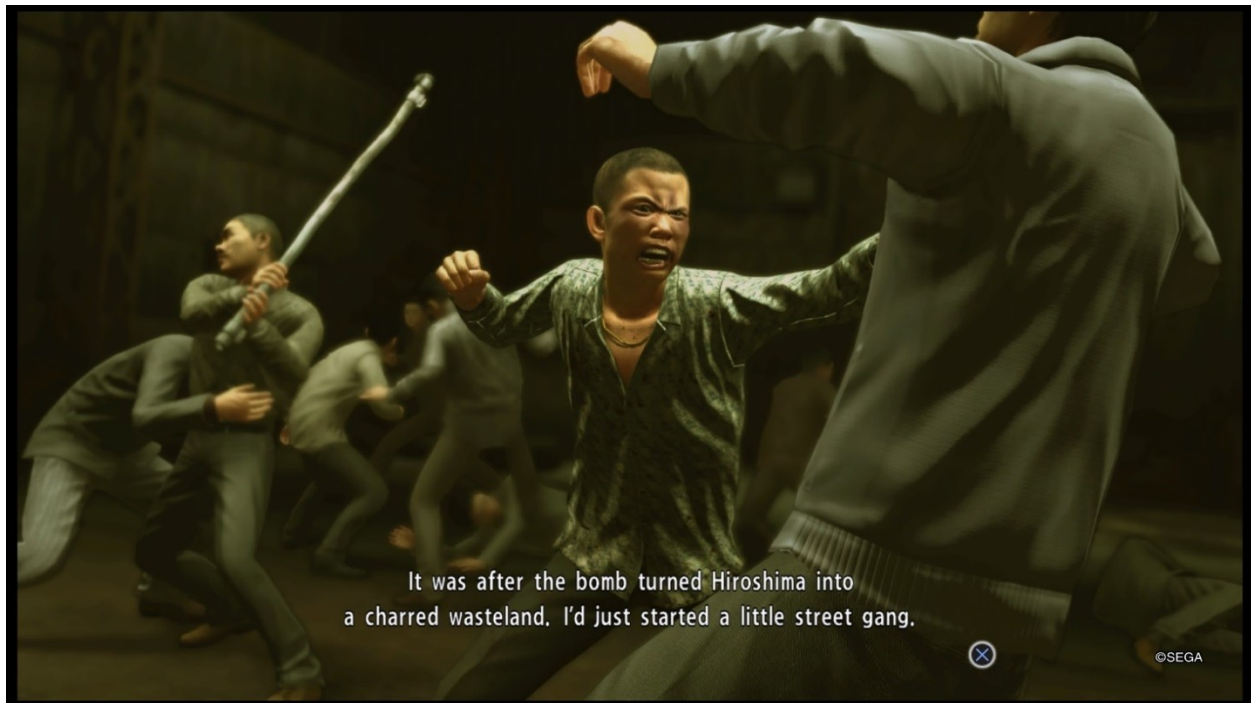


Figure 7.2. A Street Battle Among Youths. Hirose recounts the origins of his involvement in hiding “The Secret of Onomichi” to Kazuma Kiryu. Note that he specifically references the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. Screenshot by R. Scheiding.

Towards the end of the war an Admiral in the Imperial Japanese Navy, Daidoji Minoru, approached Iwami to undertake the construction of a secret Yamato-class super battleship.⁵¹² The construction was completed but the ship could not be used before the end of the war. Daidoji became a politician after the war and abused his power to groom and appoint many politicians. Thus, the secret battleship - which was highly illegal - needed to be hidden from the public or it would result in the fall of many prominent people in power in contemporary Japan. To accomplish this Minoru and Iwami hide in the shadows while Hirose worked as a street-level yakuza to protect “The Secret of Onomichi”.

Kiryu, in attempting to locate Haruto’s father coincidentally befriends low-level yakuza in the Hirose crime family. Through his interactions with these men, he comes into contact with Hirose and eventually learns the secret of Onomichi. The result of this is the unveiling of the secret battleship from its underground hiding place and a final stand-off between Kiryu and the

⁵¹² The Yamato class of battleships is referenced or alluded to earlier in the plot, but its true relevance is hidden from the player. For example, a low-level yakuza in Onomichi, Takaaki Matsunaga, is seen working on a model of a Yamato class battleship and commenting on its importance to Onomichi, a traditional fishing and ship-building industrial center.

Yomei Alliance (see Figure 7.3). During the epic battle, in which scores of enemies are defeated, Kiryu is badly wounded and taken to a local hospital. While in the hospital he is visited by a shadowy, unnamed man who offers him a bribe to not reveal what he knows about Daidoji's illegal activities within the Japanese government. Kiryu, realizing that even if he takes the bribe he and his loved ones will be in grave danger, turns down the offer and instead counteroffers to fake his own death and disappear from public life. The game ends with Kiryu observing a now-recovered Haruka and Haruto from afar before walking off into obscurity.



Figure 7.3. The Secret of Onomichi Revealed in Onomichi Harbor. The Yamato class battleship that was secretly commissioned at the end of the Pacific War and became known as “The Secret of Onomichi”. Screenshot by R. Scheiding.

The main narrative of *Yakuza 6* is an interesting blend of the factual and the absurd. Real-life events, such as the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, and experiences, such as the rise of black markets, are used to frame the more fantastical parts of the narrative. Ordering, constructing, and hiding a Yamato-class battleship, the largest battleships ever built, for more than half a century is patently ridiculous. However, the events of the narrative fit within established discourses of the past in Japan. The symbolism of the Yamato class battleship alone is significant because of the multitude of ways that the two real-life ships (*Yamato* and *Musashi*) can be remembered. Both ships, still the largest battleships ever built, were lost in the last years of the war in what can be

considered as suicide missions (especially in the case of *Yamato*). They can thus be seen as an example of bravery in the face of certain defeat which can be interpreted as either an example of Japanese victimhood, heroism, or a combination of the two. Yet, at the same time, they can be seen as a symbol of Japanese militarism and colonialism. In other words, if one were to select a symbol of the war, from a Japanese perspective, that best represents the diffracted nature of Japanese war memory the *Yamato*-class battleship would be near the top of the list.

Beyond this, there is a clear depiction of the continued suffering of victims of Hiroshima within the game as well. Hirose being orphaned and subsequently led towards a life of crime can easily fit into typical depictions of the victim discourse found within Japanese war memory (though this particular story leaves out any mention of radiation sickness and other related diseases). It is a symbol of the continued “fallout” of atomic bomb victims that continues long after radiation has decayed and disappeared. In addition, the idea of a massive abuse of power and subsequent cover-up led by a former Admiral fits within perpetrator-based war memory that questions government involvement in the war. Taken together these elements display to the player the continued relevance of the war and the bombs in a seemingly disconnected contemporary Japan. Kazuma Kiryu and the player alongside him, through his personal struggle to help his family, is forced to confront Japan’s military past. Unfortunately, even this paragon of righteousness and gallantry is unable to mend the mistakes of Japan’s past and is forced into obscurity to protect himself and his loved ones.

7.2.4 Characters

Kazuma Kiryu, also known as the Dragon of Dojima because of his iconic full-back dragon tattoo, is the playable character and main protagonist of *Yakuza 6: The Song of Life*. It is also worth noting that Kiryu was a playable character and main protagonist of every mainline game in the *Yakuza* series prior to the release of *Yakuza 6*, though he did share this role in some of the previous titles (*Yakuza 0*, *4*, and *5*). Also, unlike many fictional characters, Kiryu ages between each adventure at a normal rate (he is 50 years old at the beginning of *Yakuza 6*). As a result, Kiryu is a well-established character with a defined history at the start of *Yakuza 6* and, as with the larger narrative of the series, the player is expected and encouraged to have some knowledge of Kiryu and his relationships *before* entering the game.

However, for the uninitiated, Kiryu and his personality become readily apparent early and often throughout playing the game and experiencing the narrative. Kiryu, despite being a (former) yakuza, is not the typical anti-hero/criminal that could be expected to be found in an open-world crime game. Instead, Kiryu is a beacon of righteousness and all that is good. To borrow a term from tabletop RPGs, Kazuma Kiryu is a lawful good archetypal hero in that he lives by a strict code of honor and enforces it upon his world and enemies. In the context of the *Yakuza* series, this means that Kiryu defends the weak while fighting evil forces whether they be small (such as small-time street punks) or large (such as entire gangs or governments). In Kamurocho and Onomichi, Kiryu finds numerous opportunities to take action but, regardless of player choice, he always does the “right” thing as defined by his strict moral code. This can range from defending women from being harassed by drunk men to posing as a mascot to entertain the local children of Onomichi. It can be said that Kiryu is a simple character, in that it is easy to understand his motivations and actions, but that he is not underwritten or uninteresting.

The characters around Kiryu are much less important and less fleshed-out than the main protagonist. While not unimportant, each of the other characters in the game function as foils or support characters for Kiryu. This is particularly disappointing when considering Haruka, a character that had been central to the plot of several prior games but was relegated to a much less prominent role in *Yakuza 6* as she spends the majority of the game in a coma at the hospital in Tokyo. Enemies suffer from a similar issue, as they are more one-dimensional than previous series villains. Each of the three main antagonists, Hirose, Iwami, and Daidoji, spend part of the main plot hidden from the player before being dramatically revealed. This maintains the mystery of the story but leads to main villains that are simply “evil” or well-intentioned but misinformed or misguided.

The minor characters introduced throughout the open world are more rounded and interesting despite having little to no bearing on the main plot. Each substory or side activity introduces at least one character for Kiryu to interact with (usually with Kiryu solving a problem for them or defending them from thugs or unscrupulous characters). Of particular note are the hostesses at Club Shine in Kamurocho. There are five Club Shine hostesses (Saki, Riona, Erina, Hikaru, and Sora) all of which have their own personalities, likes/dislikes, and affinities. Players interact with the hostesses as Kiryu by visiting Club Shine and sharing drinks and conversations

through a mini game that is styled to resemble a dating sim or through meeting for dates outside the club and engaging in side activities, such as singing karaoke (a staple mini game in the *Yakuza* series) or playing darts.⁵¹³ Hostess clubs are a mainstay of the *Yakuza* series, at least in part because the games occur within entertainment districts. They are worthy of consideration in *Yakuza 6* because the hostesses become the characters that the player interacts with the most on a personal level. The fact that, if the player follows through each of their storylines, all of the women fall in love with Kiryu reveals that, despite his rigid personality, righteousness, and moral code, he is intended to be a heroic, respectable, and desirable character (see Figure 7.4). These are revered traits in the *Yakuza* universe.



Figure 7.4 A Date with Sora. Kiryu, from a first-person perspective, speaks to the hostess Sora at the conclusion of their rooftop date in Kamurocho. Screenshot by R. Scheiding.

⁵¹³ Dating sims are a popular genre of video games originating in Japan with many subgenres. This includes otome games which are produced and marketed to female audiences. *Yakuza 6* does not fail to draw attention to the parallels between dating sims and its hostess club mini game. If the player decides to date the hostess Sora, Kiryu learns that she plays dating sim games aimed at a male audience as a way to pick up dating tips. As a result, the player experiences a reference to dating sims while playing a dating sim. For a more in-depth examination of dating sims and the otome subgenre in particular see:

Emily Taylor, "Dating-Simulation Games: Leisure and Gaming of Japanese Youth Culture," *Southeast Review of Asian Studies* 29 (2007): 192–208.

Sarah Christina Ganzon, "Investing Time for Your In-Game Boyfriends and BFFs: Time as Commodity and the Simulation of Emotional Labor in *Mystic Messenger*," *Games and Culture* 14, no. 2 (2019): 139–153.

Some of the characters of *Yakuza 6* have connections to the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The three main villains, Daidoji, Iwami, and Hirose, all survived the war and have some direct connection to it (Daidoji as an Admiral, Iwami as a black marketeer, and Hirose as a survivor of Hiroshima). Yet, the majority of the cast, including the main character Kiryu, do not. They are merely Japanese citizens living in contemporary times that are not intrinsically connected to the ashes of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. However, it is this lack of direct connection that helps connect the player to the past. Just as Kiryu cannot help being drawn into a conflict decades in the making, the player is forced to confront and learn about the past along with him despite having no direct connection to that specific past themselves. In other words, just as Kiryu did not experience the war personally, neither did the player. Both parties (i.e. Kiryu and the player) thus confront the problems of the past within the present on relatively the same terms. As a result, even though Kiryu is an extraordinary example of a contemporary Japanese person he has a similar level of experience with Japan's wartime past as the player which allows him to be viewed as an audience surrogate. This surrogacy helps forge a connection between character, player, and discourses of the past.

7.2.5 Gameplay

Yakuza 6 features two densely packed open-world maps, Kamurocho and Onomichi, filled with enemies to fight, restaurants to eat in, and mini-games to play. All three types of activities are central to player progression and the gameplay loop of *Yakuza 6*. The player is required to engage in all three systems as they progress the story as a way of leveling up Kiryu. While it is possible to skip these parts of the game and only focus on finishing the central narrative of the game, this type of gameplay would only be plausible for highly skilled players as all other players would find their version of Kazuma Kiryu far too underpowered and underequipped to take on the challenges of the story mode. Thus, the typical gameplay loop of *Yakuza 6* could resemble this type of activity string: play open-world mini-games → eat at restaurant to gain experience → engage in street combat → play story mode mission. However, it should be noted that these activities would be constantly shuffled based upon the random spawns of enemies on the world map and player preferences. For example, a player could decide to play one particular mini game for several hours in a row, or only fight enemies, or simply explore the open world map taking pictures.

The central gameplay element of the *Yakuza* series is street brawling hand-to-hand combat; *Yakuza 6* is not an exception to this rule. All progress in the game is designed around developing Kiryu's fighting skills. It is notable that each title in the series needs to come up with a reason for why Kiryu has not retained his fighting prowess from the previous games; the excuse in *Yakuza 6* is Kiryu's increasing age and recent stint in prison. *Yakuza 6* introduced a new game engine and, as a result, created a new fighting system that disposed of multiple fighting styles in favor of one unified system. Each activity in the game assigns experience points to one of five categories (strength, agility, spirit, technique, and charm) which are used to enhance Kiryu's base stats or buy special skills (such as better dodging abilities, gaining more experience from completing certain activities, etc.) As Kiryu gains more experience he becomes a more capable fighter and can take on the more difficult challenges that the game offers, mainly the story missions and the secret hidden boss, series mainstay Amon (see Figure 7.5).



Figure 7.5. Kiryu Knocks Out Amon. A fully powered Kiryu knocks out the final secret boss of the game, Amon in an over-the-top battle featuring fire works, battle drones, and explosions. Screenshot by R. Scheiding.

Aside from fighting in the streets, *Yakuza 6* is packed with mini games to play, each with their own specific gameplay quirks and specificities. The list of games is extensive: a karaoke lounge, batting cage, chat room featuring recordings of real-life AV models, Club Sega arcade,

cat café, gym, darts, mah-jong parlor, clan creator, spearfishing, baseball management and game simulation, and a barfly game. These games are more than mere distractions as, aside from providing valuable experience points, they are well-designed and complex games in their own right.



Figure 7.6. Kiryu Feeds a White Cat. The player engages in numerous, varied side activities and mini games in *Yakuza 6*. In this instance Kiryu befriends a stray cat by feeding it as a way of recruiting it for a local cat café. Screenshot by R. Scheiding.

For example, the Club Sega locations allow Kiryu to play full versions of classic Sega arcade games such as *Virtua Fighter 5: Last Round* and *Puyo Puyo*, among others. Kiryu is also put in charge of running an amateur baseball team which involves recruiting players in the open world (usually through sub story missions), managing the lineup and pitching rotation, leveling up player attributes through assigning special training tickets, and playing important plate appearances in the games. A final example comes from the cat café mini game where Kiryu is tasked with finding stray cats for a local café. This involves yet another mini game where the player must listen for cat meows when exploring the open world before attempting to befriend cats by feeding them (see Figure 7.6). These are only three examples from the game, but they are emblematic of the depth of gameplay and time commitments that are typical of *Yakuza 6*'s non-main narrative side content that the player spends the majority of their time engaging in.

One final aspect of *Yakuza 6* and its gameplay that is worthy of comment is its extensive restaurant options based on real world Japanese cuisine. The inclusion of restaurants with authentic dishes is another staple of the *Yakuza* series that reappears in *Yakuza 6*. Options range from expensive steak restaurants, to small ramen spots, or fast-food joints (see Figure 7.7). The food options are notable as they help to further ground the series in contemporary Japan. In a Japan that is full of gratuitous street fights and ridiculous side quests the food system helps to maintain some semblance of “realism” and remind the player that the game occurs specifically in contemporary Japan, rather than a fully fictitious world.



Figure 7.7. Kiryu Gains Experience by Eating a Beef Bowl. Kiryu receives an experience bonus called “blissfully drinking alone” for ordering a specific combination of items at the beef bowl restaurant. Screenshot by R. Scheiding.

Yakuza 6, a heavily narrative-based game, thus encourages the player to experience all aspects of the open-world environment through a combination of incentives. The side content is both fun on its own and important for player progression. This encourages the player to explore all that the open world has to offer rather than only focusing on the story of the game. However, these gameplay systems also can be read through a discourses of the past model. The player is encouraged/forced to take-in the facsimile of contemporary Japan that the game presents through its progression systems and entertainment value. When experienced alongside the story of the

game, with its heavy commentary on Japan's wartime past, it further encourages the player to consider the continued implications of the war in contemporary Japan. This resembles the stress on education that is found in numerous discourses of the past in Japan, especially Peace education (as discussed in Chapter VI). Given that the narrative of *Yakuza 6* engages in multiple discourses of the past but does not definitively privilege any one particular interpretation of it (i.e. heroism, victims, or perpetrators) the game and gameplay encourage the player to think about the past and its implications on their own (or Japan's) present and future.

7.2.6 Analysis

The connections between *Yakuza 6: The Song of Life* and discourses of the past of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are evident on a basic, surface level. The forces that arise, and must be defeated, are deeply rooted in the bombing of Hiroshima and the conclusion of the Pacific War. Having a villainous character that was orphaned by the bombing of Hiroshima is a simple and direct way of referencing the past in a game that bases itself in a facsimile of contemporary Japan. This small part of the plot engages with the major discourses of the past surrounding the war in Japan without labelling a single discourse as correct. The fact that Hirose survived the bombing of Hiroshima and became embroiled in a life of crime reminds the player of the victims of the war and calls to discourses of Japanese victimhood. Daidoji's abuse of power as an Admiral in the Imperial Japanese Navy recollects discourses of the past that focus on Japanese aggression and role as perpetrators of the war. Finally, though not directly depicted in the game, the player is able to wonder if these depictions are fair. Can Hirose, Daidoji, or countless nameless soldiers be considered as heroic? Thus, all of the three major discourses of the past of the war within a Japanese context (i.e. heroism, victimization, perpetration) are implicated through *Yakuza 6*. Yet, the game does not take a definitive stance on the "proper" way to view the past or its role in the present. This is, perhaps, best displayed in the invocation of the Yamato class battleship that is central to the plot and allows open interpretation of the true nature of Japan's wartime past. Like the Yamato, which can be seen as an example of Japanese heroism, victimhood, or perpetration, the game is open to interpretation especially in regard to war memory within contemporary Japan.

However, it must be considered that the *Yakuza* series is deeply character driven and that *Yakuza 6* was billed as the end of the story of one of Sega's most iconic characters, Kazuma

Kiryu.⁵¹⁴ As such the stakes were raised to their maximum as the developers attempted to give an appropriate send-off to a beloved character. Kiryu is a man who, in previous games, took down entire yakuza clans, fought foreign mafia groups, unveiled police corruption, and defeated numerous other enormous threats. Surely if anyone could “solve” the issues of Japan’s historical militarism, war memory, and atomic past it would be him.

Yet, evidently, even Kazuma Kiryu, the paragon of righteousness and gallantry, had no solution or recourse when faced with Japanese discourses of the past. Kiryu, an audience surrogate, directly experiences the contemporary implications of Japan’s discourses of the past (though in an exceedingly exaggerated form) and has no solution, recourse, or definitive answer for them. Instead, he chooses to leave the past as is and protect his family by disappearing into obscurity. *Yakuza 6*, through its nuanced use of wartime imagery, comments on the past and its relevance to the present and future but can provide no definitive answer of how to navigate Japan’s complicated and diverse war memory.

7.3 Case Study - Valkyria Chronicles 4

7.3.1 General Information and Series History

The *Valkyria Chronicles* series (2008-present) is the newest series of those selected for case study in this project and is the most niche series in terms of audience size and industry influence. In addition, the series is also the smallest in terms of number of games as it consists of only 6 titles (4 in the main series and 2 spin-offs).⁵¹⁵ The primary publisher and developer of the series has been Sega though the Tokyo-based company Media.Vision has provided support for several games in the series (specifically *Valkyria Chronicles 3*, *Valkyria Chronicles 4*, *Valkyria Revolution*, and *Valkyria Chronicles Remastered*).⁵¹⁶ Once again, as all of the publishers and developers involved in the series are Japanese, for the purposes of this analysis the *Valkyria*

⁵¹⁴ Kazuma Kiryu would subsequently be featured as the protagonist of *Yakuza Kiwami 2*, the next game in the series, however this game was a remake of *Yakuza 2*. As such *Yakuza 6: The Song of Life* remained the end of his story narratively but not the end of his appearances as a playable character in the series.

⁵¹⁵ The first game in the series, *Valkyria Chronicles*, was also remastered and rereleased for current generation consoles but, other than graphical upgrades, is the same game as the original with the DLC content packed in. Even if this game were to be considered as a separate entry in the series it would still only give *Valkyria Chronicles* series 7 titles (less than all of the other selected series).

⁵¹⁶ The Japan-exclusive spin-off PC card-battler game *Valkyria Chronicles D* was published by NHN Japan and was developed jointly by NHN Japan and Sega. However, this game is vastly different from the mainline games, and even the other spinoff title in the series, so it will not be discussed further in this study.

Chronicles games will be considered to be Japanese and, as such, largely subject to and a part of Japanese discourses of the past.

The *Valkyria Chronicles* series has also been much more fluid and experimental in gameplay between games in comparison to the other series selected for study in this project. The original game, 2008's *Valkyria Chronicles*, was released on the PlayStation 3 console and combined the genres of strategy RPG, 3rd person shooter, visual novel, and base management into a unique experience. The next two titles in the series moved to the PlayStation Portable console and were, due to hardware limitations, scaled down into a more mobile friendly RPG experience. For example, they used much smaller maps, recycled content, and fewer in-engine cutscenes while also stressing shorter gameplay sessions by making missions shorter and possible to finish in less time. The series further diversified with two spin-off titles in *Valkyria Chronicles Revolution* and *Valkyria Chronicles D* which were a more traditional JRPG and an online card-battler, respectively. This case study focuses on the most recent game in the series, *Valkyria Chronicles 4*, which represented a return to the design choices that made the original game popular. It was developed by Sega and Media.Vision before being published by Sega on March 21, 2018 in Japan and on September 25, 2018 worldwide.

7.3.2 Setting

All of the main series *Valkyria Chronicles* games take place in the same universe during, or slightly after, The Second European War which is an alternate reality version of World War II. The Second European War is fought between the Federation (in the West) and the Empire (in the East) over access to the most important resource in Europa, ragnite. This can be very easily read as an allegory for World War II where the Federation maps onto the Western Allied powers (United States, Great Britain, France) while the Empire maps onto Nazi Germany, though neither of these mappings fits perfectly. Ragnite functions similarly to petroleum as it fuels the numerous tanks of the series while also having many other uses, such as being an ingredient in explosives, medical packs, and small armaments.⁵¹⁷

⁵¹⁷ Notably, there are no equivalents for the Soviet Union or Japan in the early parts of the series. In *Valkyria Chronicles 4* a side story reveals that one of the playable squad members, Azusa, is a spy from “the Far East” who was “raised by a clan of assassins”. Given her name, skills, and physical appearance it can be strongly interpreted that she is from a nation equivalent to Imperial Japan, though this is never confirmed.

In addition to these more historically influenced aspects of the setting and lore, there are also more fantastical parts of the universe as well. For example, there is an ancient super race of women, the titular Valkyria, who have superpowers such as super speed, the ability to dodge bullets, and a super attack called the Valkyrian final flame which mimics the power of an atomic bomb. Finally, there are aspects of the universe that combine the historical and fantastical. This is most prominently seen in the vehicles of the series which are based on real world tanks, aircraft, and ships but can be massive in size. For example, the Marmota, a tank in *Valkyria Chronicles*, is a battleship-sized super tank with no real-world equivalent.



Figure 7.8. *Valkyria Chronicles* History Book Interface. The menu that the player navigates to play story missions, upgrade their squad or weapons, select their soldiers, etc. Each of the tabs on then right can be selected to bring up the desired menu. Pictured is the story portion of the book. Note the blank spaces on the bottom of the righthand page which will be filled in by player story progression. This gives the impression that the player is writing the history of the Second European War as they play through the game. Screenshot by R. Scheiding.

Valkyria Chronicles 4 exists within this universe and focuses on the battles between the Federation and the Empire on the Eastern front of the war. This was the first game to focus on this front of the war, as the earlier titles focused on the Imperial invasion of the neutral country of Gallia, tasking the player with raising a desperate Gallian defense of their homeland. The player controls Squad E, a group of Federation volunteers primarily from Gallia as they engage

in Operation Northern Cross; an overland infantry strike aimed at taking the Imperial capital of Schwartzgrad. Interestingly, the player experiences this story from a book-based menu (see Figure 7.8). The pages fill-in as the player progresses the narrative, giving the impression that they are writing the history of the Second European War as they play.⁵¹⁸ This draws attention to the idea that player actions are not only engaging within the world but also actively creating historical narrative and collective/cultural memory. This presentation style/design choice combined with the clear allegorical connections to World War II make *Valkyria Chronicles* a particularly valuable game to examine through the lens of Japanese discourses of the past.

7.3.3 Narrative

The main narrative of *Valkyria Chronicles 4* follows Squad E of the Federation Army, a group primarily composed of Gallian volunteers, as they participate in the invasion of the Empire during Operation Northern Cross. The goal of the operation is to break the defenses of the Empire and quickly drive towards the Imperial capital of Schwartzgrad before the onset of winter.⁵¹⁹ Though the player eventually controls every member of the squad (if they so choose), the focus of the narrative is a small core group of soldiers: Claude Wallace (the tank commander and leader of the squad), Riley Miller (a scientist and artillery expert), Raz (a machine gunner), Kai Schulen (a sniper), and Minerva Victor (a rival of Claude's who is commander of Squad F but later joins Squad E). With the exception of Minerva, this core group of soldiers grew up together in Gallia before eventually volunteering for the Federation Army. The narrative combines the larger story of the Second European War with the personal narratives of the playable soldiers.

In the early stages of Operation Northern Cross, the Federation experiences many victories, including at the Empire held Siegal Line and it appears that the operation is turning

⁵¹⁸ This mechanic is a holdover from the original game in the series, *Valkyria Chronicles*, and has been explored in more detail by Koski. See:

Koski, 396-414.

⁵¹⁹ Operation Northern Cross is fascinating in that it largely mimics Operation Barbarossa (June 22, 1941 – December 5, 1941). This Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union began with quick victories but ultimately ground to a halt at Stalingrad in part due to poor Nazi planning, logistical concerns, and a bitter Russian winter. The Federation had been largely depicted as an allegorical representation of the Allied powers of Great Britain, France, and the United States in previous titles, and this holds for most of *Valkyria Chronicles 4*, so the decision to have Operation Northern Cross so closely mimic Operation Barbarossa is surprising and shows that the allegory of *Valkyria Chronicles* has been used flexibly by the developers at Sega.

into a rout. However, the Federation advance quickly grinds to a halt when an out of season snowstorm inaugurates an early winter. Despite the difficult conditions, the Federation slowly continues its advance towards the capital. However, a lack of supplies, poor logistics, and poor strategy slowly weaken the fighting force. This leads to an Empire counterattack in which the bulk of the Federation forces are driven towards the frozen shorelines of the Empire and crushed. Luckily for the player, Claude Wallace and Squad E miss this counterattack because they had decided to attack an Imperial train yard after they became separated from the rest of the army. As a result, they arrive at the shore after the attack instead of before or during the large-scale attack.

At this time, the remaining troops are folded into Squad E under Claude's command. Squad E then receives new orders as they are told to board the Centurion, one of three snow cruisers (a type of fictitious superweapon that resembles a large battleship but is actually a tank used for travelling atop frozen oceans). Claude then learns that he and his soldiers are to take part in Operation Cygnus, a Federation plan to attack Schwartzgrad with the three snow cruisers. The operation is not uncontested and during the drive towards the capital two of the land cruisers are lost in battle. After the Centurion itself was damaged in battle a mysterious young girl, Angelica, appears on the ship. Angelica is a kind and vibrant presence on the Centurion, but it is soon revealed that she is a Valkyria.

The Valkyria are an important race in the *Valkyria Chronicles* universe, however, to understand the full significance of this revelation, it is necessary to have played the previous titles. To briefly recap, in the previous games Valkyria are revealed to be descendants of an ancient race that invaded Europa for the North centuries ago. Though exceedingly rare, the descendants of these women are obsessively sought after, especially by militarily inclined leaders, because of their immense power potential. If properly nurtured and trained a Valkyria can gain access to their powers which include super speed, the ability to wield powerful lance like laser weapons, and a desperate super attack called the Valkyrian final flame. However, this is not a neutral process. In order to access the full extent of their powers, a Valkyria must survive a trauma or injury that would normally kill a human being. This causes the latent powers to activate and become accessible.

Of particular interest among these powers is the Valkyrian final flame which can be understood as the atomic bomb equivalent of the *Valkyria Chronicles* universe. It involves a

Valkyria expending all of her energy at once into a massive explosion that both ends the life of the Valkyria and creates massive destruction.⁵²⁰ One important difference between the Valkyrian final flame and the atomic bombs, is that the Valkyrian final flame comes from a sentient being rather than an inanimate object. As a result, the use of the Valkyrian final flame is subject to the value judgments of the individual Valkyria and can thus be considered “evil” or “good” while the atomic bombs as non-sentient objects are, of course, weapons deployed by individuals. The Valkyria thus combines the decision maker and the weapon into one entity.

Unfortunately, despite their massive power, Valkyria typically face unpleasant circumstances in their lives that are, usually, connected to their training. This “training” usually leads to the incarceration of these women as they are forced into a military life. This is partially why the revelation that Angelica is a Valkyria is shocking and unsettling to the player as they realize that she both had to survive a traumatic event to activate her powers *and* undergo harsh training at a young age. In addition, the player realizes that the explosions that signalled the end of Centurion’s sister ships in battle were the death throes of two other young girls like Angelica.

This realization is made worse when it is revealed that the snow cruisers were manufactured in the United States of Vinland (the *Valkyria Chronicles* equivalent to the United States of America) with the young girls’ immense powers being used to power reactors at the core of the ships and, importantly, the suppression of their ability to make their own decisions about the use of their powers (due to the fact that, when placed in the reactors, they enter an unconscious state). Horrifyingly, Claude learns that the goal of Operation Cygnus is to ram the remaining snow cruiser into Schwartzgrad and detonate Angelika while she is in her unconscious state as a way of vaporizing the city and its inhabitants and making the Empire capitulate.

Shortly thereafter, the Captain of the Centurion is wounded, and Claude is left in charge of the ship. Claude decides to continue the mission to Schwartzgrad but cannot decide if he will carry out the plan as ordered. After several desperate last stands by the Empire, including a heated battle in the heart of the city, the Centurion overtakes Schwartzgrad and, for all intents and purposes, the war is over.⁵²¹ However, Claude is still ordered by high command to detonate

⁵²⁰ For a further discussion of Valkyria as atomic bomb allegories see: Scheiding, ““That’s Not Real Victory””, 135-145.

⁵²¹ This final battle for Schwartzgrad combines aspects of two major events of World War II: The Battle of Berlin (April 16 – May 2, 1945) and the American air raids on Japan during the latter half of the Pacific War, in particular

the Valkyria reactor and destroy the city. He ignores this order only to find that Minerva, in her hatred for the Empire that wiped out her squad, has gone to the bridge to follow through with the plan anyways. Claude travels to the bridge to find her with her hand on the detonation lever (see Figure 7.9). He pleads with her to not pull the lever, saying, “That’s right. Once that lever is pulled, it’s no longer war. It’s genocide. This beautiful city will be reduced to a barren wasteland. Millions of lives, young and old... gone. Dust on the wind.” Minerva relents, and Squad E is forced to fight one final battle against a rogue group of Imperial soldiers who wish to capture the Centurion and procure its power for themselves.

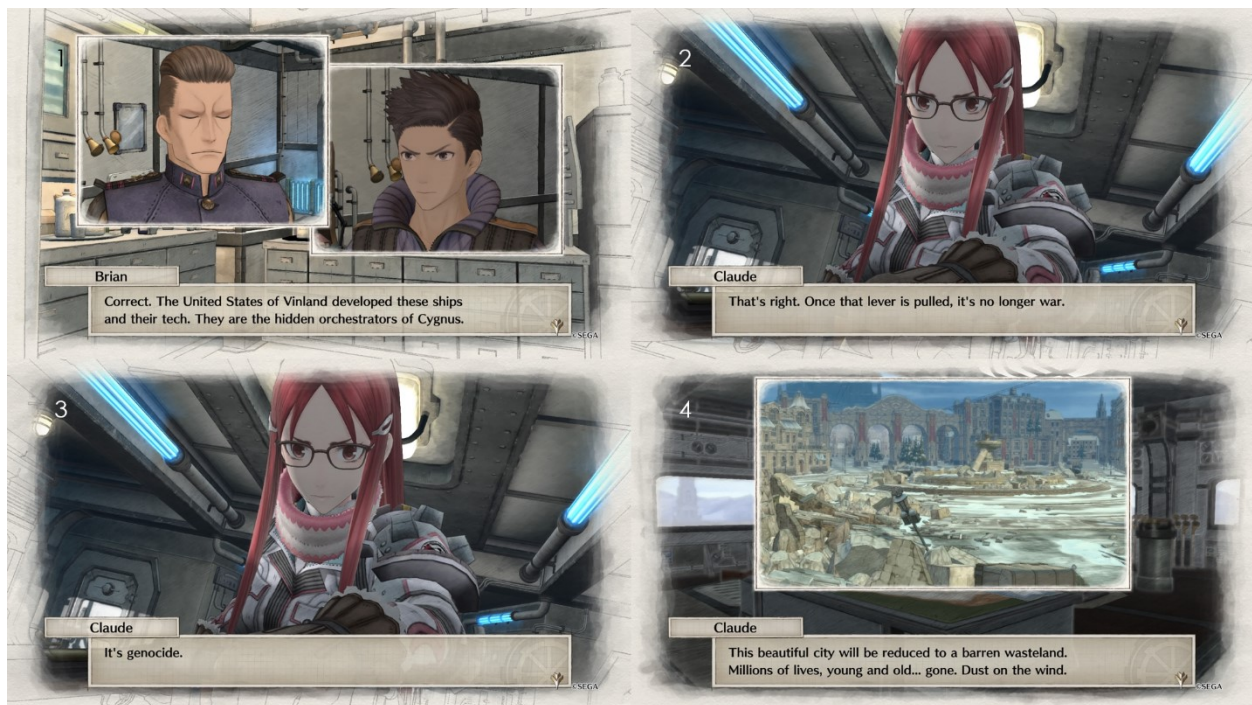


Figure 7.9. Claude Learns About the United States of Vinland & Dissuades Minerva.

Claude learns that the snow cruisers were developed by the United States of Vinland (1). He later needs to convince Minerva not to detonate the Centurion in Schwartzgrad (2-4). Screenshots by R. Scheiding.

The ending of *Valkyria Chronicles 4* is so direct in its messaging that it borders on not being allegorical. Claude is successful in dissuading Minerva in a scene that is easily read as another reference to the end of World War II and the American decision to drop atomic bombs

post the Battle of Saipan (June 15 – July 9, 1944). The video game combines ground battles (such as those between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany) with the use of atomic weapons (such as those dropped on Japan by the United States) to create a fiction. This fiction combines the final battles of World War II in Europe and the Pacific theatres into one geographical location. Of course, the ending of *Valkyria Chronicles 4* only hints at the use of atomic weaponry (and its in universe equivalents) rather than having these weapons actually be used.

on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It is a condemnation of actions, that are deemed genocidal by Claude, of the real past from an allegorical, ludic narrative and represents strong links between the game's narrative and established Japanese discourses of the past that focus on the victims, especially those of the atomic bombs.

This is the only allegorical reference to the *decision* to drop the atomic bombs found within the game. However, because the player is slowly introduced to the characters and potential victims of using the Valkyrian final flame throughout the story the scene becomes much more powerful. Realizing that a detonation will destroy a place that the player has physically experienced through gameplay, will kill characters that the player has been introduced to within the story, and result in the painful death of a young girl stripped of her agency makes the scene more compelling. The game builds to this moment of decision rather than surprising the player with it. Though the game is an allegorical re-telling of real-world events (i.e. World War II), wherein a war continuously escalated to the point of atomic detonation, the ending is changed here to make an argument against the use of atomic/nuclear weapons. In *Valkyria Chronicles 4* the use of ultimate weapons is evaded by the brave choices of one man. A city and thousands of lives are spared.

7.3.4 Characters

Valkyria Chronicles 4 is unique in that there is not a single “main” character or one central playable character. As discussed above, there are characters that are central to the focus of the plot, but none could be labelled as a traditional main character. Instead, the game opts for an ensemble cast of 52 playable characters (in addition 10 more characters were added via DLC bringing the total to 62). It is up to the player to decide which characters they prefer based on the characters' class, abilities, aesthetics, personality, etc. However, it should be noted that the player is encouraged to play with the plot centric characters of Claude, Raz, Kai, Riley, and Minerva because they are given a free command point (explained below in the Gameplay section) which gives them significantly more utility in battle. Also, as the player is placed in the position of commander during gameplay, it is possible (but not necessary) to consider them as role-playing as Claude.

Each of the non-DLC playable characters that is not featured in the main narrative receives their own substory and side mission which helps to flesh out who they are, why they

fight, and what they believe in. Some of these stories can be quite entertaining, for example in Azusa's side story it is revealed that she is a ninja spy sent from the East to observe the European conflict. Others reveal deeper traumas from a character's life. For example, in Vancey's story the player learns that her main gameplay gimmick of being drunk, which is used to great comedic effect, is actually connected to PTSD that she has from seeing her former squad mates butchered in battle. Through these substories, and the main narrative, the player can build bonds with each character which stops even the minor characters from feeling inconsequential. This is further reinforced by a permadeath gameplay mechanic (i.e. if a non-main cast character dies, they cannot be revived and are no longer available to the player)⁵²² that adds weight to the player's in-game decisions and strategies. Thus, each of the playable characters is depicted in a sympathetic way to the player and leaves the impression of everyday people becoming soldiers.

This follows along Japanese discourses of the past of the war that focus on heroism where the experiences of each individual soldier are valued and celebrated as part of a larger narrative. This, as covered in the previous chapter, includes the circulation of war memoirs, oral history, and other pieces of collective/cultural memory. It also replicates one of the more problematic aspects of these discourses of the past in that it pulls attention away from larger political and "big picture" issues to focus on the suffering of individual soldiers and their sacrifice/bravery. In the case of Pacific War Era Japan this is used to draw attention away from the colonialism of the Imperial Japanese government and the war crimes of the Imperial Japanese armed forces. Within *Valkyria Chronicles 4* this focus on the individual causes the player to focus on their own soldiers rather than the larger political landscape of the game series.

For example, the game separates individual soldiers from the higher politics of war which can encourage the player to compartmentalize individual soldiers from the goals, actions, and values of the larger political organizations that they represent. These larger goals, it must be remembered, include winning the war at any cost and relying upon the deployment of super weapons capable of killing thousands of civilians and obliterating a city. However, this is

⁵²² Only characters that are not central to the plot of the game are subject to the permadeath mechanic. This means that Claude, Riley, Kai, Raz, and Minerva cannot be killed. Typically, if they fall in battle, they are incapacitated and evacuated from the battlefield but remain in the player's roster of available troops in later missions. In other cases, particularly if Claude falls in battle, the player can receive a game over and be forced to reload and retry the current mission.

undermined both by the reveal of the ill-intentions of those in power and Claude's ability to prevent their plans from coming to fruition.

This characterization carries through to the villains of *Valkyria Chronicles 4* as well. Walz, a rival tank commander from the Empire, is depicted as charismatic and brave rather than as a one-dimensional enemy. He also is supportive of Crymaria (discussed below), a Valkyria who has been rejected and ridiculed for being too emotional and unstable; feelings which stemmed from her mistreatment and abuse at the hands of Imperial scientists which caused her to feel inadequate. Forseti, a Federation defector (and sibling of Kai), is revealed to have left for the Empire only after realizing that the Federation was working with the United States of Vinland and abusing Valkyria for the creation of superweapons. Thus, even the two main rivals of Squad E are principled, noble, and concerned with the preservation of humanity in the face of incredible destructive power.

This furthers two of the central messages of the game: courage in times of war and responsible use (or non-use) of power but it still results in the creation of a binary separation between those who fight and those who wield higher power (i.e. government, military high-command, etc.) This layered approach to characterization replicates both the positive and negative aspects of Japanese discourses of the past centered on heroism which makes the conflict of *Valkyria Chronicles 4* a compelling story of flawed human beings forced into (pointless) war rather than simply a force of wholly good heroes against wholly evil villains.

Finally, the Valkyrian characters in the game are important to consider as well. There are six confirmed Valkyria in the game, four of which are new to the series (Crymaria, Angelica, and the other two unnamed Valkyria that powered the doomed snow cruisers) and two who return from the first entry in the series (Alicia, a Gallian militia member, and Selvaria, an Imperial General). The returning characters from *Valkyria Chronicles* are important because, within the series continuity, the events of that game occur simultaneously to those of *Valkyria Chronicles 4*. As a result, players of the original game know that, eventually, Selvaria will use her Valkyrian final flame to detonate a fortress during the invasion of Gallia and that Alicia will decide not to use her powers in a similar way as she instead opts to fight alongside her friends without resorting the use of her power. This makes the struggles of Crymaria and Angelica compelling as

the player seeks to discover how they will be deployed and used on the battlefield, especially after they witness the detonation of the other two Valkyria who were powering the snow cruisers.

Angelica, as described above, has no choice over her fate but is saved by Claude's actions. She is later adopted by Kai postwar. Crymaria, through the encouragement and acceptance of Walz, also decides not to use her ultimate powers. Taken together, the Valkyrian characters become human representations of the decisions to use powerful weapons (such as atomic bombs). This is especially the case for Crymaria, who is older than Angelica and has achieved rank within the Imperial Army. She retains some control over her own fate and decides that she wants to live rather than resort to using her power irresponsibly. In *Valkyria Chronicles 4* the complex decision-making process of using weapons in a time of war is allegorically rendered into a life and death decision on an individual level. The game argues, through these characters, that using ultimate power is an individual choice that affects thousands and, as a result, should be avoided.

This fits well with Japanese discourses of the past of the war that focus on the atomic bombings and suffering of *hibakusha*. As described in the previous chapter, these discourses (which fit into the larger category of discourses of victimhood) focus on the suffering of individuals. This is primarily explored through *hibakusha* literature, memoirs, and journalistic endeavors. These works describe the suffering of victims (often in vivid and visceral detail) partially as a form of education and to place a human face on the atomic bombs. Rather than focus on the larger politics of the atomic bombs (as American discourses tend to do) the focus is on the individual victim and potential future victims. This is just one facet of Peace Education which aims to educate the public (both in Japan and abroad) about the atomic bombs as a way of speaking out against the proliferation of nuclear weapons and their (potential) future use. *Valkyria Chronicles 4* applies the lessons of *hibakusha* literature and Peace Education (i.e. focus on the victims rather than the larger politics) to put forth the argument that the use of atomic/nuclear weapons is always unjust. In its universe these ideals are ahistorically applied to their allegorical timeline to condemn the use of atomic weapons and mourn the victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by sparing the city and citizens of Schwartzgrad.

7.3.5 Gameplay

Valkyria Chronicles 4 makes use of several interwoven systems to create a unique gameplay experience. Generally, it is referred to as a strategy role-playing game (SRPG), but this moniker does not cover the diversity of systems and gameplay types that are found within the game. In fact, it can be said that the game combines SRPG elements with 3rd person shooter mechanics, visual novel storytelling, and management simulation menu systems. This gives *Valkyria Chronicles 4* an interesting gameplay loop that combines strategic elements with action sequences and narrative segments.

A gameplay session of *Valkyria Chronicles 4* starts in the book menu (outlined above in the Setting section). From here the player has several options (represented by tabs and accessed through using the shoulder buttons on the control) as to how they would like to proceed. Typically, the player will watch several narrative segments that progress the narrative, build characterization, and give context for the next battle. Sometimes these story sections are presented to the player as cutscenes rendered in the gameplay engine, however they are frequently offered through visual novel style presentations (see Figure 7.10). Much of the character interactions and key plot points of the game occur through these visual novel style-cutscenes.

Once the player has caught up on the story within book mode the next battle will unlock. However, most players will first visit their base so they can upgrade equipment, decide on which soldiers to add to their squad, and distribute experience points. “Visiting the base” does not occur in a 3D environment. Instead, the player must navigate numerous separate menus as they prepare their squad for battle. This is where the management simulation aspects of the gameplay become evident, as the creation and maintenance of a successful squad can only be achieved through careful navigation through these menus. Once again, the management simulation aspects of gameplay can be overlooked or undervalued but are still an essential part of *Valkyria Chronicles 4*’s gameplay. These management systems have only tangential connections to discourses of the past. They shape which weapons the player can take into battle and they retain an aesthetic that grounds them in the game’s universe (i.e. mid-20th century technology, wartime buildings, etc.) However, they more closely resemble RPG game systems (such as character customization and party optimization) than they do discourses of the past. Thus, these systems represent the

recreation of genre expectations and standards rather than as a commentary on the past. In other words, the management aspects of *Valkyria Chronicles 4* serve to ground the player in RPG genre conventions rather than discourses of the past.



Figure 7.10. Kai Seeks Vengeance for Stolen Bread. An example of a cutscene from *Valkyria Chronicles 4* that is presented in the visual novel style. In this scene Kai (left) seeks vengeance against her fellow soldiers who have recently purchased all of the bread in a local bakery. Screenshot by R. Scheiding.

Once the player has caught up on the story and subsequently managed their squad through visiting the base, they are ready to engage in the next part of *Valkyria Chronicles 4*'s gameplay loop: strategic battles. Even within these battles the game subverts several SRPG tropes/design principles and, it could be argued, introduces a 2nd gameplay loop to the player. A battle begins with simple instructions for the player, such as defend a given point on the map or defeat the enemy commander. These instructions have little context and may or may not provide some hint to the player as to how they should set up their squad. As a result, trial and error become an important aspect of gameplay (a player may frequently find that they need to restart a mission, make use of multiple save files, or replay a mission if they want a better grade). Regardless the player is given a predetermined number of slots to assign soldiers throughout preselected points on a map. Once they have completed this task the battle begins.

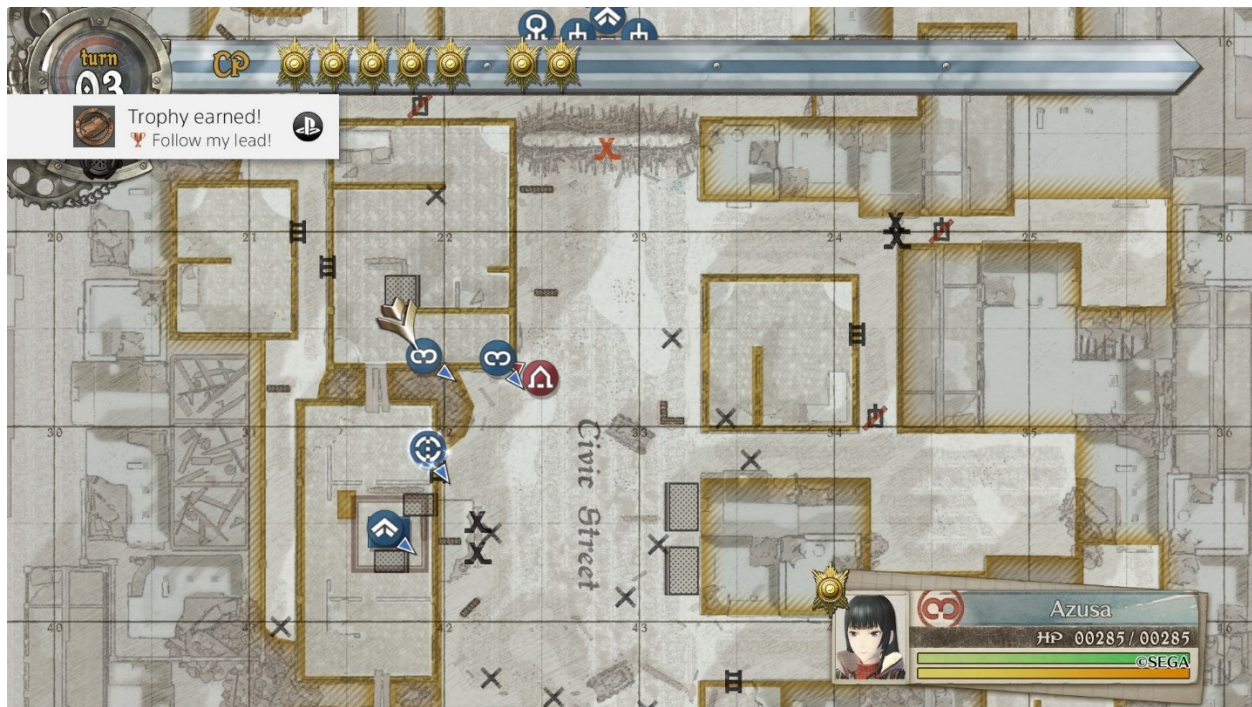


Figure 7.11. Battle Map Commander View. An example of the battle map screen in *Valkyria Chronicles 4*. Here the player has moved the selection cursor over the scout Azusa in preparation for their next turn. Screenshot by R. Scheiding.

Battles take place in a turn-based fashion where one side spends (or banks for the next turn) their command points as they work towards their goal. The player typically goes first and is greeted by the map screen (see Figure 7.11). The map screen is a 2D rendering of the battlefield where the player can view the terrain from a bird's eye view. As the player maneuvers their soldiers more information is revealed in the map mode, such as enemy positions and unit types. Other important aspects of this screen, as shown above, are the number of command points available (represented along the top portion of the map by golden medals), the position, type, and orientation of soldiers (represented by blue circles for the player and red for the enemy, the arrow shows the direction the unit is facing and the symbol in the middle indicates their class) and character information in the bottom right (character name, class, green health bar, and yellow/orange stamina bar). From this plethora of information, the player makes decisions on how and when to move specific units.

After the player has selected their unit, they are transferred to the 3rd person action section of the battle system (see Figure 7.12). From here they take control of their selected soldier or vehicle and navigate a fully 3D map from a 3rd person perspective. The player expends

stamina points by moving and can undertake one action (such as firing their weapon, throwing an explosive, using a med kit, etc.). Each unit requires a certain number of command points to move and has their own unique abilities and specializations. In addition to this the player can opt to spend command points on special orders from the 2D map and see the results on the 3D map. For example, an artillery strike can be ordered in 2D and seen by the player on the 3D map. The player must consider their decisions carefully in 3D mode because their soldiers can be permanently killed. The player expends command points until they either have none remaining or they decide to end early and bank command points for their next turn. At this point the enemy goes through a similar process (the player can only watch as the CPU executes their turn). Turns continue like this until the player achieves their objective or is defeated by the enemy. This battle system becomes *Valkyria Chronicles 4*'s second gameplay loop where the player transitions from strategizing in the 2D map before acting in the 3D map.



Figure 7.12. 3rd Person Battle Featuring a Tank. An example of the 3rd person action portion of the battle system in *Valkyria Chronicles 4*. Here the player has elected to move their tank, the Cactus, deeper into the battlefield. It has sighted, and been sighted by, numerous enemies as indicated by the yellow/green arcs emanating from its iron hull. Screenshot by R. Scheiding.

The player is given a unique arsenal of weapons and tactics that they can use to achieve their goals. This includes conventional small arms (rifles, machine guns, and sniper rifles),

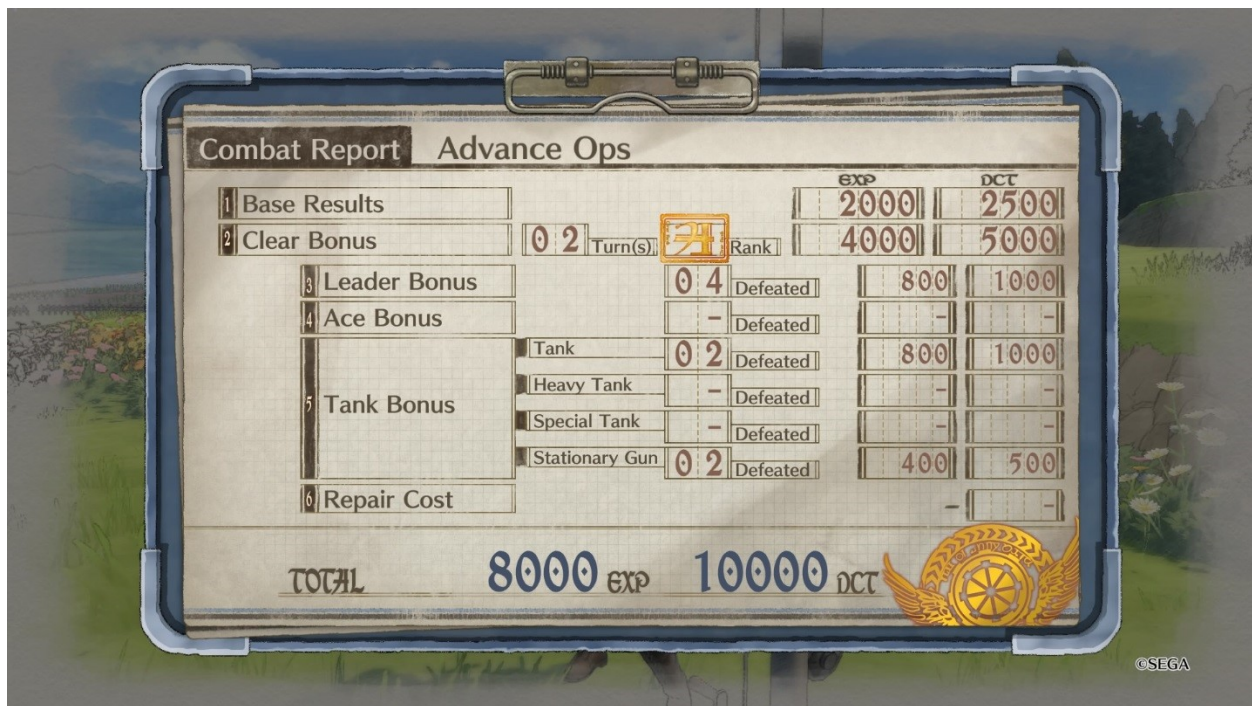
explosives (grenades and anti-tank weapons), vehicles (tanks and APCs), and artillery (ship-based or small mortars). Indeed, the player has access to most of the weapons that were available during World War II (or at least in universe equivalents). There are however, two notable exceptions: aircraft and atomic weapons. Aircraft are virtually non-existent in the *Valkyria Chronicles* universe with only one small plane being introduced at the end of the first game. This is likely due to the impact that this would have on gameplay as aircraft would drastically complicate gameplay and require additional development time and resources.

However, the lack of ability to use atomic weapons is telling because the *Valkyria Chronicles* universe does have an equivalent: Valkyria powers. The player even comes into contact with these powers on the battlefield when they fight against Crymaria as she uses her powers to destroy tanks and fire lightning-like artillery but does not opt to detonate herself with the Valkyrian final flame. This is important because it means that Valkyria powers exist in universe *and* are programmed into gameplay, yet the player does not have access to them during their playthrough.⁵²³ Through this omission the game disallows the player from resorting to atomic weapons. Even if the player disagrees with Claude's decision to spare Schwartzgrad they cannot circumvent that decision through their own gameplay and use the Valkyrian final flame to their benefit. Atomic weapons are not only discouraged in the game's narrative, they are disallowed in its gameplay. The player must fight without abusing the power of the Valkyria.

This decision is discursively important because it can be interpreted as a design choice made by the developers that indicates a critique of the use of atomic weapons. While it is impossible or difficult to argue for developer intention, it is possible to consider the gameplay systems and reason out design decisions. Giving the player access to the Valkyrian final flame would not necessarily unbalance the game, as there are many other super attacks in the game (such as an artillery barrage from the Centurion) that are available to the player but are limited in use and expensive in terms of command points. This means that the player can use these attacks but only sparingly and after great consideration.

⁵²³ In the original version of *Valkyria Chronicles 4* the player did not any access to Valkyria powers. However, this changed when the DLC pack *The Two Valkyria* was released. This pack provided a unique side story about Crymaria and Selvaria. If the player finished the mission, they unlocked the two Valkyria as units for their squad. This gave the player access to Valkyria powers but the characters inclusion in Squad E is still considered non-canonical. It should also be noted that the player still did not gain access to the Valkyrian final flame.

Theoretically, the Valkyrian final flame could be worked into this system but it is not. This, I argue, is connected to the game's narrative which explicitly argues against the use of the Valkyrian final flame. It would entirely undermine the narrative to prevent the player from using the Valkyrian final flame to destroy Schwartzgrad while allowing the player to decide to use it (as a gameplay mechanic) to kill a handful of enemy units in a smaller battle. Not allowing the player to use Valkyrian powers, especially the final flame, is a discursive choice that further bolsters *Valkyria Chronicles 4* connection to Japanese discourses of the past. Using these powers would go against its argument that individual soldiers should be celebrated for their bravery (i.e. Japanese discourses of the past centered on heroism), potential victims should be considered over political goals (i.e. Japanese discourses of the past centered on victimhood) and that those at the top of military power structures are the true villains (i.e. Japanese discourses of the past centered on perpetration).



Combat Report Advance Ops		EXP	DCT
1 Base Results		2000	2500
2 Clear Bonus	0 2 Turn(s) Rank	4000	5000
3 Leader Bonus	0 4 Defeated	800	1000
4 Ace Bonus	- Defeated	-	-
5 Tank Bonus	Tank 0 2 Defeated	800	1000
	Heavy Tank - Defeated	-	-
	Special Tank - Defeated	-	-
	Stationary Gun 0 2 Defeated	400	500
6 Repair Cost		-	-
TOTAL		8000 EXP	10000 DCT

Figure 7.13. End of Mission Results Screen. An example of the results screen from the end of a mission. The Clear Bonus (here an “A”) determines the amount of EXP (experience) and DCT (currency) the player receives. Screenshot by R. Scheiding.

One final aspect of gameplay that is essential for this analysis is the scoring system (see Figure 7.13). After each successful mission, the player is scored based on their performance and given experience and currency that is mandatory for progression of their squad. While there are

bonuses for defeating special units, such as leaders and unique weapon carrying aces, and vehicles the majority of the score bonus is determined by the number of turns the player takes to finish the mission. This means that the more turns a player takes the less reward they gain. Given that command points are limited and turns need to be completed efficiently to maximize rewards this means that the player is actively encouraged to *not kill* generic enemies. A mission completed in two turns with ten enemies killed will most likely score more than one completed in 3 or more turns with many more enemies killed. Since speed is the essential element that determines rewards the game trains the player to bypass enemies in favor of quicker routes and more efficient tactics. Through its scoring system, *Valkyria Chronicles 4*, encourages the player to spare their enemies rather than eradicating each and every one. Just as the lives of civilians are protected so too are the lives of soldiers.

7.3.6 Analysis

When examining the setting, narrative, characters, and gameplay of *Valkyria Chronicles 4* in combination, clear connections to established discourses of the past surrounding World War II emerge. The setting, an allegorical version of World War II in Europe, allows a Japanese developer and publisher to comment on a period in time that can be viewed as controversial or taboo, especially for a Japanese company.⁵²⁴ The fact that the *Valkyria Chronicles* world so closely mirrors that of the history of World War II is telling. Yet, it is what Sega does with this setup that firmly cements the game within established discourses of the past. The narrative clearly and explicitly argues to the player that Valkyrian powers, the universe's equivalent to atomic weapons, should not be used, regardless of orders, military expediency, or any other considerations. The focus is on potential victims rather than potential conquests.

This view is further reinforced through gameplay. The game, through its design, systems, and rewards, actively encourages the player to act peacefully rather than aggressively. The stress is on preserving and protecting one's units and finishing missions as quickly as possible, rather than mercilessly crushing their enemies who have been depicted as similar to the player's units

⁵²⁴ This is not meant to judge Japanese creators for attempting to comment on the war. I believe that they should. Regardless, it is easy to understand how Japanese commentary on a war in which they practiced settler colonialism throughout Asia could be viewed as controversial for numerous groups. An allegorical view of the past allows for the creators at Sega to comment on a controversial subject without directly dealing with the political implications of doing so.

in characterization. Even if the player decides to forego this, they are limited in their tools as *Valkyria Chronicles 4* does not give them access to Valkyrian powers. Opponents can use these attacks, but the player cannot. Yet, even the opponent does not elect to use the most ultimate of their powers, the Valkyrian final flame. In *Valkyria Chronicles 4*, the true antagonists are the ruthless military leaders at the top of the hierarchy who have no qualms risking the lives of their soldiers and actively seek to both develop and use weapons of mass destruction.

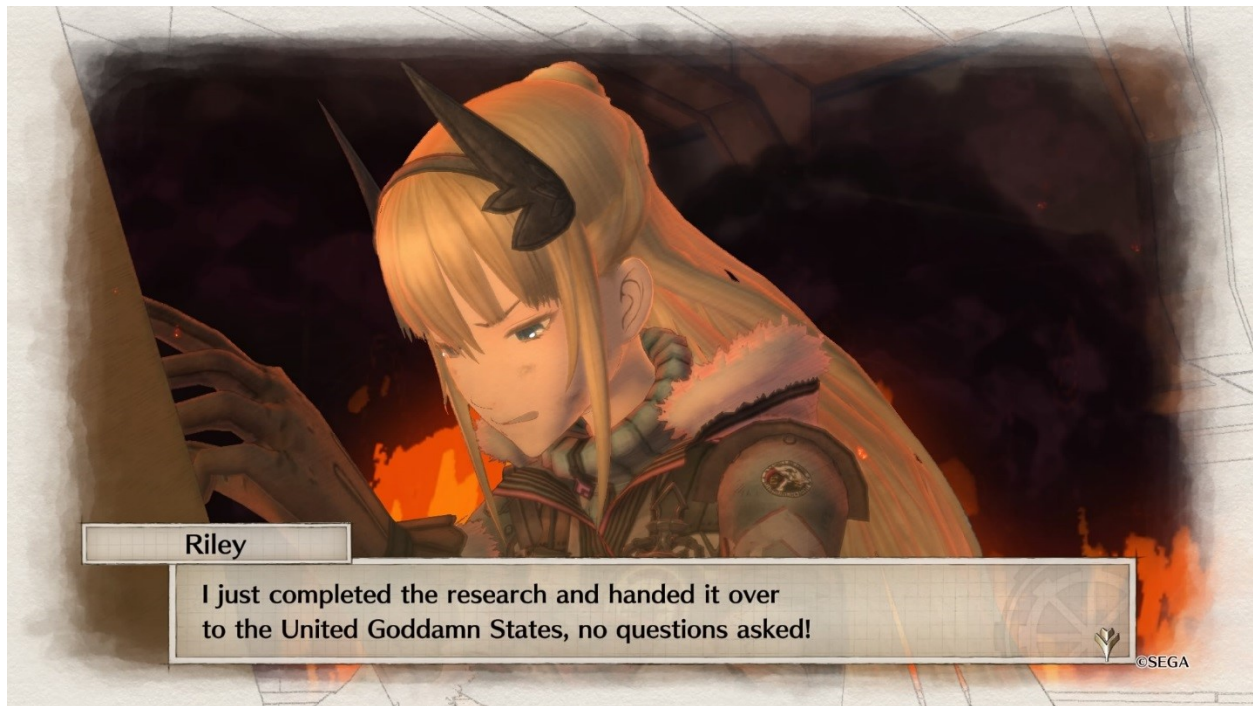


Figure 7.14. Riley Laments Her Involvement with the United States of Vinland. Riley, the scientist responsible for the creation of the Valkyrian-powered reactor that allows for the locomotion of the snow cruisers, laments her lack of critical thinking when she decided to hand over the plans to the United States of Vinland. Screenshot by R. Scheiding.

Ultimately, *Valkyria Chronicles 4* becomes a veiled critique and condemnation of the decision to drop the atomic bombs of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 and the people in power who enabled the attacks to happen. Through allegorical depictions and recreations, a world is built that mirrors the history of World War II. This world explicitly discourages the use of its atomic bomb equivalents, the Valkyrian final flame. This is stated simply in the narrative and strictly reinforced through design, systems, and gameplay. The message that the game wishes to communicate to its players is perhaps best exemplified by the engineer Riley, who was responsible for the creation of Valkyrian-powered reactor that made the snow cruisers, and thus

atomic-level detonations, possible. When faced with the fact that she blindly completed her research out of pure curiosity and created a dangerous power she laments her association with the United States of Vinland (see Figure 7.14). Riley, a person in a position of power, is thus critiqued for not better considering her actions and exercising her agency responsibly.

Valkyria Chronicles 4 through its setting, narrative, characters, and gameplay, asks the player to be careful, respectful of the lives of soldiers, and, above all else, to think of the implications of their actions and the impact they will have on the victims. The game introduces sources of great power and destruction, but condemns those that would make use of and, as a result, abuse that power. This draws upon distinctly Japanese discourses of the past that remember the war, and draw lessons from the past, in a contrary fashion to American discourses of the past. Instead of relying on arguments that justify the bombs *Valkyria Chronicles 4* implores the player to consider the victims over politics and, as a result, encourages an abhorrence to atomic/nuclear weapons and their use.

7.4 Case Study - Resident Evil 3

7.4.1 General Information and Series History

The *Resident Evil* series (1996-present) is the oldest of all the series selected for case study within this dissertation. It also has, by a wide margin, the most games and releases/re-releases. In terms of titles, there are 26 *Resident Evil* games including 9 in the main series, 14 spin-off games, and 3 remakes. However, this does not include re-releases which are games that are technically the same title but are released again (typically for a new console or hardware). For example, while *Resident Evil 4* (2005) would be counted as one title within the series, it has been released, remastered, and re-released numerous times. Currently, it is available on the GameCube, PlayStation 2, Microsoft Windows, Wii, iOS, Zeebo, PlayStation 3, Xbox 360, Android, PlayStation 4, Xbox One, and Nintendo Switch. All of these versions are very similar or, in many cases, identical to each other. While *Resident Evil 4* would count as one game within the canon of the series it is, at this point, 12 games. Unique among video games, the sales data

for the series is readily available on Capcom's investor relations website. As of June 30, 2020, they list the series as consisting of 141 titles with combined sales of 103 million units.⁵²⁵

Given the breadth of the series, it is beyond the scope of this study to review it in its entirety. Generally, it can be stated that the series is developed and published by Capcom, however, there are some examples within the series where some of the development has been completed by other smaller companies. In addition, the series has, due to the willingness of Capcom to experiment, transcended genres throughout its existence. Despite this, the series is best known for helping to create and define the genre of survival horror; a genre that combines traditional horror with gameplay that challenges the player to survive through combat, resource management, and puzzle solving. For the purposes of this study, Capcom will be considered to be the major company behind the series and survival horror will be considered to be the primary genre of the series. Finally, *Resident Evil* will be viewed as a Japanese game series influenced by Japanese discourses of the past.

This case study will focus on the most recently released game in the series *Resident Evil 3* which was made available on April 3, 2020. It was published by CAPCOM and primarily developed by Capcom, though parts of the game were developed by M-Two Inc. and K2 Co. two smaller companies made up of Japanese game industry veterans (some of whom have backgrounds working at Capcom). According to sales figure released by Capcom, the game sold 2.7 million copies as of June 30, 2020.⁵²⁶ *Resident Evil 3* (2020) is a remake of one of the main games in the series *Resident Evil 3: Nemesis* (1999) and focuses on updating the game to bring it up to current console generation standards. As such, the game was rebuilt from the ground up with a focus on streamlining the story and updating the controls while attempting to stay true to the original. It was selected because of its connections to atomic bomb discourses of the past.

7.4.2 Setting

The entire setting and lore of the *Resident Evil* series is far too extensive to cover for this study. Instead, since *Resident Evil 3* is a re-make of a game from the early parts of the series, it is

⁵²⁵ Capcom IR, "Game Series Sales," *Capcom IR Investor Relations*, June 30, 2020. <http://www.capcom.co.jp/ir/english/finance/salesdata.html> (accessed September 26, 2020).

⁵²⁶ Capcom IR, "Platinum Titles," *Capcom IR Investor Relations*, June 30, 2020. <http://www.capcom.co.jp/ir/english/finance/million.html> (accessed September 26, 2020).

best to focus on the lore from the early stages of the series. Through the first four canonical *Resident Evil* games (*Resident Evil 0* through *Resident Evil 3: Nemesis*) the story focuses on the bio-experiments of the Umbrella Corporation undertaken in the small midwestern American city of Raccoon City. The first two games, *Resident Evil 0* and *Resident Evil*, in the canon focus on the so-called “Mansion Incident” where Raccoon City’s Special Tactics and Rescue Service (S.T.A.R.S., hereafter STARS) first uncovered the illegal experiments being undertaken by Umbrella in the Spencer mansion in the Arklay Mountains on the outskirts of Raccoon City. The next two games, *Resident Evil 2* and *Resident Evil 3: Nemesis*, shift focus to the aftermath of a full-scale outbreak of Umbrella’s T-Virus in Raccoon City itself.

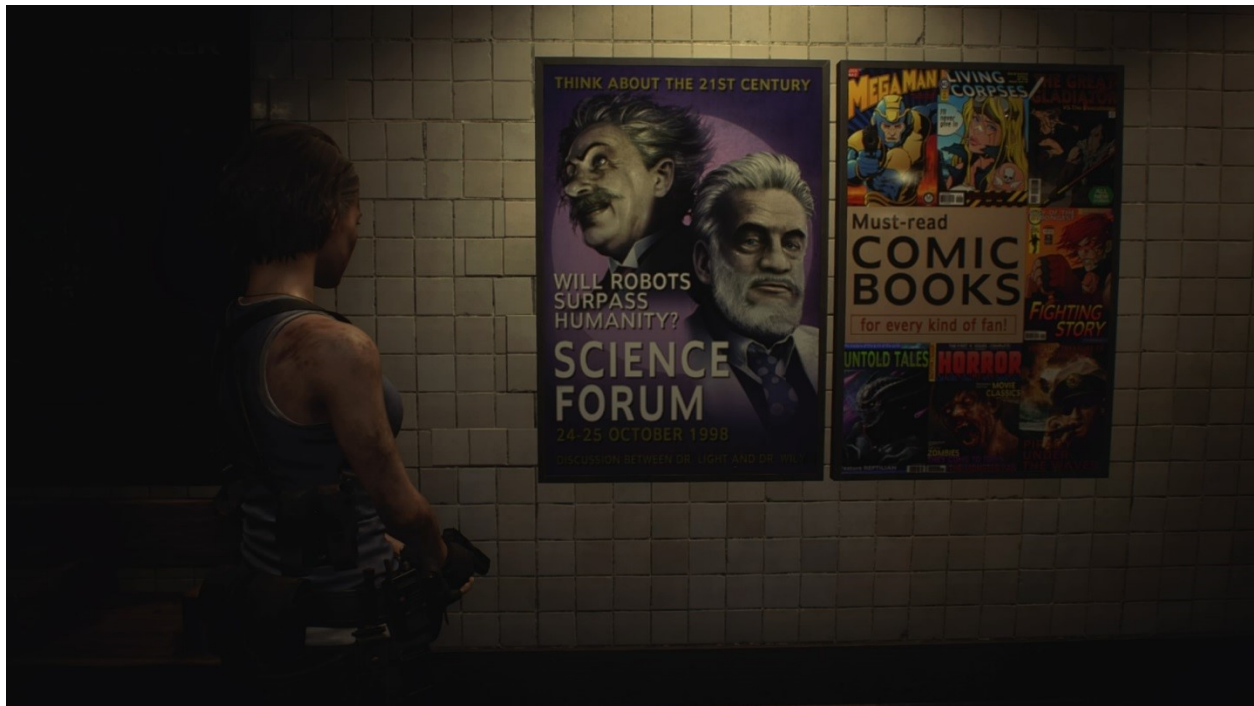


Figure 5.15. Advertising in Raccoon City. Jill Valentine observes two advertisements in one of Raccoon City’s subway stations. The poster on the left advertises a lecture about the nature of robotics between Dr. Light and Dr. Wily, two characters from CAPCOM’s well-known *Mega Man* series. The poster on the right advertises many comics, one of which is a *Mega Man* comic. Another, called *Fighting Story*, is a reference to another CAPCOM series, *Street Fighter*. Finally, the comic called *Horror*, recreates the opening cinematic of *Resident Evil 3: Nemesis*, the title which is the basis of the remake. Screenshot by R. Scheiding.

The T-Virus, short for Tyrant Virus, is a proprietary Umbrella human-engineered virus used to make illegal bioweapons. When humans are exposed to the virus they die before resurrecting as zombies. Other Umbrella experiments combined the T-Virus with other animal or

insect DNA to create more powerful monsters as well. These illegal experiments were discovered by STARS at the Spencer mansion, but all evidence was lost when the self-destruct system of the complex was activated. One of the survivors of the Mansion Incident, STARS Bravo team member Jill Valentine, vowed to expose Umbrella and remained in Raccoon City. Unfortunately, when the virus leaked into Raccoon City's sewer system and was spread by rats, Jill was caught in the city and forced to make a desperate escape. This is where *Resident Evil 3* starts.

The entire game is set in different locations spotted throughout Raccoon City. The player begins the game in Jill's apartment and travels through the following parts of Raccoon City: downtown, the sewers, the clock tower, Raccoon City's police department, the hospital, and a secret Umbrella facility and laboratory. The city is designed to resemble a typical cosmopolitan American city circa 1999 that has undergone a disaster. As such, Raccoon City is filled with small shops, office spaces, and other typical buildings but also is filled with overturned cars, uncontrolled fires, and populated by many zombies and other monsters. Interestingly, the designers at Capcom also filled Raccoon City with references to other Capcom franchises (see Figure 15). This leaves Raccoon City feeling both "realistic" and "believable" while also making it an enjoyable setting for the player to navigate. It is a "normal" city that has experienced a great disaster which makes it an excellent conduit for discourses of the past of the atomic bombs.

7.4.3 Narrative

The main narrative of *Resident Evil 3* begins on September 28, 1998 in downtown Raccoon City in Jill Valentine's apartment. As a result of the aforementioned "Mansion Incident", she is preparing to flee Raccoon City in three days. However, she receives a phone call from another STARS member, Brad Vickers, who frantically tells her that she needs to get out of her apartment at that moment. Before any more detail can be given a large monster breaks through the apartment wall and attacks Jill.⁵²⁷ She manages to escape and make it to street level where she meets up with Brad. They are quickly separated and, after a lengthy chase through the streets, Jill is saved from the monster by a man with a rocket launcher. He introduces himself as

⁵²⁷ At this point in the story the monster is nameless. However, given that this game is a remake, the monster in question is the most prolific in the *Resident Evil* series, and has appeared in several other Capcom properties, many players will recognize that the monster is Nemesis, the iconic pursuer from the original *Resident Evil 3: Nemesis*.

Carlos Oliveira of the Umbrella Biohazard Countermeasure Service (UBCS). He takes her into a subway station where she meets two other UBCS members, Mikhail Victor and Nikolai Ginovaef.

Despite Jill's misgivings about the aims of the UBCS (since they are employed by the Umbrella Corporation) she decides to help them evacuate civilians via train. Eventually Jill is able to get the train ready and she leaves with Mikhail, Nikolai, and the civilians while Carlos is tasked to stay behind and attempt to locate an Umbrella scientist named Dr. Nathaniel Bard, a man believed to have a cure for the virus. Shortly after the train leaves the station it is attacked by the creature, who kills all of the civilians. Mikhail rushes the creature with a remote mine in his arms and detonates it. As a consequence, the train derails with Jill as the only confirmed survivor. Shortly thereafter she watches as the creature, engulfed in flames, throws itself into a nearby river. This triggers a mutation in the creature and Jill is forced to fight it in the courtyard of a nearby clock tower. She, once again, defeats the creature but as she attempts to leave it behind it attacks one more time and manages to inject her with the T-virus.

Carlos, having discovered that Dr. Bard was not at the RPD station, makes his way to Jill and brings her to the Raccoon City hospital. Here he locates Dr. Bard's office only to find him deceased. However, he finds a sample of the vaccine for the virus which he gives to Jill. Unfortunately, this is not the end of their problems as they discover that the President of the United States has decided to eradicate the virus with a nuclear missile strike. This is communicated to the characters through an emergency broadcast (see Figure 7.16).

Carlos discovers that there is a secret Umbrella lab and facility under the hospital that could potentially be used to mass produce the vaccine, so he decides to explore it as a way of attempting to convince the President to reconsider his decision to destroy the city. When Jill recovers, she decides to follow Carlos into the lab where she is able to replicate Dr. Bard's process and synthesize another sample of the vaccine. She also discovers that the creature that has been following her is called the Nemesis and it was sent by Umbrella to eradicate all STARS members. Jill has a final encounter with Nemesis and is able to finally destroy him through the use of an experimental rail gun.

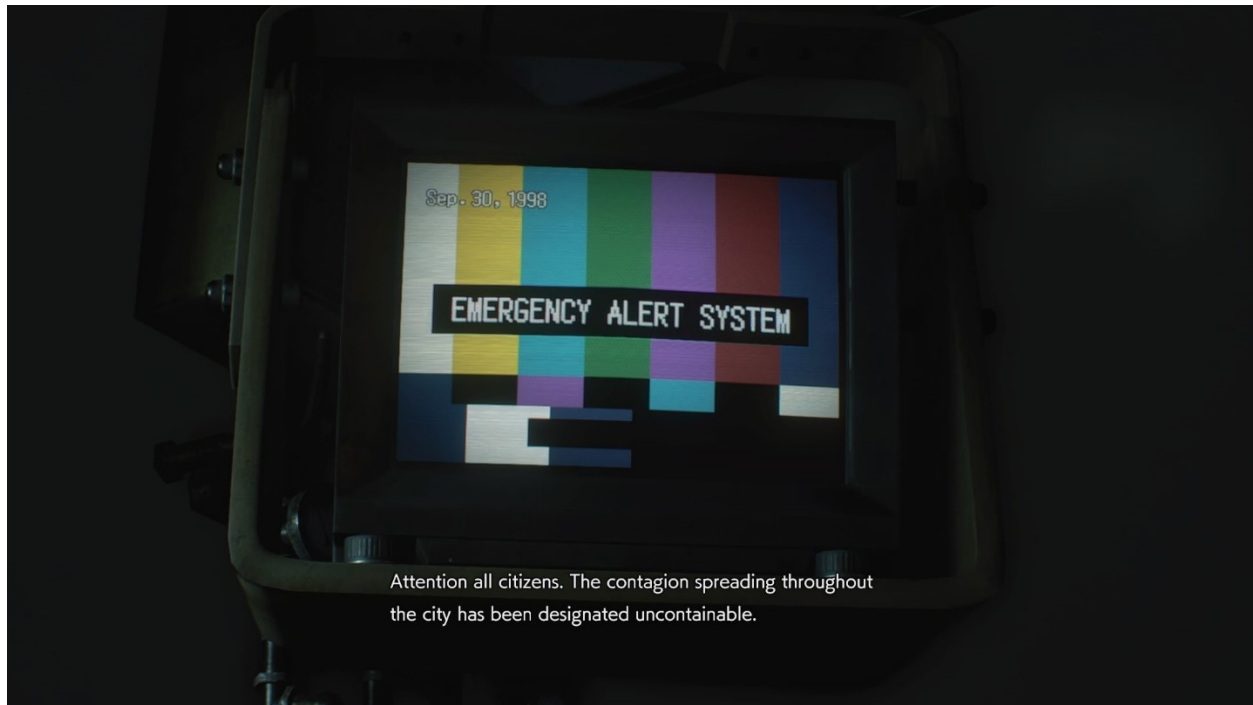


Figure 7.16. A Television Warns Survivors of an Impending Nuclear Strike. The emergency alert system informs survivors of Raccoon City that the city will be subject to a nuclear detonation. The entirety of the message relayed is as follows: “Attention all citizens. The contagion spreading throughout the city has been designated uncontrollable. On October 1, Raccoon City will be completely destroyed in a missile strike. All residents capable of rational thought are urged to evacuate immediately.” Screenshot by R. Scheiding.

Unfortunately, in the aftermath of the fight Jill is forced to confront the traitorous Nicholai who has been revealed to be a double agent and has stolen the vaccine. He decides to destroy it revealing that his plan was to gather data for an Umbrella competitor which he could then sell for a large profit. After a brief confrontation on the roof of the facility, Nicholai is wounded, and Jill and Carlos decide to leave him to die and take off in a nearby helicopter. Without a vaccine they have no way of convincing the President to reverse his decision and they fly away from Raccoon City just as the nuclear missile is launched (see Figure 7.17 and 7.18). As the city is destroyed Jill laments its downfall, which she believes was caused by human greed, and vows to take down the Umbrella Corporation.



Figure 7.17. A Nuclear Weapon Strikes Raccoon City. Jill Valentine and Carlos Oliveira escape Raccoon City via helicopter at the end of *Resident Evil 3*. In the background the nuclear missile has just hit the city. Screenshot by R. Scheiding.



Figure 7.18. Another Mushroom Cloud Over Raccoon City. As the helicopter speeds away from the city the bright flash of the nuclear explosion is followed by a massive mushroom cloud and shockwave. Raccoon City has been destroyed. Screenshot by R. Scheiding.

The connections to Japanese discourses of the past of the war and the atomic bombings are quite clear in the narrative of *Resident Evil 3*. Ending a narrative with the explosion of a nuclear device and the obliteration of a city mirrors the end of the Pacific War in 1945. However, it is only upon more careful analysis that the significance of and connection to Japanese discourses of the past can be determined. There are two particularly important factors to consider: 1) that the nuclear strike happens at the order of the (unnamed and fictional) President of the United States and the majority of the victims of the attack, both humans and zombies, were civilians (i.e. non-military personnel and non-government actors).

The fact that the decision to bomb the city (even if it happened to be an American city) is made by a sitting President draws direct comparison to Harry Truman whom, as discussed in Chapter IV, was central in the decision to drop the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This can easily be read as an allusion to Truman (or to the continued existence of the nuclear arsenal of the United States that all Presidents preside over). In addition, the game specifically makes the player the target of a nuclear strike and helps to put them into the role of potential victim of the actions of an American President. This places the player on equal footing with historical victims of the atomic bombs, regardless of their nationality, positionality, or other demographic details. Obviously, the player does not experience the same risk as a person subject to atomic/nuclear attack but, by making the player the target of the weapons ordered by an American President, the narrative of *Resident Evil 3* introduces the player to the subject position of the victim and opens up the possibility of considering the use of atomic/nuclear weapons from the position of the targeted. This parallels the “peace education” movement and *hibakusha* literature canon that typifies Japanese discourses of the past centered on victimhood.

As a result, the player is purposefully placed in the role of (potential) nuclear/atomic victim; a position that they have (most likely) not experienced in their lives. This idea is further drilled into the player when they realize that the bulk of victims (of both from the T-virus and the subsequent nuclear missile strike) were civilians which mirrors the experience of the war for many Japanese civilians both during the war and, of course, during the atomic bombings/aftermath of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The ending of *Resident Evil 3* allows the player to realize and consider their own victimhood as they attempt to stop a preventable nuclear strike before they witness the destruction of the city and, with it, the deaths of thousands of victims

who had even less agency in their fate than the player. The fact that the person who ordered the strike was the President of the United States helps to connect to collective/cultural memory of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The game actively questions the abuse of power, especially atomic/nuclear military power. After all, what could be considered a more gross abuse of power than using nuclear weapons on one of your own cities?

Yet, it is not only government power that the conclusion of the game questions. One of the other surviving actors of the game is the Umbrella Corporation which was largely responsible for the incident in the first place. In other words, the use of nuclear weapons was decided upon by the President of the United States, but the corruption and actions of the Umbrella Corporation brought about the circumstances that led to his decision. This, in broad stroke outline, resembles the experience of numerous Japanese *Zaibatsu* that were part of the war effort but survived the war and continued to do business. While (parts of) the Japanese government and military were destroyed or dismantled postwar, many of these Japanese corporations (which had engaged in the creation of war material and used forced labor) were able to survive.⁵²⁸ The Umbrella Corporation's survival, despite obvious wrongdoing, provides an in-universe pathway for *Resident Evil 3* to question corporate power both during the war and within postwar Japanese society through to contemporary times. Taken in combination, the nuclear strike on Raccoon City critiques in-universe government power and corporate power while mourning largely powerless victims.

7.4.4 Characters

The main playable character of *Resident Evil 3* is Jill Valentine (see Figure 7.19), a series mainstay who has starred in numerous titles throughout the history of the franchise. While she is not the only playable character in the game (Carlos Oliveira is playable in two short sections) Jill is the main focus of gameplay and the main narrative of the game. In other words, the player spends the majority of their time playing as Jill and generally following her story arc as they play. Outside of her involvement in the Spencer Mansion incident from the first game, little is known about Jill's past and, due to the brisk pace of the game, little additional information about

⁵²⁸ One notable example of this is the Mitsubishi Corporation that manufactured aircraft (including the famous A6M Zero fighter) during the war before transitioning after the war to make many items including cars and consumer electronics.

her is revealed as the story progresses. This is partially by design as Jill is a series mainstay and this game is a remake, so the developers expect that the player already “knows” who Jill is if they care to know in the first place.



Figure 7.19. A Closeup of Jill Valentine. A closeup of *Resident Evil 3*’s main protagonist, Jill Valentine as she watches the detonation of the nuclear missile at Raccoon City. Screenshot by R. Scheiding.

Despite this, there are some aspects of her character that become evident to the player. Jill is a highly trained police officer and is fully capable of defending herself (and others) with her physical skills and weapon proficiencies. She is brave and resilient, as seen when she lures Nemesis away from a trainload of civilian survivors and, later, fights him on a rooftop while he wields a flamethrower. Interestingly, Jill is a white American living in an American city. This means that *Resident Evil 3* can potentially be seen as an example of American victimization discussed in Chapter V, especially of the type that focuses on white, patriotic Americans. This is strengthened when it is considered that several other characters, such as Brad Vickers and Dr. Nathaniel Bard, are also white Americans that become victims of the T-Virus outbreak in Raccoon City.

However, this point of view does begin to lose some traction when many of the other characters are considered. While their origins are never confirmed, Carlos Oliveira, Mikhail

Viktor, and Nicholai Ginovaef, are seemingly not Americans and, in the case of Carlos, not white. This means, more than the previous examples covered in this study, *Resident Evil 3* presents a less-monolithically white American population of victims. As such, it would be non-precise to argue that the game engages in the trope of American victimization (especially white American victimization). Instead, by introducing the player to more diverse characters, the game encourages the player to consider the victims of nuclear attacks, regardless of race or nationality.

Given that *Resident Evil 3* is a Japanese game, it is better to associate its characters with Japanese discourses of the past, despite some minor similarities to their American counterparts. The game takes place in a fictional *American* city but that does not mean that the city and its victims necessarily need to be read as Americans. In fact, closer examination reveals deeper connections to Japanese historical victims within the game. This is most evident when considering the zombies and monsters that populate Raccoon City.



Figure 7.20. A Licker Viewed in Gallery Mode. The model for the licker enemies viewed in *Resident Evil 3*'s bonus menu. The torn red skin of the licker resembles that of some victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Screenshot by R. Scheiding.

In *Resident Evil 3* the majority of the population of Raccoon City (cited by Mikhail to be around 100,000) are victims of the T-virus and become zombies. In addition, many other Umbrella experiments prior to the outbreak resulted in the splicing of genes to create more

powerful Bio-Organic Weapons (BOWs), such as lickers, hunters, and the aforementioned Nemesis (see Figure 7.20). This means that the majority of the victims are innocent civilians, rather than anyone connected with the Umbrella Corporation, STARS, or the United States Military.⁵²⁹ This is symmetrical to the historical experience of Hiroshima and Nagasaki; in both the fictional Raccoon City and the real Hiroshima/Nagasaki the victims of atomic or nuclear weapons are largely civilians.

Beyond this, the enemies (i.e. the first victims of the T-Virus) of *Resident Evil 3* bear a striking resemblance to the victims of the atomic bombs. This is especially evident in the zombie enemies, who walk with arms outstretched and have numerous injuries (such as skin loss that resembles 3rd and 4th degree burns) much like the early victims of the atomic bombs. The nature of the wounds of the licker enemies (caused by quick mutation) also resembles atomic bomb victims in the aftermath of the blasts as the outer layers of skin have been destroyed and the musculature and viscera beneath are visible (see Figure 7.20).⁵³⁰ These grotesque elements in enemy design are an important part of *Resident Evil 3*'s horror aesthetic yet they can also be viewed as being influenced by, and having deeper connections to, Japanese discourses of the past.

7.4.5 Gameplay

Resident Evil 3 is unique among contemporary high budget games because it does not take very long to complete and does not include mechanics (such as daily login rewards) designed to retain a player base for long periods of time. Even a player looking to find all the files and secret collectibles can complete the game in around 7 hours which is a great contrast to numerous other games that attempt to retain player bases for upwards of 100 hours or more. This relatively short experience greatly effects the gameplay and gameplay loop of the game.⁵³¹ The

⁵²⁹ It should be noted that many Umbrella employees became victims of the outbreak, most notably the UBCS mercenaries sent into the city, but most of these casualties were low-ranking employees and military contractors rather than those in positions of power within the company.

⁵³⁰ For a more detailed scientific description of atomic bomb injuries see:

The Committee for the Compilation of Materials on Damage Caused by the Atomic Bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, "Part II Injury to the Human Body," In *Hiroshima and Nagasaki: The Physical, Medical, and Social Effects of the Atomic Bombings*, translated by Eisei Ishikawa and David L. Swain (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1981), 103-332.

⁵³¹ As a way of adding more "value" to the base game *Resident Evil 3* came packaged with another game, *Resident Evil Resistance*, an un-related multiplayer game where one mastermind player battles four characters trying to escape an Umbrella facility. *Resident Evil Resistance* was originally developed to be a stand-alone title before it was

game is very linear in nature and sets up systems that encourage replayability of the entire game, rather than repetition or completion of superfluous content.

At the core of *Resident Evil 3*'s gameplay is survival horror shooting from a 3rd person perspective (see Figure 7.21). The goal of the game is to progress through the story which is completed by managing inventory and resources wisely while effectively fighting (or fleeing from) the various zombies and monsters that populate Raccoon City. The player is tasked with navigating small but detailed areas as they scavenge weapons, healing items, and key items (such as keys, lockpicks, or items used to progress to new areas). Their ultimate goal is to escape Raccoon City which is completed by overcoming numerous obstacles. Interestingly, there is no side content to complete, such as side quests, and there are minimal hidden items to find. Each task that the player completes in *Resident Evil 3* brings Jill Valentine closer to her main goal of escaping Raccoon City.

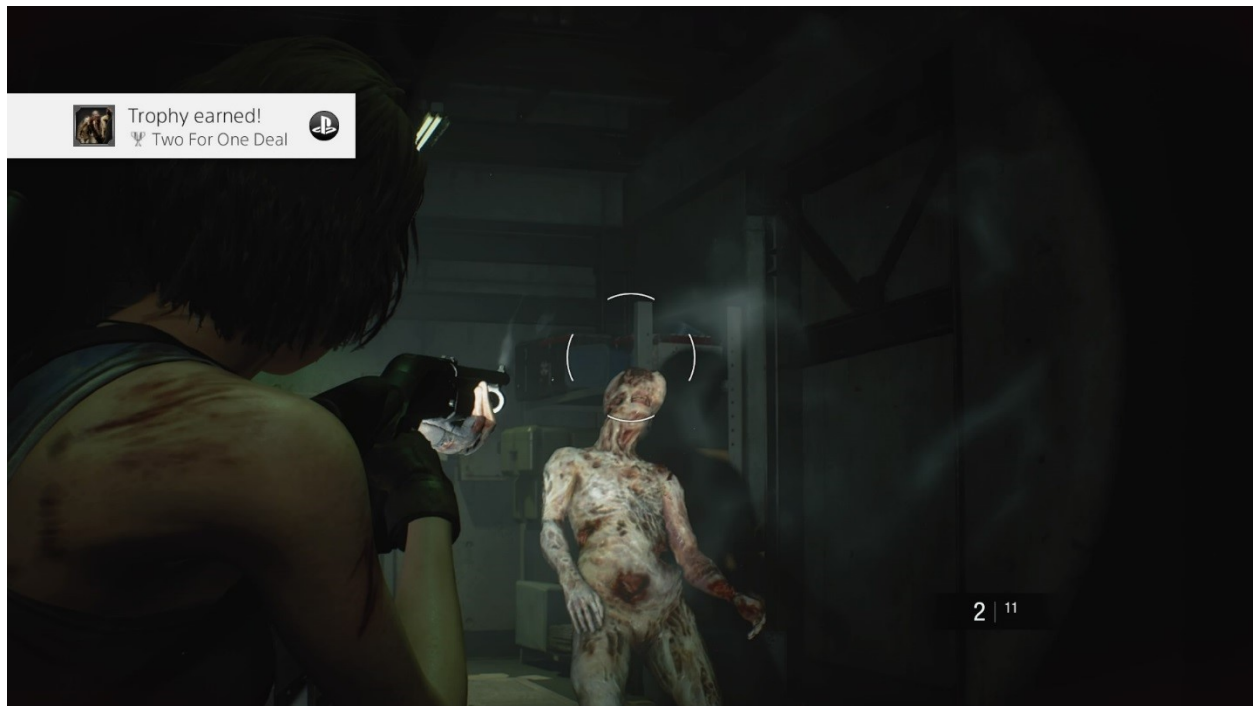


Figure 7.21. Over-the-Shoulder Shotgun Blast. An example of *Resident Evil 3*'s over the shoulder shooting gameplay. Screenshot by R. Scheiding.

packaged with *Resident Evil 3* and is generally considered to be its own game rather than a multiplayer mode of *Resident Evil 3*. This is evidenced by the fact that the game is a separate download, has its own trophy set, was reviewed separately by major outlets, and is advertised on the PS4 box as “Also Includes” rather than being considered as part of *Resident Evil 3* proper.

Given the short length of the game and lack of divergent paths or endless side content, *Resident Evil 3* has a unique gameplay loop. The player is encouraged to replay the story again and again by a scoring system and unlockables that can be used in additional playthroughs. Each time the player finishes the game or completes specific challenges (such as defeating a certain number of enemies or getting kills with specific weapons) they are rewarded with points that can be used in the unlockable shop. The shop contains powerful weapons with unlimited ammunition that allow the player to attempt the game on higher difficulty levels. As the player completes the game each additional time, they both learn new strategies for playing the game efficiently and gain access to much more powerful weapons. As a result, the general gameplay loop becomes about playing through the game faster and more efficiently each time the player attempts the story again. The player always experiences the same story with the same gameplay mechanics (i.e. 3rd person shooting and survival horror) so the gameplay loop can be described as gaining mastery over a short experience and becoming more efficient each time.

There is little that directly connects the gameplay experience of *Resident Evil 3* to discourses of the past of the war and atomic bombs. Even the survival horror aspects of the game that could be connected to the experience of *hibakusha* (especially if the monsters of the game are viewed as allegories of war victims) are downplayed as the player gains access to better weaponry. The game simply loses its ability to scare the player as they become more proficient and gain access to overpowered weapons. Yet, the fact that the main narrative of the game is unaffected by player mastery is telling. Even if the player becomes so proficient in the game that they can beat it very quickly without taking any damage or gains access to the unlimited ammunition rocket launcher and simply blasts each and every enemy there is one event that they cannot prevent: the destruction of Raccoon City by a nuclear weapon strike. In *Resident Evil 3* the player is forced to acknowledge their powerlessness in the face of imminent atomic/nuclear threats.

7.4.6 Analysis

Resident Evil 3: Nemesis, the 1999 title that was the basis for the 2020 remake, was a much larger game (in terms of hours to complete and unique content) than *Resident Evil 3*. It included branching paths, non-linear exploration, and alternate game modes that made it drastically longer to complete in comparison to the remake. Clearly, one of the development

goals of *Resident Evil 3*, as a remake, was to streamline the story while modernizing the controls and environments from the original. It cannot be stated conclusively why this was a development goal of the game though it can probably be traced to the short development time of the game itself (*Resident Evil 3* released approximately 14 months after the well-received *Resident Evil 2* remake) or a genuine desire to remove portions of the older story that were deemed superfluous (such as a well-known giant worm boss known as the Gravedigger that appeared in the original but did not have any firm connection to the central plot). Regardless, the decision to streamline and update the game meant that many parts of the original were cut or excluded from the remake. For example, two fan favorites, a boss (the aforementioned Gravedigger) and an environment (the clocktower) were cut along with many memorable puzzles. Even the titular enemy, The Nemesis, was redesigned and changed despite being one of the most iconic enemies in the series.

Given these changes, the content or narrative sections that were retained become more significant. Many of these retained aspects are directly connected to larger Japanese discourses of the past of the war and the atomic bombs. The characters in the game, specifically the enemies (the first victims of the T-Virus outbreak) resemble atomic bomb victims, both in circumstances (innocent civilians) and appearance (horrific injuries). The setting, Raccoon City, has been rendered numerous times throughout the series but receives the most care and detail to date in this iteration. It is central to the early lore and storytelling of the series (being the setting of the first 4 numbered entries of the series and several spin-offs) and, as a result, is the series' seminal setting. Yet in *Resident Evil 3* it gains character and additional meaning due to its intricate detailing and many nods to other Capcom franchises. In other words, Raccoon City becomes a setting that the player appreciates and cares about if they did not already from previous games.

This appreciation for the city makes the narrative choice to retain the original ending of the game, i.e. the destruction of the city via nuclear strike, compelling. In 1999 when Raccoon City was destroyed via nuclear strike it was shocking. The iconic capital of the *Resident Evil* universe lay in virtual ruins which made the future setting of the series unclear. The decision to retain this ending in 2020 reveals a connection to discourses of the past. In attempting to depict a shocking and horrific event within the series a shocking and horrific event from history is referenced and remediated. This is done not to downplay the events of the past, but to reveal them to new audiences through allegorical representation of the past.

7.5 Summary

These case studies used a discourses of the past typology to analyze the series background/history, setting, narrative, characters, and gameplay of three Japanese video games: *Yakuza 6: The Song of Life*, *Valkyria Chronicles 4*, and *Resident Evil 3*. More precisely, the case studies examined how these games interacted with the complex war memory found within Japanese discourses of the past connected to the Pacific War and the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Generally, these games made extensive use of existing discourses of the past in the creation of their worlds, the telling of their stories, and the modelling of their gameplay. Of course, these titles did not exactly replicate existing discourses of the past, which is to be expected, given that they are not historical recreations or simulations but, instead, allegorically reference the past.

These games can be considered as examples of, either incidentally or otherwise, remediated discourses of the past into the medium of video games. It is not possible to argue for discourses of the past as the cause of the depictions found within these games but where causation cannot be determined correlation is a valuable substitute. This is especially true when attempting to connect media to larger societal discourses and ways of remembering. If we take discourses of the past as the most socially engrained and normalized way of remembering past events, then it becomes clear how they can influence later depictions in other mediums.

The games in this dissertation show signs of being influenced by Japan's most popular ways of remembering the past. The changes made to these larger discourses can be connected to the realities and expectations of the video game medium. *Yakuza 6*, *Valkyria Chronicles 4*, and *Resident Evil 3* are examples of a remediation of Japanese discourses of the past into the medium of video games, but they are also much more than that; they are contemporary examples of collective/cultural memory that draw upon the past as a way of organizing the present and planning for the future.

As outlined in Chapter VI the Japanese discourses of the past surrounding the war are, paradoxically, unified and simultaneously ununified. There are three general categories of Japanese war memory (heroism, victimhood, perpetrators) that can be organized into a larger system, the hero/victim/perpetrator triad. Each memory system remembers the war in its own way with particular emphasis on specific people, groups, and events. Each has its own supporters

and detractors, but none can be described as entirely hegemonic or marginalized, this is determined by person, place, space, and temporality.

As such, each memory system is in perpetual competition with the others and, subsequently, relies on the others. This unified disunity can be identified within Japanese video games as they attempt to engage in discourses of the past. Indeed, the games selected for case study can be viewed as examples of attempting to deal with a distant, yet still influential/important, past that has never provided Japanese society with definitive answers. In other words, because the discourses of the past have developed in a fissured manner the remediations of them have developed in kind.

Within these case studies a particular focus on victimhood was found, however, this can be at least partially attributed to the focus of the study (i.e. Hiroshima and Nagasaki allegorically represented in video games) as Hiroshima and Nagasaki are typically part of the larger discourses of the past based around victimhood (see Chapter VI). Regardless, each of the branches was represented in some way. The victim discourse was the most consistently identified. Whether it be the survivors of Hiroshima becoming gangsters (*Yakuza 6*), the T-Virus victims of Raccoon City (*Resident Evil 3*), or the potential victims of Schwartzgrad (*Valkyria Chronicles 4*) each game allegorically referenced atomic bomb victims. This is unsurprising, as Japanese atomic bomb literature and narratives have typically been most concerned with victims. As such, a remediated video game representation of atomic or nuclear warfare would be expected to focus on victims *while also encouraging the player to do so*.

Despite the predominance of the victimhood discourse, these games did not omit the other discourses. The heroism discourse was less prevalent but could still be found in the case studies. In *Valkyria Chronicles 4* the game's rewriting of history into an allegorical fiction depicts a heroic, principled fighting force of civilian soldiers. This mimics the heroism discourse of the memory triad by focusing on individuals. Importantly the game only indulges in this after clearly rewriting the actions of historical soldiers (i.e. the removal of war crimes and atrocities) which is another essential aspect of the heroism discourses of the past. *Valkyria Chronicles 4* engages in a celebration of leaders, commanders, and soldiers that elected peace when given the opportunity while condemning those who do/did not.

The other case studies have iconic and well-defined heroes in Kazuma Kiryu and Jill Valentine, but even they find themselves powerless in the face of the decisions to use atomic or nuclear weapons. Thus, the other titles have heroes, but they do not engage in the established discourse of heroism in a traditional way. Instead of focusing on individuals as a way of avoiding discussions of those in higher power (which in a Japanese context would mean acknowledging historical colonialism and extensive war crimes) the games place their heroes in direct conflict with the powers that be. As a result, the perpetrator discourse becomes prevalent in these two titles. In both *Yakuza 6* and *Resident Evil 3* those in power make the “wrong” choice or cause the suffering of civilians and remain themselves unpunished. Thus, all three games deplore the use of atomic or nuclear weapons, the waging of aggressive war, and historical colonialism yet approach their message through differentiated, yet interconnected, ways of viewing the past.

As in Chapter V, it must also be acknowledged that many elements of these games are, of course, unrelated to discourses of the past. As an example, Kazuma Kiryu’s comical side adventures through fictional versions of Tokyo and Hiroshima prefecture add entertainment value and fun to the universe of *Yakuza*. The fact that he (and thus the player) spends numerous hours playing old arcade games, playing baseball, and feeding stray cats should not be viewed as a commentary on the atomic bombs. Likewise, the adherence to video game genre and design expectations should also not be viewed in this way. These types of entertaining or design elements (which exist in all three titles) should not be viewed as taking away from the larger narratives and messages about atomic or nuclear warfare that each game puts forward. Instead, these elements further ground the player within the world and the genre as a way to help to create a stronger fiction. In accomplishing this, the games make their connections to the past seem more contemporary and, therefore, potentially more relevant to the player in their own present.

Having identified *how* these games engage in established discourses of the past it is possible to examine *why* these elements are found. When a video game (or other piece of media) originates from an established system of discourses of the past based upon a fractured collective/cultural memory system it is unsurprising that the allegorical representation that results is equally fractured. Each of the three games selected for case study interacts with a traumatic past differently. *Yakuza 6* unveils (fictional) hidden political powers that control Japan stretching back to the end of the Pacific War. In this way it asks unanswered questions from

Japan's imperial past while acknowledging the lack of power and agency of contemporary Japanese people over them. *Valkyria Chronicles 4* considers the implications of military violence and asks its player to engage in a consideration of victims. It also rewrites a violent past and replaces it with one where Hiroshima and Nagasaki did not happen. Finally, *Resident Evil 3* uses the past as a framing device for its own universe while dredging up uncomfortable realities of times past; namely the powerlessness of civilians in the face of atomic/nuclear threats. The tragedy of its most famous city is an allegorical representation of two of history's greatest human tragedies. The past becomes a framing device.

Finally, it must be asked what are these games arguing? Or, perhaps, what do these games accomplish? Through their diverse remediations of the same past each game puts forth their own argument about the past (and what to do in the present). This adds a specific video game-centric entry into the perpetual competition of the Japanese war memory triad that typifies Japanese discourses of the past. *Yakuza 6*, *Valkyria Chronicles 4*, and *Resident Evil 3* engage in processes of collective/cultural memory as a way of teaching the past and encouraging critical thinking in the present. The games lament the atomic bombs and their victims while asking the player to consider the continuing issues that they cause in the present, yet they provide no definitive answers. In engaging with the past in this way they are emblematic of the diversified, entangled, and complicated Japanese discourses of the past of the war and the atomic bombs.

VIII. Conclusion

8.1 75th Anniversary Memories

In September 2020 I came across two articles, written to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The first, a photo essay with a small written component, was written by Stephen J. Thorne (an Ottawa-based writer, photographer, and broadcaster) for *Legion Magazine* (a periodical printed in Canada targeted towards veterans and those interested in military history). The second was a short article by Robert (Bo) Jacobs (Professor at the Hiroshima Peace Institute and the Graduate School of Peace Studies at Hiroshima University) and Ran Zwigenberg (Associate Professor at Pennsylvania State University) for *Counterpunch* (a left-wing magazine published in the United States). The two articles presented radically different interpretations of the atomic bombings.

Thorne argues, through his citation of Baylor University History Professor Philip Jenkins, that the bombs were moral and ethical and saved millions of lives on both sides.⁵³² He focuses his argument on Canadian aircrews and paratroopers whom he states were, "...granted a new lease on life [because of the decision to use the atomic bombs]."⁵³³ From here, he transitions to a discussion of Canadian POWs from the Battle of Hong Kong (8-25 December 1941) and a brief discussion of Japanese war crimes. He concludes his brief analysis, "Under American occupation, Japan went on to become an economic powerhouse. But, 75 years later, the war of aggression it waged between 1936 and 1945 is not taught in Japanese schools nor is it widely acknowledged by its leadership or citizens."⁵³⁴

The following six pages are a photo essay where two quotes from the piece are enlarged and presented along with photos of the destroyed city, the image of a single Japanese victim, and multiple pictures of Canadian POWs. The quotes, taken from the piece and used to summarize the article on the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombings are: "The end came swiftly in a cloud of radioactive dust,"⁵³⁵ and "Japanese war criminals were tried and convicted at a series of

⁵³² Stephen J. Thorne, "Victory in the Pacific: The Defeat of Japan Brought Horror and Joy After Years of Conflict." *Legion Magazine*, September/October 2020, 21.

⁵³³ Thorne, 21.

⁵³⁴ Thorne 21.

⁵³⁵ Thorne, 23.

trials.”⁵³⁶ A retrospective article in a magazine that prides itself on its historical content thus presents the atomic bombings as moral and justified technological marvels that saved the lives of brave soldiers and were dropped on deserving targets, some of which were war criminals. The idea that Japan’s war of aggression is not remembered within Japanese society, a blatant falsehood, further solidifies the article’s message: the atomic bombs were, and continue to be, justified acts of war against a deserving foe.

Jacobs and Zwigenberg take an opposite position as they argue for the need to topple the American narrative of the bombs like an unpopular or problematic statue (an action that has become popular with many statues dedicated to problematic historical figures).⁵³⁷ They use this frame to make arguments about the use of the atomic bombs and the continued relevance of the bombings today. Their article covers numerous issues such as how the act of using the term “dropped” (as in: bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki) is a passive construction that removes the agency of those that ordered the use of the bombs, designed the bombs, or delivered the bombs to their targets.⁵³⁸ Additionally, they argue that the imagery of the mushroom cloud is the perpetrator’s perspective and reinforces their importance while relegating victims to being statistics.⁵³⁹ They include an interesting, and ironic, anecdote about Barack Obama’s May 2016 visit to Hiroshima during his presidency. Obama, who stressed ideas of peace, brought the “nuclear football” (the mobile command center carried by the POTUS at all times and used to order nuclear strikes remotely) into the Hiroshima Peace Park during his speech.

These anecdotes and observations are used to put forth a larger argument: that American narratives of the atomic bombs need to be recognized for what they are and must be abandoned and rearticulated. Jacobs and Zwigenberg argue that, “[The American narrative] is a story of the mass murder of hundreds of thousands of human beings in which those murdered are a footnote.

⁵³⁶ Thorne, 25.

⁵³⁷ There are numerous examples of statutes that have been vandalized, burned, or torn down in the recent past. These include slaveowners, colonial-era Kings, and many other problematic historical figures. A more thorough reportage of this can be found in the June 24, 2020 (updated September 12, 2020) *New York Times* article “How Statues are Falling Around the World.” See:

The New York Times, “How Statues are Falling Around the World,” *The New York Times*, September 12, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/24/us/confederate-statues-photos.html> (accessed September 21, 2020).

⁵³⁸ Robert Jacobs and Ran Zwigenberg, “The American Narrative of Hiroshima is a Statue that Must be Toppled,” *Counterpunch*, August 6, 2020. https://www.counterpunch.org/2020/08/06/the-american-narrative-of-hiroshima-is-a-statue-that-must-be-toppled/?fbclid=IwAR32UYU1sISDPgEVmTeM7LSVH41wVIMu72rFtzCs_LRW__5b1C1mk9UdV50.

⁵³⁹ Jacobs and Zwigenberg, n. p.

No Japanese person is named.”⁵⁴⁰ However, they believe that this is not a “...question of simple amnesia” but rather an “...issue of misremembering and of pointing the torch of historical enquiry in the completely wrong direction.”⁵⁴¹ They ultimately categorize the American narrative as “...a triumphal fascination with the killers and the obfuscation of the killed.”⁵⁴² For Jacobs and Zwigenberg, the atomic bombings are a war crime and should be remembered as such.

These two articles are emblematic of the American discourses outlined throughout this dissertation where the more dominant, mainstream, or conservative piece of media (in this case the *Legion Magazine* article) puts forth a traditional defense of the bombs while the more radical piece (the *Counterpunch* article) openly questions and critiques them.⁵⁴³ While the existence of conflicting articles would seem to indicate that there is space for both arguments within established discourse the Jacobs and Zwigenberg piece is written from a defensive position. The authors frame their article knowing that they are writing against the dominant discourse; they know that they are arguing a marginal and unpopular position. There is space for both arguments within the established discourse but there is not *equal* space. In addition, it should be considered that there are still even further marginalized positions and populations that receive extremely limited press or none at all. These include Japanese perspectives but also other groups as well (such as Korean victims of the bomb, Chinese perspectives, or even the experiences of marginalized American populations like Japanese Americans).

In Japan, the annual memorialization activities commemorating the bombs were complicated by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, however, they were not cancelled outright. News coverage of the anniversary of the atomic bombings predictably focused on *hibakusha* and messages of peace. *The Japan Times* headlines included: “In milestone year, A-bomb survivor keeps up fight for nuclear disarmament” and “‘I want nobody to suffer like that’: One of the many children orphaned by the atomic bomb.”⁵⁴⁴ These articles, following the discursive patterns

⁵⁴⁰ Jacobs and Zwigenberg, n. p.

⁵⁴¹ Jacobs and Zwigenberg, n. p.

⁵⁴² Jacobs and Zwigenberg, n. p.

⁵⁴³ In this case *Legion Magazine* is a Canadian publication, but the arguments that it puts forth are heavily influenced by hegemonic American discourses. As such, the article can be viewed as replicating, and largely belonging to, American discourses of the past.

⁵⁴⁴ Jiji Press, “‘I want nobody to suffer like that’: One of the many children orphaned by the atomic bomb,” *The Japan Times*, August 6, 2020. <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/08/06/national/history/orphan-hiroshima-atomic-bomb/> (accessed September 11, 2020).

outlined in this dissertation, focused on the stories of individual *hibakusha* and outlined their struggles and hopes for a more peaceful world.

However, new developments, issues and concerns connected to the bombs were also reported on in the period leading up to the 75th anniversary. The aging of *hibakusha* has led to increased concerns about atomic bomb memory moving forward. *The Japan Times* reported that there are only 136,700 living *hibakusha* with an average age of just over 83.⁵⁴⁵ Yet, it is not only the *hibakusha* themselves that are aging. A jointly researched and published feature in *Chugoku Shimbun* and *Nishinippon Shimbun* (the story was also later picked up and republished by *The Japan Times*) reported on the difficulties of preserving buildings and structures damaged by the bombs in both Hiroshima and Nagasaki, mostly due to increasing upkeep costs and issues with private ownership.⁵⁴⁶ The articles make it clear that there are pressing concerns of preservation and memory that will need to be addressed in both the short and long term.

The articles thus adhere to what would be expected of articles on atomic bombs; they fit into the Japanese victimhood discourse. Yet, even within these articles there are glimpses of the other discourses from the memory triad, most notably the perpetrator discourse. The same article that describes the issues of maintaining atomic bomb victims references the deaths of Chinese victims of the bombs who died in prison while being held on suspicion of espionage.⁵⁴⁷ The article also quotes a citizen named Nakanishi Iwao, “Both the government and citizens must discuss and combine our wisdom to resolve the problem [of preservation of a-bombed buildings]. I believe the national government should be involved, since it caused the war in the first place.”⁵⁴⁸ Even in this small sample of articles commemorating and reporting on the 75th

Okamoto Akiko, “In milestone year, A-bomb survivor keeps up fight for nuclear disarmament,” *The Japan Times*, August 9, 2020. <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/08/09/national/history/terumi-tanaka-nagasaki-nuclear-disarmament/> (accessed September 11, 2020).

⁵⁴⁵ Agence France-Presse and Jiji Press, “75 years on, abolition pleas from the last generation of *hibakusha*,” *The Japan Times*, August 6, 2020. <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/08/06/national/abolition-pleas-japans-last-hibakusha/> (accessed September 11, 2020).

⁵⁴⁶ Niiyama Kyoko and Hanayama Tetsuyuki, “Hiroshima and Nagasaki struggle to preserve A-bombed relics 75 years later,” *The Japan Times*, August 9, 2020. <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/08/09/national/history/hiroshima-nagasaki-relics/> (accessed September 11, 2020).

⁵⁴⁷ Niiyama and Hanayama, “struggle to preserve a-bombed relics.”

⁵⁴⁸ Niiyama and Hanayama, “struggle to preserve a-bombed relics.”

anniversary of the atomic bombs reveals the continued friction between intertwined Japanese discursive and memory cultures.

Thus, the dominant discourses of the past of the atomic bombs are seemingly intact in both the United States/the West and Japan at the 75th anniversary of the events in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It will be increasingly interesting to follow these discourses (as well as other traditionally marginalized discourses) over the next quarter century as the atomic bombs move towards their centennial. However, the point of discussing these articles here is not to merely continue the arguments of this dissertation. Instead, these articles are mentioned as a framing device for further consideration of the atomic bombings continued relevance to discursive practices and the unique position of video games in relation to them. Rather than a simple summary or reiteration of the arguments of the previous chapters this conclusion is designed to provide lessons and observations for moving forward and to apply those lessons to larger issues of memory and its use in our contemporary moment.

8.2 Lessons

The lessons of this dissertation can be broken into three distinct groups: future research trajectories, discursive directions, and the role of video games/game studies in memory.

In terms of future research, I believe that the discourses of the typology can be applied elsewhere. While this dissertation has focused on the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (and to some extent the surrounding issues, such as the Pacific War), the typology has been designed in such a way that it can be applied to other discursive practices based around memory, commemoration, and the past/historical events. Discourses of the past was used in this dissertation to examine and describe dominant, hegemonic memory practices surrounding the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and to decipher how these practices are used in the contemporary moment as a way of organizing the world based on the wants and needs of entrenched power systems. This general model can work for numerous other historical events that are widely remembered, memorialized, and historicized.

In the future, I believe that the typology could tell us much about large historical events, such as the Vietnam War or the September 11th terrorist attacks and how they are discursively represented and remembered. I would also like to see the typology adapted to examine smaller,

lesser-known events and be used to further examine processes of erasure. In particular, I would be interested to examine the Battle of Hong Kong (December 8-25, 1941) within the context of Hong Kong's history or lesser-known aspects of World War II that would be deemed "unflattering" or go against the common myth of the "good war", such as the sinking of the USS Indianapolis (July 30, 1945). Additionally, I would like to devote some research to marginalized discourses of the past surrounding the atomic bombs and World War II. This dissertation focused on the dominant discourses of the past and their influence within historiography, collective/cultural memory, and popular media, however, further research into marginalized discourses (either from the perspective of other nations, such as South Korea, Australia, the Philippines, etc., or from the perspective of marginalized populations within Japan and the United States) would also potentially be relevant. At any rate, regardless of the event, further application and use of the typology would require deep historiographical work, an examination of the place of the events within collective/cultural memory, and some study of the events within popular culture and media. In cases where significant erasure has occurred, research would need to be directed towards why and how that erasure occurred and what the erasure informs us about entrenched power systems and discursive practices.

Beyond this, I believe that further examination of positionality in relation to insider/outsider knowledge would be valuable. In an increasingly polarized world (politically especially but also professionally and, for many, personally) examination and consideration of these issues will be necessary. It can be easy to label a researcher as an "outsider" and discount their work or, on the other hand, as an "insider" with too much bias to be relevant. However, I believe that the most valuable research will be able to position itself (and its author) in between, either as a nearby speaker or with some form of hybridity. When dealing with any depiction of the past it is vital to acknowledge that a specific type of knowledge is being produced. This knowledge is created both to guide the memory of the "insider" and to create a baseline for the "outsider". Given the cynical way that power can structure knowledge and collective/cultural memory it is important to always question the source. Being respectful is necessary as well, but respect is not a synonym for docility.

Finally, with a particular focus on the field of game studies, discourses of the past offers the potential to expand the field. The typology is designed in such a way that it can be applied to

examine how many aspects of video games (series history, setting, narrative, characters, and gameplay) function discursively as influenced by systems of entrenched power. In terms of established research streams within the discipline of game studies, using a discourses of the past typology can contribute to understandings of how games make arguments (i.e. game narratives) and how games interact with the past (i.e. game histories). Though both game narratives and game histories have been studied within the field before, discourses of the past offers a differentiated approach to their study that can contribute to the field.

Discourses of the past can be used to move beyond questions of what is “there” (i.e. the video game as product or as piece of representation/narrative fiction) and, instead, focus on larger questions of how power structures function *through video games*. While other research methodologies may focus on representation and questions of whether a representation is positive or correct, discourses of the past acknowledges what is presented and answers other questions. How are narratives grounded or where do they come from? What allows what/who/where/when to appear as they do? Why do certain elements appear in the way that they do? What is missing? Why is it missing? This is used as a process of uncovering and acknowledging the existence and functioning of larger power structures and hegemonic viewpoints. Questions of representation remain important, and should certainly be asked and studied, but discourses of the past strives to reach beyond what is presented as a way of integrating video games into larger discursive practices beyond the medium itself.

Discourses of the past, as a research methodology, can also be used to integrate understandings of the past into the field of game studies in a unique way. The typology represents a move away from understanding video games as “history”, arguments about “historical accuracy”, or studies that attempt to recognize the educational value of a particular game or the medium as a whole. Once again, these are valid questions that examine how the medium interacts with traditional history and historical teaching and they certainly should continue to be asked. However, discourses of the past is interested in integrating ideas from the fields of collective/cultural memory and critical theory into the field in a more expansive way. Game studies as a whole has shown some interest in how video games interact with the past and create history, but discourses of the past represents an attempt to theorize how video games use the past to help shape and influence the present. In other words, the typology both asks how

video games interact with traditional history and how they are a part of established collective/cultural memory practice or discursive practice. Discourses of the past examines video games' relationship with the past not to assess their accurate (or inaccurate) depiction of the past but instead to decipher what the representation of the past says about our present, particularly in terms of entrenched power systems.

In sum, discourses of the past expands upon the established field of game studies to describe how video games act discursively. Through processes of premediation and remediation, video games are influenced by the past and are used to shape viewpoints in the present. By understanding video games in this way, discourses of the past studies video games not as solitary objects disconnected from larger society but instead as a part of (or perhaps a function of) entrenched power systems.

In addition to the more generalized further applications of the research methodologies put forth by this dissertation there are lessons to be drawn from the specifics of the research object. Through this study, and the articles outlined at the beginning of this conclusion, it is clear that there are established discourses of the past of the atomic bombings in both the United States and in Japan that continue to influence memory of the past today. These discursive practices have immense historiographical roots that have premediated much of the discussion, creation, and memorialization of the events.

In the United States, despite increasing pressure, the predominant discourses of the past argue that the bombs were necessary, justified, or moral. In a "polite conversation" about the atomic bombs one can expect to hear about the achievement of the creation of the bombs, the glory of the Allied cause, and of the saving of "millions" of lives. In contrast, Japanese discourses of the past have developed in an intricate, interrelated fashion where three ways of remembering exist, paradoxically, in perpetual competition but also symbiotically. Person, place, space, and temporality have always and will continue to decide which of the triad of discourses will dominate a given moment, either the discourse of Japanese victimhood, heroism, or perpetration.

The lesson of these long-lasting discourses of the past can be found in what I label as the idea of perpetual war vs. perpetual memory. Without hyperbole, it can be argued that in the wake of World War II the United States (and to some extent their allies in the West) have found

themselves in a state of perpetual war. To list the full extent of the use of American military forces post-World War II would go well beyond the scope of this chapter but includes major wars (in Korea, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Iraq, Pakistan, and Afghanistan among others) and smaller scale invasions and deployments (in Cuba, Grenada, and many other areas). This is before other activities, like international CIA operations or the War on Drugs, are considered. Despite this state of perpetual war and conflict, there still has not been a military endeavor as popular (either at the time or within memory) as World War II.

World War II, in the United States/the West, remains the last “good war” in the popular imagination. As time has passed, and this has remained the case, it has become increasingly necessary to defend *all aspects* of the conflict as “good.” This, of course, is understandable and, to some extent, justifiable. It must always be remembered that World War II resulted in the toppling of one of history’s most evil regimes: the Nazis (a lesson that is becoming more and more important as neo-Nazi groups and symbology are making an unwelcome comeback). But it must also be remembered that defense of all aspects of World War II has negative side effects. Defense of the bombings of civilian populations, especially when it is framed as necessary, moral, or otherwise justified, serves the ever-important purpose of justifying current conflicts and the use of other weapons of mass destruction in the present. If it was justified to drop atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, why not do that again? Or, barring the use of atomic/nuclear weapons, why not use drones? This justification of contemporary conflicts is one of the primary functions of discourses of the past of atomic bombs in our contemporary moment.

The Japanese experience has been the opposite of the American experience in the wake of the atomic bombs. 1945 still represents the last major international military conflict that Japan played a major role in. This is mostly due to the abolition of the right to wage war put forth in the 1947 Japanese Constitution. Even though this part of the Constitution has been the subject of much debate and attempted reformation over the years, especially during former Prime Minister Abe Shinzo’s time in office, Japan has experienced what I label as perpetual memory. In the absence of new wartime losses and experiences (on a wide scale), Japanese society and culture has remained able to focus on the losses of 1945.

This increased focus has led to the development of the memory triad where individuals remember based on their current needs. These memories can even come into direct conflict with

one another as a relative can be mourned while a pointless war based on colonialism and populated by suffering and war crimes can be scorned simultaneously. Yet it must also be acknowledged that this multiplicity of memory is not neutral. Too often narratives of victimhood at home can be used to ignore perpetration abroad. Thus, Japanese war memory is not superior to American war memory because of its multiplicity of views and arguments. It is only more complicated to parse. Yet, in this analysis, one can find that the function of Japanese war memory is contingent on the person, place, space, temporality, and connection (or disconnection) to power.

It is often said that, “history is written by the winners.” There is an incongruity between this popular phrase and actual historical discourse, as seen within this dissertation by the extensive historiographical output by Japanese historians, writers, and common citizens, but the sentiment remains popular, nonetheless. Perhaps, in applying the tenets of this dissertation, we could argue that the winners are granted the right to remember and memorialize a little less critically. They are not faced with the existential crisis of confronting a loss, where deaths and destruction can no longer be justified solely through the righteousness of a cause. Where a cause is lost, memory flourishes. This is the difference between perpetual war and perpetual memory.

Finally, we can turn to the role of video games within these discourses of the past. In the selected case studies, there was much remediation and repetition of established discourses of the past through characters, setting, narrative, and gameplay. This held true in both American and Japanese contexts. Yet, these video games also exhibited the ability to subvert established discourses of the past. This was mainly found through the adherence to genre expectations (i.e. system design, gameplay flows, map design, button configurations, etc.) but these subversions remain important. These decisions made the selected video games an example of how video games generate media or genre-specific remediations of discourses of the past, but they also represent the medium’s unique ability to interact with and partially rewrite established discursive practices.

These subversions may seem minor, but adherence to video game genre and gameplay expectations meshes well with questioning the use of the atomic bombs. As video games sacrifice “historical accuracy”, create allegorical representations of the past, or take artistic license with established discursive practices they make small changes to discourses of the past.

Each time this occurs it opens the possibility for more varied interpretations of the past. This ability for new interpretation only expands when allegorical representations are used. It is difficult for many players, in an American context, to acknowledge that it was wrong for American aircrews to bomb Japanese civilian populations during World War II. However, when a large fictional country or empire uses excessive force on a smaller foe in a fictional video game or when a nuclear device destroys a fictional world that the player has become attached to, it can cause anger or disgust. This subverts established discourses of the past. In this subversion there is potential for critical thinking, refiguring, and reinterpretation. This is what video games uniquely offer to discourses of the past of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This also serves as an example of how the medium can potentially be used to alter and change other established discourses of the past surrounding a multitude of other events.

8.3 Why Now?

A common question that I receive about this research is, “Why now?” Seemingly, this is a question about the continued relevance of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki specifically and not a question of the continued threat of nuclear weapons or nuclear issues in general. These questions have become more common especially as other issues (such as hacking, drone strikes, terrorism, global climate change, and pandemics) eclipse traditional nuclear fears in the popular imagination. These issues, others would argue, are more relevant today. Yet, I argue for the continued relevance of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. These historical events are important in our contemporary moment.

As argued throughout this dissertation, remembrance and commemoration of the past is rarely about the past. Instead, it is very much about power relations in the present. In 2020, the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, remembrance of those events is as important as ever. The bombings, within American discourse, are still presented favorably and are used for further justification of the use of military force in the present. If the enemies of yesterday were “worthy” of being bombed, surely the enemies of today are the same (or worse). In Japan, there are fewer living survivors of the atomic bombings each year. Efforts are being made to preserve their voices, but what will become of their political movement after they pass away?

We are presented with a unique opportunity. These events, which continue to shape our present, will soon be outside of living memory. There will be no more war veterans, no more survivors, no more perpetrators. This will make it easier to “rewrite” discourses of the past. Video games, through their allegorical representation that renders playable pasts, are a medium that are uniquely set-up to help in rewriting these entrenched discourses. But, how will these discourses change? How will they support power? Will they continue to be used to justify war and violence? Will they erase the victims? Or, will media such as video games inspire new visions, new understandings, and new discourses?

Why now? Because we have the opportunity to create positive change.

Appendix: List of Video Game References

This list divides the video games referenced in this dissertation into two categories: those used as case studies and those referenced otherwise. “Authorship” has been credited based on the most easily available information and may exclude smaller studios that worked on the listed games but are not generally or prominently acknowledged. Release year is listed based on the North American release date of the game as these were the versions consulted by the author. If no North American release occurred, the Japanese release year is listed. Console for each entry was selected based on the author’s selected version of the game.

Case Study Video Games

Bethesda Game Studios. *Fallout 4*. Bethesda Softworks. Sony PlayStation 4. 2015.

Capcom. *Resident Evil 3*. Capcom. Sony PlayStation 4. 2020.

Ryu Ga Gotoku Studio. *Yakuza 6: The Song of Life*. Sega. Sony PlayStation 4. 2018.

Sega and Media.Vision. *Valkyria Chronicles 4*. Sega. Sony PlayStation 4. 2018.

Ubisoft Montreal. *Far Cry: New Dawn*. Ubisoft. Sony PlayStation 4. 2019.

Ubisoft Montreal and Ubisoft Toronto. *Far Cry 5*. Ubisoft. Sony PlayStation 4. 2018.

Other Video Games

Bethesda Game Studios. *Fallout 3*. Bethesda Softworks. Sony PlayStation 3. 2008.

Bethesda Game Studios. *Fallout 76*. Bethesda Softworks. Sony PlayStation 4. 2018.

Black Isle Studios. *Fallout 2: A Post Nuclear Role Playing Game*. Interplay Productions. Microsoft Windows. 1998.

Capcom. *Mega Man*. Capcom. Nintendo Entertainment System. 1987.

Capcom. *Resident Evil*. Capcom. Sony PlayStation. 1996.

Capcom. *Resident Evil 0*. Capcom. Nintendo GameCube. 2002.

Capcom. *Resident Evil 2*. Capcom. Sony PlayStation. 1998.

Capcom. *Resident Evil 2*. Capcom. Sony PlayStation 4. 2019.

Capcom. *Resident Evil 3: Nemesis*. Capcom. Sony PlayStation. 1999.

Capcom. *Street Fighter*. Capcom. Arcade. 1987.

- Capcom and NeoBards Entertainment. *Resident Evil Resistance*. Capcom. Sony PlayStation 4. 2020.
- Capcom Production Studio 4. *Dino Crisis*. Capcom. Sony PlayStation. 1999.
- Capcom Production Studio 4. *Resident Evil 4*. Capcom. Nintendo GameCube. 2005.
- Crytek. *Far Cry*. Ubisoft. Microsoft Windows. 2004.
- EA Canada. *MVP Baseball 2005*. Electronic Arts. Nintendo GameCube. 2005.
- Firaxis Games. *Civilization III*. Infogrames. Microsoft Windows. 2001.
- Interplay Productions. *Fallout: A Post Nuclear Role Playing Game*. Interplay Productions. MS-DOS. 1997.
- Media.Vision. *Valkyria Chronicles Remastered*. Sega. Sony PlayStation 4. 2016.
- Ryu Ga Gotoku Studio. *Judgment*. Sega. Sony PlayStation 4. 2019.
- Ryu Ga Gotoku Studio. *Yakuza Kiwami*. Sega. Sony PlayStation 4. 2017.
- Ryu Ga Gotoku Studio. *Yakuza Kiwami 2*. Sega. Sony PlayStation 4. 2018.
- Ryu Ga Gotoku Studio. *Yakuza: Like a Dragon*. Sega. Sony PlayStation 4. 2020.
- Ryu Ga Gotoku Studio. *Yakuza 0*. Sega. Sony PlayStation 4. 2017.
- Ryu Ga Gotoku Studio. *Yakuza 5*. Sega. Sony PlayStation 3. 2015.
- Sega. *Puyo Puyo Champions*. Sega. Sony PlayStation 4. 2019.
- Sega. *Valkyria Chronicles*. Sega. Sony PlayStation 3. 2008.
- Sega. *Yakuza 2*. Sega. Sony PlayStation 2. 2008.
- Sega and Media.Vision. *Valkyria Chronicles 3*. Sega. Sony PlayStation Portable. 2011.
- Sega and NHN PlayArt Corp. *Valkyria Chronicles D*. Sega and NHN PlayArt Corp. Android. 2012.
- Sega AM2. *Virtua Fighter 5: Last Round*. Sega. Sony PlayStation 3. 2012.
- Sega CS1 R&D. *Yakuza 3*. Sega. Sony PlayStation 3. 2010.
- Sega CS1 R&D. *Yakuza 4*. Sega. Sony PlayStation 3. 2011.
- Sega CS3 and Media.Vision. *Valkyria Revolution*. Sega. Sony PlayStation Vita. 2017.
- Sega NE R&D. *Yakuza*. Sega. Sony PlayStation 2. 2006.
- SIE San Diego Studio. *MLB The Show 20*. Sony Interactive Entertainment. Sony PlayStation 4. 2020.
- Sonic Team. *Sonic the Hedgehog*. Sega. Sega Genesis. 1991.

The Fullbright Company. *Gone Home*. The Fullbright Company and Majesco Entertainment. Sony PlayStation 4. 2016.

Ubisoft Montreal. *Far Cry 3: Blood Dragon*. Ubisoft. Sony PlayStation 3. 2013.

References

- Aarseth, Espen. *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997.
- Abousnnouga, Gill and David Machin. "Analysing the language of war monuments." *Visual Communication* volume 9, no. 2: 131-149.
- Addington, Larry H. *The Patterns of War Since the Eighteenth Century*. 2nd Edition. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994.
- Adorno, Theodor. "In Memory of Eichendorff." In *Notes to Literature*, edited by Rolf Tiedemann, translated by Shierry Weber NicholSEN, 55–79. New York: Columbia University Press, 1991.
- Agamben, Giorgio. *State of Exception*. Translated by Kevin Attell. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005.
- Agawa Hiroyuki. "August 6". In *The Atomic Bomb: Voices from Hiroshima and Nagasaki*. Edited by Kyoko and Mark Selden, 3-23. Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, Inc., 1989.
- Agence France-Presse and Jiji Press. "75 years on, abolition pleas from the last generation of hibakusha." *The Japan Times*. August 6, 2020.
<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/08/06/national/abolition-pleas-japans-last-hibakusha/> (accessed September 11, 2020).
- Alexander, Jeffrey C. "Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma." In *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*, edited by Ron Eyerman, Bernhard Giesen, Neil J. Smelser, and Piotr Sztompka, 1–30. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.
- Alperovitz, Gar. *Atomic Diplomacy: Hiroshima and Potsdam – The Use of the Atomic Bomb and the American Confrontation with Soviet Power*. East Haven, Connecticut: Pluto Press, 1994.
- Alperovitz, Gar. *The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb*. New York: Vintage Books, 1995.
- Ang, Ien. *On Not Speaking Chinese: Living Between Asia and the West*. New York: Routledge, 2001.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1991.
- Assmann, Jan. "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity." *New German Critique* 65 (Spring 1995): 125-133.
- Banks, Jaime. "Object, Me, Symbiote, Other: A Social typology of player-avatar relationships." *First Monday* 20, No. 2 (2 February 2015):
<https://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/download/5433/4208>.

- Bernstein, Barton J. "Understanding the Atomic Bomb and the Japanese Surrender: Missed Opportunities, Little-Known Near Disasters, and Modern Memory". In *Hiroshima in History and Memory*. Edited by Michael J. Hogan, 38-79. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Benjamin, Walter. "Theses on the Philosophy of History." In *Illuminations*, edited by Hannah Arendt, translated by Harry Zohn, 255–266. New York: Harcourt, Bruce & World, Inc., 1968.
- Benjamin, Walter. "The Storyteller." In *Illuminations*, edited by Hannah Arendt, translated by Harry Zohn, 83–109. New York: Harcourt, Bruce & World, Inc., 1955.
- Bix, Herbert. *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan*. New York: Perennial, 2000.
- Bix, Herbert. "Japan's Delayed Surrender: A Reinterpretation". In *Hiroshima in History and Memory*. Edited by Michael J. Hogan, 80-115. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Bogost, Ian. *Persuasive Games: The Expressive Power of Videogames*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2007.
- Bolter, Jay David and Richard Grusin. *Remediation: Understanding New Media*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1999.
- Brewer, Susan. *Why America Fights: Patriotism and War Propaganda from the Philippines to Iraq*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Brinkley, Douglas, ed. *The New York Times Living History: World War II: The Allied Counteroffensive, 1942-1945: The Documents, Speeches, Diaries, and Newspaper Reporting That Defined World War II*. Edited with Chapter Introductions by David Rubel. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2003.
- Burke, Peter. "History as Social Memory." In *Memory: History, Culture and the Mind*, edited by Thomas Butler, 97-113. New York: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1989.
- Burleigh, Michael. *Moral Combat: A History of World War II*. London: Harper Press, 2010.
- Butler, Thomas. "Memory a Mixed Blessing." In *Memory: History, Culture and the Mind*, edited by Thomas Butler, 97-113. New York: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1989.
- Campbell, James. "Just Less Than Total War: Simulating World War II as Ludic Nostalgia." In *Playing the Past: History and Nostalgia in Video Games*. Edited by Zach Whalen and Laurie N. Taylor, 183-200. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2008.
- Capcom IR. "Game Series Sales." *Capcom IR Investor Relations*. June 30, 2020. <http://www.capcom.co.jp/ir/english/finance/salesdata.html> (accessed September 26, 2020).

- Capcom IR. "Platinum Titles." *Capcom IR Investor Relations*. June 30, 2020.
<http://www.capcom.co.jp/ir/english/finance/million.html> (accessed September 26, 2020).
- Chan, Stephanie. "Yakuza 6: The Song of Life's localization philosophy." *VentureBeat*, February 11, 2018. <https://venturebeat.com/2018/02/11/yakuza-6-the-song-of-lifes-localization-philosophy/>
- Chapman, Adam. *Digital Games as History: How Videogames Represent the Past and Offer Access to Historical Practice*. New York: Routledge, 2016.
- Chen, Nancy N. "'Speaking Nearby': A Conversation with Trinh T. Minh-ha." *Visual Anthropology Review* 8, No. 1 (Spring 1992): 82-91.
- Chomsky, Noam. *Because We Say So*. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2015.
- Chomsky, Noam. *Hegemony or Survival: America's Quest for Global Dominance*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, LLC, 2004.
- Chomsky, Noam. *Power Systems: Conversations on the Global Democratic Uprisings and the New Challenges to U. S. Empire, Interviews with David Barsamian*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, LLC, 2013.
- Chomsky, Noam and Edward S. Herman. *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of Mass Media*. New York: Pantheon, 2002.
- Coerr, Eleanor. *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes*. Edited by Hideko Midorikawa. Tokyo: Yamaguchi Shoten, 1984.
- Committee of Japanese Citizens to Send Gift Copies of a Photographic & Pictorial Record of the Atomic Bombing to Our Children, and Fellow Human Beings of the World (Abbr. Hiroshima- Nagasaki Publishing Committee). *Days to Remember: An Account of the Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki*. Tokyo: Hiroshima-Nagasaki Publishing Company Heiwa-kaikan, 1981.
- Confino, Alon. "Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method." *American Historical Review* 102, no. 5 (1997): 1386–1403.
- Consalvo, Mia. *Atari to Zelda: Japan's Videogames in Global Contexts*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2016.
- Consalvo, Mia. *Cheating: Gaining Advantage in Videogames*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2007.
- Cook, Haruko Taya and Theodore F. Cook. *Japan at War: An Oral History*. New York: The New Press, 1992.
- Costello, John. *The Pacific War 1941-1945*. New York: Harper Perennial, 2009.
- Dayan, Daniel and Elihu Katz. *Media Events: The Live Broadcasting of History*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1992.

- Diggins, John Patrick. *The Proud Decades: America in War and Peace, 1941-1960*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1989.
- Dower, John W. *Cultures of War: Pearl Harbor/ Hiroshima/ 9/11 /Iraq*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2010.
- Dower, John W. "The Bombed: Hiroshimas and Nagasakis in Japanese Memory." In *Hiroshima in History and Memory*. Edited by Michael J. Hogan, 116-142. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Dower, John W. *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1986.
- Drea, Edward J. "Chasing a Decisive Victory: Emperor Hirohito and Japan's War with the West (1941-1945)." In *In Service of the Emperor: Essays on the Imperial Japanese Army*, 169-215. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998.
- Ducharme, Lori, and Gary Alan Fine. "The Construction of Nonpersonhood and Demonization: Commemorating the 'Traitorous' Reputation of Benedict Arnold." *Social Forces* 73, no. 4 (1995): 1309-1331.
- Dyer-Witheford, Nick and Greig de Peuter. *Games of Empire: Global Capitalism and Video Games*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009.
- Emperor Hirohito. "Imperial Rescript on Surrender." In *Sources of Japanese History Volume Two*. Edited by David John Lu, 176-177. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1974.
- Erll, Astrid. *Memory in Culture*. Translated by Sara B. Young. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.
- Erll, Astrid. "Remembering Across Time, Space, and Cultures: Premediation, Remediation and the 'Indian Mutiny'." In *Media, Remediation and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory*. Edited by Astrid Erll and Ann Rigney, 109-138. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co., 2009.
- Eyerman, Ron. "The Past in the Present: Culture and the Transmission of Memory." *Acta Sociologica* 47, no. 2 (2004): 159-169.
- Fernandez-Vara, Clara. *Introduction to Game Analysis*. New York: Routledge, 2015.
- Foucault, Michel. *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. Translated by A.M. Sheridan Smith. London: Tavistock Publications, 1972.
- Frank, Richard B. *Downfall: The End of the Japanese Empire*. New York: Penguin Books, 2001.
- Frank, Richard B. "Ending the Pacific War: No Alternative to Annihilation." In *The Pacific War: From Pearl Harbor to Hiroshima*. Edited by Daniel Marston, 227-245. Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 2005.
- Frankfurt, Harry G. *On Bullshit*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005.

- Frankfurt, Harry G. *On Truth*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006.
- Frasca, Gonzalo. "Simulation vs. Narrative: Introduction to Ludology." In *Video/Game/Theory*. Edited by Mark J.P. Wolf and Bernard Perron. New York: Routledge, 2003.
http://www.ludology.org/articles/VGT_final.pdf (accessed March 29, 2016).
- Frushtick, Russ. "Let's talk about the ending of Far Cry 5: Warning things get pretty ridiculous." *Polygon*, April 2, 2018. <https://www.polygon.com/2018/4/2/17188486/lets-talk-about-the-ending-of-far-cry-5>
- Fuller, Mary and Henry Jenkins. "Nintendo and New World Travel Writing: A Dialogue." In *Cybersociety: Computer-Mediated Communication and Community*. Edited by Steven G. Jones, 57-72. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1995.
- Galloway, Alexander R. *Gaming: Essays on Algorithmic Culture*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006.
- Ganzon, Sarah Christina. "Investing Time for Your In-Game Boyfriends and BFFs: Time as Commodity and the Simulation of Emotional Labor in Mystic Messenger." *Games and Culture* 14, no. 2 (2019): 139-153.
- Gibney, Frank, ed. *Senso: The Japanese Remember the Pacific War, Letters to the Editor of Asahi Shimbun*. Translated by Beth Cary. Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1995.
- Ginzburg, Carlo. *Clues, Myths and the Historical Method*. Translated by John and Anne C. Tedeschi. Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989.
- Glennon, Jen. "'Valkyria Chronicles 4' aims to go 'back to the roots of the series.'" *Newsweek*, October 21, 2018. <https://www.newsweek.com/valkyria-chronicles-4-sega-interview-localization-1133340>
- Goldberg, Wendy. "Transcending the Victim's History: Takahata Isao's *Grave of the Fireflies*." In *Mechademia Volume 4: War/ Time*. Edited by Frenchy Lunning, 39-52. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009.
- Hacking, Ian. "Memoro-Politics, Trauma and the Soul." *History of the Human Sciences* 7, no. 2 (1994): 29-52.
- Halbwachs, Maurice. *On Collective Memory*. Edited and translated by Lewis A. Coser. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992.
- Halbwachs, Maurice. *The Collective Memory*. Translated by Francis J. Ditter and Vida Yazdi Ditter. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1980.
- Hall, Stuart. "Encoding/Decoding." In *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972-1979*. Edited by Stuart Hall, Dorothy Hobson, Andrew Lowe and Paul Willis, 117-127. London: Routledge, 1980.

- Hara Tameichi. *Japanese Destroyer Captain: Pearl Harbor, Guadalcanal, Midway - The Great Naval Battles as Seen Through Japanese Eyes*. Translated by Fred Saito and Roger Pineau. Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2011.
- Hara Tamiki. "Summer Flowers". In *Hiroshima: Three Witnesses*. Edited and Translated by Richard H. Minear, 45-113. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990.
- Harris, Celia B., Helen M. Patterson and Richard I. Kemp, "Collaborative Recall and Collective Memory: What Happens When We Remember Together?" *Memory* 16 (3): 213-230.
- Harries, Meirion and Susie Harries. *Soldiers of the Sun: The Rise and Fall of the Imperial Japanese Army*. New York: Random House, 1991.
- Hashimoto Akiko. *The Long Defeat: Cultural Trauma, Memory, and Identity in Japan*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Hashimoto Mochitsura. *Sunk: The Story of the Japanese Submarine Fleet 1941-1945*. Translated by Commander E. H. M. Colegrave. Introduction by Commander Edward L. Beach. Joshua Tree, California: Progressive Press, 2010.
- Hayase Shinzo. *A Walk Through War Memories in Southeast Asia*. Quezon City, Philippines: New Day Publishers, 2007.
- Hayashi Kyoko. *From Trinity to Trinity*. Translated by Eiko Otake. Barrytown, New York: Station Hill Press, Inc., 2010.
- Hayashi Kyoko. "Ritual of Death." In *Nuke-rebuke: Writers & Artists Against Nuclear Energy & Weapons*. Edited by Morty Sklar, 21-57. Iowa City, Iowa: Spirit That Moves Us Press, 1984.
- Hayashi Kyoko. "The Empty Can." In *The Crazy Iris and Other Stories of the Atomic Aftermath*. Edited by Kenzaburo Oe, 127-143. New York: Grove Press, 1985.
- Hayashi Kyoko. "Two Grave Markers." In *The Atomic Bomb: Voices from Hiroshima and Nagasaki*. Edited by Kyoko and Mark Selden, 24-54. Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, Inc., 1989.
- Hayashi Kyoko and Kyoko Selden. "Dear Friend." *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* 11/12, Violence in the Modern World Special Issue (December 1999-2000): 100-106.
- Hayashi Kyoko and Kyoko Selden. "Masks of Whatchamacallit (Nanjamonja no men, 1976)." *Review of Japanese Culture and Society* 16, Women's Voices, Past and Present: Twelve Japanese Stories (December 2004): 66-88.
- Hersey, John. *Hiroshima*. New York: Vintage Books, 1989.
- Hess, Aaron. "'You Don't Play, You Volunteer': Narrative Public Memory Construction in *Medal of Honor: Rising Sun*." *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 24, no. 4 (October 2007): 339-356.

- Hirsch, Marianne. "The Generation of Postmemory." *Poetics Today* 29, no. 1 (March 1, 2008): 103–128.
- Hobsbawm, Eric. "Introduction." In *The Invention of Tradition*. Edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger, 1-14. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
- Hotta, Eri. *Japan 1941: Countdown to Infamy*. New York: Vintage Books, 2013.
- Hutchinson, Rachael. "Fukasaku Kinji and Kojima Hideo Replay Hiroshima: Atomic Imagery and Cross-Media Memory." *Japanese Studies* 39, No. 2 (2019): 169-189.
- Hutchinson, Rachael. *Japanese Culture Through Videogames*. London and New York: Routledge, 2019.
- Hutton, Patrick H. *History as an Art of Memory*. Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1993.
- Huyssen, Andreas. "Present Pasts: Media, Politics, Amnesia." *Public Culture* 12, no. 1 (2000): 21–38.
- Ibuse Masuji. *Black Rain*. Translated by John Bester. Tokyo: Kodansha International Ltd., 1969.
- Ienaga Saburo. *The Pacific War: World War II and the Japanese, 1931-1945*. Translated by Frank Baldwin. New York: Pantheon Books, 1978.
- Igarashi Yoshikuni. *Bodies of Memory: Narratives of War in Postwar Japanese Culture, 1945-1970*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000.
- Ikeda, Kyle. "Writing and Remembering the Battle of Okinawa: War Memory and Literature." In *Routledge Handbook of Modern Japanese Literature*. Edited by Rachael Hutchinson and Leith Morton, 184-197. Routledge, New York: Routledge, 2016.
- Inoguchi, Capt. Rikihei, Cdr. Nakajima Tadashi and Roger Pineau. *The Divine Wind: Japan's Kamikaze Force in World War II*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1958.
- Ivanescu, Andra. "Temporal Anomalies: Alternative Pasts and Alternative Futures." In *Popular Music in the Nostalgia Video Game: The Way it Never Sounded*, 109-143. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019.
- Jacobs, Robert and Ran Zwigenberg. "The American Narrative of Hiroshima is a Statue that Must be Toppled." *Counterpunch*. August 6, 2020.
https://www.counterpunch.org/2020/08/06/the-american-narrative-of-hiroshima-is-a-statue-that-must-be-toppled/?fbclid=IwAR32UYU1sISDPgEVmTeM7LSVH41wVIMu72rFtzCs_LRW__5b1C1mk9UdV50.

- Jenkins, Henry. "Game Design as Narrative Architecture." In *First Person: New Media as Story, Performance, Game*. Edited by Noah Wardrip-Fruin and Pat Harrigan, 118-130. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004.
- Jiji Press. "I want nobody to suffer like that': One of the many children orphaned by the atomic bomb." *The Japan Times*. August 6, 2020.
<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/08/06/national/history/orphan-hiroshima-atomic-bomb/> (accessed September 11, 2020).
- Johnson, Craig and Rowan Tulloch. "Video Games and Dystopia: Total Cities, Post-cities and the Political Unconscious." *Journal of Gaming & Virtual Worlds* 9, no.3 (2017): 243-256.
- Jowett, Garth S. "Hollywood, Propaganda and the Bomb: Nuclear Images in Post World War II Films." *Film & History: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Film and Television Studies* 18, no. 2 (May 1988): 26-38.
- Juul, Jesper. "Games Telling Stories? A Brief Note on Games and Narratives." *Game Studies* 1, no. 1 (July 2001). <http://www.gamestudies.org/0101/juul-gts/> (accessed March 22, 2020).
- Juul, Jesper. *Half-Real: Video Games Between Real Rules and Fictional Worlds*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2005.
- Takehashi Kumiko. *So Sad To Fall in Battle: An Account of War*. New York: Ballantine Books, 2007.
- Kapell, Matthew Wilhelm and Andrew B. R. Elliot. "Conclusion(s): Playing at True Myths, Engaging with Authentic Histories." In *Playing With the Past: Digital Games and the Simulation of History*. Edited by Matthew Wilhelm Kapell and Andrew B. R. Elliot, 357-367. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing Inc., 2013.
- Kittler, Friedrich A. *Discourse Networks 1800/ 1900*. Translated by Michael Metteer and Chris Cullens. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1990.
- Kittler, Friedrich A. *Literature Media: Information Systems*. Edited by John Johnston. Amsterdam: G+B Arts International, 1997.
- Kosakai Yoshiteru. *Hiroshima Peace Reader*. Translated by Akira and Michiko Tashiro and Robert and Alice Ruth Ramseyer. Nakajima-cho, Naka-ku, Hiroshima: Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation, 2017.
- Koselleck, Reinhart. "War Memorials: Identity Formations of the Survivors." In *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, translated by Todd Samuel Presner, 285-326. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2002.
- Koski, Johannes. "Reflections of History: Representations of the Second World War in *Valkyria Chronicles*." *Rethinking History* 21, no. 3 (2017): 396-414.

- Krämer, Sybille. "The Cultural Techniques of Time Axis Manipulation: On Friedrich Kittler's Conception of Media." *Theory, Culture & Society* 23, no. 7–8 (December 1, 2006): 93–109.
- Kuribayashi Tadamichi. *Picture Letters From the Commander in Chief*. Edited by Yoshida Tsuyuko. San Francisco: VIZ Media, LLC, 2007.
- Lang, Gladys, and Kurt Lang. "Recognition and Renown: The Survival of Artistic Reputation." *American Journal of Sociology* 94, no. 1 (1988): 79–109.
- Lifton, Robert Jay and Greg Mitchell. *Hiroshima in America: Fifty Years of Denial*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons New York, 1995.
- Ma, Sheng-Mei. "Three Views of the Rising Sun, Obliquely: Keiji Nakazawa's *A-bomb*, Osamu Tezuka's *Adolf*, and Yoshinori Kobayashi's *Apologia*." In *Mechademia 4 War/Time*. Edited by Frenchy Lunning, 183–196. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009.
- Macey, David. "Discourse." In *The Penguin Dictionary of Critical Theory*, 100–101. Toronto: Penguin Group (Canada), 2000.
- Maier, Charles. "A Surfeit of Memory? Reflections on History, Melancholy and Denial." *History and Memory* 5 (1992): 137–151.
- Mangiron, Carmen and Minako O'Hagan. "Game Localisation: Unleashing Imagination with 'Restricted' Translation." *The Journal of Specialised Translation* 6 (July 2006): 10–21.
- Manning, Paul. *Hirohito: The War Years*. New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1986.
- McCarthy, Kathy. "Inside Yakuza 6's In-Depth Localization." *US Gamer*, February 7, 2018. <https://www.usgamer.net/articles/inside-yakuza-6s-in-depth-localization>
- McClancy, Kathleen. "The Wasteland of the Real: Nostalgia and Simulacra in *Fallout*." *Game Studies* 18, no. 2 (September 2018): n.p.
- McCready, Samuel. "Playing the Past and Alternative Futures: Counterfactual History in *Fallout 4*." *Loading: The Journal of the Canadian Game Studies Association* 12, no.20 (2019): 15–34.
- McKee, Alan. *Textual Analysis: A Beginner's Guide*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE Publications Inc., 2003.
- Megill, Allan. "History, Memory, Identity." *History of the Human Sciences* 11, no. 3 (1998): 37–62.
- Minear, Richard H. "Atomic Holocaust, Nazi Holocaust: Some Reflections." *Diplomatic History* 19, No. 2 (Spring 1995): 347–365.
- Miyamoto Yuki. *Beyond the Mushroom Cloud: Commemoration, Religion, and Responsibility After Hiroshima*. New York: Fordham University Press, 2012.

- Miyamoto Yuki. "The Ethics of Commemoration: Religion and Politics in Nanking, Hiroshima and Yasukuni." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 80, No. 1 (March 2012): 34-63.
- Mizuki Shigeru. *Onwards Towards Our Noble Deaths*. Translated by Jocelyne Allen. Montreal: Drawn & Quarterly, 2012.
- Mukherjee, Souvik. "Playing Subaltern: Video Games and Postcolonialism." *Games and Culture* (February 2016): 1-17.
- Mukherjee, Souvik. *Videogames and Postcolonialism: Empire Plays Back*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.
- Mukherjee, Souvik. *Video Games and Storytelling: Reading Games and Playing Books*. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2015.
- Murray, Janet. *Hamlet on the Holodeck: The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace*. New York: Free Press, 1997.
- Murray, Williamson and Allan R. Millett. *A War to be Won: Fighting the Second World War*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001.
- Naito Hatsuho. *Thunder Gods: The Kamikaze Pilots Tell Their Story*. New York: Kodansha International, 1989.
- Nakazawa Keiji. *Barefoot Gen: A Cartoon Story of Hiroshima Volume One*. Translated by Project Gen. San Francisco: Last Gasp of San Francisco, 2004.
- Nakazawa Keiji. *Barefoot Gen: The Day After Volume Two*. Translated by Project Gen. San Francisco: Last Gasp of San Francisco, 2004.
- Nelson, John. "Social Memory as Ritual Practice: Commemorating Spirits of the Military Dead at Yasukuni Shinto Shrine." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 62, No. 2 (May 2003): 443-467.
- Niiyama Kyoko and Hanayama Tetsuyuki. "Hiroshima and Nagasaki struggle to preserve A-bombed relics 75 years later." *The Japan Times*. August 9, 2020.
<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/08/09/national/history/hiroshima-nagasaki-relics/>
 (accessed September 11, 2020).
- Nishihara Daisuke. "Said, Orientalism, and Japan." *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics* Volume 25, Edward Said and Critical Decolonization (2005): 241-253.
- Nora, Pierre. "Between History and Memory: Les Lieux de Memoire." *Representations* 26, Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory (Spring 1989): 7-24.
- Nora, Pierre. "The Reasons for the Current Upsurge in Memory." *Transit* 22, no. 1 (2002): 4-8.

- Nozaki Yoshiko. *War Memory, Nationalism and Education in Postwar Japan, 1945-2007: The Japanese history textbook controversy and Ienaga Saburo's court challenges*. London and New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2008.
- Nozaki Yoshiko and Inokuchi Hiromitsu. "Japanese Education, Nationalism, and Ienaga Saburo's Court Challenges." *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 30, No. 2 (1998): 37-46.
- O'Hagan, Minako. "Putting Pleasure First: Localizing Japanese Video Games." *TTR: Traduction, Terminologie, Redaction* 22, No. 1 (2009): 147-165.
- O'Reilly, Charles T. and William A. Rooney, eds. *The Enola Gay and the Smithsonian Institution*. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2005.
- Oe Kenzaburo. *Hiroshima Notes*. Translated by David L. Swain and Toshi Yonezawa. New York: Grove Press, 1996.
- Okamoto Akiko. "In milestone year, A-bomb survivor keeps up fight for nuclear disarmament." *The Japan Times*. August 9, 2020.
<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/08/09/national/history/terumi-tanaka-nagasaki-nuclear-disarmament/> (accessed September 11, 2020).
- Olick, Jeffrey K. "Collective Memory: The Two Cultures." *Sociological Theory* 17: 3 (November 1999): 333-348.
- Olick, Jeffrey K. and Joyce Robbins. "Social Memory Studies: From 'Collective Memory' to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices." *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998): 105-140.
- Onoda Hiroo. *No Surrender: My Thirty-Year War*. Translated by Charles S. Terry. Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1999.
- Ota Yoko. "City of Corpses". In *Hiroshima: Three Witnesses*. Edited and Translated by Richard H. Minear, 153-273. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990.
- Paul, Christopher. *Wordplay and the Discourse of Video Games: Analyzing Words Design and Play*. New York: Routledge, 2012.
- Pearce, Celia. "Theory Wars: An Argument Against Arguments in the so-called Ludology/Narratology Debate." In *Proceedings of DiGRA 2005 Conference: Changing Views – Worlds of Play* (2005): n.p.
- Penney, Joel. "No Better Way to 'Experience' World War II: Authenticity and Ideology in the *Call of Duty* and *Medal of Honor* Player Communities." In *Joystick Soldiers: The Politics of Play in Military Video Games*, edited by Nina P. Huntemann and Matthew Thomas Payne, 191-205. New York: Routledge, 2010.
- Perez-Latorre, Oliver. "Post-apocalyptic Games, Heroism and the Great Recession." *Game Studies* 19, no. 3 (December 2019): n.p.

- Piittinen, Sari. "Morality in Let's Play Narrations: Moral Evaluations of Gothic Monsters in Gameplay Videos of *Fallout 3*." *New Media & Society* 20, no. 12 (2018): 4671-4688.
- Pye, Michael. "Religion and Conflict in Japan with Special Reference to Shinto and Yasukuni Shrine." *Diogenes* 50, no. 3 (August 2003): 45-59.
- Ranger, Terence. "The Invention of Tradition Revisited: The Case of Colonial Africa." In *Legitimacy and the State in Twentieth-Century Africa*, edited by Terence Ranger and Olufemi Vaughan, 62-111. Essays in Honour of A.H.M Kirk-Greene. New York: Palgrave, 1993.
- Renan, Ernest. "What Is a Nation?" In *Nation and Narration*, translated and annotated by Martin Thom, edited by Homi K. Bhabha, 8-22. London and New York: Routledge, 1991.
- Resident Evil 3 Remake (RE3) Walkthrough Team. "Different Versions of Resident Evil 3 Remake | Resident Evil 3 Remake (RE3)." *Game8*, August 28, 2020. <https://game8.co/games/resident-evil-3-remake/archives/285709> (accessed September 22, 2020).
- Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1979.
- Savage, Kirk. *Monument Wars: Washington, D. C., The National Mall, and the Transformation of the Memorial Landscape*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009.
- Scheiding, J. Elizabeth. *Langford, Westman and Related Families: Their History and Genealogy*, in collaboration with Peter D. Bela Merey. Toronto: Pro Familia Publishing, 1999.
- Scheiding, Ryan. "'That's Not Real Victory': Atomic Bomb Collective/Cultural Memory in *Call of Duty* and *Valkyria Chronicles*," *RePlaying Japan* 2 (March 2020): 135-145.
- Scheiding, Ryan. "'The Father of Survival Horror': Shinji Mikami, Procedural Rhetoric, and the Collective/Cultural Memory of the Atomic Bombs." *Loading: The Journal of the Canadian Game Studies Association* 12, no.20 (2019): 1-14.
- Schulzke, Marcus. "Moral Decision Making in *Fallout*." *Game Studies* 9, no. 2 (November 2009): n.p.
- Sennett, Richard. "Disturbing Memories." In *Memory*, edited by Patricia Fara and Karalyn Patterson, 10-26. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Sloan, Robin J. S. "Videogames as Remediated Memories: Commodified Nostalgia and Hyperreality in *Far Cry 3: Blood Dragon* and *Gone Home*." *Games and Culture* 10, no. 6 (2015): 525-550.
- Spector, Ronald H. *Eagle Against the Sun: The American War With Japan*. New York: Vintage Books, 1985.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" In *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, edited by Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, 271-315. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988.

- Squire, Kurt D. "Replaying History: Learning World History Through Playing Civilization III." PhD diss., Indiana University, 2004.
- Stahl, David C. "Critical Postwar War Literature: Trauma, Narrative Memory and Responsible History." In *Routledge Handbook of Modern Japanese Literature*. Edited by Rachael Hutchinson and Leith Morton, 169-183. Routledge, New York: Routledge, 2016.
- Stebel, Jonathon. "How Valkyria Chronicles 4's localisation team nailed the JRPG sequel's English voice-over." *PlayStation Blog*, July 31, 2018.
<https://blog.eu.playstation.com/2018/07/31/how-valkyria-chronicles-4s-localisation-team-nailed-the-jrpg-sequels-english-voice-over/>
- Sturken, Marita. "Personal Stories and National Meanings: Memory, Reenactment and the Image." In *The Seductions of Biography*. Edited by Mary Rhiel and David Suchoff, 31-41. New York: Routledge, 1996.
- Tada Makiko. "My Husband Does Not Return". In *The Atomic Bomb: Voices from Hiroshima and Nagasaki*. Edited by Kyoko and Mark Selden, 173-181. Armonk, New York: M. E. Sharpe, Inc., 1989.
- Tanaka, Stefan. *Japan's Orient: Rendering Pasts into History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.
- Taylor, Emily, "Dating-Simulation Games: Leisure and Gaming of Japanese Youth Culture." *Southeast Review of Asian Studies* 29 (2007): 192-208.
- The British Mission to Japan. *The Effects of the Atomic Bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki*. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1946.
- The Committee for the Compilation of Materials on Damage Caused by the Atomic Bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. *Hiroshima and Nagasaki: The Physical, Medical, and Social Effects of the Atomic Bombings*. Translated by Eisei Ishikawa and David L. Swain. New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1981.
- The New York Times. "How Statues are Falling Around the World." *The New York Times*. September 12, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/24/us/confederate-statues-photos.html> (accessed September 21, 2020).
- Thompson, John B. "Tradition and Self in a Mediated World." In *Detraditionalization: Critical Reflections on Authority and Identity*, edited by Paul Heelas, Scott Lash, and Paul Morris, 89-108. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1996.
- Thorne, Stephen J. "Victory in the Pacific: The Defeat of Japan Brought Horror and Joy After Years of Conflict." *Legion Magazine*, September/October 2020: 20-25.
- Toland, John. *The Rising Sun: The Decline and Fall of the Japanese Empire, 1936-1945*. New York: Modern Library, 2003.

- Tomonaga Masao, Yamamoto Sadao and Yamawaki Yoshiro. "After the Atomic Bomb: *Hibakusha* Tell their Stories." *International Review of the Red Cross*, no. 87 (899): 507-525.
- Toyonaga Keisaburo. "Colonialism and Atom Bombs: About Survivors of Hiroshima Living in Korea". In *Perilous Memories: The Asia-Pacific War(s)*. Edited by T. Fujitani, Geoffrey M. White and Lisa Yoneyama, 378-394. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2001.
- Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. "Abortive Rituals: Historical Apologies in the Global Era." *Interventions* 2, no. 2 (2000): 171–186.
- U. S. Naval Technical Mission to Japan. *Miscellaneous Targets: Atomic Bombs, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Article 1, Medical Effects*. N. p.: BiblioGov Project, 2013.
- United States Strategic Bombing Survey. *The Effects of Atomic Bombs on Health and Medical Services in Hiroshima and Nagasaki*. N. p.: Andesite Press, 2015.
- von Hilgers, Philipp. *War Games: A History of War on Paper*. Translated by Ross Benjamin. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2012.
- Wagner-Pacifici, Robin. "Memories in the Making: The Shapes of Things That Went." *Qualitative Sociology* 19, no. 3 (1996): 301–321.
- Walker, John. "Far Cry 5 has the worst endings in all of gaming history: The End is Nightmarishly Bad." *Rock Paper Shotgun*, April 11, 2018.
<https://www.rockpapershotgun.com/2018/04/11/far-cry-5-has-the-worst-endings-in-all-of-gaming-history/>
- Walzer, Michael. *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*. New York: Basic Books, 1977.
- Washburn, Dennis. "Imagined History, Fading Memory: Mastering Narrative in *Final Fantasy X*." In *Mechademia Volume 4: War/ Time*. Edited by Frenchy Lunning, 149-162. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009.
- Watanabe Morio. "Imagery and War in Japan: 1995". In *Perilous Memories: The Asia-Pacific War(s)*. Edited by T. Fujitani, Geoffrey M. White and Lisa Yoneyama, 129-151. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2001.
- Weaver, Andrew J. and Nicky Lewis. "Mirrored Morality: An Exploration of Moral Choice in Video Games." *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking* 15, no. 11 (November 2012): 610-614.
- Webster, Andrew. "Fallout 3 censored in Japan, quest removed." *ars Technica*, November 11, 2011. <https://arstechnica.com/gaming/2008/11/fallout-3-censored-in-japan-quest-removed/>

- Weller, George. *First Into Nagasaki: The Censored Eyewitness Dispatches on Post-Atomic Japan and Its Prisoners of War*. Foreword by Walter Cronkite. Edited by Anthony Weller. New York: Three Rivers Press, 2006.
- Winter, Alison. *Memory: Fragments of a Modern History*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2012.
- Winters, Francis X. *Remembering Hiroshima: Was it Just?* Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2009.
- Winthrop-Young, Geoffrey. *Kittler and the Media*. Malden, Massachusetts: Polity Press, 2011.
- Yahara Hiromichi. *The Battle for Okinawa: A Japanese Officer's Eyewitness Account of the Last Great Campaign of World War II*. Introduction by Frank B. Gibney. Translated by Roger Pineau and Masatoshi Uehara. Toronto: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1995.
- Yates, Frances A. *The Art of Memory*. London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1966.
- Yoshida Kaori, Huong T. Bui and Timothy J. Lee. "Does tourism illuminate the darkness of Hiroshima and Nagasaki?" *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management* 5 (2016): 333-340.
- Yoshida Mitsuru. *Requiem for Battleship Yamato*. Translated by Richard H. Minear. Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1985.
- Zelizer, Barbie. *Covering the Body: The Kennedy Assassination, the Media, and the Shaping of Collective Memory*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.
- Zerubavel, Eviatar. "Social Memories: Steps to a Sociology of the Past." *Qualitative Sociology* 19, no. 3 (1996): 283–299.
- Zinn, Howard. *The Bomb*. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2010.
- Zwigenberg, Ran. *Hiroshima: The Origins of Global Memory Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.