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Wills, John (2021) *Showdown on the Pixel Frontier: Videogames and the American West Guest Lecture*. In: Digital Americas Austrian Association for American Studies Annual Conference, April 2021, Online. (Unpublished)

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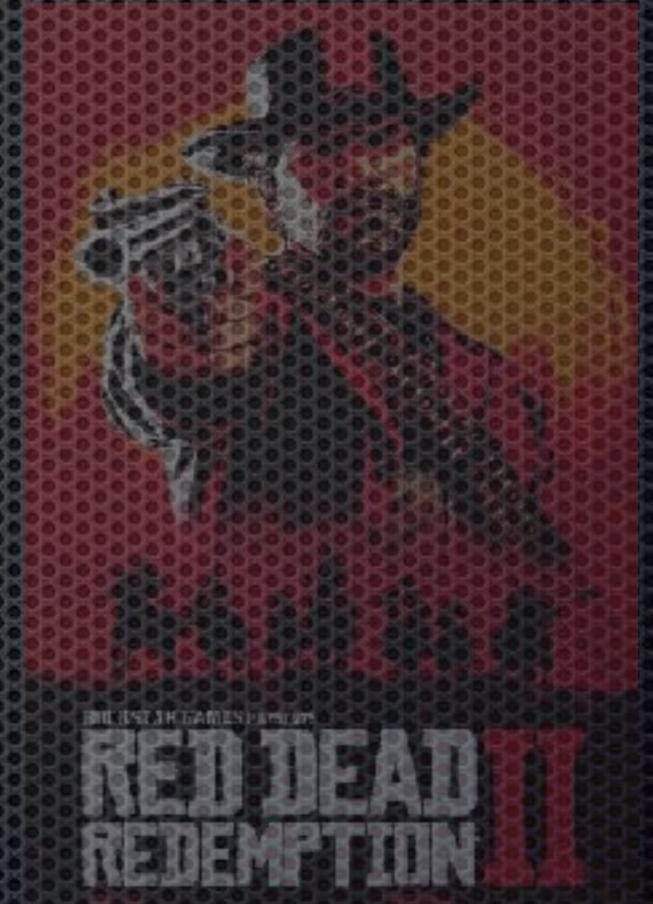
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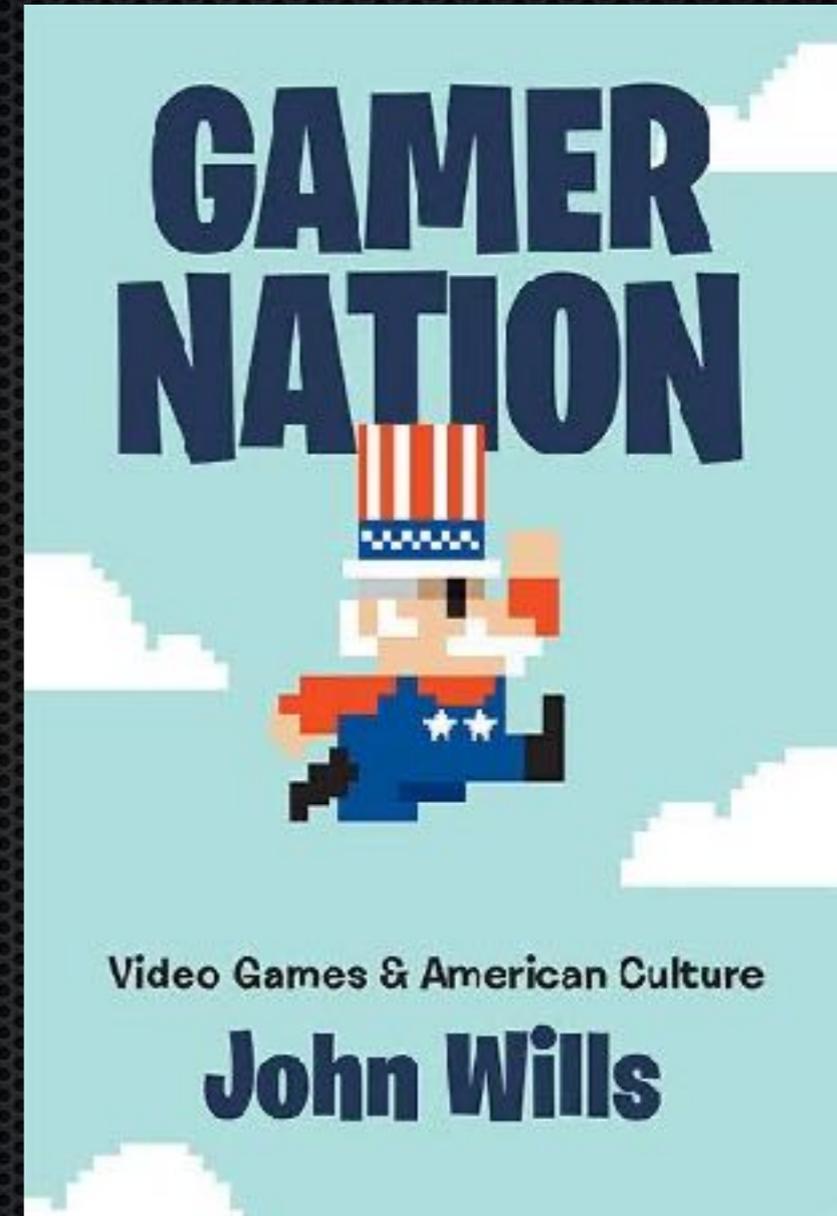
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Showdown on the Pixel Frontier: Video Games and the American West

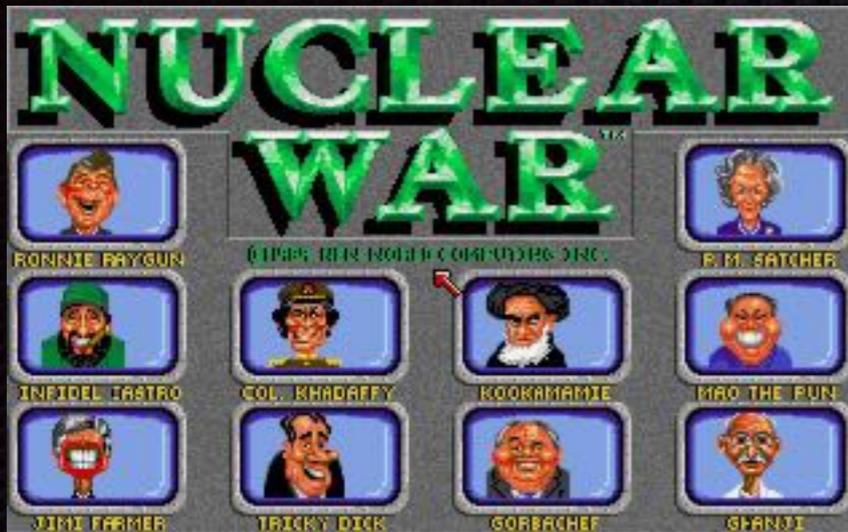


Dr John Wills University of Kent

- 1 Games and New Frontiers
- 2 Playing Cowboys and Indians in the Digital Wild West
- 3 Cold War Gaming
- 4 9/11 Code
- 5 Fighting the Virtual War on Terror
- 6 Grand Theft Los Angeles
- 7 Second Life, Second America



Video Game America



Video Game America

- ✦ How does 'Wild West' game intersect with history of format?
- ✦ How does it compare with other popular presentations of West?
- ✦ Does it provide anything new?

American West in Video Games

- ❖ 'Western Game' one of original video game genres (1971+)
- ❖ 100 plus titles, some commercial success, popular historical theme
- ❖ Simulation from Symbolic to Realist
- ❖ Proximity to Film
- ❖ Predilection for Violence



- Early Gamic Stories of West (*Oregon Trail* and *Gun Fight*)
- The Western Sublime (*Wanted* and *Red Dead Redemption 2*)
- Mundane/Everyday West (*Lasso* and *Red Dead Redemption 2*)

GETTING THE PROGRAM...

```
MONDAY MAY 10 1547
TOTAL MILEAGE 15 575
FOOD          BULLETS          CLOTHING          MISC. SUPP.          CASH
46           1090           40           45           005
DO YOU WANT TO (1) STOP AT THE NEXT FORT, (2) HUNT, OR (3) CONTINUE
12
TYPE FANG 12ANG
RIGHT BETWEEN THE EYES---YOU GOT A DIB SHE!!!!
WATCH YOUR CALORIES TONIGHT!!!
DO YOU WANT TO EAT (1) POORLY (2) MODERATELY
OR (3) WELL?2
HAIL STORM---SUPPLIES DAMAGED
```



Oregon Trail: Western Expansion as Linear Story



Gun Fight and Ludo-Narrative Resonance



Wanted and the Pixel Sublime



Visual Realism and Arthur Morgan



Albert Bierstadt: Looking Down Yosemite Valley (1865)



William Stanley Haseltine: Alpine Scene (1856)

Red Dead Sublime

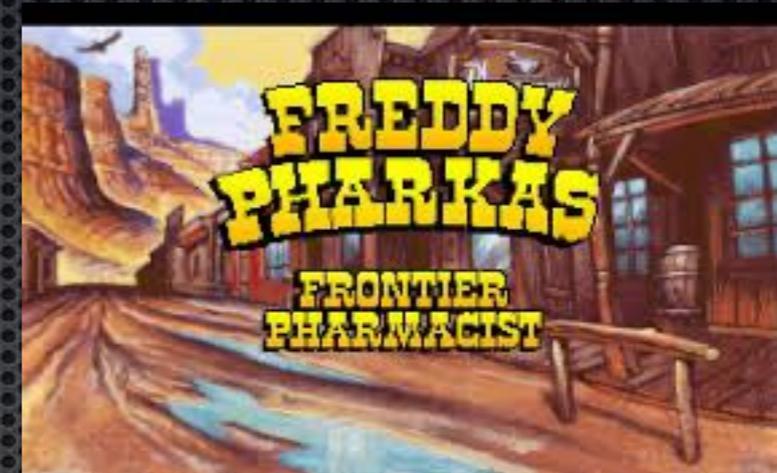


Lost Luggage (1982)

Paperboy (1984)



The American Everyday in Video Games



Everyday Tasks:

- Roping Animals (Lasso)
- Bronco Riding (Buffalo Bill's Wild West)
- Riding a Stagecoach (Cheyenne)
- Running a Pharmacy (Freddy Parkas: Frontier Pharmacist)

The Everyday West



Everyday Tasks:

- Gun Cleaning and Crafting Ammunition
- Collecting Ingredients and Cooking Food
- Patting and Brushing your Horse
- Chopping Firewood
- Having a Bath, Getting a Haircut and Shaving
- A Seasonal Wardrobe

Rockstar's Everyday West



Red Dead and Mundane Realism

Future Directions

- ✦ Further Research/Articles on American Food in Games, Atomic Culture of *Fallout*, & 'the Everyday' in Gaming
- ✦ Book project on *Red Dead Redemption* with Esther Wright
- ✦ Get in touch: Twitter @jonw

