

Playing American

Open-World Videogames and the Reproduction of American Culture

Videogames have always depicted representations of American culture, but how exactly they feed back into this culture is less obvious. Advocating an action-based understanding of both videogames and culture, this book delineates how aspects of American culture are reproduced transnationally through popular open-world videogames. proposes an analytic focus on open-world videogames' "ambient operations" and traces practices of "playing American" through the stages of videogame development, gameplay, and reception. Three case studies – concentrating on the , , and franchises, respectively – highlight different figurations of "playing American." Thematic foci range from public discourses on systemic racism and neoliberal capitalism to the justification of real-world surveillance practices and to the reconfiguration of the Western in the digital age. provides those interested in either videogames or American culture with a fresh angle and new concepts regarding its subject matters. It demonstrates that videogames are agents of cultural reproduction that do distinct cultural work for American culture in the twenty-first century.



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