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The Looker: The Art of Parody Against the Menace of Goofiness

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#GDC23

a scheme by **Bradley Lovell**

The Looker: *The Art of Parody* *Against the Menace of* **Goofiness**



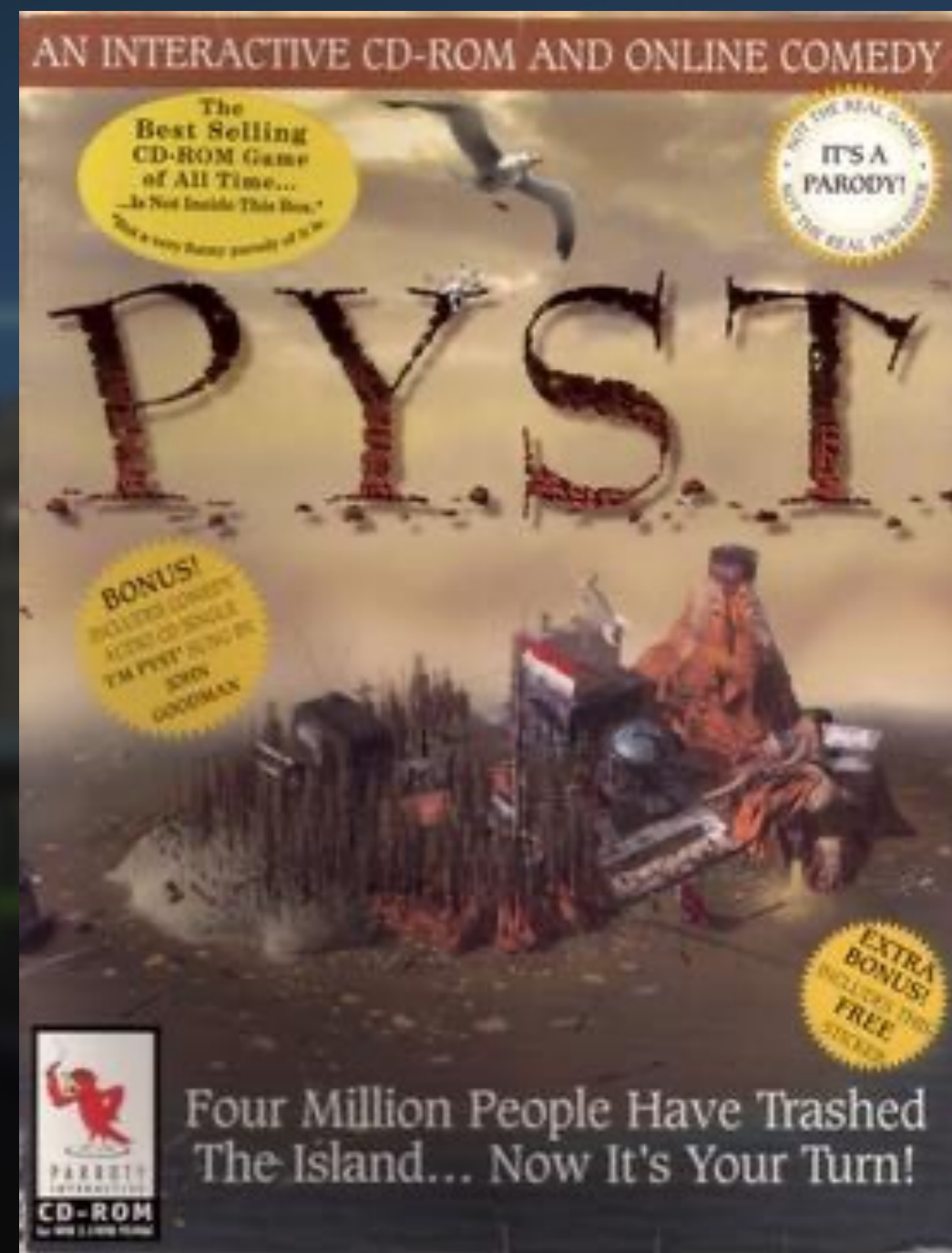
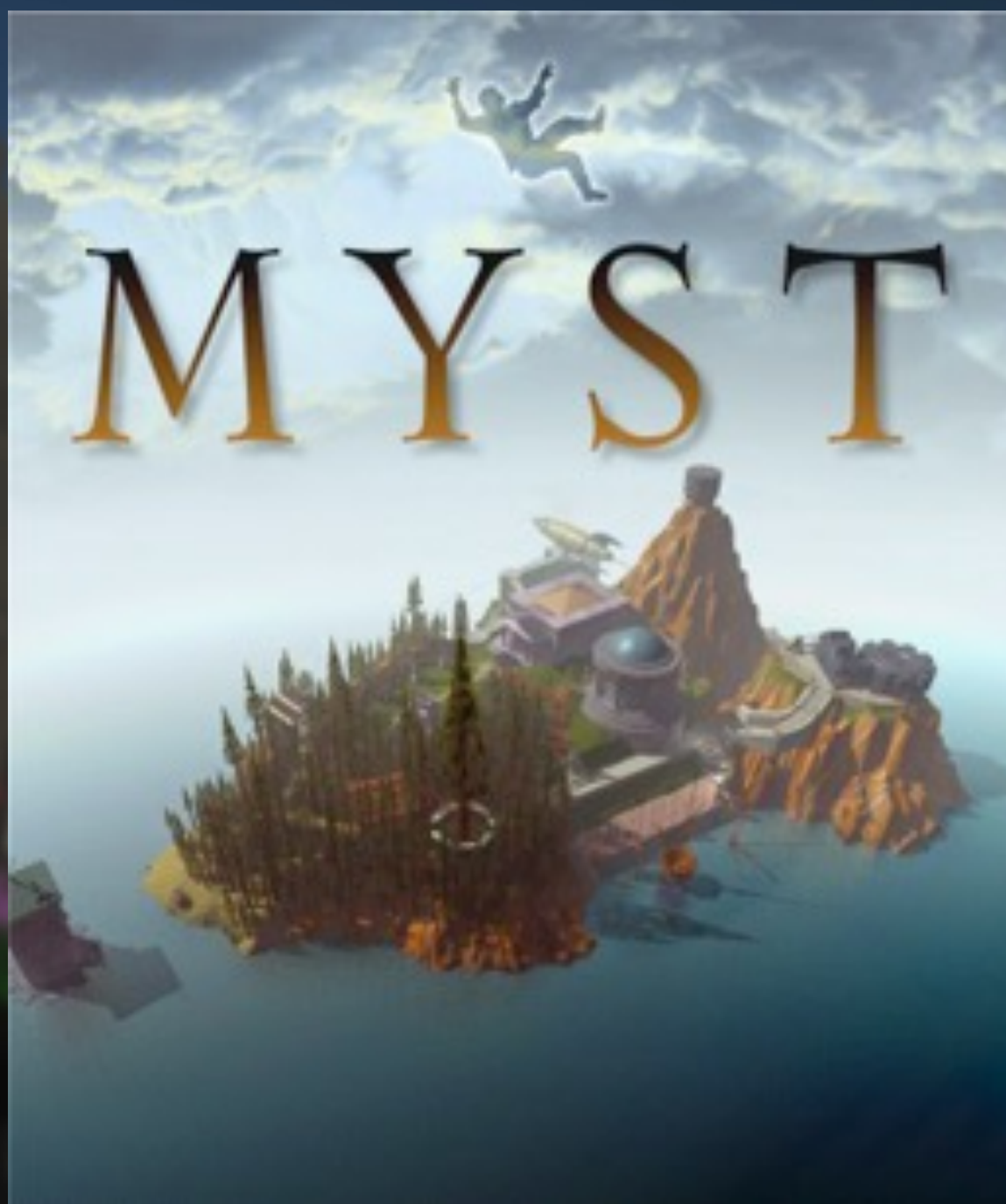


THE WITNESS



THE LOOKER

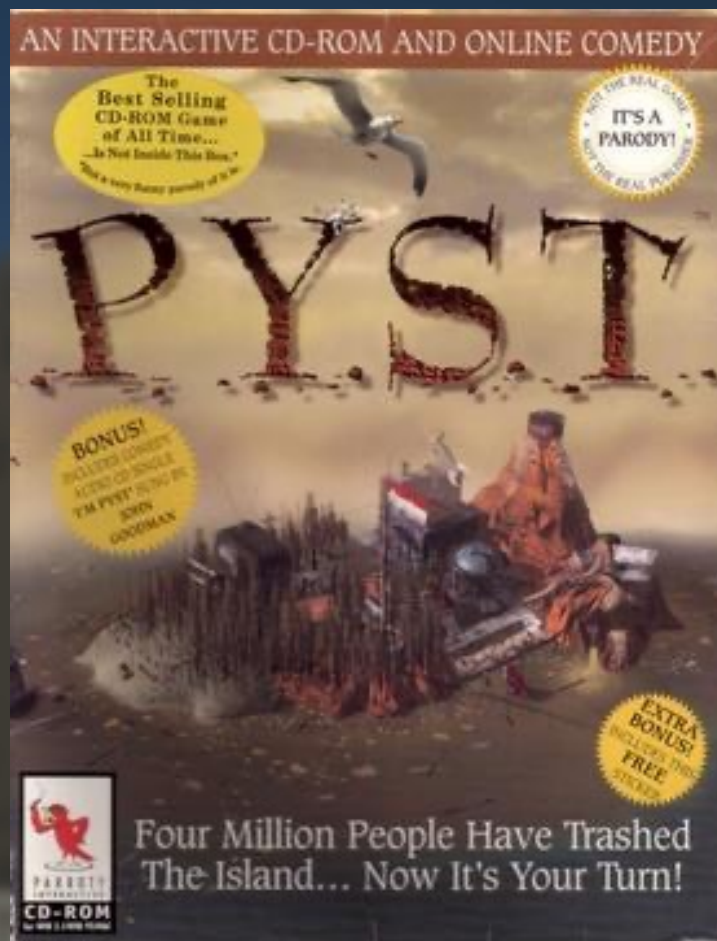


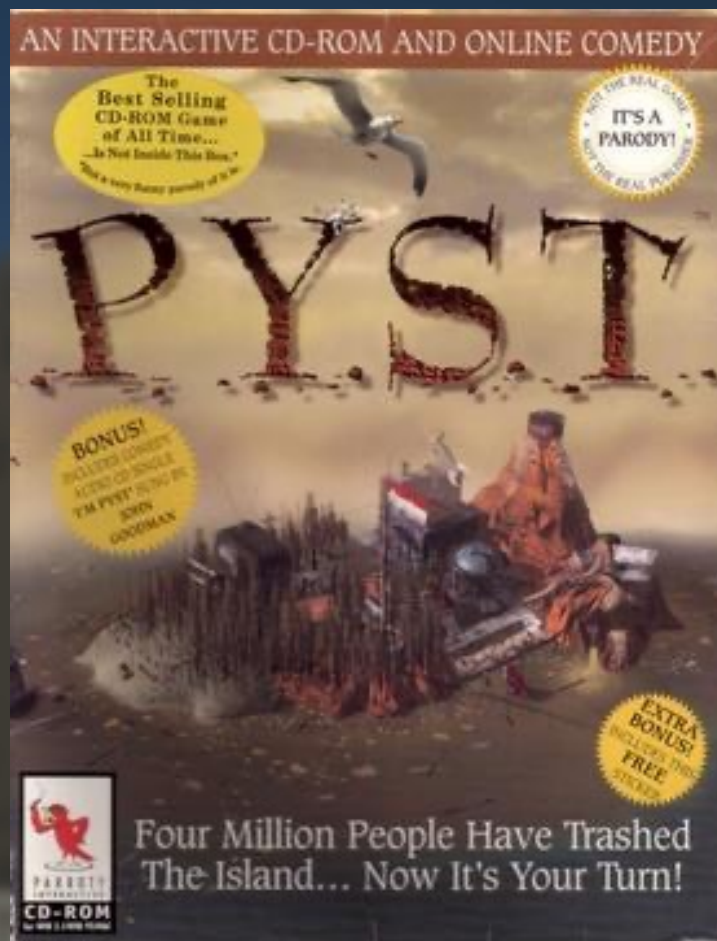


The Making of PYST

Video Link:

<https://www.subcreationstudio.com/gdc-pyst-clip>





metacritic

5.0



metacritic

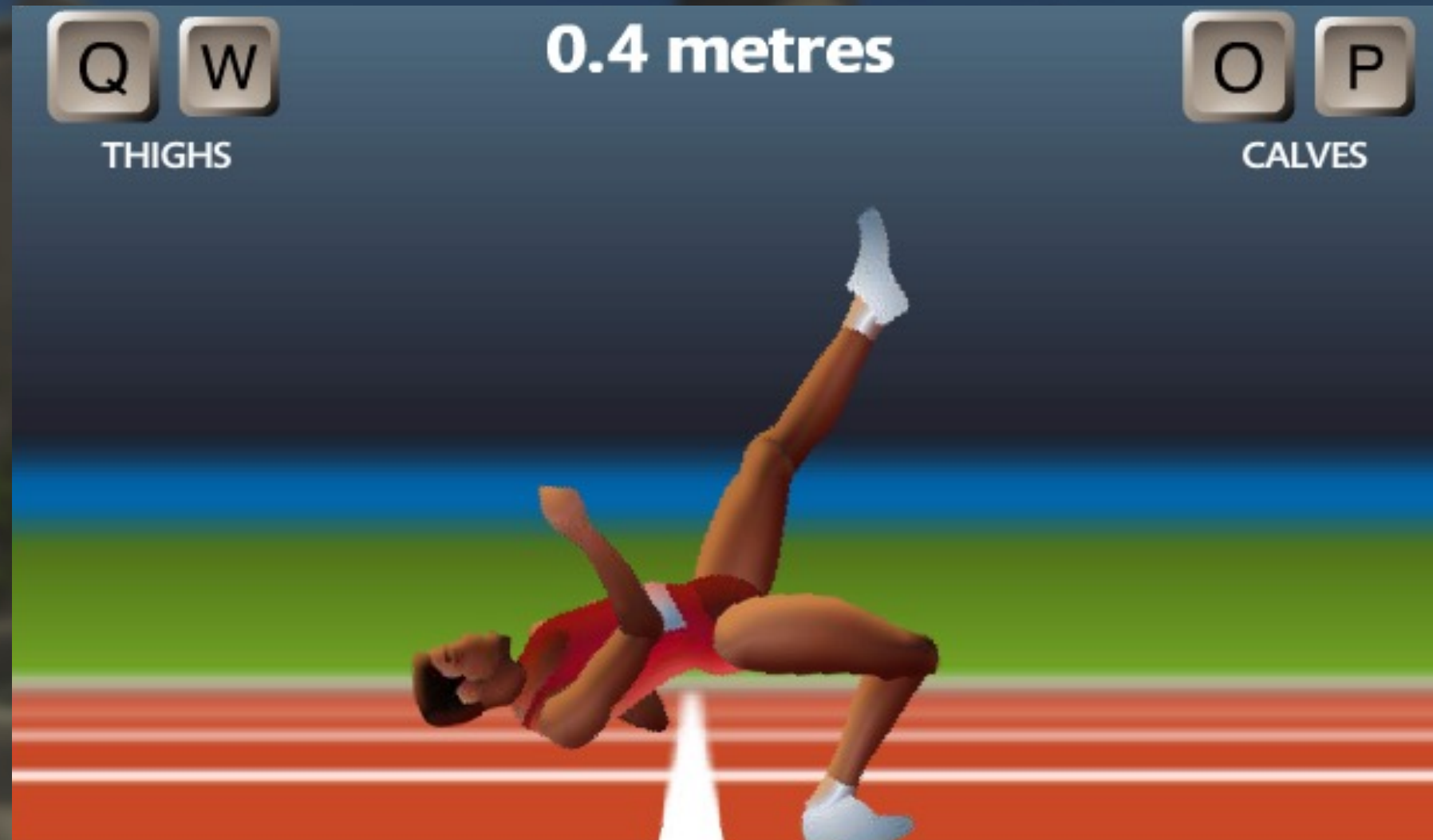
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Parody and Satire

Relies on Scripted Humor

- Requires authorial intent
- Distinct from emergent content and humor

Parody and Satire



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Relies on Scripted Humor

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Uses Exaggeration & Inversion

- Exaggeration – replacing element with a stronger version
- Inversion – replacing element with its polar opposite

Parody's Central Appeal

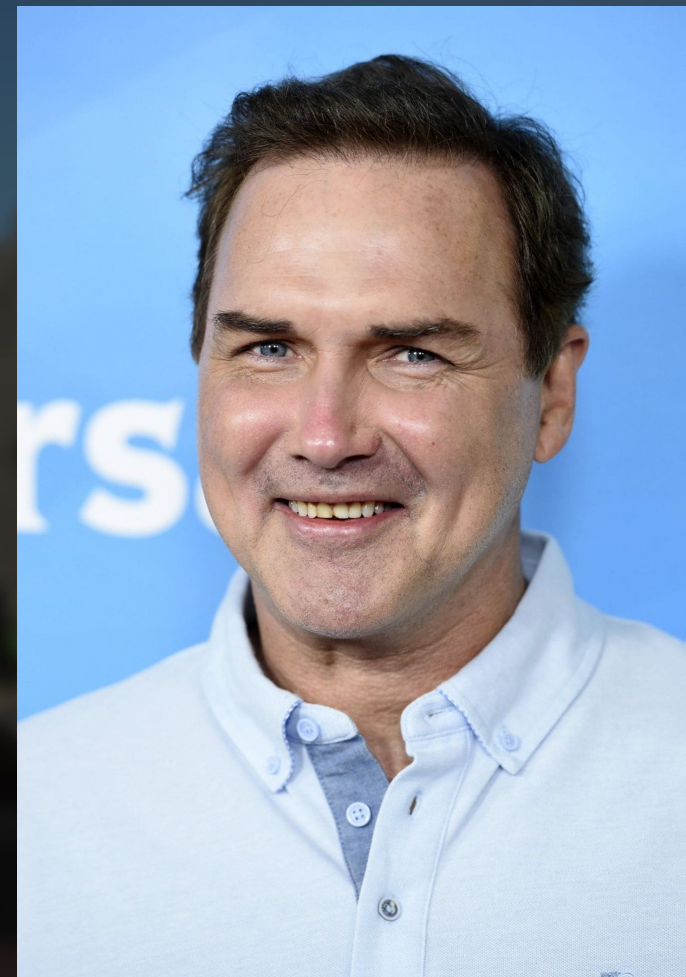
The Feeling of Validation

- Someone else saw what they saw, too
- “That’s so true!”
- Comes from under-discussed elements of the source material

Parody's Central Appeal

“[I]t's one thing to make people laugh,
it's another to make people smile.”

– Norm Macdonald



The Witness as a Subject

The Looker Relies on *Bathos*

- *Bathos* – juxtaposition of the lofty and profound with the commonplace or profane

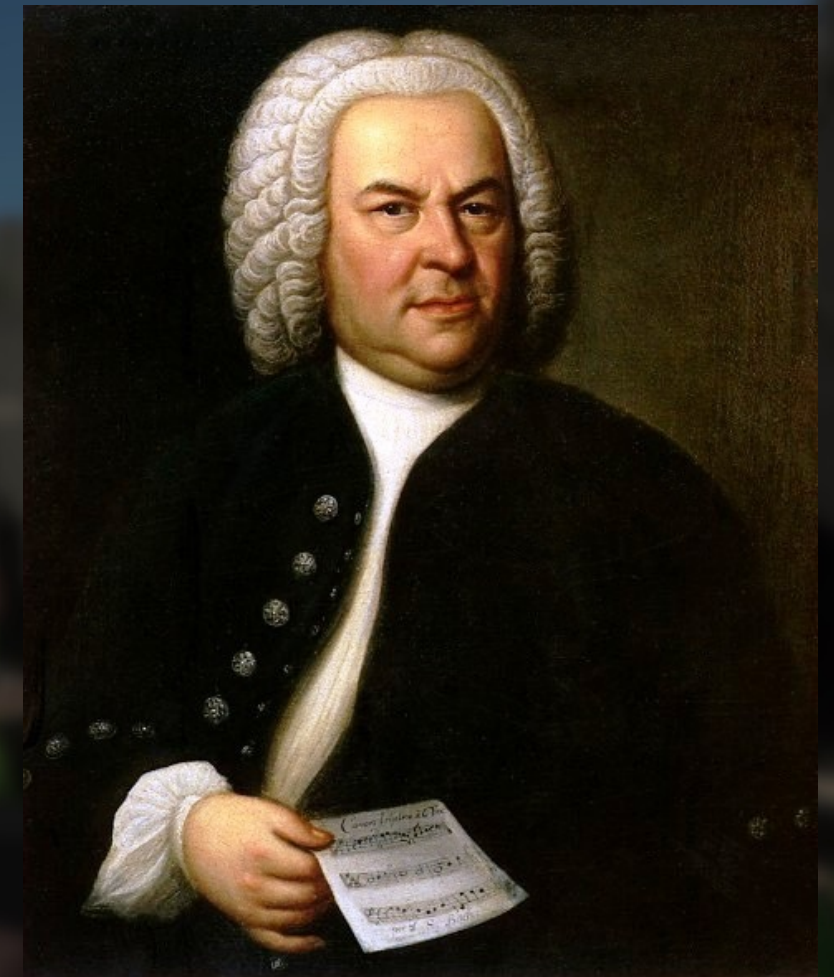
The Witness Is Tense & Distinctive

- Draws the player into a silent, unresolved conversation
- Sets very clear, consistent expectations for the player

Pitfalls of Parody

“The journey is more important than the destination, but without a destination, there can be no journey.”

– William Shakespeare



Pitfalls of Parody

Treating Humor as the Goal (it is not)

- The goal is to relate to the audience, and humor naturally arises
- Parody IS a creative take on the source material that HAS humor
- “I noticed something interesting and distinctive. How can I represent that in a funny way?”

Leaning on the Trappings Instead of the Essence

- Games like *Pyst* often fall back on spectacle and convention

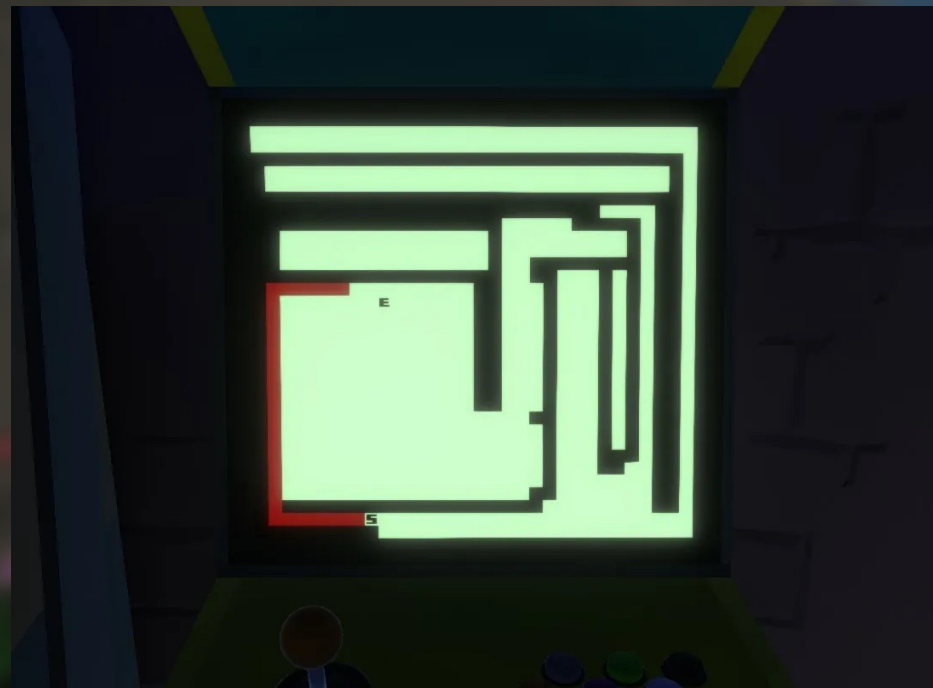
Deliver the Goods

"I love it, I respect it, and I'm going to deliver the goods... but I'm also trying to reinvent it in a way."

– Quentin Tarantino



Deliver the Goods



Contrast

Maintaining Contrast

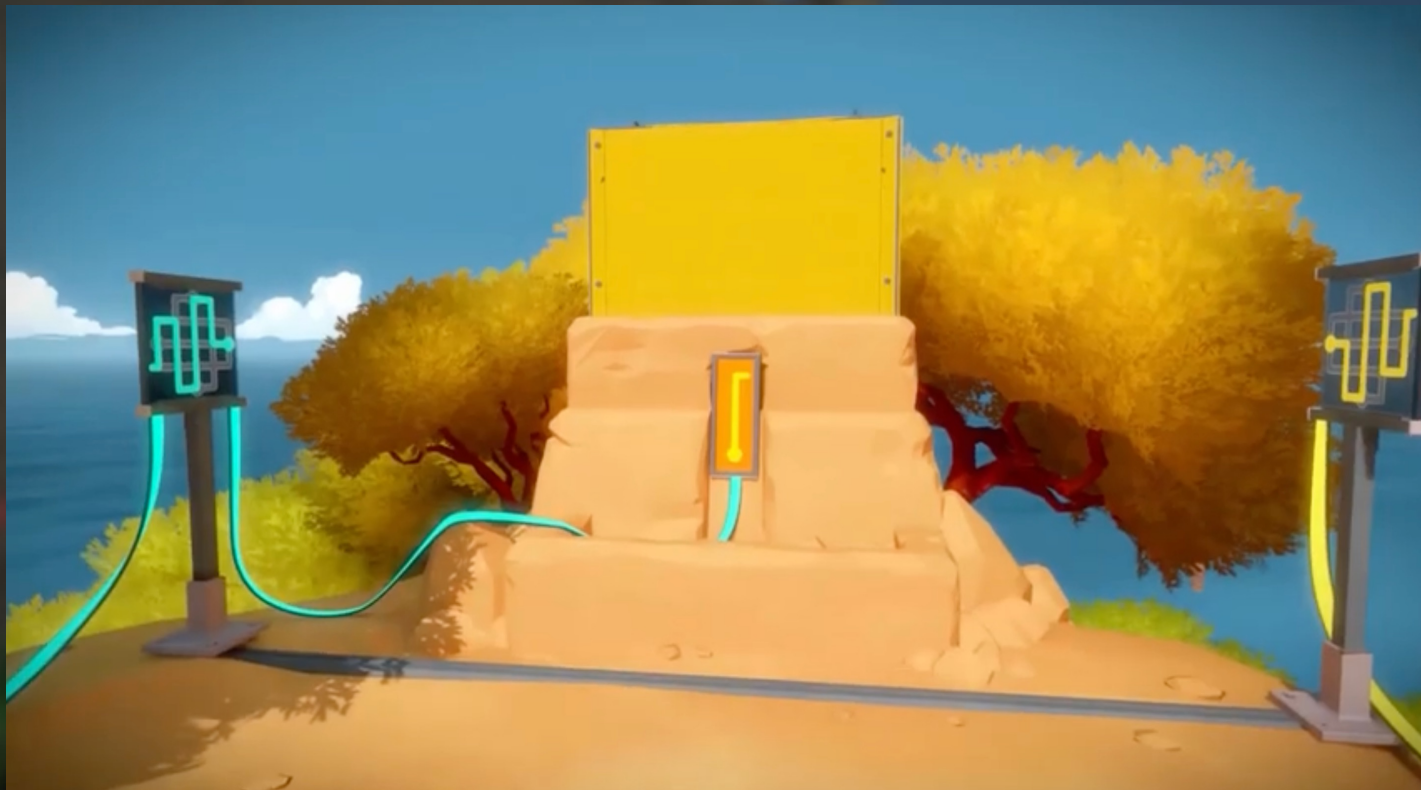
- There need to be expectations to subvert
- You need to remain unpredictable
- Invest in the humor by restoring expectations back to baseline

Respect the Player's Time

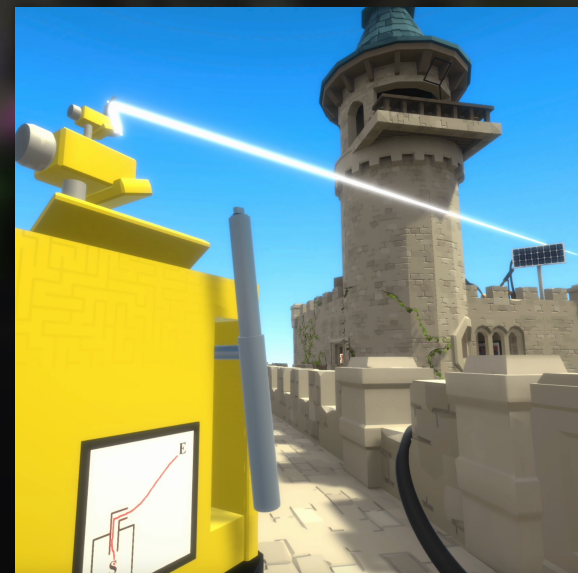
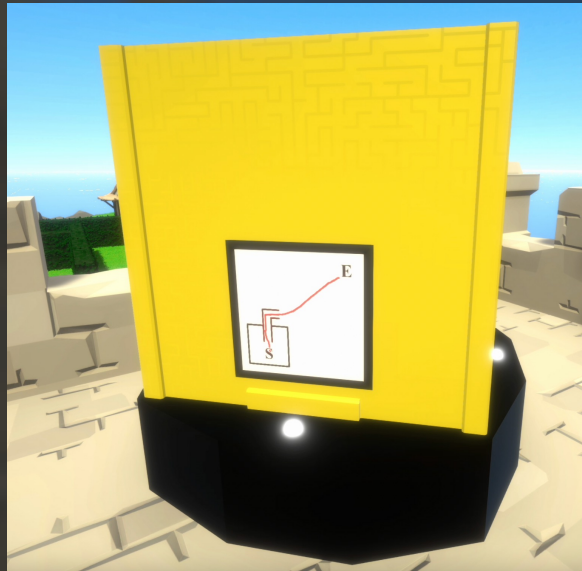
Keep Delivering Payoffs

- These can be jokes, challenging gameplay, time for reflection, etc.
- They shouldn't cost the player more time than they're worth

The Witness



The Looker



Respect the Player's Time

"Given the opportunity, players will optimize the fun out of a game."

– Soren Johnson



Respect the Player's Time

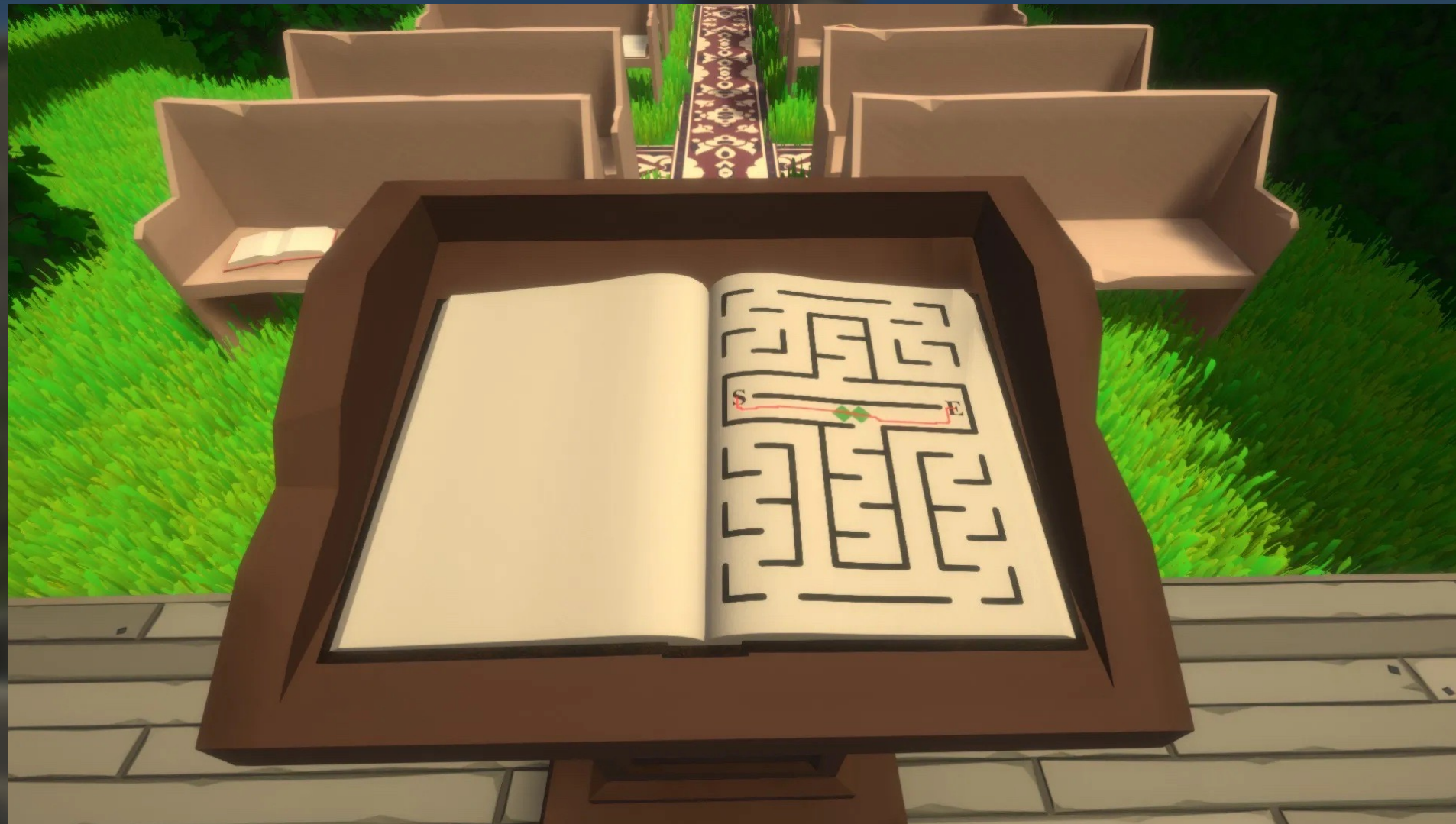
Do Not Subvert Input Expectations

- The player's action space should remain clear
- Too broad an action space will make the player waste time

Do Not Subvert Output Expectations

- Let the player know when an interaction is finished

Respect the Player's Time



Good Parody

- Derives humor from a central relationship with the source material
- “Delivers the goods” of the original work/genre
- Remains unpredictable, maintains contrast
- Respects player’s time and Input/Output expectations





Thank You!

If you have questions, Q&A will be held in the
Overlook 2018 wrap-up area.
(The windowed area across from Room 2018)