

Public Abstract

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Graduation Term:SP 2015

Department:Journalism

Degree:PhD

Title:Sacred Space Evaders: Religious Hegemony in Gaming Journalism

In the modernist paradigm, the news is assumed to be secular, or rather, devoid of religious content. Recent research implies that in actuality, journalism contains latent religious values (Silk, 1995; Underwood, 2002). This research aims to challenge the modernist paradigm by uncovering the religious hegemony operating in a niche area of journalism. This research explores the nature and operation of religious hegemony in gaming journalism through in-depth interviews with gaming journalists (n=17) and a narrative framing textual analysis of gaming journalism texts from 1993 and 2013 (n=116). Gaming journalism is a valuable resource for such research, in that much of digital gaming news still originates from outside of the American paradigm. Thus reporting on such content reveals normative conceptions about what American journalism considers normal and acceptable (Berdayes & Berdayes, 1998). By looking at the development of gaming journalism over a 20-year period, it is also possible to explore the extent to which a paradigm shift has taken place (Kuhn, 1996). This study makes a case that Modernist Protestantism is what has been normalized in gaming journalism conceptions of religion. Such research addresses central scholarly journalism concerns regarding objectivity, societal normalization through media, and misrepresentation of minority perspectives.