X-Men, Dragon Age, and Religion: Representations of Religion and the Religious in Comic Books, Video Games, and Their Related Media

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Abstract
It is a widely accepted notion that a child can only be called stupid for so long before they believe it, can only be treated in a particular way for so long before that is the only way that they know. Why is that notion never applied to how we treat, address, and present religion and the religious to children and young adults? In recent years, questions have been continuously brought up about how we portray violence, sexuality, gender, race, and many other issues in popular media directed towards young people, particularly video games. These issues rarely include religion, despite a significant shift in how young people, specifically millennials, relate to religion.

This paper examines how religion and religious characters are presented in comic books and video games. These two mediums are particularly important for young people as video games are an ever growing form of entertainment and comic books, though they have been a part of popular culture for decades, have seen a resurgence in popularity in recent years. Specific cases of religion in video games, including the creation of religions specifically for the game, the addressing of real world religions in games, and the use of religious terminology in the game are examined. This paper also examines the number of comic book characters that are associated with various religions, how they are portrayed in comics, and how this numbers are changing.

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The study of religion and video games is a subfield of digital religion, which the American scholar of communication, Heidi Campbell, defines as "Religion that is constituted in new ways through digital media and cultures." (Campbell, 2012, p. 3). Video games once struggled for legitimacy as a cultural product, today, however, they are both business and art. Video games increasingly turn to religion not just as ornament but as core elements of their video game design and play. Games involve moral In "Religion Explained" French Anthropologist Pascal Boyer tackles this elusive subject in an interesting, well written way. Using new findings and research from Evolutionary Biology and the Cognitive Science's like; philosophy, psychology, neuroscience and, of course, anthropology, Boyer takes you on a unique tour of the human mind. Starting out with a brief look at world religions we see that many of them share common themes like; ancestor worship; spirits or Gods that know all about us and can hear our prayers; artifacts that act as intermediaries between us and our ancestor/s