

Virtually Sacred: Myth and Meaning in World of Warcraft and Second Life

By Robert M. Geraci

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Millions of users have taken up residence in virtual worlds, and in those worlds they find opportunities to revisit and rewrite their religious lives. Robert M. Geraci argues that virtual worlds and video games have become a locus for the satisfaction of religious needs, providing many users with devoted communities, opportunities for ethical reflection, a meaningful experience of history and human activity, and a sense of transcendence. Using interviews, surveys, and his own first-hand experience within the virtual worlds, Geraci shows how *World of Warcraft* and *Second Life* provide participants with the opportunity to rethink what it means to be religious in the contemporary world. Not all participants use virtual worlds for religious purposes, but many online residents use them to rearrange or replace religious practice as designers and users collaborate in the production of a new spiritual marketplace.

Using *World of Warcraft* and *Second Life* as case studies, this book shows that many residents now use virtual worlds to re-imagine their traditions and work to restore them to "authentic" sanctity, or else replace religious institutions with virtual communities that provide meaning and purpose to human life. For some online residents, virtual worlds are even keys to a post-human future where technology can help us transcend mortal life. Geraci argues that *World of Warcraft* and *Second Life* are "virtually sacred" because they do religious work. They often do such work without regard for-and frequently in conflict with-traditional religious institutions and practices; ultimately they participate in our sacred landscape as outsiders, competitors, and collaborators.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Robert Geraci has produced another excellent study...Geraci's specific analysis merits scholarly attention and response. His clear writing style makes this work of scholarship digestible for the interested general reader. The book could serve well as a textbook in an advanced undergraduate or graduate seminar on religious transhumanism. Despite the fast-changing world of virtual reality and gaming, and the scholarship explosion surrounding these and related topics, Geraci's book is likely to stand for some years as the authoritative work on things virtually sacred."--*Nova Religio*

"Robert Geraci's astute argument that video gamers discover enchantment, redemption, and transcendence in gaming deserves widespread attention. *Virtually Sacred* is one of the most original treatments of gaming and participation in virtual worlds I have ever read. The elegant, understated prose provides the perfect foil for Geraci's unexpected, provocative foray into grasping the contours of religiosity in gaming and virtual worlds." --Bonnie Nardi, Professor at University of California, Irvine, and author of *My Life as a Night Elf Priest: An Anthropological Account of World of Warcraft*

"This lucid but sophisticated book demonstrates that online virtual realities like *World of Warcraft* and *Second Life* allow the sacred to flourish in a secular society, encourage players to experiment with ethical issues, sustain community in an age when tribe is an obsolete concept, and offer not merely escape but transcendence." --William Sims Bainbridge, author of *The Warcraft Civilization* and *eGods*

"In *Virtually Sacred*, Robert Geraci argues that 'virtual worlds are now rearranging or replacing religious practice', competing with traditional religions and their stories in a new spiritual marketplace. This provocative book represents a major empirical and theoretical step forward for the study of digital religion, engaging seriously and thoughtfully with the history of religions, virtual anthropology and actor-network theory, and will make an essential contribution to the next generation of debates in the field of religion, media, and culture." --Tim Hutchings, CODEC, St. John 's College, Durham University

About the Author

Robert M. Geraci is Professor in the Department of Religious Studies at Manhattan College. He is the author of *Apocalyptic AI: Visions of Heaven in Robotics, Artificial Intelligence, and Virtual Reality* and many essays that analyze the ways in which human beings use technology to make the world meaningful. He was the principle investigator on a National Science Foundation grant to study virtual worlds and the recipient of a Fulbright-Nehru Senior Research Award (2012-2013), which allowed him to investigate the intersections of religion and technology at the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore.

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Daryl Steele:

The reason why? Because this Virtually Sacred: Myth and Meaning in World of Warcraft and Second Life is an unordinary book that the inside of the guide waiting for you to snap that but latter it will zap you with the secret this inside. Reading this book close to it was fantastic author who also write the book in such amazing way makes the content inside of easier to understand, entertaining technique but still convey the meaning fully. So , it is good for you for not hesitating having this anymore or you going to regret it. This unique book will give you a lot of positive aspects than the other book include such as help improving your talent and your critical thinking technique. So , still want to hesitate having that book? If I have been you I will go to the e-book store hurriedly.

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