

Much ado about nothing? Analysis of the Polish internet discourse about "Hatred"

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ABSTRACT

My presentation will analyze the discourse that arose in the Polish internet after the first presentation of trailer of game "Hatred". This Polish isometric shooter gained international media attention and at that time was viewed as highly controversial because of its premise and alleged connections of its creators with the Polish far right movements. The international media attention spawned the local media attention and inspired public discussion between Polish game designers, game scholars and journalists. The shape which this discourse has taken seems to be interesting example of ways in which transgressive content of some media may be interpreted and function in struggle to redefine the rules governing the field that produced those media. It is especially interesting how moral commotion, quite typical for the media, is a stimulus for renegotiation of interpretation frames used by Polish game designers, scholars and journalists and by it - the shift in boundaries of Polish gaming discourse field. This presentation aims to deepen the understanding of ways in which transgressive content is defined and used in discourses of moral commotion and its role in reconstructing the discursive status quo. Presentation is based study that I conducted from September to October 2015 that focused on computer aided content analysis of polish internet discourse about "Hatred". The analyzed sample, consisted of tweets written in polish regarding "Hatred" (1143 total), articles on polish gaming portals (59 total), articles on Polish gaming blogs (16 total), and public facebook posts published by key actors - all published between 01.10.14 and 01.09.15. The sample of tweets was created by harvesting them via custom script, the articles were gathered by employing analytical search strategies: briefsearch and citation indexing strategy. Articles, published on English speaking gaming portals as well as blogs, tweets and you tube videos served as broader background for the study although those sources were not systematically analyzed.

The methodological framework was critical discourse analysis.

The theoretical background for my study was Pierre Bourdieu's model of economy of cultural goods especially his notion of taste and Julius' concept of transgressive content.

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Transgressive content was understood as one that:“violate[s] certain beliefs and sentiments of the audience” (Julius 2002) creating an occasion for the player to reflect on nature of their involvement within the game and its relation to the outside world thus creating transgressive experience. Bourdieu's constructive structuralism served as a framework in which the transgression functions. Bourdieu in *Distinction* claims that the economy of cultural goods has a specific logic based on the taste understood as the ability to distinguish between the cultural goods and ways of appropriating and consuming them that are considered adequate for the social group from which one stems and those that are not.

Transgression may potentially be the tool of distinction which subverts group's taste or one that empowers it. The interpretations of transgression, which are promoted in video game press, and social media can be a good indicator of how discourses of dominated and dominating groups are shaped.

Keywords

Hatred, Discourse analysis, Poland, Pierre Bourdieu, Economy of cultural goods, Transgressive content

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