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Glimpses of neoliberal ideology in George RR Martin's: Game of Thrones

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Abstract
The research paper is based on one of the most ever viewed television programs 'Game of Thrones' that examines, to what extent 'Game of Thrones' informs or resists Neoliberalism. The proposed research Farmwork tries to confirm elements of mainstream pop culture and the promotion of the ideology. It also determines how narrative-driven television is utilized to challenge established ideologies and determine the kind of messaging that could be embraced by Game of Thrones' vast audience. The slightly broadened topic undertakes a content analysis to investigate the hidden content of the show's plot and focuses on attention is on the series' discussions of power, wealth, and class, not on all the ways that neoliberalism can be present. This essay concludes that while Game of Thrones can critique neoliberalism, it is unable to offer an alternative to the society it critiques. In many ways, the conclusion of Game of Thrones, which proposes a counterargument against neoliberalism, runs counter to the very objections it raised. From here, it is determined that even though the Game of Thrones story does not match the neoliberal discourse pattern, its audience appeal is diminished by how the show ends.

Introduction
In year 2011, Game of Thrones was the most watched television series. Without counting the millions more that viewed the show illegally, Game of Thrones might bring in 10 million viewers to HBO alone over the course of its 8 seasons. The conflict for the "Iron Throne" and the civil war in a mediaeval nation are the subjects of the television series. This series, which has dragons, magic, politics, love, and violence, rapidly won the hearts of millions of people. The story being revealed beneath the surface is more interesting to this paper. I wish to investigate the ideological foundations of the Game of Thrones story considering Hall's (2016) writings. Neoliberalism shall be referred to as the dominant ideology for the sake of this essay. I consider neoliberalism to have had a bad impact on our political, economic, and cultural institutions as a social justice student. I am therefore interested in how neoliberal ideology is supported and promoted by mainstream popular culture. Having said that, I am not willing to subject Game of Thrones to such categories prior to a thorough examination of its story because I am curious in the potential for mainstream popular culture to challenge prevailing orthodoxy. Neoliberalism has a direct impact on power, money, and class, thus I will concentrate on how it relates to these topics in this essay. Although neoliberalism covers a lot more than these three areas, for the purposes of this essay, I will only be concentrating on these. The following is the subject of my research question: How may the Game of Thrones story, as a component of mainstream popular culture, combat prevailing notions about power, wealth, and class?

Other aspects of this series cannot be discussed because the narrative is the main subject of this essay. Visuals, for instance, would have helped in addressing this research question, but due to the scale of this project, they won't be included in this analysis. This study takes the position that story will suffice because it will ultimately point to ideology. Conversations between characters, which characters succeed and fail, which characters survive and die, and which character will win "Game of Thrones" will show the ideology it promotes, more particularly, how the story justifies these characters' outcomes. For instance, if a character suffers, does the story criticize their laziness and say that they are solely to

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blame for their own shortcomings? The story likely promotes neoliberal ideas. However, if the story focuses on the societal or economic barriers to this character's success, it might be more resistant to such an ideology. This research question will be resolved based on how the narrative approaches the themes of power, wealth, and class via the prism of neoliberalism.

Similar to that, this study will undertake a content analysis and, as a result, speak about latent content. As this series is set in a mediaeval fantasy world, it won't directly address neoliberalism; instead, the aim of this analysis is to show how it does so subtly. More specifically, it will make analogies between the discussions of class, wealth, and power in this series with similar

discussions in our day. This study will use debates of neoliberal discourse and criticism of it to assess how much Game of Thrones defies neoliberalism. From there, this essay will go over how the Game of Thrones storyline may help or hinder the fight for social justice.

Methodology

How may the Game of Thrones story, as a component of mainstream popular culture, challenge prevailing ideas about class, wealth, and power? My objective is to determine whether or not neoliberalism is reflected in the series' overall narrative. I analyze the major narrative components that touch on issues of power and class/wealth. I conduct a content study of the series' statements and particular narrative moments to evaluate their applicability to the issues of power, wealth, and class. I review each episode of Game of Thrones in order to do this.

If the television show can show how its story can be utilized to advance social justice, then others will be able to do the same with their own stories. On the other hand, should it be found that Game of Thrones promotes neoliberal ideology and replicates it, it is equally crucial to research the effects of the show's messaging on its viewers, especially for a show with such a large audience as Game of Thrones.

I use content analysis since it is the best approach to answer my research question. According to Krippendorff (2004), content analysis is the process of determining the meaning and likely outcomes of a body of transmitted material (such as a book or film). (p. xvii) In this analysis of Game of Thrones, we will determine if the programme pushes narratives that support neoliberal ideology or narratives that oppose it. This research aims to uncover the narrative's meaning and the philosophy behind it by employing a method guided by content analysis. This essay examines the underlying presumptions of the narrative (the latent content), the potential ways in which it might speak to an audience beyond the present circumstance, or, more specifically, whether the narrative reinforces or resists neoliberalism through underlying meaning or speaking to an audience beyond the present circumstance.

In order to categories quotes and narrative events according to their assigned topics of power or wealth/class, I evaluate the quote's connection to neoliberalism when I first allocate it to a topic. It could be required to choose which quotes are more important than the others depending on how many quotes are gathered. I undertake a detailed analysis using the literature that has been discussed so far in this paper based on the initial assessment. Together, these examinations of narrative passages and citations will enable me to determine whether Game of Thrones is resilient.

According to the research I did, pop culture narratives can act as vehicles for ideologies. According to Stuart Hall (2016), the dominant system does not automatically provide the conditions necessary for people to create new political subjectivities and subjective possibilities for themselves. They are obtained through the articulation techniques that result in them (p. 205). The prevailing system will not allow for new subjectivities or new viewpoints to be accessible to the general audience. This study can investigate what is being said beneath the narrative's surface using the content analysis method and draw conclusions about which ideology is at work.

Analysis
Having power is a myth

As a civil war for the monarchy breaks out across the nation, the issue of power continues. Most pretenders to the throne behave in a similar manner to Robert, threatening to "bend the knee or I'll destroy them". The majority of candidates are more concerned with serving their personal interests than the interests of the people they hope to rule. They do awful things like assassinate kids who could challenge their authority or burn their opponents alive. They do this because they think that "Ruling is like lying on a bed of weeds and ripping them out one by one before they suffocate you in your sleep," (s02e02) But as previously mentioned and implied by the narrative, "I'm no king, but I think there's more to rule than that," The next quotation from the tale emphasizes this idea even more:

Does it? He has neither crown, nor gold, nor favour with the gods. He has a sword, the power of life and death. But if it's swordsmen who rule, why do we pretend kings hold all the power? When Ned Stark lost his head, who was truly responsible? Joffrey? The executioner? Or something else? Power resides where men believe it resides. It's a trick, a shadow on the wall. And a very small man can cast a very large shadow.

The fundamental nature of authority in this series is questioned by this quotation. It stresses the idea that power is an illusion rather than just rejecting the idea that kings or even the affluent wield it. A person's belief affects that power. As a result, it is a myth that the king must be oppressive or to be feared. The notion that wealth and power are equivalent is also untrue.

Kingship or wealth only had impact because of people's faith in them. As a result, when others have faith in them, they might investigate alternate aspects of power.

There is a prevalent idea known as "capitalist realism" in neoliberal discourse that holds that not only is capitalism the only functional political and economic system, but also that it is currently hard to even conceive of a cogent alternative (Fisher, 2009, p. 2) [11]. Those who embrace neoliberal and capitalist discourses might accept the "bumps" in the system while simultaneously ignoring them by making the claim that there are no alternative options, which is known as "capitalist realism." Game of Thrones tries to dispel the notions that their system is normal, that kings have always been cruel, and that the affluent have exploited their position of power. By doing so, it also calls into question their society's entire system of authority. People believe that the way the world of Game of Thrones is shaped is the only possible way for it to be shaped. As Fisher notes, "capitalist realism offers itself as a shield sheltering us from the

hazards posed by belief itself," the audience might here negotiate or take up the series' narrative surrounding the illusion of power (p. 5). The notion that there can be an alternative is what it means to oppose the neoliberal narrative surrounding "capitalist realism." Game of Thrones asserts that power only exists in people's minds, that it is a ruse, and that anybody may become powerful.

The system of rule
Some compare the system to a ladder where they compete to reach the top. Whether those at the top behave cruelly or kindly, selfishly or selflessly, it was never intended that they do so; what matters is the ascent. Securing power and clinging to it for as long as possible is all that matters. The investigation of the various characteristics of kings in the series has shown that those who can perform harsh deeds, own enormous riches, and operate in their own self-interest have an easier time climbing the ladder. It is also evident that whoever ascends to the top of this ladder will not remain there for very long. Tywin Lannister, who reached the top of the ladder, dropped from it after just one season. The show then starts to doubt this "ladder." What purpose does it all serve? How many people's lives were lost so that one person could remain in power for a little period of time? How long would Rob Stark have remained at the top of the ladder before being knocked down, for instance? Would his brief presence there have allowed him to have an impact? The query posed in this quotation is as follows:
I know. But still it filled me with dread. Piles and piles of them, years and years of them. How many countless living, crawling things smashed and dried out and returned to the dirt? In my dreams I found myself standing on a beach made of beetle husks stretching as far as the eye could see. I woke up crying, weeping for their shattered little bodies. I tried to stop Orson once… He just pushed me aside with a "cuhn" and kept on smashing. Every day, until that mule kicked him in the chest and killed him. So, what do you think? Why did he do it? What was it all about? (S04E08).
What the aim of this arrangement is, what Game of Thrones starts to ponder? What good is it if the system constantly promotes rivalry among people and this competition causes the pain and death of millions so that one person can hold power for a split second before someone else snatches it away from them? What purpose does the peasant class serve in serving the ruling class when all that the ruling class is concerned with is gaining and maintaining power? Especially when the ruling class engages in "the climb" competition while the peasant class suffers the most. Competition is the central theme of neoliberalism's discourse. Instead, the neoliberal state aims to reconstruct society around the competitiveness ethos and the competition principle, as Davies (2016) [6]. Describes (p. xvi). This fits the definition of a meritocracy. According to Davies (2016) [6], the majority of people are classified as "losers" under this system, meaning that their inability to make the "climb" is due to their own lack of talent or effort rather than the unfair system they are required to compete in. This is something that Game of Thrones begins to address. This reasoning has been shown in numerous ways through discussions about class, but the fault has been placed on poor leadership rather than ideology.

Conclusion
How may the Game of Thrones story, as a component of mainstream popular culture, combat prevailing beliefs about class and power? Was my initial query. I have come to the conclusion that Game of Thrones is resistive but falls short of providing a viable alternative to the system it is criticising after looking into the narrative's interactions with discourses on power, wealth, and class. There are two distinct sorts of opposition to hegemonic ideology according to Gramsci (1999): negative and positive. Game of Thrones offered its viewers the chance to bargain or engage in harmful kinds of resistance, as was demonstrated in the analysis of this paper. While discussing power, Game of Thrones makes it abundantly obvious that its citizens are not all given equal access to it. Neoliberal language would indicate that economies will expand in the absence of government intervention, which will result in human progress. Neoliberalism supports the idea that people are equal because of democracy. Although a monarchy is shown in Game of Thrones, democracies in the actual world can be compared. "Actual existent constitutional democracies privilege the wealthiest," as Dean (2009) [7] put it. The poor are excluded, exploited, and oppressed as neoliberal capitalism is installed, expanded, and protected, despite claims to the contrary (p. 76). Here, the audience can discuss or contrast how the monarchy in Game of Thrones, or the "wheel," primarily serves the interests of the ruling elite.
Furthermore, it was shown that in this series, affluent people motivated by their own self- interest hold the power rather than Kings and Queens. Wars erupt out and kings and queens are replaced when they displease the powerful lords. I think Game of Thrones gave its audience the chance to negotiate or mount a resistance to such discourses by highlighting how power is held by a privileged minority through debates of neoliberal discourse on power and their accompanying criticism.

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