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THE TRANSFORMATION OF RESISTANCE DISCOURSE INTO THREAT DISCOURSE IN THE VERBAL NARRATIVE OF THE GAME HOGWARTS LEGACY

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ABSTRACT
This study examines how the verbal narrative of *Hogwarts Legacy* transforms Goblin resistance discourse into threat discourse. Despite experiencing structural discrimination, particularly exclusion from wandlore, the Goblins' rebellion under Ranrok is portrayed as destructive, legitimizing wizard authority while delegitimizing marginalized resistance. The study also critically addresses the reproduction of anti-Semitic stereotypes in Goblin representation. Employing Fairclough's three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), supported by Gramsci's hegemony and Fraser's counterpublics, this study investigates the linguistic and ideological mechanisms underlying this discursive transformation. Data consist of dialogues, cutscenes, descriptive texts, field guides, and ambient dialogue from the main storyline of the PC Steam version, collected through systematic gameplay and verbatim transcription. Analysis follows Fairclough's stages of description, interpretation, and explanation, with trustworthiness assessed using Lincoln and Guba's criteria. This study contributes to critical linguistic game studies by revealing how interactive narratives reproduce ideological power relations and marginalize resistance. Its novelty lies in conceptualizing the transformation of resistance discourse into threat discourse and counterpublic co-optation as mechanisms through which marginalized voices are delegitimized in video game narratives.

Keywords: *critical discourse analysis; hogwarts legacy; resistance discourse; hegemony; counterpublics*

INTRODUCTION
Contemporary video games are not merely entertainment; they are spaces of discourse production that construct social meaning, power relations, and ideology for players (Muriel & Crawford, 2018). As interactive narrative media, video games hold a unique capacity to shape players' attitudes toward social issues through the interwoven mechanisms of story, dialogue, and gameplay systems (Pérez Latorre & Oliva, 2019). One game worth examining from this perspective is Hogwarts Legacy (Avalanche Software, 2023), a role-playing game set in J.K. Rowling's wizarding world, particularly because it represents Goblins as a non-human group subjected to structural marginalization.

In the game's narrative, Goblins are historically and institutionally barred from accessing wandlore, the knowledge and right to own and use wands, which in the Harry Potter universe symbolizes power and magical legitimacy. This prohibition reflects long-standing structural discrimination that places Goblins in a subordinate position to wizards. The Goblin

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rebellion led by Ranrok can therefore be read, in substance, as a legitimate form of resistance to systemic oppression.

However, the narrative frames the rebellion differently. Rather than constructing it as a legitimate struggle for equality, the game represents Ranrok and his followers as a destructive threat to the wizarding order, one the wizard protagonist must stop. This shift produces an ideological paradox: the game appears to acknowledge the structural injustice Goblins experience, yet delegitimizes their attempt to resist it.

The issue becomes more complex given critiques that the game's visual and narrative representation of Goblins replicates classic anti-Semitic stereotypes, including particular physical depictions and associations with banking and wealth (Zhou, 2023). Such stereotypes are not new to the Harry Potter franchise, but their reappearance in an interactive medium raises questions about how old discourses are reproduced and naturalized through new narrative mechanisms.

Nancy Fraser's (1990) concept of counterpublics is relevant here. Subordinate groups often create alternative discursive arenas to articulate interests and identities unaccommodated by the dominant public sphere. In Hogwarts Legacy, the Goblins' space of resistance is co-opted by the dominant narrative into a discourse of threat to be crushed. From a Gramscian perspective, this counterpublic co-optation manifests ideological hegemony operating through narrative and linguistic mechanisms.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative-critical approach with a descriptive-interpretive orientation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). A qualitative approach was chosen because the study seeks to understand the meanings, ideological constructions, and power relations embedded in texts, which cannot be reduced to quantitative data alone. The critical character of the study is reflected in its aim to unmask the ideologies hidden behind discursive constructions that appear neutral or taken for granted.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Initial analysis of the field guide texts and expository dialogue shows that the power relations between Goblins and wizards are constructed from the outset through a historical narrative about the ban on wandlore access. Textually, this ban is generally presented in a descriptive-historical mode, as a given historical fact rather than a problematic or questionable political decision. This pattern is a form of ideological naturalization: structural inequality appears as an objective condition of the wizarding world, not as the product of historical power relations that can, and should, be questioned.

At the level of transitivity, the Goblins' semantic role shifts from goal/patient (those acted upon, in the context of historical oppression) to active agent of violence once the narrative enters the rebellion phase. This shift matters because it redirects narrative focus away from the structural injustice behind the rebellion and toward Ranrok and his followers as individual sources of threat.

At the lexical level, the vocabulary describing Goblin actions during the rebellion (words associated with violence, chaos, or threat) should be compared with the vocabulary describing equivalent wizard actions. The protagonist's magical violence against Goblins, for instance, is generally legitimized through frames of "self-defense" or "rescue."

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At the level of modality, it is necessary to examine how deontic and epistemic modality are used differently: whether the wizards' suppression of the rebellion is presented as an indisputable moral necessity (high modality, such as "must" and "have to"), while the Goblins' motives are framed with doubt or epistemic deficit, implying uncertainty over the legitimacy of their demands.

In line with Zhou's (2023) critique, the game's visual representation of Goblins, though outside the scope of this verbal analysis, serves as intertextual context reinforcing a critical reading of the verbal text. In Fraser's framework, the Goblin rebellion, which could function as a counterpublic for articulating legitimate demands for equal access to wandlore, is co-opted by the dominant narrative into a threat the protagonist must crush. This co-optation works hegemonically: players are structurally positioned, through gameplay and the protagonist's perspective, to accept this framing as given.

If confirmed by complete verbatim data, these findings indicate that Hogwarts Legacy reproduces a classic hegemonic pattern: surface acknowledgment of structural injustice without narrative legitimation of the oppressed group's resistance. This is consistent with the Gramscian argument that hegemony operates most effectively not by denying injustice, but by limiting the space for legitimate responses to it.

CONCLUSION

Based on the conceptual and methodological framework developed, this study is projected to show that the verbal narrative of Hogwarts Legacy constructs Goblin-wizard power relations asymmetrically through ideological reframing at the levels of modality, lexicalization, and transitivity, effectively transforming the Goblins' discourse of resistance into a discourse of threat. These findings strengthen the argument that video games, like other narrative media, can function as instruments for reproducing ideological hegemony, even when they appear to offer social critique at the surface level. Future research is recommended to complement this study with multimodal (visual-audio) analysis and to examine player reception, in order to understand the extent to which this ideological framing is accepted, negotiated, or rejected by audiences.

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