

Transactive Criticism on Bridgerton TV Series through Norman N. Holland's Perspective

Eka Sulistia Cahya^{1*}, Sandra Damar Siswanti²
^{1,2} Universitas Gadjah Mada

*Email: ekasulistiakahya@mail.ugm.ac.id

ABSTRACT

In the new criticism, the reading process involves both reader and the work. This study aimed to find what makes a work become popular based on readers' responses. By using the Bridgerton first series, this study was analyzed using transactive criticism by Norman N. Holland. According to Holland, in the reading process, there are 4 modalities used by the audience as the step to understand the process of making meaning in Holland's perspective, there are defense, expectation, fantasy, and transformation (DEFT). The data was gathered from the comments of the audience in IMDb (Internet Movie Database). The results found that Bridgerton became popular are because of people's interest in regency era genre, it useful as the pandemic escapism, easy plot, the curiosity of the novel's reader, the diversity and the high rating. In watching the series, the audience has their own approach and point of view.

Keywords: Bridgerton, transactive criticism, popular literature. DEFT, reception

INTISARI

Pada era kritik baru, proses membaca melibatkan pembaca dan karya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menemukan hal apa yang membuat sebuah karya menjadi populer melalui respon pembaca. Dengan menggunakan serial pertama Bridgerton, penelitian ini dianalisis dengan menggunakan kritik transaktif Norman N. Holland. Menurut Holland, dalam proses membaca, terdapat 4 modalitas yang digunakan pembaca dalam memahami proses pembangunan makna, diantaranya pertahanan, ekspektasi, fantasi, dan transformasi (DEFT). Data dikumpulkan melalui komentar audiens di platform IMDb (Internet Movie Database). Hasilnya ditemukan bahwa Bridgerton menjadi populer karena genrenya, menjadi pelarian saat pandemi, plotnya mudah, rasa penasaran pembaca novelnya, keberagaman aktor, dan ratingnya yang tinggi. Dalam menikmati serial tersebut, audiens memiliki pendekatan dan sudut pandang masing-masing yang membuat mereka memiliki pandangan yang berbeda meski membicarakan satu topik yang sama.

Kata kunci: *Bridgerton, kritik transaktif, sastra populer. DEFT, resepsi*

INTRODUCTION

Novels, movies, and series are three different things. Novels are verbal, while movies and series are audiovisual. But those three have something in common in giving the

experience to its audiences (Adi 2016). The shifting from printed to visual media, that is from novel to movie, is affected by the development of technology. The invention of the new tools has made everything simpler, easier, and more practical. That's what happens to printed books such as novels which can be found only in physical form and now also can be found in digital form in everyone's devices. The transformation also happened to the human's habit where to see the movies only can be done at the theater, but now it can be watched from the TV in the house, via personal computer, or even using the smartphone. All in all, what invention that people consume today, primarily online, is just one of a "new way" of enjoying the previous media, what is completely new actually is the way people receive it and their perception toward the media (Hammond 2015).

In the study of popular literature, popularity serves as a strong foundation for selecting research objects, particularly when the aim is to understand reader responses and the wider reception of a work. Popularity is not merely a quantitative measure but an indicator of a text's appeal to a broad audience (Gaves, 2015). Wolfgang Iser, for instance, posits that the meaning of a literary work emerges through the interaction between text and reader, where readers' responses reflect their experiences and expectations (Iser, 1980). Literary texts are a phenomenon that only becomes actualized once they are read and responded by their readers. A text itself is merely a pre-logic, while the true logic resides in the mind of the reader (Williams, 2009). Therefore, the popularity of a works of literature signals a dynamic engagement between the text and diverse layers of readers, indicating how the work fulfills or challenges their expectations.

One of the media that is currently being popular in the middle of the new generation is Netflix. It is offering a feature that the movie theater can't provide, the flexibility. Since everyone always has the leisure time and wants to chill in their bed while enjoying themselves, Netflix gives rise to their need and provides movies and series right in their hand via smart TV, laptop or their smartphone that is connected to the internet. Netflix is just the new media of TV channels, so basically, they are similar in offering the experience of watching by audiovisual. The difference is that Netflix involves transnational audiences, internet, and channels that mediated with technology (Jenner 2018). In 2019, Netflix was available in 190 countries and had 100 million subscribers dominated by Americans (Jenner 2018). In 2023, it was raised to 260 million (Dean 2024).

Netflix has produced several widely acclaimed shows, with *Bridgerton* emerging as a notable success. As of September 24, *Bridgerton* Season 1 ranks fourth on Netflix's All-Time Most Popular TV Shows chart, with 113.3 million views, equating to 929.3 million hours watched. Season 2 follows in sixth place, with 105.9 million views and 845.3 million viewing hours, while Season 3, released on June 13, 2024, is currently in the tenth position with 797.2 million views and 93.8 million hours watched (Seitz 2024). In 2022–2023, *Bridgerton* was the world's most in-demand romantic drama, boasting a global demand rating 33.9 times higher than the average TV show (Roeloffs 2024). The show's appeal is particularly strong among women, who make up 76% of its viewers, with one-third of the audience identifying as Black or Hispanic (Mitovich 2022). Despite not being Netflix's top-ranked show overall, *Bridgerton* is the platform's most-watched romance series, setting it apart from other popular titles in genres like mystery, thriller, and crime.

Adapted from Julia Quinn's 2000 novel, *Bridgerton* attracted 82 million viewers within 28 days of its release and occupied the first place in 83 different countries (Robinson 2021). The series reached 625 million views, establishing it as a record-breaking title on Netflix (Travers 2024; Nunan 2021). With production costs nearing 100 million USD, *Bridgerton* earned approximately 239 million USD in profits from the UK alone in 2020 (Wijayanti 2022). It has further consolidated its reputation as the number one series on IMDb's most popular TV shows list (IMDb 2024). IMDb stands for Internet Movie Database which is an authoritative and popular platform of movie and TV source.

Classified as a romance-drama, *Bridgerton* represents a breakthrough in genre diversification on Netflix, where action, adventure, and comedy typically dominate viewership (Nash Information Services 2024). The show's success underscores an evolution within the romance genre, as subgenres have reshaped both narrative formulas and societal values (Romeril 2024). *Bridgerton* leverages these shifts to capture a broad audience, marking it as a distinct cultural phenomenon. Given *Bridgerton*'s exceptional viewership numbers across genres, audience influence appears to play a critical role in determining a show's popularity. Analyzing popular media through audience reception, this study explores *Bridgerton*'s appeal by examining IMDb audience reviews, utilizing Norman N. Holland's psychoanalytic reader-response theory to investigate why and how this series resonates widely with viewers.

In his psychoanalytic criticism framework, Holland provides four modalities called DEFT which stand for *Defenses*, *Expectations*, *Fantasies*, and *Transformations*. These modalities become a fundamental step in reading process according to Holland which includes what kind of approach that people do to a text (expectation), being selective to what they should take for themselves (defenses), the projection of wish-fulfillment (fantasy), and the translation process of the fantasy related to the themes (transformation) (Grujicic-Alatryste 2013). The themes mean the plot and its meaning (Holland 1989). In real life, people save their desire in id, and act as their ego which has been filtered by superego. Holland says defense has some forms, there are repression, denial, projection, introjection, fight against the self, splitting, symbolization, sublimation, and rationalization (Holland 1989). Each of the readers will choose their own notion to the specific point of interest with their own sense and logical thinking (McPhail 2017). Holland contends that “we enjoy literary works in a mode derived from our most primitive experience of gratified desire, that stage in earliest infancy when we feel at one with the nurturing mother who satisfies our hunger” (McPhail 2017). The way readers enjoy the work of literature is by glorifying the desire as the child being fed from their mother. It is because the work showed what they really want to see and that fulfilling their fantasy. Holland stated about transformation that “We abstract images, incidents, characters, forms, and the rest into certain psychological themes: man-woman, mother-child, castration-gratification, coercion-submission, and so on and those themes are built : “if I am phallicly coercive, mother will castrate me; if I submit, she will gratify me” (Holland 1989).

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research methodology with descriptive analysis to explore audience responses to media narratives. Data collection centers on user comments sourced from the IMDb platform, selected to capture a broad spectrum of viewer interpretations and reactions. To enhance representational depth, comments were chosen at random, ensuring diversity in user backgrounds, content focus, and thematic engagement (Wang et al., 2013). Following data collection, the study applies Norman Holland's DEFT (Defense, Expectation, Fantasy, Transformation) model, a psychoanalytic framework that interprets textual engagement through the reader's psychological lens. This model was chosen for its ability to reveal the subjective processes by which readers project personal

experiences, fears, and desires onto media texts, constructing unique, individualized meanings. By analyzing user comments through DEFT, the study captures how audiences incorporate their identities and psychosocial backgrounds in response to narratives (Grujicic-Alatrisme 2013).

The data analysis method begins by analyzing each comment using the stages outlined in Norman Holland's DEFT model: Defense, Expectation, Fantasy, and Transformation. First, the analysis identifies “defenses” in comments where audience members may exhibit resistance or discomfort in response to certain aspects of the narrative. This defensive response, which can reflect cultural taboos, personal boundaries, or societal norms, reveals underlying psychological barriers that shape viewers' interpretations (Anggraini et al., 2021). Next, the analysis moves to map “expectations” that audience members bring to the narrative. This phase considers how pre-existing beliefs, cultural frameworks, and personal experiences influence what viewers anticipate from the storyline or character behaviors. Following this, the model explores the “fantasy” elements, identifying parts of the narrative that align with or challenge personal or collective desires, revealing deeper psychological needs or wishes that the audience may project onto the text. Finally, the analysis examines “transformation,” where the narrative and reader's self-concept intersect, producing an interpretation that integrates the story's themes into the viewer's own identity. Through this phased approach, the study offers a nuanced understanding of how personal, cultural, and psychological factors shape the reception of media content (Anggraini et al., 2021).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study is focusing on the first season of Bridgerton. By taking random sample of the comments, the result showed that at least there are six themes or categories of audience reason on watching Bridgerton and gaining its popularity. Each of the themes represented by two comments from different IMDb user/audience.

Table 1: Summary of Audience Responses

Theme	Audience Comment		
Interest on regency era drama	<table border="1"> <tr> <td><i>Cejvr</i> (Apr 29, 2021) From the first episode I was hooked. I haven't read the books so I had no idea about the storyline or even that this was actually based on a book series. I love</td> <td><i>alatouche</i> (Feb 3, 2021) Bridgerton is beautiful and romantic. The aristocracy truly believes they are civilized while treating women like chattel. However, Bridgerton has given</td> </tr> </table>	<i>Cejvr</i> (Apr 29, 2021) From the first episode I was hooked. I haven't read the books so I had no idea about the storyline or even that this was actually based on a book series. I love	<i>alatouche</i> (Feb 3, 2021) Bridgerton is beautiful and romantic. The aristocracy truly believes they are civilized while treating women like chattel. However, Bridgerton has given
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	<p>these time period dramas. So after I finished watching this season I was quite surprised to whom the notorious Lady Wistledown is. But although it was revealed to us the ton still has no idea who the author is, am I right? I hope that it will be revealed later to the ton in the series. But to let the cat out of the bag now would spoil the fun. Good ending for a nice romance. I'm glad Simon did not leave Daphne otherwise he must have ended up a very unhappy man. Although the order of the children born to them was reversed I still like the fact that they had a son. (And his father did not win). Giving this a 10. Music was good. The plot excellent. And the chemistry between the lead actors were superb. Really a nice show. Love it.</p>	<p>women the autonomy to create their own destinies unlike other historical dramas that portray women as weak and needy.</p> <p>I love Lady Danbury is gorgeous, bold, and does not take no for an answer. She's the pencil that connects all the dots.</p> <p>The men are fickle and lost and in need of attention. A nice change from the typical period romance dramas.</p>
<p>Escapism</p>	<p><i>AntiRacistFeminist</i> (Dec 26, 2020) I've not read the books so don't know how faithful it is but this series was great fun. It was over the top and very dramatic but also very funny. Which is exactly what you want from a Regency era comic-drama. It's exactly the sort of thing to take your mind off real life drama. It is definitely a good idea to spend 8 hours watching people dancing in beautiful clothes at extravagant balls, and wondering if the pretty young woman will marry the handsome Duke. (Instead of worrying about a pandemic) I definitely recommend it.</p>	<p><i>dmseeneey</i> (Jan 3, 2021) Quirky, cute and quaint. I could come up with many more adjectives to describe this darling show. Oh, I forgot lovely. LOL! This show could not have come along a more perfect time. During covid we needed to smile, I mean a really big smile, and Bridgestone delivers. I haven't felt this good watching a show in a long time. It isn't as funny as the book "The Duke and I" but it makes for it by being so totally cute. The storyline is sometimes a bit foolish, but who cares it is so much fun to watch. I don't think the lead actors are well matched. But I liked them very much. And they do have chemistry. The actress playing Daphne looks like Peter Pan's sister for the Disney movie. Cute as a button. I don't know what is going on this year, but she is the second actress to look like a Disney cartoon character, the other is the lead actress in <i>The Queen's Gambit</i>. I can't wait for Season 2 and read the rest of Julia Quinn's books.</p>
<p>Curiosity</p>	<p><i>K-stephen</i> (Dec 25, 2020) Yes embarrassing what a way to ruin a book, ruin history. It upsets to think that Julia Quinn who wrote the source material that was so well researched in all areas sold her rights to be made into this drivel. I hate to say Julia Quinn. Who was my go to</p>	<p><i>Judymhut</i> (Dec 26, 2020) I'm a huge fan on the Bridgerton series. For years I've wanted a film adaptation but a series is even better. The books are obviously better but they've done a great job of capturing Julia Quinn's wit, charm and romance. It's not a</p>

	<p>re-read will never be re-read again. I am so sad the someone should sell her vision to be made into this embarrassing Tosh. I admired writers who hold on to their dreams, Rowling, Meyer and even EL James. Just so so embarrassing!!!!!!!</p>	<p>perfect show but it's perfect if you're looking for some feel-good escapism. Daphne and Simon's love story isn't the best of the series so it's only going to get better from here. Can't wait for the other siblings to get their stories.</p>
<p>Easy plot</p>	<p><i>Laurasalander</i> (Dec, 25 2020) Now, the plot is predictable for a novel series like this. I chose to watch it with my mother and it was enjoyable like an afternoon conversation with friends. Nothing deep really, lack of subtlety. But that doesn't have to be a bad thing. People often forget who are watching series and films, forgetting that some may not understand the undertones of a message. Bridgerton's lack of subtlety is beneficial for them, for my mother who doesn't understand English aristocracy because of our background. She loved the series.</p>	<p><i>dream_girleva18</i> (Jan 3, 2021) My husband and I enjoyed it. It was cute, funny and easy to watch. I think other people just took it to seriously to enjoy it. Either they hate love or never loved at all.</p>
<p>Diversity</p>	<p><i>Alfaroperla</i> (Dec 26, 2020) Is a great story, really well made and enjoyable to watch, I think the actors all did a great job and is really refreshing to see people of color in period stories. And if you are mad about that last thing then stay mad and quiet thanks.</p>	<p><i>Elisaforsgren</i> (Dec 25, 2020) I do not have a problem with diversity or that this series does not align perfectly with history... but my problem is that it is a period piece. And while they did not hold to truth on the race of aristocrats - you should expect this when it is a Shondaland production, think Hamilton - the issue is they held true on the language used and the seriously deep misogyny. It is almost every line and well, the very theme of the series of events that take place to show the eligible women off to marry a wealthy man.</p>
<p>The rating</p>	<p><i>Irinap2000</i> (Dec 26, 2020) Sorry but I could watch only for 10 min. The queen who behaves like a drunk sailor in a pub. Where is the grace and benevolence? Really??? Editing my first review: after seeing a high score ratings, tried to whatch one more time, picked episode 3. No!! It is impossible. I have very sophisticated taste in movies and degree in art history. This movie is nothing but a disappointment.</p>	<p><i>bluebell-56367</i> (Dec 27, 2021) Watched it cause everyone was freaking out about how "good" it is. Most bland, boring show I've ever made myself sit through. Just go watch the classic books to novels and you'll get so much more than this snooze fest will give you.</p>

1. Elaboration of DEFT model

In the new criticism about the reader's response, it is understandable that meaning is not only in the text itself, but something that is constructed in the reader's mind in the limitation of the text. The audience needs to be counted as one of the factors in the meaning making process, because they have different interpretations because of their different identity and experience. In this paper, Bridgerton season 1 TV series that play on Netflix used as the medium to see how the interpretation of the reader is different from one to another.

It is indeed different to see the reader's response from the printed book and from the audiovisual, because what attract the audience from audiovisual is not only to the text itself, but also The reviews given by the audience showed a lot of different concerns even though this research only takes some of them, but it quite represents the diversity of the human mind. Identity and experience are both important aspects in determining the drive of the self. If we take a look at the modalities that Holland offers, that is DEFT (Defense, Expectation, Fantasy, Transformation), we know that not all of the reviewers are really into the series. Some of them like it and the others dislike it. Their expectation means that their approach, or their motives in watching the series are variably different. The thing is that they are all engaged to the work and the work being meaningful because of the reader's interpretation on specific things. It is what Holland called transactive. What the story gives is not taken as it is, but there is reader's mind on it. There's a fantasy that reader's try to reflect from the story to their real life.

Let's have a look at different reviews from [BoydudeReviews](#) (1 January 2021)

As a 23 year old black dude, I actually liked this show. I honestly thought it was going to be a full on comedy, but it actually had a lot of dramatic themes. I won't lie when i watched the first two episodes, I was very, very confused as to why there were alot of black royals. I thought for a second that this was true, but if memories served me right, it wasn't. But then I began to understand that this is all fiction and a made-up fantasy on what if life was like this.

And I have to admit, I kinda liked it. Some people don't like the film because of it being politically incorrect. But there are HUNDREDS and HUNDREDS of period dramas that are more accurate than this. So why don't those people just go and watch those? I think people just want to complain about something because human beings are never satisfied. Even some of the greatest period dramas that are pretty historically accurate has it's fair share of haters. I didn't take it seriously. I just turned my brain off and enjoyed the fantasy.

From this review, we knew that the reviewer expected it to be a funny series but he got nothing but a drama theme at the end. He projects his idea into the story as a defense and makes a fantasy about the aristocratic life itself. There are a lot of comments about how “fiction” the story is, in which the story didn't give the true history and people are wanting that kind of truth from the series. Let's just say about the diversity, it might not be like that in real life. But this dude's fantasy made him comfortable with the series, he follows the storyline as the series gives him. As Tyson stated that if a reader dislikes a text, in order to finish it, she/he needs to cope with it, indeed Holland also asserted that the effort to cope is the interpretation process itself (Tyson 2015). This dude turns out to believe that diversity can be real, even if it is just in his mind, it means that he copes with the fiction side and continues his watch. He makes the submission that in order to gain pleasure, he needs to be drawn into the story and let his mind go with it. In this level, the series gives him a pleasure, a feeling of black people in the middle of aristocratic life. He made such a defense by transforming fantasy into an acceptable meaning of the ego and made it his own belief. While he knew that the story wasn't real, he still let his consciousness drown into his fantasy (unconscious mind).

2. Between audience and the work towards the popularity

By taking some reviews on IMDb, it is found some reasons why audiences interested in the first season of Bridgerton series, they were because audience interested in regency era drama, it useful as the pandemic escapism, easy plot, the curiosity of the novel's reader to the series version, the diversity (the cast skin color) and the high rating. Those reasons are found by applying DEFT model into the audience reviews and analyzing it to see the motives of each audience points on their expectations, form of defense, especially to their fantasy and how they transform it into the reviews.

2.1. Audience interests in regency era drama

Every person has its own preference in choosing what to watch simply because they have a defense, or in this sense it could be based on different taste. On the review by *Cejvr*, the user didn't have any expectations on what is going to be in the series. Her first line might show what attracted her in the first place, and it was the genre of the series. Period dramas genre or it also can be called regency era drama in which the audience is shown to the different era to nowadays kind of attract people especially its combination to romantic

and a little splash of mystery genre. She doesn't know where the story will take her, but she watched it simply because of her interest and curiosity in it. Her expectation on the genre gives her the drive to continue watching and keep guessing and also expect the happy ending of the love story between the Duke and Daphne.

The user's fantasy falls into being authoritative instead of being submissive. In this case, the user's fantasy is to fight against the text of who's the real Lady Whistledown without relying on what text has given to the audience. In another fantasy of the user, Simon should be with Daphne to be happy, it can be a reflection on how her thoughts focus on the relationship goals between man and woman. She transforms the fantasy into the ideal life of marriage and having a kid as the result. Just like the ideal reality that everyone's always craving for. Yet it is a kind of submissive act toward the story for the user to become satisfied with the story, as Holland said that "if I am phallicly coercive, mother will castrate me; if I submit, she will gratify me"(Holland 1989). By being submissive to the story, the user gets its satisfying moment and pleasure in watching the series.

alatouche showed different reaction according to the series by mentioning *a nice change from typical period romance dramas* which means that this typical genre is the kind of this user's taste. The user found the different element of the series that different from any other drama which portray the user's interest on how woman depicted, how strong and independent, while men are weak. The user being submissive according to the stage of fantasy. Being submissive means that the user follows and enjoys the storyline. It can be concluded from the comment that the user transformed the fantasy onto the boldness of women behavior toward the men's world.

2.2. Pandemic escapism

This series was published for the first time in 2020. In the middle of the pandemic era people tended to stay at home and do everything online such as working or finding something to entertain themselves. Bridgerton became one of the most suitable escapes for those who find it very difficult to go through the pandemic by just staying at home for a long time.

The review from *AntiRacistFeminist* definitely shows how the pandemic era became a big concern for a lot of people. Instead of being stressed, people need their leisure time to

be fulfilled with this kind of series. The user shows the defense of being in a pandemic era and just turns its fantasy of the romance between man and woman. Just like the previous section of the comment by *Cejvr*, this type of user transforms the story as her fantasy, the inner wish of being loved. In the middle of the locked down time, there was a lot of burden felt by the people, and as their needs of some escapism, this series gave people, especially this user, an opportunity to release the feeling of repression of the hard time.

The similar comment by *dmseeney* with the same pattern showed that Bridgerton has delivered such a good story that fulfilling the user's heart. The reality is really hard to accept and one of the ways out is to let people's mind fly into another world where it is more enjoyable rather than full of pressure. This thing is mentioned by Holland where the reader sends themselves into their fantasy something that they can't solve in real life (Samuels 1978). Instead of minding about the foolishness, the user transforms the fantasy into the fun way of watching in the perfect timing that is in the pandemic era.

2.3. Curiosity

Both of the reviews by *K-stephen* and *Judymhut* are pointing to how the book they read is becoming their biggest concern in watching the series. They have an expectation on how the story will go and bring the same or different pleasure. But the thing is that one of the reasons why they watch the series is because they have read the book and have an expectation on how it will be on screen. Their expectations resulted in different reactions. The first one is more stritch to the book, while the second is more flexible.

Judymhut statement of the "feel-good escapism" has given a clue on how her fantasy is fully accomplished by watching the series. The way she stressed the romance relationship between the main lead characters shows that she translated the whole story in one theme, that is romance. She might have approached the series because of her curiosity after reading the novel and then become a big fan of it. She might be less interested in Daphne and the Duke love story because she had found the better story about the series. But her fantasy at least sent her to an unreal life where true love (might) always wins.

2.4. Easy plot

There are a lot of hard to watch series, especially for some kinds of genre like mystery, detective, etc. But drama and romance might be one of the options for those who

enjoy the light story line but still gives pleasure to the audience primarily in the stressful moment.

Laurasalander and *dream_girleva18* talked about the easy plot that it's easy to catch. For *Laurasalander* especially for her mother who didn't have any background knowledge or maybe interested in Aristocrat history. But the statement of "lack of subtlety" from the user gives the clue of the different expectations between mother and daughter. They both watched it, but the mother enjoys the watch while her daughter has a different point of view on reacting to the series. The user needs her desire to be fulfilled, in this case it is that she wanted to get more about the message of the Aristocracy life, which means that she craves for reality insert in the series, just like an infant who needs to be fed by his mother. In this review we can find the user was doing submission, in order to get satisfied with the work, she ended up agreeing to the whole story and making sense of it.

2.5. Diversity (the cast skin color)

Diversity is everything about humans all around the world, but racism also everywhere. This series gave rise to the issue by giving the look of different skin color to place different and important roles for each of its characters. Even when it is not the real history, people do enjoy it as a part of humanity, while some others still think about the history and reality of the aristocracy in which it doesn't make any sense to have such diversity.

From those reviews, we can see how the defense works on different people. Their opinion through the color diversity on the series cast. It can be mentioned that *Alfaroperla* has an introjection of the work that this user believes and respect to the diversity and receives the message to promote equality. While *Elisaforsgren* statement showed the denial as the defense. It is not straight to the user's idea that the cast should be showing different skin color of the cast while in the reality of the Aristocrat, they are totally different. Each of their defenses are stressed on different things. *Alfaroperla* put her attention to the skin color, the diversity which in her mind is a good idea. This is a reflection of her action toward the racial issue, she fights against it and supports the series for that choice to show diversity. It can be concluded that the user fantasy of anti-racial life, where all people live their life in harmony without being distracted by any differences between human and being racist.

While *Elisaforsgren* commented on the same but quite different point of view, even when she stated that there's nothing wrong with diversity of color but still complaining about the reality about the aristocracy means that the meaning of the literary work can't be separated from real life. In her mind, there should be truth in the story, and that's her need without saying to be racist. She sent her defense on how bad the representation of women in the story by saying "misogyny". Yet it is true that the series only showed how the eligible woman met the valuable man and reversed, in this case, the user shows her opinion by denying the story and on how unfair it is for other (uneligible) women. Her fantasy touches her consciousness with the idea that real life shouldn't be like that.

2.6. The rating

Rating became the other reason for someone to watch the series. It can't be denied that the hype of the series made a magnetic effect to gain more and more audiences and the number of views of the series. But the work itself is back again to the personal taste of the audience. So someone might like or dislike the show. And the number of views are still rising regardless of the different reactions, whether they love it or not.

In this statement, the users either *Irinap2000* or *bluebell-56367* shows how their defense works as the statement come out of disliking the characterization of the queen's behavior. Such defense can be categorized as projections. In the user's mind, there is a fantasy about how the queen should behave, and it doesn't meet the user's expectation and the way she enjoys the work. The users transform the fantasy into an authoritative act where she refuses to agree with such characterization of the queen. The user stated that she has a kind of taste, but after all we can conclude that she was trying to project her idea into the series, but then it didn't match her expectation and failed to build her fantasy. The users might not like it, but the fact that this user still watches it because of the rating means that the judgment of others, their opinion on a work can influence other people and make a work become popular.

CONCLUSION

Through the collecting data of some reviews toward Bridgerton TV series season 1, it can be concluded that different audiences have a different opinion and which part they are interested in. Those differences, according to Holland, are because audiences are engaged with the works by their mind. Their identity and experience are matters in making

meaning. The reviews were analyzed by using Holland's transactive criticism on the DEFT model of reading process and what can be found is that every audience has different points to stress about the series. The result showed that they are getting engaged to the series because the audience is interested in regency era drama, they used it as the pandemic escapism, it has an easy plot, the curiosity of the novel's reader to the series version, the diversity (the cast skin color) and the high rating. Those findings are based on the comments section on IMDb.com of Bridgerton's first series. Their mind goes into different themes because of their different identity and of course experience. All in all, the audience tied themselves into the series. They use the defense and fantasy to make a transformation to the story, they surely give the meaning into the story and make it a transactional relationship between the audience and the work. From the discussion we can conclude that the popularity of Bridgerton didn't come only from its audience who gave good comments but also from those who didn't. Their expectation on different approaches made it possible to increase the number of audience and make Bridgerton as the popular TV series.

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