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Marxist Analysis of *Ready or Not* (2019)

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Abstract

The 2019 horror comedy *Ready or Not* addresses the terror when American class oppression turns deadly and unearths the ruthless nature of maintaining prosperity through the family's game of hide and seek. The cruel, barbaric treatment Grace receives from her new in-laws provides insight on the conditions needed for survival by the working class in modern day America. The film critiques the longstanding concept of the American Dream through the intersectional lens of feminist thought. Through a Marxist analysis, themes of class conflict and alienation emerge as commentary on the harsh nature of capitalism, revealing the dark truth about the "success" of the American bourgeoisie.

Keywords: Marxism, horror films, *Ready or Not*, American Dream, capitalism in Hollywood, feminism in Hollywood

Introduction

In a brief interaction with her husband-to-be, Grace MacCaullay states that her husband's father "thinks I'm after your money," to which he responds, "well, I mean, that's true." This lighthearted taunt at the beginning of the film hints at a central theme of the entire plot, where it is not the proletariat's lust for upward mobility that is the problem but instead the bourgeoisie's willingness to do absolutely anything to maintain their wealth and power. Because capitalist and feminist critiques pervade the entirety of the film, Marxism provides the strongest foundation to analyze *Ready or Not*.

While a number of films in the contemporary age have aimed at inspecting class disparity, in recent years, the focus has shifted to female protagonists representing the role of the proletariat (e.g., *The Menu* from 2022, and *Blink Twice* from 2024). The long-awaited recognition of this intersectionality of gender and class as a source of conflict validates the silent struggle of working-class women via typical horror conventions. As Roberts (2025) observes, writing in *The Conversation*, "the locus of repression becomes their privilege, which is often built on exploitation, inequality and invisible or normalized forms of harm." After first defining Marxism as a critical lens, this paper will explore themes of the American Dream and the feminine body in horror to recognize the *Ready or Not* as having a uniquely intersectional perspective. For this analysis, the film functions as the "superstructure" in Marxist examination, and the underlying analysis of the concepts presented takes shape as the "base."

Methodology

The true beliefs of Karl Marx are often misinterpreted and distorted in modern conversation, but they ultimately boil down to a relatively simple system of ideas revolving around the impact of the means of production on society. Most central to this field of analysis

are the dynamics between the bourgeoisie and proletariat, and idea of false consciousness, and concerns of hegemony and isolation in relation to social structure.

Overview on Marxism

To properly apply Marxist analysis and critique, the defining concepts of this theory must be identified. While trying to find a moment to breathe before her wedding, Grace Maccaullay's palpable anxiety prompts the prying of her future mother-in-law, Becky Le Domas.: She asks Grace, "Nervous? Ah... Because your blood isn't blue enough?" This questioning gives light to a deep-rooted fear of many who find themselves intertwined with those of a higher social class. Berger (2019) explains that through the lens of Marxism, "Everything is shaped, ultimately, by the economic system of a society" (p. 56). Using the terminology of the method, we find that

What Marx has described as the "base" represents the economic system found in a given society. This economic system, or mode of production, influences, in profound and complicated ways, the "superstructure" or institutions and values, of a given society. (Berger, 2019, p. 58)

Not only does the economic system impact the lives and decisions of those within it, but the structure of society feeds into and furthers this cycle and pushing of ideas, primarily onto the working class, labelled by Marx as the proletariat. It is worth noting that this system is not inherent, and the belief that it is inherent ties directly into a key theory of Marxism: the concept of "false consciousness."

Theories of Marxism

Berger (2019) explains false consciousness in simple terms:

It is important for the ruling class to affect people's consciousness by giving them certain ideas; in this way the wealthy, who benefit most from the social arrangements in a capitalist country, maintain the status quo ... the ideas of a given age are those promulgated and popularized by the ruling class in its own interest. Generally speaking, then, the ideas people have are the ideas that the ruling class wants them to have. (pp. 59- 60)

Essentially, the bourgeoisie maintain their power by asserting that the existence of their power is an inherent function of society, and they maintain this dominance with a constant stream of ideas that uphold their standing. Such ideas affirm the hierarchy of capitalism as merely a component of society, and not a concept that can be overthrown or argued against. Marxist analysis reveals the ideology behind the false consciousness, which the ruling class truly believes and perpetuates through the messages they push onto the proletariat. In turn, the proletariat, living in a world shaped by such rhetoric, has no choice but to internalize and live by that imposed way of thinking. As a result, both groups follow and lead their lives in accordance with false consciousness, and uncovering this reveals the messaging of the dominant group.

Sub-Components of Marxism

Class conflict is an essential expansion point of false consciousness, as it emerges as a rejection of the pre-established hierarchy. This mindset is a response to the assertion that "If social arrangements are natural, they cannot be modified; thus, one must accept a given order as inevitable" (Berger, 2019, p. 65). Yet "Marxists argue that the social and economic

arrangements found in a given society at a given time are historical—created by people and therefore capable of being changed by people” (Berger, 2019, p. 65). The tension surrounding this disagreement within a given society takes form as class conflict and builds with severity as the gap between classes grows.

Working simultaneously with this conflict is alienation, a type of isolation resulting from the nature of capitalism. According to Berger (2019), “Capitalism may be able to produce goods and materialist abundance for large numbers of people (although, ultimately, at the expense of others), but it necessarily generates alienation, and all classes suffer from this, whether they recognize it or not” (p. 68). As the effects of economics bleed into every component of life, this dynamic shapes drastically different experiences for those of contrasting social classes. Over time, these experiences gradually manifest a sense of alienation, as this societal separation shapes entire worldviews depending on economic standing.

Finally, overarching false consciousness and other concepts of Marxism, the idea of hegemony reveals

a complicated intermeshing of forces of a political, social, and cultural nature.

Hegemony transcends (but also includes) two other concepts: culture, which is how we shape our lives, and ideology, which, from a Marxist perspective, expresses and is a projection of specific class interests. (Berger, 2019, p. 77)

While the concept of hegemony connects to all forms of media control and ideological beliefs, in this context, this control derives from class standing and economic power structures within the capitalist society of the United States.

For a film like *Ready or Not*, economics permeates the entirety of the storyline. The main plot device, a game of hide and seek, occurs due to the family’s commitment to a ritual

act to preserve their wealth, and their hegemony as a result. Grace's reluctance to socialize and trust the family stems from class conflict and fears of inadequacy in comparison to the financial standing of her in-laws, a prime example of alienation due to her class. Everyone outside of the direct family lineage is regarded as disposable, even those who married into or work for the family. The ideologies held by the bourgeoisie of the film, the Le Domas family, shape the lives of anyone brave enough to attempt to join their world, reinforcing the family's hegemonic influence.

Existing Conversations on the Horror of *Ready or Not*

Due to the recency of the *Ready or Not*'s release, specific critique and analysis of the film is extremely limited; however, the themes addressed in the film are widespread and often discussed by academics. To aptly situate the film within its proper placement in academia, an examination of the concept of the American Dream, as well as contemporary manipulation of this fantasy for entertainment, must take place. The film being in the horror genre speaks to one level of social commentary, but the existence of a female protagonist takes the "final girl" trope in horror into a new conversation.

The American Dream Is Dead

The topics of the American Dream and wealth have been explored in a variety of directions in academic contexts. Through the division of class between Grace and the Le Domas family, the tension surrounding portrayals of wealth in America arises. Fahy (2015) utilizes Paris Hilton to dissect this disconnect, stating, "As P. David Marshall reminds us, 'celebrities reinforce the conception that there are no barriers in contemporary culture that the individual cannot overcome.' And Paris Hilton has made this message an essential part of her appeal." In truth, this out-of-touch perception of the flexibility of class only further isolates

the bourgeoisie from the proletariat, if we directly acknowledge how unrealistic the longstanding American Dream has become.

Shaviro (2022) uses the path in *The Great Gatsby* to expand upon a larger issue with the morality and stakes that the lower class must suffer through, stating, “differing childhood circumstances plus inheritance crush any prospect that equality could ever be more than an empty phrase ... even if the talented can get rich, as Gatsby does, his rise fails to validate his success morally given its criminality” (p. 46). Although differing greatly in fields of criminality, Grace also only finds success through the brutal deaths of those standing in her way. The moral breakdown she experiences is a factor in her success, which leaves audiences unsure of the true appeal of the American Dream in modern society. This concept has recently transformed in television and media depictions, taking shape as a “game” put on for the entertainment of the bourgeoisie (e.g., *Squid Game*). Kim and Park (2022) describe the structure of such games in which

These participants are, wittingly or not, coerced by “killer capitalism” to consent to risk their lives for the one-456th possibility of winning the prize money. In that their lives are equally threatened outside the ... Game, their exercise of “free” will is about as free as today’s consumers are in choosing from the limited selection prescribed by the “free” market capitalism. (pp. 458-9)

The crushing nature of immobility in capitalist society becomes apparent through such lenses, and brings to light the means by which the proletariat must act in order to survive, frequently shown in film as a monstrous manifestation, outlined by Webb and Byrland (2008) through zombies:

Zombies seem to operate purely on the basis of drive, and have no obvious concern with “the production of material life” (all they do is consume and destroy) ... There is something unthinking, unthought, about zombie consumption; there is something organized, systematic, about capitalist consumption. (p. 89)

While there are distinct differences in the drive behind both forms of consumption, the parallels illuminate clear motivation in this demonstration in horror films, and the dehumanizing use of this characterization only feeds into the use of such entertainment for the bourgeoisie.

Feminine Representation in Horror

Identifying a false binary of hierarchical gendered representation in media, Katz (2015) identifies “qualities such as compassion and empathy [to be] typically equated with weakness and femininity ... Men in patriarchal cultures have employed this binary for centuries to justify the perpetuation of their familial, religious, economic, and political control over women.” (p. 159). Throughout the course of the film, the Le Domas men function in an unrelentingly cutthroat fashion, both in defense of their wealth and their masculinity, adding another layer to the social implications of their actions. Grace’s femininity causes an institutional fear to surface, as her power shown in the film disrupts the previously established dominance of masculinity within the family tree.

Dillman (2014) focuses on the female death as a focal point in horror, and the constant punishment of women in film, even when they do not technically die in the film’s universe:

And after seeing [such] brutal death enacted ... can we undo it once we learn it was only a future possibility? Colin MacCabe has argued that in the hierarchy of film discourses, truth resides in the image! I go one step further and underscore that truth

not only resides in the image, but trumps all other narrative avenues that might attempt to mitigate the power of that truth. (p. 31)

Although many women in older media survive or fight back against their oppressors, their agency is ultimately held in the hands of men. The image of their mutilated, near-death experiences haunts the narrative and audience, reinforcing the idea of what could happen to an unlucky woman. But *Ready or Not* exemplifies a recent trend in the twenty-first century, placing women as the subject of success stories, rather than the victim. Gooch (2025) explores the transformation that women must go through in order to survive the circumstances established in society, through the main character Gillian in the independent film *I Blame Society*, and studies the way in which

external ideas affect Gillian's thoughts and actions. Gillian's descent into serial murder is the result of her naturalization of other peoples' ideas about how women should be...She is working, performing the industry's stated desires, albeit in the most perverse fashion. (p. 50)

This translates beautifully into the transformation that Grace undergoes in *Ready or Not*, in aligning herself with the selfish, violent values necessary for survival in a capitalist society. Despite mirroring the acts of the Le Domas family, her transformation dismays those around her.

The aforementioned texts are connected in their interpretation of the horror genre as a vehicle for discussing unrest and frustration with societal structure, the horrific nature of modern-day capitalism, and the underlying misogyny in media that has only recently gained focus in horror. But each source only touches on some of these aspects, not all. The following analysis therefore aims to unite feminist and capitalist critiques, while addressing the

intersectionality of gender and class through a Marxist analysis, with the goal of expanding the conversation sparked through the film *Ready or Not*.

Superstructure: The Film as Text

The superstructure, as an artifact of Kellner's (1995) concept of "media culture," demonstrates how certain beliefs in a capitalist society permeate the institutions of everyday life. For this specific analysis, the film itself models the proletariat drive for change, as well as the subsequent bourgeoisie fear of that possibility, shown through the family, the narrative, and behind the scenes in the film's production.

The Family

The Le Domas family name belongs to many through marriage and direct family lineage, surprising due to their cautious protection of wealth. Throughout the film, many of the family members contribute to Grace's haunting night, but a select few stand out and truly shape her experience. Perhaps as a commentary on the privilege associated with generational wealth in the United States, or unintentionally done as a bias of the directors, all characters in the film, other than two maids, are white and follow conventional beauty standards. Even the maids of color noted for their beauty are light-skinned.

Beginning with the newest addition to the family, the bride herself, Grace MacCaullay, becomes Grace Le Domas after her marriage near the start of the film. She is white and thin, conventionally attractive with blonde hair and blue eyes, , played by established scream queen Samara Weaving. Her upbringing bounces between foster homes in the implied lower class, and she possesses a slight insecurity and anxiety at the prospect of merging these experiences into the legacy of the Le Domas family. Grace's slight reluctance towards the rest of the family manifests as sarcasm with hints of comedy, which provides a relatable character for the

audience, standing in for an average heterosexual American woman dealing with society's struggles.

Grace's new husband, Alex Le Domas, is an estranged member of the Le Domas family. He has married Grace against their wishes, as his family hoped to keep him closely knit with the rest of them. Despite distancing himself emotionally from his family, he still shares the privileged, upper-class lifestyle that the family legacy holds. Although his love for Grace appears genuine, he withholds essential secrets from her and ultimately succumbs to his cowardice, choosing the respect of his family over his new wife. Alex's family, heterosexuality, and whiteness greatly play into his lack of understanding of the working-class experience, which disconnects him from his wife as the film progresses.

Grace finds an unexpected ally in Alex's brother, Daniel Le Domas. Although Daniel participates in the activities of his family, he is the only one who sacrifices himself to show mercy to Grace, as even her own husband turns on her. Daniel is first introduced as the "alcoholic brother who keeps hitting on [her]," who uses dry, sarcastic humor to display his resistance to the family ways, despite his compliance in their daily life (Bettinelli-Olpin & Gillett, 2019). Like the rest of his family, Daniel is heterosexual, upper class, white, and conventionally attractive, but presents his wealth in a more casual, rugged fashion. This preference is a point of frustration for his parents, but it is also a representation of the privilege to be imperfect as a member of the bourgeoisie.

Finally, Tony Le Domas, the father and current head of the family, operates as the main historian to deliver context of the family and background for the film. His dedication to the preservation of the family motivates the others to do the same through brutal violence. Meanwhile, his fear of disappointing his great-grandfather, who provided the life he has, drives

his determination. Tony presents as a confident, ruthless, masculine figure, masking his anxiety and deep-rooted terror of the family legacy. Yet his white, heterosexual male privilege does not prepare him for the defeat he experiences.

The Narrative

Ready or Not begins with Grace as an anxious bride just before her wedding, clearly intimidated by the financial power that her fiancé's family possesses, but Alex, calms her down and they proceed with the wedding. Her working-class background invites clear judgment from the well-off family members in attendance, and she attempts to ignore this conflict for the sake of appearances. Instead of a honeymoon or traditional post-wedding celebration, Grace finds herself forced into a game night, made all the more confusing to her by her husband's frightened reaction. Tony, his father, introduces a long-winded history of the family's financial legacy, to the confusion of Grace, that leads to her drawing a card from a deck of puzzle cards. Grace draws the "Hide and Seek" card, prompting stone-faced reactions from the extended family sitting around her.

As she laughs at the childlike task at hand, the Le Domas family members obtain their very real, antique weapons from an impressive collection left by their great-grandfather. Any celebration or joy from the events of her wedding just hours before transforms into confusion and panic. The game begins with the ruthless murder of a nearby family maid. As this incident sparks no reaction from the family, the film rapidly develops into a cold, unforgiving bloodbath. Grace realizes the insanity of the situation she has become involved in, and she must spend from midnight to dawn attempting to escape by outsmarting the family's determination to preserve their legacy. After hours of persistent mental torment, physical mutilation, and acts of inhumanity all in defense of wealth, Grace eventually survives. Her survival means the failure

of the ritual, causing the Le Domas family to spontaneously combust. Grace emerges as a battered and bloody bride, and as the new sole heir to Le Domas family fortune.

Production

Fox Searchlight Pictures, a corporation now owned by Disney and referred to simply as Searchlight Pictures, distributed this film in alignment with their focus on acquiring and providing recognition for independent films. The production group Radio Silence, made up of Matt Bettinelli-Olpin and Tyler Gillett, established their strong artistic direction within the horror genre first on Youtube, then at film festivals, and *Ready or Not* became their breakthrough film for many mainstream audiences. Following its success, they went on to handle the iconic *Scream* franchise for two films. Their creative meta-commentary and interpretation of the genre stands out to horror fans (Vary, 2022). The film's cult classic status and cultural relevance generated enough conversation for a 2026 sequel, expanding into a wider scope addressing oligarchy, while continuing the messaging of the first film.

Base: The True Horror of Profit & Power at all Costs

The base, functioning as the foundation for analysis, exists as the literal concepts which create and support the previously defined superstructure. This section therefore analyzes the reasoning behind the plot points and story components, connecting them to societal values and themes that draw back to Marxist ideology.

Preservation of Wealth

As the audience learns through Grace's lens the depth of the Le Domas legacy, the familial conversations about their dynasty, or "dominion," as they prefer to be called, illuminate their self-perception of prosperity as a "gift" that could only be blessed upon them magically. Their discussion of lineage not only portrays the gradual expansion and hegemony of the family

name but also reveals an underlying belief of the broader upper class. The bourgeoisie cannot accept the mental weight of their privilege, which must be attributed instead to an outside force, rather than acknowledging the advantages their identity holds in America.

While the work of their great-grandfather did take time, thought, and effort, his ability to participate in an economic system that catered to white men during a time of much more obtainable economic prosperity was what laid the groundwork for the success of his heirs. Instead of realizing that the economic accessibility fostered by his identity was what provided for their patriarch's upward movement, the family instead believes this ease of accessibility could be applicable to all, were they given the chance to make a deal with the devil. In a way, this lack of understanding alienates the Le Domas family from the lower class as their hegemony becomes so ingrained in everyday life that it prevents them from having an open mind. The privilege that the Le Domas family holds in particular, as a white family with generational wealth and dominated by men, leads them to deflect to deals with the devil, whom they perceive as a generous benefactor watching over them and maintaining their power. They fail to acknowledge that capitalism itself upholds their power. Their compliance in unwittingly operating within this system further proves the ideological power and pervasiveness of false consciousness among even the bourgeoisie.

The fragile worldview of the family lies in the balance of the ritual game. They believe that anyone entering through marriage must prove themselves before being granted access to their riches, even directly calling them "initiates." This creation of additional hoops to jump through ignores the barriers already in place for mobility between social and economic classes, and this plays into the concept of such games being used merely as entertainment for the bourgeoisie to flaunt their wealth to those yearning to rise above their current standing.

Newlyweds such as Grace must be willing to take this risk, defined by Howe (2004, as cited in Kim & Park, 2022) as “a product distinctive of that particular sporting culture where cultural capital is accrued by those who are willing to risk their health and well-being for a better performance” (p. 457). In other words, the proletariat must be ready, at a moment’s notice, to sacrifice everything for a possibility of bettering their livelihood, and this class conflict slowly wears down and dehumanizes the lower class as they work to prove themselves in a system built to see them fail.

Isolation and Disconnect

Capitalism, as a system, fosters alienation to a violent degree through its very culture. After Grace claws her way through the manor gate, even as spikes cut through her skin, she perseveres to reach the lone car driving down the silent road. She sighs with relief and gratitude despite her various wounds because she sees someone who surely would help her in her condition. The male driver pauses, just for a moment, to yell at her to get out of the road. A few beats pass of silence, as this interaction settles with Grace, before she screams a stream of obscenities, voicing not just her suffering but a widespread frustration with the current intensity of capitalism that the United States functions under.

Just a few moments later, when she gets lucky enough to take control of the family car and access their help line, the man on the other end, despite the clear distress in her voice, is unable to help her in calling the police because the car was reported stolen. Feminine frustration in the lower class is often taken as hysteria, while those in the upper class are supported and aided in times of struggle, and Grace receives absolutely no empathy from the support team on call. Both this instance and the that with unhelpful driver comment on forced alienation. The former displays the hostile culture of self-preservation, while the latter reflects the policy

employed by corporations to bar their workers from supporting those in need, both responses notably come from men.

Even those working alongside the Le Domas family, so closely that they may as well be blood, are disregarded as not worthy enough to be protected. Emilie, the younger Le Domas daughter, shoots two maids on separate occasions, and her only true dismay is that she did not hit her target, Grace. Emilie cries out, “Why does this always happen to me?!” (Bettinelli-Olpin & Gillett, 2019). The gory wounding of the women warrants little sympathy from the family members, whom the audience can expect to at least voice disappointment in the loss of accessories to their wealth. Instead, the Le Domas family views the deaths of their staff as an inconvenience to clean up, if they stand in the way of their success in the game. While female death frequently “haunts the narrative” in the horror genre and informs the plot following their demise, here, the killings of maids are mere incidents that pass by with almost no recognition by the characters. This callousness proves just how isolated the Le Domas family is from those who live alongside them every day. The physical interaction the family has with their staff prior to the game falsely suggests closeness; instead, the impacts of class bleed so deeply into their consciousness that this alienation from their staff that cannot be broken.

Bloodthirsty Conditioning

A trope in both action and horror genres is the concept of the invincible male. Yet while Grace suffers from a variety of severe wounds and similarly endures, the tone and trauma of her suffering delivers a specific message. After a gunshot through her hand, the shock of which causes her to fall into a pit of animal and human carcasses, Grace must crawl up a slippery ladder, with a nail plunging through her fresh wound just as she almost makes her way out. In order to stay hidden and survive, she must quiet her cries of pain, tear fabric from her wedding

dress, and wrap her injuries just well enough to continue her fight. These scenes exhibit the disgustingly violent reality of life under the strict system of capitalism: there is never a chance to fully recover, only prepare yourself just enough to keep going. Grace's literal wounds correspond to the structural violence that never allows a break, just as the working class deals with constant unfair wages, increases in cost of living, and exhausting labor expectations. Her suffering poses the question of how desirable the American Dream truly is when such perseverance is necessary.

The film further shows the audience how the culture of capitalism conditions even children into sharing the mindset of the Le Domas family. In an earlier scene, a young Daniel Le Domas faces his aunt's husband-to-be, himself frightened and wounded during the game, and instead of reacting with empathy and care, Daniel alerts his family to the man's location. Later in the film, Georgie, replicates this conditioning when he stumbles upon Grace hiding. She reacts to his discovery of her with relief and attempts to aid a child she sees as innocent and traumatized in a horrifying situation. But without hesitation, Georgie pulls out a gun and shoots her in the hand. He then receives praise from his mother, which solidifies his belief in such cruelty as the correct response. Such an intense desire for self-preservation from the family demonstrates a very literal conception of class conflict and the lengths at which a group will go to, even exploiting their children as weapons.

Finally, despite her initial reluctance to act as mercilessly as the Le Domas family, Grace laughs upon seeing the downfall of those who worked so tirelessly and viciously to eliminate her. Her behavior at the beginning of the film showcases her desire for the family to accept her and her willingness to comply, even if she disagreed. But the manner in which she was treated creates a new version of her that no longer possesses the empathy she began with.

Grace's own deterioration of moral goodness reinforces how deep the hegemonic value of cruelty runs. Tellingly, this transformation seems to infiltrate her spirit in response to her acquisition of the family's wealth upon their deaths. In embracing this change, she subverts the conventional function of the female body to accessorize a horror film, given the typical exploitation of young women in horror films as victims of gore and brutal death. Grace faces death and instead comes out alive more times than one would expect. This survival points to the laborious conditioning she undergoes in just one evening and the willpower she possesses to prevail.

Societal Context

During the creation of the film in 2018, the United States economy at first glance appeared strong but was deceptively positive. Even as unemployment continued on a steady decline, concern arose from the conditions of lower wage workers. Those towards the lower end of earnings in any given position experienced detrimentally slower wage growth than those at the top, widening the gaps already in place. These gaps were even worse along the lines of gender and race (Gould, 2019). The age old saying of the "the rich get richer and the poor get poorer," rang violently true in the lives of many Americans. Yet because overall growth was occurring, no matter how slow, this inequality elites in society could glossed over the need for policy reform and social aid.

The Trump administration, in office at the time of the film's production and release, followed this pattern of boasting about economic growth while actively working against the working class. To illustrate the conditions, the National Low Income Housing Coalition (2018, 2019) reported that

At a time when the affordable housing crisis has reached new heights, and homelessness is increasing in some communities, the president's proposal would eliminate or deeply cut essential housing and community development programs...The backlog of public housing capital repair needs is upwards of \$40 billion, but the Administration proposes to entirely eliminate federal funding for capital repairs and slash funding to operate public housing.

Conditions such as these experienced at the time in American society brings the conclusion of the film with the burning of the Le Domas mansion to the forefront as a point of brilliant irony. The film depicts the destruction of an institutionally-preserved mansion in a painful fashion, much as many working class saw their access to housing ripped away during the same period. Having to endure a brutally classist policy led by a multi-billionaire in office left many Americans angry and yearning for change, and *Ready or Not* paralleled this rage in a socially acceptable format.

False Consciousness

Capitalism breeds competition—and no one wins. In this film, in spite of decades of the Le Domas family going to extreme lengths to preserve their wealth, Grace causes their empire to crumble in just a few hours in the middle of the night. Despite the conditioning from adolescence to embrace violence, the alienation of all outside of their “dominion,” and living life at the hands of their devilish benefactor, no act could prevent the doomed fate awaiting the family. While the entire family carefully crafted their presentation to the outside world and violently ensured that they maintained their power and hegemony, but nothing could ever truly satisfy the beast that is capitalism in its current state.

Although we see Grace begin the film eager to please this family, innocently optimistic amidst a sea of red flags, she contorts into a callous shell of the woman due to the horrific circumstances she is forced to endure over ninety minutes. Her resilience revealed through the experience allows for the preservation of her womanhood, wit, and spirit, but certainly not without the loss of trust in those around her. The hollow ideal of the American Dream unfolds for viewers as her arduous path to wealth begins to deconstruct the appeal of similar success. Is a rewarding mobility from the working class to the bourgeoisie possible in the current extreme version of capitalism that exists today? The Le Domas family disregarded love, compassion, and even logical thinking to prevent Grace's survival, and even their desperate and anguished attempts at self-preservation left them nothing. In their own ways, both sides lost everything they valued in the conflict, which prompts the audience to wonder if there is a point in even attempting upward mobility? This thinking leads to considering why a distribution company now owned by the media powerhouse that is the Walt Disney Company would allow present a story of someone seemingly "beating the system." The competition reflected in Grace's battle with the Le Domas family benefits no one other than the highest in society, and in truth fosters the kind of narratives that perpetuate and circulate a false consciousness throughout the public.

Conclusion

Ready or Not uses the devil and violence to show parallels between the brutality of the film and the vicious culture of capitalism. Although the horror genre fosters a variety of social commentary, few films target a topic so directly and undeniably. The protagonist, Grace, and her stomach-turning path to becoming the final girl creates a secondary layer of gendered experiences, and Marxism exposes the overarching messaging of the film: the impossibility of clean, successful social mobility in present-day American society.

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