

## GOSSIP: A CULTURAL FORMULA OF POPULAR LITERATURE AND AS THE AUDIENCES' DESIRES MANIFESTATION IN SHONDA RHIMES' *BRIDGERTON* NETFLIX SERIES

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### ABSTRACT

Gossip is a deeply held cultural practice in society; every community engages in discovering and sharing specific information through gossip. With all its intrigue, gossip draw people in to follow certain stories, and this is how it is portrayed in the *Bridgerton* series created by Shonda Rhimes. In *Bridgerton*, gossip is the formula that makes the series unique. It captures viewers' interest, contributing to the show's popularity. The connection between the audience and gossip lies in culture and desire. This study focuses on exploring gossip in the *Bridgerton* series and its relationship with its audience. In addition to enjoying the story's content, viewers also appreciate the series creators' methods of distribution and product placement, specifically the use of Instagram as a social media platform. The unique interaction between the audience and the series creators clearly reveals the audience's desires toward the series and the gossip that serves as its formula. Thus, research on Cawelty's formula becomes the theoretical focus of this study, which is then linked to Lacan's concept of desire to demonstrate how the gossip formula functions as a cultural signifier and an expression of societal desire. The method applied is qualitative descriptive to ensure the data can be comprehensively elaborated. The results of this study indicate that gossip serves as a cultural formula deeply ingrained in the audience; the audience's active anaclitic and active narcissistic desires are fulfilled by the romance and gossip elements present in the *Bridgerton* series.

**Key Words:** *Gossip, Bridgerton, Formula, Desire, Audiences.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Gossip is a deeply ingrained social activity that is particularly popular among women. Gossip also often serves as a mode of communication and a source of information about people in the local community. This makes gossip a very easy and inexpensive way to spread information. This is also because gossip can



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take place during downtime or while spending leisure time with relatives and friends. Thus, gossip is a deeply ingrained activity with the potential to serve as a social phenomenon within a community for sharing information about people in the immediate social circle. This concept was proposed by Seville-Troiike (2003), who defined gossip as a form of human communication that involves sharing information about people in the immediate social circle and is segmented within a specific social group. In this context, gossip is an intriguing social phenomenon to explore, whether in literary works or academic writings, as it reflects the daily activities of a social group through conversations or written texts.

The *Bridgerton* series and its audience share a relationship of mutual need. The series needs its audience to generate revenue, while the audience needs the series to satisfy their desires—or, as some might say, as a means of escapism from a real world that is exhausting and full of stress. Accordingly, viewers choose the *Bridgerton* series as a way to unwind. This is evidenced by the popularity of the *Bridgerton* series, which achieved 82 million views in its first season, making it the number one Netflix series in 76 countries. It was also nominated for various awards and won categories such as Top Television Program, Best Television Series, Best Breakthrough Performance, and others (Andreeva, 2021). Furthermore, the series maintains an Instagram account with over three million followers who actively follow updates about the show. Consequently, the *Bridgerton* series, in addition to its success as a popular Netflix series, has also captured the hearts of viewers who eagerly await the continuation of the story and its upcoming seasons.

The series depicts London society in “*Bridgerton*” as viewing a gossip tabloid written by a female author, Lady Whistledown, with cynicism. Society considers it unimportant because it contains only information about one of the families in London. The content of the tabloid consists mostly of mockery of that family, with only a little praise. However, as time goes on, with London in the midst of wedding and matchmaking season, the gossip written by Lady Whistledown begins to be eagerly awaited by the public, who want to learn about potential marriage partners. Furthermore, since the focus of the gossip was the London society itself, some families there hoped to be featured in the column, while others did not, depending on what Lady Whistledown wrote about them. In this context, the London public’s view of gossip began to shift from one of cynicism to the realization that, whether consciously or unconsciously, gossip had become something of great importance to them (Rhimes, 2020).

The gossip in this context is a cultural element incorporated into a work of popular fiction. As proposed by (Cawelty, 1977), a formula is a cultural product embedded in a popular literary work to influence that work and to represent and connect various aspects within a specific society—in this case, the *Bridgerton* series portrays 17th-century London society, showcasing various images, symbols, themes, and myths present within that society. Thus, gossip can be considered a formula present in the *Bridgerton* series that represents the state of a society’s culture. Radway also posits that popular fictional novels are read or enjoyed because they depict elements that are similar to or familiar within a society (Radway, 1991). This can also be interpreted to mean that consumers of popular fiction choose works that are familiar to their own lives for enjoyment.



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In this context, the *Bridgerton* series, which incorporates gossip, serves as a familiar formula within societal life.

Regarding formulas, it is simply impossible for a formula in a literary work to be included without a purpose. Cawelty notes that the relationship between formulas and the daily lives of popular fiction readers is intertwined. The formulas featured in such fiction serve as a form of escapism, as they can distract readers from their exhausting lives (Cawelty, 1977). Based on research findings from several comments by viewers of the *Bridgerton* series, they feel that they are engaging in escapism by watching the series. In connection with this, this study also applies Jacques Lacan's theory of desire to elucidate the desires of viewers that are fulfilled through watching the *Bridgerton* series.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

To develop the ideas and arguments in this study, several previous studies that also discuss formulas, escapism, and *Bridgerton* were reviewed. In (Ayu, 2017; Putri & Saktiningrum, 2021; A'daillah, 2014; Rusdianti, 2019; Junida, 2018; H., 2017), the authors discuss escapism found in popular literary works, such as Korean dramas, novels, and so on. Additionally, Putri and Ningrum wrote about *Bridgerton* from a feminist perspective. Furthermore, the discussion of the deconstruction of gossip in the *Bridgerton* novel serves as a reference because it addresses the instability of the interpretation of gossip in the society depicted in the novel (Rusdianti & Pujiharto, 2023). Based on what has been discussed in previous studies, this research offers novelty in terms of its subject matter and the application of a more specific theory, namely a focus on gossip as a formula and a form of escapism within a popular fiction work, *Bridgerton*.

Based on the foregoing discussion, it is evident that this study addresses several research questions. (1) How does gossip serve as a formula that captivates viewers of the *Bridgerton* series? (2) Why does gossip serve as a gateway to escapism for viewers of the *Bridgerton* series? Consequently, this study will examine gossip as a formula within popular fiction. Additionally, this study will explore how gossip can serve as a gateway to a form of escapism for viewers of the *Bridgerton* series.

## METHOD

The method applied in this study is a qualitative method using descriptive analysis. According to Creswell, qualitative research is research conducted to explore and understand the meanings of issues within the social sphere (2024). Gossip is an issue within the social sphere. Therefore, gossip can serve as a key factor in the popularity of the *Bridgerton* series. To further understand and elaborate on this, the qualitative research method, as outlined by Miles and Huberman, involves three steps: data reduction, data organization, and drawing conclusions from the analysis (2014). In conducting this study, the researcher collected data and then filtered comments from *Bridgerton* series



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viewers who follow the series' official account, *@Bridgertonnetflix*, on the Instagram social media platform. During this filtering process, the researcher selected specific comments—as the actual dataset contained thousands of comments with many similarities—that demonstrated the fulfillment of desires and aligned with the gossip data category. The analysis was conducted by reviewing the comments and linking them to relevant theories. The data suggests that the gossip incorporated into the *Bridgerton* series captures viewers' attention and provides them with a sense of comfort while enjoying the series.

During the development of this study, the researcher also applied a method appropriate to this research, namely the psychoanalytic method. According to Adi (2016), the psychoanalytic method is a method for examining the relationship between literature, actions, and motives, as well as the nature of the text itself. Additionally, this study focuses on the language used in a narrative that represents both the researcher and the subject of the study. This aligns with the perspective proposed by (Tyson, 2015), who argues that psychoanalysis is a means of uncovering insights within a literary work that reflect the thoughts and psychological states mirrored by the narrative text. However, in this context, it is not only the narrative text that is analyzed but also the effect of the narrative on the audience. Thus, it could be assumed that when an audience member writes a text about what they experienced after watching the *Bridgerton* series, it would reflect their psychological state.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

### *Gossip as The Cultural Formula which Captivates The Audiences*

The first discussion focuses on gossip as a formula in popular fiction. The choice of gossip elements featured in the *Bridgerton* series is truly brilliant. This is evidenced by the public's enthusiastic reception of the series, which is delivered through a gossip-driven narrative style. In posts uploaded to Instagram that used the word "scandal," the content garnered significant attention from viewers, receiving thousands of comments that indicate the use of gossip to convey the plot is an incredibly engaging way for audiences—particularly women—to follow the story.

Redeeming gossip is a fascinating topic to discuss anywhere. A popular Netflix series created by Shonda Rhimes, titled *Bridgerton*, incorporates gossip as a formula to capture viewers' attention. In the series, gossip—or what could also be called scandal—is a key element in drawing viewers' interest, encouraging them to choose the series as their entertainment during their free time. In this context, gossip can attract female viewers to enjoy the series' story through a culturally relevant narrative, as gossiping is, by nature, a common part of women's daily lives. Women tend to gossip to gather information about various matters. This is discussed in a CNN report, which reveals that women enjoy gossip and explains that women gossip to gather information regarding competition for a partner, whether about the man or their female rivals (CNN, 2020). Thus, gossip serves as a means for women to gather information so they can stay updated on current issues in their environment, particularly when seeking a partner. In addition to being a means of gathering information, gossip also serves as a



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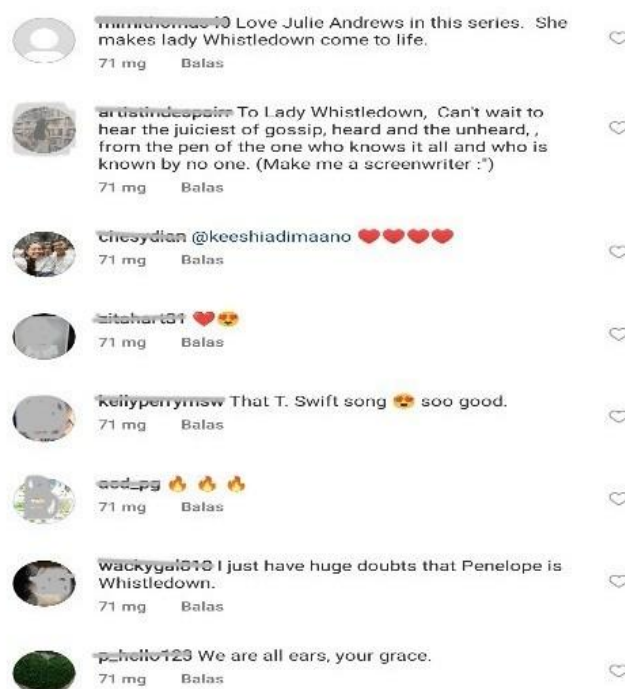
weapon for women to bring down others. This is as argued by McAndrew in an article reviewed by Kumparan regarding the relationship between gossip and women, noting that women tend to use gossip as a substitute for physical attacks when targeting opponents (Noorputri, 2018). Thus, gossip is an important tool for women. In the world of women, information that is generally considered trivial by society can be used as a weapon to bring down opponents.

Gossip as such a formula can be based on the theory of the formula proposed by Cawelty.

*Formulas are cultural products and in turn presumably have some sort of influence on culture because they become conventional ways of representing and relating certain images, symbols, themes, and myths. The process through which formulas develop, change, and give way to other formulas is a kind of cultural evolution with survival through audience selection (Cawelty, 1977: 21)."*

Hence, according to Cawelty, a formula is a cultural product. Drawing a parallel with the *Bridgerton* series, which uses gossip as a tool to draw in viewers, this work is exceptionally well-crafted and engaging in terms of storytelling. In this particular case, not all popular fiction aired by Netflix or other streaming platforms employs gossip as a storytelling technique; however, it can be concluded that this gossip-based formula is what constitutes a unique and compelling element. Yet, it is also a culturally ingrained formula because it draws from a culture deeply rooted in society and is subsequently incorporated into popular fiction. This point is further argued by Cawelty, "A formula is one such pattern. When we have successfully defined a formula we have isolated at least one basis for the popularity of a large number of works. Of course, some formulaic writers are more successful than others, and their unique popularity remains a problem that must be explored in its own right (Cawelty, 1977: 21)." Thus, based on the explanation of the formula developed by Cawelty, it can be assumed that the gossip—which serves as the unique formula of this popular fiction—sets it apart from other works and is what makes this fiction popular and appealing to the audience.

This is proven by the audience's warm reception of Lady Whistledown as the gossipmonger:



The screenshot shows that Lady Whistledown, the gossipmonger, has captured the audience's attention. This demonstrates that gossip and gossipmongers are deeply ingrained in society. The culture of gossip within a community is a casual, everyday activity aimed at obtaining specific information about one or more people. In the context of the gossip portrayed in the *Bridgerton* series, gossip is a crucial element that significantly impacts the lives of the characters in the series. However, in reality, viewers watching the series are relaxing and enjoying their free time, and they enjoy the gossip provided by the series. Thus, even though there is tension in the series caused by gossip, viewers still enjoy it casually, because at its core, gossip within society is essentially casual conversation.

Referring to comments related to the discussion, such as the comment from @A\*\*\*\*\*r, who wrote, "To Lady Whistledown, Can't wait to hear the juiciest of gossip, heard and the unheard,, from the pen of the one who knows it all and who is known by no one. (Make me a screenwriter :)". There's also a comment from @a\*\*\*\*\*n who is stating, "I just have huge doubts that Penelope is Whistledown." This shows that Lady Whistledown, as the source of the gossip, has become a fan favorite. Gossip serves as the key to keeping viewers engaged and preventing boredom when watching series of the same genre, namely romance. Gossip, as a cultural phenomenon, is a means of spreading information and gaining insights into the surrounding community (Rusdianti & Pujiharto, 2023). Even trivial gossip can become significant because it is deeply ingrained in society; in fact, people can even weave their own "agenda" into the gossip. From the strategy employed by the creators of the *Bridgerton* series—who weave their "agenda" through the gossip embedded in their work—it is evident that gossip plays a significant role in human life. Such is the audience's love for the gossip packaged in the series that even the voice actor for the gossip has become the focus of attention, as seen in the comment by @M\*\*\*\*\*40, who wrote, "Love Julie Andrews in this series. She makes lady Whistledown come to life". Actress Julie Andrews only do a voice act as Lady Whistledown's voice in the series, not the main character. However, her name appears in the credits and her role is well highlighted, even better than the actors and actresses who became supporting characters in the series. Gossip, in this series is not only used as a mere content insert, but is also used as a way to promote the continuation of the previous series. Posts on the instagram account @Bridgertonnetflix often contain the writings of Lady Whistledown. The audience is made, as if part of the audience that is in the world of stories. Comment from @P\_\*\*\*\*\*3 who wrote "We are all ears, your grace". The comments indicate that audiences are part of *The Ton* in the series. This engagement made the series attract more and more attention from other viewers, seeing that there were thousands of comments for the post.

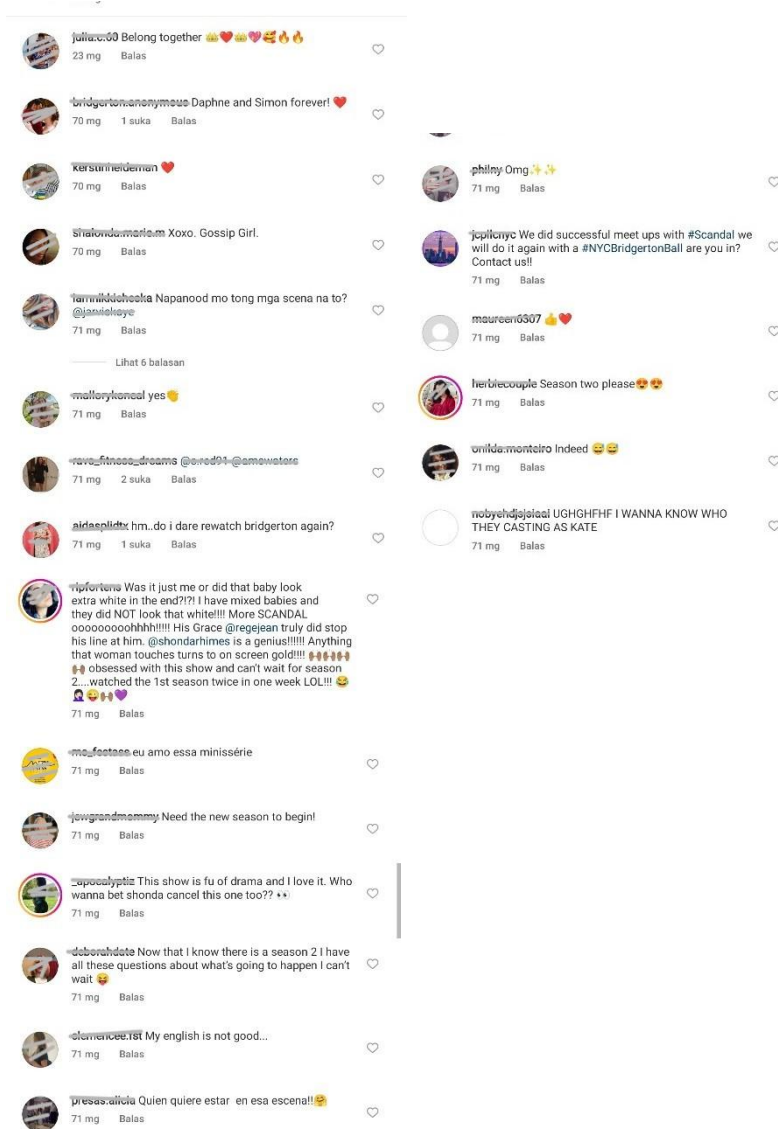
Furthermore, audience engagement through gossip which is casual chatter and very easily accepted by the public, especially women, has led many followers of @Bridgertonnetflix Instagram account to comment on what was shown in the



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series, which was then turned into Instagram posts by the creator.



Comments shown in the screenshots indicate that viewers of the series do not merely enjoy the gossip presented within the narrative, but also actively engage in gossiping about the events in *Bridgerton* and extend these discussions into real-life contexts, effectively reproducing gossip beyond the text itself. This can be observed in the comment sections, where viewers invite others to participate in discussions, speculate about the storyline, and discuss the actors and actresses involved in the series. In this context, the focus on actors and actresses emerges because they become the primary objects of discussion, particularly in their absence from the digital space where these conversations take place.

In discussing actors and actresses within the comment sections, viewers frequently employ the hashtag “#scandal.” The use of this hashtag indicates that gossip, as a formula, fosters a sense of attachment between the text and its audience. Audience desire is realized not only through the inclusivity of gossip but also through the broader inclusivity presented by the series, particularly in the casting of Black actors and actresses. This can be seen in a comment by @r\*\*\*\*s, which states, “Was it just me or did that baby look extra white in the



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end?!?! I have mixed babies and they did NOT look that white!!!! More SCANDAL 0000000ohhhh!!!! His Grace @regejean [The Instagram ID of the actor who portrays The Duke of Hastings] truly did stop his line at him. @shondarhimes [The Instagram ID of Series creator] is a genius!!!!!! Anything that woman touches turns to on screen gold!!!! A++ # obsessed with this show and can't wait for season 2.... watched the 1st season twice in one week LOL!!!” The use of the term “scandal” in this comment reflects the impact of gossip as a formula embedded within the series. Furthermore, comments such as “We did successful meet ups with #Scandal we will do it again with a #NYCBridgertonBall are you in? Contact us!!” and “Xoxo. Gossip Girl” suggest that the familiarity of gossip as a cultural practice enables audiences to easily express support for the actors, producers, and the series. In this sense, audience participation extends beyond passive consumption, as viewers actively produce testimonies—predominantly positive ones—through communicative practices that resemble gossip itself.

The conclusion that can be drawn from the discussion regarding gossip is that it serves as an attraction for audiences to watch the *Bridgerton* series through Instagram posts. Viewers are invited to enjoy the gossip embedded within the series’ narrative. By engaging with this gossip, audiences can follow the storyline more casually, as gossip functions as a form of relaxed conversation. Furthermore, viewers are encouraged to gossip beyond the series itself, as they can interact on Instagram to share their personal experiences while watching the series, seek information about its developments, and discuss the actors and actresses involved in the show.

### ***Gossip in Bridgerton serial as the audiences’ bridge of escapism***

Related to the discussion above, gossip functions as a cultural formula capable of attracting the audience's attention. This is also connected to the way viewers engage in escapism through the gossip presented in the series. To link the concepts of formula, escapism, and audience engagement, this study employs the theory of desire proposed by Jacques Lacan. Lacan posits that there are four types of desire corresponding to different structures inherent in human beings. The context of desire constructed by Lacan reflects the fulfillment of individual needs for each *Bridgerton* viewer. These four types of desire are passive narcissistic desire, active narcissistic desire, active anaclitic desire, and passive anaclitic desire (Bracher, 2009). In this context, viewers exhibit different desires in enjoying the *Bridgerton* series. This can be observed in how viewers express their comments on posts related to the series on Instagram. In other words, when viewers gossip in comment sections, they are simultaneously expressing their personal desires within that discourse.

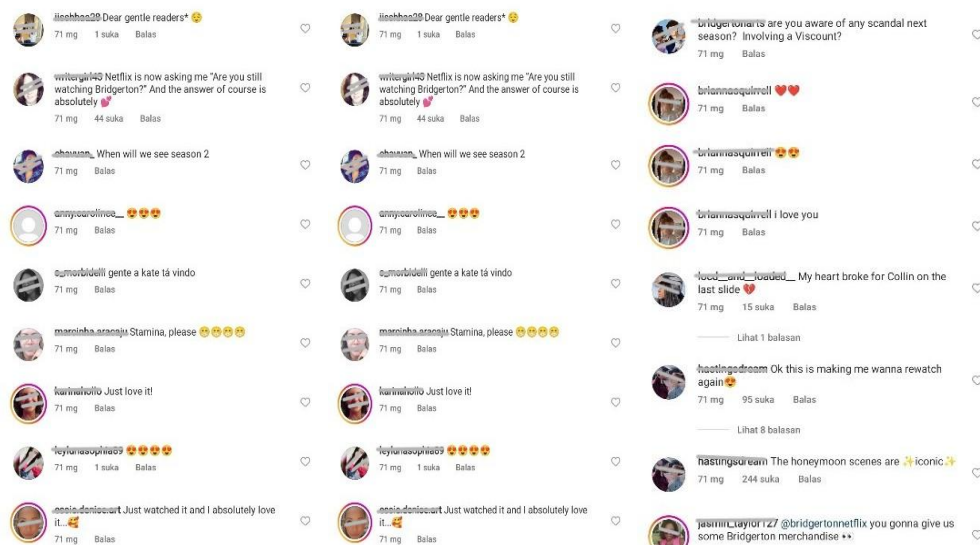
#### **1. Audience’s active anaclitic desire caused addiction to *Bridgerton* Series**

Anaclitic desire refers to the desire to possess the Other—in this study, the *Bridgerton* series—to achieve satisfaction (Bracher, 2009). In relation to viewers’ comments on Instagram, the majority expressed a desire to continue watching the series. This indicates that they use the series to fulfill their wishes and attain satisfaction. This aligns with the concept of escapism, where individuals seek to temporarily escape from the pressures of reality into a more relaxed popular



fiction. When people experience unavoidable fatigue, they look for something to divert their attention, and in this case, that diversion is the *Bridgerton* series. Moreover, while engaging in gossip, they are also able to fulfill their latent desires.

This is reflected in comments that reveal how addicted viewers are to the series and their desire to watch it repeatedly. Beyond wanting to rewatch, they also demand the production of subsequent seasons, considering that there are multiple novels written by Julia Quinn in the *Bridgerton* series. Consequently, viewers who are also readers of these novels naturally expect other novels to be adapted as well. As of now, Netflix has only produced the second season of the series. The first season—which is the focus of this study—is the adaptation of the novel *Bridgerton: The Duke and I*, while the second season continues the adaptation from the second novel, *Bridgerton: The Viscount Who Loved Me*.



These comments indicate that the *Bridgerton* series functions as a tool for fulfilling viewers' desires to escape from the exhausting realities of life. They seek to satisfy their desires by watching the series.

The active anaclitic desire of *Bridgerton* viewers can also be assumed to be a need that must be fulfilled when individuals engage in escapism through popular fiction. It is undeniable that, when facing an exhausting world, people require other tools to satisfy their desires, such as this series. Through the narrative constructed in the series, viewers can fulfill desires that cannot be satisfied in real life. Therefore, active anaclitic desire can also be assumed to be a driving factor behind the human need for escapism.

In the *Bridgerton* series, gossip is embedded to allow viewers to easily channel their desires. While romance series are abundant, *Bridgerton* incorporates gossip as a formula, enabling audiences to connect more readily with the work. For instance, a comment from @l\*\*\*\*28 reads, "Dearest Gentle Readers," aligning with *Lady Whistledown's* catchphrase. Another viewer, @b\*\*\*\*\*ns, writes, "Are you aware of any scandal next season? Involving a viscount?" Additionally, @b\*\*\*\*\*ns comments, "This account is what keeping me alive atm (emoji) whoever runs it deserves a gold medal (emoji)." Lastly, @s\*\*a writes, "If anyone knows how to move on from *Bridgerton*, don't tell me because I'm not planning to do (emoji)."



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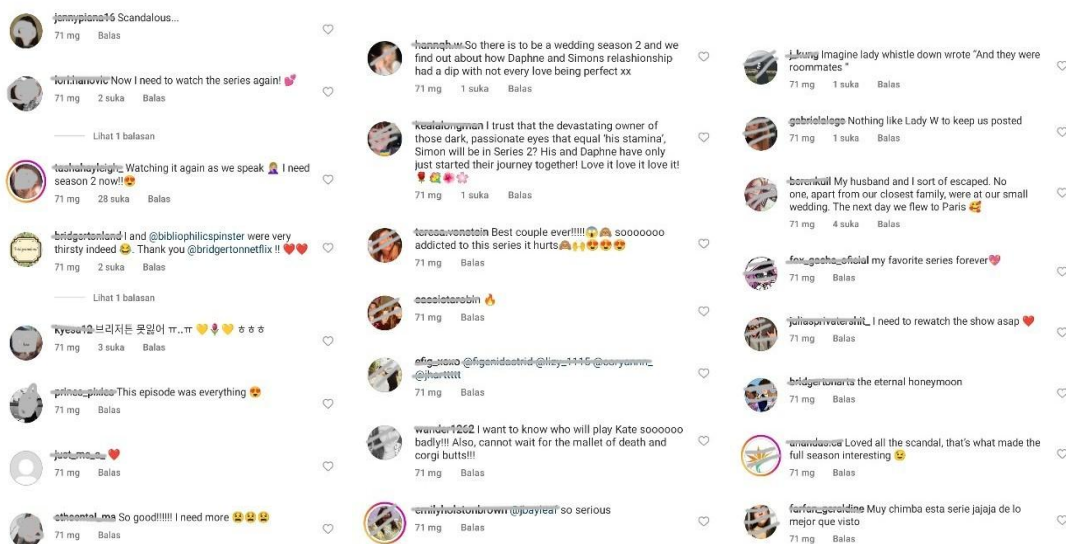
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The way the series promotes itself and conveys its narrative through gossip allows viewers to feel involved in the world of *Bridgerton*, thus fulfilling their desire to immerse themselves in the fantasy universe constructed by the series creators.

The discussion regarding the relationship between gossip, viewers, the work, and audience fantasy illustrates an interconnected dynamic between viewers' latent active anaclitic desires in the real world and cultural habits of instinctive communication, gossiping, and having an open arena for audiences to express their desires. The creators of the work seek popularity, crafting the series in a way that resonates with societal habits. Simultaneously, audiences need a safe space to channel their instinct for gossip. Gossip serves as the bridge that fulfills both needs. Thus, the manifestation of desire through embedded gossip, as a formula in the *Bridgerton* romance series, successfully meets the expectations of both viewers and the series creators.

## 2. Audiences' active narcissistic desire caused addiction to *Bridgerton* series

Active narcissistic desire is a form of desire that reflects an individual's aspiration to become the Other or something beyond themselves (Bracher, 2009). This desire pertains to a person's identity, which evolves over time. In the context of this study, viewers who engage in escapism through popular fiction can be assumed to have lives that do not align with their desires or aspirations, and through the *Bridgerton* series, they are able to fulfill them. This is illustrated by comments from viewers who are married couples watching the series together. Beyond married couples, many single viewers also imagine having lives similar to those depicted in the *Bridgerton* series. From these examples, it can be assumed that when engaging in escapism through popular fiction, individuals channel desires that cannot be directly expressed in the real world.



From the sample comments, it can be concluded that viewers with active narcissistic desire express their latent desires through the language they use. Symbolically, they convey their desires through the comments they write.



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The relationship between gossip and viewers' anaclitic desire can be observed in the most specific comments, such as the one by @B\*\*\*\*I, who wrote, "My husband and I sort of escaped. No one, apart from our closest family, were at our small wedding. The next day we flew to Paris." The commenter felt highly relatable to the series. By using the phrase "sort of escaped," they explicitly acknowledge that the work serves as a diversion from a world that is not as ideal as depicted in the series. The difference between active anaclitic desire, discussed previously, and active narcissistic desire is that the subject wants to become a character fantasized in the story. In this case, the married couple did not experience the family gathering as portrayed in the series.

In addition, a comment by @T\*\*\*\*\*n reads, "Best couple ever!!!! S0000000 addicted to this series it hurts (emoji 3x)." The excessive use of exclamation marks indicates that the viewer desires a relationship as sweet as that of the characters in the series. Furthermore, the expression "it hurts" demonstrates how the hyperbole employed by the commenter reflects the depression or emotional pain caused by their own reality.

Further discussion shows that the sample comments also indicate self-identification as characters involved in the series. Viewers' engagement is closely tied to how the narrative is constructed through the gossip system, with both gossip subjects and objects. Audiences seem to become gossip subjects themselves, in close proximity to Lady Whistledown. This argument is supported by the following comments: @H\*\*\*\*w wrote, "So there is to be a wedding season 2 and we find out about how Daphne and Simons relash[t]ionship had a dip with not every love being perfect xx," and @J\*\*\*\*g wrote, "Imagine Lady Whistledown wrote 'And they were roommates,'" while @G\*\*\*\*I wrote, "Nothing like Lady W to keep us posted." By imagining themselves as characters or part of "The Ton," viewers are free to express their desires through gossip.

Gossip, once again, becomes a manifestation of viewers' desires—specifically, their active anaclitic desire to be part of "The Ton" and to seemingly become characters within the series. Supporting this analysis, a comment by @A\*\*\*\*\*e reads, "Loved all the scandal, that's what made the full season interesting." This clearly demonstrates that gossip serves as a manifestation of viewers' desires, fulfilled through the series they enjoy. The validation of desire through the series increases audience engagement and addiction to *Bridgerton*. Several comments indicate that viewers want to watch repeatedly, even anticipating subsequent seasons. For example, @I\*\*\*\*\*c wrote, "Now I need to watch the series again!," @T\*\*\*\*\*h\_ commented, "watching it again as we speak (emoji) I need season 2 now!," @B\*\*\*\*d wrote, "I and (tagged account) were very thirsty indeed (emoji). Thank you (tagged account)!!," and @E\*\*\*\*\*e commented, "so good!!!!!!! I need more (emoji 3x)." These comments reveal that viewers, "thirsty" for the validation of their desires through the series, become increasingly addicted. The gossip technique facilitates the communication of emotions between viewers and the work, allowing viewers' desires to be easily validated and fulfilled.

In conclusion, the desires expressed in viewers' comments are active desires—both active anaclitic and active narcissistic. This indicates that when viewers watch the series, they position the series as the object and themselves as the



subject. It can also be assumed that viewers attain their own subjectivity while watching the series. This can further be connected to how individuals engage in escapism from reality in order to regain their subjectivity.

## CONCLUSION

Gossip is a deeply ingrained cultural practice and can be concluded to serve as an attraction for audiences to watch the *Bridgerton* series. Viewers are invited to enjoy the gossip embedded within the series' narrative. By engaging with this gossip, audiences can follow the storyline more leisurely, as gossip functions as casual conversation that also conveys information about social spheres within society. Furthermore, viewers are encouraged to gossip beyond the series itself, as they can interact on Instagram to share their experiences while watching the series, seek information regarding its developments, and discuss the actors and actresses involved in the show.

Desire serves as the driving force behind individuals' engagement in escapism. The desires expressed in viewers' comments are active desires—both active anaclitic and active narcissistic. This indicates that when viewers watch the series, they position the series as the object and themselves as the subject. It can also be concluded that viewers attain their own subjectivity while watching the series. This can further be linked to how individuals engage in escapism from reality through the fantasy world constructed in the series to achieve validation of their desires and regain their subjectivity. Therefore, the gossip presented in popular fiction series functions as a catalyst, allowing viewers to relax while simultaneously channeling their desires effectively.

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