

Monopoly as Ideological Play: Cultural Reproduction of Capitalism in Game Design and Practice

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Abstract

Monopoly was initially designed as a critique of capitalist property relations but has gradually evolved into a cultural artifact that teaches and legitimizes capitalist values. This study examines how the game communicates ideological messages through its rules, design, and play practices. A qualitative design was employed in two stages: discourse and semiotic analysis of The Landlord's Game (1903) and contemporary Monopoly editions, and in-depth interviews with participants from different age groups. The first stage investigates how rulebooks, game components, and promotional materials reflect the shift from systemic critique to market reproduction, while the second explores how players interpret mechanisms such as property accumulation, debt, taxation, chance, and bankruptcy, alongside the symbolic role of visual elements. The study is expected to reveal how Monopoly naturalizes capitalist practices and positions entertainment as an ideological apparatus, contributing to debates in cultural studies, media literacy, and game studies.

Keywords

Monopoly, cultural reproduction, game studies.