Game Of Thrones Versus Vikings: Comparative Analysis

Ever since Vikings made the scene in 2013, inescapably equating to Game of Thrones have accompanied. Despite the Thrones is obviously not historical to physical life, both series are set in time from the past and conflicts for power are primary to their stories. Some might be liking Game of Thrones more, or some might be a fan of Vikings, or maybe others grow a love for both of these shows. It is also possible some even hate one of them and completely cherish for the other. In any case, one cannot deny the many things that are similar within these two.

Game of Thrones understandably is older, and it may seem like the creators of Vikings reasonably wanted to capitalize on the achievement of Game of Thrones by making a comparable series, however, Vikings still retain its own and merit plentiful respect for that, but also for so much more. Notwithstanding, it is certain that there are differences which set these shows apart on a few levels. The first thing that strikes is the fact that Vikings based on history and comparing Game of Thrones, George R.R. Martin has teased the historical events he was motivated by, Game of Thrones does not have to try to be accurate to them.

Reality is something Vikings has to loosely follow. If you go ahead and Google Ragnar you would have a rough idea about what he is destined to do and when and under what circumstances he is supposed to die. Hence, watching the series will eventually reveal those facts. The equivalent can be said of various of Vikings' figures, some of whose fortunes are lesser known. Game of Thrones resonantly reveals the fantastical, while Vikings, on the other hand, flirts with it. The History Channel series has invited the viewers into the mind's eye of a protagonist, where they see things according to their beliefs. Here we do not see any dragon but, we yet to believe by the hints given to us gods walk among us. Similar to Game of Thrones our characters take action hereupon to their tenets. In order to see swords light aflame to be a confirmation of a mythological element though it is necessary to cross towards Game of Thrones’ territory.

Figure 1 - Elements of mythology appear mostly in Game of Thrones.

In this picture, we see Beric Dondarrion’s flaming sword. Game of Thrones starts with King Robert’s visiting the northern castle Winterfell. Robert needs to ask his longtime friend Ned Stark to be his right hand-assistant or in another word Hand of the King. King arrives at the castle with his queen and a bunch of Lannisters. Right after the royal party's arrival, Catelyn Stark who is the wife of Ned Stark receives a crow with a message indicating that former Hand’s death came from Lannisters. Ned’s son Bran afterward discovers the queen and her brother are having sexual affairs. Queen’s brother, Jamie Lannister then pushes Bran from a window in order to silence him, attempts to murder. Everyone else thinks that he simply fell from the tower while climbing.

Ned Stark leaves Winterfell with King Robert rides to South. The same day Jon Snow who is Bastard son of Ned Stark also leaves the castle in order to serve at the Wall, where some men have sworn to defend it, the Night’sWatch. These men were receiving strange messages about bizarre creatures have caught on seen and they were losing more men with the increasing frequency. Tyrion Lannister brother to Jaime Lannister who is a little man, companies Jon Snow

on his journey in order to see this massive structure called the Wall. Meanwhile, on the other side of the Narrow Sea, which separates Westeros and Essos, Daenerys Targaryen marries to a warlord named Khal Drogo who is the leader of Dothraki people. Daenerys and her brother Viserys are the last members of their family which have been defeated by Robert to become King. They are an ancient family claimed to be descended from dragons, and Viserys believes if he leads the Dothraki army he can take back the Throne.

A knight named Ser Jorah Morment who is exiled by Ned Stark pledges he will help. Daenerys receives three dragon eggs as a wedding gift and she immediately becomes fascinated by them. Meanwhile at the King's Landing Eddard -Ned Stark- discovers none of Cersei's children are from Robert and they are not true heirs to the Iron Throne. Cersei learns about this fact and she gets to acting. Poisons Robert during his hunting trip and he gets back heavily wounded. Not long after his arrival, Robert dies. Cersei arrests Eddard. She forces Ned to confess treason in order to protect his two daughters. Unfortunately, even though he lies and admits that he committed to treason Cersei's son Joffrey -now the king- has Eddard to be beheaded. As a result, North opens rebellion against Joffrey. Robb Stark who is the son of Ned Stark wages war against Lannisters. Along the way, he promises to take one of Frey's daughters as his bride after the war in order to receive strategic help from them. Yet, he does not keep his promise. It is a matter of fact in Westeros everybody gets punished if they decide to do something wrong.

For that reason, we get to witness him and his mother Catelyn Stark and a handful amount of his soldiers slaughtered during the Red Wedding. From now on, we see Daenerys dragons come to life and she outsmarts many foreign men who have the power. She builds an army from nothing. She takes cities under her control and becomes a queen with the biggest army that Westeros has ever seen. She manages to cross the sea with her 3 grown dragons. During this time, Cersei loses all of her children and becomes the first queen of the Red Keep. Jon Snow first manages to be the leader of Night's Watch and he becomes the King in the North. He bent the knee to Daenerys and becomes allies. Also, between Jon and Daenerys a love sparks. Besides, we learn that Jon is not a bastard of Eddard and he is the true heir to the Throne. On the other side, an army of death called White Walkers as I mentioned earlier as bizarre creatures, for the first time in the Westorosi history manages to pass the wall. We get to see the real enemy. In the other show, our protagonist is Ragnar Lothbrok, a semi-legendary figure of Norse folklore. His numerous tales gathered and tossed into a blender so that it becomes approachable for TV. Ragnar strikes us as a rather different member of Vikings as the story tells us. He is a warrior and raids just like his fellows yet he also seeks for more. He is at heart an explorer and a guy who seeks for knowledge. As a former farmer during the whole first season, he wants to know if there are other places where life is not as difficult as in the harsh landscape of Scandinavia.

Ragnar has a wife named Lagertha. She is a renown legendary shieldmaiden. They have two children one boy Bjorn and a daughter named Gyda. Aside from them, other prominent figures include Rolo who is Ragnar's brother. Rolo has some amount of conflict with his brother. Yet another character who appears almost in all episodes is Ragnar's shipbuilder friend named Floki, who is a bit of an odd duck, to speak the least. There is also Ragnar's King Horik, his second wife, Aslaug, and a few other significant characters for the first season including the monk Athelstan. There is a strong relationship between Ragnar and Athelstan which I will talk about later in this paper. We witness Ragnar become more and more by every episode. First, he manages to become Earl then he gets to be the king. He explores England and does not stop there. He goes further to Paris. He defeats English armies even gets to raid Paris.

Eventually, he dies in season 4 and after him leaving the show, his children and the other characters fill the screen with their adventures. Both shows have similar epic settings and medieval look.

They have large armies battling from time to time and key characters shaping the storyline with urging for more power and wishing to become the one who sits on the throne. Both of them have nudity and many gruesome deaths. Maybe one difference about the settings would be when it comes to battles Vikings feels more real given the fact that it is following the History and there are no magicians and of course dragons aside from the Dragon carvings on their ships. Viking's dragon, while handsome, can not muster so much as a spark.

Figure 2 - On the left side, three dragons from Game of Thrones and on the right side a ship from Vikings that has dragon carving on it.

Although it seems like Vikings do not look mystical much because they have to stick to the history and reality, it does not change the fact that there were quite a lot of myths in the Norse Folklore. Hence, it seems they added some moments where it reflects the mythological essences of the time and also these scenes reveal themselves very ambiguously so that they give the audience a chance to somewhat explain themselves it also could not be mythological at all.

To illustrate, characters see visions but you get to think they might be under the effect of mushrooms which they actually consume in some scenes. Besides, there are lots of moments with the Oracle of Kattegat -the city where Ragnar lives-. These moments would be called mystical and the series comes close to cross the fantastical border. However, at the end of the day, it should not be forgotten Vikings as series just a series. Joanna Katarzyna Puchalska explains this in more detail, "As we can see many threads shown in the Vikings series might be misleading. Others – like tattoos, eye make-up, wedding ceremony, Norse mythology and the pursuit of fame – find justification in historical sources. It seems that the creators of the television series tried to use all possible sources on the Viking Age and make Vikings as interesting as possible for the viewers, without necessarily paying heed to the credibility of the presented phenomena.

After all, the show is entertainment, not a documentary programme, and the audience should be aware of that fact. Still, the preparation of the History Channel and its willingness to convey the climate of the early medieval times deserves praise. Even though in their work history intermingles with the legend, it might inspire future enthusiasts and researchers and widen our knowledge on the Viking world.". Figure 2 - The oracle of Kattegat. Game of Thrones embody many religions in it though there is never a battle over it. Samantha Pine explains these religions in more detail, "(...) there are three different religions that divide the Seven Kingdoms of Westeros. The major religion is The Faith of the Seven and is predominant through the south of the region, whereas in the north, many worship the Old Gods of the Forest and in the Iron Islands, the Drowned God. Throughout Westeros, religious rituals and ceremonies are limited to weddings and worshiping at Great Septs or, for the north men, Weirwood trees. Although the stories behind all of their different religions are interesting, it seems the characters only mention their Gods in passing.". Everybody seems to be okay with their beliefs. Yes, there are moments one claims to worship to the real god and the other claims her god is the one and only. Still, this never drags them into fighting over their religious beliefs.

On the other hand, things get bloody when it comes to Vikings. Fellow people of Kattegat are pagans like most of the Vikings. They do not hesitate when it comes to killing Christians. Aaron Pruner says, “While we all know from history that Christianity ended up demolishing Paganism, this compelling culture clash plays out in a tragically beautiful way on Vikings. In Season 1, Ragnar and his men discover a group of Christian Monks praying at a church they proceed to demolish. At that time, the Norsemen only knew of their Gods Odin, Thor, and Loki and that when they died in battle, they would live on in their heaven known as Valhalla. Discovering this new culture — and strange Christian religion — led to the kidnapping of one young surviving monk by the name of Athelstan” and they kill the rest of the monks. One of the biggest selling points of both series is their relatable characters. They both have strong female characters and they both live in harsh and unforgiving environments besides, they are pretty good at it even many times better than their male rivals.

The heroines obviously are Daenerys for Game of Thrones and Lagertha for Vikings. Both are self-sufficient women – Danaerys is engaged with assembling an army for her resurrection to Westeros, Lagertha is a milestone of Ragnar’s elite raiding unit – but later she becomes an Earl by dealing with would-be rapist second husband by slicing him into prosciutto. In another scene, Lagertha is the one where she gets to punch Ragnar over his head with her shield. Not your ordinary housewife then. Moreover, both series have heroes to root for. Just maybe Game of Thrones can win here with its versatile story where there are a lot of characters for everyone. Furthermore, two series have homosexual characters represented in different ways. Game of Thrones has lesbian, bisexual and gay figures represented very openly, however, Vikings display this very differently.

Game of Thrones has been important for gay fans just as rainbow flags and Jell-O shots by showing gay scenes bravely on the scene. So, it would feel unacceptable to suggest that Game of Thrones is not good with LGBTB lately. Yet, it seems like Thrones might have a gay problem. Over the years, gay figures on Game of Thrones have faced particularly bloody and ignominious deaths. Renly was killed by a shadow monster that came out of Melisandre’s womb. We witnessed the brutal death of bisexual Oberyn Martell whose had exploded by the hands of Mountain. Hodor asexual character died while holding the door. Yara captured by her uncle Euron and it seems many torture scenes are likely to follow. Elleria other bisexual figure captured by Euron and now she is probably tortured to death by the hands of Cersei while watching her daughter rot away in front of her. Moreover, most importantly, Loras Tyrell not just burnt alive and buried under the ashes of Sept of Baelor this happened right after he was forced to waive his sexual orientation and the man he truly loved. “I have laid with other men, including the traitor Renly Baratheon,” he says in his confession. “I’m guilty of depravity, dishonesty, profligacy, and arrogance.” After his forehead got carved the seven-pointed star and he had to deny everything he once held dear. However, as it seems some negativity wave hits the gay fans of Game of Thrones, there are other meanings could be taken out. For example, with Loras Tyrell case it is a fact that the belief which denotes homosexuality also went under the Sept of Bailor. Besides, there is still a chance maybe another character would come forth in season 8 and satisfy the gay fans of Game of Thrones.

Figure 4 - Loras Tyrell his forehead got carved with the seven-pointed star.

In the other show, Ragnar sails into the seas and his urge to discover new lands and possess more knowledge carries him to the shores of England. Here he and his crew find a monastery, one famous for its illuminated Scriptures.

The Northmen brutally kills unprepared monks and takes as much as treasure they can carry. Ragnar, however, discovers something much more important than gold: one monk named Athelstan who can speak his language and more interestingly he risk his life over a religious copy. When they ashore back to Kattegat the Earl punishes them for leaving without his will and he claims all the treasure for himself. Yet, he lets the men who raided to pick one object from the treasure. Everyone else except Ragnar picks something valuable as golden bracelets and so on. On the other side, Ragnar chooses his monk Athelstan. So in tales hero gets awarded by a pretty girl at the end but here Ragnar who already has a beautiful wife he gets this young man. From now on, there are many scenes if not explicitly screams out that there is a relationship more than bromance between Ragnar and Athelstan, it is obvious to the eye to pick up the tension within these two.

Figure 5 - On the left Athelstan and on the right Ragnar Lodbrok.

One explicit scene shows the interest of these men to each other must be the one that after Ragnar taking Athelstan back to his home as a slave. While Ragnar and Lagertha making love, Ragnar offers Athelstan to join them. This might look like if Athelstan is offered to have sex with Lagertha at a glance though, it actually is a threesome offer. Following interviews with the cast, especially Travis Fimmel who plays the Ragnar Lodbrok, have approved that the scene was not only about Lagertha propositioning Athelstan. Ragnar desires the threesome just as much as she does, and Athelstan is just as thrilled/shaken by the both of them. There are other moments that prove the love between these characters such as how they get gloomy when they stay apart and how they are looking at each other. Moreover, they care about each other's beliefs and feelings. Athelstan tries to be a pagan for Ragnar -even it is not admitted by any- and Ragnar even falls onto his knees and prays with Athelstan to the Christian god. And it is also important to not forget how Ragnar becomes devasted and lost after the death of Athelstan. Figure 6 - Ragnar and Athelstan praying together. Zombies started appearing in the early 1930s.

Since then, they kept making the scene in different forms. Before the terrorist attack in the USA, they were sometimes representing the consumer hunger yet another time the capitalist politics. But regardless, whatever is put under the scope they kept pace and evolved with it. White Zombie was one of the earliest examples of zombie movies. Here, slow-paced zombies were epitomizing imperialist concerns. On the other hand, with George A. Romero's Night of the Living Dead (1968) had its ghouls chasing after automobiles and oil. So, the importance of some products was vital throughout human history. Consumerism of these aforementioned goods, sometimes altered the world system. These alterations on the other side created their own zombies. Vast use of sugar, for example, diminished the healthy food and struck out our balanced nutrition habit by poisoning our diet with fast food. Then, we have seen the zombie horde of sugar consumers.

Earlier movies where slow-paced zombies took place, built on criticizing capitalism, imperialism, racism and such. After the September 11th attacks, zombie films become to reverberate the worst-case fears of an exaggerated media cultivation, a fear of terrorism and epidemic in the zombie semblance. Movies started evolving within the current circumstances and zombies started to get reshaped as well. From now on most of the zombies we see in these kinds of movies are now fast. They can run, sprint and most probably catch you easily. They are from an era where the army, institutions and corrupted social integrity would fail in an attempt to stop them. This might be ringing some bells because Game of Thrones also has its own zombie

horde the White Walkers! We are encouraged to read the Wall as the edge of legal jurisdiction, a border that parts the rule of law from anarchy, civilization from barbarism.