

Star Wars Actor Rips Game of Thrones: 'No Black People'

In a recent interview [with GQ](#), *Star Wars* actor John Boyega took a shot at HBO's hit series *Game of Thrones*, decrying a lack of black actors in the show.

"There are no black people on *Game of Thrones*," said Boyega, who directed a similar complaint at *Lord of the Rings*. "I ain't paying money to always see one type of person on-screen. Because you see different people from different backgrounds, different cultures, every day. Even if you're a racist, you have to live with that. We can ruffle up some feathers."

Boyega's comments were not accurate—there are several prominent characters in *Game of Thrones* who are black, such as [Salladhor Saan](#), Missandei, and Grey Worm—but received praise nonetheless.

“Bravo (or should that be Braavos?), John Boyega, for saying what so few are willing to say: *Game of Thrones* has a diversity problem,” [wrote](#) *Newsweek*’s Tufayel Ahmed.

Dani Di Placido at *Forbes* was less impressed.

“Calling out two franchises based entirely on British history and mythology is completely counter-productive,” he [wrote](#). “While film productions should make every effort to cast a representative assembly of actors, it shouldn’t be to the detriment of the story.”

This has become a national pastime of sorts in the United States. We argue over the appropriate level of diversity in movie casts, companies, and sports teams, shaming (or suing) those that do not meet a particular standard. (No one knows precisely what the standard is, however, because it’s not fixed.)

Diversity is a happy word. No one can really be against it. To be against diversity would imply one is a bigot—a racist or misogynist.

The problem is the word diversity carries far more implications than one might think. As author Noah Berlatsky recently [wrote in the L.A. Times](#), it is basically a euphemism, a polite plea to white people asking them to stop being racist and sexist:

“When critics from marginalized groups ask for more diversity, they are actually asking the media, employers, schools and society in general not to discriminate against them. When it takes until 2017 to get to a female-led superhero film from Marvel or DC, that’s not a failure of diversity; that’s sexism. When 12 Doctors have been cast since 1963 and they are all white men, that’s not a failure of diversity either; that’s racism (and sexism as well).”

A request for more diversity isn’t really a plea to embrace

stimulating heterogeneity. It's a plea to embrace minimal decency."

Berlatsky is saying that underrepresentation of any group is *prima facie* evidence of discrimination; there can be no other explanation.

This thinking has become orthodoxy for many today, the cornerstone of a new faith based on social justice. It's a highly attractive moral philosophy in many ways.

As Shelby Steele [pointed out](#) earlier this year in the *Wall Street Journal*, it empowers with moral authority those who wield it. Meanwhile, it denies moral authority to others by invoking "America's old bigotries—racism, sexism, homophobia and xenophobia."

"To be stigmatized as a fellow traveler with any of these bigotries is to be utterly stripped of moral authority and made into a pariah," Steele writes.

Whether *Game of Thrones* creators George R.R. Martin, D.B. Weiss, David Benioff, or HBO are actually racist or sexist is not really the point. If one fails to meet this ephemeral standard of diversity, he has committed a modern form of blasphemy.