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Using Newspapers and Films as Tools for Cultural History Research

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The European Conference on Media, Communication & Film 2021
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Abstract

This paper demonstrates how media historians can gain valuable insight by using newspapers as well as fiction films as their primary source materials. It exhibits the value of considering press and cinema sources next to one another, through a case study of the representation of London's public transport network in popular newspapers and fiction films of interwar Britain. Through a close reading of relevant newspaper articles and films, it becomes evident that whilst both media paid heed to the sensational and potentially hazardous aspects of public transport, newspaper reports also sought to reassure readers which used transport every day. This indicates a more complicated relationship to the dangers of modernisation than an analysis of fiction films alone would suggest. Newspapers and films provide adjacent, complementary forms of representation. The press report on real-life events, but increased commercialisation of the press means that fictional storytelling devices are frequently used by reporters. Fiction films provide the inverse; its made-up stories need to be grounded in reality to permit audiences to connect with them. Considering both media alongside one another can create a new and richer understanding of social and cultural history.

Keywords: Film History, Media History, London, Methodology

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Introduction

This paper sets out a novel research methodology for cultural history research: the use of both film texts and newspaper reports as primary sources. Using these sources alongside one another can lead to valuable new insights in cultural history. As well as describing a possible approach to this methodology, the paper demonstrates its usefulness by providing an analysis of the representation of London's public transport system in interwar British films and newspapers.

During the 1920s and 1930s, British citizens were likely to consume both films and newspapers in their day-to-day life, as both media industries expanded rapidly. Audiences' interpretation of the world around them was influenced by the representation of that world in both films and newspapers. Newspapers and films provide different but supplementary representations of topics. Excavating the representations across both media therefore gives new insights in how a topic or phenomenon was presented to audiences.

In relation to London's public transport system, both media took differing approaches to representing this topic, which could lead to the *Daily Mirror* printing an article in 1929 about the unfortunate Miss Organ who got brutally attacked in a train; and the film *Underground* being released a year prior to this and displaying the underground train as a space for courtship. These two depictions appear to give conflicting messages about public transport.

This paper first makes the case for using newspapers and films as primary texts alongside one another. It then offers a practical insight into how one may design and conduct a project that considers both films and newspapers as primary texts. The second half of the paper explores the representation of public transport in interwar British films and newspapers, to demonstrate the methodology in action.

Using Newspapers and Films as Primary Sources

Using multiple, disparate types of source material for cultural history work is of course not new, and this approach has been used by other cultural historians and film historians to great effect. It is the combination of daily newspapers and films that is not commonly used, and of which I will set out the benefits. As D. L. LeMahieu (1998, p. 9) has demonstrated, newspapers and films both became particularly influential forms of mass-media in Britain between the wars, and, he argues, they democratised culture by allowing many more people to participate in the consumption of cultural expressions.

Richard Abel, who has looked at how newspapers reported on the emerging habit of filmgoing in the US, calls newspapers the 'Cultural Partner of the Movies' (2015, p. 6). His book *Menus for Movieland* persuasively demonstrates the role that the daily newspaper industry played in the promotion and growth of filmgoing as a new habit. The approach set out in this paper is different; rather than looking at newspaper articles *about film*, it explores how one can compare the representations of a specific topic or event in both film and newspapers, to gain a rounded understanding of how the topic or event was mediated for everyday audiences.

Existing scholarship, then, has agreed on the importance of newspapers and films in early 20th century Western cultures. There has been exploration of how newspapers and fictional sources wrote about film; but there has not yet been much work done on how newspaper and film together reflected on the world around them.

Methodology

When planning to embark on a project that considers both films and newspapers, the main consideration is the difference in volumes between both media. A newspaper consists of hundreds of articles per issue. Depending on the country and period under observation, the film output within scope of the project could also run into the hundreds of film texts. To make the volume of potential primary sources manageable, sampling is required.

My own project only considered newspaper articles in three newspapers: The *Daily Mail*, *Daily Mirror* and *Daily Express*. These three titles were selected because they were all popular, national, daily newspapers. All were founded around the turn of the century, and hugely increased their circulation during the interwar period. Using these three papers as primary material allowed for an analysis of how newspapers aimed at the mass, lower-middle-class audience, represented the world to their readers.

But even with three newspaper titles, the amount of content over twenty years can be overwhelming. To narrow down the possible range of material, for each newspaper only two months' coverage, for each of the years in my period were considered. For the *Daily Express* for example, papers published in March and April for each of the years between 1920 and 1939 were included. The sampling for the other two papers covered different months, allowing for the total amount of primary material to cover six months out of twelve for each calendar year. This meant the sampling did not include any coverage about some big events: The General Strike in 1926 for example did not fall within it. The random approach to deciding which months to sample precluded the possibility of any unconscious bias towards certain historical events over others. After deciding on the sample, each newspaper issue within it was read on microfilm and its contents analysed. Any article that fell within the research parameters was noted down and coded against defined topics of interest.

Rather than reading the newspapers on microfilm, it is also possible to use word search cues in digital databases to find relevant articles. Whilst this approach may be the only available option if the researcher is not physically able to access microfilms or the original documents, there are limitations to using digital databases. Not all archives have sophisticated word search functionality, and any search is naturally limited to the terminology the researcher is aware of. Journalists may be using unfamiliar terms to describe the same topic, particularly if they were working in a different cultural or historical context. This may lead to valuable reports being missed by the researcher. Alternatively, a smaller sample size would likely allow for a more thorough read-through of each individual issue.

In comparison, the film corpus is almost inevitably smaller than the newspaper archive. If one is researching early cinema or cinema of a country where preservation has been limited, the sample is necessarily limited. As films can be less easily accessible than newspaper copies, online databases can in this instance really help the researcher to calculate how many films in theory exist that would be relevant to the research topic. From these, a representative sample can be drawn up to be included in the research.

The temporal nature of film brings its own challenges; they can require a significant time commitment to review and depending on the topic of research interest, the film's synopsis may not clarify whether it should be included or not. In those instances, a full viewing of the film is required to determine its suitability.

Findings

After setting out the practicalities of designing a research project that considers both newspapers and fiction films, the second half of this paper demonstrates how combining these sources can lead to new insights. As noted above, this is done with reference to the representation of London's public transport system in the period 1919-1939.

London's transport system continues to receive ample scholarly attention. Although it was originally created in the mid-19th century, the interwar period is also a pivotal time for its development. The public transport network expanded rapidly during the 1920s and 1930s, to facilitate travel to and from the many new suburban developments at the edges of the city. The period also saw the rationalisation of the network and its unification under the name London Transport. The scholarly conversation around London's public transport in the interwar period is therefore often around ideas of unification, creating community, and rationalisation (Harrington, 2017).

Whilst fiction films do subscribe to the notion of public transport as a space of community and levelling, newspaper reports highlight very different aspects of the public transport experience. When reviewing the reporting of London's public transport system in popular newspapers of the interwar period, two main topics emerge. The first are reports of violence against passengers, and the second are reports on transport accidents.

Attacks on passengers were particularly aimed at women using public transport. The introduction of public transport had given women more ability to navigate the city independently, for example to travel to and from their places of work. This mobility evoked some concern about the changing place of women in society. Attacks on female passengers were one way to limit these women's new-found freedom.

Take for example what befell Miss Daisy Tyler, a sixteen-year-old who travelled home to Barking on the tube in April 1921. Whilst in an apparently crowded carriage, an unknown attacker sidled behind Daisy and cut her braid off with a razor. According to the *Daily Express* article that reported on the incident, the type of blond hair that Daisy had was in 'considerable demand', although it leaves up to the reader's imagination what the hair would be used for. More telling is the key concern that an anonymous friend of Daisy raises after the attack: Daisy was upset not because of the violation per se but because she had been intending to go to a dance later that evening, suggesting that her main upset was around an apparent loss of feminine appeal. In this incident, the community in the crowded carriage offered no protection to Daisy. Rather, it offered protection to the attacker, as he (or she) was able to be obscured by the other commuters.

If crowded carriages could be dangerous, the same was true for empty ones. In December 1929, Miss Organ, a podiatrist in her mid-20s, was brutally attacked in a train between Bromley and New Cross, south London. Like Daisy Tyler, Miss Organ was also travelling home from work. The train was an overground suburban train and therefore had separate compartments which offered the opportunity to attack passengers' unseen. According to Miss Organ's testimony, the man who attacked her had gotten on at the same time as her. After sitting in the carriage without speaking for a number of minutes, the man suddenly jumped up and attacked her, stealing her money and leaving her badly wounded.

Finally, trains could be used as conduits for even more serious violence against women. In September 1922 a parcel was found in a train travelling from Waterloo station, which contained a girl's hand, arm, shin bone and foot. The parcel was left on the luggage rack in a carriage. A man had reportedly been sitting below the parcel but had left the train without taking the parcel with him. The parcel was handed in at the left luggage office and opened a few days later. The transitory and anonymous space of the rail carriage allowed the perpetrator to get rid of the evidence of a crime.

The other type of transport news that was regularly reported in the papers were occasions where accidents and technical failure caused potentially dangerous situations. Take for example the report on a 'triple smash' that took place in Leyton in 1925. The accident involved a bus, a lorry and a tramcar; the lorry first crashed into the tram and then smashed into the bus. The force of the impact cut the bus nearly in two. Miraculously, no-one in the bus died, but 16 passengers were injured, 7 of whom had to be taken to hospital. The *Daily Mail* article notes that "Most of the injured were young women", again those who were returning from their jobs in Central London to their homes in the suburbs.

Although transport accidents were serious and no doubt had a significant impact on the lives of those involved, newspaper reports on them are remarkably subdued, particularly in comparison to some of the other, more sensational reporting taking place in British tabloids at the time. None of the articles include images of wrecked vehicles, even though the technology was available to print reportage photographs. The 'immediacy of the visual medium', to borrow a phrase by Lucy Bland (2008), was considered too shocking and inappropriate for reporting on accidents. Instead, the articles adopt a factual tone, focusing on the details of the location of the accident and the identities of the casualties. Although some of the accidents at least appear to have been caused by poor driving skills, the articles are reluctant to blame anyone for the accidents. Instead, they tend to be 'inexplicable', with drivers and mechanics claiming they are unable to understand how the accidents could have happened.

What emerged from the newspaper research was that public transport was largely presented as a potential and unmanageable danger, particularly for female travellers. Unlike newspaper reports, films of the same period foregrounded positive possibilities of public transport. In contrast to the notion of the bus or train carriages as a space that could leave you vulnerable to attack, as newspapers presented them, films showed these same spaces as spaces of possibility. The anonymity of the train carriage makes it a place for opportunity rather than danger. Films also highlighted public transport's function of bringing people of all walks of life together, and framed this as a positive feature.

This supposed feature of public transport as a democratic space is particularly foregrounded in the 1928 film *Underground* (Asquith). This film takes as its premise that the London Underground is a space where people from all backgrounds and classes meet by chance. The plot is concerned with four characters: Nell, a shop girl in a department store; Bill, an attendant in an underground station; Bert, a 'rogue' who works in Lots Road power station; and Kate, a seamstress and Bert's long-suffering girlfriend.

The film opens with the following title:

The 'Underground' of the Great Metropolis of the British Empire, with its teeming multitudes of 'all sorts and conditions of men', contributes its share of light and shade, romance and tragedy and all those things that go to make up what we call 'life'. So in the

‘Underground’ is set our story of ordinary work-a-day people whose names are just Nell, Bill, Kate and Bert.

The opening title makes much of the supposed mixture of characters and events on the Underground, which was partly achieved because there was one standard low fare for all passengers.

The first sequence of the film is set during a morning rush-hour commute. Nell and Bert meet in an Underground train, but the film also gives ample attention to the other ‘types’ in the carriage, such as the stern female police officer and the young sailor and soldier who try to impress a girl by offering their seats. In this first scene Bert, the ‘rogue’ tries to flirt with Nell. The tightly packed communal carriage space forces her to endure his advances against her will as she’s physically unable to put distance between herself and Bert.

The rest of the film plays out the courtship between Nell and Bill, who works in the Underground station; and Bert’s attempts to break up this budding relationship, for which he calls on the help of his put-upon girlfriend Kate. By the end of the film, Nell and Bill are secure and happy in their relationship.

In the film’s closing scene, again in an Underground carriage, we see an older man who persuades the young man sitting next to him to give up his seat for a young woman. As soon as the woman sits down the older man starts flirting with her. When she does not reciprocate, the man turns his attention to the man sitting on his other side, and tries to get him to give up his seat to Nell, who is standing with her back to them. Nell politely refuses the offer of a seat, as she is travelling with Bill and is happy to stand. The old man is lecherous and he uses the pretence of politeness to get young women to sit close to him. The only reason Nell can escape this fate is that she is already married and has a male companion to travel with; if she had been alone, politeness would have required her to accept the offered seat. The Underground trains in *Underground* are presented as spaces where all classes of people mix, but also as spaces where women are frequently annoyed and imposed upon.

Although the film is keen to promote the space of the Underground as one that is democratic and allows people from all backgrounds to share an experience, it also singles out the experience of women as potentially unpleasant. Almost despite itself, the film is not able to fully depict the Underground carriage as the level playing field that it claims it to be. In line with the real-life experiences of female travellers, set out earlier, Nell comes repeatedly under threat of harassment in the Underground carriage.

Conclusion

Films of the interwar period, then, largely present public transport as a utopian space where people from all backgrounds can mingle. Newspapers did their best to underplay the potential dangers of using public transport. Both media in tandem worked to reassure their audiences that using public transport was safe and desirable. Neither medium challenged the structural underpinnings of the public transport system, or questioned whether people should be using it at all in light of some of its shortcomings. Rather, the media worked to normalise the use of public transport at a time when it increasingly became a standard part of Londoner’s daily lives.

Considering representations of public transport in films and newspapers alongside one another has revealed this interplay between the two media. It has shown that whilst newspapers did

report on transport crashes and failings, films did not choose to represent the same, but instead ascribed more positive features to public transport. In both media, however, female passengers are shown to be under siege from their male counterparts, who use the transport space to harass or attack them. That this shows up in films as well demonstrates that this element of public transport use was not questioned or considered undesirable.

Analysing newspaper reports and fiction films alongside one another can provide new and valuable insights into how topics or events were presented and consumed by historical audiences. The representation of a specific topic or event can be markedly different in both media. As audiences for both media would be consuming both newspapers and films, they would be subject to both depictions, and their own experience of the world would be formed by both. Considering both in conjunction allows for an exploration of gaps and overlaps between both media.

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Contributions of the Media to Polarizing Perspectives

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Abstract

This research found that the general public in the United States perceive youth in foster care (YFC) to be negatively presented by the media. We conducted a demographically representative national survey (N=2487 adults) in which the majority of respondents reported that they believed YFC are at least somewhat accurately portrayed as 1) Victims, 2) Survivors, 3) Criminals, and 4) Drug Addicts. The small group of respondents who identified previous life experience in foster care (N=245) were less likely to select Victim and Drug Addict, and similarly likely to select Criminal and Survivor, as compared to those without prior foster care experience. Respondents with higher consumption levels of certain media types (such as news channels or newspapers, network channels, and streaming channels) and of particular media genres (such as news and dramas) were more likely to select the negative media portrayals of Victim and Criminal for YFC. Media type and to a lesser extent, media genre, also influenced respondent's perceptions about the typical childhood experiences of YFC. There were no meaningful demographic (race, gender, age) patterns that influenced the association between the type or genre of media consumed and the perceptions of YFC. Therefore, the media is an important source of information in creating negative perceptions about YFC for all ages, genders, and races in the United States.

Keywords: Foster Care, Perception, Media

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Introduction

The stories of origin for fictional superhero characters typically involve a family tragedy in which they are left alone to fend for themselves in a dark and dangerous world. Many of these characters have a positive relationship with a caregiver such as an aunt, butler, or group home leader. They overcome the loss of their biological parents by identifying superhuman strengths within themselves and using their power to help others. Despite the multi-billion-dollar media industry for superhero movies, comic books, and television shows, through which people become familiar with these origin stories, our earlier research discovered that the public doesn't associate these positive narratives with the real lives of youth in foster care (YFC) (Ponciano, Abioye, and Gayle, 2020). We found that only 5% of a demographically representative group of approximately 2500 adults in Los Angeles reported that the media portrays YFC as heroes. However, the respondents selected the portrayals of Victim, Survivor, Criminal, and Drug Addict by very large margins as compared to the other more positive options in addition to Hero (such as Role Model, Mentor/Guide, Working Professional, and Loving Child/Parent). While Victim and Survivor, two of the four most frequent media portrayal selections, appear to be benign on their surface, they reflect a traumatic past that people from foster care are assumed to have experienced.

In this original study of YFC, approximately 35% of the respondents had either personal or professional experience with YFC. This subgroup of respondents was less likely to select Victim and Survivor but just as likely (personal experience) or significantly more likely (professional experience) to select Criminal as a media portrayal. The likelihood for the general public, as well as people who have direct experience with YFC, to select Criminal inspired the next phase of research to better understand the source of this perception.

Our results demanded that we expand our research questions to include the following: 1) Were these results specific to Los Angeles or representative of the United States? 2) Did levels of consumption or particular types or genres of media contribute to the negative perceptions of YFC? 3) What contributes to negative perceptions about YFC for those who identify as having a lived experience in foster care?

Los Angeles is both the hub of media production and the county with the highest levels of YFC in the United States. The possibility exists that the demographically representative sample of adults in Los Angeles were affiliated with the production of movies and television in Hollywood, the production of apps and software in "Silicon Beach," and the production of entertainment and sports news. Furthermore, Los Angeles County has reported approximately 30,000 children with open child welfare cases at any given point in time (Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services, 2021). This exceeds the number of open cases in other counties across the United States as well as the total numbers of entire countries. The potentially higher exposure to media production and to people in foster care in Los Angeles introduces the possibility that the respondents might have different perceptions than those in other parts of the country. Distribution of the survey to all regions of the United States would help to answer the first research question.

The original 2018 survey provided evidence that the media is a source of information that the public utilizes when forming perceptions about YFC and that these mental models negatively influence expectations for the real-life outcomes of YFC (Ponciano, Abioye, and Gayle, 2020). We hypothesized that a variation of stories might be told in different types and genres of media and that depending on levels of consumption, the public might be exposed to

negative stories in certain media formats. Therefore, media consumption questions were needed to answer the second research question.

We were puzzled by the likelihood of negative perceptions for those who had direct personal or professional experience with YFC as well as why so few people who responded to our survey recognized that Heroes often have a foster care story of origin. We conducted a series of informal social experiments during which we met virtually with a variety of stakeholder groups such as educators and administrators in a K-12 school district, social workers, and child development specialists. We presented pictures of superheroes and asked the stakeholders to describe them. They used words like strong, hero, and brave. Then we shared the origin stories of each of the superheroes and explained how they all had a lived experience in foster care. Immediately after this discussion, we asked them to select from the same list of media portrayals and identify those that they associated with YFC.

Despite the priming of the superhero origin stories and the fact that these stakeholders had direct experience with YFC, Hero was selected by 5% or fewer of the members of each group. The majority of every group selected Victim, Survivor, Criminal and Drug Addict. The negative mental model about YFC was so entrenched that priming about superheroes had no impact. Moreover, our social experiment participants were deeply unaware of their negative mental model about YFC and the influence this may have on their expectations for the future life outcomes of YFC.

The social experiments only deepened our interest in clarifying the role of media in the development of negative mental models for YFC. While the superhero stories provide strong counter narratives to negative media stories, there was a consistent disassociation for our social experiment respondents. Therefore, to expand on our findings from the first survey we had to collect more data to better understand the media's influence on public perceptions.

Methods

Measure. In 2020, we redesigned our original 2018 survey to ask participants questions about their own lives (i.e., gender, age, race, regional location, foster care experiences), the media they consume, and their perceptions of YFC. There were five demographic questions that determined racial identity, gender identity, age group, level of education and current US state of residence. We also asked a series of four questions, with skip logic, that explored respondents' personal experiences with foster care. The remainder of the questions were a mix of matrix tables, multiple choice, and rank order that asked respondents about their personal consumption of media and their perceptions of YFC.

Participants. The sample of 2487 adults from across the United States were demographically diverse with a slight majority of female participants (54% to 45% male). A small subset (10%) of participants identified as YFC (during their childhoods). However, when provided with a list of foster care-like experiences (group care, primary care by a non-parent relative, primary care by a non-relative adult, emancipated, runaway), 29% of the sample reported that one or more had occurred during their childhoods. It was unclear why those with a foster care-like experience did not self-identify as YFC; therefore, all analyses reported here will only include those who identified as YFC during childhood.

The sample was mostly educated with 10% reporting an associate degree, 25% a bachelor's degree, 18% a master's degree, and 5% a doctorate. An additional 10% had completed some

college, 3% had attended a trade or technical school, and 5% had completed some post-graduate work. Only 18% had ended their education at high school graduation or before.

Tables 1 - 3 below describe the racial, age, and regional distribution of the sample:

	White	Asian/Pacific Islander	Hispanic/Latino	African American	Biracial	Native American
Survey Sample	65%	6%	9%	14%	6%\$	0%
US Census*	60.1%	6.1%	18.5%	13.5%	2.8%	1.3%

Table 1. Racial Demographics Comparison.

*<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/PST045219>

18*-24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45-54 years	55-64 years	65+ years
11%	14%	16%	14%	15%	31%

Table 2. Age Distribution of Sample.

**Anyone under the age of 18 was dropped from the analysis.*

Regional area	# of States	% of total sample	% of US population*
South	14	36.3	38.3
Midwest	12	18.1	20.8
Northeast	11	18.5	17.1
West	13	22.7	23.9

Table 3. Regional Distribution of the Sample.

*https://www.census.gov/popclock/data_tables.php?component=growth

Results

The first research question sought to confirm the Los Angeles County results with a national survey. Participants were provided with 12 media portrayal options and asked to rank the top 5 most likely media portrayals for YFC. Negative media portrayals included Criminal, Victim, Abuser, Sociopath, Sex Worker/Pimp, and Drug Addict and positive media portrayals included Hero, Mentor/Guide, Role Model, Working Professional, Loving Child/Parent, and Survivor. We combined the rankings into frequency counts to illustrate how often the portrayals were ranked in the top 5 selections. Mirroring the Los Angeles County sample, the demographically diverse adult respondents from across the country (Table 4) were most likely to report that YFC are portrayed by the media as Victims (66%), Survivors (61%), Criminals (53%), and Drug Addicts (51%).

There were some notable differences between the samples. More than half of the national sample selected each of the four top selections while only one media portrayal (Victim) was selected by more than half of the Los Angeles sample. With the exception of Survivor, all of the positive portrayals were selected by less than 20% of the Los Angeles sample and by more than 20% of the national sample. Therefore, it appears that the perceptions of the Los Angeles sample were more negative than the national sample.

Although participants ranked the media portrayal of Survivor high, it is meaningful to note that Victim received the most selections as a media portrayal for YFC for both samples. On a 5-point Likert Scale, only 14% of the 2020 participants reported that media portrayals are not at all accurate while the remaining 86% chose one of the four other options indicating that they believed the portrayals to be slightly (25%), moderately (43%), very (11%), or extremely (7%) accurate.

	Victim	Survivor	Criminal	Drug Addict	Abuser	Loving Child or Parent
United States (N=2487)	66%	60.8%	52.9%	50.9%	34.8%	30.6%
Los Angeles (N=2488)	72%	41%	40%	30%	13.5%	5.3%
	Sex worker or Pimp	Sociopath	Role Model	Mentor/ Guide	Working Professional	Hero
United States (N=2487)	29.3%	29%	28.5%	28.4%	24.5%	23.8%
Los Angeles (N=2488)	14.8%	13%	3.9%	4.4%	2.9%	5.4%

Table 4. Comparison of Media Portrayal Frequencies in the Top 5 Rankings for LA And US.

The second research question examined the influence of media type and media genre on perceptions about YFC. The survey asked about 9 media types including newspapers/news channels, non-news magazine articles, online information channels, social media, TV/movie streaming services, network channels, cable TV shows, books, and other. The most frequently selected types of media consumed were network channels (72%), newspapers or news channels (62%), TV/movie streaming services (57%), and social media (54%). Respondents also reported about their consumption of 12 genres of media including drama, memes, animation/anime, sports, comedy, horror, action/adventure, news, documentaries/docuseries, foreign language/independent, science fiction, and other. The most frequently selected genres of media consumed were drama (63%), sports (62%), news (62%), and action/adventure (57%). Our analyses found main effects for media type (Table 5) in the prediction of some media portrayals. When the various types of media were combined, the respondents with self-reported higher levels of consumption predicted the media portrayal selections of Hero, Victim, Abuser, Sociopath, Survivor, Sex Worker/Pimp, Drug Addict, and Loving Child/Parent.

Portrayal	Effect	DFn	DFd	F	p	Sig	η^2G
Hero	Media Type	8	4721	5.59	0.000	***	0.005
Victim	Media Type	8	4721	8.50	0.000	***	0.008
Abuser	Media Type	8	4721	5.52	0.000	***	0.005
Sociopath	Media Type	8	4721	7.92	0.000	***	0.008
Survivor	Media Type	8	4721	9.48	0.000	***	0.009
Sex Worker or Pimp	Media Type	8	4721	9.00	0.000	***	0.009
Drug Addict	Media Type	8	4721	2.98	0.002	**	0.003
Loving Child or Parent	Media Type	8	4721	5.19	0.000	***	0.005

Table 5. The Significant Main Effects for Media Type Predicting Media Portrayals.

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Similarly, when all genres of media were combined (Table 6), the respondents with self-reported higher levels of consumption predicted the media portrayal selections of Criminal, Hero, Victim, Abuser, Sociopath, Survivor, Sex Worker/Pimp, and Loving Child/Parent. It would appear that media type drives the perception that YFC are portrayed as Drug Addicts in the media and that media genre has a similar influence on the perception that YFC are portrayed as Criminals in the media. Neither media type nor media genre predicted the positive portrayals of Mentor/Guide, Role Model, or Working Professional.

Portrayal	Effect	DFn	DFd	F	p	Sig	η^2G
Criminal	Media Genre	11	4672	1.86	0.040	*	0.002
Hero	Media Genre	11	4672	5.03	0.000	***	0.007
Victim	Media Genre	11	4672	7.04	0.000	***	0.009
Abuser	Media Genre	11	4672	4.12	0.000	***	0.006
Sociopath	Media Genre	11	4672	8.81	0.000	***	0.012
Survivor	Media Genre	11	4672	11.78	0.000	***	0.016
Sex Worker or Pimp	Media Genre	11	4672	10.30	0.000	***	0.014
Loving Child or Parent	Media Genre	11	4672	5.60	0.000	***	0.007

Table 6. The Significant Main Effects for Media Genre Predicting Media Portrayals.

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

An examination of the individual media types and media genres revealed significant differences for people who were exposed to higher levels of *news* and *drama* (genres) from *newspapers/news channels*, *network channels*, and *streaming services* (types). Higher consumption rates were significantly positively associated with selections of Criminal, Drug Addict, and Victim and significantly negatively associated with selections of Loving Child/Parent, Mentor/Guide, Role Model, and Working Professional. These analyses did not reveal any meaningful patterns when examining the relationship of demographic groups (age, race, gender) with media type and media genre in association with perceptions of YFC.

However, media type and media genre did reveal interesting results for a new survey question about typical childhood experiences in foster care. Respondents were asked to select one or more options from a list of 16 that included financial security in the home, emotional support, adult love and guidance, educational support, discipline, frequent moves/routine disruptions, religious affiliation, therapeutic interventions/prescribed psychotropic medications, nurturing of dreams/aspirations, positive reinforcement, enduring connections/trusted relationships, social isolation, exposure to diverse career opportunities, negative interactions with law enforcement, preparation for independent living, and conflict. The most frequently selected typical experiences for YFC included religious affiliation (49%), preparation for independent living (45%), educational support (44%), and discipline (44%).

With all media types combined, higher consumption levels significantly predicted 10 of the 16 experiences that the respondents selected as typical for YFC during childhood (Table 7). In other words, consumption of media type influenced respondents' perceptions about the following experiences of YFC: financial security, emotional support, adult love/guidance, educational support (the third most popular selection), discipline, and social isolation (the fourth most popular selection). Additionally, media type influences expectations that YFC will experience frequent moves/disruptions, negative interactions with law enforcement, preparation for independent living (the second most popular selection), and conflict.

Childhood Experience	Effect	DFn	DFd	F	p	Sig	η^2G
Financial security	Media Type	8	4721	3.069	0.002	**	0.003
Emotional support	Media Type	8	4721	2.850	0.004	**	0.003
Adult love, guidance	Media Type	8	4721	5.110	0.000	***	0.006
Educational support	Media Type	8	4721	3.379	0.001	***	0.004
Discipline	Media Type	8	4721	3.151	0.001	***	0.004
Frequent moves, disruptions	Media Type	8	4721	2.195	0.025	*	0.002
Social isolation	Media Type	8	4721	4.971	0.000	***	0.005
Neg interactions w/law enforcement	Media Type	8	4721	2.054	0.037	*	0.002
Prep for independent living	Media Type	8	4721	2.059	0.036	*	0.002
Conflict	Media Type	8	4721	3.082	0.002	**	0.003

Table 7. The Significant Main Effects for Media Type Predicting Childhood Experiences.
 *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Similarly, higher consumption of the combined media genres significantly predicted perceptions about 9 typical YFC childhood experiences (Table 8). In addition to predicting the selections of financial security, emotional support, adult love/guidance, educational support (the third most popular selection), discipline, and social isolation (the fourth most popular selection), media genre also influenced perceptions about the presence of positive reinforcement, enduring connections/trusting relationships, and exposure to diverse career opportunities.

Childhood Experience	Effect	DFn	DFd	F	p	Sig	η^2G
Financial security	Media Genre	11	4672	4.444	0.000	***	0.007
Emotional support	Media Genre	11	4672	2.939	0.001	***	0.005
Adult love, guidance	Media Genre	11	4672	4.405	0.000	***	0.007
Educational support	Media Genre	11	4672	3.490	0.000	***	0.005
Discipline	Media Genre	11	4672	3.606	0.000	***	0.006
Positive reinforcement	Media Genre	11	4672	2.686	0.002	**	0.004
Enduring connections, trust	Media Genre	11	4672	1.831	0.044	*	0.003
Social isolation	Media Genre	11	4672	2.867	0.001	***	0.004
Exposure to diverse career opportunities	Media Genre	11	4672	2.017	0.023	*	0.003

Table 8. The Significant Main Effects for Media Genre Predicting Childhood Experiences.
 *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Neither media type nor media genre predicted religious affiliation (the most popular selection), therapeutic interventions/prescribed psychotropic medications, or nurturing of dreams/aspirations. Additionally, media type did not predict positive reinforcement or enduring connections/trusted relationships and media genre did not predict frequent moves/routine disruptions, negative interactions with law enforcement, preparation for independent living, or conflict. The combined types of media seemed to have a greater influence over the most popular perceptions of typical childhood experiences for YFC as compared to media genre.

Lastly, the third research question examined the extent to which a personal lived experience in foster care influenced the selections of media portrayals and life outcomes for YFC. A

comparison between those who identified themselves as in foster care (IDFC) during childhood (N=245) and those who did not (N=2242) on their selections for media portrayals for YFC revealed some overlap as well as some differences. There was a large difference in the group sizes and Table 9 demonstrates how those without a foster care experience skewed the overall results.

PORTRAYALS	No ID as FC (N=2242)	IDFC during childhood (N=245)	Entire sample (N=2487)
Criminal	54%	43%	53%
Hero	23%	31%	24%
Victim	69%	41%	66%
Abuser	35%	37%	35%
Sociopath	28%	33%	29%
Mentor/guide	28%	34%	28%
Survivor	63%	40%	61%
Sex Worker/Pimp	28%	45%	29%
Drug Addict	52%	37%	51%
Role Model	28%	36%	29%
Working Professional	23%	39%	25%
Loving Child/Parent	30%	32%	31%

Table 9. Selections of Media Portrayals for IDFC.

A review of Table 9 suggests that the IDFC group were less likely to select the portrayals of Criminal, Victim, Survivor, and Drug Addict than those who did not have an experience in foster care and were more likely to select the portrayals of Hero, Sociopath, Mentor/Guide, Sex Worker/Pimp, Role Model, and Working Professional. The correlation between IDFC and the rankings of media portrayals ($r = .17$, $p < .05$) revealed a weak but significant relationship; therefore, we thought it was likely that other factors were also important to enter into the model.

Regression models including the genre or type of media consumed, the age groups of respondents, their racial identification, and IDFC status suggested small impacts of the included factors; however, there were no cross-model trends. Significant main effects included IDFC with the media portrayals of Victim ($F(1,4721)=551.08$, $P<.001$, $R^2=.05$) and Drug Addict ($F(1,4721)=271.72$, $P<.001$, $R^2=.03$). In other words, IDFC were less likely to select the media portrayals of Victim and Drug Addict but were as likely as those without experience in foster care to select Survivor and Criminal. Individual differences related to age, gender, and racial identity were not consistent predictors of media portrayals.

Conclusions and Discussion

These findings suggest that the general public, particularly those who have little to no direct experience with foster care, report that the media portrays YFC in a negative manner. Our analyses concluded that these results of the national survey confirm the results of the earlier Los Angeles County survey. The same negative media portrayals were chosen by both samples. However, a more nuanced picture emerged when examining the influences of particular media types and media genres.

Although the group size was small, the IDFC group was only slightly less likely to select the negative media portrayals that dominated the results of both the 2018 and 2020 surveys. Therefore, it appears that those who have lived the experience of foster care are as influenced by media portrayals as those who have no personal knowledge. YFC are not immune to the negative media depictions. It seems nearly inevitable for them to accept these narratives as truth and succumb to society's perceptions. In this way, consistently biased messaging tying foster care to victimhood and criminality becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Media depictions arguably have real life consequences for many marginalized youths. These depictions can also encourage a sense of shame and fear of exposure. Since our data found most respondents believe that the negative media portrayals of YFC are at least somewhat accurate, people from foster care must reconcile their real lives with the fictional and typical media portrayals.

Only 10% of the sample identified as having a foster care experience; however, 29% reported having one or more foster care-like experiences. We considered two possible explanations: 1) in some circumstances, people may have experienced an informal foster care-like experience without notification to the social services or family court, and 2) perhaps people with personal experience in foster care during childhood who achieve success begin to externalize the typical experience of YFC and disassociate themselves. If they no longer see their stories as representative of the foster care journey and consider themselves to be the exception or an exclusion from the traditional media identity, identification with foster care becomes complex. This sense of being abnormal and atypical to the traditional childhood experience can cause people to hide from their past. Unfortunately, if those with successful outcomes are unwilling to be "outed," the public is deprived of the opportunity to experience real counter-narrative examples that challenge media depictions. This "hiding" from identity starts early for YFC. For example, consider the context that exists for YFC when the teacher asks students to have a parent sign a field trip permission slip. While this feels like a benign statement, to YFC who do not live with their parents, it is a reminder of their atypical experience.

Without the exposure to counter-narratives, most in the public see only the definition of foster care as depicted in the media. Unfortunately, disassociation compounds the complexity of the issue as there have been many prominent public figures in the media who have not openly owned or celebrated their foster care experience. By not acknowledging their connection to the foster care journey, the public does not see many examples of former foster youth to dispel the myths. If an environment existed in which people felt compelled and inspired to share their foster care histories, this could have two important effects: 1) the public would discover that many different members of their community have had foster care experiences and 2) children in foster care would begin to have more real-life examples that could lessen the desire to hide their experiences.

To exemplify this point, consider the following list of public figures: Marilyn Monroe, Willie Nelson, Steve Jobs, Larry Ellison, Malcom X, Bill Clinton, Maya Angelou, Oprah Winfrey, Eddie Murphy, Tiffany Haddish, Barack Obama, Colin Kaepernick, Dave Thomas, Cher, and Louis Armstrong. They were raised by adults other than their biological parents; however, there is little press coverage identifying them as YFC during childhood. Even though many know their background stories, they aren't associated with foster care because few on the list have claimed it. If President Obama had labeled being raised by his grandparents as a foster care experience, he could have served as a similar inspiration for YFC as he did for black children seeing the first black president.

Challenging the ideas behind the narratives which render people in foster care as not just damaged, but likely to perpetrate harm, involves creating nuanced counter-narratives that expand the conversation. Content creators must become aware of how their depictions may directly affect children across the country. Instead of using the foster care narrative as an explanation for victimization, criminalization, drug addiction and survivorship, creators can explore nuanced contributing factors. Efforts that were made with media portrayals of the LGBTQ+ community have resulted in the representation of the diverse experiences that exist for people who share this identity. This has, in part, been informed by advocates from the LGBTQ+ community who have established a standard for media depictions and who publicly questioned stereotypical narratives. These advocates have also served as consultants on media projects and inform newsrooms and producers about appropriate language. This should be a similar approach for the foster care community through their own network of advocates to celebrate positive portrayals and discredit caricatures and stereotypical images.

It is easy to lean into the data and say that the media portrayals are accurate. Statistically, YFC are victims of parental misconduct and are overrepresented in criminal justice systems. However, given the pervasiveness of the negative media portrayals about YFC, these statistical outcomes may be related to self-fulfilling prophecies messaged to YFC through media and society's perception of their likely failure. For instance, many think physical and sexual abuse are leading causes for youth to enter the foster care system. Thus, the media portrayal of YFC as victims feels reasonable. The truth is that most youth enter the foster care system due to neglect, not physical or sexual abuse. General neglect was the reason for foster care placement referral in 63% of the cases in 2019 (United States Census Bureau, n.d.), and this is important because of the direct link to poverty, rather than abuse. It is less accurate to assume victimization when placement is more likely due to a parent's inability to financially care for a child. However, while sensationalized stories of horrific abuse may increase viewership, they also perpetuate a negative mental model that defines YFC as victims.

The consumption of particular media types and genres predicted the selection of negative media portrayals for YFC regardless of demographics. This is concerning as it highlights the influence media has on the perceptions of disparate groups. Given that both newspapers and news channels within media type and news within media genre significantly influenced perceptions, further research is needed on the association of news stories and the development of implicit biases about YFC. Expanding the body of literature on media bias toward people with lived foster care experience is imperative to framing the issue and intentionally countering bias. Segmenting and stereotyping young people who have likely been subjected to institutional systems that are notorious for failing to achieve their stated goals of "safety, permanency, and well-being" has significant ramifications for individuals and our collective society. Growing the literature in this space means establishing points of

entry into humane discourse that positively transforms how citizens and practitioners recognize diverse narratives about various mechanisms of care.

The lack of well-established public examples means that people who choose to directly work with YFC, may be doing so with an implicit negative mental model. If the professionals who interact with YFC, project negative expectations, then these youth are more apt to exemplify those characteristics. This research is important in that it is the first of its kind to inform those who interact with YFC about how they may have been influenced by the media. The educators, social workers and caregivers are on the front lines and must become aware of the need to challenge old ideas and shift their perceptions. These biases are pervasive and yet, they are rarely recognized or considered. Training programs and tools are needed to advance new perceptions, even while the media is learning to shift their approaches. While their biases are hidden, even from themselves, the harm that they cause is real. There must be a commitment to understand these triggers more fully and plan to minimize and eradicate them.

Collectively, we must all challenge assumptions about YFC and be mindful of the media we consume. We must hold the media accountable when they share negative stories that inaccurately influence public perception and write to the networks and producers who have not traditionally been challenged on these ideas in the journalism and writing rooms. We should explore our own biases and consider how the media is influencing our perceptions of YFC. When we are in spaces where we work or engage with children, can we use language that considers someone from foster care may be in our midst? If we use the word caregiver, when referencing our parents, it signals to others the recognition of the diverse childhood experiences that exist in our country. It is a simple change to recognize that YFC are members of our communities. In doing this, YFC will see their experiences becoming normalized and then the media and the public will follow suit.

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Digital Game Habits and Motivations of Youth in the Context of Uses and Gratifications Approach

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Abstract

In today's digital world, individuals deal with different activities to spend their free time. One of these activities is undoubtedly digital games. The aim of this research is to reveal the digital gaming habits and motivations of young people. The theoretical basis of this research conducted for this purpose is the uses and gratifications approach. Qualitative research method was preferred in this study. Semi-structured interview form was used as data collection tool. The focus group of the research consisted of 10 young people. Content analysis was also used to evaluate the data obtained from the interviews. As a result of the research, it was revealed that the basic digital game motivation of young people is to spend time and to relieve their stress. In addition, participating young people see digital games as a means of socialization. The escape motivation is also one of the important motivations expressed by young people. Considering the time allocated to digital games, it can be said that young people play games for 1-2 hours a day on average. Participating youth stated that they mostly preferred mobile devices as a digital game platform. PC and game consoles lagged behind mobile devices. Action games and strategy games ranked first in the preferred game types.

Keywords: Digital Games, Uses and Gratifications, Content Analysis, Game Genre, Games Platforms

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Introduction

Although the concept of the game is as old as human history, it is an important part of human civilization and culture. This phenomenon, which first appeared with a simple imitation behavior, has become an important element of fields such as war, faith, and art over time. Technological innovations have shaped our leisure time activities while making human life easier in many areas from health to education. The most tangible effect of technology on leisure activities has been through digital games. While adults of all ages spend time with digital games, especially young people are more interested in digital games. The aim of this research is to reveal the digital gaming habits and motivations of young people. The theoretical basis of this research conducted for this purpose is the uses and gratifications approach.

In the early 20th century, the relationship between the individual and the media has always been interesting. The effects or ineffectiveness of media tools on the individual has been the main guide of media theories. At this point, the uses and gratifications approach has given media research a view from the passive audience perspective to the active audience assumption. This approach should be considered in terms of functionalist theory in sociology and motivational theory in psychology. Basically, this approach claim that individuals use media to meet certain needs. In other words, it focuses on what individuals do with the media, not what the media does to the individual. Basic elements of the uses and gratifications approach include the individual's psychological and social environment, communication needs and motives, attitudes and expectations towards media, functional alternatives to using the media, communication behavior and their consequences.

In line with the aims and theoretical basis of this study, qualitative research method was preferred. The data acquisition technique is semi-structured interview. Content analysis was applied to the data obtained from the interviews. 10 young people aged between 19 and 25 who have been playing digital games for more than 5 years were included in this study. The results of this research are also limited to these participating young people.

Context of Uses and Gratifications

Communication studies were initially shaped by the conviction that mass media have an unlimited power over the society, as can be seen in the stimulus-response model. In the following years liberal approaches came to prominence, in which the audience was active, and the responsibility shifted from tools to the audience. Within the framework of this approach, it has been argued that the audience is in an active position rather than a passive position. Therefore, research conducted in communication studies have moved from a vehicle-centered position to an audience-centered one. In the studies carried out in the 1950s and 60s, it started to be revealed that the audience consists of individuals who consciously make the decision to watch. One of the most famous and important approaches developed in this direction is the uses and gratifications approach. This approach questions how the audience uses the means of communication and for what needs. The main concern of this approach has been on why people use certain media. According to this approach, the audience receives and uses communication tools or information in these tools in line with their needs (Güngör, 2016, pp. 123-126; Özer & Birsen, 2010, p. 352). This approach was based on the question of "What does the media do to individuals?" instead of the question "What does the individual do with the media?" it was based on the question. The emergence of this approach dates to the early 1940s. The roles of Elihu Katz and Jay Blumler in shaping

this approach should not be forgotten. Researchers draw attention to the needs of people and their active use of the media. According to them, people meet their daily needs in various ways such as mass media (Güngör, 2016, p. 127). Indeed, according to a study on television viewers conducted in 1972 by Dennis McQuail, Jay Blumler & Joseph Brown, viewers watch television to address four needs: The first is the need for self-appreciation, and the second is social interaction. Others are excitement and fun (Fiske, 2014, pp. 268-270).

Although the uses and gratifications approach is an approach developed for traditional media, research on television has stood out relatively compared to other communication tools (Quan-Haase & Young, 2010, p. 351). Nevertheless, as Özgür Köseoğlu stated, "the strength of the uses and gratifications approach is also due to its application to different media contents" (2012, p. 65). Therefore, it can be said that this approach is applicable to many media tools and their content.

Although this approach has been used extensively in academic research, it has also received some criticism. For example, the understanding that the individual dominates communication tools is one of the main points of criticism. Because while placing the individual in the position of the subject only, it also places the mass media in a way as an object. Therefore, it is thrown into a position that literally clears the mass media. In that case, it comes to the conclusion that we should never criticize those who make up the messages of the mass media. Because they are not "guilty" in any way. In other words, no matter what the audience did, the audience did it themselves. The result is that no one but the audience (especially the mass media) can be criticized (Güngör, 2016, p. 134; Erdoğan & Alemdar, 2005, s. 166-167).

It is also stated that the uses and gratifications approach has evolved into a more important and different position with the spread and development of new media tools with the criticisms made since those who use new media tools are in an active position than ever before. Moreover, while the audience in question consumes the content, on the other hand, they are in the position that creates the content. Indeed, as stated by Anabel Quan-Haase & Alyson Leigh Young (2010, pp. 351-352), although this approach was developed for traditional communication tools, it is possible to use it for new media tools. Because, on a ground where the boundaries between producer and consumer are blurred, it is of great importance to determine why and with what motivation the audience prefers new media tools or to determine the reasons for choosing new media instead of traditional media and to try to make a detailed explanation about this. However, as Bellarmine A. Ezumah points out (2013, p. 30), the fact that the new media allows individuals to choose among many media has been a factor that strengthens the uses and gratifications approach. As a matter of fact, it is known that many research on new media (especially the internet) using this approach started in the 2000s (Alikılıç, Gülay, & Binbir, 2013, pp. 45-46). It is seen that researchers especially use this approach to determine why and how individuals use new media (especially social media), or for what motivations (Karimi, Khodabandelou, Ehsani, & Ahmad, 2014, p. 56).

It is possible to find many studies in the literature on social media, internet or other tools of new media that adopt the uses and gratifications approach (Ahorny, 2015; Akçay, 2011; Al-Jabri, Shoail, & Ndubisi, 2015; Alikılıç, Gülay, & Binbir, 2013; Ezumah, 2013; Kara, 2016; Karimi, Khodabandelou, Ehsani, & Ahmad, 2014; Karakoç & Gülsünler, 2012; Krause, North, & Heritage, 2014; Köseoğlu, 2012; Köroğlu, 2015; Quan-Haase & Young, 2010; Koçak, 2012; Özer, 2016; Özata, Kılıçer, & Ağlargöz, 2014; Öztürk, 2018; Raacke & Bonds-Raacke, 2008; Tanta, Mihovilović, & Sablic, 2014; Urista, Dong, & Day, 2009; Üçer, 2016).

Whitling & Williams, 2013; Wook Ha, Kim, Libaque-Saen, Chang, & Park, 2016; Göncü, 2018).

As can be seen in the studies in the literature, the uses and gratifications approach are generally based on quantitative methods. However, this approach does not exclude qualitative methods such as in-depth interview and observation (Jensen & Rosengren, 2005, p. 69). Therefore, there are also qualitative studies in the literature that adopt the uses and gratifications approach. For example, Ömer Özer & Haluk Birsen (2010) are the leading researchers who recommend conducting a qualitative research on this approach. Özer and Birsen examine the reasons why violent games are played within the framework of the uses and gratifications approach. Although the researchers state that quantitative methods are frequently used in this approach, they state that the results obtained with quantitative data (for example questionnaire) collection techniques are limited and this is also reflected in the comments. However, they state that this approach can be developed if different data collection techniques are used. As a matter of fact, they created a sample of 14 people in their study and tried to reach the result by conducting in-depth interviews with the participants.

Digital Games

Play is defined as a leisure that occurs spontaneously, that has no purpose, and makes that people happy. The game activity has the following features:

- It occurs spontaneously.
- It occurs in sense organs, nerves and muscles, and mental level.
- Its Experiences are repeated.
- It limits the time and space itself.
- It shows regular development stages (Akin, 2008, p. 1)

Roger Caillois defined game as a voluntary activity that is made for fun, continued at a specific place and time, and that can have unexpected results (Pala & Erdem, 2011, p. 54).

Johan Huizinga defines people who play games as “ludens” and people get to know their daily life through play. Humans experience the illusion of reality with games and develop strategies against life. According to Huizinga, playing games is an important activity in the life of societies. Huizinga states that people even live with games (Yengin, 2012, pp. 93-96).

According to Huizinga, game comes before culture and is independent. Game is not serious and should be considered outside of ordinary life. The game has its limitations, and it is played in the "magic circle" that can be accessed and exited. Cushion and Sumo wrestling are examples that can explain this concept.

In order for the game to be considered as a "game", it must be free, direct, non-interest and inclusive. In modern societies, the game has been commercialized. Huizinga opposes game being a business (Oskay, 2000, p. 150). Ehrmann et al. (1968) opposes Huizinga's idea of abstracting the game from an external reality. According to him, games, culture, and reality are connected to each other, they interact mutually.

Mc Luhan, on the other hand, describes the game as a machine that acts when players agree to be puppets. Again, according to Mc Luhan, games are an element of mass media that has become an extension of social selves, not private ones (Kızılkaya, 2010, p. 50).

Whether it is digital or traditional, the game, which examines many scientific fields from psychology to anthropology, from sociology to communication sciences that constitute the content of the study, has an important place in the mental, physical, and cultural development of a child pedagogically. According to Toksoy, game is an important actor in social maturation, acquisition of identity and formation of self (2010, p. 205). Through game, a child gains experience, empathizes, learns to respect others, learns patience, adaptation, discussion, problem management, and cope with stress (Yavuzer, 1999, p. 170).

With the development of Internet technologies, digital games played on various devices such as computers, atari, consoles, mobile phones or tablets allow people from all over the world to play with each other in the same game not only by playing against artificial intelligence in the game, but also in virtual and augmented reality. In short, it covers all games played in digital tools or environments, which allow the person to participate in the game personally in the environment it is in.

The concept of digital games in Turkey began to be put forward in the 2000s (Binark & Sütçü, 2008, p. 43), the concept of digital games from social media to mobile games, consoles to virtual devices has continued to be discussed. The discussion is psychological in terms of the fact that digital games sometimes increase addiction and violence (Uysal, 2017; Aydoğdu Karaaslan, 2015; Irmak & Erdoğan, 2016; Dolu, Bükür, & Uludağ, 2010) and sometimes sociological in terms of revealing new identity constructions (Binark & Bayraktutan-Sütçü, 2009; Sucu, 2012; Kan, 2012; Batı, 2011), sometimes aesthetics within the framework of game design (Barmanbek, 2009; Sezen, 2011), sometimes economical in terms of being considered as an industry and a sector (Sormaz & Yüksel, 2012; Karahisar, 2013) continues as studies.

Method

In this study, qualitative research method was preferred because it was aimed to determine the digital gaming habits of young people between the ages of 19-25. According to Yildirim & Şimşek (2008, p. 39), qualitative research: a type of research in which qualitative data collection techniques such as observation, interview and document analysis are used, and a qualitative process is followed to reveal perceptions and events in a realistic and holistic manner in a natural environment. According to Altunışık et al. (2010, p. 302), qualitative research techniques, which have an interdisciplinary feature, deal with the research problem with an interpretative perspective with a holistic approach. The events and facts discussed in the study are evaluated in terms of the meaning people attribute to these facts and events. The research questions determined for this study are as follows:

- 1- What gratifications do young people most use digital games to achieve?
- 2- What age do young people start playing digital games?
- 3- What tools do young people play digital games on?
- 4- How long is the time spent by young people for digital games?
- 5- What genres of digital games are young people interested in?

Focus Group

In this study, the participants were determined using the criterion sampling method, one of the purposeful sampling methods. Criterion sampling consists of people, events, objects, or situations with the qualifications determined in accordance with the purpose of the study (Büyüköztürk, Çakmak, Akgün, Karadeniz, & Demirel, 2016). The main criteria set by the

researcher in selecting the group determined for the study are that participants play digital games for 5 years or more, and that participants are between the ages of 19-25. The results of this study are limited to young people included in the sample. Verbal information was provided to the working group determined by voluntary participation for the purpose of the research.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants

	Age	Sex	Profession	Educational Level
P1	19	Male	Student	Bachelor's Degree
P2	19	Male	Cashier	High School
P3	25	Male	Academician	Master's Degree
P4	22	Male	Student	Bachelor's Degree
P5	20	Male	Sales Person	High School
P6	20	Female	Childminder	High School
P7	21	Female	Student	Bachelor's Degree
P8	21	Female	Student	Associate's Degree
P9	22	Female	Nurse	Associate's Degree
P10	24	Female	Academician	Master's Degree

The study group of the research consists of 10 young people. 5 of these young people between the ages of 19-25 are male and 5 of them are female. The educational level of the participants ranges from high school to graduate school.

Data Acquisition

Semi-structured interview form was used as data acquisition. In this form, there are questions prepared to evaluate digital game playing habits and motivations. In the preparation of their questions by the researcher, it was important that the questions were not multidimensional, while they were easy to understand. Attention has been paid to principles such as the fact that questions do not give direction to the interviewer. Research data was obtained using a voice recorder in meetings held at the time and place of appointment of participants.

Analysis

Content analysis was used to evaluate the data obtained from the interviews. In content analysis, there were four stages: processing the qualitative research data obtained from the

documents, coding the data, finding themes, organizing codes and themes, defining, and interpreting the findings (Şimşek & Yıldırım, 2008). At this point, the data collected from the study through interviews were coded. Some themes were reached from the results obtained from the coded data. The formula belonging to Ole Holsti (1969, p. 129) was used to ensure validity and reliability. According to this formula: $\text{Reliability} = 3M / (N1 + N2 + N3)$ is the number of encoding agreed upon on the M value in this formulation, and the N value is the number of encoding each encoder does. According to this formula, the compatibility between encoders was 89%.

Findings

In the interpretation of the research findings, firstly, the participants were asked questions within the framework of the research questions of the study and the answers received were shown in the tables. Then, the data obtained through content analysis were divided into themes and evaluated.

Table 2: The Motivations of Young People Participating in the Research to Use Digital Games

P1	This is how I spend my free time.
P2	Entertainment and Socialization
P3	It helps me relax
P4	It helps me learn new things
P5	I think it improves my problem-solving ability
P6	Digital games are funny and educational
P7	Being able to team up with my friends and succeed things in digital games makes me happy
P8	Digital games help me spend my free time as well as help me learn English
P9	I like to do things in games that I can't do in real life
P10	Thanks to digital games, I get away from the problems of daily life

If we look at the results of other studies on digital game motivations, excitement and entertainment motivation came first in the study of Pala & Erdem (2011), while digital game motivations were determined as an assessment of entertainment and leisure in the study of Ünal et al. (2013). In the study of Uluyol et al. (2014), digital game motivations were determined as entertainment and stress relief. In the study conducted by Topal & Aydın (2018), digital game motivations were determined as stress relief and competition. Finally, in the study conducted by Bağcı (2019), the motivations of spending time and relieving stress came to the fore as the motivation of the digital game.

Table 3: Ages at which Young People Participating in the Research Start Playing Digital Games

P1	Since 9 years old
P2	Since 10 years old
P3	Since 12 years old
P4	Since 7 years old
P5	Since 8 years old
P6	Since 7 years old
P7	Since 6 years old
P8	Since 10 years old
P9	Since 10 years old

P10 Since 13 years old

Table 4: Platforms Used by Young People Participating in the Research to Play Digital Games

P1	Mobil devices
P2	Mobil devices
P3	Game console
P4	PC
P5	PC
P6	Mobil devices
P7	Game console
P8	Mobil devices
P9	Mobil devices
P10	PC

In their study on the most preferred digital game platforms, Taylan, Kara & Durğun (2017), In their study concluded that the PC used first to play games, and mobile devices were used after the computer. In the research conducted by Bağcı (2019), it was determined that digital games are played more on mobile devices.

Table 5: Times and Frequencies of the Young People Participating in the Study to Play Digital Games

P1	I play at least 1 hour 3 days a week
P2	I play 2 hours a day playing
P3	I play for 1.5 hours every day
P4	I play for 1 hour a day
P5	I play at least 4 hours every day
P6	It does not exceed 1-2 hours a day
P7	2-3 hours for at least 3 days a week
P8	2 hours a day
P9	1 hours a day
P10	2 hours a day

When other studies on the time spent with digital games are examined, it was seen that in the study conducted by Ünal et al. (2013), 59% of the participants stated that they played games for less than 1 hour a day. In the study conducted by Yavuz & Tarlakazan in (2018), 50% of the participants stated that they spend less than 1 hour a day for digital games. Unlike these studies, 61% of the participants in the study conducted by Topal & Aydın in (2018)² stated that they played games for more than 3 hours a day.

Table 6: Game Genres Preferred by Young People Participating in the Research

P1	Action Games
P2	Online Games
P3	Action Games
P4	Online Games
P5	Strategy
P6	Simulation
P7	Online Games
P8	Strategy
P9	Strategy

P10 Simulation

Considering the researches on game genres preferred by young people, action and strategy genres games were the most preferred game genres in the study conducted by Ünal et al. in (2013). In the study of Uluyol et al. In (2014), the most preferred game genres were action games and strategy games. In another study conducted by Taylan et al. In (2017), it was seen that action games and sports / racing games were preferred more. Action and sports games became the most preferred game type in the study conducted by Yavuz & Tarlakazan in (2018). In the study conducted by Topal & Aydın in (2018), the most preferred game genre was the puzzle / quiz type.

Content Analysis Findings**Digital Game Play Motivations**

In general, it is possible to collect the motivations for playing digital games under three headings. First, the most dominant motivation for playing games is the motivation to spend free time/have fun/relieve stress. For example, P1 stated that “games above all the best way for me to spend leisure time. Because games are fun. In addition, games increase my motivation against difficulties and obstacles” while another participant P3 said that “I already have a very stressful work life. I relax by getting away from my daily troubles while playing games.” P6 draws attention to the relaxation and entertaining functions of digital games as well as their educational functions. P6 stated that "It helps me to improve my English while spend my free time."

Second, it is the socialization function of digital games. P7 stated that “We team up and play with my friends in PUBG. We also have the opportunity to meet new people,” P7 said that “We can exchange games in online games via Playstation. Thus, I meet new people”. Finally, problem solving / escape are the motivation expressed by the participants. P9 stated that "thanks to the games, I can explore other different worlds. Games improves my imagination," he said. P5, on the other hand, said that “games become a testing ground in terms of creating solutions to the problems in daily life”.

Time Allocated to Digital Gaming

Two different views emerged regarding the time that participants devoted to digital games. The first view is that digital games occupy a very important place in leisure activities. P5 stated that “After I come home from work, I play games on the computer for about 4 hours. I don't have many other activities like listening to music, watching movies, or reading books” again P7 stated that “I spend my remaining time from lessons only for games. Spending time on social media is boring for me. ”

In the second view, participants state that digital games do not have an important place in leisure activities. P9 stated that “For me, watching social media and TV series takes more time than playing games”, P1 stated that “Playing games in my spare time is an occupation that comes after listening to social media and music”. At this point, we can say that the use of social media has an important place among young people's leisure activities.

Digital Game Genres and Digital Game Platforms

Preferred game genres include online games and offline game genres. Preferred online games are usually both single-person and multiplayer games, such as PUBG and Fortnite, which can also be played on mobile platforms. Strategy, simulation and action games are more preferred in offline games. While Civilization and Total War series stand out as the strategy game, it has been revealed that the Call of Duty series and Assassin's Creed series games are played by the participants as the action game. In terms of digital game platforms, the choice of mobile game platforms (smartphones, tablets) and non-mobile (PC and game consoles) game platforms stands out. It should be noted that participants who prefer computers and game consoles do not use mobile platforms. Users who prefer mobile platforms stated that they also play games on the PC from time to time.

Conclusion

Compared to other media such as books, movies, and radio, digital games seem to have an unusually wide appeal and serve a surprising number of emotional, social, and intellectual needs. The digital gaming environment is an increasingly complex and diversified environment. In today's digital world, individuals engage in different activities to spend their free time. One of these activities is undoubtedly games in digital environments.

It is observed that individuals of almost all ages play digital games in different environments, especially using mobile devices. The finding in this study that young people have the habit of playing digital games to spend time supports this result. There are various findings in the literature that support this finding. Onay-Durdu et al. (2005) concluded in their studies with university students that students play games to relieve stress. Çavuş et al. (2016) stated in their study that university students mostly played computer games to relax and relieve stress. Topal & Aydın (2018) concluded in their study that university students mostly preferred computer games to relieve stress. Uluyol et al. (2014) found that pre-service teachers preferred computer games mostly for entertainment.

One of the important results of the study shows that participating young people view digital games as a means of socialization. Especially young people who spend time with online games communicate and socialize with their peers. In the study conducted by Johnson et al. in 2016, it was confirmed that the motivation to socialize is an important point for young people who play digital games. In addition, the escape motivation is one of the important motivations expressed by young people. Young people are turning to digital games to get away from the troubles in daily life.

Considering the time allocated to digital games, it can be said that young people play games for 1-2 hours a day on average. This result is consistent with the results obtained in other studies (Ünal, et al., 2013; Tarlakazan & Yavuz, 2018).

Participating youth stated that they mostly preferred mobile devices as a digital game platform. PC and game consoles lagged behind mobile devices. This result shows us that the convergence features of devices such as smartphones and tablets also shape game habits.

Action games and strategy games rank first in the preferred game types. Participants noted that the violent content in action games functions as an element of relaxation. Participants

stated that they preferred strategy games, especially because they developed problem-solving practices.

Digital games are a new phenomenon for young people as entertainment and leisure activities of the developing new media technologies. In general, digital games are a technological entertainment tool by young people. It should be emphasized to young people that digital games have not only entertainment function but also an educational and instructive function. From an academic point of view, the digital game world is a suitable field for interdisciplinary studies. Qualitative and quantitative research can be conducted especially on the educational function of digital games.

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The Debt of Roy Anderson's Dark Humor to Samuel Beckett and the New Objectivity

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Abstract

One of the main characteristics of Roy Anderson's movies is the dark humor and tragicomedy. Various art sources influence his dark humor, such as Samuel Beckett's oeuvres and New Objectivity paintings. Beckett's approach towards tragicomedy can be discerned in Andersson's world and his comic figures. Andersson emphasizes on human being's dark side to create comic characters. Passivity is a significant, horrifying quality of modern subjects in his view, and it will be exploring in this paper. His similar figures, with their repetitive and deadpan manners, question the contemporary world's passive subjects. This study employs Henri Bergson's ideas in "*Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*" and Incongruity Theory to investigate humor in Andersson's movies. In addition, the importance of social and political context in Andersson's works connects him to New Objectivity paintings. Two painters of this movement, George Grosz and Otto Dix, are mentioned here. The reason is that their caricature manner and specific attention to the body are similar to Andersson's works. This paper attempts to answer how Anderson establishes the comic tone of his movies and how his concerns and the aforementioned inspirations impact his aesthetic choices. The findings indicate that Andersson benefits from Beckett's works and New Objectivity paintings to accentuate his critical approach to contemporary world issues. He uses comic devices, including similarity, repetition, and deadpan, to express his concerns. Andersson transforms all the influences from other artists into his unique way for his purposes.

Keywords: Roy Anderson, Dark Humor, Tragicomedy, Samuel Beckett, New Objectivity

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Introduction

Roy Andersson is a Swedish director who is considered one of the most critical living European film directors, best known for his “living trilogy” which includes *Songs from the Second Floor* (2000), *You, the Living* (2007) and *A Pigeon Sat on a Branch Reflecting on Existence* (2014), and his latest movie *About Endlessness* (2019). He has gained global recognition for his unique cinematic style over the past decades. A vital ingredient in his films is dark humor and tragicomic tensions. “It is close to the absurdist comedy of Franz Kafka, the surrealist slapstick of Samuel Beckett. Films like these can be regarded as droll comments on modern Swedish life, wry critiques of capitalism or goofy sendups of the welfare state” (Costanzo, 2020, 251). Another noticeable feature of Andersson’s films is tableaux vivants which stems from his interest in painting (Lindqvist, 2016, 552; Hanich, 2014, 38). Here, I mention New Objectivity Movement because of the humor lies in their work, and I focus on George Grosz since dark humor is one of the essential qualities of his paintings.

Despite the abstraction and surrealism of Andersson’s work, there are explicit references to certain historical events. That is where he distances from Beckett and gets closer to the New Objectivity movement. There is no apparent reference to a particular place and time in Beckett’s works, while many New Objectivity painters criticized their society and “display a strong social consciousness” (Wu, 2019, 85). Andersson can also observe the flaws of capitalism and neoliberal societies. He strongly criticizes the passivity of modern subjects, their emptiness, and the horrors of the modern world. That is why he tries to engage the spectator’s critical power by employing specific stylistic devices, including dark humor, tragicomedy, breaking the fourth wall, long shots and deep focus.

I have two goals in this paper. Firstly, I aim to investigate how Andersson’s aesthetic choices are tied to his concerns and the comic aspects of his movies. Different scholars have discussed these style choices. However, to my knowledge, no research has been done exclusively on the relation of his aesthetic choices to creating humor and comic effects. Secondly, as I am studying Andersson’s debt to Samuel Beckett and New Objectivity painters, I want to show how he employs these influences according to his worldview and concerns. In this regard, I will explore the importance of passivity, one of his main concerns, in his cinematic world. I also examine how he utilizes similarity and repetition to create comedy.

Incongruity Theory

There are two approaches in order to define comedy: as a genre and also as a mode. Geoff King believes that the best way to understand comedy is as a “mode” rather than a “genre” (King, 2002, 2), and non-comedy genre films can all contain comedic elements. As Andrew Stott illustrates, “this might lead us to suggest that what we call comedy is really humor, a specific tone operating free from generic restraints” (Stott, 2005, 2). Furthermore, we often see the comic techniques are employed to express serious critiques, and they emerge in contexts that do not follow the rules of the comedy genre. King states that comedy is “often disruptive. It messes things up and undermines ‘normal’ behavior and conceptions” (King, 2002, 19).

The leading theories of humor, as Noel Carroll asserts, are superiority theory, incongruity theory, the release theory, the play theory, and the dispositional theory. Here, I mainly

depend on incongruity theory which is the most prominent theory among others. Noel Carroll notes that the incongruity theory means that “what is key to comic amusement is a deviation from some presupposed norm” (Carroll, 2014, 17). We think of something as ordinary, and something else disrupts the way we think the world is or should be. So, it does not meet our expectations regard to the world. Henri Bergson also identifies incongruity as a source of humor. His ideas revolve around the boundaries between human and machine He states that devices like repetition and similarity that make humans look like machines resulting in laughter. Bergson explains in *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic* (1900) that “the attitudes, gestures and movements of the human body are laughable in exact proportion as that body reminds us of a mere machine” (Bergson, 2008, 29).

According to John Allen Paulos, “a necessary ingredient of humor is that two (or more) incongruous ways of viewing something (a person, a sentence, a situation) be juxtaposed. In other words, for something to be funny, some unusual, inappropriate, or odd aspects of it must be perceived together and compared” (Paulos, 1980, 9). The juxtaposition is a critical element of comedy that may subvert our expectations, as Carroll states, or disrupts some established rules of society. In addition, Todd McGowan argues that each comic moment is traumatic since it makes people conscious of things that were hidden under the veil of everyday life (McGowan, 2017, 11).

Dark humor and Tragicomedy

Dark or Black humor is a concept that is hard to define. It is a term that Andre Breton first coined in his book *Anthology of Black Humor* (1945). However, he has not provided an exact definition of the term. Here, I will be using the most common definition of the word, which best suits my arguments. Black humor is a type of comedy that make jokes about tragic, disturbing and dreadful topics such as hopelessness or suffering. Jordan Cox refers to Black Humor as “anything combining the morbid and grotesque with humor and farce to give a disturbing effect and convey the absurdity and cruelty of life” (Cox, 2014, 14). The incongruity is inherent in such humor since the shocking situation juxtaposes with the normal expectations of the spectators. In this respect, Mark Hewitson states that in black humor, “[t]he darkness of experience is combined with the lightness of the comic” (Hewitson, 2012, 216).

Two significant concepts in my study are tragicomedy and Kafkaesque due to their connections to black humor. These are two out of four “common threads” Michael Y. Bennett recognizes in absurd literature (Bennett, 2015, 19). One of the representatives of the Theatre of the Absurd is Samuel Beckett. Martin Esslin believes “the Theatre of the Absurd is a darkly comic form that places great demands upon audiences, asking them to juxtapose incongruities and make sense out of often horrific laughter” (Esslin, 2010, 29). The definition of tragicomedy is elusive since it has been defined differently. As John Orr has stated, “tragicomedy demonstrates the coexistence of amusement and pity, terror and laughter” (Orr, 1991, 1). In this definition, the two concepts of tragicomic response and black humor are similar in their dual nature. Kafkaesque is an adjective that is ascribed to situations similar to Kafka’s abnormal and surreal situations. These situations result in a specific response called tragicomic in which “one must both laugh and cry, sometimes simultaneously, sometimes alternately, and sometimes one is unsure which response is adequate and/or appropriate.” (Bennett, 2015, 91).

Passivity

Passivity is a significant concept in Andersson's worldview that has a vital role in his aesthetic choices. It has been appeared on two levels in Andersson's world: movie characters and the audience. Andersson represents his characters as passive or indifferent. Most of the time, the characters are just observers of a situation. He is trying to criticize passivity as a horrifying quality of modern people. Therefore, Andersson wants the audience to look critically at the characters and, more importantly, at themselves instead of just having fleeting sympathy. Thus, he attempts to maintain a distance between them and people in his cinematic world by using specific devices, including comic techniques, and breaking the fourth wall.

The first level of passivity is on the area of movie characters. In shaping movie characters' passive relationship with the world, Andersson is influenced by Beckett's approach towards tragicomedy. This genre has undergone many changes, from Plautus, Roman dramatist, that coined the term to Beckett. In Renaissance, protagonists of tragicomedy were tragic, and the world they were put into was a comic world. However, this relation between characters and the world was changed in modern tragicomedy (Foster, 2004, 167). Verna A. Foster explains that modern tragicomedy "reverses this pattern, presenting comic characters in an ultimately hostile or at best indifferent and thus tragic universe" (ibid, 168). This reversed pattern can be recognized in Andersson cinematic world, a key element of his movies.

Passivity is one of the significant characteristics that makes Andersson's characters comic in this tragic world. In many tragic circumstances of Andersson's movies, people stand and stare at the incident or say absurd or indifferent sentences. Therefore, what creates a comic situation is the people's reaction which is incongruous with the situation, and this is where Andersson and Beckett are both connected with Kafka. What makes a situation Kafkaesque is the reactions we see in characters towards the strange cases. Thus, the people's "inaction is what is horrifying and is utterly inhuman" (Bennett, 2015, 137). For instance, "the situation in *Waiting for Godot* is tragic, but the characters' response to it is comic" (Foster, 2004, 169).

In "*Songs from the second floor*" (2000), Lasse, a clerk, is being fired after thirty years of work in a firm. Lasse and the high-level executive, Pelle, are in a corridor lined with doors that all of them are ajar. Other employers are just watching Lasse's misery while weeping and begging Pelle not to fire him. Lasse clinging to Pelle's legs, and when Pelle starts walking away, Lasse is dragged halfway through the hall, which has a comic effect. The spectator feels laughter and distress at the same time (Figure 1). It is an awkward situation. Andersson attempts to juxtapose incongruous elements to reach a tragicomic effect.



Figure 1: Song from the Second Floor (2000).

Deadpan, which is usually understood in terms of performance, accentuates the character's passivity and indifference. Its narrowest definition “refers to an emotionless and expressionless presentation of self” (Holm, 2017,104). Deadpan has usually been considered as a passive mode of humor. Nicholas Holm reconceptualizes deadpan “as an active intervention that refuses to fall straightforwardly into the conventional aesthetic categories by which humor is communicated and understood” (ibid). So, deadpan has dual functions in Andersson’s films. It highlights the characters’ passivity by their deadpan performances, and as a comic mood, it helps with the critics Andersson wants to express.

The second level of passivity is on the area of audiences. As passivity is the human status in Andersson’s view, he generalizes this quality to the audience in various ways. For instance, in “You, the Living” (2007), a man fails in a magic trick and ends up breaking the dinner China of a family of Nazi sympathizers. As a result, he is sentenced to death in court. When he is about to be executed, people sit behind a glass wall and watch this scene while eating popcorns. This scene indicates the audience’s passivity by being bracketed people watching the execution with the audience in the movie theatre.

Breaking the fourth wall is a device for generalization in Andersson’s works. Lasse is fired in the firing scene I discussed earlier, and he is begging Pelle: “no! no! no!”. At this moment, Pelle looks straight into the camera and makes the audience as witnesses. This device activates the spectator and reminds them that “You are an accomplice!”. Also, black humor and tragicomedy in the aforementioned scenes result in an ambivalent response in the audience. Should they be sad or laugh? This is where the question of what is the right action should arise. Comic techniques help develop the critical approach by making a distance between the audience and the subject matter. Therefore, one of Anderson’s concerns is to transform a passive spectator into an active one.

The most significant component of Andersson’s filmmaking that helps activate the audience has its roots in André Bazin theories. As Lindqvist put it, Andersson Borrows “his use of spatial depth and layering-or “staging in-depth”- within the long takes” from Bazin (Lindqvist, 2016, 39). He also uses long shots and deep focus cinematography since these devices require the audience’s participation to find comic elements in the scene. “Andersson challenges his viewers to become attentive observers” (Hanich, 2014, 37). They have to find the comedy hidden in various spots of a shot themselves. Lindqvist states, “forcing the viewer

to make a choice activates her social conscience in a way that viewing directed by editing does not” (Lindqvist, 2016, 39).

This layered visual composition can also create “a tension between volume and surface, and dimensionality” (Chinita, 2018, 1-6), and this tension helps Andersson make comedy effects. In “*You, The Living*” (2009), a scene opens on a man sitting in the foreground. He plays a repetitive rhythm. After a while, his wife appears at the doorstep in the background and screams. The man does not do anything and keep playing with a deadpan style. She goes out of the frame and hardly closes the door, which is heard from off-screen. Then, the picture framed behind the man falls off the wall (figure 2). Then, the downstairs neighbor is shown knocking on the ceiling with a broom in protest of the music sound. In the next scene, a man stands on his balcony and the musician and his neighbor can be seen in the background, in the apartment building across the street (figure 3). This tension between the foreground and background, and off-screen and on-screen, make the comic impact.



Figure 2: *You, the Living* (2007).



Figure 3: *You, the Living* (2007).

Similarity and Repetition

Similar Traits

In the previous section, I discussed passivity as a quality in people's behavior incongruous with their distressed situation, and this incongruity prepares the ground for them to become comic figures. In this part, I discuss how Andersson creates his archetypal and comic figures by using similarities in their physical and mental traits. Bergson asserts repetition and similarity create the mechanical quality since the living cannot be repeated, implying some latent mechanism. Bergson explains:

“Laughter will be more pronounced still, if we find on the stage not merely two characters, as in the example from Pascal, but several, nay, as great a number as possible, the image of one another, who come and go, dance and gesticulate together, simultaneously striking the same attitudes and tossing their arms about in the same manner”, and in this situation “this deflection of life towards the mechanical is here the real cause of laughter” (Bergson, 2008, 12).

Andersson's characters have similar traits. They are desperate, impotent and helpless, and have lost everything that had value one day. They live in a world that has become devoid of meaning and search desperately for something to make their lives meaningful. There are several scenes in which Andersson's characters start crying in public while other people act entirely indifferent. For instance, in *“You, the Living”* (2007), a carpet seller starts crying in front of his customers, an elderly couple. He says that he fought with his wife. The woman passes some judges on whose attitude was worse. His husband just asked her to leave the store, and they walk away. The man keeps crying after they left, while a passerby stands behind the store window and looks inside (figure 4). The passerby is just a passive observer of the man's misery through the shop window. This scene reminds us of today's world in which people have got used to just watching everything on the screens or through the shop windows. The deadpan style makes an awkward tragicomic situation and stops us from feeling sympathy with the man.



Figure 4: You, the Living (2007).

Similar Bodies

People in Andersson's film are analogous in physical appearances, gestures, and how they move (figure 5). His portly characters, whose white and pale faces remind us of Beckett's characters have origins from clowns (Cavecchi, 132; Cohn, 1962). According to Ursula Lindqvist in her book *Songs from The Second Floor* (2016), Andersson claims the fact that "his films' protagonist is a human archetype is what motivates his use of whiteface, a visual effect intended to equalize all of the characters" (Lindqvist, 2016, 26). These characteristics relate Andersson to Beckett since the uncertainty of Beckett's characters' identity has also been interpreted as an archetypical characteristic (McDonald, 2006, 2).

The similarity of characters and their unusual white bodies seem to destroy these characters' individuality. People, who lose their individuality and look the same, find machine-like qualities. This unity can also make them look like objects or goods of massive production, and their stillness accentuates this impact. Here, Bergson idea resonates again that when mechanical act substitutes the flexibility, it results in laughter. People should be able to feel and think, so when they are machine-like, we find them laughable. Rapidity is an element that reinforces the sense of comedy since it makes humans look like machines. As Luis Giannetti states, "where speed tends to be the natural rhythm of comedy, slow, dignified movements tend to be associated with tragedy" (Giannetti, 2001 ,128). However, Andersson's characters are static, and when they move, they do it very slowly. This dignity is incongruous with those empty, object-like people. Thus, there is a juxtaposition of tragedy and comedy characteristics.



Figure 5: About Endlessness (2019).

Based on the previous paragraphs, Andersson intentionally wants to emphasize the characters' bodies. As Bergson states, tragic poets tried to avoid drawing attention to the body of their protagonist. Since "no sooner does anxiety about the body manifest itself that the instruction of a comic element is to be feared" (Bergson, 2008 ,17). As a result of resemblances between Andersson's characters, sometimes it is not easy to distinguish them from each other. The interesting point is that this similarity also draws the audience's attention to their physical qualities. The similarity of characters and their unusual white bodies highlight the feeling that they are devoid of emotion. The importance of body connects Anderson to New Objectivity Movement.

In New Objectivity Movement, there is significant attention to the body. It is evident in George Grosz's or Otto Dix's portly figures. It comes from the caricatured quality of their paintings. "The involvement of the artists in social criticism, and the resulting intensification of representational form, reveal a tendency towards caricature" (Michalski, 2003, 20). As a result of turning back from expressionism and trying to "distance themselves from the excesses of Expressionism" (ibid, 8), the painters evacuated their personages of feeling. To achieve this goal, they employ specific colors and caricature manner. Andersson uses the characteristics of these paintings to desensitize his characters, including the color pallet, their gestures and dark humor. This desensitization transforms into deadpan performances in cinematic language. So, this deadpan style and monochromatic shades with white and neutral colors and high key lighting strengthen this sense of being devoid of emotion (Figure 6 and 7).



Figure 6: Dr. Mayer-Hermann (1926).



Figure 7: Songs from Second Floor (2000).

Repetition

Repetition is a common device in creating comedy; repeating a dialogue or an act "contributes to the comic" (Cohn, 1962, 61). Sometimes Andersson uses repetition to show or criticize the emptiness of some aspects of human life. For instance, the execution scene in "You, the living" consists of three shots. An elderly woman repeats the same dialogue in each scene. She says, "the set, it was handed down from my great-great-grandmother, and it was more than 200 years old". This repetition highlights the horror and the absurdity of the scene. This scene has comic impacts since it is full of incongruities. Judges are served with beer in

court. It challenges the validity of the law in general. The man's lawyer merely cries and does not defend his client in the court. It seems he knows the conviction is predetermined. The humor of this scene and its juxtaposition with a dreadful situation is able to reveal the brutality and horrifying nature of it so much better.

Comedy can express criticism concerning society since, as a result of its disruptive nature, it can reveal any flaws in the object of its criticism. One of Andersson's primary criticisms is on neoliberalist society and capitalism. Repetition is the most desirable device for him to challenge the capitalist conventions. People are living in a society that the market defines everything. In *"About Endlessness"* (2019), a priest talks to a therapist about losing his faith. Religion is his livelihood, so as long as he is able to make money, this is of minor significance if he believes what he says. In the following scenes, the priest, who has an appointment next week, comes again to the doctor's office. When he arrives, the therapist intends to leave and repeats, "I have to catch my bus", while kicking the priest out with the help of his secretary. According to Julianne Q. M. Yang, "The repetition of individual lines [...] allow the film to touch on themes such as alienation, selfishness, desire, work, and the power of routines in modern life". (Young, 2017, 576).

A Pigeon Sat on a Branch Reflecting on Existence (2014) features two salesmen who are somehow reminiscent of Vladimir and Estragon in *Waiting for Godot*. A comic couple with absurd dialogues and different spirits who seem to need each other. They are trying to sell their novelty items with the same dialogues and actions each time deliver in a deadpan manner, and this repetitive desperate effort makes them tragicomic figures. Jonathan experiences a bewildering feeling that something is wrong. Every time Jonathan is dealing with some questions, a man in charge of the flophouse notifies him that "some people get up early for work tomorrow". People's lives have been shaped by capitalism rules. They are unwilling to hear or think of any ethical or philosophical questions. Their lives are based on bus timetables or the rules of their job.

Comedy Beneath Social Life

Andersson and Grosz have the same approach towards the meaning and purpose of art. For Grosz, art is "to hold up a mirror in front of his age, in the form of paintings in which truths are painfully revealed through polemic overstatement – here lay, for Grosz, the "social purpose" of his work as an artist" (Metzger, 2017, 62). I intend to depict the resemblance of these artists on the way they criticize society by mordant humor and surrealism. However, first, it is essential to express one of Bergson's viewpoints. Bergson explains how a potential comic element lies under the apparent surface of the ceremonial aspect of social life. "They owe their seriousness to the fact that they are identified, in our minds, with the seriousness object with which custom associate them" (Bergson, 2008, 16). To reveal that comic side, we only need to take their given seriousness away, and "For any ceremony, then, to become comic, it is enough that our attention be fixed on the ceremonial element in it" (ibid).

In some of George Grosz's paintings, his figures wear formal garments in public places, while some parts of their bodies are not covered with clothes (Figure 8). It seems he tries to penetrate social formality and its appearances to reach that latent comic behind them. There is a similar experience in Andersson movies. He challenges the seriousness of courts or religious ceremonies, when Judges are drinking beer in the court, or a priest, who lost his faith, performs a ceremony while drunk and stumbles. In the sacrifice scene of *Songs from the Second Floor*, religious and business elders lined up to watch the girl leading to the cliff.

People wear formal clothes, and everything has been rehearsed in advance to sacrifice an innocent girl (Figure 10). We can also think of *the pillars of society* (1926) painting (Figure 9) that Grosz “offers an exaggerated gallery of typical representatives of power under the Weimar Republic” (Metzger, 2017,62). This scene has dark comedy and is filled with incongruities. Andersson criticizes the barbarism hidden beneath modern life. It reminds us of *Waiting for Godot* and Pozzo’s cruel treatment of Lucky and how the formality of his conversation with Vladimir and Estragon seems comically anomalous (McDonald, 2016, 39).

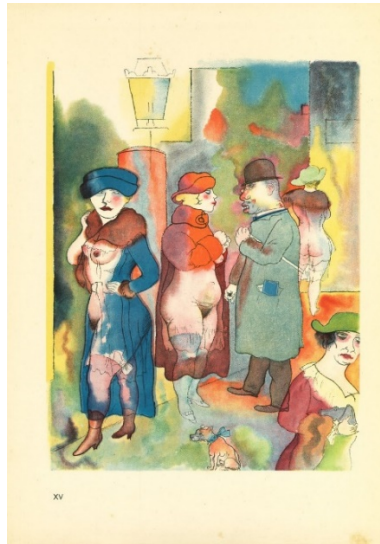


Figure 8: Before Sunrise (1922).



Figure 9: The Pillars of Society (1926).



Figure 10: Songs from Second Floor (2000)

Conclusion

Black humor is one of the main characteristics of Roy Andersson's cinematic world. He makes jokes about the dark side of the world and human beings. Several artists influence him, but Beckett and New Objectivity Movement have greatly influenced his dark humor. Andersson inherited Beckett's approach to tragicomedy. His comic characters live in a tragic world that does not make any sense. Andersson strongly criticizes the passivity of modern subjects, their emptiness and the horrors of the modern world. Passivity is a quality in people's behavior that is incongruous with their distressed situation. This incongruity prepares the ground for them to become comic figures. Andersson also benefits from some characteristics of New Objectivity paintings such as black humor, attention to the body, caricature quality, and the importance of the social and historical context. According to Bergson, similarity and repetition are devices to create comedy. The similarity of characters in their appearances and traits strengthens their machine-like quality, and they become like the massive products produced in the capitalist world. All in all, Andersson's aesthetic choices are tied to his concerns and the comic aspects of his movies. In addition, he employs Samuel Beckett and New Objectivity influences according to his worldview.

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No City for Fatal Women: Gender, Power, and Noir Convention in Marvel's Jessica Jones

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Abstract

This paper aims to analyze both the employment and subversion of traditional noir convention in the web television series *Jessica Jones*, based on the Marvel Comics character of the same name. While the series is more a crime drama than a superhero story and features numerous elements that mark it as a work of neo-noir, it simultaneously subverts and reworks noir's traditional portrayals of gender and power. Centered around a female, superpowered private investigator who suffers from PTSD due to a history of rape, violence, and manipulation, *Jessica Jones* presents a version of urban femininity that embodies traits previously associated with the masculine, tough-as-nails heroes of hard-boiled fiction, but also gives voice to the anxieties of contemporary womanhood. This paper will further examine how the creators of *Jessica Jones* successfully incorporate elements of noir fiction into the series while opening new possibilities for the genre's representation of gender and power dynamics; it will conclude that, much as classic noir reflects the social issues and collective anxieties of mid-century America, *Jessica Jones*—and potentially, neo-noir—brings forth the social issues that continue to weigh on our contemporary psyche, ushering in a new form of noir fiction that embodies new complexities.

Keywords: Noir, Neo-Noir, Gender, Women, Power, Trauma, PTSD, Superhero

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Introduction

The titular heroine of Marvel's Netflix series *Jessica Jones* kicks us into her narrative by informing us of her job as a private investigator as we see her lurking in New York's seedy back alleys, capturing the trysts of unfaithful spouses and resorting to her superhuman strength to bag criminals and intimidate difficult clients. After she dryly introduces herself by claiming that she excels at her line of work because of her aptitude for seeing the worst in people, Season 1 unfolds with a cryptic missing person case that compels Jessica to confront her traumatic past of rape and psychological manipulation at the hands of telepathic sadist Kilgrave; the ensuing investigation sees the P.I. take increasingly active steps in her search for the predator she formerly sought to avoid at all costs. The series' narrative style and visuals mark it indelibly as a work of neo-noir; however, its characterization of heroism and evil, as well as the first season's depictions of sexual dynamics and themes of trauma survival and female autonomy, radically subvert and rework numerous conventions of film noir. While classic noir was a murky mirror of the social anxieties that gnawed at mid-century America, the multidimensional meshing of noir tradition, superhero fiction, and urban psychological thriller that is *Jessica Jones* engagingly tackles contemporary discussions of gender, power, and consent (sexual and otherwise). This paper will examine the noir conventions present in Marvel's *Jessica Jones*, focusing mainly on Season 1, and argue that the series' creators utilize certain elements of classic noir and subvert others to craft a series that is both a tribute to a time-honored cinematic inheritance and an embodiment of timely gender discourse; namely, that *Jessica Jones* is an artistically and ideologically rewarding noir text for the age of #MeToo.

“Camera Friendly”: Noir Visual Narrative

Named for its distinctive visual characteristic, film noir's most recognizable convention is its use of lighting and color to enhance narratives. In the most literal sense, *Jessica Jones* is noir all over but with a strategically colorful twist—a phenomenon that is both a creative spin on an iconic visual tradition and a nod toward the series' origins in the comic book art form. This staining of Jessica Jones' noir with calculated dashes of color imbues both the narrative's urban landscape and the characters' complex psychological dimension with striking immediacy. Like traditional noir works, the show typically features wide-angle shots that “[have] the effect of drawing the viewer into the picture...and thus rendering emotional or dramatic events more immediate” (Place and Peterson, 1996, p. 67), with the show's cinematographer Manuel Billeter using wide lenses that incorporate New York's cityscape into *Jessica Jones*' narrative (Heuring, 2018, para. 12). The aesthetic of the show also vigorously embraces noir's penchant for “the constant opposition of areas of light and dark” (Place and Peterson, 1996, p. 67); the overarching atmosphere of suspense and gritty urban realism, as well as the psychological isolation and gloom experienced by the protagonist, is rendered by a willingness to “[allow faces] to fall into complete darkness” in several scenes, but not without “one white point in the frame to emphasize the inky blacks” (Heuring, 2018, para. 13). But color is also a crucial element employed in the visual fabric of *Jessica Jones*, effectively conveying mood and subtext. Billeter opted for cool tones in the daylight scenes to create a sense of “harsh reality,” while “[embracing] the warm, dirty-orange sodium vapor light” of New York after nightfall to render the night “warmer and more forgiving” (Heuring, 2018, paras. 7-8); in fact, true to noir cinematic convention, “[t]he majority of scenes are lit for night” (Schrader, 1996, p. 57) as the alleys, bars, offices, and ramshackle apartments of New York by night sees a greater percentage of plot development than daylight. Moreover, Season 1 skillfully incorporates the comics' use of color and characterization in its portrayal of the perverse villain Kilgrave, known in the original texts as “Purple Man.” Rather than the literally purple-skinned nemesis of comic book

origin, viewers of *Jessica Jones* are presented with the elegantly attired (in shades of tastefully varied purple) David Tennant, whose presence is accentuated with vividly purple-tinged lighting—both his physical presence and the traumatic remnants of his manipulation of Jessica’s mind. The significance of the color purple is manifold: while ostensibly symbolic of royalty, “associated with power, wealth and luxury... [that is] ambitious and confident” (Rolufs, 2016, paras. 3-4) and connoting the respect and prestige that Kilgrave is so eager to command from his victims (particularly women), the color is also strongly associated with sorcery and is thus a fitting symbol of Kilgrave’s invasive manipulation of Jessica (Rolufs, 2016). The neon harshness of the purple lighting that indicates Kilgrave’s presence in Jessica’s mind, always unsettling and disruptive compared to the relative warmth of the city lights, highlights the perversity of the control he aims to enmesh her in.

Further along the vein of noir visual storytelling employed by the designers of *Jessica Jones* is the presentation of a *mise-en-scène* that conveys the relationships of the characters pictured or the narrative impact of a particular incident. Despite its unmistakably 21st century setting, the show’s cinematography celebrates and incorporates classic noir’s use of unconventional shots and strategic compositions to visually imply crucial narrative points. The production design of *Jessica Jones* appropriately features spatial arrangements designed to unsettle, jar, and disorient the viewer in correlation with the disorientation felt by the *noir* heroes. ... Claustrophobic framing devices such as doors, windows, stairways, metal bed frames, or simply shadows separate the character from other characters, from his world, or from his own emotions. And objects seem to push their way into the foreground of the frame to assume more power than the people. (Place and Peterson, 1996, p. 68)

Jessica’s urban surroundings are delineated throughout the show with steely surfaces and glass barriers, from subway poles and rickety doorways to lit windows and the camera lens from which she views the sleazier sides of humanity. The distance and separation created by these elements indicate Jessica’s propensity for isolation and alienation from others, a character trait that serves as both a coping mechanism for her PTSD and a vantage point from which to objectively perceive human interaction—a crucial element of her detective work. The constant presence of recording devices, from cameras and phones to physical files of documents and photographs, reinforces the sense of vigilant paranoia Jessica experiences in the wake of Kilgrave’s manipulation; her discovery of Kilgrave’s designated “shrine” to her, covered wall to wall in photographs and collages of her face and complete with a copy machine that endlessly reproduces more images (Rosenberg, 2015-2019) is a concrete manifestation of a predator’s obsessive, objectifying gaze and desire for the power to dictate and manipulate her existence. On a compositional level, frames often feature atypical camera angles that are a visual hallmark of noir convention but are also fittingly reminiscent of comic book panels. “[O]blique and vertical lines are preferred to horizontal. Obliquity adheres to the choreography of the city, ... [and] tend[s] to splinter a screen, making it restless and unstable” (Schrader, 1996, p. 57); dramatically slanted shots locate Jessica within the morally disorienting cesspool that New York City is presented to be, and in certain scenes highlight the disturbing disbalance of power and morality, e.g., when Kilgrave’s supposedly-liberated victim Hope Shlottman carries out his final command to murder her parents in the elevator and chillingly tells Jessica to “smile”—an oft-repeated demand that Kilgrave makes of women (Rosenberg, 2015-2019). And Kilgrave’s pervasive presence in Jessica’s mind is jarringly depicted in flashbacks with purple-tinged closeup shots of him behind her shoulder, speaking menacingly into her ear; in one particularly triggering flashback, Jessica’s forced participation in an “anniversary” dinner at a restaurant shows only Kilgrave’s darkly purple silhouette foregrounding an elegantly attired Jessica bathed in lurid purple light—a shot that embodies Kilgrave’s exploitative gaze and his

perceived possession of Jessica's beauty and attention (Rosenberg, 2015-2019). These and many more examples of conventional noir cinematography techniques are utilized in *Jessica Jones* to build a visual narrative that conveys the psychological effects of rape and manipulation as well as the paranoia of inhabiting an urban environment that is simultaneously alienating and inescapable; the noir lens of *Jessica Jones* thus projects the mind of its titular detective despite her efforts to keep her troubles (whiskey-) bottled up.

“Hard-Drinking, Short-Fused Mess of a Woman”: The Hard-Boiled Detective and Gendered Heroism

The noir element that has been most responsible for *Jessica Jones*' popularity with audiences is the protagonist's characterization as a jaded, hard-drinking, “hard-boiled” private eye, to whom actress Krysten Ritter lends a wry charm and humanity. The conventional hard-boiled hero adopts a “cynical way of acting and thinking which separate[s] one from the world of everyday emotions—romanticism with a protective shell...[and] live[s] out a narcissistic, defeatist code” (Schrader, 1996, p. 56); sporting both a sardonic sense of humor and a bleak view of humanity, the quintessential noir hero is inevitably forced to mingle with the underbelly of society while suffering from damaged personal relationships, which leads to self-imposed isolation as a coping mechanism. This character trope marks an essential distinction between noir and mainstream detective fiction;

[w]hereas the classical detective is often at one remove from the milieu which gives rise to the socially disruptive act of murder, the “hard-boiled” investigator immerses himself in this milieu, and is tested by it in a more physical and life-threatening manner. Crucially, the private eye—the most archetypal “hard-boiled” hero—operates as a mediator between the criminal underworld and the world of respectable society. He can move freely between these two worlds, without really being part of either. (Krutnik, 1991, p. 39)

This fluidity between worlds and paradoxical entrapment in a state of alienation is effectively delineated in *Jessica Jones*, whose titular heroine is a prickly but resourceful loner with an aversion to emotional entanglement; the “physical and life-threatening” nature of her investigations plays out engagingly to prompt Jessica's displays of superhuman strength in bar fights and street chases, and criticism of her “effective” methods as being “erratic” and “volatile” (Rosenberg, 2015-2019) suggests the moral and legal ambiguity she enjoys as a freelancer outside the official police force. Coupled with the series' cinematography, which is purposely built around motifs of glass panes and lenses that create a sense of emotional alienation and distortion through multiple “layers between the camera and the actors—reflections, foreground obstruction and visual occlusions” (Heuring, 2018, para. 4), Jessica Jones—replete with her penchant for sarcasm, liquor, and black leather—makes for an ideal hard-boiled noir hero.

However, she isn't one—that is, not according to orthodox noir tradition. A key quality of the hard-boiled private investigator who prowls darkened streets in search of answers is his masculinity—his status as a “hero” is intimately bound to his status as “tough” *man* who represents truth in a web of deceptive chaos and intrigue. Traditionally, the “hard-boiled” private-eye hero represents an “Americanization” and masculinization of the classical detective. The world through which he moves...[is] a world of violence and lawlessness...[and is] dominated by assertive masculine figures of self-appointed authority. The lawless context of the “mean-streets” world legitimizes the private eye's own aggressiveness in pursuit of his mission to establish a regime of truth. ...But what is principally at stake in the private-eye story is not the safeguarding of “normal” society...[but] the affirmation of the hero as an idealized...figure of masculine potency... [Classic noir] is characterized by the relatively

unproblematic validation of the detective as masculine hero. (Krutnik, 1991, p. 93)

In this sense, Marvel's bleary-eyed, sailor-mouthed PI is the gendered antithesis of the archetype she embodies, and her presence in the narrative is thus inherently subversive. Her tough-guy attitude toward work and life exudes from a petite figure which, while deliberately not adorned to stereotypical feminine charm, is undeniably female and in command of its sexuality—an aspect of Jessica's character that is central to her identity after her experience at the hands of the sexually manipulative Kilgrave. By placing a woman who is traumatized, conflicted, and psychologically vulnerable—despite her shattering physical strength— at the heart of a modern noir narrative, in the investigative slot conventionally occupied by idealized manhood, *Jessica Jones* utterly reshapes the fabric of the archetypal yet innovative story it sets out to tell.

“In My Line of Work”: Voiceover Narration and the Articulation of Vulnerability

This question of the investigator's identity, perspective, and voice ties into another essential noir element present in *Jessica Jones*: the use of the protagonist's first-person voiceover. By turns narrative and confessional, this technique serves as a crucial means of highlighting the investigative plot structure as well as revealing the protagonist's character. Worth noting is the conventional difference in artistic impact of noir voiceover from the straightforward voiceover narration that frequently appeared in mainstream cinema of postwar and mid-century America; rather than simply establishing narrative authority, noir voiceovers open gateways to internal depth and complexity within characters.

In contrast to *films noirs*, other 1940's genres use voice-over primarily to accentuate the verisimilitude of and to increase audience identification with their narrators' stories. Voice-over is used in war dramas, for instance, to increase viewer identification with the films' heroic soldier protagonists. ... In films adapted from literary sources, the voice-over is most often associated with a recreation of the original novel's authorial narrational voice...[and are thus] associated with authority, heroism, and power...*Films noirs*, however...contain weak, powerless narrators who tell a story of ... their inability to shape the events of their lives to their own designs. (Hollinger, 1996, p. 244)

While the above generalization might seem to contradict Krutnik's description of the conventional masculinized authority the noir hero embodies, I contend that they merely describe different dimensions of the character type; the external “masculine” toughness necessarily *coexists* with the internally disorientated, dysfunctional “powerless narrator” who must don an idealized version of perceived potency to accomplish his (or, in Ms. Jones' case, her) goals.

In this light, *Jessica Jones*' use of this technique is extraordinarily appropriate to the genre's requirements, though the heroine's status as an iconoclast in the long line of male noir detectives remains untouched. Jessica's voiceover monologues do indeed establish her identity as a traumatized, isolated figure steeped in paranoia, exemplified in her tendency to throw around grim antisocial manifestos such as “People do bad [stuff]. I just avoid getting involved with them in the first place. That works for me” (Rosenberg, 2015-2019), and her confession of numbness and nihilistic disorientation:

Everything changes. And nothing changes. People die. More are born. And in between... we exist. I never wanted to do more than that. Just exist. I've gone through life... untethered, unconnected... I wasn't even aware that I'd chosen that. It took someone coming back from the

dead... to show me that I've been dead too. The problem is, I never really figured out how to live. I hate starting at the beginning. (Rosenberg, 2015-2019)

Such first-person accounts of the emotional vulnerability masked by Jessica's terse demeanor literally give voice to a protagonist whose heroism lies in her identity as a survivor as well as her superhuman physical abilities. Interestingly, the show's multiple comic book-style action sequences not only honor the series' origins in superhero fiction, but serve as an effective foil for her psychological vulnerability and may be interpreted as a physical manifestation of the traditionally "masculine" armor worn by the quintessential noir detective; besides her trademark caustic humor and blasé demeanor, Jessica is often obliged to protect herself from physical damage by beating up bad guys, even if her power over her mind is under constant threat from Kilgrave's manipulation and the crippling trauma left in its wake. The conflicting duality of her external power and internal vulnerability acts as a springboard that propels much of the plot and Jessica's own character arc, with her ongoing struggle for victory over Kilgrave playing out both psychologically and physically. The most significant victory in terms of narrative impact is the first episode's closing scene, which sees Jessica's character undergo a drastic shift from emotional weakness to an empowered sense of moral responsibility, culminating in her statement that "[k]nowing it's real means you've got to make a decision. One: Keep denying it. Or two: Do something about it" (Rosenberg, 2015-2019). In a character-defining flash of selfless determination, she refrains from fleeing the site of Hope's parents' murder, literally wheeling around 180 degrees and steeling herself to reenter a chapter of her life that left her deeply scarred; this transition from a passive former victim to an active, determined woman in pursuit of her predator is a pivotal moment in her role as both the damaged detective of noir convention and the empowering representation of female trauma survival.

"Smile": Female Image and Noir Free of the Femme Fatale

The task of situating Marvel's *Jessica Jones* within the film noir genre holds the most confusing difficulty—and here, I argue, ideological appeal—when faced with the gaping lack at the narrative's center: despite its litany of innovatively rendered noir elements, *Jessica Jones* seems to have forgotten to deliver one of the most iconic stock characters and genre-defining noir conventions in cinematic history—the *femme fatale*. This staple of classic noir fiction who typically seduces, manipulates, and threatens her way to either morally nihilistic success or a grisly death is a paradoxical figure because of the conflicting representations of power she embodies; while the *femme fatale* is ostensibly a force of female agency and "masculine" strengths such as ambition and intelligence, her hypersexualized image and its negative associations with danger, aggression, and manipulation—i.e., the projections of masculine anxieties and expectations she is loaded with—ultimately problematize her status as an empowering or subversive narrative device. It is therefore no coincidence that the *femme fatale* trope's uneven representation of gendered power dynamics is turned inside out by *Jessica Jones*' reconfiguration of the trope's core elements—sexuality and desire, control and manipulation—and that in its place we follow the trials of a powered woman who is most literally "fatal" to others and herself when robbed of her psychological and physical agency by a male antagonist who doesn't hesitate to weaponize her superhuman strength and demand acts of excruciating violence from her in order to accomplish his will. Certain conventional traits of the alluring yet predatory woman are instead tellingly thrust onto Kilgrave's character, namely, his potent charisma (telepathy-imposed and otherwise) and suave line delivery, his fixation on seduction and possession of romantic conquests, and the mystery surrounding his origins (which eventually gives way to disturbing revelations); he is depicted as the elusive,

menacing force that conventional *femmes fatales* perform, while the object of his obsessive penchant for manipulation is the investigative, increasingly active (and thus conventionally “masculine”) Jessica. His recurring command that his female victims “smile” is the ultimate combination of *femme fatale*-esque manipulation and the male gaze’s deprivation of female control over expression and appearance.

Besides being artistically innovative (an effect much enhanced by Krysten Ritter’s and David Tennant’s mesmerizing performances and the series’ sophisticated cinematography), this reversal of the conventional gender dynamics typically featured in noir texts situates female voice and experience within a more substantial role and enables the audience to engage with a well-dimensioned female character while witnessing a fictionalized—but uncannily accurate—portrayal of how manipulation and violation of consent affects even the strongest of women. Feminist analyses of film noir have noted how noir representations of gender dynamics are essentially masculine attempts (and often, failures) to “probe femaleness in order to capture a hidden ‘truth,’” that “femaleness is always judged as excess or lack from the perspective of male normalcy,” and how the use of voiceover narrative technique “implicates the spectator completely in the perspective of the film’s male narrator and leads this implicated spectator to join with the narrator in his condemnation of the...major female character, the dangerous and often deadly *femme fatale*” (Hollinger, 1996, p. 245). Christine Gledhill (1998) has stated that [t]he material for the film noir heroine is drawn from the stereotypes of the *femme fatale* or evil woman and the good-bad girl... [T]he hero [is] frequently not sure whether the woman is honest or a deceiver, but the heroine’s characterization is itself fractured so that it is not evident to the audience whether she fills the stereotype or not. ... Such a mode of characterization...is in marked contrast to the consistent moral trajectory of the male, who, although he may be confused or uncertain as to the relation of appearances to reality, at least maintains a consistency of values. (p. 31)

The inherent instability at the heart of the noir female character, as well as her reliance on masculine subjectivity to function as a narrative force, is replaced in *Jessica Jones* by the authoritative (albeit at times vulnerable and questioning) weight of Jessica as both investigative hero and narrator; it is she who grapples with the dark, murky task of probing Kilgrave’s deeds and intentions, and she who must expose the manipulative predator who appears in the image of a suave, chivalrous lover that initially appeals to women. Furthermore, while Jessica is not stereotypically “womanly,” it is made clear that she is sexually attractive and that her unique brand of femininity and sexuality are substantial qualities that enable her to regain control over her life as she attempts to recover from Kilgrave’s rape; while her use of spontaneous sexual encounters to “self-medicate” against emotional isolation is arguably a parallel to her damaging reliance on alcohol as a coping mechanism, the active subjectivity with which she wields her sexuality (rather than flirting, she claims to only “say what [she] want[s]”) contrasts starkly with the sexuality of the traditional *femme fatale*, who, though potentially “active” compared to the virtuous, passive heroines of other traditional genres, are underlyingly still projections of masculine fears and lusts. The series’ treatment of female power, in terms of both narration and characterization, thus dramatically subverts noir convention and reworks the genre’s most iconic power dynamic into an instrument that amplifies the female voice over the male gaze.

With the above factors in mind, the striking physical differences between conventional noir female characters and the image of femininity presented in *Jessica Jones* acquires clearer significance. The former type of female image is ostensibly such a prominent figure in popular visual culture that it hardly needs elaboration, but it is worth pointing out that the sensuously over-the-top bombshells of noir convention are iconic precisely because they function as visual

icons—or images—that can be intuitively located within specific visual settings. To further quote Gledhill, [t]he visual style of *film noir* is commonly seen as its defining characteristic through which its formal excesses carry and submerge the incomprehensibility of plot and contradictoriness of characterization... Within this context the female image is frequently part of this visual environment, just as she is part of the hostile world of the plot in which the hero is enmeshed. The noir heroine frequently emerges from shadows, her harsh white face photographed without softening filters, part of the abstract lighting schemes. More crucially, of course she is filmed for her sexuality. Introductory shots, which catch the hero's gaze, frequently place her at an angle above the onlooker, and sexuality is often signaled by a long, elegant leg (*The Postman Always Rings Twice*, *Double Indemnity*, *Deadlier Than the Male*). Dress either emphasizes sexuality—long besequined sheath dresses—or masculine independence and aggression—square, padded shoulders, bold, striped suits. (p. 32)

Set against this visual tradition that diminishes female subjectivity and highlights the static quality of physical appeal, Jessica's appearance in the series is a distinct aesthetic and symbolic subversion. Her tattered, distressed jeans and minimalistic tank tops and T-shirts are typically paired with her trademark black leather jacket, an article of clothing that at once evokes rebellion against the mainstream, solidarity with the outsider, and a wry tongue-in-cheek attitude toward this very notion of an archetypal charismatically rebellious hero (Green, 2016)—an attitude that Jessica herself displays throughout her journey as a superhero; large black boots are the obviously functional choice considering the damp, unsavory environments that Jessica's job takes her to. Despite the somewhat prominent theme of sexuality in the series, there is a minimum of female nudity; our glimpses of Jessica's plain underwear mainly occur in non-sexual contexts that highlight her exhaustion and restless activity as a protagonist, such as when she tumbles into bed after a frustrating night of detective work—in her shabby New York apartment, in the absence of a male audience that expects to be seduced. Another image-related detail of particular interest is how Jessica—and on a metanarrative level, the creators of this television series—explicitly rejects one of her comic-canonical superhero uniforms, a form-hugging, “sexy” spandex piece of creamy white and blue that aligns with the typically oversexualized image of female superheroes. This scene, though brief and lighthearted, is important because it marks the series as an intersection of subversive noir and subversive superhero fiction. Much like the sexually exaggerated *femmes fatales* of noir cinema, superpowered women have overwhelmingly been presented as “large-breasted and small-waisted, long-haired and long-legged” sex objects “to be looked at rather than subjects to view the story through” (Cocca, 2016, p. 12); both configurations of power and gender are pointedly undone in this production. Besides offering comic relief, Jessica's contemptuous dismissal of the stereotypical “Bad Girl” superhero aesthetic mirrors the series' liberation of the noir heroine from the *femme fatale* trope, creating a deliberate divorce from the hypersexualization of female power traditionally present in media.

Conclusion: Innovation of Gendered Genre and Meaningful Narrative in the Era of #MeToo

The social and cultural significance of Marvel's *Jessica Jones* series lies in both its refreshing place in the respective genres it falls under, and its timely arrival in the decade that saw the rise of the #MeToo movement, i.e., heightened awareness of the need for public discourse on consent and gender-based violence. My above discussions on the stylistic elements of the production aim to argue that its success in generating discussion on its themes is largely due to the creative finesse employed in evolving a cinematic tradition whose depiction of power and gender dynamics has proven ambiguously provocative. Classic noir works are “structured...as

scenes of battle conflicting aspects of their social milieux” (Hollinger 258), marked by a general sense of confusion regarding mid-century America’s helpless attempts to make sense of the seemingly irreconcilable rift between the sexes and their roles in society; the genre’s potential for ideological subversion was both born from and hindered by the puzzling and fragmentary narrative styles they adopted, with aberrant portrayals of powerful women and unreliable male narration intertwined with “the perennial myth of woman as threat to male control of the world and destroyer of male aspiration” (Gledhill, 1998, p. 32). Moreover, the genre has typically been remarkable for technical style rather than meaningful narrative substance or commentary, with an overwhelming “anti-realist” focus on “conventionalism, stylization, theatricality, [and] stereotypicality” (p. 32) and a fixation on “loss, nostalgia, lack of clear priorities, insecurity...[submerged] in mannerism and style” (Schrader, 1996, p. 58).

Jessica Jones forcefully disposes of this sense of moral nihilism and emptiness, instead weaving noir’s technical and aesthetic conventions into its narrative while pushing the genre’s weaknesses aside and injecting an electrifying sense of authentic purpose into the heroine’s pursuit of truth. The show uses the aesthetics and visual language of noir convention to depict the disorientating effects of violence against a woman, allowing the audience to inhabit the heroine’s subjectivity rather than making a fetishistic spectacle of that violence, and also features well-rounded portrayals of solidarity among women (Jessica’s sisterly bond with Trish Walker) and positively-functioning romantic relationships (the mutual support between Jessica and Luke Cage). The first season’s narrative thereby expands the capacity of noir to encompass more meaningful narratives that resonate with contemporary issues, filling the moral lacunae of past noir pieces with Jessica Jones’ heroic endeavors. At the same time, viewers are invited not only to take a walk through a stylistically striking urban noir enigma, but to witness the struggles and triumphs of a hard-boiled heroine who defies the rigid categorization of trope labels as she drinks, jumps, and punches her way through a city—and a narrative—she memorably makes her own.

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***Ethno-cinematographic Rhizomes: Examples from the Independent Cinema of
Apichatpong Weerasethakul and Anocha Suwichakornpong***

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Abstract

We propose a conceptual framework of filmic analysis, the "ethno-cinematographic rhizome", as a parallel and convergent vehicle of audiovisual artistic creation and para-ethnographic observation of non-Western societies in today's global era. It is based on the concept of "rhizome" by the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze, an "image of thought" that understands knowledge in a non-hierarchical and horizontal way as an apprehension of the multiplicity and expansive horizontality of the real and that is opposed to the dominant epistemological tree-like model. We are going to apply this conceptual framework to two feature films from contemporary Thai independent cinema: *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall his Past Lives* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul, Lung Boonmee Raluek Chat, 2010) and *By the Time it Gets Dark* (Anocha Suwichakornpong, Dao Khanong, 2016). We emphasize the fragmented rhizomatic structure of these films that present a multiplicity of narrative and chronological lines that are assembled in a complex way to bring out a cinematographic apparatus of high aesthetic beauty and at the same time profound para-ethnographic knowledge of Thai social reality. They combine realistic with surreal and even fantastic elements that show us the daily life of people and ethnic groups of Thai society while exploring its collective unconscious populated by myths, dreams, historical traumas, supernatural entities and hybrid human/non-human beings. We propose that through these films we can capture deep sociological and anthropological knowledge of Thai society if we incorporate the open and expansive epistemological framework of Deleuze's rhizome, becoming perfect examples of our concept of the "ethno-cinematographic rhizome".

Keywords: Rhizome, Deleuze, Ethnography, Cinema, Weerasethakul, Suwichakornpong

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Deleuze and Guattari's Concept of Rhizome

A rhizome is an "image of thought" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) taken from botany. In botany a rhizome is a subterranean plant stem that grows horizontally and indefinitely, emitting roots and shoots from its nodes, spreading more and more throughout the territory. It thus differs from the tree, which depends on a root from which its entire trunk and branches sprout. Deleuze makes the rhizome a model of knowledge, an epistemological model that contrasts with the "root-tree" epistemological models dominant in Western philosophy, from Plato to Hegel and that postulate a transcendental hierarchical point from which everything real and rational is derived. The rhizome model is opposed to the dominant arborescent model, constituting itself as a model that "presents" reality in a horizontal and expansive way and not a model that "represents" it in a vertical and closed way. It is thus opposed to the organizational, binary and chronological logics of the real that dominate in thought and also to a large extent in art and cinema in particular. It "has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, *intermezzo*" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987: 25).

Its first and second principles are those of "connection and heterogeneity" (7). It "connects any point to any other point" (21). Its third principle is that of "multiplicity." "The rhizome is reducible neither to the One nor the Multiple... It has neither beginning nor end, but always a middle (*milieu*) from which it grows and which it overflows. It constitutes multiplicities" (21). It is an "assemblage" (in French, "*agencement*") of multiplicities and heterogeneities always open and expansive, in constant metamorphosis and adaptation. The parts of the assemblage are characterized by "relations of exteriority". Its fourth principle is "asignifying rupture" (9), according to which the rhizome can break but recompose itself in its old lines or in new lines. The rhizomatic assemblage is multiple and emergent, made of combinations and recombinations of autonomous elements. Unlike a structure, defined by a set of points and positions, with binary relations, the Assemblage is made only of lines that have a double face: lines of territorialization or segmentarity, that fix a signifying totality (it is an "organism") and lines of deterritorialization or flight that are continually dismantling the totality (it is also a "body without organs") facing change and metamorphosis (4). Its fifth and sixth principles are those of "cartography and decalcomania" (12). Unlike the dominant arborescent model that builds tracings or models that reproduce and represent a given reality, the rhizomatic model is constituted as an open map, with multiple entries and susceptible to permanent modification.

The Ethno-Cinematographic Rhizome

The Rhizome is an epistemological model that instead of being a carbon copy of the given reality, it is a map of potential realities that goes beyond the self-limiting confines of the transcendent models, opening up to the virtual. In addition to philosophy and science, it can also be found in art (Pollock), in music (Boulez) or in literature (Joyce).

Here we apply it to the cinema, proposing a concept of "ethno-cinematographic rhizome" applied to non-Western films that include relevant ethnographic knowledge. The ethno-cinematographic rhizome would seek to express a given social and cultural reality through the elements of cinema (image, sound and time) by means of "percepts" (Deleuze, 1986, 1989) instead of "concepts", without following a rational fixed point and a narrative or meaning tree hierarchy. It would be an emerging and expanding assemblage of heterogeneous elements, realistic and non-realistic, rational and non-rational, human and non-human, seeking to express through arts a complex cultural reality in today's global era of global flows

and global assemblages (Appadurai, 1990; Collier & Ong, 2005). It would be a map to explore a cultural reality and not an objective copy of it. Within Deleuze's own philosophy of cinema (Bogue, 2003; Deamer 2016), the "ethno-cinematographic rhizomes" would be examples of "time-image" (Deleuze, 1989), an experimental cinema that by means of the inclusion of dreams and fantasies deconstruct the sensory-motor organizations of the "movement-image" (Deleuze, 1986) of classical mainstream cinema, opening up to virtual potentialities.

This "non-representational" (Anderson & Harrison, 2010) cinema would not seek from a rational fixed point to "represent" the world but to "present" a world. Using the expressive freedom that art brings, it opens up to the exploration of hidden, dreamlike and mystical dimensions of Non-Western cultures (lines of flight or deterritorialization) within the realistic description of their social realities (lines of segmentarity or territorialization). Following Deleuze's conceptual framework, it opens then the "actual" to the "virtual" (Deleuze, 2002). It would thus be a novel and powerful variant of visual anthropology and ethnographic cinema that would not fit into the social scientific method unless we follow Deleuze's epistemological paradigm.

We connect our conceptual framework with the theories of Bruno Latour (2007), Viveiros de Castro (2014), Yuk Hui (2016), among others, in the sense of the anthropological need to "take seriously" other non-Western world views, from an open ontology and a practical metaphysics. We thus link up with a perspective that rejects "orientalism" (Said, 1978) as a western ethnocentrism that distorts other worldviews and reifies the "other". Instead, we seek to give the other subaltern a full voice (Spivak, 1988), thus also connecting with "decolonial" perspectives (Dussel, 2015; Mignolo, 2011) and with the "epistemologies of the South" (De Sousa, 2014). Within visual anthropology and ethnographic cinema we connect with recent developments that, moving further than the "observational cinema" (Grimshaw & Ravetz, 2009) seek to go beyond representative docu-fiction (Edwards, 2012; Poole, 2005; Schneider & Wright, 2010; Yanai, 2011) and also with applications at large of Deleuze's philosophy in anthropology (Glowczewski, 2019). We connect as well with further explorations of the application of Deleuze's philosophy of cinema (Martin-Jones, 2011), and with our own previous applications to Asian cinema of the Deleuzian concepts of rhizome and assemblage (Malaina, 2015, 2020, 2021).

We are going to apply our conceptual framework to two examples of films from the growing Thai independent cinema (Baumgärtel, 2019; Ingawanij & McKay, 2012): *Uncle Boonmee who can Recall his Past Lives* (Apichatpong Weerasethakul, 2010) and *By the Time it Gets Dark* (Anocha Suwichakornpong, 2016).

We are going to present some illustrative elements of its multiplicity that make up lines of segmentarity and lines of flight of their rhizomatic assemblages with its aesthetic dimension and at the same time its presentation of an ethno-social world.

These elements are not hierarchically organized, forming a horizontal rhizomatic structure, made by complex actor-network relationships within a flat ontology and a practical metaphysics (Latour, 2007). All of them connected to each other, in an assemblage of heterogeneities that simultaneously connects different narrative and chronological lines with multiple entries and exits. The ethno-cinematographic rhizomes of both films combine the lines of segmentarity/territorialization of the more realistic components with the lines of flight/deterritorialization of the dreamlike, mystical, fantastic ones. Through their

interconnection they produce the emergence in the film of the ethno-cinematographic rhizome.

The Cinema of Apichatpong Weerasethakul as Example of Ethno-cinematographic Rhizomes

Apichatpong Weerasethakul (Bangkok, 1970) is a Thai independent film director. Winner of the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival in 2010 with his film *Uncle Boonmee who can recall his past lives*. Other films: *Tropical Malady* (Prix du Jury, 2004, Cannes Film Festival), *Cemetery of Splendour* (Best Film, Asia Pacific Screen Awards, 2015).

His cinema, developed outside his country's industry, combines an almost documentary hyper-realistic style (including non-professional actors and ambient sound instead of music) with fantastic, dreamlike, surreal elements portraying lives of popular classes from the Thai region of Isan. His films are complex assemblages of heterogeneous socio-cultural elements (Buddhist, Animist/Shamanist, Modern, Sexual, Experiential, Memories, Dreams, Myths) that shape a coherent global system made by the lines of segmentarity of Isan's people daily life and the lines of flight of their dreams, myths and fantasies (Ingawanij, 2013; Teh, 2011).

The film we take as example of the "ethno-cinematographic rhizome" is *Uncle Boonmee who can recall his past lives* (Lung Boonmee Raluek Chat, 2010). The film story is the following: dying of kidney disease, uncle Boonmee spends on a rural farm in Isan his last days with his family, including the ghost of his wife and a forest spirit who used to be his son.

Some elements of its rhizomatic assemblage are the following (with no hierarchical organization): an ethnic human group, the Thai people from Isan northeast region, highly influenced in culture and dialect by neighboring Laos (Keyes, 1994, 2014); a geographic location (Isan, Thailand, one of the poorest regions of Thailand, with a basically agrarian economy); the complex culture of Isan, which is influenced by Theravada Buddhism (Crosby, 2013), the official religion of Thailand, but also by animist and shamanist beliefs of Laotian origin (Arhem & Sprenger, 2015); disease and medical care (Malaina, 2021); the agricultural farm; the Laotian migrant workers in Isan's crop fields; the historic memory and trauma of the Isan region with references about the fierce repression against communist militias influenced by Laos (Winichakul, 1997), which even makes Boonmee believe it is the cause (*karma*) of his illness because he took part in those events; dystopian visions of the future (soldiers capturing ghost monkeys); family relations including living relatives and ghosts; non-human ghosts; human ghosts; human/Apes living/ghosts hybrids expressing a "continuity of interiority" (Descola, 2013) between humans, animals and spirits; the jungle as a liminal space and border zone (Boehler, 2011) between the natural and the supernatural; animist "sacred sites" and "potent places" (Guillou, 2017) such as the cave where Boonmee dies; animist folk tales (the love story between a princess and a fish); Buddhist religiosity; the Buddhist Theravada temple wat; doubles, *doppelgängers* and splits between the sacred and the profane, and the popular music and the karaoke, among other components.

The Cinema of Anocha Suwichakornpong as Example of Ethno-cinematographic Rhizomes

Anocha Suwichakornpong (Chonburi, 1976) is a Thai independent film director, screenwriter and producer. She is recipient of the 2019 Prince Claus award and of the 2020 Silpathorn

Award. Director of two feature films (*Mundane History*, 2009 and *By the time it gets dark*, 2016). Co-director with Ben Rivers of *Krabi, 2562*.

She shares with Apichatpong the creation of the same dreamlike atmosphere in her films, sometimes combined with almost documentary treatments, where realistic and surreal elements are combined, also seeking to capture the deep structures, both conscious and unconscious, of contemporary Thai society. Therefore, in her films, she also includes the most realistic lines of segmentation with lines of flight of dreams and fantasies. Therefore, in her films, she also includes the most realistic lines of segmentation with lines of flight of dreams and fantasies, within a montage characterized by the multiplicity of chronological and narrative lines.

The film we take as example of the “ethno-cinematographic rhizome” is *By the time it gets dark* (Dao Khanong, 2016). The film shows the lives of a film director and her muse (who was an activist student during the 1970s), a waitress constantly changing jobs, and an actor, who are subtly connected by almost invisible threads.

Some elements of its rhizomatic assemblage are the following (with no hierarchical organization): the historic memory and trauma of the repression and massacre by the Thai Army of the students at the Thammasat University in 1976 (Winichakul, 2020); individual memories; love and romance in times of struggle for democracy; the making-of of a film; cinema within cinema; magic and telekinetic powers; dreams; the psychedelic experience with psilocybin mushrooms (Stamets, 1996); the fungi life (Stamets, 2019); a mushroom farm; references and tributes to film pioneers, including a scene from Meliès's *Journey to the Moon* (1902); a tobacco factory and its workers; roads and highways; the glamorous life of movie stars; the empty and precarious lives of working-class women (Mills, 1999); luxury hotels; the cleaning services; the tourist industry; serving and cleaning dishes; the Buddhist temple (and the struggle of women to be part of the *sangha*); night life in the city, and the evolution from analog to digital of cinema and society at large, among others components.

Conclusion

The films of Weerasethakul and Suwichakornpong are examples of ethno-cinematographic rhizomes. Their cinema, although it is fiction and does not correspond to a rigorous ethnographic study, can provide, following Deleuze's epistemological model, significant information on Thai society by presenting aesthetically the multiplicity of heterogeneous elements, realistic and unrealistic, the lines of segmentarity and the lines of flight that make up the world of meaning in which its people may inhabit in today's global era.

We propose their cinema as a line of exploration of our conceptual framework of the “ethno-cinematographic rhizome” that can later be expanded with the study of the work of similar filmmakers (who also combine experimental cinema and ethnographic description) from other cultures and countries such as, by instance, Sergei Parajanov, Pedro Costa, Abbas Kiarostami, Carlos Reygadas, Lav Diaz, Tsai Ming-Liang, Bi Gan, Lucien Casten Taylor, Philippe Grandrieux, Zhao Liang or Trinh T. Minh-ha.

Our project is therefore an ongoing project and with this paper we wanted to make a synthesis of its main approaches, taking as an example two films by Apichatpong Weerasethakul and Anocha Suwichakornpong and presenting some elements of their multiplicity that make up their “ethno-cinematographic rhizomes”.

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***Culture and Human Resource Management:
Understanding Communication in the Ages of Globalization***

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Abstract

This paper will examine the international management of culture and human resources communication. The various movements of human resources and competencies have implicated the phenomena of culture exchange worldwide. Intercultural conflicts, intercultural competencies, and intercultural management are topics humans did not face decades ago. Researchers worked on these differences and how we can accept and cultivate the cultural differences in society. The modern globalized world is in motion, flows of goods, capital, services, people, information, and ideas. In this context, whenever the issue of economic globalization is addressed, the word always refers to economic globalization, the one that finds its expression in global markets, capital, the flow of products and information, global media operations. In this paper we want to show that globalization will produce universal attitudes, practices, and institutions or a new birth of global culture. Inevitably and most of the time, organization personnel are going to be separated geographically. Organizations also are unable to identify regional, international, market and subculture differences. Companies and international structures operating in different zones and geography will be a determinant for their development. Start with the regional, national international and intercontinental cultures to adapt the product and human resources. In a period of expansion, we need to find new opportunities. Weaknesses in cultural management can limit everyone to their own culture.

Keywords: Culture, Interculturalism, Communication, Companies, Expatriation, Globalization

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Introduction

The globalization concept: leading to intercultural changes. Considering the concept of globalization is a key point in the international development of companies it is necessary to try and understand how the wheels of trade work. This is an essential element for any company that wants to work internationally. Several studies have been made based on this approach, for example the analysis of competitive forces within a sector (Porter). In the early 1980s, Porter greatly improved the competitive diagnosis by introducing players other than the company's current competitors.

Three of the main approaches were: world-systems theory, globalization as an outcome of modernity, and globalization as a dual process which centers around culture (Heather, Voisey and Riordan 2001:28). In the literature, the authors often associate studies on this concept with expatriation. It is mainly in this context that multinational or transnational organizations train their executives to develop. Internationalization is emerging as one of the drivers of trade development, as local companies with the resources to internationalize their activities offer themselves significant opportunities for economic growth. Some of the main drivers of globalization are rooted in political, technological, and economic developments. The exchange is dedicated to the liberalization of the conditions under which trade takes place. In Europe, for example, closer integration and continuous expansion of the European market, as well as general trends in business liberalization and deregulation, have resulted in the creation of a single European agreement. Old barriers to treaties have been removed, and alliances are expected to emerge, for the benefit of consumers.

Inside the development of human resources abroad, diversity acceptance must be considered. The mix of different cultures shows us new conflicts inside an international company. The realities of such a project are so complex that we cannot rely on a single concrete example. We must extend our analysis to several variables and with all these variables, we will identify a group of key elements to be considered and integrated into our globalization development model. This first part of this section includes the main theories of globalization and, for the most part, these theories are based on a general framework. There are several determinants of the dynamics of globalization. The quest for cost-competitiveness leads groups to concentrate and specialize their production to achieve economies of scale.

Globalization should be progressive and incremental and explores the issue of communication and its role in the long-term human resource management of the firm (Richard 2001: 25). Globalization refers to the idea of a unification of time and space, characterized by scientific and technological progress and the free movement of people, goods, and capital. Globalization suggests the universalization of the challenges, the advent of a world of economic, political, and social interdependence, and the necessary use of multilateralism to address these issues.

The development of the dynamics is a prelude to the strategy: are all the activities of the company concerned by globalization identified? How to integrate international human resources into the global strategy? By working abroad, entities can take advantage of opportunities outside their domestic sphere. This can take the form of a change in customs regulations, the opening of a country to Foreign Direct Investment, employment to attractive prices or a change in political regime.

Communication and Technology

A phenomenon that has been active for centuries, globalization has taken off considerably in recent decades with the liberalization of trade and the proliferation of trade agreements allowing people and companies to move from one country to another delocalization. The arrival of new communication technologies, notably the Internet, has also contributed to globalization through the easier circulation of ideas, images, music and all forms of art that can be digitized.

Technology has dramatically improved access to information and communication, including the leading role of IT, as well as the ability to manage geographically dispersed production sites. Researchers also argue that more efficient and cheaper types of transport have emerged for both goods and people. As a result, a new situation of globalized competition has emerged, and companies must undertake the export of their activities to develop them on a different scale and in a different area. Modern technology has been widely used in the production and delivery of services which covers a wide range of applications. Consequently, technology allows for speed in the production process without wasting time. Technology has ensured the continuation of a long process of automation.

The contemporary diffusion of modern technology within a company is a new phase of mechanization of operations and control and coordination. With these technologies and over the past decade, globalization has become a differentiated process. Recent research has shown that most firms engage in “outbound” activities, and it has been established that, among exporting firms, a large proportion is not limited to exports alone, but is also involved in a series of “inbound” and related forms of international behavior that interact with each other. Outbound = export related, or activities related to overseas activities. Inbound equals Import related, or activities related to the international activities.

Finally, we know that clear and efficient communication between a sub-structure and its headquarters is an essential point in the successful collaboration. Thanks to the Internet, communication methods have changed, and we work through electronic messages, not to mention all the other applications. Speech and language have given way to new forms of communication in the world of work and international cooperation.

Globalizations Implicate Changes

To move our discussion forward, we can directly highlight the first major force: Globalization, which from a theoretical and business point of view is at the heart of international trade or movement of people. For a company with little or no external exposure and seeking to diversify its markets and supplies, the challenge is to assess the potential for developing transactions with foreign countries, i.e., adapting its offer, adapting its buying, and selling procedure to specific constraints that are different from our original location of the company. Above all, it is about developing the competence within a structure and an ability to understand and adapt to situations: Companies create international strategic alliances to achieve a strategic goal, which is often the acquisition of new knowledge. They cooperate to learn, but cultural diversity can be an obstacle in these learning and cooperation processes. When companies want to cooperate effectively in an international context, they must learn how to do so.

Strategy can be defined as responsiveness to changes in the environment, the international competence of our teams in our mobilization capacities and the willingness of managers to expend the business. If the structure plans to establish itself on one or more foreign markets on

a long-term basis, it is necessary to be able to develop a cross-border development strategy with a view to gaining stable and defensible positions. The company must be able to control diversity and control distance. Entrepreneurs must have the will to define and develop an excellent international strategy, based on global competitiveness (Chandler 1962) (Oddou 1992: 301).

This diagnosis particularly concerns the group which has a continental or even multinational, objective. The challenge is to assess global competitiveness and prior to the development of a global strategy. This strategy requires a broad integration of functions at the international or global level. The key point is the ability to achieve this integration. Each company is confronted with common inconveniences, but also with problems and conflicts that are specific to it according to the way it manages its subsidiary internationally. The transfer of an entity abroad can quickly turn into a constraint and a burden if it is not managed properly and efficiently. (De Groot 2014: 196)

However, it is relevant to prepare the company carefully while already considering geographical, economic, managerial, and cultural aspects. There is no real international order, i.e., no higher authority above all to enact rules applicable to all States. The International Business Law is the result of several sources, treaties, conventions, regulations, general principles developed by different organizations and multiple sources. An international business contract can therefore generate conflicts of law or standards, in the event of improper performance of the contract. The drafting of an international contract requires several precautions to avoid conflicts as far as possible: modalities of execution of the contract, bad faith, conflicts of norms or jurisdiction, etc. (Earley 1897: 685)

Partnerships, foreign investment, and the creation of cross-border networks are viable new ways to strengthen the economic strategies of companies. These diverse international activities can include different functions such as R&D, marketing, production and involving elements of the entire value chain. In addition, there is evidence that the presence in foreign markets and the possibility of relocating part of the value chain allows companies to engage in productive activities and, more generally for all their economic dynamics, to be stronger and more viable, compared to other enterprises that develop a strategy based solely on exports.

Culture and Human Resources Management

Cultural risk may be the most important of all. Companies with the help of international human resources will reduce the risk with intercultural intelligence. Unfortunately, *we can* firmly believe from the *observation* and experience that *many companies are* unable to adapt human resource management to local markets. Transportation of human resources abroad must be the first preoccupation of companies wishing to develop an international business, many times money and profit are the major factors that incorrectly and wrongly drive companies to internationalization (Gertsen 1990: 341) (Tung 1993: 461).

Acknowledging the different ways of working, multiculturalism can offer workers new opportunities, and new markets inside an international business. (Ajiferuke & Boddewyn 1970:58) (Carden 1992: 341) Each country possesses its own legal system and ethical issues. Thus, before starting an international project, a company should be perfectly aware of existing practices and make sure these can be managed. If executives do not understand local legal and ethical issues, employees will work with an ineffective diversity management (Patrice 1995). Managers will be linked to the headquarters and company personal; it will be a difficult task

for a manager to deal daily with diversity issues especially far from home. Workers and managers must together solve these issues of diversity with little or no interference from outsiders. (Baligh 1994:14) (Iles 1995: 17)

What would happen if national and international companies are unable to bridge the difference between global business models and local market business models? Always bridge the difference between the global and local markets, prepare if necessary, key areas and separate the local activities from the global ones. Managers must understand the local business practices. Local business practices are dangerous for a company; managers must be chosen by the headquarters and cannot come from the receiving country at the beginning of the project (Caliguri 2000: 61) (Mendenhall & Oddou 1985: 39). Inevitably and most of the time, company personnel are going to be separated geographically. The company will, therefore, must choose a system to work effectively and a system to define how the company must be run while its employees are working outside their original country.

To avoid personal conflict and assignment failures managers and employees must work in assigned duties to established technical procedures such as financial accounting and reporting to head office. Local and expatriate activities must be separated and defined before the beginning of the Internationalization process (Black & Gregersen 1990: 461) (Vulpe 2004). In an international context, the challenges facing HR are numerous. The management of company resources is crucial for companies embarking on the complex process of globalization. We shall look at the different lines of perception of the people who make up the work team abroad and see how important it is to focus efforts on the right direction so that the company and its objectives move in the same direction. Firstly, it must be explained that the primary function of human resources in the international context is to act as a catalyst.

Individual and organizational skills are mixed around the same table and the same discussions. The mobilization of all actors involved is necessary for the good understanding of all the parties. Regions of the world have their own codes of cultures and perceptions of business. Therefore, the mix of different cultures from different countries can be an inevitable disadvantage in decision-making. It can also become an asset if the management style and decisions are evaluated as a group and in agreement with all parties. Among the various tasks to be accomplished, the function of HR is to harmonize the organization with its working environment to ensure the necessary coherence and flexibility within a multicultural group. Human resources are present so that the establishment can work in good conditions and exercise resourceful management to achieve the expected performance levels.

In his 1999 book, Le Boterf argues that knowledge is one of the embodied resources on which the notion of competence is based. This knowledge helps us to better understand a phenomenon, a situation, an object, an organization or a specific professional context: the culture of the country, traditions, food, clothing, to name but a few concrete illustrations.

If we look at the literature in the field of intercultural competence and for expatriates who have to go through this stage of understanding, it should be noted that many authors insist on the cognitive aspect. The cognitive approach is more than existent in situations where executives move to other cultures. The development of intercultural competence is made up of several well-marked stages, expatriation missions are events that force understanding and often have recourse to a cognitive approach. Amongst these most cited competences, we find the knowledge of the notion of culture in general. In this book, the question is how to analyze and understand the components and determinants mentioned above, as well as knowledge of one's

own culture. We can also mention the knowledge of the specific culture with which one is interacting.

Skills or qualities: dominant personality traits. These skills are qualities that we need and apply daily in our context. In our context and in professional life, intercultural training deals with the problems of effectiveness. In the foreign subsidiaries, we will find different character traits in the hired profiles and certain personality aspects will be predominant in intercultural interactions. The character traits we find in companies are different and depend, as we have pointed out, on the profile of the person concerned. In many cases, the personality lines are mixed, and they are distinct from one individual to another. In fact, when recruiting, one seeks to vary the profile and maximize the potential and skills of human resources.

Management of International Subsidiaries: The EPRG

The Ethnocentric, Polycentric, Regiocentric, and Geocentric (EPRG) model was proposed by Perlmutter in 1969 to highlight the different concepts of company management in international markets. He considered four important strategic predispositions in a multinational company: The EPRG model; is a predisposition where all strategic decisions are guided by the values and interests of the parent company. Such a firm is concerned with global viability and legitimacy in its domestic country. The ethnocentric model is characterized by the unification of systems and strategies: the model applied to subsidiaries is that of the parent company. The polycentric model is a predisposition where strategic decisions are tailored to suit the cultures of the different countries in which the multinational company competes.

The advantage is that it creates a strong corporate culture with a single, clearly identifiable authority system and gives a consistent overall image. The disadvantage is that the needs of employees and customers of the subsidiaries are hardly taken into account or considered. Due to ethnocentrism, intercultural conflicts can arise, causing local resistance. It should also be pointed out that this system is particularly effective when the company has to deal with a simple environment that does not change much. In this case, the company can draw on the experience and skills of the head office and extend them to other target markets. On the other hand, the model reaches its limits as soon as the company positions itself in very different markets which require specific local responses. (Armstrong & Baron 2004)

A polycentric multinational is mainly concerned with its legitimacy in each country in which it operates, even if this means some loss of profit. The polycentric model is characterized by a fragmentation of systems and strategies between subsidiaries and the parent company, the management of entities is as local as possible. The Geocentric model is an attempt to integrate various subsidiaries through a global approach to decision-making systems. The overall purpose of human resource management is to ensure that the organization can achieve success through people. As Ulrich and Lake (1990) remark: HRM systems can be the source of organizational capabilities that allow firms to learn and capitalize on new opportunities. A geocentric firm tries to balance viability and legitimacy through a global business network. The regiocentric model, unites the interests of the parent company with those of the subsidiaries, at least on a limited regional basis. A regional multinational tries to balance the viability and legitimacy of multinationals at a regional level.

The predominant orientation of a multinational is called an EPRG profile. An ethnocentric or polycentric EPRG profile is very common (Perlmutter 1969), while a regiocentric or geocentric EPRG profile is relatively new between multinational companies. This model has contributed

to a better understanding of the strategic and organizational orientations followed by companies at the international level. The theory is a comparative synthesis of headquarters-subsidary relationships based on the approach developed by Perlmutter. The comparison is based on three main criteria that represent differences in:

- Organizational approaches: degree of complexity, authority and decision-making, evaluation, and control.
- Intra-firm relationships: cultural orientation, degree of interdependence and autonomy, and origin of flows.

Theoretical and methodological strengths and weaknesses of the different conceptual frameworks are next discussed (Andersen 1997). The choice of practices that an employer pursues is heavily contingent on several factors at the organizational level, including their own business and production strategies, support of HR policies, and cooperative labour relations (Cappelli 1996).

Conclusion

For years, the terminology used by International Human Resources Management was expatriation. Today, with the transformations brought about by the external factors of globalization, we speak of "international mobility management". We can now speak of expatriation in several cases, not just limited to one person and his or her family, but to a wider range of human resources. Transfers of employees to other countries are now a common mode of operation. Transfers are from headquarters to foreign subsidiaries, from foreign subsidiaries to headquarters, as well as international transfers to other remote entities. Mobility is complete, and a person of a different nationality and culture can be deployed in a completely different context in terms of geolocation. In general, expatriation is more open today and we can thus qualify it by using the term traditional expatriates, local and transnational managers (Adams 1991).

Through various theoretical elements, in this paper was addressed the question of the globalization process, which consists in developing the human activities abroad. It is possible to enrich the presentation of this research by proposing that the scope of a company's portfolio of activities can be characterized by three dimensions to which different development logics are associated. The number of business areas in the portfolio, the number of production phases controlled by the company itself in each of the portfolio's constituent areas, the geographical scope or number of foreign markets in which the company operates (Hays 2004: 25).

We have shown, first, that the choice of human resources management is not necessarily planned; it can sometimes be the progressive consequence of the search for new outlets or meetings with professional actors in the international environment. These actors will then become essential local partners for the launch of a national activity on an external market. Globalization is a strategy with many facets and sometimes they are difficult to manage. The company's progressive progress leads to economic, cultural, and structural changes. However, are there any limits to the globalization of companies? There are political, social, and cultural resistances, as well as very powerful forces of mundialization. To understand the international strategic approach, it is first necessary to determine the level of globalization and localization of the activities in which the company operates. Indeed, in its context of human resources management, the company is subject either to localization forces or to globalization forces with expatriates.

We have also highlighted the location forces that tend to limit trading, or all the cases considered to a limited national or even regional area. In the phases of internationalization, several departments of the company will be involved, both at the commercial level and at the industrial level. In the latter case, the financial, legal and tax functions will be particularly involved to both finance and hedge risk. In the last phase of internationalization comes multinationalization, and only if companies reach this stage, the multifunctional strategy is characterized by the concern for coordination between the company's different departments. The choice of the company's organization at this stage plays a crucial role. The development aims to optimize the geographical distribution of production and marketing activities; it is also dedicated to the harmonization of procedures. Some functions, such as currency risk, communication, culture, or human resources, can be perfectly managed in a highly cross-functional manner. This globalization seems to pose a great threat to some individuals (Lee & Larwood 1983: 657).

In this quotation, we want to show that globalization will produce universal attitudes, practices, and institutions or a new birth of global culture. The company is also able to quickly meet a competitor's technological lead in marketing, financial, and strategic products, or processes. This corresponds to a takeover through mergers, takeovers, acquisitions and thus be able to generate economies of scale or increase its diversification capacity (Heather, Voisey, & Riordan 2001: 37) (Levitt 1983: 92).

The expansion of economic and financial exchanges is therefore the expansion of interdependent connections between individuals. Globalization is the expansion of economic mechanisms and financial phenomena to all human activities on a global level. Products are becoming increasingly similar; currency crises are a consequence of this phenomenon and globalization is resulting in global markets and services. The current trend is also to be on the lookout, whether technological, political, financial, economic, or commercial development. The practice of Benchmarking, drawing inspiration from more efficient competitors to develop the key success factors, the control of profitability, with all the social consequences that this creates, the closure of factories, but also redundancies.

Intercultural ignorance is a real factor, and many are affected in their daily functions. No expatriate or executive can ignore these barriers, they are real, present, and part of everyday life. Learning, knowledge, and mastery of theoretical elements are an asset to anyone who wants to apply them in their work and this learning has a profound impact on how the firm is seen to approach foreign markets.

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