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*TV Documentary on the Threshold of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*

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The Asian Conference on Film & Documentary 2014  
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**Abstract**

With the advent of television, documentaries became the centre of gravity of TV productions. During the eighty-year-old life of TV, documentaries have undergone changes in the form and content. This paper is aimed at identifying one of the most important developments in TV documentaries which started in the 1990s and is known as “reality TV”. Recognition, emerging fields, generations and types of programmes of “reality TV” have been studied through surveys in this paper.

Key words: TV, TV documentary, reality TV



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## Introduction

In this paper, the developments of TV documentary in the west and the industrial world from the early nineties and on the threshold of the 21<sup>st</sup> century will be studied. TV documentary has faced substantial changes in production, new administrative solutions and technical innovations which have led into the emergence of different types of TV documentaries. Like other innovations, it has somewhat shattered the foundations of formal structures of traditional documentary and has established new foundations and capacity for itself. Recognition, analysis and describing the features of TV documentary in this era include this paper's words.

## Defining the topic and noting the main questions of the research

Analytic examination of TV documentary programmes, in form and content, providing a comprehensive picture of the technical procedures, and transforming the content in TV documentary forms, from the early 1990s with emphasis on "reality TV" programmes in order to identify the capacities, facilities and limitation of such programmes, is the main topic of this research.

This paper is meant to answer the following questions:

- 1- Based on what needs did the TV documentary start to change from the beginning of the 90s?
- 2- What TV structures did those needs lead into?
- 3- What is the innovation of such structures and what impacts has it made upon deepening, expansion and development of the language of TV documentary ?

## The purposes of the research

- 1- Providing a definition and digestion about form elements and expressive capacities of TV documentaries since the early 90s with emphasis on "reality TV" programmes.
- 2- Typology and Classification of TV documentary structures in form and content.

## The theoretical framework of the research

Forming the theoretical framework of the research regarding the subject and its area requires studying and examining the vote of the philosophical, cultural and media scholars. Therefore, the theory that has been invoked in this process is the theory of "Culture industry". Theorist like Max Horkheimer <sup>1</sup>and T.W Adorno <sup>2</sup>mention a

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<sup>1</sup> Max Horkheimer (1895-1973) German philosopher and sociologist, in the 1930s, in collaboration with Theodor Adorno, he established "Frankfort School" as a social research institute in Frankfort. He immigrated to USA in 1940 he published *The Dialectic of Enlightenment* with Adorno's assistance. He is the creator of "critical theory"

<sup>2</sup> T.W Adorno (1903-1965) German philosopher sociologist musicologist composer and Neo-Marxist, he was one the most important members of "Frankfort School" with Walter Benjamin, Herbert Marcuse, Jürgen Habermas and Max Horkheimer

theory called “culture industry”. And its features include: This industry represents the industrial society and the cultural goods which are the achievement of this industry are produced for the today’s people. Entertainment and Recreation and all the elements of “culture-industry” have existed long before this industry was born. However, these elements are controlled and updated from higher places. “culture-creation industry” can take pride in its achievement for transferring the art into consumption with high energy.

### **The hypotheses of the research**

- 1- Economical and social needs are the main reasons for the structural change of TV documentary since the beginning of the 90s. Such needs have led into the emergence of hybrid structures of TV documentary which did not exist before and is known as “Reality TV”.
- 2- Using the methods of documentary filmmaking and combining them with a fictional expression of issues that are rooted in the realities of everyday life, the “reality TV” programmes have played a key role in expansion and development of TV documentary language. The unique capability and flexibility of “reality TV” in borrowing and cannibalizing different genres of programming in order to create new hybrid structures is the unique feature of the period under discussion.

### **The meaning and significance of the televisual concept “reality”**

Everyone depending on their conception, pictures a special concept of reality in their minds. Most of us consider reality as a world in which everyone exists. A place in which some events are caused by other events and some happen accidentally in every time and place. Reality has no inherent meaning; or perhaps the meaning of reality is so diverse that looks unlimited. Reality never suggests interpretations or never insists on an event more than another. The meaning and significance of the televisual and cultural concept of real events are largely reflected by documentary producers, historians, essayists, and writers. These people represent a global reality. Every one of us lives in a small section of this reality. Since we cannot experience the whole reality directly, we should rely on the television, magazines, newspapers, books and movies. Therefore, the knowledge of the audience about a reality which is beyond their privacy is provided through the media for them. The media choose what is real and what is not real based on their economical, political and cultural taste. They focus on some specific events and ignore some.

It is equally important to the media to process and manipulate the events they select for their audience. The reality is presented based on the capabilities of technology (cameras cannot film in the dark) and Economic and political necessities based on the ideological and organized criteria. Telling apart the true events from the processed ones by the audience in front of the TV screen if not impossible is so difficult. TV producers neither can show a piece of the reality (a car accident, a soccer match, an earthquake) nor intend to. Except when they translate it into TV language and this way they adjust it or fictionalize it. They will necessarily display the event from a certain camera angle in a particular structure of various shots. They also mix it with

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sound effects, special music or even an unusual narration. Sounds and images are processed, manipulated and put in new containers in their transmission from reality to TV. They transform into television material and are televised in a televisual grammar.

### **The history of “reality TV”**

“Reality TV” follows its history largely in programmes that are filmed live such as: hidden camera or different narrations of shows related to funny jokes, programmes on natural disasters, and shows in which special talents are looked for and also in amateur video shows. Such shows which were observed in the 80s and 90s in different forms, each have a combination of reality and citation. For instance, they use ordinary people, hidden or portable cameras, moving, funny or exciting pieces of movies or they look for ordinary people’s reaction in public situations or their privacy. Despite this history, some other social elements affected “reality TV”. For example, tendencies to violate people’s privacy (Van Zoonen 2001:136) or noting wider reflection of minority’s beliefs on TV media (Holland 2001:144)

Yet, “reality TV” has received academic, analytic and critical attention concurrent with formation, growth and development of its expressive forms. As an example, Jermin and Holmes (2003), Kilborn (2003), Brenton and Cohen (2003), Corner (2001), Roscoe (2001), and Hill (2005) have examined such TV documentary shows analytically.

Nichols comments on “reality TV” as follows:

Using various forms and styles like “observational documentary” and in combination with psychological, cultural and social discussions, reality TV “has opened a new window to the world” while it takes part in changing the culture, without doubt has presented a drastic change from the interests and behaviours of the contemporary society. (Nichols 1994:46-48)

Yet the success and flexibility of “reality TV” have caused a continuous exploration to design new conditions. Conditions which besides innovations, have established a combination between citing, exaggeration and being made-up. As Brenton and Cohen believe:

Generally, by being ahead from the historical context and intense focus on individuality, “reality TV” is a sign of postmodern and anti-political culture. (Brenton and Cohen: 2003).

Nevertheless, one of the differences between such shows and traditional documentary structures is the viewer’s role in “voting” and participation in determining the “efficiency” of the show consistently. Therefore, not only “reality TV” cares about filming particular people involved in an event, but also it directly contacts a reality beyond the show.

### **The main elements in the growth of “reality TV”**

Generally, three elements are involved in the development of “reality TV”. These three elements relate to three areas of distinct and yet overlapping popular media

production, production of programmes with superficial and controversial contents such as the content of tabloid journalism and production of popular entertainment during the 80s. This growth was partly a result of deregulation and marketization of media industries in advanced industrial states such as American, European and Australian countries. And partly a result of a commercial media environment in which the confronting point between telecommunications, computers and the media ensured competition amongst network, cable and satellite channels for revenue. (Hesmondhagh 2002:34)

Not only TV documentary was dependant on this environment to survive but also had to adapt itself with It.—Hill 2005:17— these three areas which are important to clarify the emergence of “reality TV” in different countries and their media industries, are:

- A- Tabloid journalism
- B- Combining news and gossips by the modern TV technology
- C- Production of populist factual programmes

### **A- Tabloid journalism**

“Reality TV” shows have particular elements which draw on the staple ingredients of tabloid journalism. These elements rely on fluidity and hybridity in form and content. John Fiske describes tabloid news as follows: ‘its subject matter is that produced at the intersection between public and private life; its style is sensational ... its tone is populist; its modality fluidly denies any stylistic difference between fiction and documentary’ (Frisk 1992: 48).

The intersections between the public and the private, fact and fiction, highlight how tabloid journalism relies on personal and sensational stories to create informative and entertaining news.(Bird 2000:23) Elizabeth Bird points out: ‘journalism’s emphasis on the personal, the sensational, and the dramatic is nothing new. Street literature, ballads, and oral gossip and rumor all contribute to the development of news’

Therefore, there is no wonder why we can observe a desire to move towards tabloid journalism’s superficial and controversial point of view in popular news and popular “reality TV”. In fact, the readers of tabloid journalism and viewers of “reality TV” merge and equate the consumption of news and reality programmes by turning to superficial news of tabloid journalism in order to learn more about “reality TV” programmes.

### **B- Combining gossips and news by modern technologies**

During the 1960s ‘local news emerged as a potentially profitable product, evolving into a popular hybrid of traditional hard news and gossipy chat that was often preferred by viewers’ (Bird 2000: 214). Developments in technology, such as satellites and Mini cameras, ensured that local news bulletins could “transport” their audiences to the scenes of crimes in progress, unfolding hostage situations, urban shooting sprees, raging fires, and the like’ (Glynn 2000: 23). This reliance on raw footage would become a staple ingredient of reality programming. When Rupert

Murdoch<sup>3</sup> took advantage of deregulation policies during the Reagan administration and launched the Fox Television Network in the late 1980s, the channel featured programmes, such as *America's Most Wanted* or *Cops*, which took advantage of the growth of popular journalism, especially in local news.

The rise of reality TV was connected with the success of American tabloid TV and the demise of documentary television. In the 1960s and 1970s, early magazine-style series, such as *Tonight* (BBC 1957–1965) or *Nationwide* (BBC, 1969–1984), provided a mixture of news and humorous or eccentric stories. These magazine-style programmes were forerunners for much contemporary popular factual television (Brunsdon et al. 2001: 51). But it was the introduction of British versions of American reality programming in the early 1990s that began a trend in what was commonly referred to at the time as 'infotainment'. For example, *999* (BBC, 1992–) was modelled on *Rescue 911* (CBS).

### C- Production of populist factual programmes

TV documentary producers, in the early 90s started producing such programmes to appeal the public and with the purpose of public popular service. This move from being public to being popular posed a major threat to the traditional relationship between documentary and public service broadcasting:

Public service broadcasting traditionally assumed that a responsibility to the audience was of more importance than, say, a commercial duty to shareholders. In this context, documentary, as a quality genre flourished even though it did not achieve mass appeal anywhere until the later 1990s. It became clear, as the ratings became more paramount, that documentary presence in the schedules was a real mark of public service commitment.

The emergence of reality programming in the early 90s coincided with the time when documentary, along with news and current affairs, was already under performing in the ratings. "Reality TV" filled a gap in the schedules, but at the expense of sacrificing the more traditional and the controversial types of documentary. (Kilborn 2003:48) Another way of looking at the popularity of "reality TV" is to argue that its success is possibly the price of survival for contemporary documentary (Winston 2000: 55)

In diagram 1, the economical and social conditions causing "reality TV" and also televisual and press background have been illustrated.

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<sup>3</sup> Rupert Murdoch born in 1932 Australian journalist, who is also known as the media tycoon. He is the main shareholder of more than 175 publications around the world. He founded Sky News TV channel in 1989. He has turned into one of the main satellite TV, film industry and the internet investors during the recent years. According to *Forbes'* list of the richest people, he is the 132<sup>nd</sup> wealthiest man in the world with \$4 billion of net capital.

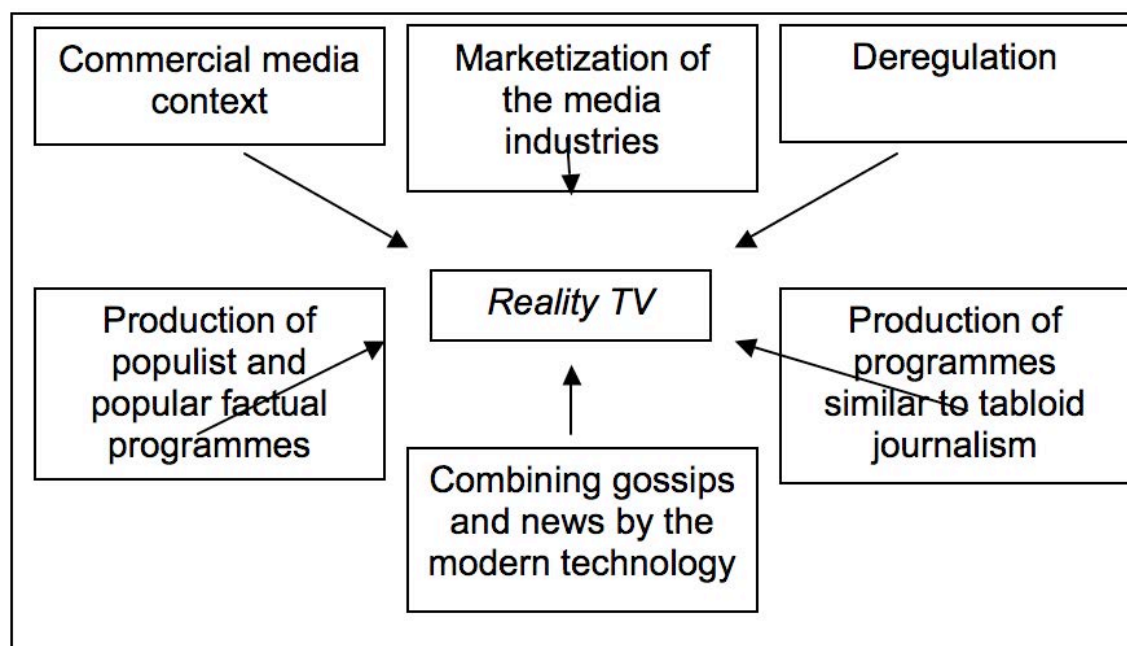


Diagram 1: The emergence of reality TV

### **The relationship between TV documentary and factual programming in form and content**

How does the form and content of documentary television connect with factual programming? What relationship exists between the development of TV documentary and the development of factual programming? Although this may be an uneasy relationship, nevertheless, we cannot understand “reality TV” without considering its place within the context of other types of TV programmes as both categories defy simple definitions. Just as “reality TV” is a broad category that is difficult to define, the category of documentary also escapes any tight generic definition, and what we understand by “documentary” is always dependent on the broader context of the kinds of audiovisual documentation currently in circulation’ (Corner 2002: 125).

The types of documentary television directly relevant to reality programming include documentary journalism, documentary realism, and, in particular, observational documentary. Documentary journalism addresses topical subjects in a series format, using journalistic conventions, and usually involving the quest of a presenter/reporter delving behind the headlines (Corner 1995: 84).

Observational realism, which is a ‘set of formal markers that confirm to us that what we are watching is a record of an ongoing, and at least partly media-independent and expository realism, which is a ‘“rhetoric of accuracy and truth” that many television documentaries variously draw on’. Both types of realism ask the audience to register the techniques used to observe real life (for example, hand-held cameras), or the way in which an argument is presented to us (for example, the interpretation of evidence)

The issues of realism, accuracy and truth in documentary are complex, in terms of both production and theory; and key books, such as *Representing Reality* (Nichols 1991) or *Claiming the Real* (Winston 1995) discuss it. Reality TV’s conflicting relationship with documentary is especially apparent when we consider observational

documentary. This type of documentary emerged from “direct cinema” in the 1960s America, ‘Cinema verite’ in the 1960s France, and TV documentary in the 1970s Britain. Stella Bruzzi comments that observational documentary relies on the use of lightweight, portable cameras and tends to deal with current events; events that are unfolding in front of the camera (Bruzzi 2001: 130). This technique clearly influenced the ‘fly-on-the-wall’ feel of docu-soaps. Documentaries like *An American Family* (Craig Gilbert, USA, 1972) or *Police* (Roger Graef, UK, 1982) are antecedents to docu-soaps such as *The Real World* (USA, MTV, 1991–), or *The Cruise* (UK, BBC, 1998). As Winston remarks: the docu-soaps focus on bastardization of reality. There are even traces of observational documentary in reality game shows such as *Big Brother*, although its claims to observe real life are heavily subsumed within the game show format (Winston 2000:45).

### **“Reality TV” Category**

The category of reality TV is commonly used to describe a range of popular factual programming which has a variety of styles and techniques associated with reality TV, such as non-professional actors, unscripted dialogue, hand-held cameras, seeing events unfold as they are happening in front of the camera. However, the treatment of “reality” in reality programming has changed as the genre has developed over the past decade. Jason Mittell argues for an examination of television genres as ‘cultural categories, unpacking the processes of definition, interpretation, and evaluation that constitute these categories’ in order to better understand ‘how genres work to shape our media experiences’. The process of categorizing reality TV highlights the inherent problems for the television industry, scholars and audiences in defining a genre that by its very nature is concerned with multiple generic participation, and constant regeneration. (Mittell 2001: 19–20)

Television usually cannibalizes itself feeding off successful genres and formats in order to create new hybrid programmes. As Brunsdon remarks: It is the hybridization of successful genres that gives reality TV such strong market value. The soap opera and observational documentary came together to create docu-soaps. The game show and observational documentary came together to create reality game programmes that in turn dominated primetime schedules. (Brunsdon 2001:55)

Perhaps the most traditional industry term for “reality TV” is “factual entertainment”. The term usefully merges factual programming with entertainment-based television; and highlights hybridization, a common generic feature of most reality programmes. Another term is that of popular factual, a term that links popular audiences with a variety of factual television genres and formats. The industry terms of “factual entertainment” and “popular factual television” are umbrella categories for a range programmes.

### **“Reality TV” definition from televisual scholars**

Most television scholars who discuss “reality TV” tend to include a variety of television genres in their definitions of the ‘reality genre’ Precisely because reality TV borrows from so many different existing genres. Dovey (2000: 28), for example, in his book *Freakshow: First Person Media and Factual Television*, considers the proliferation of “subjective, autobiographical and confessional modes of expression”



within infotainment, docu-soaps and talk shows. Humm (1998: 34) is also interested in first-person media, but charts the trend in 'real people shows' to light entertainment, lifestyle and game shows, as well as documentary.

Brunsdon (2001: 66) discuss popular factual television in relation to two main strands – docu-soap and lifestyle programmes. For some scholars, even the subgenres within reality TV are the result of a complex borrowing from other television genres. Turner (2001: 7) describes lifestyle programmes as containing 'the following television genres: game shows, soap opera, "reality TV", observational documentary, confessional talk shows, talk shows, cooking and gardening advice programmes'

Hartley defines "infotainment" as a combination of lifestyle, "reality TV", tabloid news, investigative journalism, talk shows and animal series. He believes the television industry pushes the boundaries of popular factual television to create new hybrid formats. (Hartley 2001: 77) Corner touched on one of the core issues in the definition of "reality TV": by its very nature popular factual entertainment sits in the spaces between fact and fiction (Corner 2000:158). Jane Roscoe and Craig Hight (2001), have identified the flexible, self-reflexive, and limitless appeal of fact/fiction formats assert that: "... rather than thinking about a 'fact/fiction dichotomy', they think about documentary as existing along a fact-fictional continuum, this way each text constructs relationships with both factual and fictional discourses' (Roscoe 2001: 7).

Their perspective on documentary draws on existing arguments within documentary studies about the evidential status of documentary as a record of reality, and/or a creative treatment of reality:

"Documentary does not provide an unmediated view of the world, nor can it live up to its claims to be a mirror on society. Rather, like any fictional text, it is constructed with a view to producing certain versions of the social world ... Even though we may agree that documentary representations are as constructed as fictional ones, the stance that documentary takes toward the social world is one that is grounded on a belief that it can access the real." (Roscoe 2001: 8)

On the whole, the common ground between most theories is the connection between fiction and fact in programmes which are grounded on fact reflection and at the same time intend to make a connection between documentary aspects and contemporary TV documentary programmes like the vast set of "reality TV".

### **"Reality TV" generations**

The production of the first reality TV generation started in the early 1990s and was mostly influenced by police incidents and rescue services. As examples, we can mention *Rescue 911*, *American detective*, *Top cops*, *Code 3* in America and *999* and *Police camera* in England.

The second generation of "reality TV" began with the production of *Big brother* series in the Netherlands in 1999. The distinctive characteristic of this generation was placing people in challenging conditions and testing them in unpredictable situations.

Ian Aitken comments as follows:

The reason of this phase's emergence is featuring *The real world* on MTV channel and also *Expedition Robinson* which was produced in style of *The survivor* on Switzerland's TV. As well as competitions about perseverance and entanglement on Japan's TV that compelled the participant to do dangerous things. ( Aitken 2006: 1105)

The third generation of "reality TV" started in 2001. Aitken comments as follows:

"While media scholars were predicting the downfall of "reality TV" the third season of *Big Brother* on BBC channel 4 was unprecedentedly successful. It seems "reality TV" is not joining the history peacefully but is still developing, is still producing new subcategories and influences other media culture's genres." (Aitken 2006: 1106)

Unlike the primary and traditional documentary which considers education, training and expressing social problems as its fundamental duties, it insists on meticulous reflection of historical backgrounds and considers informing people as a priority. Under mentioned circumstances, it sets providing serious thinkable thought-provoking insights as its primary goal; reality TV insists on integrating the following aspects in sequence: entertainment, notifying and training.

### **Factual television programmes**

This category is consisted of programmes which in the following forms show non-professional actors in different contexts and filming situations:

- Factual programming
- Docudramas
- Docu-soaps
- Talk shows
- Lifestyle programming
- Law and order programming

The objectives of the mentioned programmes are showing the reality, narrating events that have happened before or showing people who work or live in narrative series. It seems like TV technology and programming techniques in such examples, as an impartial media are used to show the characters and situations which currently exist or even would exist if such programmes were not produced.

### **Factual programming**

*Big Brother* is the most famous example of such TV programmes. A "reality TV" show in which selected people from the society appear in a house which is built particularly for this show and are aware that they are filmed around the clock. The first series of *Big brother* was featured in the Netherlands in the spring 1999 and was produced by Endemol television Production Company owned by John de Mol<sup>4</sup>. Such programmes were sold successfully around the globe and its value to appeal to audience was unfolded after CBS channel offered Endemol \$ 20 million to buy the show's rights. Generally, this show combines different genres ingredients:

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<sup>4</sup> Jon de Mol born in 1955 is a media tycoon in the Netherlands, Europe and America. He is the founder of two companies: *Endemol* and *Talpa*. He is also an economic tycoon in Germany

- 1- It is a contest which has a big prize.
- 2- It is a narrative series which emphasizes on expressing emotions and forming minor groups in the society.
- 3- It is a documentary featuring social experience and its objective is examining the interaction patterns between people who are under “natural” or “artificial” pressure.

This latter form of realism was emphasized by the prominence of inserted sequences featuring the program’s two resident psychologists analyzing and discussing the behaviours of particular participants.

The title “Big Brother” is originated from George Orwell’s <sup>5</sup>novel “nineteen eighty four” In this novel the plot takes place in future. The citizens of an autocratic society are controlled by cameras. “Big brother is watching you” the show discusses trapping, limitation and controlling. *Big brother* was initially piloted under the title the way the society works. With participants that were trapped like mice in an experimental maze. Like a psychological egoistic ambitious test, the grand prize was in contrast with the needs of participants to gain loyalty from their opponents. The rules were imposed by the production team, and everything were arranged in a way that participants were granted the prize based on the needs, the same way that lab animals are treated to do things in return for receiving food.

### **Documentary Drama “(docudrama)**

Docudrama has been made by combining the realities and events of the contemporary society or historical incidents with the element of fiction and dramatic narration. Therefore, as we understand from the name of such shows, it is a combination of two separate categories which are always considered separately: documentary and drama. We face various terms to describe a genre in which a historic event is presented in form of a dramatic entertainment. Docudrama is variously known as drama documentary, documentary drama, dramatized documentary and faction (a blend of “fact” and “fiction”). In other words, we are not facing a consistent genre but a group of similar genres. Nevertheless, we should use “docudrama” to include all of them. Without considering the characters, the events are rooted in reality. For example, *death of a princess* (ITV 1980) which is about the true assassination of a Hungarian-Austrian princess, revelation of more new details about the First World War are reconstructed, however, based on what principles are docu-soaps produced?

Such shows generically seek bringing up real or historic characters.

### **Docu-soap**

Docu-soap combines observation and interpretation of reality, used in documentary, with continuous narration focused on a group of characters in soap opera. Docu-soap observes ordinary people and places this observation in dramatic narration structure and this way points out people’s everyday lifestyle and also focuses on game and narration.

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<sup>5</sup> George Orwell (1903-1950) English journalist and writer , he is most famous for his two novels: *Animal Farm* (1945) and *nineteen eighty-four* (1949) Orwell’s works are about criticizing communist government model

Docu-soap is a genre between documentary and drama. The subjects of docu-soap are drawn from the core of the society. These are neither powerful elites nor powerless social outcasts. They are typically employed in service sectors jobs, hotel staff, marketers, drivers or sales assistants who deal with the public. They are like “us”, like their audience they are ordinary; however, their presence in TV distinguishes them from us and they occupy a middle position between being ordinary and being a celebrity. Docu-soap focuses on another kind of middle class by documenting the subject’s private and business lives and this way crosses the line between both experiences. For Graeme Burton: docu-soap “stands for a growing use of viewers to entertain the viewers; an approach familiar from the game-show genre and the use of studio audience. It creates the illusion that television recognizes its audience and works for its audience” (Burton 2000: 159)

### **Talk show**

Such shows are TV production innovations in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Such programming became a constituent of America’s evening shows in the 1950s. And gradually, talk shows became a fundamental part of TV documentary in the 1980s. Such shows which are mostly organized through conversations and focus on representing various types of live and unscripted dialogues. Talk-shows are commonly run by a host.

Although such shows seem unscripted, they are not the presentation of an open conversation but the main discussion topics are organized by the crew and script writers of the show based on particular televisual conversation formulas; therefore, they are strongly structured.

Talk-shows are also known as “round-table” shows, are a combination of two groups of TV programmes: news and entertainment shows.

Talk shows are often identified by the host's name in the title. Pointing out the host’s name is of vital importance. Hosts like: Mike Wallace, Phil Donahue, Oprah Winfrey and Barbara Walters are some of the most well-known hosts of such shows.

The importance of such shows has had an exponential and considerable growth, and their hosts have played an influential role in the society. The hosts usually talk about cultural, social, political and artistic ideals with the power of a politician or an expert. They have changed into citizen’s spokesmen and representative in history. In this case, they are authorized as a serious investigator or humorous character to investigate or mock any cases they wish. Of course, this authority exists as long as they play their roles within their own roles.

### **Lifestyle programming**

The primary goal of such shows is providing information and training. However, such programmes influence informing and training by different visual techniques. Therefore, the showmaker tries to focus on developing the aspects which cause more joy. Joy of watching enables the viewers to face the news and documentaries programming as entertainment. The intention of programmes called “lifestyle” is teaching practical skills. Skills such as cooking, decorating homes and gardens or

clothes. Such programmes enable the viewers to ignore the training part if they want to and treat them as entertaining shows. Therefore, the undeniable purpose of such shows is entertainment but in a documentary-like form. In such programmes, various expertise is largely used, for example, to improve the decoration of a house like *Changing rooms* (BBC since 1994) or addresses the techniques to decorate or improve the garden like *Earth: the power of the planet* (BBC since 1994) or discusses the appearance and the way people dress like *What not to wear* (BBC since 1994). In recent years, such programmes have improved in terms of popularity which is related to general life standards and increase of welfare level during the 1980s and 1990s. John Ellis notes:

Lifestyle programming is the reference for consumerism to be added to people's personality. People learn throughout these shows how to find solutions for needs which are caused by the same shows. Solutions which cause providing practical behaviour in the society. Schedulers seek practical behaviour patterns to visualize those solutions. (Ellis 2002: 212)

Most lifestyle programmes have fine features, subtle editing and an intensive rhythm and in recent years they use dramatic elements to increase the attractiveness of the shows.

### **“Law and Order” programming**

Concerns arising from the increase of crime and social unrest caused more control on people's behaviour and public places, in the 1980, to prevent crime and felony. In 1984, such policies were transmitted to TV and the first series of “law and order” programmes named *Crimewatch* was produced. This show provided a chance for watching and also being watched. This show often features crimes which have been reported in the press. To do so, all TV facilities and expressive capacities such as heavy and military music, rapid editing and quarrel and fight scenes are used. Such programmes also receive aid from modelling crimes with narration, emphasizing on particular details of the events and shocking the audience to engage them to solve the cases by dramatic narration.

### **Conclusion**

The rise of reality TV came at a time when networks were looking for a quick fix solution to economic problems within the cultural industries. Increased costs in the production of drama, sitcom with fix characters and comedy, unscripted popular factual programming became a viable economic option during the 1990s. The deregulation and marketization of media industries, especially in America and Europe, also contributed to the rise of reality TV, as it performed well in a competitive, multi-channel environment. Reality TV has its roots in journalism and tabloid journalism, but it owes its greatest debt to documentary television.

“Reality TV” programmes have played a key role in developing the language of documentary by using documentary filmmaking techniques and combining them with narrative expression of the subjects rooted in everyday-life situations. The unique capability and flexibility of “reality TV” to borrow and cannibalize different

production genres to create new hybrid structures, is the unique feature of TV documentary in the period under review.

The main formants of reality programming – infotainment, docu-soap, lifestyle, talk show and reality game show – were successful in the 1990s and early 2000s because they drew on existing popular genres, such as soap opera or game shows, to create hybrid programmes. These hybrid formats focused on telling stories about real people and real events in an entertaining style, usually foregrounding visuals, characterization and narrative above all else. The ratings success of infotainment, docu-soaps, lifestyle and reality game shows is testament to the mass appeal of entertainment stories about real people caught on camera. All in all, reality programming is an extraordinary success story, an example of television's capability to cannibalize itself in order to survive in a media environment at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, So that without doing away with traditional factual programming it has led to the growing popularity of TV documentary. The achievements of “reality TV” in two areas of form and content, contains considerable achievements in the realm of TV documentary amongst people. These achievements in terms of form, besides making new expressive forms in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, is the evolution of the process which TV documentary started in the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Using documentary films techniques such as impartial observation of the events, hunting moments and recording people's reactions by hidden camera techniques, using non-professional actors and combining them with dramatic narration of fictional TV, “reality TV” has provided a new horizon beyond the route of TV documentary. On the one hand, it indicates the new capacities of documentary TV in combining the fields of fictional documentary; on the other hand, it indicates the interests and needs of the contemporary society in different fields of sociology, psychology and economy. This success is the result of extraordinary flexibility of “reality TV” in the constant search for designing new methods of narration of TV documentary which based on the needs of the society, sometimes combines the foundations of the traditional definitions of TV documentary and fiction TV and sometimes shatters them and provides new foundations for them.

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***Stray Dog, a Gun, the Individual and Society in Shinji Aoyama's *An Obsession****

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## Introduction

Shinji Aoyama is a contemporary Japanese filmmaker born in Kitakyushu, Fukuoka Prefecture on the island of Kyushu in 1964 and director of 14 feature films to date. He has created a number of films that have explored the role of the individual in society. Many of these films deal with alienation and a search for identity among the youths of contemporary Japanese society in films like *Two Punks* (1996) and *The Wildlife* (1997). In fact Aaron Gerow (2002) suggests that to Aoyama politics are the ‘struggle to protect the individual as individual.’ It is significant to point out that Aoyama was born 54 years after Akira Kurosawa (1910-1998). However, he based his screenplay for the film *An Obsession* (*Tsumetai chi* 1997) on Kurosawa’s 1949 film noir *Stray Dog* (*Nora Inu*). This is a testament to Kurosawa’s monumental influence on modern Japanese film. *Stray Dog* may seem like an unlikely choice for inspiration from Kurosawa’s oeuvre because it is more likely to be considered of secondary importance in the west. Outside of Japan, it has been seen largely as a minor step in the director’s development that would be realized in his breakthrough film, *Rashomon* the following year in 1950. That film, subsequently, would win the Golden Lion award as best film at the Venice Film Festival where it would herald in one of the great Japanese directors of film to the world. However, in Japan the film has a greater critical profile. For example, it was ranked number 10 in the 2009 *Kinema Junpo* poll of greatest Japanese films (albeit behind two other Kurosawa films: number 2, *Seven Samurai* (1954) and number 7, *Rashomon*). The themes that Aoyama inherits from Kurosawa allow him to make observations about the individual and contemporary society that would not have been valid at the time of Kurosawa’s production in Japan’s postwar society.

### The Individual and Society in *Stray Dog* and *An Obsession*

It is apparent that *Stray Dog* and *An Obsession* represent different values and different depictions of Japan as well as the sensibilities of two different directors. Kurosawa set out to make a genre film, ala French crime novelist George Simenon, that Kurosawa (1982) saw as largely as a failure to embody the writer’s novelistic style. In fact Terrance Rafferty (2004) points out it is really only a failure in the limited scope of the mystery genre, because it is a more rich and complex film due to Kurosawa’s interest in the complex aspects of human behavior reflected in the film. Thus, the film depicts several stories in one narrative: a detective “film noir”, a doppelganger story of similar protagonist and antagonist in a race against time to stop a killer from killing again, a protégé/mentor story of a rookie cop and seasoned veteran, and a realistic social commentary on postwar Japan.

The film has somewhat of a simple plot that is shaped into a more complex story by Kurosawa’s cinematic exposition and exploration of nuances in the script. A young detective named Murakami (played by Kurosawa regular Toshiro Mifune), has his pistol lifted from him on a crowded bus on the hottest day of the year. Murakami is obsessed with recovering his pistol to overcome his carelessness in allowing it to be stolen in the first place. It is revealed that the gun had been borrowed by a desperate army vet named Yusa (played by Isao Kimura). Yusa, uses the gun to for a crime spree in which he robs, injures and murders innocent victims. Murakami under the tutelage of the seasoned mentor detective Sato (Another Kurosawa regular Takashi Shimura) attempts to track down the increasing desperate and violent Yusa. In the end

Yusa is captured and in doing so Kurosawa makes a social commentary on the postwar mentality and morality of people who have survived WWII. Murakami represents the societal hope for a better future, while Yusa represents the individual need for a better life in the present at any cost. In Kurosawa's typical humanist fashion he is also making a critique of capitalism and how it creates a chasm between the classes in a focus on the individual at the cost of society at large in a competitive economic atmosphere in which there are clear winners and losers.

Kurosawa's theme might be simply stated as a question of how to live in the postwar world of struggle and want. Murakami represents the Kurosawa humanism that states the individual is responsible for the improvement of society, which is reflected in his vocation as a policeman whose job is to serve and protect the community. Yusa, who Murakami feels a connection to as a WWII veteran (who also had his knapsack stolen upon returning), has chosen the opposite path in which he pursues his individual desires, which are manifested in consumer culture. Yusa is a nihilist he cannot conceive of working, saving, and scrimping in order to create a stable future. This inability of Yusa to imagine a future creates a sense of alienation and hopelessness. His reaction to hardship and defeat is that of depression, lassitude, and exhaustion. He wants money, food, and drink so that he can create a prosperous future in the present. He is amoral so he will achieve this by any means necessary-theft, murder, whatever-for him the ends justifies the means. So the existential question for Kurosawa lies in the answer of how to live in the postwar society-for society or for oneself.

On the surface, Shinji Aoyama's *An Obsession* is essentially a remake of Kurosawa's *Stray Dog*. A cop loses his gun to a killer, which triggers a search for the killer and the gun. The mentor-protégé aspect of the film is cut out and the police procedural aspect of the film is reduced. In addition, the story in Kurosawa's film takes place during the collective suffering of Japan during the postwar era, while Aoyama's film takes place in the relatively wealthy and struggle free society of the late 90s. At this point in time people's problems are more insular and philosophical than the material struggles for survival faced by the postwar society trying to rebuild their society after defeat and years of war. However, Aoyama mentioned feeling a prevailing sense of violence in Japan in the late 90s after the sarin gas attacks of the cult Aum Shinrinkyo in 1995 to Jasper Sharp (2005) in his commentary of the film. This sense of violence is manifested in the film as the hazmat-suited death squads that intermittently appear in the background throughout *An Obsession* without comment. These feelings of the threat of violence create feelings of hopelessness and loss of direction, not unlike that felt by many in the postwar society of *Stray Dog*.

In *An Obsession*, the detective Saga (Ryo Ishibashi) not only has his gun stolen from him by the nihilistic Shimano (Kazuma Suzuki), but he is also shot by the assassin of a cult leader that he was pursuing. This results in Saga being a "hollow man," since he lost the use of a lung during this incident. After he is shot, his wife Rie (Eiko Nagashima) leaves him since he never paid her any attention as cop dedicated to his career, which makes him questions human relationships after the fact. His pursuit of Shimano brings him in contact with Shimano's ex-girlfriend Kimiko (Kyoko Toyama), who believes that love can only be proved in death. In the end, Shimano and Kimiko opt out of life while Saga and Rie choose life and start over in a relationship of friendship as the basis for continuing on in life.

The main existential question for Aoyama, unlike Kurosawa is not how to live, but rather whether to live or not. In the supplemental interview (2005) to the film on DVD, Aoyama discusses the philosophical underpinnings of the film in which he changes the Shakespearean question of “To be *or* not to be” to “To be *and* not to be.” He says the story is of people who possess not only life, but also death within themselves and have to live life facing death. He suggests that all people possess death within themselves and that it is embedded in society. Thus, death is always with people who are conscious of its existence. Aoyama suggests that people who live by facing crisis’ tend to question the core nature of humanity. In what Aoyama calls his “post existential” film, the characters of Saga and Shimano do not face the same struggles that besieged Murakami and Yusa. This is because Japan has recovered through the economic miracle that resulted in the Bubble economy and the bust that followed and continued in the late 90s, in which the film is set. The characters are at battle with their own demons, rather than those of society. Shimano is from a wealthy family and has plenty of money, so his alienation is not from want of materialistic goods like Yusa, but rather from his terminal leukemia and subsequent lack of identity and meaning in life. Saga is similar in that he does not judge Shimano for his actions and understands his position, because the “hollow” Saga is also searching for identity and meaning in life adrift from his job and wife. This is shocking for his partner who at one point is moved to fight Saga for siding with a criminal.

At one point in the film, Saga admits that he does not disdain people who commit suicide. Furthermore, Saga says that he does not judge Shimano and does not think that he is crazy, because many people live for reasons like desire or greed. In fact, the people Shimano has killed are given little thought by the film nor the characters in it, unlike Kurosawa’s film which explores the repercussions of the crimes that destroy other people’s lives and stifles their ability to create a new future through diligence and hard work. As Gerow (1997) points out that in Aoyama’s cinematic world, people begin life alone and must create their own morals through confrontation with death and the need for maintaining human relationships. Shimano wants to prove his love to Kimiko and feels the best way to do that is to kill and die. He does not interfere when Shimano kills Kimiko and himself in an effort to prove his love. This sequence takes place in an empty baseball stadium, which is homage to Kurosawa’s film, which also contains a key scene in a crowded baseball stadium. In a filmed interview (2005), Aoyama states that suicide is one way of expressing love since the two involved are responsible for each other’s lives and that Shimano and Kimiko believed that there was no other way to prove their love. There is a long tradition of *shinju* (double suicide) in Japanese history as personified in Chikamatsu Monzaemon’s famous 17<sup>th</sup> century *bunraku* (puppet) play *Shinju Ten no Amijima* (*The Love Suicides at Amijima*). Thus, this should not come across as particularly shocking for Japanese audiences. Saga accepts this as one possible solution to the question of whether to live or not, but also finds his own answer to the question through a renewed friendship with his wife where he can prove his love to her by sharing a lifetime together as friends. In essence, Saga rejects Shimano’s nihilism. He reunites with Rie and takes over the family business.

## Conclusion

Just as Kurosawa used the film noir and police thriller framework in order to make observations about life in his contemporary society, so does Aoyama. Although the basic plots of both stories are similar, each respective director has created an original vision of their respective societies at a specific point in history in a manner that also allows for the investigation of personal reactions to each director's moment in time. Kurosawa's moral universe is informed by simple humanism; it is essential to sacrifice and work to improve society collectively. Whereas for Aoyama, it is more important for the individual to work out his or her own reasons for existence in order to find an identity and create meaning in life.



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The logo for 'iafor' is centered on the page. It consists of the lowercase letters 'iafor' in a light blue, sans-serif font. The text is enclosed within a circular graphic composed of two overlapping, semi-transparent arcs: a light blue one in the foreground and a light red one behind it, creating a sense of depth and movement.

## *On using Machinima as 'Found' in Animation*

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### **Abstract**

This article explores the extent to which machinima can work as 'found' and be appropriated in an animation. Machinima as a relatively new animation production technique gains its popularity in the community of independent animators. It is also used by installation artists to create installation artifacts in the digital space. As a form of remix and fandom culture, machinima is closely related to readymades and found arts. However, the layered concept 'found' in machinima is vague and has not been clearly defined, as the knowledge generated within the machinima production practice community is usually fragmented, incomplete and poorly documented.

This article is based on installation art and machinima production practices. Two issues are of mostly concerned: 1. How can machinima components be considered as 'found' in an animation; 2. To what extent can machinima components work as found in an animation. The outcome benefits both animators and installation artists who want to use machinima in their works. It also provides a lens to further study on machinima, as well as on installation in the digital space of videogames.

Keywords: Found works, Installation art, Machinima

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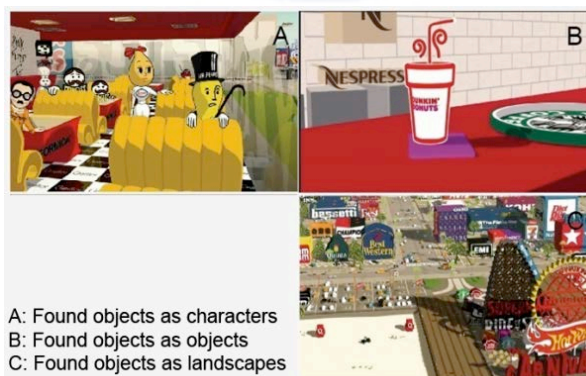
## 1. 'Found' in animation

In order to build a framework to explore the use of machinima as 'found', this paper firstly discusses the concept of 'found' in animation. The concept of found object has been initially developed by Duchamp who made a series of readymades which consists of using unaltered everyday objects designated as art; it is a core aspect of installation art. As the readymade, the found object is placed in a particular context and re-designated; it thus questions the status of art and the museum (Benjamin 1993; Oliveira, Oxely & Petry 1994; He 2008). Found objects are 'taken unaltered from ordinary existence, (they) preserve an aspect of reality when shown as part of a work of art' (Davidson & Desmond 1996, p.6). In animation, readymade works can be intentionally appropriated, and the concept 'found' is to different extents involved.

To illuminate the diversified forms of which found materials can be applied in animation, four pre-existing cases are discussed in this section.

### (1). *Logorama*

*Logorama* (2009) is a short animation that shows strong features of installation art. Different logos are collected, appropriated and designated as other objects; therefore this work is an example of using found objects in the digital space. *Logorama* takes advantage of the visual similarity between the logo and other images, and use logos as characters, objects and landscapes (see Figure 1). In this animation work, all the logos are found objects, and the designation of them is automatically finished by visually linking the logos to the images in ordinary experiences. In the signification system of the logos in *Logorama*, the relationship between the signifier and signified is designated as visual similarity, and thus the original signified is replaced by the object that the logo looks like. For example, in this animation the logo of MSN (Windows Live Messenger) represents butterflies rather than the MSN software; it therefore becomes an icon rather than a symbol or index. The remixing of readymades, the replacement of the signified, and the change on the signification system make all logos in this animation being found objects. The focus of this work is on the designation of found objects, and the story is less important, therefore it can be considered as an installation artifact in itself.

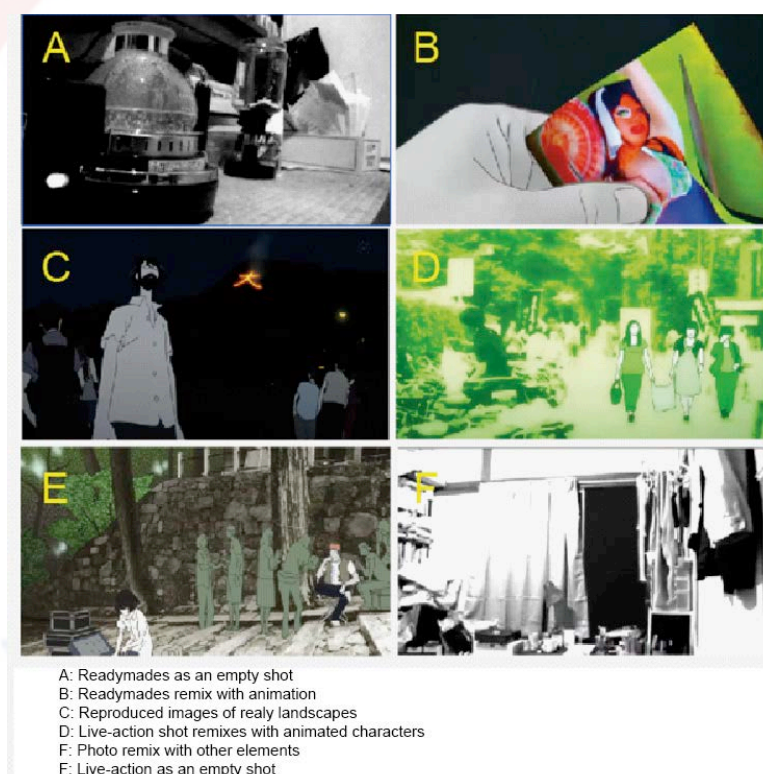


**Figure 1** The found works in *Logorama* (2009)



## (2). *The Tatami Galaxy*

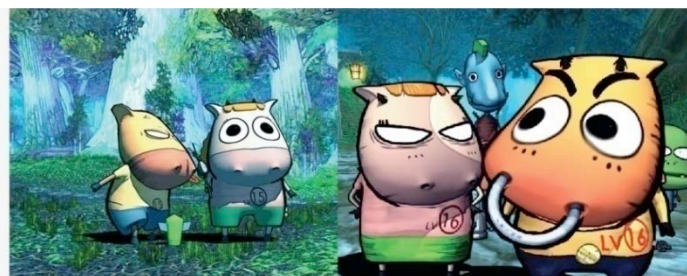
*The Tatami Galaxy* (2010) is a TV anime work which combines multiple techniques and styles. It uses different kinds of 'found' materials, and merges them with 2D components (see Figure 2). On some occasions live-action segments are also used as single empty shots (in which no main character appears). These shots are shot by the animator, but the image of landscapes and objects are 'found' by the animator and used to construct the virtual world of this anime. Some replicas of these landscapes and objects in the virtual space of this anime do not equal or being connected to their origins in reality. For example, this anime uses a photo of old apartments as the background of some scenes; however this photo does not represent the very buildings in reality, instead it creates a part of the hyperreal world of this animation. From this perspective, the image of this apartment is found and digitally appropriated in this anime work.



**Figure 1** The readymade works in *The Tatami Galaxy* (2010)

## (3). *I Am MT*

*I Am MT* (2009) employs multiple production techniques, and it uses the readymade digital space of *World of Warcraft* (WOW) as the stage of its story. It is a work of remix and remediation. Its machinima backgrounds are captured directly from WOW. Filters are applied, but audiences can identify the landscapes of WOW. Main characters are not readymade models from WOW but designed by the producer. These 2D style rendered 3D characters are not the WOW realistic characters but cute style, as shown in Figure 3. There is no traditional hand-drawing 2D animation composited in *I Am MT*.



**Figure 3** The cute 2D style rendered 3D characters in machinima backgrounds in *I Am MT*(2009)

The producer employs 2D style rendered 3D characters, and also uses some 2D conventions such as iconic facial emotions, however the emotional expression created by this technique is limited. Furthermore, the appraisal of the combination of cute style characters and 3D machinima backgrounds is controversial, and thus resisted by some audiences (Huang 2010).

#### **(4). *The Hero's Journey Project***

*The Hero's Journey* is the animation production practice of my doctoral research project, in which I attempted to bring the concept of *found* from installation art into animation. This research project is a practice-based research that draws inspirations from my experience of installation art practice (*The Endangered Earth*) to creation of a post-apocalypse animation (*The Hero's Journey*, <https://vimeo.com/102311705> password: huangwww3boxcc). In *The Endangered Earth*, I used various found objects, and combined them with other elements. This artifact is composed of five works including *The Metal Casket*; it creates its space as the context of the found objects in it. This space does not represent but creates its own reality in which the original functions of found objects are deprived, and the found objects thus are endowed with new meanings. For example, the computer cases in *The Endangered Earth* cannot function as they used to, instead they are used as caskets (see Figure 4: *The Metal Casket*). The computer cases link *The Endangered Earth* to daily experience (in this case, the experience of modern technology and digital life) in a critical way, and drives viewers to critically reflect on the abuse of technology.



**Figure 4** *The Metal Casket*



**Figure 5** The replica of *The Metal Casket* in *The Hero's Journey*

The artifact of *The Metal Casket* is to a large extent depended on the appearances of found objects; found objects are also influenced by their positions in the artifact and the relationship to others. Some of the found objects I collected were further processed, but most of them were kept in their original state. In *The Metal Casket*, the computer cases I collected were with different shapes, colors and sizes. They were piled up without a certain sequence, and this process of assemblage showed flexibility and an extent of randomness. The use of found objects also led to the feature of flawed statue, as in the process of assemblage I had no intention to create a perfected form of the appearance of the art work. The new meaning is endowed by the context that is created by the artwork, as well as the designated title of the work.

This installation art work has been digitally reproduced in *The Hero's Journey*. From this perspective, the image and idea of *The Metal Casket* are found and appropriated in this animation. The digital replica is placed in the post-apocalypse world; the scale of this art work is enlarged, and is combined with other materials such as bones and doodles (see Figure 5). Similarly, images of readymades in *The Hero's Journey* critically connect the artifact to the daily experience; some are used as 'found' to symbolically express ideas. The forms and sources of readymades in this project are various and cover a range of disciplines, and the ways of adapting and using them are flexible. In *The Hero's Journey*, readymade are placed in the fictional world. Some scenes of *The Hero's Journey* are significantly influenced by the appearances of the readymades.

However, an essential difference between the two art works is that the space of *The Hero's Journey* is virtual but not substantial, and thus the concept of 'found' also exists in the virtual form. In the post-apocalypse context of *The Hero's Journey*, some readymade images lose the original functions and meanings they represent. For example, in the post-apocalypse world, the image of cash may lose the function of currency and the traditional meaning of wealth. They are endowed with new functions and meanings (e.g. 'cash' as 'fuel' or 'trash'). These readymades are combined with others, and are re-designated in this particular context. Based on the concept of found objects, these readymades are found.

I notice that for readymades in the digital world, there are two parallel layers of appropriation existing: the vehicle (e.g. the digital file of pictures or 3D models) and the image (in the digital world and on screen). For example, a 3D digital model of a desk is collected and used in this project, and this digital file is a vehicle of readymade; more than a digital component, the image of this model is an icon that represents a real desk and its functions and meanings. When this model is being used in my project, both these two layers of appropriation are reflected in this process: the digital file is found and remixed with other components; meanwhile, the readymade image of this desk is placed in the virtual world, which is displayed on screen.

### **'Found work' in animation**

Based on the cases above, the term 'found work' can be used to describe those components that are not originally created for this project but are sourced from somewhere else; they are appropriated and replaced into the new context, in which their original functions or meanings are deprived, and new ones are endowed. This concept of found relates to the animator, as well as to characters in the virtual world. For example, in *The Hero's Journey*, 3D digital models of computer cases have been collected and placed in this particular project which provides a new context; this process is like that of an installation artist finding and appropriating readymades in his artifact. On the other hand, the images of computers that are shown on screen in *The Hero's Journey* represent different functions from that of in our daily life; they are used in different manners, and combined with other materials, to express new ideas. For characters in this virtual world, these computers are 'found', and are never expected to be used as they are in ordinary life.

In an animation work there are two layers of the concept 'found' active: first, the vehicle of readymades that are found and appropriated in the production software; second, the images are found and reproduced in the space of animation. The first layer is primarily reflected in the process of animation production, as the animator uses readymade components (such as 3D digital models) directly in my project. The second layer is predominantly displayed on screen as found images (or images of found objects). On both the two levels, a found work in an animation: (1). is a readymade; (2) is combined with other materials, or is put in a new context; and (3). has new meanings or functions.

## **2. Machinima: a form of readymade art**

Machinima is 'animated filmmaking within a real-time virtual 3D environment... (It is) a mixture of several creative platforms - filmmaking, animation and 3D game technology' (Marino 2002, p.1). Berkeley defines machinima in a more circumspect manner: 'machinima is where 3D computer animation gameplay is recorded in real time as video footage and then used to produce traditional video narratives' (2006, p.66). Machinima is originally a form of fan fiction which is based on the original

work of popular culture, such as a novel, film or animation, and it is usually not produced as 'professional' (Hetcher 2009; Zeng 2012; Brown & Holtmeier 2013). Machinima absorbs the elements in its original game, and the gap between the two can be minimized.

Machinima is the convergence of videogame, cinema and animation (Marino 2002; Nitsche, Riedl & Davis 2011; Burke 2013). Marino (2002) and Horwatt (2007) believe that machinima is an avant-garde art form, and machinima works are highly experimental. Johnson & Petit (2012) cite Greenaway's statement that machinima as a viable art form will need to be text based rather than image based; they further argue that machinima should be tied to Hollywood story telling. As an alternative production technique, machinima can help animators to form new styles based on the original game, and to diversify the animation styles (Zeng 2012). However it is struggling for acceptance (Berkeley 2006). As Nitsche, Riedl & Davis (2011) state, the device of machinima creation is poorly documented, and the knowledge generated within the practice community is usually fragmented and incomplete. Academic research such as this paper can help ensure that machinima receives the artistic and public recognition it deserves.

Machinima is a form of remix, as it combines and manipulates cultural artifacts, including various forms of readymades, into new kinds of creative blends (Johnson & Petit 2012; Nitsche, Riedl & Davis 2011; Hetcher 2009; Cheliotis & Yew 2009; Knobel & Lankshear 2008). Machinima thus inherently has eclectic and hybrid features. For machinima the hybridization 'occurs in remixing a species of video game with a species of video-editing technique(s) to create narratives via writing with moving images and sound for do-it-yourself entertainment purposes' (Knobel & Lankshear 2008, p.25). Machinima reproduces the digital world of videogame in animation, thus is also a process of remediation, which as Lichty defines is used to describe 'practices that recreate works in performance art in virtually "embodied" media' (2009, p.6).

Creating machinima involves appropriating readymade resources found within the game engine (Knobel & Lankshear 2008) into new contexts, therefore machinima is connected to found arts, and has been used by installation artists. The digitally appropriated components of machinima within the digital space of game are 'highly malleable and needs to be created' (Howatt 2007, p.10). As a form of remix, machinima avoids the suggestion that 'the new works are produced by fans of the underlying works' (Hetcher 2009, p.1871). The aesthetics of machinima 'emerge from its unique context as a found technology, providing a set of pre-programmed movements and visual elements that are reconstituted in new ways by the animator' (Nitsche, Riedl & Davis 2011, p.51). As a new media, machinima can be used to 'experiment and push the boundaries of the art form with imaginative three-dimensional performance art that immerses the viewer in the sensory experience in a new way that goes light-years beyond what is even possible in real-life

installation art' Johnson & Petit (2012, p.92). As Conradi states, the digital technology provides 'opportunities of imagine entirely new approaches to non-objective forms and to liberate the imagination of artist' (2012, p.70). However, the remix of readymades is not equal to using found works, and the norm of defining machinima as found has not been established.

### **3. Use machinima as found**

Found arts can be created in the digital space of videogames and machinima. Machinima installation artists such as Annabeth Robinson, Garrett Lynch, Fortunato Depero and Tullio Crali use online games to create installation artifacts in digital spaces (e.g. videogames); some others such as Cao Fei and Gazira Babeli use machinima as a new media of installation artistic creation. For example, Cao Fei's machinima documentary '*iMirror*' (based on *Second Life*) has been considered as an installation artifact at the 2007 Venice Biennale; as Lichty (2009) states, 'while it might be possible to create (installation) works that exist in the virtual that do not express themselves in terms of references to the tangible, they are likely extremely subtle or outside the embodied paradigm of human experience' (2009, p.8).

There are multiple forms and levels of 'found' reflected in installation artifacts in digital spaces. For example, for an installation artist, an empty bottle from *Fallout 3* (2008) on screen can be a found object as it is modeled and textured by game developers. Meanwhile, from the perspective of the existence of the digital post-apocalypse space, the empty bottle can also be 'found' as it is collected from somewhere in the digital world, and it has different functions and meanings.

#### **Two practices**

This research project is based on my artistic practices, and it is thus practice-based. Practice-based research is 'an original investigation undertaken in order to gain new knowledge partly by means of practice and the outcomes of that practice' (Candy 2006, p.1). In a practice-based research project, the practice is an integral part of the research process, and the basis of the contribution to knowledge (Candy 2006; Scrivener 2000; Chang 2009). In this research project, I reflect on my experience of the animation production practice of *The Hero's Journey*, as well as of machinima installation art work *The Corridor*. This reflect-in-action has characteristics of reflexivity that means not only reflect but turn the experience to myself (Sullivan 2005). This process is heuristic, which means it incorporates creative self-processes and self-discoveries, and the emergence of understandings is through the unpredictable process (Moustakas 1990; McNiff 1998). The outcome of the creative-production practice is necessary for the understanding of this research; it has its own value as an artwork and contributes to human experience; it can be shared in a wide community of installation artists and machinimators.

All the machinima segments in the two artistic practices (*The Hero's Journey* and *The Corridor*) are captured directly from the original videogames. The two project demonstrates different extents to which machinima can be used as found.

### **(1). *The Hero's Journey* Project (machinima components)**

*The Hero's Journey* is a non-dialogue short animation project that employs multiple production techniques. This work is additive, as I have created a large number of details, and imported plenty of posters, illustrations, doodles and photos.

In this project, machinima footages were combined with other components to create background and visual effects. As a production technique, machinima was not good enough to express the complicated facial emotion that I needed, but could be an excellent technique to make 3D based backgrounds. However, I noticed that it is difficult to find high quality videogames that reproduce contemporary Chinese urban landscapes, and thus in this project, the use of machinima was limited.

In order to find proper machinima components, I collected resources from several games including *Fallout 3: New Vegas* (2010), *Call of Duty 4* (2007), and *Metro: Last light* (2013). Some other games such as *Grand Theft Auto 4* (2008) and *Second Life* (2003) were viewed but not used due to their inappropriate visual styles or qualities. I chose photo-realistic games that contain modern urban landscapes or post-apocalypse scenes, since these games are additive and can satisfy my requirements for the style. However since most high quality videogames are made by Western studios, their virtual worlds were the Westerner's imagination of China rather than representations of real Chinese cities. This limited the scope that I could choose for this project. Materials from *Call Of Duty 4* and *Metro: Last Light* were mostly used, since some stages of these games are ruined Russian cities, which are more similar to Chinese cities than the wasteland of USA in *Fallout*. Most machinima segments are clouds, abandoned buildings and ruins of the city. They were combined with other components that show strong Chinese style. In most occasions they were not used as major figures in the layouts; however as parts of the whole, they contributed the whole visual effects and helped to shape the atmosphere of the post-apocalypse world (see Figure 6).



**Figure 6** Machinima components in the background of *The Hero's Journey*

I also used some found footage to create visual effects. The sources varied, and they became hard to identify after they were mixed with other works in an integrated entirety. Some of them were selectively exposed to express particular meaning or emotions.



1 a Neolithic art work; 2 Newspapers of squeezing bile from living bears; 3 my previous work; 4 a found footage from my friend; 5 a found footage from my friend; 6 machinima (Skyrim); 7 machinima (Fallout 3:New Vegas); 8 machinima (Metro:Last Light)  
9: machinima (Fallout:New Vegas)

**Figure 7** The found works in the segment of montage pictures

For example, in the pictures montage segment I experimented with using found footage and images of found objects to create visual effects (Figure 7). Different works were collected and remixed in this segment for specific purposes. Some of them (the Neolithic artwork, the newspapers and my previous illustration works) were



used as a single shot to link to other scenes according to the screenplay; the others were used to make visual effects.

In the process of viewing videogames for machinima production, I found many interesting scenes. They could not be used directly as scenes in this project, but I thought they could provide short but strong impressions that were related to the theme of *The Hero's Journey*. I wondered whether I could use these impressions to help express my ideas. As an experiment, I added a machinima segment which was captured from *Fallout 3: New Vegas* (2010). It was a first-person shot in which the character runs in a dark narrow corridor. In this process, I found that the translucent machinima layer can give a split-second and discontinuous impression since it kept interfering and being interfered by other layers. Thus I tried to add more elements and made this segment even more fragmented, and this segment was considered as a set of fragments of impression. I captured videos of running, shooting, killing and missile launching from different videogames, as I wanted to display fragments that related to the self-destruction of mankind. I exposed the information explosively, and deliberately overloaded fragments so that audiences could not capture all the details; I made pictures shift faster and faster, and different footages overlapped with each other. This process was random, as I remixed multiple segments without a pre-designed order. Through controlling the transparencies of different layers, the fragments of impression such as running, shooting and killing were interwoven together.

This project indicates that machinima segments as found works can be used in different stages of animation production. Machinima can be used to create singular shots, or be combined with other material in various ways. In this process, this production technique is deployed according to the narrative and/or visual requirements of the animation. The story space of *The Hero's Journey* breaks the connection between machinima and its original videogame. For example, in the photo montage segment, the machinima components I used lose their identities of combats in *Fallout 3: New Vegas*, *Skyrim* and *Metro: Last Light*, but are a part of the memory of the protagonist of *The Hero's Journey*. In other scenes, The objects created by machinima (e.g. a collapsed building from *Call of Duty 4*) are detached from their original games and merged into the world of *The Hero's Journey*.

For the animator who intends to combine machinima with other production techniques, visual style is one of the essential issues. The appropriation of machinima components will undoubtedly bring the style of original videogames. It will make the animation work aesthetically eclectic and hybrid; however it also has the potential danger of breaking the consistency of aesthetic style. Due to this consideration, for animation project that integrates multiple production techniques (such as *The Hero's Journey*) to shape one unified visual style, machinima segments are seemingly more proper to be used at the subordinate parts of the scenes.

## (2). *The Corridor*

In order to explore the layered use of machinima as found in animation, I created an installation artwork, and reproduced it in the digital space of videogame. The replica was represented in the form of machinima. This installation artifact was firstly designed in the process of creating the post-apocalypse world of *The Hero's Journey*. It was a corridor with a huge number of tableware that covers the ground, and the protagonist would go through the corridor (see Figure 8 ).



**Figure 8** The sketch of the corridor scene in section 2

This scene was initially designed as an alarm system set by another survivor who the protagonist would encounter. Within the post-apocalypse context, this scene expresses ideas more than its expected functions in the ordinary world. This work involves the use of found objects, as the tableware is 'found' for characters in this virtual world; it loses its original functions, and has new functions and meanings (a part of an alarm trap, and a critical reflection on the over consumption). I realized that the idea of this scene can be used to create a real or an animated installation artifact. In animation it is possible to provide the experience of interaction with the art work through the character as avatars of audiences. As Rheingold states, 'at the heart of VR [virtual reality] is an experience – the experience of being in a virtual world or remote location' (1991, cited in Bolter & Grusin 1999, p.22). This interaction between the artifact and character provides the experience of viewing and physically participating in the artifact in the virtual space of *The Hero's Journey*. Therefore, this corridor has double identities: a scene of this animation (an alarming system for the survivor who lives in the building); and an interactive installation art which expresses my anti-consumerist ideas.

I then created this installation artifact (a real craft). I collected empty bottles, containers, tableware, and other wasted industrial products and piled them in a corridor. This artifact was not publically exhibited, instead I invited one actor stepping through this corridor, and I used videos to record the experience of the

interaction between the actor and the art work (Figure 9). This video has been uploaded to youtube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pLxjxpyoeiY>).



**Figure 9** *The Corridor* (real craft)

I reproduced this artifact in *Fallout 3: New Vegas* (2010) (youtube link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3vDGixsh5fE> ). I found a corridor, collected a large number of tableware and bottles, and placed them on the ground (Figure 10). The game engine provided great freedom, and the scale of the digital version *The Corridor* was significantly enlarged. In this process, I exploited the mechanic of *Fallout 3: New Vegas*, and the in-game objects were considered as 'found objects'. All the digital components (empty bottles, etc.) that are provided by the videogame developer were assembled in the digital space. Due to the limitation of the game engine, I could not place the objects precisely, and the remixing process creates random consequences. This whole scene is significantly greater than the sum of its parts, while all components of this work are in relation to others.



**Figure 10** *The Corridor* in *Fallout 3: New Vegas* (2010)

As a part of the experience that is provided by this artifact, I used the game character to interact with this work. I controlled the player character (PC) stepping through the corridor (Figure 11), and the experience of physical participation was created in this process. The in-game action and the ephemeral experience was recorded by

machinima. I also recorded the interaction between the artifact and the non-player character (NPC) (Figure 12). The artifact was unwillingly set in the routine of one NPC; this process was similar to that of placing an installation artifact in the routine of spectators in a museum).



**Figure 11** The interaction between the controlled game characters and the digital installation artifact



**Figure 12** The interaction between NPC and the digital installation artifact

This machinima version of *The Corridor* was created within the videogame, it thus kept the visual connection with *Fallout 3: New Vegas*. However, this does not mean that *The Corridor* is representing one scene in the digital world of the videogame, neither this machinima is a recording of game-play. On the contrary, it builds its own post-apocalypse space, which disconnects this machinima art work from its original videogame.

Neither *The Corridor* in the digital space is simply a replica of the real craft. The environment of the artifact (the post-apocalypse atmosphere) endows the artifact with

new and stronger meanings (e.g. the criticism of the over-consumption). The post-apocalypse fiction is a subgenre of science fiction (SF/Sci-Fi), and possesses strong post-modern features (Ostwalt 1998; Pearson, 2006; Gomel 2010; Napier 2008; Rosen 2008). In the post-apocalypse world, everyday experiences are removed and audiences are forced to confront the dead world that is depicted by the science fiction genre (Fisher 2010). The daily functions of many industrial products are deprived. These products are endowed with new functions, which collides with the daily experience.

*The Corridor* does not equal to the corridor scene in *The Hero's Journey*. In *The Hero's Journey*, the corridor is an alarming system set by a survivor. However, this function works only in the specific context of the story of *The Hero's Journey*. With the context changes, the alarming function loses. Meanwhile, this corridor is no longer in the ruin of the amusement park in the world of *The Hero's Journey*, therefore this artifact is set in a new space that provides specific atmosphere and context.

## **Discussions**

The cases above indicate that not only real objects, but also images of virtual objects (such as those in another animation or videogame) can be found, reproduced and remixed in an animation. The machinima works in *The Hero's Journey* and *The Corridor* have two identities: (1). the images in the digital space of the games, and they are found and appropriated in the animation space; (2). the video segments (the vehicle of readymades) that are created by the animator, and despite the fact that the images of games are readymade, the video segments are seemingly not found or readymade in itself. However, the second identity is still closely related to found works; the use of these machinima segments is similar to that an installation artist uses found objects to create a part of his artifact, and remixes these components with others.

Therefore, the vehicle of a machinima component (a digital video segment) that created by an animator is not found for him; however, some machinima works can still be considered as found if the machinima segments are remixed with other materials, since the animators collect readymade resources of videogame and appropriate them in new context which endows machinima segments with different meanings.

Not all machinima are found works, some are even not strict readymades. In some machinima works, the animator may create new models, textures and plots; in some others, the contexts of the original games are completely kept, and these works are more likely trailers or recorded gameplay videos. The former is not readymade but is created by the animator; the latter, in contrast, has not been set in a new context and re-designated.

Based on the application of machinima in the two projects, as well as the definition of the found object and found footage (Benjamin 1993; Oliveira, Oxely & Petry 1994; He 2008; Davidson & Desmond 1996; Fossati 2012; Bolemeuvel, Fossati & Guldmond (eds.) 2012), two norms for using/identifying machinima components as 'found work' can be reached.

(1). The animator uses original works of the game, or other readymade resources (such as mods that are made by other players). The readymade works can be found within the game, or within the develop kits such as map-editor. In this process, the animator records the gaming experience that is provided and framed by the game developer. However, if the animator makes new models, texts, textures or other components specifically for his project, it is not a found work.

(2). The machinima component is put in a new context through being re-edited and remixed with other works. This process is similar to that of an installation artist puts found objects in new environments and remixes them with other materials.

(3). The machinima video should be re-designated and thus has new meanings. As a found work in an animation, the machinima segment is usually detached from its original game. It is put in a new context, or creates its specific hyperreal space, in which the machinima component is endowed with new meanings. Some machinima segments that are used in animation are still a recording of gameplay (e.g. the *Minecraft* machinima videos in *Southern Park*), and they can hardly be considered as 'found'.

In short, when using machinima segment as a found, it comes from ready-made resources, and is used in other contexts to express new ideas. In this process of appropriation, the machinima segment is usually detached from its original game. The artist's effort is collecting and reassembling the materials that he found in the game. In a broader view, these norms may also apply in digital appropriations in other fields.

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The logo for the International Association for Film and Documentary Research (iafor) is centered on the page. It features the lowercase letters 'iafor' in a light blue, sans-serif font. The text is enclosed within a circular graphic composed of two overlapping, semi-transparent arcs: a light blue arc on the left and a light red arc on the right, which together form a partial circle around the text.



*Investigation on Historical Representation by the  
Case Study of Taiwan Historical Drama Films*

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**Abstract**

Under the discourse of “historiophoty”, historical drama films can be both entertainment and media of conveying history. Historical drama films not only have been taken as the material of history study by historians, but also affect viewers’ cognition of history. The main subjects in this research are the Taiwan historical drama films which depicted the history of Japanese colonial period in Taiwan (1895-1945). During Japanese colonial period, when Taiwan was transformed into a modern society, lots of modern facilities and architecture were constructed and had great impact on Taiwan cityscapes. Therefore, by looking into the relationship between the elements of history and film, this research aims to see how the films represented the history and what history they represented.

In this research, the selected films which conform to the definition of collective memory and depict the historical events in Japanese colonial period are categorized by the ways in which they recreated their movie scenes. The further investigation of this research has been taking these selected films as the bridge of the past and present to focus on how the films recall the memories of the citizens as well as strengthen the linkage between citizens and the past through the portraying of the fabric of cities.

Keywords: historiophoty, history, representation, film, collective memory

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## Introduction

Taiwan film industry had been stagnant from since 1990 because of the competition of Hollywood film. However, recently more and more film makers have tried to show the life of Taiwanese in the past, present and future on the screen in an interesting way, such as Cape No.7(海角七號, 2008). Therefore, Taiwan film industry has come alive. The issue of historical representation form motion pictures and written words has been a hot topic for many years. Marc ferro (1977) pointed out that the historical drama films provided an interpretation in social and historical aspect. Hayden White (1988), a historian in the tradition of literary criticism, proposed the term “historiophoty”, and argued that whether films could be the materials of history study in his essay.

For many years, there have been lots of discussions on how the films interpret histories. In 2011 when one of the Taiwan historical film, Seediq Bale (賽德克·巴萊, 2011), was released, many people talked about its movie scenes. The representation of the historical scenes not only became the hot topic, but also the local people asked the film production team to leave the scenes as new tourist spots.

In the first half of 2014, there are two historical drama films were released, Twa-Tiu-Tiann (大稻埕, 2004) and Kano(2014). Both of them led to lots of discussion on the authenticity of history and created the vivid images to the places where they depicted. Moreover, there were lots of travel plans designed for tourists to experience the phenomenon of the films and the historical events.

In view of the above, historical drama films have its power to convey film makers' explanation of the history to the society. They also represent the distinctive spaces with vivid images, which have influences on the places to an extent. To investigate the representation of history and its space, this research focuses on the screenplays and the movie scene and tries to achieve the following goals: (1) to clarify how the films represented the history. (2) to analyze the histories and different typologies of historical scenes the films represented.

The research subjects are the films which depicted the stories of Japanese colonial period (1895-1945) in Taiwan. During Japanese colonial period, some of the Taiwanese had a difficult time under the suppression of Japanese government. However it is also when Taiwan was transformed into a modern society. Lots of modern facilities and architecture were constructed and had great impact on Taiwan

cityscapes. The controversy of the history makes the film makers have more room to have their own explanation of the history. Besides, because some of the buildings and facilities built during Japanese colonial periods still have the impact on Taiwan cityscapes, it is interesting to look into how the film makers represented the distinctive spaces on the screen. This research collected thirteen films which depicted the history of Japanese colonial period. To emphasize the representation of the space and cities, the criterion for selecting cases is “specific for a place/city”. Therefore, the research subjects are the four films which depicted certain historical events. They are *Blue Brave: The Legend of Formosa in 1895* (一八九五, 2008); *Seediq Bale* (賽德克·巴萊, 2011); *Twa-Tiu-Tiann* (大稻埕, 2014); *KANO* (2014).

### **Collective Memory: the concept of history, representation and place**

#### **Collective Memory**

Historical drama film is a medium to convey history, story and the memory shared by one group. Memory is the mental capacity to recall and recognize the events and experiences of the past. Memory may be either individual or collective. (Ardakani & Oloonabadi, 2011) When talking about collective memory, it often trace back to the works of French Scholar, Halbwachs (1887-1945). Halbwachs specifies that collective memory is individuals as group members who remember. There are many collective memories, as there are many groups in a society, such as families, associations, corporations, armies and trade unions. For each group, they all have their own memories which are constructed for a long time by the group members who located in a specific group context. The context is delimited in space and time. (Halbwachs, 1992)

After the discussion on collective memory from Halbwachs, it has raised more discussions and issues related to collective memory from other scholars. The definitions of collective memory from other scholars are quite the same. Steiner and Zelizer (1995) had some statements to tell the difference between personal memory and collective memory. Personal memory is an individual's ability to conserve information; collective memory consists of the recollections of the past which is shared by a group of people. Another scholar, Wertsch (2008) pointed out that “Collective memory is a representation of the past that is shared by members as a generation or nation-state”. In his definition, as the statement of Halbwachs, collective memory is constructed and shared by a group of people who are in the same context of time and space.

## Collective Memory and Place

Citizens who live in a certain region and under the same context are taken as one group. They contribute to the place's distinctiveness and continuity in time (Lewicka, 2008). They construct and share the same memories of the past, and this is also one of the reasons why collective memories are place-specific (Ardakani & Oloonabadi, 2011). Lewicka (2008) pointed out that collective past is the thing which people remembered and known, and it depends on many factors, including written, oral, and material sources. Memory contents which are shared by the residents are shaped by "official ideologies transmitted through media, history lessons in schools and the school textbooks, circulated legends and songs, architectural and urban traces, family stories". Besides, collective memory is the linkage of generations through the ceremonies and rituals which has been incorporated with collective memories.

## Representation of Historical Drama Film

### History and Historical Fact

Before introducing historical drama films, it is necessary to clarify what is history? "History is one of a series of discourses about the world. These discourses do not create the world but they do appropriate it and give it all the meanings it has. That bit of the world which is history's object of inquiry is the past." (Jenkins & Munslow, 2003) According to the definition above, the historical fact is about the past, and history is the explanation of historical fact. The truth of the past couldn't be gotten, and history would be the explanation by different people in different points of view. Mien Shih, Li (李冕世, 1989) also argued that history is the explanation of historical event, which is constructed by time, space, people and event. When having research on historical fact, it is necessary to make a comprehensive understanding about its space and geography.



Figure 1 Four Elements of History

## Historical Drama Film

According to Rosenstone (1995), historical film can also be taken into three broad categories: history as drama, history as document and history as experiment. History as drama, the most common and popular form of historical film can be further divided into two categories: (1) Film which is based on documentable persons or events or movements; (2) Film whose central plot and characters are fictional, but whose historical setting is intrinsic to the story and meaning of the work. In this research, historical drama film is defined as history as drama.

Marc Ferro (1977), a French historian, thought the value of film is that it provides an interpretation in social and historical aspect. Therefore, apart from providing the evidence for the history, film is the way of showing individuals' own interpretation of history, or it is the way to make audience have their interpretation after watching films. However, not all historical drama films success. Marc Ferro pointed out that the successes of historical drama films are entirely attributed to imagination which must be based on historical data. Following is the four dimensions proposed by Marc Ferro to account for the characteristics of historical drama film.

For the first dimension, data-choosing, means that the director would choose the historical data he/she wants to give his/her interpretation of the history. The second dimension, principle of data organizing, shows the ways of arranging the historical data. For example, film makers can arrange the data in certain way to increase more tension in the film. The third dimension is the purpose of authors. Therefore, the position of the film would be decided by the director. It could be an advance guard movie, or a movie for children to understand history easily. The fourth dimension is invention and creativity. Invention and Creativity lie in what plots the director and the screenplay writer want to choose to add some imagination.

Table 1 Dimensions of Historical Drama Films

Data choosing	Principle of Data Organizing	The purpose of authors	Invention & Creativity
Interpretation	Logic, Aesthetic, Dramatic tension	Knowledge power, Popular film, Advance guard movie	Question Choosing & Pattern Forming

## Historical Representation

To represent is to give back a society an image of itself, and to help people define and locate themselves with respect to those surroundings. Representation is one of the oldest functions of art and theater (Aitken & Zonn, 1994). From the above definition, historical representation is to give visual information of the past world, including the space, the clothes, the phenomena and etc. Film, as one of the ways to represent the distinctive spaces, life style and human conditions of the city, has the ability to capture and express the spatial complexity, diversity and social dynamism of the city through mise-en-scene, locating filming, lighting, cinematography, and editing (Shiel, 2001) which refer to the five elements of film: narrative, mise-en-scene, cinematography, sound and editing (Bordwell, Thompson, & Ashton, 1997).

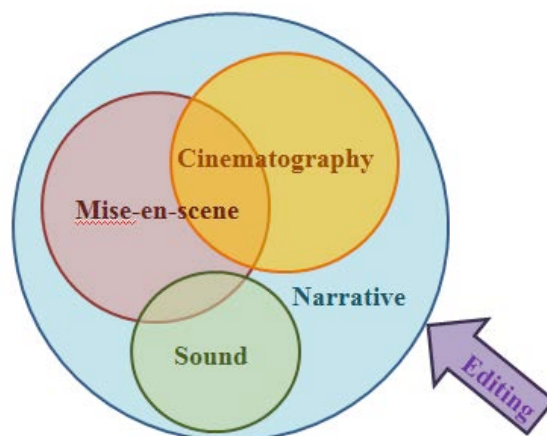


Figure 2 Five Elements of Film

The characteristic of historical representation through written discourse and image discourse has been discussed by many scholars. Hayden White (1988), proposed a new term in the essay – historiophoty, which is “the representation of history and our thought about it in visual and filmic discourse”. Hayden White mainly pointed out whether the visual-auditory where the given written account of history is translated without any significant loss of content is equivalent to the original contents. In the article Hayden White also argued that cinema and video are better than written discourse to actually represent landscape, scene, atmosphere and complex events, because images provide a reproduction of the scenes and atmosphere of the historical events. Many people would think that the written discourse could record the history more detailed because the written discourse does not have the limitation of time. However, Hayden White said that every written history is also the product of the process of condensation, displacement, symbolization, and qualification, just like the film. Film, like written history, also focuses on representing the history.

## Taiwan Historical Drama Films

This research has been taken Taiwan historical drama films as case studies. To narrow down the research scope, this research first collected thirteen films which depicted Japanese colonial period (1895-1945) in Taiwan. During Japanese colonial period, some of the Taiwanese had difficult times under the suppression of Japanese government. However it is also when Taiwan was transformed into a modern society. Lots of modern facilities and architecture were constructed and had great impact on Taiwan cityscapes. Also the controversy of the history makes it worth to investigate how the historical drama films gave representation of that history.

There are thirteen films which depicted the history of Japanese colonial period. They can be categorized into three categories: (1) films depicting the life of Taiwanese (2) autobiographic films (3) films depicting historical events. To emphasize the representation of the space and cities, other criteria for selecting cases is “specific for a place/city”. The thirteen films are place specific for the whole Taiwan, but the films which depict historical events are specific for the cities in Taiwan, which make the research more focus on the historical representation of the spaces. Therefore, the cases are the following four films: *Blue Brave: The Legend of Formosa in 1895* (一八九五, 2008); *Seediq Bale* (賽德克·巴萊, 2011); *Twa-Tiu-Tiann* (大稻埕, 2014); *KANO* (2014).

This four films depicted different historical events respectively in Japanese colonial period. *Blue Brave: The Legend of Formosa in 1895*, distributed by Green Film Production (青睞影視製作有限公司) in 2008, portrayed Japanese Invasion of Taiwan(乙未戰爭). In 1895, when the Japanese armies came to take over Taiwan after the first Sino-Japanese War (甲午戰爭), the Hakka (客家) people, some Holo (閩南) people and indigenous people were gathered to fight for their hometown and to resist the government of Japanese. The historical sites of Japanese Invasion in Taiwan covered from Hsinchu(新竹) to Changhua(彰化), but *Blue Brave* mainly depicted the story which happened in Hsinchu(新竹) and Miaoli(苗栗). *Seediq Bale*, distributed by ARS Film (果子電影有限公司) in 2011, depicted Wushe Incident (霧社事件), which happened in Nantou (南投) in 1930. Wushe Incident is a famous uprising staged by Taiwan indigenous people to react against Japanese colony. *Twa-Tiu-Tiann*, distributed by Green Film Production (青睞影視製作有限公司) in 2014, different from other three films, it showed Peace Act Incident (治警事件), which happened in Taipei (臺北) in 1923, through the time travel of a college student. *KANO*, distributed by ARS Film (果子電影有限公司) in 2014, portrayed how *KANO*, the baseball

team of Kagi Nourin (嘉義農林學校) in Chiayi (嘉義), strived for getting the opportunity to participate the baseball competition in Kosien (甲子園). Besides, KANO also depicted the establishment of Chia-Nan Canal (嘉南大圳) in the film.

Table 2 Basic information of the four films

	Blue Brave: The Legend of Formosa in 1895	Seediq Bale	Twa-Tiu-Tiann	KANO
Poster				
Release	2008	2011	2014	2014
Distributor	Green Film Production (青睞影視製作有限公司)	ARS Film (果子電影有限公司)	Green Film Production (青睞影視製作有限公司)	ARS Film (果子電影有限公司)
Director	Zhi-Yu Hong (洪智育)	De-Shen Wei (魏德聖)	Tien-Lun Yeh (葉天倫)	Zhi-Xiang Ma (馬志翔)
Historical Event	Japanese Invasion of Taiwan (乙未戰爭) (1895)	Wushe Incident (霧社事件) (1895-1930)	Peace Act Incident (治警事件) (1923)	The establishment of Chia-Nan Canal (1930). KANO won the 2nd place in Koshien (1931).
Main Historical Site	Hsinchu, Miaoli (新竹,苗栗)	Nantou (南投)	Taipei (臺北)	Chiayi (嘉義)



## Current findings

### Historical Investigation of the four films

According to the data of the four films, to represent the histories, the film production teams would investigate the details of the stories and the phenomenon mainly from written records, pictures and oral histories.

From the interview of the director of Blue Brave on TV program, the film production team investigated the hair style, the clothes and every detail about the culture of Hakka people from historical documents and books. (民視交通電視台, 2008)

For Seediq Bale, to represent the appearance of Wu-She elementary school, because the pictures taken at that time were too unclear to identify the original appearance of the space, they compared the pictures taken one year before Wushe Incident. Besides, the film production team also cooperated with historians as their consultants of history and culture. The consultants would help the team to make the scene, the screenplay, the behavior of actors closer to the history. (王擎天, 2011)

For Twa-Tiu-Tiann, besides historical documents, they mainly represented Dadaocheng (大稻埕), a place in Taipei, according to the painting “南街殷賑 (郭雪湖, 1930)”, which portrayed Dadaocheng in 1920s. The painting is collected by Taipei Fine Art Museum (臺北市立美術館). The film production team also collected some information about the history from the descendants of Hsueh-Hu Kuo (郭雪湖) and Wei-Shui Jisn (蔣渭水), the leader of Peace Act Incident. (于珈, 2014)

KANO, different from the previous three films, the history is mainly about the story of the baseball team of Kagi Nourin (嘉義農林學校), the original school of National Chiayi University (國立嘉義大學), so the film production mainly collected the historical information from the school. They also collected some information from a few baseball players of KANO. (ARS Films, 2014)

Table 3 Ways of historical investigation of the four films

	Blue Brave	Seediq Bale	Twa-Tiu-Tiann	KANO
Historical Documents	V	V	V	V
Historians		V		
Institution			V	V

			(Taipei Art Museum)	(National Chiayi University)
Oral History		V	V	V
Interview		V		
Other	V (Books)			

### The spatial representation of historical events

After the investigating of the scenes, the film production team has to decide how to represent the historical scenes. In the four films, there are four ways, including filming in the actual historical scenes, taking other spaces as the scenes, rebuilding scenes, as well as using animation to make the scenes better.

#### (1) Blue Brave: The Legend of Formosa in 1895

To represent the environment and the phenomenon, the story of Jiang Shao-Zu (姜紹祖) was filmed in the original space, Tien-Shui-Tang. As for the story of Wu Tang-Xing (吳湯興), the film production team took Shuan-Tang-Wu(雙堂屋), Liou-Gu-Cih (劉家祠) as the house of Wu Tang-Xing in the film.



Figure 3 Film image of Tang-Xing Wu's (吳湯興) house  
(Source: Green Film Production)



Figure 4 Film image Tien-Shui-Tang (天水堂) (Left figure);  
Tien-Shui-Tang (天水堂) in 1920 (Right Figure)  
(Source: Green Film Production; 客家文化數位典藏)

## (2) Seediq Bale

To represent the original appearances of Wu-She Street and Mahebo in 1930, the film production team cooperated with the designers from Japan as the art team. In the film production team they also had Ming-Zheng Guo (郭明正) as their consultant of history and culture.

The film production team chose to rebuild Wu-She Street at Lin-Kou (林口) Mesa, Taiwan, and rebuilt Mahebo in the deep mountains in Fuxing (復興) Township, Taoyuan (桃園), Taiwan. First, the Japanese art team would design and have design drawings according to the old photos and the investigation of the specialists. The design drawings included the overview of Wu-She Street at Lin-Kou Mesa and the settings of each building. Second, the art team would make a model of the whole design, and the chief of art team would hold a mini camera to see what the scenes looked like after finishing. They would also discuss the details with director before starting to build the scene. Third, they did land grading and then build the wooden houses. After finishing the construction, the furnishing group and making-it-old group of art team would add some elements to make the scenes look like real spaces.



Figure 5 Rebuilt Mahebo (馬赫坡) (Left Figure); Mahebo in 1931 (Right Figure)  
(Source: A R S Film; 台南大學日治時代日文珍本數位典藏計畫)

## (3) Twa-Tiu-Tiann

For Twa-Tiu-Tiann, to represent the appearance of the place, Dadaocheng (大稻埕), in 1923, they borrowed “Folk Art Shop (民藝街坊)” from National Center for Traditional Art (國立傳統藝術中心), and do some adjustment in the borrowed scene according to the painting “南街殷賑 (郭雪湖, 1930)”

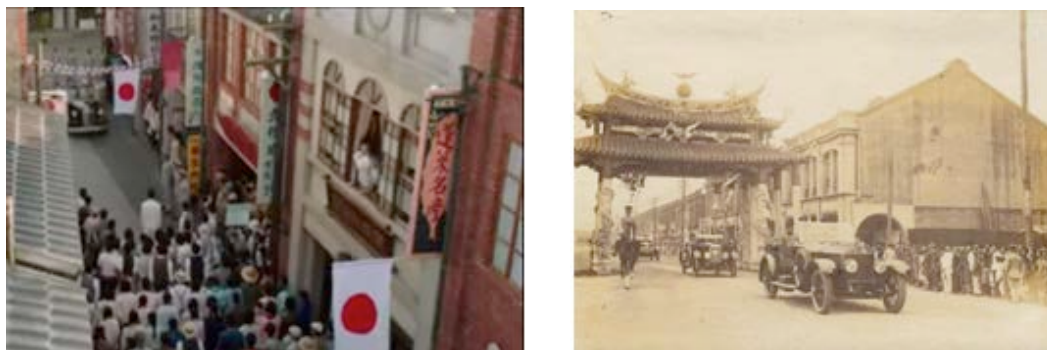


Figure 6 Rebuilt Dadocheng (大稻埕) (Left figure); Dadocheng in 1923 (Right Figure)

(Source: Green Film Production; 行起紀念寫真帖)

#### (4) KANO

Compared to Seediq Bale, to represent the history of KANO the film production team used lots of different ways, including rebuilding, animation, the original space of the historical events, borrowing other venues as the original space.

The scene of the celebration of Wu-Shan-Tou Reservoir was filmed at the original space in Tainan (台南), Taiwan. The downtown of Chia-Yi in 1903 and Koshien were both rebuilt according to the historical data and oral history survey. To represent the situation of the baseball competition in Koshien, the film production also used animation to make the rebuilt Koshien more realistic. The downtown of Chia-Yi was built in Liou Cho (劉厝) section in Chia-Yi, and Koshien was built in Nanzih (楠梓) Dist., Kaohsiung (高雄). The two scenes were demolished after the film was finished. (A R S Film, 2014)



Figure 7 Rebuilt fountain roundabout (Left Figure);  
Fountain roundabout in Japanese colonial period (Right figure)

(Source: A R S Film; Chia-Yi City Government)



Figure 8 Rebuilt cityscape of Chia-Yi City (嘉義市) (Left figure);  
Cityscape of Chia-Yi City in 1933 (Right figure)  
(Source: A R S Film; 典藏台灣棒球史)

### Summary & Future Investigation

Historical Drama film can be seen as a way to convey the explanation of the past from film makers' point of view. However, unlike written history, historical drama film is more sequential and dramatic, which make film have the power to affect the audience. Therefore, there must be some inventions in the film, such as *Blue Brave: The Legend of Formosa*. Although it is a film mainly depicted how the Hakka fighters fight for their hometown and their culture when the Japanese were going to take over Taiwan, the director decided to focus on portraying the detail of the war scene but the love between the land and people, part of the which are the invention of the film maker.

For the ways how the four films interpreted the histories, historical document is the common way, especially "picture". With image, the film production team can represent the clothes, space and culture more delicate and realistic. For the screenplay, this research found that *Blue Brave*, *Seediq Bale* and *Twa-Tiu-Tiann* mainly depicted the resistances and the difficult time the Taiwanese had by portraying the culture and nationality of Taiwanese. Nevertheless, recently some other materials have come out such as *KANO*. *KANO* talked about the story of a school baseball team which consisted of Han (漢) people, Taiwan indigenous people and Japanese. There was no ethnic problem in the baseball team. The film mainly portrayed the baseball players' enthusiasm and the stories of the building of Chianan Canal, which was designed by Yoichi Hatta (1886-1942) and improved the agriculture in south Taiwan. After *KANO* was released, this different type of story soon triggered a heated debate in Taiwan.

Historical drama film not only is a way to convey interpretation of history, but its

movie scenes also could be another possibility to lead people feel the phenomenon. In further investigation, this research will focus on the residents who now live in the historical sites where the four films portrayed to investigate how the historical film play a role as the bridge of the past and present.



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***Rebellion and Despair. Children and Adolescents in Recent Japanese Films***

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The Asian Conference on Film and Documentary 2014  
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

Children and adolescents have been a prominent subject for Japanese cinema in recent years. From the viewpoint of the proposed thematic scope of “Individual, Community & Society: Conflict, Resolution & Synergy”, the non-adult characters and its conflicts are a privileged theme. Cinema, as a popular culture manifestation, contributes to the discourses on construction of the sense of community, belonging –or lack of it– and identity. This paper approaches the depiction of conflictive childhood and adolescence in recent films, its significance and its fitting in the stream of Japanese cinema history. This historic approach is not intended to be a comprehensive account, but a tour across selected moments and films of Japanese cinematographic culture. The aim is to draw a map on some connections that can shed some light on the contemporary filmmakers –including names such as Miike Takashi, Nakashima Tetsuya, Sono Sion or Iwai Shunji–, tendencies and films.

Keywords: Childhood, adolescence, Japanese cinema, conflict, identity

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## Introduction

The topic of childhood and adolescence is not new for Japanese cinema. Many titles, some of them remarkable ones, have approached the subject. This subject has become especially prominent in recent years, particularly depicting generational clash, and rebellious attitudes amongst the youngsters, with a certain amount of violence in many cases.

Having selected some of the most prominent of important authors in the latest contemporary Japanese cinema films, starting from the concepts of *childhood* and *adolescence* and their historical significance in the Japanese context, along with some relevant examples from the history of Japanese cinema, this paper will explore a map through all this complex. It should allow us to tend the lines of correspondence to understand both the peculiarities of this current phenomenon and also the continuities with the dynamics already set in the national cinematography.

### On the concept of *childhood* and its importance in Meiji Japan

According to the French scholar Philippe Ariès, “by the eighteenth century, special conventions in artistic and literary representation marked children as a distinct group and *childhood* as a separate domain, set apart from the everyday life of adult society. The immaturity of children is a biological fact of life, but the ways in which this immaturity is understood and made meaningful is a fact of culture.” (Shiraishi: 2005, 1) So there is a social and historical construction of a space of *childhood* as an ideally safe, innocent, and carefree domain. On a collection of *nishiki-e* prints edited by the Japanese Ministry of Education in the Meiji era, can be observed that the modern Japanese state redefines childhood in the same way as their referential capitalist western countries and identifies it as “a time of crucial importance for making useful, active citizens”. (Paget: 2011, 3) It is accepted that we all live with some sense of belonging, being it to some place, community or nation. But this sense of belonging, rather than natural, is constructed so can be forged and reshaped. (Wada-Marciano: 2012, 87) That’s why the institutions sought to integrate individuals, mobilise them for service to the nation and inspire in them a sense of personal identification with it. (Paget: 2011, 3)

In order to consolidate the radical shift the country was undertaking from the Meiji era, the Japanese people’s sense of belonging and identity “was gradually established through various discourses in public or private spheres, via, for instance, the government’s official announcements or popular culture, such as cinema.” (Wada-Marciano: 2012, 87) From various accounts, policies, and proclamations of the early Meiji officials, it can be found an ambivalent view of children. They are regarded at the same time as the embodiment of the nation’s hopes for the new era, as well as a potential danger “to be subdued through a rigorous regime of surveillance, indoctrination, drills and endless recitations”, (Paget: 2011, 6) This resulted in a duality of images. On one hand, children are heroic beings, willing defenders of the nation who could be relied on to bring Japan power and glory. On the other, they are targets of relentless surveillance and rigorous discipline, suggesting an anxiety about what they might do should the government fail in its task to thoroughly indoctrinate them. (Paget: 2011, 17)

### Good boys of the 30s, orphans of the 40s, bad boys of the 50s

In the 30's, cinema was already consolidated as mass media, perhaps the most prominent. The imperial and militaristic regime showed some kind of success in those indoctrination policies described in the previous section and the depiction of children in those days can be considered a continuation of it. Nevertheless, there were ways to circumvent censorship by using those conventions. A fine example is Ozu's *I Was Born, But...* (生れてはみたけれど *Umarete wa mita keredo*, 1932). With this film, Ozu cleverly, embeds a veiled critic to the official policies in the form of a comedy about children.

The protagonist family moves to the western suburbs of Tokyo, shown as an empty land to conquer which seems to allude to the new colonized lands in continental Asia, what which places us in the realm of political commentary. The children start a struggle to fit in the newly met neighbourhood children's society. They soon succeed and, by their witty actions, even replace the son of the president of a big company owner, incidentally their father's boss, as the leaders of the group. Later, watching a film shot by the president of the company, the children discover their father's submission to the hierarchy as he follows instructions to perform ridiculously in front of the camera. They get angry and urge their father to react. This episode underlines how fair the children's society is, as the prevalent positions are acquired by merits, and boosts a contrast of their dignity against the adults' miserable attitude towards power. The wise use of children's depiction reveals in this film useful to somehow resist power structures and its indoctrination efforts generating some critical thought by subtle irony.

Following the defeat and under the rule of the allied forces, post-war Japan becomes a *place* without effective guardianship by the nation-state. Therefore there was no "citizenship" in the practical sense of the rights and legal protections. Cinema specifically highlights this *condition of stateless-ness* by the depiction of orphans, "figures whose susceptibility to the post-war's disintegrated state granted them singular power in dramatic narratives", and so they depicted "Japan as a place without 'citizenship' in a large number of films. (Wada-Marciano: 2012, 87-88) Time and again, the act of working grant these figures a way back in the social fold, a way to claim their identity in the post-war landscape. (Wada-Marciano: 2012, 107)

As the country starts to recover social and economically, fathers returned to the screen. But a sense of detachment from parents remained in youth depictions, as established in the *Taiyōzoku* films. *Taiyōzoku* is the name given to a cultural phenomenon triggered by the success of Ishihara Shintarō's novels and the films based on them. It basically consist in stories of unemployed and lazy hedonist youngsters, practicing beach sports by daytime and frequenting jazz clubs by night, with dancing, alcohol and fights as amusements, ideally supplemented by casual sex without commitment. For the first generation raised in the new postwar system, freed from national-imperialist suffocation and the compulsory military duties their parents have had, that created a great enthusiasm. The dazzling public appearance of the Ishihara brothers meant for them the consecration of the life of conspicuous consumption to which they aspired, and made them role models and champions of a new masculinity that young people wanted to emulate.

So *Taiyōzoku* could be considered a revolt only in its façade, as it is based on the values of consumerism, leading some to argue that in reality was nothing more than a creation of the media tabloid media, which focused attention on the need for youth riots for something to argue against a backdrop of serenity, as the country was in the way of successful social and economic recovery. (Richie: 2005, 151) And so seems to do Ozu in his film *Good Morning* (□ □ □ □, Ohayō, 1959). Considered a remake of *I Was Born, But...*, this film also shows the domestic rebellion of a couple of brothers against their parents. But there isn't any noble reason in this case, but just a strategy to force them buying a television. The selfish couple of boys seems to be Ozu's parody of the Ishiharas and their hedonistic rebelliousness, depicting a change of his view of the children, therefore of the future, from optimism in pre-war to a negative one in the post-war era. (Montaño: 2012)

### Adolescence, subculture and consumerism

The protagonist of the *Taiyōzoku* movement were not children but youngsters in the verge of adulthood. Adolescents. Needless to say, new attitudes brought by the culture fired great anxiety in a fearful adult society that their imitative children were to fall in the whirlpool of sex and violence shown on screen, and led to increasing pressure from various lobbies parents and teachers. British *Cultural Studies* had been stating from the 70s that the marginal nature of so-called *subcultures* doesn't rely in themselves but in the disqualification exercised by institutions. The debate stands on whether they represent a form of resistance against the *establishment's* values, threatened by new subversive ones, or whether it is simply inconsequential recreations that capitalism allows off-production hours (school and work). This second idea would be strengthened by the way these expressions come into a negotiation process of the image they project, usually stigmatized as a provocation by institutions but at the same time used by the media, specially advertisement industry, either as a form of stigmatization or provoking, but ultimately incorporating it for its commercial use. (Mattelart & Neveu: 2004, 53-56) That being said, it would be easier to understand why adolescence is frequently linked to subcultures and its depiction in public spaces.

Adolescence, which can be described as an intermediate stage between childhood and adulthood, can be considered as a product of consumer capitalism as it has erased from society the habit of the rites of passage. Walter Benjamin observed that “over the nineteenth century, bourgeois society, by means of hygienic and social, private and public devices, produced a secondary effect, probably its true subconscious: to offer people the opportunity to avoid seeing the dying.” (Pintor: 2005, 4) Moving away from the consciousness of mortality, capitalism trivializes human life reducing it to a pulse for consumption with adolescence as an ideal state.

Indeed, the consumerism involved in the *Taiyōzoku* movement had an impact in Japanese film industry. In the moment when television started to threaten the film business, the major studios detected through the success of those films a wish for new faces and new forms of expression. The combination of sex and violence shown in the film *Crazed Fruit* (狂った果実, Kurutta kajitsu, 1956) was followed by the studios in a wide range of series of films. New genres emerged, around the so called *seishun-eiga*.<sup>1</sup> In the following years, film production entered a serious crisis, as authors

<sup>1</sup> 青春映画 or films about adolescents

eventually left the majors. This brain drain led to a split between independent filmmaking and a studio system creatively impoverished and fully devoted to serialized film instalments that proved to work well.

The only girl mentioned until now was Misora Hibari pretending to be a boy, so masculinity has been an issue. Many of those serials were based on exploitation movies involving youngsters, many times high school students, violence and eroticism. And several of the main characters were feminine.

### **Girls take up the stage**

Getting back to the Meiji *nishiki-e*, girls are portrayed in “scenes of female multitasking. [which is considered] The girls’ exemplary behaviour.” (Paget: 2011, 10) If the traditional roles assigned to women were instilled to girls and their visual representation, the film industry seems not having care of girls –mind again Misora’s masculine identification–, until exploitation films made adolescent girls attractive to masculine audiences because of their dual quality: childlike but in the verge to become adults. They can be considered innocent and pure, as well as be regarded as sexual subjects (although mere objects in most cases). Not a really fair panorama from a gender point of view.

This secular disregard for women has had some effects in artistic expression that, nevertheless, can be pointed as somehow positive. In the field of manga the *shōjo* genre,<sup>2</sup> oriented to young girls, experienced in the 60s and 70s a kind of revolution when women started to take a prominent creative role. Logically, they understood girls’ feelings, desires and expectations far better than her masculine peers, so developed new plots and styles that not just fitted better their target’s tastes, but led to a completely new way of expression.

*Shōjo* turns to melodrama, to the progressive sophistication of the plots and the expression of feelings to recreate the individual inner world as a space of feminine freedom. They usually rely on expressive compositions, in most cases very abstract, that concentrate in an only panel or layout several ideas and dramatic visual effects, like glitter or flower patterns, and sometimes combine different places, times and points of view simultaneously. Their stories flow through new narrative conventions and evoke a fanciful private space that projects girls’ intimate desires and aspirations. This includes a sublimation of adolescence and a late entry into adulthood, which appears to be the product of a context of social crisis in which young people express their rejection to a society they dislike. (Berndt: 1996, 95-96)

Besides this new aesthetic findings, it is relevant that men developed an interest on girls’ stories, be it for fascination on the new ways of expressions, for curiosity on learning about girls’ inner world or both. So a positive effect in all this is that both masculine and feminine worlds have somehow started to come closer and seek for mutual understanding. One example of all this can be found in Iwai Shunji’s films, as we will see in the next section.

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<sup>2</sup> *Shōjo* (少女), literally means *little women*

## Children and adolescents in contemporary Japanese films

*Fireworks* (打ち上げ花火、下から見るか? 横から見るか, Uchiage hanabi shita kara miruka? yoko kara miruka?, 1993) is an example of Iwai's moments of expressive concentration, synthesizing in multiple readings and emotions in a visual composition –effect that can also be traced in the field of music video, where the director was trained before he started filmmaking–. The movie tells the dream of a child on an impossible date with the girls he secretly loves, who is moving to another town and won't keep attending the same school. During the daydream, planning to run away, the girl dresses and makeup as an adult to pretend having the legal age to work. But it is significant that she suddenly abandon this idea and drags the boy to the school, where she gets into the pool, wash her face and share for a while their last infantile plays together in the water. The whole film includes many *shōjo* aesthetic effects, such as environments dominated by flowers, glitter and sparkles with expressive intention to emphasize the charm and idealization of the beloved girl.

In *All About Lily* (リリイ・シュシュのすべて, Ririi Shushu no Subete, 2001), the text intertwined in the image leads us into reflection on identity in the contemporary world characterized by the rise of networking and the virtual. A tension between the real and the simulated moving into the sphere of identity in the terms the conceptualized by Scott Bukatman as *terminal identity*. This concept consists in the dissolution the boundaries between the human and the technological, which shapes society by transforming each individual in a node of the communication networks. The human body is transmuted into a simple inbound and outbound data, information accumulation juxtaposed a reality not physical but virtual. (Bukatman: 1993)

But the physical dramatically intersects the characters by the cruel reality determined by bullying and forced prostitution<sup>3</sup> they suffer at school. Emotional expressiveness through a stylization is searched to make the beauty in the images collide with the nasty violence, moral degradation and lack of hope for their characters. In this context, they seem to be disconnected from the adult world. Throughout the film, the main character doesn't talk at all to his parents. They supply money, scold him and even slap him, but he never answer and merely look down to the ground. Neither that elementary and intuitive form of communication, the look, is able to articulate the boy. In fact, adults practically vanish from the screen. The vigilant parenting and guidance, is completely erased.

Not completely erased but equally impossible is intergenerational communication in Sono's *Suicide Club* (自殺サークル Jisatsu Sākuru, 2002) which shows the other side. In this film, the view is that of the older generation incapable of understanding the young behaviours. This Lack of understanding is shown in a disturbing opening scene, featuring a bunch of scholar girls, in apparently quotidian and even pleasant moments in a station. Nothing seems suspicious in their behaviour nor their cheering moods, but when an express train approaches, all fifty girls jump in front of it holding hands

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<sup>3</sup> Enjo-kōsai (援助交際) or *compensated dating*, is a practice involving schoolgirls receiving money for accompany adult men. It doesn't necessarily involves sex intercourse, but it does in many cases. The practice spread and got media attention in the 90s in Japan

In both *Suicide Club* and *All About Lilly*, it is evident that Japanese filmmaking is not detached from international trends, as can be noticed in these passages about *The Virgin Suicides* (Sofia Coppola, 1999) and *Elephant* (Gus Van Sant, 2003):

The world of *Elephant* is a bleak one in which people fail to connect meaningfully. For the greater part of the film Van Sant focuses on the quotidian and ritualised routines of the adolescent protagonists (...) Even before violence erupts on screen the viewer is made aware of the implicit brutality at play in the everyday. As we shall see, the protagonists are quintessential examples of what Thomas Docherty calls 'the postmodern character' – they are emptied out of all 'personal' characteristics and exist merely as drifting, rootless bodies on screen. (Backman: 2012, 157)

They address a disconcerting and even radical refusal to progress into adulthood. As such, while these two films draw on the teen pic inheritance, they offer far more complex portraits of adolescence and subtly indict the way in which the traditional (and obsolete) adolescent rite of passage has been re-appropriated

into even more pernicious forms of order and control that stifle metamorphosis and becoming. These films centre on bodies in transition in which the passage from childhood into adulthood is mapped allegorically, and in a disturbing manner, onto the passage from life to death. (Backman: 2012, 165)

Both quotes could perfectly fit also for Sono and Iwai's films and, at some extent, also to Nakashima Testsuya's *Confessions* (告白 *Kokuhaku*, 2010). *Confessions* goes a step beyond to the classical rebel students film, even further than the famous and polemical *Battle Royal* (バトル・ロワイアル, Batoru Rowaiaru, Fukasaku Kinji, 2000), which depicted the alienation and excess of competitiveness in the educational system at the same time as the fears of parents of revolted adolescents and claims for firm hand on it. The plot sets a dystopian law to punish misbehaviour in class groups, by a game consisting on killing each other until only one is left alive. *Confessions*, is not the story of a confrontation of students against their teachers and classmates, but the explosive revenge of a teacher against her students. Cold and elegant, this film shares many of the style trends seen on Iwai's filmmaking. Also many of the topics in *All About Lily*, especially bullying and lack of effective ways of communication between the young and the adults worlds. But there is an essential difference, as the parents, far from being erased from the account, are very present in the film. It seems that all the conflict has its origin in parental faults at not caring at all or, on the contrary, overprotecting their children. This double attitude points at the dual common situation of absent overworking parents or/and overprotective mothers devoted to childcare.

But more important, the film seems to confront the idea of children as innocent creatures. A socially unconceivable idea, like that of a teacher hatching a personal revenge against her students, is the principle plot of the films. This contrasts with the useless attitude of the substitute teacher, whose naïve conception of his role is shown as ridiculous, as it is also perceived by his students. All this seems to support the thesis that adolescents, despite still being formally under parental guidance and school formation, should take full responsibility if they commit serious crimes.

In more positive terms, Nakashima directed some years before *Kamikaze Girls* (下妻物語, *Shimotsuma Monogatari*, 2004). This film as well is comparable with those by Iwai, for setting a story of girls –Iwai’s films are usually starred by young girls. The exceptions, as the two films commented on previously, also include important female characters–. It talks about the uncertainties that adolescents try to fill by fitting in some social categories. In this case, the story is about the unlikely friendship between two girls belonging to different, and mostly incompatible, urban tribes. But it isn’t set in an urban location but in a rural area, that makes their lifestyle even more misunderstood. But the film doesn’t seem intended to judge, neither in a negative or positive way, the dressing and behaviour codes the girls have chosen to follow. Those subcultures are also not under scrutiny, but simply act as a mean to set a specific appearance to the film and to trigger comical situations. The tone of this movie is far less grimly and with a happy ending. If none of the previous films are strictly realistic but expressive and stylized, humour in *Kamikaze girls* relies in exaggeration, both in the storytelling and the visual record.

The last film to comment on is also set in a funny mood. It is a recent work by the prolific Miike Takashi, in the form of a musical romantic comedy. *For Love’s Sake* (愛と誠, *Ai to Makoto*, 2012) also includes violence and some ironic views to class difference. The film incorporates many parodies of common places of Japanese cinema too, especially those films addressed to or depicting adolescents. The musical scenes feature famous pop songs which lyrics fits with the situations and characters. Let’s talk about three of them.

In the opening one, with the song of significant title *Violent Love*<sup>4</sup>, the main characters are presented. The stereotyped, dominant and aggressive masculinity of the young delinquent Makoto, dazzles with his look and bravery in a street brawl the apparently fragile and submissive Ai. Both dressed in their school uniforms, the high class girl looks spotless while the low class boy’s is already dirty and shabby even at the start of the combat. Choreographed violence appears very natural to Makoto, who looks so comfortable acting violently. If all of this doesn’t remind enough the commonalities on certain advertisements addressed to male audiences, all the scene is colourful and full of effects reinforcing its look as an advertisement for television.

Another song shows Ai’s classmate, Iwashimizu, proposing to her in an empty classroom. The girl looks terrorized and the performance of Takei Emi, in the role of Ai, reminds those of threatened girls in *slasher* films. In a particular moment, a shot-reverse shot sequence suddenly reveals an astonished crowd, the rest of the class group, behind Iwashimizu. Another technique taken from horror films that will be stressed by their terrorized reaction when Iwashimizu approaches them.

Some clue on how to understand this blend of genre could be found, once again, resorting to Backman’s thoughts about Coppola and Van Sant’s films:

(...) both of these films hinge on the crisis of making meaning and the impossibility of addressing specific forms of crisis within established, or culturally accepted, language. By subverting generic representation and form from within, I would suggest that American Independent Cinema as

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<sup>4</sup> 激しい恋 Hageshii koi



exemplified in these two films engages with forms of cultural cliché and established film genres specifically in order to create new modes of seeing and thinking. In *The Virgin Suicides* and *Elephant* we are no longer dealing with a situation of crisis (which is commonly the case in any classical film) but a crisis-image: an image of instability, transition, and metamorphosis. By privileging uniquely cinematic elements the ontological status of the moving image is thrown into crisis. Bodies on screen are already inherently in a situation of flux and becoming because this is the very essence of the cinematic. (Backman: 2012, 164-165)

This playful use of horror film devices keeps on in the third song scene. In this case is Ai who is declaring her love to Makoto in the school garden, with the teachers and the rest of students as witnesses. His response is, unsurprisingly, pushing away the girl aggressively. Contrary to the usual in musicals, prone to emphasize movement, with even the passer-bys casually joining the singing and gaily dancing, everyone but the involved main characters stands still, expressionless, staring at Ai. Those presence are a kind of menace. If in the second scene, the love declaration seems to terrorize the crowd, in this one they act like if the girl's sentiments were something inconceivable, something to severely punish and proscribe.

## Conclusion

In contemporary Japanese films of children and adolescents, a pessimistic viewpoint stands out, displayed in a formally stylised way.<sup>5</sup> Artistically, they mainly search for some sense of visual poetry as displaying violent depictions of conflict, both inter and intragenerational. Violence seems an easier way of relationship than any kind of communication. In this sense, links with a certain historical trend in Japanese cinema and certain continuity on with them can be traced. Nevertheless, also many and significant breakaways can be spotted.

There is a new space for a feminine voice, or at least to more sophisticated female characters, not just intended for a mere exploitative gaze. Also the depiction of masculinity is evolving, put in question or at least treated in an ironic way. The adoption of specific characteristics popularized by *shōjo manga* would have been fundamental in this regard.

Far from relying on any sort of discourse conducting to promote behavioural patterns or contribute to shape national identity in any way, some social criticism is implied in those films. Especially, a strong discomfort and uncertainty amongst the young Japanese can be underlined. The idea of a homogeneous society of middle class citizens seems to be confronted. This is not anymore the stable and wealthy society with bright future of the previous decades, before the burst of the bubble economy, the natural disasters as the big earthquakes in 1995 and 2011 or other serious events

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<sup>5</sup> Of course, there are some other films and authors with more realistic styles –Koreeda Hirokazu and his *Nobody Knows* or Kawase Naomis's *Shara* or *Suzaku*, for instance– that are excluded from this account. But it is mainly due to the space given and to an aim to talk about films and directors that traditionally get less attention from scholar publication. Including them in the article wouldn't really change substantially my final conclusions as they also share many trends with their colleagues analysed here.

like the gas attacks in the underground, also in 1995, and more recently the nuclear issues.

Nevertheless, it doesn't look to be intended as part of a subversive discourse or transforming program. Those films, despite arguably independent from major studios, some artistic achievements and clever observations on society, can't be removed from its close relation to consumerism. But an appeal for commercial purposes, does not invalidate both its artistic achievements and its relevance as cultural artefacts. As products of its time, those films are infused with the potentiality to critically reflect on contemporary Japanese society and the place of children and youth in it.



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***Artificial Consciousness: Where Does Science Fact Break from Science Fiction,  
and How Do We Know?***

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**Abstract**

This paper explores what has been termed artificial consciousness (AC) (a.k.a., synthetic consciousness or artificial sentience). Related to its companion, artificial intelligence (AI), the subject might sound more like science fiction or fantasy than possibility. Though humans have been speculating about nonhuman consciousness for centuries, it was in the 1960s when computer science promised the rise of machines with human-level abilities. While the real-world challenges persist, we went ahead and built autonomous, fictional entities like HAL 9000 and the Terminator. This task has been relatively simple for standard narrative, by merely placing anthropomorphic character over a machine. In reality, constructing the human platform, through silicon or otherwise, is more than a matter of physical engineering or reshuffling human qualities. In fact, a truly artificial agent has very little need to replicate human intelligence or other capabilities. Consequently, the potential emergence of real-world AC could have less to do with our machines than with the success or failure of our minds to comprehend it. Given the typical portrayal of AI in fiction, as talking bipedal robots and doomsday machines, and our centuries of misunderstanding organic life forms, including our own, we might simply be incapable of imagining where the future is headed.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, artificial consciousness, machine consciousness, science fiction, synthetic phenomenology

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## **Introduction**

This paper explores the possibility of what has been termed synthetic or artificial consciousness (AC). To some, this might sound more like science fiction than fact, but to those engaged in the dialog, the potentiality of AC is a serious prospect. In the 1960s, artificial intelligence and computer science promised the rise of machines with human-level intelligence and other capabilities. In fiction, this has been comparatively easy to engineer. Simply take the human character and assign it machine qualities, or merely do what we have been doing for centuries with animals, which is anthropomorphize them with human qualities. On the film screen, this has worked rather well. Our autonomous, sentient agents of tomorrow have come in humanoid forms such as Roy Batty, Major Kusanagi, and Lt. Commander Data. By comparison, clustering forms of artificial entities have been known as HAL9000, Skynet, and the Matrix.

## **Multiple Definitions, Levels of Description, and the Unique Human**

Much of the subtext in this paper concerns the intersecting vectors of fact and fiction. This relates to a kind of fictionalism, a philosophical discourse useful for conveying ideas, but nonetheless must not be interpreted as literal truth (Eklund, 2011). Despite the portrayal of AI and robots in film and in popular press, subsequently nested within a framework of Western archetypes utilizing the typical good-bad narrative dichotomy, the potential evolution of machine consciousness is a much stickier, less well-defined proposition than fiction suggests. As such, artificial or synthetic consciousness could be interpreted a number of ways, including the rise of consciousness from information. Such a view calls attention to the psycho-philosophical constructs of intelligence, cognition, affect, and human ethics. In turn, each must be examined on the road to machine intelligence and nonhuman ethics. Hence, before making significant headway on some kind of definition for artificial consciousness, human efforts to the effect will need to recognize our indefinite understanding of what might give rise to AC itself.

Western science and even art, particularly in the American vein, have been greatly influenced by products of philosophy and behavior rather than processes of an internal nature (see Allen, 2011): in other words, philosophizing and doing take precedence over experiencing (except when it comes to nonhumans, then we conveniently play it the other way, guaranteeing an argument of human specialness in both directions). Although the neuroscientific revolution of the past decade has done much to change the attitude toward nonhuman consciousness (for a review, see Edelman & Seth, 2009), the influence of behaviorism still dominates many of the social sciences, from behavioral psychology to behavioral economics. It also fuels the divisions in AI, between an industrial model of narrow AI, focused on function and application in commercial and political economy, and an evolutionary-inspired model of general AI, which, in part, hopes to generate the autonomous entities of popular imagination. At present, compared to the success of the former camp, the latter, more-general view of these two fundamental directions in AI, has been considered a failure. But the underlying problem itself is nothing new; in fact, it is as old as our ability to process information, form definitions, and manage ambiguity, particularly when we consider multiple levels of description.

The definitional problem begins right away, with the very concept of *information*. The word *data* is often employed synonymously these days, but it certainly does not appease a majority. In fact, the father of information theory, Claude Shannon (1916-2001), considered the word information as merely useful for discussion, while a single concept of information could hardly account for any ultimate definition of what information was or what it could do (Floridi, 2010). In other words, Shannon avoided the common pitfall of reifying a construct, which is the mistake, throughout history, of assigning physical or event-meaning to an abstraction of language.

The problem is much more apparent with the constructs of consciousness, intelligence, and emotion, whereby we tend to discuss each in terms of how much or how many, or of strictly having or not having. It is mainly problematic because consciousness, intelligence, and even emotions do not actually exist (on emotion, see Griffiths, 2008); they are language constructs or abstractions that enable us to have conversations about the phenomena they purport to represent. As such, it is not possible to have actual quantities or on/off experiences of any of them. Parisi (2007) considered this a fundamental flaw with the philosophical approach to consciousness, where the question itself, What is consciousness? remains particularly useless for any scientific attempt to untangle the possibility of machine consciousness. This might seem counterintuitive in the context of natural conversation, but only because we have come to think of humans (and all entities, biological or otherwise) in terms of “being in possession of” some well-defined characteristic. This is one of the core difficulties plaguing many pursuits, including the use of interpretation and comprehension among storytellers and the public alike, where mixing (distorting) conventions and levels of description are not only acceptable but considered creative.

It also presents a paradox that probably most are not quick to realize. Throughout history and philosophy, and commonly today in psychology, popular media, and elsewhere, we often talk about “human nature,” which we eagerly employ in our struggle to maintain segregated uniqueness in relation to nonhuman species and machines (on interspecies relations, see Corbey & Lanjouw, 2014). In this struggle, the constructs of intelligence, emotion, and consciousness are gold standards for how we think, how we feel, and how we experience, thus giving us our unique nature. The problem, as mentioned above, and critiqued at length by Ashworth (2000), is that this so-called nature has mostly been drafted from the theoretical abstractions of our own minds. Without biological or empirical bases, they cannot count as definitions of nature in any physical or material sense. It is in our nature to breathe; this is readily obvious. It is in our nature to eat. But we would not use these two premises as defining characteristics of *Homo sapiens*. When we actually look at biology and evidence, we find that what we consider to be emotions, as with breathing and eating, have prehistoric neurological origins across species, while intelligent behavior, as we understand it, is common to at least mammals (Johnson, 2010; Rumbaugh & Washburn, 2003). The real difference, then, given the more-advanced cortical development of the human brain, is that we can perform higher levels of intelligent behaviors, which includes making abstract terminology. This advanced intelligence, coincidentally, fuels the trend, in both science and popular culture, of us downplaying our primitive emotionality in favor of our new and unique intelligence.

## Problems with Organic Consciousness

To the issue of multiple levels of description, Albert Einstein wrote, “Body and soul are not two different things, but only two different ways of perceiving the same thing. Similarly, physics and psychology are only different attempts to link our perceptions together by way of systematic thought” (as cited in Levy, 2010, p. 14).

The point is important because we humans tend to define all things based on our limited or even single perceptions of the world and its various phenomena. Subsequently, artificial consciousness can be a particularly difficult concept to grasp, due, in no small part, to our hard enough time grappling with human consciousness, let alone the thorny topic of nonhuman or animal consciousness. Allen (2011) pointed out that most animals clearly have ordinary consciousness, meaning they demonstrate states of wakefulness or awareness of immediate environment. At least mammals, too, experience their own forms of affect, based on their ability to sense, and seemingly process, experiences of pain and suffering in themselves and in others (Johnson, 2010).

More controversial, though, are the rather subjective and experiential forms of consciousness, as well as self-consciousness, and what Block (1995) called access consciousness: the ability to represent conscious information to others, typically through the use of language. This all ties into what is known as the multiple realizability of mind, a longstanding antireductionist argument in philosophy that, essentially, defines the mind as a confluence of abstractions leading to functions, behaviors, or characteristics of what we would recognize as a mind itself (e.g., see Bickle, 2013). This has been a major position in psychological science, which has been readily adapted to AI theory concerning emotion and consciousness (Scheutz, 2014). Other theories also abound for machine consciousness, including that of Manzotti (2007), whereby consciousness results from various process schemes manifesting from an architecture. By comparison, Morasso (2007) advanced the approach that consciousness is dependent on a nervous system, thus it must be more than a mere mental phenomenon. This latter argument runs throughout neuroscientific studies (Cvetkovic & Cosic, 2011), on humans and even nonhumans (Boly et al., 2013), which cannot be covered in this current paper. Safe to say, however, that a single approach, a single interpretation, or even a single definition of the phenomenon we label consciousness, would not be a fair approach, regardless of popular, literary, or other academic ruminations to the opposite.

With that said, life can give rise to not only phenomenological consciousness, as evidenced by its existence in humans, but also to a plurality of conscious states and experiences. In neurology, for example, consciousness involving the fully formed human brain is not discussed as an on/off phenomenon, but as a function of vigilance and awareness, in which the complete and simultaneous engagement of both represents the state of being fully rested, awake, and attentive. Many other states also exist, including the various forms of normal sleep, as well as states experienced as a result of brain trauma. The age of the particular individual is also significant, specifically the amount of natural neurological development or degradation during the lifespan. In cross-species comparisons, the same complex considerations also hold true. An example would be the adult chimpanzee, which has demonstrated several of



the neurocognitive and behavioral characteristics commonly associated with the average human toddler (Matsuzawa, 2013; Rumbaugh & Washburn, 2003).

### **Artificial, Artifact, Animal**

While mainstream AI still remains fairly disinterested in the possibility of conscious machines, other scholars, typically working across disciplines, have attempted to lay a foundation for its scientific study. Chella and Manzotti (2007), for example, have argued for a newer, more-sophisticated modeling of consciousness, which partly makes use of how it arises in the human brain. Others have put forth the concept of synthetic phenomenology (Aleksander & Morton, 2007; Chrisley, 2009) as a method for examining the potential consciousness of artifacts: an approach that states a machine or artifact does not necessarily need to be conscious for it to contribute to the study of machine consciousness.

The argument goes back to at least Alan Turing (1950), who articulated the impossibility of getting inside a machine, to evaluate any potential feelings or thoughts, and considered the idea of doing so an expression of mere human solipsism. A more contemporary, even stronger critique was put forth by Pollack (2006), who questioned whether human-level intelligence is even the standard by which all intelligence should be measured. Pollack refuted whether a mind is even necessary for intelligent behavior, considering that evolution itself, often through symbiotic composition (Watson & Pollack, 2003), has produced a myriad of intelligent-behaving species that lack minds or even sophisticated brains. Others (Buttazzo, 2001; Haikonen, 2012; Reggia, 2013) have questioned whether consciousness, too, even requires our classic definition that brains or minds must exist in some prescribed manner before consciousness can occur. The suggestion here is that organized patterns in neural networks are simply enough.

Regardless of the approach to understanding nonhuman consciousness, asserting that a machine or artifact cannot be conscious is a bit like saying a rabbit cannot have manners. This analogy might seem a bit removed from the issue at hand, but it calls attention to the important role that evaluation plays in constructing or defining reality based on abstractions. In this case, manners are a subjective human construct that take no account of what might constitute politeness in a rabbit society. Given the needs of living as a rabbit, essentially as prey not predator, rabbits might be far more courteous than any other species, including humans. Accordingly, their inability to express this in human terms does not make them any less capable of having manners. Ultimately, stating that rabbits cannot have manners, in the same way that nonhuman agents cannot have consciousness, is a meaningless claim; and it does not draw attention to a difference in species as much as it does to problems associated with applications of language. The only fact we actually glean for certain, which adds to the pointlessness, is that rabbits cannot be humans.

Taking a case in the reverse direction, most dolphins are in control of a very sophisticated echolocation system, giving them a heightened awareness of underwater frequencies and sounds that goes unmatched by most other aquatic creatures (Berta, Sumich, & Kovacs, 2006). This phenomenon is a matter of biology, which has no equivalent among primates. The bottlenose dolphin also sleeps one hemisphere at a time, allowing it to maintain levels of awareness during slumber, a characteristic

completely outside the human experience. Given these facts, filtered through standard definitions of consciousness, dolphins must be in possession of higher levels of consciousness than humans, at least ordinary consciousness in their native ocean environments. In fact, based on the same logic commonly employed about the uniqueness of human consciousness, dolphins would be fully conscious and special, while humans would be lesser creatures with limited awareness and capabilities, merely existing in the world while dolphins were excelling in it. In addition, given the human inability to speak a dolphin code, or even register sound frequencies that dolphins process quite naturally, humans must actually be only partly conscious. For them to thrive as a species, therefore, they will need to evolve dolphin-level capabilities.

The above line-of-thought is important because an underlying theme, throughout the evolution of AI, has been whether an artifact or synthetic entity can or will develop human-like capabilities. This has certainly been the case among the artificial general intelligence (AGI) community, which has set its sites on that very goal. More realistically, and perhaps more disturbingly, depending on one's outlook, is that AI has no inherent need to be like humans, in the same way that a human has no need to evolve into a dolphin, any more than our rabbits need to develop human-like manners. What is much more likely is that an evolving AI could skip past humans altogether, as it has already done computationally, and proceed to super-intelligent entity with full autonomy.

Because we cannot be sure of the consequences from this trajectory, it remains potentially disturbing for people, and has likewise inspired a whole genre of dystopic literature and film where machines take over the world. It has also inspired formal critiques of the problem within AI itself, ranging from legitimate concerns about control and coding (Armstrong, 2014), cooperative morality and reciprocal altruism (Fox & Shulman, 2010), and anthropomorphic bias and designed friendliness (Bostrom, 2014; Yudkowsky, 2008). The problem has been simultaneously met by an opposite, evolutionary argument (Pinker, 2007; Swayne, 2013), that super-intelligence, by definition, means the ability to solve problems in adaptive, non-threatening ways; in other words, just because humans have evolved emotionally aggressive and destructive tendencies it does not mean that a machine, without any of the same biological architecture, will follow the same course.

### **Crafting the Fiction**

From the first page of his book entitled *Between Literature and Science*, Swirski (2000) argued that in order to make any future accessible, the writer of science fiction and fantasy cannot delve too far into a truly plausible future, one that would merely appear incomprehensible to most readers. The criticism concerns the pragmatic side of aesthetics, to which the writer must ground a story in familiarities associated with past and present. Such narrative strategy, quite common in fiction development, remains effective because it exploits the tendency, documented throughout psychology, for people to rely on heuristics, biases, and cognitive illusions for everyday judgments and existence. In one influential work on the familiarity bias, Kahneman and Tversky (1973) documented that people tend to construct representations of reality based on what they already know, as opposed to new evidence or statistical logic, a habit leading to fallacious intuitions and erroneous

predictions. A related term is the assimilation bias, whereby we tend to conform new data to match our existing beliefs, rather than the other way around. Thomas (2013) addressed the dilemma in terms of mental imagery, which we depend on tremendously for our daily functionality, a habit that nonetheless posits numerous problems for perception, memory, and meaning formation. In short, regardless of what we see with our eyes, our internal images guide many of our objective decisions, images that are entirely subjective phenomena.

Given such predicaments, and predisposed to excessive reliance on vivid but not necessarily appropriate information (i.e., the availability bias), we are faced with the hard challenge of trying to discuss the future without falling into self-deception, either scientifically or fictionally. As a consequence, Swirski (2000) claimed that the gulf between the two cultures of science and literature is not as vast as purported. Instead, the situation should be seen as more of a relationship, complex and interesting, in which science fiction writers in particular have built “epistemic bridges” (p. x) between the two worlds. Broderick (2000) stated it perhaps more curiously. “Quite a few writers in and out of science fiction have been eddying in the slipstream of science toward a gnarly attractor in narrative space ...” (p. 3).

In the study of creativity in arts and science, Root-Bernstein and Root-Bernstein (2004) noted many similarities between the two worlds as well. For example, artists and scientists, including mathematicians, tend to share psychological testing profiles. All three, despite differences in product, also speak about their processes in similar ways, processes that include complex pattern recognition, managing abstraction, and the intentional employment of imagination. The particular importance of imagination has been discussed by many (e.g., Gendler, 2013; Markman, Klein, & Suhr, 2009; Taylor, 2011), not simply as a tool for creativity and storytelling, but as a requirement for all manner of affect and learning, including social understanding, empathy, moral reasoning, and simulated projection into other times and events, which aids critical thought.

So how does this play into the world of AI or AC? The future tends to beget fear, particularly in an age devoted to the nonstop broadcasting of global unrest and impending doom. AC is a topic of the future, and will become more relevant as more of that future passes into present. Compounding that anxiety has been such franchise films as *The Terminator* (Hurd, 1984) and *The Matrix* (Silver, 1999), in addition to the ultra-realistic genre defining *2001: A Space Odyssey* (Kubrick, 1968). In each case, the main characters are faced with a powerful central-AI bent on human annihilation. In the near 15-year spacing between each film, that AI depiction evolved like a religion, from the unassuming psychotic agent of HAL9000, to the wrathful and biblical god-like entity known as the Matrix. Also, in each of those films, the humans retained no way of determining whether each AI were conscious, merely the sense that they were because of the destructive behavior they emanated.

### **Crafting the Fact**

The fictions of the preceding paragraph addressed problems for AC, ones not without parallel in the real world. The centralized processing AI approach, throughout the history of AI development, has thus far been a predominately Anglo-American phenomenon, one that readily stokes the fires of Orwell’s (1949) warnings of Big

Brother. On the surface, IBM's Watson computer, which proved victorious on the game show *Jeopardy*, a feat previously reserved only for humans, has a public persona visually bathed in the light of cool blue, a color that psychology has shown to be relaxing and non-threatening to humans. The visual choice is important because HAL 9000 was swimming in alarming red. With the exception of this visual, and the possibility that HAL was probably self-aware while Watson most probably is not, the two systems are architecturally similar. In other words, both are, essentially, physically amorphous clustering systems of multiple processors, focused around a central hub that expresses intelligent behavior. This has been the fundamental direction of large-scale AI development since its inception over 60 years ago, and its fictional portrayal in *2001* is, if anything, a testament to the visionary outlook of director Stanley Kubrick and his project consultant, the scientist and science-fiction author Arthur C. Clarke.

While the game-show champion Watson shares parallels with HAL 9000, the immense computational clustering and algorithmic AI power of a company like Google more resembles Skynet from the *Terminator* series. In addition, according to clues garnered from trends in spending and activity, the National Security Agency (NSA) (Bamford, 2009; Global Research, 2013) and the U.S. Defense Department (Elkus, 2014) are massively investing in AI development, with their combined efforts possibly accounting for the largest AI spending globally. Like in the films presented above, there really is no way of determining if any real-world agents in the Google, Pentagon, and especially NSA scenarios can attain, or have already attained, something resembling a conscious state, particularly since each platform is unavailable for public assessment. In particular, if the Defense Department and the NSA are developing AI similar to the more-publicly understood Google architecture, this would mean narrow, task-specific functionality where any kind of consciousness or self-awareness, recognizable by humans, is not going to be detectable.

The truth is, as the above-mentioned films have implied, and as the arguments from earlier sections in this paper have suggested, such consciousness might actually be outside our innate human capability to ever detect. Given our track record with other nonhuman species to date, even if we managed some form of detection, all probability indicates that AC will be incomprehensible (e.g., see Heaven, 2013). So incomprehensible, in fact, that some sophisticated AI designs might already have a primitive form of consciousness, which makes our biological inability to experientially conceive or even appreciate dolphin echolocation seem like an elementary-school problem. At least dolphins are formed of the same organic matter as humans, with dual-hemispheric brains responsive to a central nervous system, as all mammals, birds, and most other macro-level species are. But how does a silicon-based artifact, with a nervous system of binary 0s and 1s, potentially interpret, understand, and maybe even imagine itself within an environment? What will be the case when machines move beyond silicon and binary, to the barely understood world of quantum computing, which is now in its infancy?

In his pivotal 1950 paper, Turing proposed a test for machine intelligence, one that has since become known simply as the Turing Test. In almost direct rebuttal 30 years later, Searle (1980) proposed his Chinese room argument, against the possibility of any kind of computer mind or consciousness. Both of these have been discussed extensively for decades, taking on near-religious significance in AI debate, so they

will not be addressed here. But the truth is, neither is up to the task outlined in the preceding paragraph, of assessing the literally alien form that machine consciousness is likely to take or has already started taking. As such, given the current limits of our perceptions, languages, and biases against fathoming future conditions, AC might as well be from another galaxy.

### **Is That the Only Model?**

While the Anglo-American world remains transfixed on the potentiality of cluster systems, AI in Japan is closely bound up with advances in robotics. Specifically, advances in autonomous humanoid robotics have inspired an array of architectures and possibilities, including the internationally famed Asimo system by the Honda Corporation. Humanoid robots, and their typically negative portrayal in Western cinema, are greeted in nearly opposite fashion in Japanese society (Katsuno, 2011). One reason is purely pragmatic. The Japanese population is rapidly aging and there will be no one to care for them (Iida, 2013; Ryall, 2013). As such, while Western analysts and the public debate the anxiety caused by intelligence (e.g., Barrat, 2013) and human-like physical appearances (Bar-Cohen & Hanson, 2009) of machines, affect for human interfacing has become a topic of commercial and social development throughout East Asia. A big question, then, posited throughout the history of AI, is whether machines can emote. But as argued earlier in this paper, this line of question remains somewhat depthless.

Psychology has clearly outlined that affect is a construction, and constructions require both a speaker and a listener to agree on their meaning in order for such constructions to carry accurate substance or implication. Hence, all affective states, when at least two parties are involved, require both an emoter and a perceiver in order for any individual emotion to carry a definition. Take, for example, something as simple as a smile. How can we tell what the smiler is actually feeling, or whether our interpretation of that smile is even accurate? Is the person happy, nervous, or perhaps masking an altogether different feeling? Likewise, does the smiler even know why he or she is smiling? Maybe the smile is not masking an emotion from the external viewer, but masking it from the emoter. We are not always in command of, or in touch with, how we feel, sense, or react at any given moment.

The truth is, affect is as much, if not more, context driven and externally interactive as it is internally processed, which implies that nonhuman agents are capable of emoting even if they cannot feel anything on the inside. To an elderly person confined to a wheelchair or nursing facility, an emoting robot might very well be the most affectively rewarding experience of that person's present life. That very theme was played out in the 2012 small-budget film, *Robot and Frank* (Acord et al.), in which Robot itself was inspired by Honda's Asimo design. In that narrative, as with the argument above, regarding the constructed nature of affect and consciousness, one would be hard-pressed to deny that an agent such as Robot lacked a form of self-awareness. Perhaps more importantly, from a functional, phenomenological, and even humanistic perspective, if an argument against an affective or conscious humanoid agent were analytically successful, would it make any difference to the individual who believed otherwise? As noted earlier in this paper, on heuristics and bias as a cornerstone of judgment, the answer is probably no.

## Where Does This Leave Us?

In following traditions such as psychology, mathematics, and most sciences, not understanding what one is up against is no barrier to studying it. AI, particularly the type advocating human-like general intelligence, has become a multidisciplinary field, one that has turned around and challenged the very parameters it has borrowed, not the least of which includes the study of information, evolution, intelligence, and consciousness. In this light, regardless of hopes or fears, several AI researchers (e.g., Bostrom, 2013; Goertzel, 2014; Muehlhauser, 2013) have assumed the inevitability of super-intelligence and synthetic consciousness, and moved directly to a proactive stage of trying to provide some assurances, from the outset, that future AI or AC will not end up becoming the apocalyptic legend of Western film lore. The attitude is controversial, displeasing many in the more-traditional AI and philosophy communities alike. But from a dynamical chaos perspective, where sensitivity to initial conditions holds unseen deterministic reverberations throughout the future of the system, making an attempt at getting things right from the beginning might not be a bad approach.

In the meantime, as for whether actual consciousness in artificial agents is even plausible, at least a kind that we can understand, or will remain an artifact for science fiction, only time can say. In Stanislaw Lem's 1961 novel *Solaris*, subsequently made into films of the same title by Andrei Tarkovsky (1972) and Steven Soderbergh (2002), the author's central theme addressed the ultimate inadequacy of communication between humans and nonhuman species. Such a message will likely remain paramount for some years to come.

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***Seeing like a Feminist: Representations of Societal Realities in Women-centric  
Bollywood Films***

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**Abstract**

One of the most notable contemporary trends in Indian cinema, the genre of women oriented films seen through a feminist lens, has gained both critical acclaim and sensitive audience reception for its experimentations with form and cinematic representations of societal realities, especially women's realities in its subject matter. The proposed paper is based on readings of such women centric, gender sensitive Bollywood films like *Tarpan*, *Matrubhoomi* or *The Dirty Picture* that foreground the harsh realities of life faced by women in the contemporary patriarchal Indian society, a society still plagued by evils like female foeticide/infanticide, gender imbalance, dowry deaths, child marriage, bride buying, rape, prostitution, casteism or communalism, issues that are glossed over, negated, distorted or denied representation to preserve the entertaining, escapist nature of the melodramatic, indeed addictive, panacea that the high-on-star-quotient mainstream Bollywood films, the so-called 'masala' movies, offer to the lay Indian masses. It would also focus on new age cinemas like *Paheli* or *English Vinglish*, that, though apparently following the mainstream conventions nevertheless deal with the different complex choices that life throws up before women, choices that force the women to break out from the stereotypical representation of women and embrace new complex choices in life. The active agency attributed to women in these films humanize the 'fantastic' *filmi* representations of women as either exemplarily good or baser than the basest—the eternal feminine, or the power hungry sex siren and present the psychosocial complexities that in reality inform the lives of real and/or reel women.

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One of the most notable contemporary trends in Indian cinema, the genre of women oriented cinema seen through a feminist lens and structured around pressing and sensitive gender issues, has gained both critical acclaim and sensitive audience reception. Films like *Tarpan* (The Absolution) have the potential to posit an alternative to traditional Bollywood films as they try to make depictions of women more true-to-life in narrative cinema.

### **The Well of Memories: Tarpan**

*Tarpan* (1995) by K Bikram Singh can be counted as a pioneering effort to showcase, in an innovative cinematic genre, the evils of a caste and class based gender discriminatory patriarchal society. Persisting gender inequalities in a reigning patriarchy, existing cultural beliefs and practices permeate into almost every aspect of the women's social and cultural environment and value systems. *Tarpan* presents the quest for a mythical well of memories, with supposed medicinal and restorative properties hidden in its waters, that needs to be cleansed, all its filth, accumulated over ages, needs to be removed so that the life giving, restorative, magical water spouts forth—it is this fresh water that can prove rejuvenative for a strange malady that plagues all seven year old girls in a particular village in Rajasthan who live emaciated lives and die long, lingering and painful deaths. Forgotten and abandoned, the well remains hidden, lost to the villagers. The only clue to the now forgotten Jogia well can be found in a crude mural preserved by an old woman which depicts horrifying scenes of gendered violence. The mural is dominated by a well in which women and children are being thrown ruthlessly by demonic creatures. A long and hidden tunnel into the past where perhaps ghosts of the village past reside, the Jogia well is not in any specific time or place. In the process of cleaning this well—the Jogiya Kuya—that memories of class, caste, sexual, physical and psychological exploitation and domestic abuse are resuscitated and sincere confessions to the crimes are needed to condone the deeds. In this process *Tarpan* in a way employs the process of re-memory deployed by Toni Morrison in *Beloved* (1987). To 're-member' forcefully 'disremembered' apparently forgotten traumatic events through the very act of the person's re-memory not only acknowledges the trauma but also validates the pain suffered by countless victims of oppressions and discriminations. As the long repressed memories resurface, the present is haunted by an irrevocable past; and as the sinners confess, an absolution as well as an ablution take place as it were — reminding the audience of a true tarpan, the ritual worship appeasing the memories of dead ancestors, and life is restored and regenerated. Seen as a pioneering feminist film, *Tarpan* makes use of a gendered subject matter, a non-linear story line and a distinct theatrical form that puts the performative aspect to the fore that brings out the surreal, representational nature of cinema as performance and therefore challenges mainstream ideological expectations along with basic codes and conventions of cinematic representation, and therefore creates an alienating effect of distancing or estranging the audience. Deploying the strategy of a mythic quest of a father for a regenerative water that would rejuvenate his daughter by restoring her health, *Tarpan* presents a series of inter-related narratives in the form of four stories which initially appear as individual incidents of personal conflicts between members of different communities, classes and castes that eventually merge into a single narrative of a gendered communal holocaust perpetrated by the uppercaste landlords over the lower caste minions, the disremembered memories of which need to be absolved before life can be restored to the hapless girl children of the community.

### **The Birth of a New Nation: *Matrubhoomi***

It is a belief wide spread in India that the birth of the girl child is the outcome of a *shraap* or curse from the gods. The dominant religions as well as the kinship structure prevalent here lays great value on reproduction in general and sons in particular; girls are considered a lifelong liability as they carry off a large part of the family's assets as dowry at the time of their marriage gnawing at the family's economic well being. The condition of women in India, where some parts of it notorious for rampant female foeticide and infanticide when newly born girls are smothered in a tub of milk to evade the associated sin or *paap* and resultantly a terribly skewed sex ratio, can be well gauzed through the countless reports of gender discriminations that make the headlines daily. Fighting gender disparity is a big challenge in India with its socially sanctioned traditions of dowry and dowry-deaths, its complacent permissiveness of wife beating and domestic abuse in the form of wife swapping, forced polygamy/polyandry and child-marriage in some communities. The social crisis faced by the eleven states in India with an alarmingly adverse sex ratio that has created a terrible scarcity of girls, resulting in the revival of some traditional evil social customs, like inbreeding, wife swapping, bride bazaar, wife renting/buying, prostitution to name only a few, points to the grim reality facing Indian women. inspired by a magazine report about a village in Gujarat, which had no women, Manish Jha's debut feature, *Matrubhoomi: A Nation Without Women* (2003), portrays one of the grimmest realities of present day India, rampant female foeticide, an atrocious crime that has been complacently sanctioned, even actively condoned as part of traditional Indian ethos since time immemorial. *Matrubhoomi* presents a futuristic dystopia, offering a view of the near future when the nation would face a grim reality without women as it sanctions almost a selective genocide as hundreds of girl children die in the nation everyday simply because they are girls. "The first emotion that hits anybody watching *Matrubhoomi* is shock," writes a reviewer from a leading Indian daily. "Shame follows. And, ultimately, one feels drained. It is a numbing experience. Jha's vision of a nation without women is bleak. It is a world where a father sells off his daughter, where a father-in-law sleeps with his daughter-in-law and where brothers conspire to kill the sibling who is closest to their collective wife."<sup>1</sup> Set in a nondescript village somewhere in a futuristic rural northern India, *Matrubhoomi* explores in a brutal and hard hitting manner, an age when the patriarchal set-up has forced women to become nearly extinct as a result of the gory practice of female infanticide. Populated exclusively by brutish men, the dark world of the small village reduces to a violent barbaric state and the near extinction of women results in the dehumanisation of the sex-starved men, young and old, who indulge in group pornographic sleaze, bestiality, homosexuality and violence. Without women, the society degenerates, emotionally and psychologically, grows gross and debilitates cluttered as it is with horrendous and grotesque perversions like cross dressing and lewd dance performances. The frightening visions that the Jogia Kuya throws up in Tarpan gets a grimmer dimension as it is invested with a chilling black humour in Jha's film through the depiction of gut-wrenching violence, repeated rapes and utter barbarianism. Rooted in reality, Jha's *Matrubhoomi* is created intentionally as an exaggerated, horrifying fantasy to promote awareness among the people of this horrendous social malady and the plight of the girl-child in India. It reads almost like a parody, a dark, mocking re-enactment of the great Indian epic Mahabharata, where a father buys a wife for his five sons by paying five lacs and five cows as bride price from the father of the bride and demands his conjugal rights over her body to get his

money's worth, where a father gets rich by the monetary compensation given for the father-in-law's sexual rights over his daughter-in-law and all vestiges of normalcy and ethics vanish into thin air as brothers kill brothers, the wife is chained to a post in the cowshed without food and water just to be used as an object of sexual release for her five husbands and the village men alike and men kill each other over the rights of the body of the last surviving woman and the paternity of her 'son'. "This is the vision of India's future woman: The tale of Kalki, a metaphoric Draupadi who inhabits a rural India somewhere around 2050... A caste-war ensues, killing nearly all as Kalki gives birth to a girl. The Mahabharata reference gives way to the forecast of Vishnu's incarnation, Kalki, bringing an end to Kalyug."<sup>2</sup> writes another reviewer in an article in the Times of India. In the spectral village, after the carnage when all men kill each other for the possession of one woman and the supposed paternity of her yet-to-be born 'son', the last surviving woman Kalki frees herself from bondage and gives birth to a girl in a deserted house and acknowledges her birth with a smile as the newly born daughter thrashes her tiny legs up in the air and makes her presence felt through her lusty cries. Though critics have allegedly labelled Jha's vision as 'bleak', a feminist reading would envision a positive ending to the film, signifying the birth of a new nation—a nation born out of strife, pain and humiliation, built on the bodies of the brutish men, a nation cleansed as it were by the blood of the warring, armed, degenerate men. The only 'man' alive, so to say is the young boy, a servant and presumably lower class and lower caste, a sympathetic soul to the hardships of Kalki, and a prospective mate for Kalki's new born daughter in a nation where women would be free from patriarchal atrocities. The birth of Kalki's daughter, a triumphant girl-child, is literally the beginning of an indigenous matriarchal world, a Matrubhoomi, the land of mothers, in the true sense. From a nation without woman, a patriarchal dystopia, the narrative of Jha's film travels towards a nation of women, without violence, without blood bath, without rape, dowry or foeticide envisioning a feminist utopia as it were, sustained by love, care and compassion for each other.

### **A Riddle of Choice: *Paheli***

*Paheli* (2005) by Amol Palekar is a re-telling of a folktale named *Duvidha* as retold by Vijaydan Detha. It is the story of a woman who is left by her husband and is visited by a ghost who is in love with her. Lachchi is a young woman who, fed on stories of idyllic relationships of Laxmi and Narayan, that last a lifetime, dreams of marriage and a husband who loves her. In her aspiration, Lachchi is like Everywoman, and like everywoman she has dreams of an idyllic marriage night yet her husband Kishenlal, a true businessman who leaves her the morning after their marriage for five long years to hone his business skills. He goes abroad early morning leaving the marriage unconsummated, true to the dictates of his father and Lachchi's dreams, nurtured so lovingly from childhood, get shattered by the utter indifference that Kishenlal shows towards her presence in the room with him. He is more interested in the tallying of accounts of marriage in his accounts than making idyllic live to his newly-wed wife. True to the doppelganger motif of a ghostly double so common in folktales, a ghost soon arrives, in the form of her husband and presents himself before Lachchi as her lover. Though a ghost, his honest nature comes out sharply as he tells Lachchi the truth about himself at the outset and offers the choice to her. This is the first time anyone has asked her choice and Lachchi chooses the ghostly lover knowing full well that he is neither a human nor her husband. She makes a conscious choice and affirms her right to a desirous self that has been

summarily negated by her husband when he abandoned her. Paheli, in addressing the issue of a woman's right to choice as well as a human self with human desires, boldly broaches a tabooed subject in the context of a patriarchal India with its venerated conservative notions of chastity and self sacrifice in women. The film interrogates the notion of marriage and companionship as well as love in arranged marriages to foreground the subtle gendered issues at work. Paheli becomes a feminist text as it spotlights a women's choice over her own life and deals with issues of self and agency in that context. The dilemma or riddle of choice that Lachchi is faced with does away with the very notions of chastity inculcated in women in the patriarchal traditions from time immemorial as well as the stereotypes of a perfect wife as she ponders her choice—whether she wants to live her own life, pining away in austerity for an indifferent husband who leaves her of his own free will the morning after her marriage and goes away to prosper in business in far away foreign lands for five years or spend her life in a loving mutuality and bask in the happiness of reciprocated love with a form changing, shape-shifting ghost who loves her, respects her choice and cares for her family. The ghost Kishenlal is all that the living Kishenlal is not. The real life Kishenlal has acted as a husband in control of his wife's destiny—leaving his newly married wife alone in what was still a strange and unfamiliar home for her, not wanting to consummate their marriage thus taking away her right to sexual desire, shattering her dreams, abandoning her under the pretext of business and, by implication, not being honest with her about his motives before marriage. His announcement that he is going to leave her for five years on her wedding night stuns her and shows the stereotypical male mentality of taking women for granted as an object to be possessed and used or discarded at will. On the other hand the ghostly double is a representation of all of Lachchi's desires— he is a sensitive lover, a prankster, a magician, a person who acknowledges her desires and reciprocates her emotions — all the qualities that Lachchi longed for in a husband. Instead of self-sacrifice and martyrdom, Lachchi thus opts for a fulfilling and passionate union, a reciprocal relationship with the ghost, and in the new age fairytale that Palekar weaves, she is reunited with her ghostly lover even after the real life Kishenlal returns and establishes himself as her husband. Lachchi's bold decision and empowering choice, as well as the 'fairytale' ending resulting in female sexual autonomy is a social statement that is rare in Bollywood cinema, if found at all. In order to eschew realism and present a different worldview, Palekar in Paheli uses the ghost and the different animal or bird forms that he takes as well as the puppets from Rajasthan, who are a veritable presence throughout the film. The feminist overtones in Paheli can be seen in the interventions in the story by the puppets who act as narrators, mediators between the supernatural and the real world as well as the chorus who discuss the social and moral implications of Lachchi's choice with an unmatched sagacity. Though Lachchi and Kishanlal are shown during the end credits as puppets in the hand of fate, it is the choice that Lachchi exercises over her own life, opting for a life of fulfilment with the ghost who not only loves and cares for her but also helps bring back the family honour and consequently, becomes the cause for the return of Kishenlal's brother, and, as a result, love and happiness back to her sister-in-law, bringing joy and love to Lachchi, the family as well as to the whole village by digging a pond of fresh water in the deserts of Rajasthan, that makes her an empowered woman and Paheli a feminist text. It is the ghost who literally works miracles and charms everyone by his gaiety and loving nature while the real Kishenlal fails miserably both as husband and as a businessman. Even at the end the ghost surrenders to Lachchi's name and the wise old shepherd successfully bottles up

Lachchi's lover, the ghostly double of Kishenlal and solves the riddle. Interestingly the union of Lachchi and the ghost culminates in Lachchi giving birth to a daughter, Looni Ma and it is the name Looni Ma that becomes the code word proving the identity of the ghost when he comes back to Lachchi in the body of her husband Kishenlal. 'Looni Ma' therefore works like a well beloved shared secret as their mutual relationship, a signifier for mutuality and reciprocity hidden from the view of others. It is like the river Luni, that mythically flows beneath the surface of the earth, ever flowing, life giving yet hidden from view, known only to the initiated. This regenerative stream of love born out of the union of two kindred souls—one human the other a spirit, thus become emblematic of the whole world, the material and the spiritual, the natural and the supernatural, the normal and the paranormal, the real and the surreal. This confluence is notably manifested through the girl child, born out of love and conscious choice, and thus she becomes an agentive self from birth.

### **Vamp or Victim: *The Dirty Picture***

*The Dirty Picture* (2011) by Milan Luthria, writes Taran Adarsh in a perceptive review, "draws inspiration from the struggling female actors in the 80s, whose insurmountable and indomitable spirit made them emerge triumphant and create a distinctive space for themselves in the male-dominated industry. .... *The Dirty Picture* not only draws attention to the life of a sex goddess, but also makes us responsive of the catastrophe behind the facade.... It's an exceptional portrayal of an ordinary person's rise from scratch to extraordinary heights and her subsequent fall."<sup>3</sup> Set in the 1980s, the controversial film is a fictionalised biopic of the life and times of the much sought after sensuous South Indian actress Silk Smitha, and her contemporaries like Nylon Nalini and Disco Shanti, all of whom were noted for the overtly erotic nature of their roles and who had become the rage for the male audience yet all of whom led turbulent lives and died lonely deaths, mostly opting for suicides to end their lives—women who have been victimised as seductive vamps, the sex sirens designated by the patriarchal film industry. "What peculiarly signalizes the situation of woman" writes Simone de Beauvoir in her revolutionary *The Second Sex*, "is that she - a free and autonomous being like all human creatures - nevertheless finds herself living in a world where men compel her to assume the status of the Other."<sup>4</sup> The male world has distorted the woman to serve the needs of its culture and has seen the woman only as it chose to see her – defining the woman for its own purposes. In the male dominated culture, a woman has thus become a myth as it were. "She is an idol, a servant, the source of life, a power of darkness; she is the elemental silence of truth, she is artifice, gossip and falsehood; she is healing presence and sorceress; she is man's prey, his downfall, she is everything he is not and that he longs for"<sup>5</sup>. She is at once Eve and Virgin Mary - at once evil and good - "through her is made unceasingly the passage from hope to frustration, from hate to love, from good to evil, from evil to good."<sup>6</sup> The male world is a scene of betrayal for these victimised women as the world that had lured them on with promises of fame, wealth and companionship, love and stardom, is the world responsible for their downfall. That Silk was lured by the promise of love and mutual reciprocity only to be let down repeatedly by both her lovers and the male dominated film industry that used her is succinctly portrayed in the choice of the bindi and the red sari that Silk wears as she prepares for her suicide—the wish for marriage as the red sari symbolised remained unfulfilled for these women as a dialogue in the film re-iterates 'women like you can't be taken home...yes but they can be taken to bed'. Extremely ambitious small town girl



Reshma desperately tries to make a mark as an actress. She is a sensuous dancer in desperate search for a foothold in the film industry and she finds it in Selva Ganesh, the producer, who rechristens her as Silk and she calls him Keeradas “justifying that keede hi toh banate hain silk (worms produce silk). That smart and symbolic line pretty much sums up the bigger picture behind the dirty picture.”<sup>7</sup> opines Gaurav Malani, of TNN in his review of *The Dirty Picture*. “The supposedly decent and respectable society is the one that makes a Silk out of Reshma and sex-symbol out of Silk.... The barefaced demeanour of the film candidly highlights the exploits of the industry and the unapologetic attitude of its female protagonist.”<sup>8</sup> The film foregrounds the almost heroic struggle of a woman to achieve her dreams of stardom, and her ultimate fall when discarded by the very men who had used her as a tool to reach their personal goals. The double standards of the society where a woman is either a heroine, the too good to be true and gullible Devi or a vamp, a sex siren baring her body, to be used to titillate and seduce the predominantly male spectatorship so as to increase the box office success rates and keep the cash tinkling at the counter, the rampant sexual exploitation of women in the film industry all come out succinctly in the film. It is best exemplified in the long speech by Silk at the award ceremony where she vents her anger at the double standards of the male dominated film industry that only uses but also abuses women and women’s body to achieve their own selfish gains and self aggrandisement. These vamps are created by the male industry but treated as a ‘dirty secret’—“the secret of the night that no one bares in the day”, how a patriarchal society compels the aspiring woman artist to compromise her dignity by forcing her to make ‘dirty pictures’ yet then ostracize her by labelling her as ‘vulgar, ghatiya (low down), sexy, dirty’, and put the burden of guilt and grossness on the women—how a woman who wants to make her name as an actress is forced by the conniving agents of the male world to become a victim and lose her identity. A scathing speech by Silk succinctly brings out the double standards of the patriarchal society and the male dominated, gender discriminatory film industry that exploits women at will : “To make your own film take off, you’ve used me like a boarding pass, yet I’m the vulgar one. It is you who have forced me to dance yet none has observed my hard work and determination. They were all watching something else. And I’m the low down vamp. I’m the debased sex siren...apart from me every one of you are respectable here... you make films on sex, sell them, watch them yourselves, make others watch them too, even give awards for them yet you are afraid to acknowledge them.” Silk’s indomitable spirit comes out as she says : “You keep on wearing your respectability like this, and I would go on taking off my clothes. I will go on making my Dirty Pictures, and make people watch my dirty pictures.” The concepts of vulgarity and respectability are thus interrogated to spotlight the ways of discrimination against women who are sexploited and victimized as the vulgar ‘bazaari’ women— the ‘eternal vamps’ of the film industry while the men who use them come out respectable as heroes.

The *Dirty Picture*, the story of ‘a lone woman, seeking sustenance in a man's world’ with only ‘her rock hard confidence to carry her through’ in an exploitative world that transforms ‘Reshma into Silk, a storm that refused to be quelled’ is a ‘seminal work to be discussed in feminist discourses’ writes the famed reviewer Nikhat Kazmi of TOI.<sup>9</sup> “Determined to take on the industry single-handedly and carve a niche for herself as a sex symbol in a hypocritical world, Silk was the steroid shot that sent the world in a tizzy. Journalists and holier-than-thou art film makers like Abraham...hysterical women's groups and the ubiquitous moral police branded her

the scum of the earth...[yet] One dirty picture followed another and name, fame and success peaked to unimaginable heights for our girl from nowhere who unabashedly lived out her dreams.”<sup>10</sup> But the problem lay “in the duplicity of a world which was hungering for sex, but was ashamed to acknowledge this primordial need. So that, serenading Silk was okay in the darkness of the auditorium or behind closed bedroom doors. But accepting her as part of the social pecking order was taboo, for Silk, in a sick society, was a synonym for dirt.”<sup>11</sup> By sheer grit and determination, Silk had reached the top but she ultimately dies a forlorn death battling rejection, the censure of the moral custodians and the double standards of society that had used and discarded her ruthlessly for its own gains. The Dirty Picture portrays women as powerful by revolving round an audacious, intensely motivated protagonist who remained ‘unapologetic about her life till the very end’<sup>12</sup>, but it also ‘brings out the inner turmoil and pathos of her character’<sup>13</sup>—her struggles with fame, fortune, alcohol, the deceit and infidelity of the duplicitous male world and the rejection meted out to her by the patriarchal society that created her.

### **Feminine, Feminist, Female: *English Vinglish***

Written and directed by Gauri Shinde, *English Vinglish* (2012) is a transformational journey of Shashi in her quest for self-respect. The narrative revolves around a housewife who runs a home business of making and selling laddoos and who enrolls in an English-speaking course to put an end to the mockery and derision of her husband and daughter for her lack of English skills, and gradually gains a new respect for her own self in the process. Taken for granted by her husband and daughter who treat her with disrespect and mock her weak English on numerous occasions, Shashi feels emotionally devastated, shaky, fragile and constantly insecure with feelings of rejection traumatizing her; though for Sagar, her young son, she is beloved as she is, and her supportive mother-in-law encourages her in all her ventures. She goes to New York alone to attend a wedding where she has a traumatic experience at a local coffee shop while ordering coffee due to her poor English. She is resourceful enough to secretly enrol in a conversational English class that offers to teach the language in four weeks, showing her determination to overcome any odds at an unfamiliar city by herself. As a promising and committed student and a gifted confectioner, Shashi emerges self-confident, earning everyone’s love and respect. Her class mate Laurent, a soft-spoken French chef, develops a bond with Shashi; Shashi reciprocates the feeling but chooses to return to her family thanking Laurent for making her see herself in a new light. In her determination to overcome this insecurity and master the language, Shashi slowly begins to discover herself. Shashi transforms herself with steely resolve becoming a self-assured and confident woman, but tempered with compassion and dignity. As Shashi gains confidence as a student in an alien city, freely going about, mixing with her motley group of classmates, she creates for herself a world and an identity of her own apart from her family. This identity formation is boosted by the admiration she feels for herself in Laurent’s eyes, an admiration and desire that she had always wanted to see in her husband but lacked. She herself feels attracted to the French man, and this recognition of her own self and its many-sidedness makes Shashi a New Woman as it were. She travels from a feminine self—a hesitant and always insecure self that tried to please everybody in her family, was always submissive and self-sacrificing, modeled on the patriarchal precepts of the perfect wife and mother, to a feminist self that defies her sister’s sympathetic advice for spending the time cooped up at home and tries hard to

conquer a language that had always eluded her, to a female self, to use Elaine Showalter's terms<sup>14</sup> while reading a Bollywood film, where she had not only mastered the colonizer's tongue but also has found a new self, confident, charismatic, conscious of her choices in life, agentive and aware of herself as a desirous woman in her own right. The toast Sashi raises in perfect English to the newly-wed couple at the wedding ceremony in front of her full family, who had once derided and disrespected her, for her hesitant, non-English ways so to say, says volumes about their colonial mentality. It is Sashi's former tormentors who remain colonized all their lives under the oppressive weight of English, as the master's tongue, while their ever hesitant, ever insecure gauche wife and mother, casts off her colonial shackles in the airplane as she returns home, when she asks for a Hindi newspaper from the air hostess in perfect English, gaining the first flicker of admiration from her husband's eyes. For Sashi, English is not so 'important' anymore and it acquires a nonsensical diminutive tag 'Vinglish', she had mastered it and travelled beyond its closures to create a new identity for herself in which English was merely a tool, an aid in her self-attainment. Composed and confident Sashi has found a new, full life as an entrepreneur; she has gained the power to exercise her choice in life—to come home to India, her language, her culture and to her family. Thus Gauri Shinde's English Vinglish, taking inspiration from the real lives and experiences of countless Indian housewives and attesting to their determination to better their lives, truly attains, through its protagonist Sashi, the New Woman, the stature of a very contemporary film of the post colonial times with a strong feminist perspective.

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#All translations from Hindi by the present author.

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### **Filmography:**

Tarpan (1995)

Producer: NFDC | Director: K. Bikram Singh | Screenplay and dialogue: K. Bikram Singh | Cast: Revathi, Meeta Vasisht, Om Puri, Manohar Singh | Release: 1995

Matrubhoomi (2003)

Producer: Punkej Kharabanda, Patrick Sobelman, Nicolas Blanc | Director: Manish Jha | Screenplay and dialogue: Manish Jha | Cast: Tulip Joshi, Sudhir Pandey, Sushant Singh, Aditya Shrivastav, Piyush Mishra, Pankaj Jha, Sanjay Kumar | Release: 2003

Paheli (2005)

Producer: Red Chillies Entertainment| Director: Amol Palekar | Screenplay and Dialogue: Sandhya Gokhale | Cast: Shah Rukh Khan, Suniel Shetty, Rani Mukherjee, Juhi Chawla, Amitabh Bachchan | Release: 2005

The Dirty Picture (2011)

Producer: Shobha Kapoor and Ekta Kapoor | Director: Milan Luthria| Screenplay and dialogue: Rajat Arora | Cast: Vidya Balan, Naseeruddin Shah, Emraan Hashmi, Tusshar Kapoor, Anju Mahendroo | Release: 2011

English Vinglish (2012)

Producer: Sunil Lulla, R. Balki, R. K. Damani and Rakesh Jhunjhunwala | Director: Gauri Shinde| Screenplay and dialogue: Gauri Shinde| Cast: Sridevi, Adil Hussain,

Mehdi Nebbou, Priya Anand, Shivansh Kotia, Navika Kotia, Sulabha Deshpande, Sujata Kumar, Rajiv Rabindranathan, Sumit Vyas, Ruth Aguilar, Maria Romano, Cory Hibbs, Damien Thompson |Release: 2012



***Film Theory, Subjectivity and Community: How Does Film Theory Relate To The Idea Of Community Building?***

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The Asian Conference on Film & Documentary 2014  
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

In my paper I will discuss the relation between film theory, subject and the idea of community building. I will give a detailed understanding of how both theoretical perspectives in film studies as well as artistic practice of film making try to rethink new ways of possibility of being together. I will argue that the final approach of contemporary political film studies is to rebuild the concept of subject and community building that was either deconstructed, mistaken or wrongly rejected by the Modern and Postmodern theorists. In my studies I will not only rethink the possible political and philosophical approach to new theoretical studies of film from the perspective of subject and forms of community but also show how the history of film theory (or art theory in general) should be rewritten in such manner. For my methodology I will be using a combination of concepts coined by contemporary philosophers that question historical divisions of Modern/Postmodern, High Art/Popular Art, Reality/Fiction, etc. My approach is mainly inspired by the works of Jacques Ranciere, Giorgio Agamben, Gilles Deleuze, Jacques Lacan and Alain Badiou. All of them offered new theoretical approaches to study culture and although not all of them focused their work on Art, Film or Aesthetics, their works can be easily transferred into other academic fields, helping to understand how Art (Film) theories expresses political concerns about the notion of subject and community.

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## Between Politics and Aesthetics

The question of the relation between cinema, production of subjectivity and the idea of community building is the question of potential meetings between art (and broader aesthetics), ethics and politics. In the time of critical evaluation of postmodern legacy and rebuilding Metaphysics, rethinking and redefining the connections between them is – I believe – a matter of urgency. I would like to introduce and narrow down this very broad philosophical topic by specifying and outlining possible ways of talking, thinking and looking at cinema and its mode of production from the perspective of creating new forms of subjectivity and idea of the common. I will underpin my theoretical arguments by making direct references to the philosophical work by Jacques Rancière.

Rancière's interests in cinema can be perceived as a shift towards practical examination of the aesthetical field with the use of theoretical tools presented in his previous works and dedicated to the study of relations between politics and aesthetics. The fundamental concept that binds his reflection in that field is „the partition of the sensible” (fr. *Le partage du sensible*). By coining this expression he urges for overpassing the dialectics of ontology and epistemology, form and matter, subject and object or more broadly the existing divisions in academic disciplines. In this sense the partition of the sensible should be understood as both continuously renewing and ongoing process of dividing and sharing public and private space and time as well as the condition of possible configuration of material parameters within social, historical, political, artistic and academic fields. Political and ethical implications of the above concept ought to be perceived from the aesthetical perspective, superior in Rancière's writings. It is clearly apparent in the way he defines his own understanding of politics. In *The Politics of Aesthetics* he states that: „Politics revolves around what is seen and what can be said about it, around who has the ability to see and the talent to speak, around the properties of spaces and the possibilities of time” (Rancière, 2004: 8).

This definition derives inspiration from the Kantian theory of space and time as a priori forms of cognition and experience and also from the critical reading of Platonian notion of ideal Republic that is based on political exclusions and hierarchical organization of social field. The idea of the formulation of the political subject Rancière borrows from Aristotle, who claims in his *Politics* that „the human is a political animal” (Aristotle, 1944: line 1253a). The combination of these three sources of inspirations allows Rancière to form an argument of aesthetical foundation of every political activity and that includes art, production of the subject and the common. If human is a political animal it happens as a result of acquiring and possessing a language that can be spoken, heard and formed as statements expressing needs, desires and requests as fundamental acts for both political and community building activities. Analogically, animals possess only a meaningless voice that can express biological needs, fear and pain.

The first step in the proces of forming political subject – according to Rancière – is based on including people's voice in the dominant public discourse and acknowledging it as a voice of political actors. In other words humans become political subjects at the moment when their voice is permitted to enter space and time of political discourse that sets the stage for (re)distribution of the sensible.



In an analogical sense Rancière defines aesthetics by surpassing its simple relation to art and by relating it to politics. „The word aesthetics does not refer to a theory of sensibility, taste, and pleasure for art amateurs. It strictly refers to the specific mode of being of the object of art”. (Rancière, 2004: 18). This broad political understanding of art and artistic practices allows him to suppress dialectics of Modern and Postmodern art or, in a broader sense, autonomy and heteronomy of art and combine them in a united political field. There is a mutual point of origin for both mentioned tendencies in art and it can be located in the possibilities of rethinking the subjectivity and introducing new forms of community. In this sense there is no significant distinction between Modern Art, its idea of autonomy, abstraction or de-figuration and Postmodern Art with its ludic, ironic and parodistic directives. Rancière proposes the concept of „Aesthetic regime of Art” in order to include both movements within one tendency of contemporary Art and at the same time cancel the misunderstood contradiction that grounded historical periodization in the Art of XIX and XX Century.

Aesthetic regime is a transgression from the two previous regimes that Rancière defines as Ethical and Representational (Poetical) regimes of Art. The first one takes its origins from Plato and his ideal organization of the Republic, where art did not exist in its distinctive, autonomous status. It is important to understand that art in general can only exist within a constructed discursive field that enables its organization and identification. The form of such understood discourse includes three main factors: „modes of production of objects or interrelation of actions; forms of visibility of these manners of making and doing; and manners of conceptualizing these practices and these modes of visibility”. (Rancière: 2002, 7).

The specific modes of conceptualization are at the same time conditions of possibility for art and its existence within social and political reality. It does not simply allow art to enter the material reality but also enables the partition of the sensible in a way that art can be socially and culturally acknowledged, recognised and perceived in its distinctive and singular form. In the first regime of art objects enter public space as images of divinity and are only possible as a visual representation of dominant ideas and imagination of religious figures. Their conditions of possibility are grounded on the ethical judgement based on the following questions: „is it allowed to make images of the divinity? Is the divinity portrayed a true divinity? If she is, is she portrayed as she should be?” (Rancière, 2002: 7). Images are not considered as art in this regime as they do not participate in the process of producing and dividing sensible within social field but rather serve as visual forms of ideological messages that role is to reaffirm political and social orders. In the ethical regime we cannot speak of art as such as produced objects of representation are strictly relying on the external judgments that do not allow any art piece to circulate freely in the society and go beyond the highlighted boundaries.

The second, poetical (or representational) regime of art separates from this external ethical judgment in order to form art in its autonomy and distinctive identity. The main category that defines this regime is Aristotelian mimesis that should not be understood as a practice of producing similarities but rather following and repeating the norms and conventions strictly designated to the field of art. Shaping form out of matter is based on imposed rules and standards that clearly define subjects of art and forms or styles that they can be represented through. Art constructs a relatively closed

system where its language becomes codified and determined by the set of representational and stylistic rules.

The third regime of art, the most important for Rancière, is called Aesthetical. He defines it in relation to the Romantic art theory, mainly represented by Friedrich Schiller and Friedrich Schlegel. In this regime of visibility and intelligibility both Modern and Postmodern objects of art are considered within the same partition of the sensible which means that producing autonomous art bears the same political reason as Postmodern ludic or parodistic practices. Art in the aesthetic regime no longer belongs to a distinct universe where clear divisions and identities are enforced upon objects in order to enable them to exist as art works. Following Romantic theories Rancière names the evolving status of such understood art as „free-appearance”, „meaning as a sensory form which is heterogeneous, with respect to other forms of experience. It is apprehended in a specific experience, suspending the ordinary connections between appearance and reality, form and matter, activity and passivity, thought and sensation”. (Rancière, 2002: 8).

„In the aesthetic regime of the sensible, which is extricated from its ordinary connections and is inhabited by a heterogeneous power, the power of a form of thought that has become foreign to itself; a product identical with something not produced, knowledge transformed into non-knowledge, logos identical with pathos, the intention of the unintentional, etc.” (Rancière, 2004: 18).

### **Film Theory and The Common**

Following such understood theory of contemporary art I would like to link the outlined definition and its relation to politics by referring it to cinema and especially to the problem of how can the above understanding of aesthetic regime of art be transferred in to the field of film theory without losing its political potential.

There is a direct transition between the proposed idea of intersecting politics and aesthetics and the philosophical film theory introduced by Jacques Rancière in his two fundamental texts: *The Future of the Image* and *Film Fables*. Rancière builds a mode of reading film that is illustrating his concepts of aesthetics and politics by expanding it into the cinematic field. The relation between images and world are central to his understanding of how to look at films and what films can make possible and productive. His way of analyzing films is both political and aesthetic by means of highlighting the importance of productive element that relates to formation of both subjectivity as well as community.

He begins his book on cinema, titled *Film Fables*, by quoting French director and theorist, Jean Epstein, who said that „Cinema is true. A story is a lie” (Rancière, 2006a: 1). In this formulation Rancière includes his ethical view on cinema by situating it within the aesthetic regime of art and at the same time rejecting the narrative as a constitutive element of both film and its evolution as an artistic medium. The history of narrative cinema is combined and rejected together with a narrative history of cinema that originates from Aristotelian representational regime of art. Rancière rejects the idea that the origin of film as art is the moment when it started telling stories and coined its own specific artistic language. By doing so he also denies the historical understanding of linear film evolution that follows development of

artistic forms. This is also the way to understand the title of his work in its double meaning. Film fable is both the fable existing in films as well as the fable of the history of cinema.

Being opposed to this idea he believes that film will discard the Aristotelian fable as he argues that „life is not about stories, about actions oriented towards an end, but about situations open in every direction. Life has nothing to do with dramatic progression, but is instead a long and continuous movement made up of an infinity of micro-movements”. (Rancière, 2006a: 2). Discarding film fable is equal to the transition from representational to aesthetic regime of art. This movement is fundamental to release the productive power of cinema, crucial for the new production of subjectivity that leads to new ways of forming the community. In order to do so Rancière rethinks the oppositions between object and subject, film in its technological dimensions and people that enable it in a sense of creation, perception, experience. The productive power of cinema can be enabled once the oppositions are surpassed and redefined in a similar way that Romantic theorists understood art as a combination of the conscious and the unconscious. Film in its technological form does not possess any essence in a way that it does not want anything and has no immanent message or desire that is attached to it. It is unconscious and passive and it is up to the active and conscious intention of the subject (film maker, critic, spectator) to turn the passivity of the image into the meaning and intention of the film. It however should not be done so in a way of constructing a closed narrative structure, but on the contrary, by introducing a continual „play between the oppositions of form and matter, subject and object, the conscious and unconscious” (Dasgupta, 2009: 340).

Rancière is not radical in his claims. His theory can be placed somewhere between postmodern philosophers, such as Baudrillard, whose most famous concept of simulacrum was introduced by him to show how everything becomes a sign without its point of reference and visual culture studies with its attitude towards analyzing world as an image. In *The Future of the Image* Rancière clearly demonstrates his position by saying that „the end of images is behind us” (Rancière, 2007: 17) and by introducing the concept of the „sentence-image” as an answer to it (Rancière, 2007: 43). Both „the end of the images” and „the future of the images” serve here not as statements of truth but rather as problematic rhetorical sentences characteristic to linear thinking of images that have their history with their goals and ending points attached to it. By introducing sentence-images Rancière becomes close to Lacanian psychoanalytical ethics which main message is to „approach the real” (Lacan: 1997, 31). For Rancière the image (but also art in general and cinema in particular) neither can completely fall into narrative categories nor should it be perceived simply as a form of narrative. On the other hand the image is never simply what appears in front of our eyes, it should not be perceived in phenomenological categories. The approach to images, similar to Lacanian approach to the real is through the language and its ruptures that constitute possibility of production. This is the important moment where Rancière clarifies the similarity between cinema, subjectivity and community. By the concept of sentence-image he understands:

„something different from the combination of a verbal sequence and a visual form. The power of the sentence-image can be expressed in sentences from a novel, but also in forms of theatrical representation or cinematic montage or the relationship between the said and unsaid in a photograph. The sentence is not the sayable and the image is

not the visible. By sentence-image I intend the combination of two functions that are to be defined aesthetically – that is, by the way in which they undo the representative relationship between text and image”. (Rancière, 2007: 45-46).

In cinema films offer us narrative forms that are the combination of – what Roland Barthes has called – punctum and studium (Barthes, 1981: 25). The first one refers to the visible „truth” of the image, a trace of history in its visual form and the second represents the meaning, symbolic layer that every image must contain in order to be grasped by the gaze. The productive power of art, images and cinema lays in their impossibility to translate symbolic into real or, in other words, represent the idea by the complete material form. Production relies here on the notion of desire that is based on fundamental lack that cannot be surpassed. Cinema reproduces desire by putting this impossibility into play on several levels – between director and film, film and spectator or imagination, desire and actual images.

The power of cinema is not simply in the idea of offering absorbing and attractive stories that we immediately become to desire. It is rather the opposite, that is the constant dissolution and reproduction of desire that can never meet with the story and stays in the conflict with itself. This is what Rancière means when he says that „cinema seems to accomplish naturally the writing of oisix that reverses Aristotle’s privileging of muthos. The conclusion, however, is false, for the very simple reason that cinema, being by nature what the arts of the aesthetic age strive to be, invariably reverts the movement” (Rancière, 2006a: 9). Following Schiller’s and Schlegel’s understanding of art as the perfect identity of the conscious and the unconscious „film remains caught within this desire and its failed fulfilment – and this failure is precisely what is productive in film” (Dasgupta, 2009: 341).

The political potential of cinema follows here the Lacanian ethical directives and relies on ongoing reproduction of this irresolvable tension between the narrative and matter, the subject and object. It does so not by trying to subsume these dialectics into one category (similar to the hegelian concept of *Aufhebung*) but rather by agreeing on their impossibility and a need for a constant search for possible common meeting points between them that are not derived from the enforced orders but rather rely on contingency, singular opportunities and non-imposed unions. Rancière borrows the Romantic concept of the art as the play and offers new ways of both producing and looking at artistic objects as free of political content or determined structure that offers one possible way of experiencing it.

Finally, what brings closer cinema, subjectivity and the possibility of producing the common is a wish to overcome any normative relations between objects and events in reality and its representation. Introducing this possible break is a political act of overcoming the representational logic of art that limits discourse to the form of representation. The effect can be called a democratization of art which is based on rejecting and rethinking the relations between knowledge and non-knowledge, form and matter, senses and forms of expressions, used to manifest them as well as visual representations of ideas.

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***A Sentimentalist Approach to the Comfort Women Issue:  
Reading a Documentary “The Big Picture” through the Notion of Sympathy***

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The Asian Conference on Film & Documentary 2014  
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

This paper analyzes a recently released documentary on the comfort women issue, “The Big Picture”, through two notions of sympathy: diachronic sympathy and synchronic sympathy. Diachronic sympathy is to infer the counterpart’s passion in relation to the sympathized’s diachronic being. It is collective but personal and reflective but contingent. In contrast, synchronic sympathy is to imagine the circumstance of the counterpart. It is a partially reactive sentiment to an imagined circumstantial vulnerability. With this distinction, I contend that both Koreans and the Japanese in the documentary might reconsider their habituated nationalistic orientations towards the comfort women issue and perceive circumstantial vulnerability comfort women faced as a shared threat through the Lacanian *Real* at the register of diachronic sympathy and the Derridean *Différance* at the register of synchronic sympathy.

Key words: diachronic sympathy, synchronic sympathy, circumstantial vulnerability, comfort women, the Big Picture

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## Introduction

This paper analyzes the comfort women issue within the context of CEDAW (the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women). CEDAW is a human rights convention which requires its members to alter their institutional frameworks to collectively reconfigure the gendered social structure; the gendered social structure itself is not a problem but its configuration. Korea and Japan have ratified this treaty, but the lack of collaborative effort between them to collectively reconfigure the gendered social structure belies the purpose of CEDAW.

In this context, the resolution of the comfort women issue is a conundrum because there is no single historical narrative or universal moral standard through which one can demand such structural change from Japan. In the same way, there is no universal rationale through which one can persuade Koreans to renounce their insistence.

Then, is there any alternative? This paper claims that sympathy could help both Koreans and the Japanese to perceive circumstantial vulnerability comfort women faced as a mutual threat, and thus they may share collective interests to resolve it. However, sympathy does not *unify* different “we”s, but *creates* different configurations of “we”s. In other words, both Koreans and the Japanese might reconsider their habituated demarcation between “we” and “others” through sympathy.<sup>1</sup> To substantiate this argument, this paper introduces a distinction between diachronic sympathy and synchronic sympathy. With this distinction, it analyzes “The Big Picture”, a recently released documentary on the comfort women issue to portray how both Koreans and the Japanese may perceive the contextual experience of comfort women as a mutual threat at the register of diachronic sympathy through Lacan’s *real* and at the register of synchronic sympathy through Derrida’s *différance*.

### (1) Two Dimensions of Sympathy: Diachronic and Synchronic sympathy.

In Cunningham’s reading of Hume, sympathy consists of two dimensions: diachronic and synchronic sympathy. First of all, diachronic sympathy is to infer one’s passions in relation to one’s diachronic self (Cunningham, 2004, p. 242). In other words, you infer the counterpart’s passion at the moment in relation to her life through putting yourself into the position of the counterpart. Furthermore, diachronic sympathy often involves a shift of the initial feeling. In other words, you shift your initial feeling towards the counterpart you sympathize with according to the further information you obtain (Baier, 1991, p. 180).

Then, how does diachronic sympathy work? First, you experience the impression of passion. Your body reacts to an external stimulus, the suffering of a person, in accordance with your habituation to the causal connection between that stimulus and

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1 According to Blanchot, we often perceive “others” as a collective entity, which exists external to “us”. Thus, we wrongly assume that there must be an infinite distance between “we” and “others”. However, it is neither “we” nor “others” who creates the relationship between the two. Rather, it is the relationship between the two, which creates “we” and “others”. In Blanchot’s terminology, the relationship is what mysteriously gives voice to “we” and “others”.



your experience. In other words, your bodily reaction to the stimulus reflects your memory of repetitive causal experiences to that stimulus. For instance, assume that you are traveling in Sudan. You find a child crying and sympathize with the child without knowing anything about the child or the situation. You involuntarily feel sad about the child because you are habituated to react in that way. To elaborate further, you immediately feel sad about the child because your body is habituated through the numerous repetitive experiences of a similar situation where you feel sad when you see a child crying. Thus, this process is unilateral in a sense that this bodily reaction is subjective, because this reaction does not involve your reflection on your sympathy.

Yet, this is not the whole picture. Diachronic sympathy includes not only the impression of passion but also the impression of reflection. In other words, you reflect on your initial sympathy. This process roughly occurs in the following steps. First, you reflect on the possible causal connection between the passion you have noticed and a possible cause of the passion in the counterpart. Second, you compare that passion with your memory of the past experience and construct an alternative causal relation between the passion and the cause of the passion. Third, you alter the initial passion about the passion and sympathize with the counterpart's situation with the altered passion. Finally, you repeat this cycle of the impression of passion and the impression of reflection. To conceptualize this process better, it might be helpful to consider the child example again. As mentioned above, crying is often associated with sadness. Accordingly, when you see a child crying, you sympathize with the child and experience the imagined sadness. Yet, if you realize that the child was crying out of relief, you sympathize with the child differently. You alter your initial impression of passion through the reflection, and sympathize with the child's relief, not her sadness. Consequently, the impression of passion and the impression of reflection unite feeling and thought. In this respect, as Deleuze contends through reading Hume, morality is an *extension* of sympathy (Deleuze, 1893, p. 43).

Synchronic sympathy is to imagine a situation the counterpart might have been in than the very passion she might have felt in that situation. In this sense, synchronic sympathy is spatially extensive but temporally limited. It is not to sympathize with the counterpart's diachronic self, but with the contextual experience of the counterpart (Cunningham, 2004, p. 243). Thus, a kind of connection built between the sympathizer and the counterpart is a shared situational setting similarly imagined by each. Obviously, one may hope to avoid such situational threat for various reasons. It can be out of disgust or a desire to protect one's beloved ones from such danger. Yet, one may still hope to avoid such threat. In this manner, synchronic sympathy is spatial not temporal, and this feature of synchronic sympathy is both its weakness and strength. On the one hand, synchronic sympathy is mechanical and less varying. Thus, it has weaker narrative power than diachronic sympathy. On the other hand, because it is habitual, it is more practical for the purpose of sharing a collective threat. Unlike diachronic sympathy, synchronic sympathy might be more easily induced.

In this respect, synchronic sympathy may provoke one's habituated sense of self-preservation and other habituated sentiments such as a desire to protect one's beloved ones from going through the imagined suffering they might face in the future. One may hope to avoid an imagined circumstantial vulnerability not only for oneself but also for those one cares for. Thus, synchronic sympathy may not motivate individuals to care for a stranger, but it can motivate individuals of different identities to share a

similar sentiment towards a certain social phenomenon. This shared sentimentality may subsequently alter their perceptions, beliefs, and interests on a social phenomenon. Through synchronic sympathy, individuals indirectly imagine a form of threat they might be subject to and become more vigilant on the issues regarding that form of threat.

## **(2) The Analysis of the Documentary, “The Big Picture”**

In 2007, a group of Japanese publishers requested that Koreans and Chinese publishers join a collective project to publish illustrated books promoting the theme of peace for children in Japan, China, and Korea (Kwon, 2013). Upon this request, the Korean publisher asked Yoon-deok Kwon, a Korean novelist, to draw an illustrated book for children. After considering various options, she decides to draw a picture book about the life of a comfort woman named Shim Dal-yeon. Accordingly, the film, “The Big Picture”, portrays four years of how the picture book “Kkothalmeoni” (Flower Grandma) came into being; the title was inspired by Shim’s hobby of pressing flowers.<sup>2</sup>

### **(2-1) Diachronic Sympathy and Lacan’s Real**

The documentary starts with Kwon initially focusing on antagonizing the Japanese army and the soldiers. As a victim of sexual violence herself, she initially thinks that she is the best person to speak through the voice of Shim. In the process of drawing the picture book, she occasionally revisits her past memories and feels strong anger towards the perpetrator. She portrays Shim’s experience from her own perspective and attempts to depict how the structured sexual violence under the imperial Japanese army victimized Shim. Yet, through her constant interactions with Shim, the protagonist of the book, Kwon realizes that Shim does not want the book to portray her as a soul full of resentment. Kwon feels that Shim desire “peace” and hopes to be portrayed “*beautifully*” in the book; whenever she sees a flower, she says, “I wish everyone live happily just like how people become happy when they see the flowers.”<sup>3</sup>

In fact, Shim’s desire for “peace” is much more complex than it may seem. On the one hand, her sense of detachment toward her own suffering reveals how her unconsciousness functions in relation to her trauma. In Lacanian terminology, the real is a register of the unconsciousness where any attempt of articulation either through language or other mediums fails; individuals cannot access their own real. Due to this peculiar feature of the real, it is often associated with trauma. In Shim’s case, she cannot remember clearly what happened to her, for she cannot access her own “trauma”. She can neither coherently remember the “suffering” nor the “passions at the moment of suffering.” Ironically, it is due to this inaccessibility through which she can shift her perspective on the issue of comfort women and desire peace. In other

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□ Please refer to the picture 1 in the appendix.

3

□ Please refer to the picture 2 in the appendix.

words, Shim can shift her perspective, for her painful memories are inaccessible.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the inaccessibility to her own passions engenders her desire for peace. On the other hand, her desire for peace demonstrates a possibility of a shift in one's engagement with a perceived target of resentment. In other words, there is no causal relationship between harassment and resentment; the relationship between the two is always in flux. The connection between one's pain and one's anger towards the target is contingent. Shim's aspiration for peace clearly manifests how the lack creates a different attitude towards a certain issue even if that issue has been particularly painful to oneself.

Shim's attitude puzzles Kwon, for she cannot understand why Shim is not resentful. This evinces that Kwon synchronically sympathizes with Shim but fails to diachronically sympathize with her. Kwon shares the context of Shim's suffering but fails to share the passion of Shim, the desire for peace. However, she soon realizes that her antagonistic portrayal of the Japanese army and the soldiers reflect her "own" resentment towards them not Shim's: the contingent nature of the relationship between resentment and pain. She acknowledges that her own interpretation of Shim's experience is clearly subjective. Consequently, she comes to reflect on her initial sympathetic connection with Shim. Kwon reflects on how she has been habituated to perceive the comfort women case as such. She understands that her vision was the nationalistic gaze which antagonizes the signifier, "the Japanese state." She realizes the illusive nature of this gaze that the gaze of Shim, which Kwon thought she was sharing, does not exist. She recognizes that this gaze has framed her to see only what she wanted to see: the brutality of the Japanese army.

With the awareness that the picture book might merely reflect her own anger towards the Japanese army and the soldiers, Kwon decides to test an early version of the picture book at a Korean elementary school. Korean students feel repulsed by the picture book because of the cruelty portrayed in it and fail to identify themselves with the protagonist. A kind of reaction Kwon initially expected to take place between the protagonist and the students certainly fails to occur because the students fail to identify themselves with the protagonist. Shim's resentment towards sexual violence portrayed in the book is not how a typical 13-year-old girl would feel. A 13-year-old Shim would rather be traumatized, disoriented, and frightened. In a way, the protagonist in the book represents Kwon herself, an angry middle-aged woman victimized by sexual violence. Even more than the single author, this protagonist is the product of a culture of resentment and bitterness; beliefs of the society that fashioned her are imposed upon her, beliefs she could not believe and which masquerade as her own are made possible only by failing to diachronically sympathize with Shim.

After the test preview, Kwon attempts to revise the picture book and reconsiders the focus of the book. She says,

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□ The extension between the Lacanian real and sympathy is inspired by how Deleuze approaches the notion of desire in *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. In this paper, while reading the documentary through the notion of the real, I appropriate it as a possibility of diachronic sympathy.

*“My biggest worry was to portray Shim without antagonizing Japan. I do not want the reader to think that Japan is wholly responsible for the atrocity and its ramification Shim still suffers from. The suffering of Shim has to do with our attitude towards comfort women. We naively believe that we are totally free from accusation. In a way, even the Japanese soldiers were the victims of the war.”*(Kwon, 2013)

Through numerous revisions, the book comes to better resemble how Shim might feel about her experience diachronically; how she would consider her suffering retrospectively within the framework of her life. Kwon shifts her initial attitude and experiences a moment of diachronic sympathy with Shim. She realizes that there is no single oppressor in the comfort women case. Even the Japanese soldiers were also war victims in a sense because some of them were forced to fight in the war for various reasons. Kwon comes to perceive the “Big Picture” that Shim was one of the victims of the maladjusted gender structure. Her illusive nationalist gaze, which had hindered her from perceiving the “Big picture”, finally shifts. This transition evinces the possibility of diachronic sympathy. Just like the sympathizer who initially sympathizes with the child wrongly and shifts, Kwon alters her sympathy. It is this moment through which Kwon shares both Shim’s circumstantial suffering (synchronic sympathy) and Shim’s desire for peace (diachronic sympathy).

In this respect, diachronic sympathy is reflective and flexible. Initially, Kwon only synchronically sympathizes with Shim, assuming that Shim must be vengeful. However, through reflection, Kwon realizes that Shim desires peace rather than revenge or compensation.

The case of the author and real life character shows one side of diachronic sympathy – between people of the same cultural sphere. Yet, what about the cross-cultural relationship between the sympathizer and the sympathized? Is diachronic sympathy possible between Japanese people in the documentary and Shim?

Right before the publication of “Kkothalmeoni”, Hamada Geiko visits Shim. When they are taking a picture together, she suddenly says “*Sorry*” again and again and bursts into tears (Kwon, 2013). Watching Hamada sobbing, Kwon subsequently bursts into tears (Kwon, 2013). Kwon pats Hamada’s back and sobs along with Hamada. Shim holds Hamada’s hand tightly and says, “*You are like my daughter, if I had a daughter she would cry like you*” (Kwon, 2013). Here, Hamada *feels* Shim’s pain, and thus Shim feels *as if* Hamada were her daughter. In other words, they create a certain form of *resemblance*. However, their resemblance is neither a formalized rational agreement regarding a certain issue nor a realization of shared intrinsic similarities. Rather, the resemblance is a moment of connection between the two *confused* diachronic beings. Here, both Hamada and Shim are confused of who they are. On the one hand, Hamada is being detached from her Japanese identity and cries *like* Shim’s daughter. On the other hand, Shim, a victim of “the Japanese”, hugs and pats Hamada *as if* she were her daughter. Ironically, they come to resemble each other because they are confused of who they “are”: Shim as a victim and Hamada as an aggressor.

Yet, it is important to notice that this moment of diachronic sympathy is beyond Hamada’s conscious control. Just like Kwon’s sense of affinity with Shim is, Hamada’s sense of guilt is not a conscious deductive understanding of Shim. She did

not intend to cry at that moment nor had any control over her feeling. Rather, she reaches the moment where she diachronically sympathizes with Shim partially unconsciously.<sup>5</sup> In this respect, the moment of diachronic sympathy is specific to each individual and one cannot artificially create such moment. Thus, it is impossible for individuals to control whether or not to diachronically sympathize with a person even if they desire to do so.

If this is true, creating an artificial moment where diachronic sympathy takes place between the sympathizer and the sympathized is highly implausible. Rather, the moment of diachronic sympathy seems to be a moment of rupture in the Lacanian sense.

For Lacan, a rupture happens when one brushes against the real (Ellie, 1996, p. 197). As briefly touched upon, the real is a register of unconsciousness which cannot be translated into the symbolic. While the imaginary functions as to create pseudo-coherence in the symbolic, i.e., the chain of free-floating signifiers connected to each other which can be displaced (Metonymy) and subsequently condensed (Metaphor), the real embodies what is incoherent and undifferentiated; for the later Lacan, there is neither a signified nor a master-signifier (Ellie, 1996, p. 197). In other words, the real is a register of unconsciousness where any attempt of articulation either through language or other mediums fails.

Due to this inaccessibility, the real is often associated with the traumatic experience. For instance, a victim of rape can neither coherently remember the situation nor clearly articulate the experience. She cannot portray it in a manner which can be signified.

Upon the contact with the real, the subtle and delicate pseudo-coherence between signifiers collapse; the presumed coherence, i.e., the imaginary, gets threatened by the real.<sup>6</sup> This moment of a rupture is a point where the imaginary order reveals its artificial nature. In other words, the things which made a clear sense before becomes a complete non-sense.

When a signifier brushes against the real, the unconscious acts to confine the concatenations of signifiers and re-orders the relationship between free-floating signifiers. To elaborate further, the unconscious attempts to create a meaning out of the arbitrarily disposed signifiers to sustain the homeostasis of mental life. For example, when a contingent and arbitrary signifier, e.g., a sentence like “You are a complete failure!”, brushes against the real at a certain moment, the unconscious re-orders the relationship among signifiers to make sense of the signifier in relation to the nexus of signifiers. In other words, the signifier itself does not have any content,

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□ Here, my intent is neither to claim that there is a clear binary distinction between consciousness and unconsciousness nor to argue that diachronic sympathy is completely unconscious. Rather, it is to emphasize the contingent nature of diachronic sympathy.

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□ To be clear, it is not that there is some traumatic “thing” that threatens coherence. Rather, it is the very threat to coherence that makes an experience traumatic.

but its relation to other signifiers functions as yet another meaning. Thus, the real resists the symbolic and re-orders the symbolic.

If read through this Lacanian schema, Hamada's diachronic sympathy does not only come from her conscious awareness and visualization of Shim's suffering. In addition to her own interest in Shim's suffering, she comes to diachronically sympathize with Shim's suffering when a signifier brushes against her real. In the documentary, Hamada starts to cry when she holds Shim's hand to take a picture together. In this case, a signifier, which brushes against the real, is the act of Hamada holding Shim's hand. With that touch, Hamada suddenly bursts into tears. Her sense of coherence in herself, what Lacan calls the imaginary, breaks down upon the moment of brushing against the real and her unconscious re-orders the relationship among signifiers to make sense of the signifier in relation to the nexus of signifiers. The moment of diachronic sympathy completely disrupts her sense of how to feel, think, and behave as a "Japanese" novelist. Hamada's sobbing symbolizes the breakdown and reconstitution of her sense of coherence constituted by the relation among the signifiers.

Upon the moment of diachronic sympathy, her sense of coherence as a Japanese woman dismantles itself. Hamada's pseudo-coherence through which she has oriented her relationship with Shim so far reveals its illusive nature. It is only through this disruptive reorientation of how to "be" a Japanese woman in relation to Shim does Hamada diachronically connect herself to Shim. Thus, the moment of diachronic sympathy is both a moment of disorientation and a moment of connection. On the one hand, Hamada experiences the disorientation of herself. She is neither clear why she cries nor capable of expressing her passion linguistically. In other words, the moment of diachronic sympathy perplexes her. On the other hand, through the disorientation, Hamada departs from her previous understanding of Shim as a stranger to a mother through the connection to Shim's diachronic self.

Yet, it is important to note that there is no direct causal relationship between the touch and Hamada's sobbing. The touch does not cause diachronic sympathy but only creates a context through which Hamada diachronically sympathizes with Shim's suffering. In other words, she could not control her diachronic sympathy.<sup>7</sup> This would be similar for an audience who watches a documentary on comfort women or a reader of the novel *A Gesture Life* by Chang-rae Lee, which deals with the issue of comfort women. The moment of rupture is not only contingent but also unique to each individual. There is no way to fully control how to trigger such feeling due to the particularities each individual embodies; it is impossible to anticipate which signifier would cause the brush against the real, for there is no master signifier which always triggers the brush against the real.

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□For Lacan, there is no objective standpoint through which one can analyze the moment of rupture. In the case of the film analysis, if the moment of rupture takes place, it is between the reader and the film, not between the characters. Yet, for the specific purpose of the paper, I assumed the standpoint of a spectator and portrayed the interaction between Hamada and Shim Dal-yeon as a moment of rupture from the perspective of "I."

This conclusion is very important. If a moment of diachronic sympathy is contingent, Koreans and the Japanese may fail to perceive the circumstantial vulnerability of comfort women as a mutual threat through diachronic sympathy.

## (2-2) Synchronic Sympathy and Derrida's *Différance*

Then, what about the register at synchronic sympathy? When the Japanese publisher Doshinsha and Kwon take a test preview on “Kkothalmeoni” to Japanese children, one of the elementary students says, “*It was wrong to forcefully bring young female children to Japan. If it were me, it would have been so painful*” (Kwon, 2013). Another student in the group comments in a similar manner. She says, “*I am shocked. I wish this kind of gender violence would not take place ever again*” (Kwon, 2013). After listening to the story of “Kkothalmeoni”, the female elementary students neither suffer from severe exhaustion like Kwon nor bursts into tears like Hamada. Rather, they quite plainly state that they would not want such pain if they were in the same situation of Shim. Here, the elementary school students do not merely imagine Shim’s bodily pain. Rather, they synchronically sympathize more broadly with the circumstantial vulnerability Shim faced. The social stereotypes imposed on Shim when she came back to Korea from Japan are some of the circumstantial vulnerability the elementary students synchronically sympathize with. This synchronic sympathy is possible because the protagonist is not a 71-year-old woman but a 13-year-old girl. The effectiveness of the picture book is its portrayal of the circumstantial vulnerability of a 13-year-old girl whom elementary school students can imagine and identify with. The students synchronically sympathize with the protagonist as they imagine themselves in a similar situation. Without much reflection on the context, they express a desire to protect themselves from an imagined threat. Accordingly, a kind of solidarity which arises between Shim and the students is not a shared common truth. Instead, it is a shared vulnerability to a certain situation. As Rorty writes, “it is sharing a common selfish hope, the hope that one’s world – the little things around which one has woven into one’s final vocabulary – will not be destroyed” (Rorty, 1989, p. 92). This moment is neither a solemn moment of guilt nor a moment of a sudden diachronic sympathy.<sup>8</sup> Instead, it is a mere hope to avoid and prevent an imagined suffering.

Furthermore, it is crucial to notice that the imagined threat, i.e., the circumstantial vulnerability of Shim portrayed in the picture book, is always *absent*. In other words, the students consider the imagined threat as a danger yet to come. In Derrida’s terminology, it is both differed and differentiated. He writes,

“The verb “to differ” seems to differ from itself. On the one hand, it indicates difference as distinction, inequality, or discernibility; on the other, it expresses the interposition of delay, interval of a spacing and temporalizing that puts off until “later” what is presently denied, the possible that is presently impossible” (Derrida, 1973, p. 130).

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□ The children were given information only about the content of the book, not the detailed information on the debate between Koreans and the Japanese.

On the one hand, the threat and the non-threat *differentiate* each other to sustain their very existence. The threat is the circumstantial vulnerability portrayed in the picture book while the non-threat is a hope for an ideal future without the threat. This oppositional relationship between the threat and the non-threat is interesting, for they are both fictional. In other words, for the students, the threat can never be “experienced” because it is neither exactly Shim’s nor other comfort women’s. Rather, it is a fictional setting portrayed by Kwon’s reading of Shim’s diachronic self. In this respect, the threat functions as an empty signifier which induces a certain sentimental reaction from the audience without any signified. In the same manner, the non-threat is an empty signifier too because the non-threat exists only in relation to the threat. Thus, neither the threat nor the non-threat is “real”, because both are imaginaries. To rephrase, both the threat and the non-threat are illusions which do not exist, but the very oppositional relationship sustains their existence. On the other hand, the threat acts as an imaginary which evokes a sense of vulnerability because of its possibility in the future. The threat does not strike the students as a picture of the presence, but a picture of the future. What the students are afraid of is the very possibility of such threat taking place in the future because it may destroy what is considered to be stable in the present: the threat is constantly *differed*. In this line of reasoning, the threat functions as an arbitrary danger in the future. It is always absent in the present but potentially present in the future. For the reason that the threat is a *différance*, it can constantly induce the sense of vulnerability. The Japanese students feel motivated to prevent the threat because the threat is absence both spatially (*differentiated*) and temporally (*differed*). The very fact that they cannot “experience” the threat induces them to fear it.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, the Japanese students synchronically sympathize with Shim’s suffering, perceiving it as a *différance*.

## Conclusion

Within the context of the comfort women issue, I have suggested sympathy as a medium thorough which both Koreans and the Japanese may perceive the comfort women issue as a collective problem. With a particular emphasis on the documentary “The Big Picture”, I have demonstrated how sympathy may function in reality. At the register of diachronic sympathy, a moment of diachronic connection between Hamada and Shim functions a rupture where Hamada’s sense of coherence deconstructs. It is only through this disorientation that Hamada comes to “understand” Shim’s diachronic self.

At the register of synchronic sympathy on the other hand, the Japanese students perceive the imagined threat, i.e., the circumstantial vulnerability portrayed in the picture book, as a collective problem which should be prevented in the future. On the one hand, they hope to avoid the imagined threat out of the fear that it may destroy their peaceful present. On the other hand, they hope to prevent it, for they believe a

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□ At first glance, reading a documentary through Deleuze’s reading of Hume, Lacanian notion of the real, and Derrida’s *différance* might seem too superficial. Yet, my emphasis is not that their theories become a coherent whole. Rather, I hope to create a pastiche through engaging with some of the most difficult thinkers in contemporary continental philosophy.



society without such threat is possible in the future. In this respect, the imagined threat functions in relation to the non-threat (a future without the threat), which is always differentiated and differed: Derrida's *différance*.

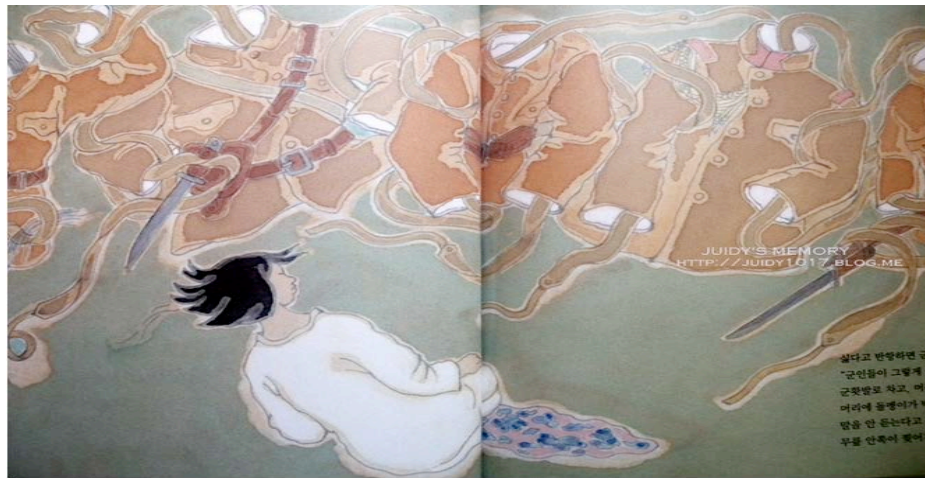
However, a possibility of sharing a mutual threat through sympathy is not to erase difference. Rather, through sympathy, we can constantly question the relationship between "we" and "others". Consequently, we might both break away from our habituated "weness" and create different configurations of "we". Just like how sympathy creates the current "we", it could also disrupt our habituated sentimental affiliations with whom we define as "we".

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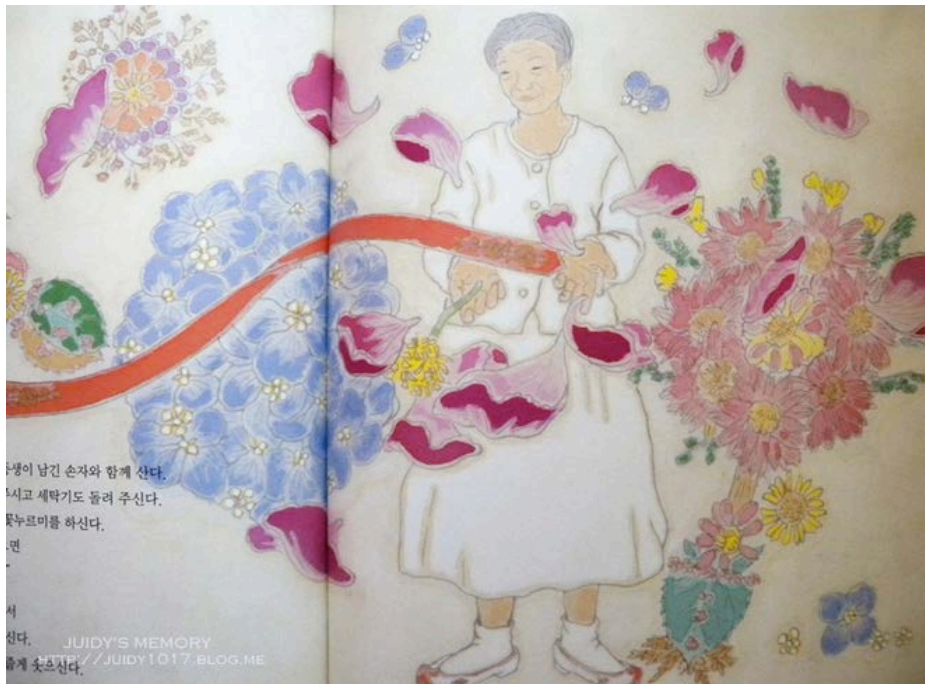
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Appendix (The pictures are from the book, Kkothalmeoni)

Picture 1



Picture 2



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