

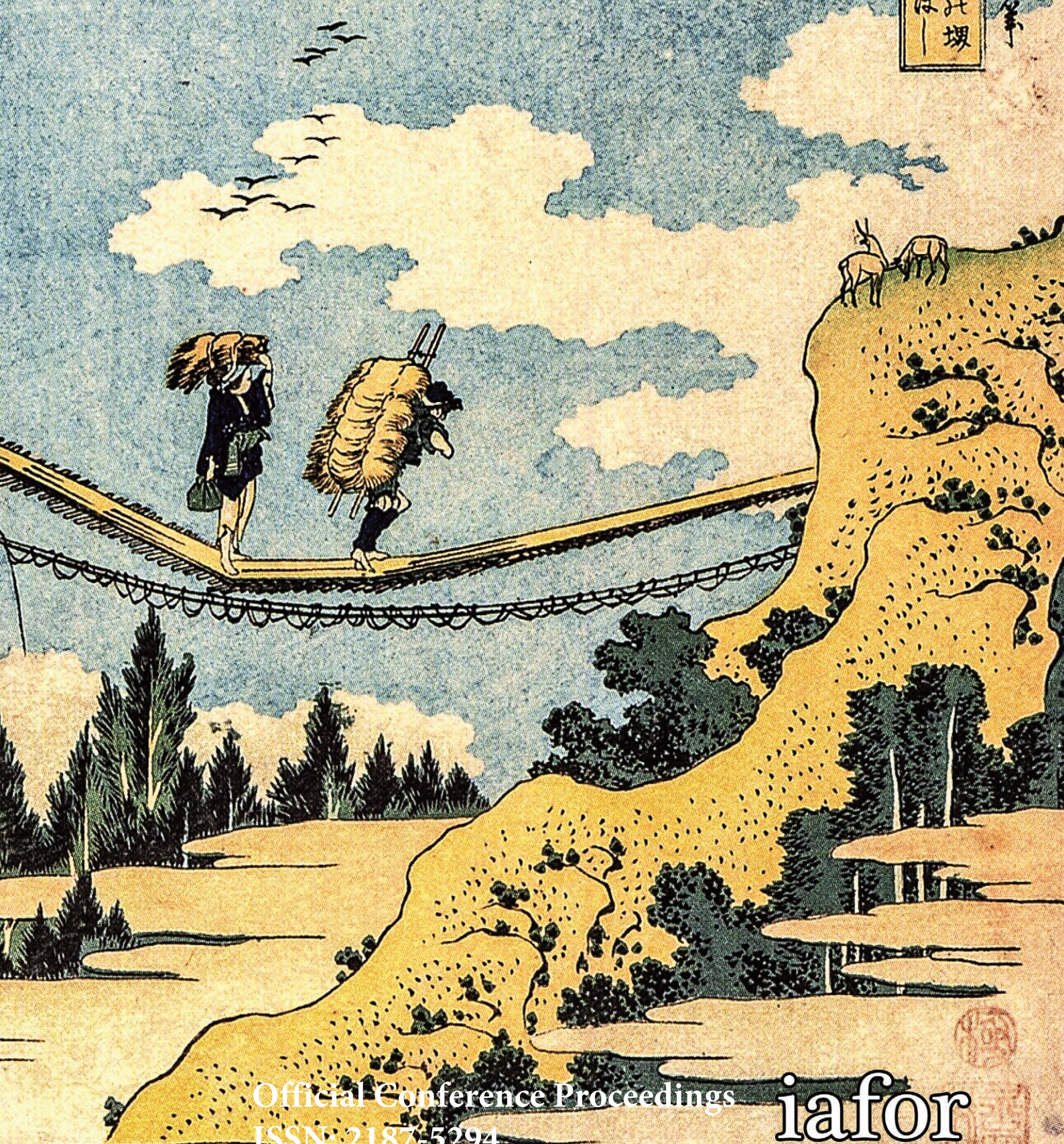
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*A Documentary Film on the Lives of Families of Filipino Journalists in Quezon Province
Who Died in Line of Duty*

Dyanara S. Corachea, Southern Luzon State University, The Phillipines

The Asian Conference on Film & Documentary 2015
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

This study is about the lives of the families of Filipino journalists in Quezon Province who died in line of duty most especially featuring the life of the family of Bert “Fausto” Sison. This study aimed to feature the lives of the families of Bert Sison as well as the families of the other victims of media killings in the province, their life before and after the incident of killing of their relative happened. This also sought to determine in their different aspects of living was affected by the incident. This study is descriptive and pure qualitative. Upon the conduct of the study, the researcher found out that the families of these victims are greatly affected in different aspects including their economical, psychological, social, and security aspect, their lives changed together with the sudden loss of their relative. Also, traumatic experience marks in their life. The researcher concluded that media killings or the incident of killing to their relative affects the family most especially the spouse, children and even siblings.

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Introduction

Journalism is the practice of gathering, evaluating, and Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ) believes media plays a crucial role in scrutinizing and strengthening democratic institutions, defending and asserting press freedom, freedom of information, and freedom of expression. Media could—and should—be a vehicle for social debate and consensus that would assist to the promotion of public welfare. Likewise, journalists are the news workers or the watchdogs of the society for they are contributory in shaping or molding the public opinion. A journalist is a reporter, a press officer, correspondent, broadcaster, newscaster, columnist, commentator, and news writer.

“News is what will sell papers, news is what the public wants to read, news is what raises eyebrows, and news is what newspapermen choose to make it” - Johnson (1926)

Thus, journalists are not the news, but the ones who searched for the news. A journalist’s task is to be fair on both sides of the stories. News depends heavily on how it is presented to the public and the reality will never be a reality if not presented on a firm and unbiased way.

Journalists around the world are killed, tortured or threatened. Oftentimes, these things happened because journalists are watchdogs of the society, the messenger of the unbiased news and history. Issues on media irresponsibility and weak democracy have been some of the factors threatening the people involved in digging news. Issues in media are of social significance, since the perspective of an individual almost depends on what he sees and what the news feed him. (Lumbang, 2009).

Background of the Study

In the Philippines, Southern Luzon has been considered as a dangerous region for journalists’ since the restoration of democracy in 1986, long before Maguindanao or Ampatuan Massacre tremor the media industry in the country. One of five journalists murdered since 1986 was from Southern Luzon, the second most dangerous area for journalists’ to be in after Mindanao, which has 36 cases--- according to Philippine Daily Inquirer’s article on August 23, 2004. In Quezon Province, three media workers were gunned down since 1990, these include Enrique “Ike” Lingan, Apolinario “Polly” Pobeda and Bert “Fausto” Sison. Lingan, a reporter in Quezon Times was shot dead in Lucena City by a policeman, now imprisoned after the incident according to the victim’s mother. Pobeda meanwhile, was gunned down in Lucena City by two bodyguards of Mayor Romano Talaga namely Eulogio and Eric Patulay but the Talaga’s denied their involvement in the case. Lastly, in 2008, Bert “Fausto” Sison was gunned down while on his way home with her daughters Amirah and Liwayway. Sison died on the spot while his daughters were unharmed, though left with great trauma because of the incident.

The researcher was motivated to produce a documentary film to address the needs of the families of the victims of media killings in Quezon Province. As the researcher watched the news about the 4th year anniversary of the tragic Maguindanao Massacre and the death of Dr. Gerry Ortega and how their families still fight for justice, the researcher realized that the families of the victims of Maguindanao Massacre should not only be the focus in ending the culture of impunity in our country and seeking justice but as well as the families of the victims from the other provinces which the researcher think needs balance attention and support from the government and from media agencies and organizations concerned in the welfare of journalists.

Objectives

The main objective of the study was to produce a documentary film that features the lives of the families of Bert Sison, Ike Lingan, and Polly Pobeda, Filipino journalists in Quezon Province who died in line of duty.

It sought to:

1. Feature the status of the families of Filipino journalists in Quezon Province who died in line of duty
 - 1.1 Life of the family before the death of their relative
 - 1.2 Life of their family after the death of their relative and how they cope
2. Assess if these incidents of killings affect the families and their life in terms of:
 - 2.1 Economic Aspect
 - 2.2 Psychological Aspect
 - 2.3 Social Aspect
 - 2.4 Security Aspect
3. Compare the experience of the lives of other families who were victims of journalist killing with Sison's family's life

Significance of the Study

This research study benefits the following people, profession and organizations. It would give factual information and knowledge and awareness of the incident:

Journalists, this study is beneficial for them for these promotes and pay tribute to their profession and their sacrifices for every news that they dig in.

Media-advocates, organizations and institutions concerning the welfare of journalists, this study is an eye-opener item for the public.

Researchers and Future Researchers, this study could be a reference and starting point in making an in-depth investigative research about journalism and issues entailed with it.

Families of the victims of media killings, this study would serve as assistance to them in seeking justice and for others to be aware about their situation and needs after their relative has been killed.

Communication students, this study could be their reference point to inspire them in making documentary film about development concern on journalism and community. The study could help the students to become aware, knowledgeable about the importance of a documentary film that can be a medium of disseminating information with an advocacy of developing journalism and the community as well.

Scope and Limitations

The main goal of the study was to produce a documentary film featuring the lives of the families of Filipino journalists in Quezon Province who died in line of duty from 1990 to 2008. Moreover, this presented the ways and means on how these families live before and after the death of their relative especially in economic, psychological, social, and security aspects of their lives. To make the study credible and balance, the researcher reached out National Union of Journalists of the Philippines-Quezon Chapter for their views and opinions regarding the status of the families of the killed journalists in Quezon Province. During the conduct of the study, only Mrs. Rosemarie Sison, wife of Bert Sison, Mrs. Divina Pobeda-Rocero, sister of Polly Pobeda, and Mrs. Bonifacia Lingan were the only family members who were available for the interview and production of the documentary film.

The study utilized a descriptive method and is purely qualitative. It used focus interview and participant observation.

Definition of Terms

To make this study more understandable, some terms are defined operationally.

Culture of impunity is a culture wherein the murderers or mastermind in the killing particularly in media are not being punished or cases being unresolved.

Documentary Film is a digital motion-oriented form of presenting stories of real life.

Duty is affiliated to do something even if it is life-threatening because it is your duty or passion.

Economic Aspect is an aspect of living, focusing on the financial capabilities of a certain family.

Family is the direct relative of a journalist who died in line with its duty.

Filipino Journalists pertain to the watchdogs of the society that dig news and issues for public information.

Journalist killing pertains to one reason why Philippines is considered as a dangerous country for a journalist.

Psychological Aspect is an aspect of living which focuses on the emotional or mental attributes of a person or a family. It focuses on the families' experiences including traumatic incidents

Quezon Province is an area in Southern Tagalog, the location where some journalists was killed.

Security Aspect is an aspect of living which focuses on the security or safe condition of a person or a family, it includes threats and harassments

Social Aspect is an aspect of living which focuses on the attributes of a person or family towards the community in which he interacts

Under the gun is a term used to describe the life of Filipino journalists as well as their families struggling through the threats and challenges in media.

Research Method

Research Locale

The researcher conducted the study in Quezon, Province specifically in Agdangan, Lucena, and Sariaya wherein the family of Lingan, Pobeda and Sison currently resides.

Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive method and is purely qualitative. The researcher observed the participants and conducted focus interviews. Also, the researcher stayed for at least a day to observe the informants.

Informants

The informants of this study were mainly the wife of Ike Lingan, sister of Polly Pobeda and wife of Bert Sison. The researcher chose only the three informants since they were the only available family member during the conduct of the study. To further understand the issues of media killings and the families of the victims and to add some supporting statements, the researcher also interviewed the head of NUJP Quezon Ronilo Dagos and Delfin Mallari of Philippine Daily Inquirer.

Instrumentation

The method of collecting data was done through the use of interview questionnaires and focus interview. The researcher used an interview questionnaire to have a smooth flow of conversation with the interviewees. The questionnaires or guide questions deals on the status of the families in different aspects including social, psychological, economic and security aspect. Also it contains questions about their life before and after the death of their relative. There are also guide questions to some of the journalists being interviewed including the status of Quezon Province regarding media killings, issues in media and journalists and journalism.

Data Gathering Process

The researcher underwent various steps. First, the researcher requested for the approval of the study from the research professor and then the researcher inquired from NUJP-Quezon to get the information and location of the families of the killed journalists in Quezon Province. Then, the researcher went to the place where the families live and conducted the shooting of the documentary film. The researcher conducted a focus interview guided with questions related to the objective of the study and participant observation. Separate interview with the members of NUJP-Quezon was done. The researcher considered the availability of the said members by requesting their approval through sending emails and online messages.

Results and Discussions

This contains the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data obtained after the conduct of the study.

Status of the families of Filipino journalists in Quezon Province who died in line of duty

Life of the family before the death of their relative

In the case of the family of Bert Sison and the family of the other victims, their families have a very simple life but then, media killings shatter it.

*“Sa kabila ng aming paghihirap mag asawa, sabi nga eh ang ating Panginoon eh nagsisikap kami. Tulad ng ting-ting ng walis na pinag-bigkis-bigkis namin. Pag alis nya ng bahay namin, ang kanyang trabaho ay ganito; maninisid sa dagat, manganganta sa radyo. Lahat ng iyan ay ginawa ng aking asawa. Ako naman pag-alis nya may alaga akong bata, pagkatapos ko ng ganitong gawa ko ako’y uupo sa isang lugar at ako’y magkakayas ng walis, maglalaba ako kung maari pa. Lahat ng ginagawa ng isang may bahay na pagtulong sa asawa ay ginawa ko na. Kahit kami ay kumaen ng tuyo, masayang masaya kami.....
..kaya sabi ko nga, sa buhay ng mag-asawa kung pagkain lang ang wala, hindi yun problema.”*

Mrs. Rosemarie Sison (wife of Bert Sison) declared having a convenient life, when her husband was still living. Both of them provided for the family. Also, she said in the interview that her husband was a very good husband and media worker that really follows the rule and never did any anomaly related to his duty to report the news.

*“...ang alam ko ang aking asawa ay tuwid na daan. Dahil kung yaan ay hindi tuwid ang dinaanan mayaman si nanay. Sa totoo lang, kung si nanay ay mukhang pera si Bert patay na ay buhay na buhay si nanay.”*Mrs. Sison added.

From the statement of Mrs. Bonifacia Lingan (wife of Ike Lingan) and Mrs. Divina Pobeda-Rocero, the expressed having a normal or typical life before the incident of killing happened.

“Ayos naman, nakakaraos....” Mrs. Lingan stated while Mrs. Rocero said the following:

“Kami naman po eh, bale kapatid ko nga sya (Polly Pobeda) ay sya naman ay nasa Lucena..”

The life’s family after the death of their relative and how they cope

“Sabi ko nga, kung ilalarawan ang aming buhay talagang isang dramang katakutakot. Akala lamang ng aming mga kamag-anak ay meron ako, ay wala. Nung umalis ka Ka-Fausto mo ay akoy nahinging bente, ang sagot sa akin,

mamaya na. Sa totoo lang kung ako ang tatanungin ay gusto kong magka-kaibigan dahil wala na eh, wala na. sabi nga sabi ko sa sarili ko baka ako'y nabaguhan, natakot akot na baka pag ako'y iniwanan mag isa eh wala akong alam. Tayong Katoliko, kahit yung iba hindi, alam nating may Diyos pero yung pagbaril sa kanya hindi natin masyadong alam. Ako'y nung maging Born Again ako'y tuwang tuwa dahil hindi lahat ng Born Again ay ayos meron ding kapintasan."

Based on what Mrs. Sison expressed, it can be observed that after the incident, financial issues strikes them. Also she said on the interview that she even sell some of their valuables just to pay her husband's debt. She also added the following:

"... Yung pumatay sa aking asawa ay yang quarry na yan eh. Naku sikreto natin yun. Ang daming buwaya sa mundo. Naku sabi ko nga, mayayaman ang mga buwaya. Pero dito sila ay may palasyo, magpalasyo na sila ng magpalasyo dito sa lupa pagdating doon ay impyerno naman sila. Bat ako matatakot ay ako'y may Diyos, ang matakot ay yung walang Diyos dahil akoy mamamatay na ako'y maligaya eh dahil ako ay may takot sa diyos."

Based on the statement it is seen that she knew the mastermind, but she remained silent.

According to Dagos (2014), the families of the victims of media killings usually are offered money in order to withdraw the case that they filed—others were threatened. This makes the culture of impunity even more controlling and alarming. Since the restoration of democracy, estimated 200 media workers were being eliminated and out of the estimated 200, only a few have identified the gunman but not the mastermind of the killings. However, NUJP adapted a program for the families of their fallen media colleagues --- *Saranggola* which seeks to help the families of the victims of media killings, creating programs for the welfare of these families and for protection and moral support as well.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Divina Pobeda-Rocero stated:

"...nagsampa po sila ng kaso bale ang lumalakad po dun eh si Mayor Ojeda eh kaya lang nabalewala na din kasi matagal na walang nangyari, hanggang ngayon wala na."

Mrs. Divina Pobeda-Rocena (sister of Polly Pobeda) stated that after her brother's death, their family filed a case regarding Polly's death. They also said that somebody was trying to pay them to withdraw the case that they filed against their brother's killer.

She added:

"Nung una po sabi babayaran na lang kami. Pero hindi po kami pumayag".

"...hindi naman po kami pumayag. Tas ayun nung naghehearing pa hanggang ngayon eh nawala na".

Meanwhile, Mrs. Bonifacia Lingan shared the following:

"Nakay Rodriguez ako noon, kay Gobernador. Kay Gov. Rodriguez, yun ang tumangkilik sa akin hanggang sa kaso, yun ang nagtubos sa mga ano ko sa kaso..."

Aspects of life was affected by the sudden loss of a relative
Economic Status

According to Ragragio (2014), media worker is the family's sole provider to their financial needs that's why losing them means losing a part of their everyday needs. One can easily realize the impact it has left the families. Its impact involves financial ability of the families sustaining the daily needs of the children, their education, among others, now that their main source of income has gone.

Mrs. Rosemarie Sison expressed difficulty in terms of financing their family's daily needs. She narrated the following:

"Ako naman eh pagka ano ay nahingi ako ng tulong sa aking mga anak. Pag ako'y pinapadalhan ng anak ko, bago ko yun mabitiwan, ay tutoy itoy padala ng kapatid mo ay tipidin natin to dahil bukas ay baka wala tayong ibili ng bigas. ... Nung nabubuhay si Bert bagamat kamiy mag asawa hindi naman sila obligadong silay tumulong sa amin. Dahil bagamang mahirap ay napagtatagni-tagni."

Mr. and Mrs. Sison have six children working in Manila and in some part of Laguna. One of her grandsons is in her supervision. During the data gathering or interview, it could be observed that she has a typical life, surviving everyday living with the money sustained by her children. They own a house and a lot in San Roque, along with three unused motorcycles, a huge house compare to the usual, household things are unused since her husband died. Withal, they have a small space for vegetable garden. Mrs. Sison is uneducated, and is always assisted by her neighbors.

In addition, Mrs. Divina Pobeda-Rocero stated:

"May anak po sya (Polly Pobeda) isa sa unang napangasawa nya, nasa amin yun ay nung namatay po sya wala ng nagtutustos sa kanyang anak, bale yung magulang ko na lang."

With this statement from Polly Pobeda's sister, problem with financial matter could be felt. As of today, their parents have taken responsibility for Polly's child to be sent in school. Currently the family is living in Padre Burgos, Quezon but the said child is in Atinoman, Quezon.

Psychological Status

According to Mallari (2011), Sison's daughters was shot in his car by two unidentified gunmen on a motorcycle and died on the spot. The gunmen also wounded his 30-year-old daughter, Liwayway, in the arm before fleeing the scene. Sison's 24-year-old daughter, Amirah, escaped unharmed by pretending to be dead. Both of Sison's daughters also report for the Regional Bulletin.

Mrs. Sison narrated the following:

"Halos sila ay maloka, halos. Maayos naman na ngayon. Nasaksihan ko lahat, lahat. Umalis kami dito. Ako kahit ako gagani-ganito, ang nanay ay hindi nag-aral, napatapos ko ang aking mga anak ng hindi napapatawag ang kapitan para kami ay mag usap ng kaguluhan sa anak. Kaya akoy walang alam sa batas eh, kaya't nung unang sya ay nakaburol ay wala akong alam, wala akong masasabi. basta ang aking asawa ay ulirang asawa sa aming tahanan."

Based on this statement, it is evidently seen that the incident of killings that happened to their family challenged them emotionally. According also to Mrs. Sison, after what happened, her two daughters resigned from work as a journalist due to fear and trauma. She also expressed the difficulty in recovering after the loss of her husband:

"Sabi ko nga kung mabubuhay akong muli at syay mabubuhay muli, sya pa rin ang gusto kong makasama. Sa loob ng aming pagsasamang mag-asawa, nung akoy umibig"

sa aking asawa ay labindalawang taon, yun talaga ang una kong pag-ibig. Kaya nga hanggang sa oras na ito pag may naloko sa akin, hindi ako sabik sabi ko. Kaya nga sabi ko laging tuwid ang aking daan, tuwid na tuwid. Siguro, sabi ko nga sabi ng ating panginoon doon ulit makmi magsasama, sa dakong paroon Pag akoy napunta sa kanyang libingan, akoy naiyak pa rin. Akoy, tatay parang hindi ko kaya. Hindi ako makakarecover. Kung akoy walang apong ganto, baka akoy buang na.

“... Akoy nahihili sa mag asawang buong buo, bakit nga kaya ang tao ay malupit, ang lupit ng tao.”

According to Reforma (2014), loss is an integral part of life, grief and pain as well. The start of grief may be delayed for an extended period then be initiated by some events related to the original loss. A common fear shared by those in grief is that distress will never end. The mourning experience includes ideas of reaction, adaptation and process. Reaction involves the response. The person reacts emotionally as the pain is experienced, and gradually reacts cognitively as new identity is formed and a life is rebuilt.

It is stated that Mrs. Sison cannot recover to the loss of his husband. Even though years have passed, she still misses him. She has forgiven the mastermind of the killing still, it left a mark on her life that made her life incomplete. Her daughters were also in the incident and were greatly affected; difficulty in breathing was always experienced by her daughters every time they were reminded of the tragic incident that happened to them.

Social Status

Social status as to be used in this study is how these families live in their community without one of their family members. These families are often judged as one of the members of the elite group in the society. But based on reports and different studies, families of media workers are usually deprived most especially the ones in the provinces; this was according to Ronilo Dagos, Head of NUJP Quezon.

Mrs. Sison shared the following:

“Sabi nga kaya lang sabing mayabang ay naka-kotse. Sa totoo lang ang aking pinagbayarang utang sa labas sa gasolina ay katakutakot. Ayaw ko lang masabing ang aking asawa ay patay na ay karami-raming utang ... Sa totoo lang kung ako ang tatanungin ay gusto kong magka-kaibigan dahil wala na eh, wala na.”

She is alone with her three-year-old grandson. Home-based, taking care of his grandson and guarding their house. She merely goes out just to buy things that she needs. She always anticipates for programs that will provide them something, and waiting the remittances from her children that she seldom accepts because they have their own families now.

She added the following:

... Sabi ko pinili ko yung nanay ko sa San Roque dahil ang aking laging pagpapalaki ay ganun pero meron pa ding kapintasan. Sabi ko nga ang Diyos ay nakapagpatawad, kayoy tao lamang. Hanggat akoy di nakakaapekto sa inyo wala akong ano”

People always see the not-so-good side of their family, Mrs. Sison said in the interview that when she went to the church she just wore old clothes and people

around her teased and suggested her to change clothes but she never did. She is not bothered of what others' opinions.

Security Status

Families are aware of the dangerous job of their family-member in the media. Some of them even received the same death threats before they were killed. It is under this condition that the families always feel the fear of possibly being harassed or even killed. Usually, a media man receives threats due to their job to tell the truth no matter who the involved people are and no matter what the situation is. As to their families, the same situation is applied. After their relative has been killed and they filed a case, issues of money offerings came along but the families refused to accept it.

Mrs. Sison stated the following regarding the mastermind of his husband's murder:

"Yung pumatay sa aking asawa ay yang quarry na yan eh. Naku sikreto natin yun. Ang daming buwaya sa mundo. Naku sabi ko nga, mayayaman ang mga buwaya. Pero dito sila ay may palasyo, magpalasyo na sila ng magpalasyo dito sa lupa pagdating doon ay impyerno naman sila.....Bat ako matatakot ay ako'y may Diyos, ang matakot ay yung walang Diyos dahil akoy mamamatay na akoy maligaya dahil ako ay may takot sa diyos..... Talagang sabi ko ay salamat. Kahit ako ay walang pinagaralan.....Dahil iba raw talaga ang may takot sa Diyos. Sige lang.....Bayae nyo naAng ating Panginoon lagi ang pakinggan, subukan nyong matulog at bukas sasabihin nyo may nabulong sa inyo."

In addition, Mrs. Rocero stated the following:

"Nung bandang huli na nalaman namin. Naglilihim naman sya eh hindi nya sinasabi na gamun pero sinasabihan namin kasi may naririnig kami na may mga nakaanuhan sya. Sabi namin edi tama na yang kakaano niya ang sabi nya, trabaho lang to."

Their family did not know that Polly was receiving threats due to his job as a radio reporter. As to the part of their family, they did not receive any threats or harassment before and after her brother was killed. According to NUJP, families of the victims of media killings usually were offered with money in order to withdraw the case that they filed against the killer. Some of them most especially the families of the victims of Maguindanao Massacre are often receiving threats, others did back out in the case and some other accepted the money being offered to them, thinking that it is the most practical way to do since no one is supporting them and they want a peaceful life far from disturbing threats that merely affect them.

Summary and Conclusions

Findings

The researcher has come up with the following findings:

1. Before the incident happened, the three families are in a good way, happy and contented even though they are not really that wealthy, however, after the incident happened and they filed a case, money offering comes along but the Pobeda and Lingan family did not accept it and did not revoke the case.
 - 2.1 The struggle of the three families to everyday living continues after the incident but in a harder way.
 - 2.2 The families of the victims still seek for justice and still cannot recover to what happened. Trauma and distress came along most especially to Bert Sison's family.

2.3 For the three families, people around them have this mindset that when you have a journalist in a family --- the family is automatically rich but the reality is that they are just a typical family surviving their everyday living.

2.4 Threats have been received but not been publicized or even discussed to their families. As to the part of the three families, they did not receive any before or after the incident.

3. Sison family's experience is most tragic compared to Lingan and Pobeda family since the incident of killings left a great psychological depression to Bert Sison's spouse Mrs Rosemarie Sison and to his traumatized daughters.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following are the conclusions:

1. The documentary film featured the lives of the families of the victims of media killing in Quezon Province before and after the incident happened.
2. After the conduct of the study, the researcher assessed that the killings affects the families in economical, psychological, and social aspect.
3. The life of Bert Sison's family compared to the life of the families of Ike Lingan and Polly Pobeda was somehow the same though Sison's family's psychological trauma is much heavier.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions, the following are recommended:

1. For the families of the victims of media killings in Quezon and other provinces be given fair attention and support from the government and other agencies and organizations that focus on the welfare of the families of the victims of unresolved cases of media killings.
2. A follow-up study focusing on press freedom and issues regarding impunity be conducted.
3. For local media to be more regulating in telling the news whether it is print or broadcast
4. For future researchers to conduct study about families of victims of media killings with a wider range
5. The future researchers are encouraged to make an in-depth study regarding media killings and produce documentary film that will tackle diverse area related to journalism.

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Who is Afraid of Gays and Lesbians? Power and Politics of Queer Visibility in Dickson Iroegbu's Law58

Tunji Azeez, Lagos State University, Nigeria

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Abstract

While most countries in Europe and America are taking a more critical look at their homophobic positions and granting recognition and acceptance to homosexuals, most African countries are clamping down more aggressively on the rights of gay, lesbian and bisexual peoples. Nigeria is reputed to be one of the most homophobic countries in Africa. This is evident in its prohibition of same-sex erotic not only by traditional and religious institutions but also by official legislative criminalisation of non-heterosexual activities.

This homophobic legislation is a product of a politically powerful heterosexual majority that seeks to deny and acknowledge the presence of persons of other sexual orientations outside mainstream heterosexuality. While homosexuality and bisexuality attract different jail terms in Nigeria, they also attract death by stoning in some northern states of the country where the Shari'a law is in operation. The resultant tension created by these traditional, religious and official legislations of a politically, religiously and culturally powerful sexual majority and a closeted and emerging queer ethnicity in this country has, therefore, become the focus of a few filmmakers.

This study examines one of the few queer-themed movies -Kingsley Iroegbu's *Law58*- to reveal the challenges faced by Nigerian gays, lesbians and bisexuals who are seeking recognition and visibility towards deconstructing dominant heterosexual myths and shibboleths.

Key words: homophobia, queer, heterosexuality, Power, Politics, Nigeria, Nollywood

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Introduction

As mentioned in previous chapters of this book, in recent times, very few issues have generated controversies more than the issue of homosexuality. The debate around this sexual orientation cuts across cultures, class, religion, and politics such that one then begins to wonder how a person's sexual orientation or preference could become so central around the world. Recently, the United States of America legalised same-sex marriage. This decision by the Obama administration, to a large extent, will be a factor that will decide the fate of the Democratic Party in the next general elections. The same can be said of other countries of the world and, specifically, African countries. In previous chapters, we have revealed the homophobic nature of two countries, Nigeria and Ghana and that acceptance or rejection of homosexuality by political office holders/seekers, in their manifestoes, determines their political fortunes. One then begins to wonder if homosexuality is a new sexual orientation/preference in human history and culture for it to be generating such controversy. Indeed, one is tempted to ask if sex and sexuality determine the course of a society's developmental history. As a foremost gender and sexuality scholar (Rust, 1992) posits,

Although some individuals were believed to have predispositions toward same-sex sexual behavior, ancient and medieval concepts of same-sex sexual predispositions were not equivalent to the modern concept of essential homosexual orientation (Boswell 1990). The rise of the homosexual person transformed doing into being, and homosexual behavior became a basis for identity.

The quote above reveals that same-sex sexual relationships existed in ancient and medieval times but that they do not equate to the modern conception of 'homosexual orientation'. By this, she seems to suggest that while homosexuality as an activity was recognised as existing in ancient cultures, those who practiced it did not come out to assert their difference from mainstream heterosexuality. Consequently, homosexuality as a 'practice' is not alien to man. If this is accepted, then, certain questions become pertinent; what is responsible for the sudden attack of homosexuals and people of other sexual orientations outside mainstream heterosexuality? Are heterosexuals afraid of gays, lesbians and bisexuals? What is the basis of the fear of homosexuals? Is one's sexual orientation natural or acquired? Is sexuality a public discourse and therefore, political or is it private and devoid of politics?

Looking critically at the conception of homosexuality across space and time, one discovers that though a person's sexual preference is a private matter, it has implications in the public sphere. This is particularly so since the arrival of the homosexual as a third gender in the society;

The first change of modern relevance to the Western world was the birth of the concept of the homosexual as a type of person, which occurred in the mid-nineteenth century (Bullough 1976; Foucault 1980; Katz 1983; Weeks 1986) or earlier (Trumbach, 1977). Prior to this time, a person's sexual self was not defined in terms of the sex of her or his partner. Sexuality was structured and described primarily in terms of class, age, and gender role rather than genital sex. (Rust, 367)

The above reveals the way homosexuality was conceived in modern societies. In the ancient world, this sexual practice was just an act engaged in by a few influential men who engage in it more with younger men. This is particularly so in the Greek culture

where the powerful and older men penetrate the younger and weaker men as penetration was a sign of power and superiority. Schmidtke (1999) avers that;

... Islamic law condemned homosexual practice, not homoerotic sentiment. Mutual attraction between males was unanimously vied to be perfectly natural and normal. Islamic civilization being essentially phallocratic, the role of the penetrator in the sexual act is considered dominant and superior. His social respectability remains untouched by is sexual practice, regardless of the nature or gender of the object of penetration.

If Islamic and Arab cultures, like their Greece, Roman and Medieval counterparts recognised homosexuals and indeed, tolerated them, there is a need to examine modern homophobic temper, particularly in Nigeria and Ghana where most of the people believe that homosexuality is foreign, unnatural and evil. Since we have established the prevalence of same-sex marriage in some African cultures prior to their contact with Euro-American cultures in previous chapters, we shall move to a discussion of our first Nigerian queer-themed movie, Dickson Iroegbu's *Law 58*. But before we begin a detailed discussion of the movie, it is important to examine the view of a Ghanaian gay, one of the very few to come out of the closet on the debate on the 'un-Africanness' of homoeroticism and its placement as a Western vice;

I think it's time Ghanaians accept the fact that Gays exist in Ghana just like other country around the globe. Being gay is never a new thing in Ghana and I wonder why people still try to deny the fact that Gays exist in Ghana but rather they refer it as a western lifestyle (Sic) . I am Gay and I never adopted the "lifestyle" from any other person, as I was growing up, I realized I had a feeling for men and I always want to see young boys half naked playing football. My mother and cousins told me that I looked very feminine and they said I look very pretty than a woman. I grew up and I develop a feeling for men and that is my sexual orientation. And I am sure that know (sic) one can change my sexual orientation.¹

The assertion above from a Ghanaian gay counters the view that homosexuality is a Western vice. This claim is important to the movie to be examined here. This is because the debate between the biological and the social constructionists is still raging. In *Law 58*, the protagonist affirms the social constructionist theory as he becomes, rather than being born a homosexual. In addition to our discussion above, we must note that not only gays, lesbians and bisexuals are closeted but, also closeted is any art form that attempts to bring them to the public as evident in the arrest and detention of the filmmaker whose work is discussed here².

¹ This statement is credited to Abu, one of the few gays in Northern Ghana. The statement was posted online by hannahgaventa (possibly a pseudo name) on July 8th, 2012 in an article titled, "I want to meet a gay"- Attitudes towards Homosexuality in Northern Ghana.

² Dickson Iroegbu was not only arrested by the Nigeria police for producing a movie that they saw as promoting vice, his family members also abandoned him because the release of the movie brought doubts around his sexuality! This is despite the fact that he is married with children.

Cinema and the challenge of heterosexuality

Definitely, there have been a number of queer-themed movies before and after the production of *Law 58* (2012) in both Ghana and Nigeria, *Men in Love* ((2010), *Guilty as Sin*, *Quit the Game*, *Quit the Stage*, *Journey to Self*, *Confusion Na Wa* (2012) *Jezebel* (2009), *House of Gold* (2013) *4Play* (2011), and a host of others. Of all the artists in Nigeria and Ghana, one observes that filmmakers are the most interested in the debate on homosexuality. In fact, at the moment, only a few literary artists have come out openly to engage in the debate using their artistic products. But, these works and their creators were not subjected to the attack faced by filmmakers because as Green-Simms and Azuah observe,

Because of Nollywood's predilection for both indiscretion and castigation, it is perhaps not surprising that it is the first and only form of African popular culture to produce an entire body of work that addresses the issue of homosexuality. Of course West African celluloid films such as *Karmen Gei* or *Dakan* and works of literature such as Jude Dibia's *Walking with Shadows*, Chimamanda Adichie's *The Thing around Your Neck*, and Frieda Ekotto's *Chuchote Pas Trop* have also addressed the issue. However, typically, those texts are not consumed locally and across class and education levels; ... while the archive of gay-themed Nollywood films reveals very little about the lives of actual LGBTI People in Nigeria, it does expose the range of fears and desires people have about them.

Little wonder, then, that filmmakers that engage in queer-themed movies become objects of ridicule, scorn, attack and rejection both by family members, the society and law enforcement agents in both countries. It is interesting to note that while Dickson Iroegbu was attacked by the Nigerian public, including fellow filmmakers and law enforcement agents for his production of *Law 58*, the same fate befell Abdulsalam Mumuni, the gay-themed producer of *Dirty Secret* in Ghana. The attacks and arrests of the two men notwithstanding, the movies sold out in both countries. We may, then, ask, who is afraid of gays, lesbians and bisexuals to want to suppress any artistic creation that talks about them?

This brings us to the issue about the power of film to challenge the status quo politically and culturally. Realising the power of the film as a medium of knowledge production and dissemination, the United States of America in 1930 produced the Motion Picture Production Code popularly called the "Hays Code" after the head of the organisation that wrote the code, Will .H. Hays. Tratner, (2003) notes that realising the power of the film in society, the code declares that movies are;

... 'entertainment' but of a very peculiar kind which produces strange effects never encountered before as part of any entertainment, effects which threaten to compromise the morality of movie viewers so powerfully that moviemakers must censor themselves. ... Most arts appeal to the mature. This arts appeals to every class- mature, immature, developed, law-abiding, criminal.

We can, therefore, understand the fear in the hearts of governments, religious leaders, opinion leaders, traditional institutions and the society generally when Nigerian and Ghanaian moviemakers engage with the issue of homosexuality. As the Hays Code

concludes, 'Psychologically, the larger the audience, the lower the moral mass resistance to suggestion.'

From the above, we have established the nexus between sex, sexuality and politics for, every artistic work is a product of the politics and power game of its period. Since homosexual persons are on the margins of society by the very fact of their sexual orientation, it follows that both they and whoever attempts to bring their case to the public domain will be hounded. Therefore, both subject (homosexuals) and object (the films about them) would be rejected by dominant heterosexuality.

Here, we chance upon another problematic. If the society frowns upon homosexuals and bisexuals, who then buys the films that are produced about them? This is the concern of many scholars of queer politics and literature. (Gaudio, 2014) for instance believes that since most Nigerians have never met an openly homosexual person, the celebration of the passage of the anti-gay bill by the Nigerian National Assembly smacks of hypocrisy and envy of homosexuals who have broken out of the financially demanding phantasmatic³ heterosexual marriages. According to him,

With the world's eighth-largest population of internet users, Nigeria ranks in the top five countries for internet searches for gay porn. Rather than simply reflecting a cultural aversion to homosexuality, the fanfare accompanying Nigeria's anti-same sex marriage law can be seen as a massive attraction-repulsion triggered by a crisis in heteronormativity.

We can see from the above that while majority of Nigerians and Ghanaians condemn homosexuality roundly as an evil act, they are, in a way fascinated by it. This is because, as mentioned earlier most gay-themed movies sold out in both countries.⁴

Homosexuality, power and the negotiation of visibility in Law 58

Dickson Iroegbu is one of the most controversial directors in Nollywood even before the production of *Law 58*. With the production of *Law 58* at a time that the Nigerian National Assembly was considering the anti-gay bill, the controversy became even more widespread. According to him, some notable Nollywood actors that he approached to star in the movie turned down the offer for fear of being branded gay⁵. While the movie is not the first gay-themed movie in Nollywood, the popularity of the movie was, no doubt, promoted by the topicality of the issue. In addition, the controversial nature of the producer prompted many Nigerians to want to see the movie.

The movie opens on Chief Douglas (Kanayo. O. Kanayo) and Charles (Mac-Morris Ndubueze) as Charles shaves the beard of Chief Douglas. While there seems to be nothing amorous in a man shaving the beard of a fellow man, the close up on the face of Chief Douglas as he is shaved reveals the affection between the two men. The shaving done, the two men hold each other tenderly as they caress each other. The

³ According to Gaudio, cultural critic, Neville Hoad describes Africans' blend of Christian and African sexual traditions which allows them to marry several women, including underage girls, have multiple concubines and patronize prostitute without losing their respectability in the society, including their churches as 'phantasmatic.'

⁴ Abdulmalam Mumuni, the Ghanaian producer of *Dirty Secret*, one of the gay-themed movies studied in this book reveals in an interview that I had with him in October, 2014 that the movie was released in both Nigeria and Ghana and that the movie sold out in both countries that he had to go back to the studio for more copies. The same is reported by a film vendor about *Law 58*, in Nigeria.

⁵ According to the director in a report posted online by Wilfred Pkiche, on February 2, 2012, the duo of Desmond Elliot and Mike Ezuruonye turned down the offer to be part of *LAW 58*.

scene fades with the smiling face of Charles, a boy in his early twenties into the next scene. The next scene reveals that the previous scene was a flashback.

Now, with the scene described above, one notices that the gay relationship between the two men suggests an attraction by an older man towards a younger man. While there is nothing wrong in an older man being in a relationship with a younger man, the relationship suggests one of coercion of the younger man by the older man. This is soon revealed in later scenes where we the director takes us into the basis of the relationship. In the scene that follows, Charles and his mother are at table. His mother, is angry at him for not passing his exams and get into the university despite her providing him with all that he needs. The atmosphere becomes tense as his mother, (Clarion Chukwura) minces no word in telling him how disappointed she is in him. Charles makes a futile effort to calm the situation by promising that he would pass his next exam and make his mother proud. By this, the director sets up Charles as a desperate boy who would do anything to get into the university.

With this set-up, Charles is shown as vulnerable. His vulnerability is soon capitalised on when James (Charles Warran) their gardener approaches him by teasing him that he overheard the conversation between Charles and his mother and promises to get him into school even without writing the requisite entrance examination! Charles is shocked but excited at the thought of gaining admission and making his mother happy. The condition, for this is that he would be taken to meet a certain chief Douglas. At this point, the audience learns the reason behind the relationship between Chief Douglas, an older, powerful and richer man, and Charles, a poor, desperate boy seeking admission.

From the above, we observe the thinking of the director-producer of the movie that homosexuality as a sexual orientation is non-biological but rather socially constructed and that the reasons for indulging in it is purely for materialistic or other benefits. This position is against the position that homosexuality is biological phenomenon as evident in the claims of some openly gay men and lesbians. The representation of gays, lesbians and bisexuals by heterosexual filmmakers who portray queer identities as mis-guided heterosexuals has been the concern of many gays and lesbians. (See Ciasullo, 2001, Eaklor, 1994, Nnyannungo, 2014, Rust, 1992, Ritch, 2006). These scholars have against against how heterosexuals portray lesbians, and their bodies specifically, in mainstream heterosexual cultures. Therefore, it is important to note Iroegbu's portrayal of homosexuality in this movie and that his portrayal takes the debate on homosexuality back to the Greek, Roman and Arab culture where the penetrator is considered, by the very act of penetration as superior and the passive male or the penetrated is considered as inferior. This was a time when homosexuality is merely an act and not a basis of a person's identity as we have demonstrated in previous chapters. (See Schmidtke, 1999).

As a heterosexual engaged in the debate on homosexuality, Iroegbu does not push the argument of homosexuals but, actually, the argument of heterosexuality. In fact, Iroegbu, to clear his person from any link with homosexuality granted interviews in the press to explain that he only engaged with the theme to broaden the scope of the debate on the subject as he condemns homosexuality in its entirety. To push this argument, therefore, the plot of the movie is woven around a desperate, vulnerable boy and a powerful, rich and older man who exploits the boy for sexual satisfaction. Perhaps, we may safely infer here, that Iroegbu is conscious of the politics

surrounding homosexuality hence, his decision to present the issue from a heterosexual point of view.

As the plot of the movie unfolds, James leads Charles to Chief Douglas to explain his admission problem. We are soon taken into the scene where Douglas interrogates Charles about his sexual orientation. Of course, as expected, he replies that he is attracted to girls but that he is still a virgin. When Douglas asks if he has ever considered making love to a man, Charles springs up from his sitting position, stunned and repulsed by the question. Douglas calmly explains to him that 'making love to fellow men is more pleasurable than making love to women'. The scene ends with an incredulous look on Charles' face.

As expected of any young boy, Charles is repulsed by Chief Douglas' sexual advances in return for university admission. He gets angry at James for taking him to such a man and vows never to go with him to see Douglas, again. In this scene, the director reveals James as a 'bottom' in a homosexual relationship while Douglas is portrayed as 'straight-acting' or 'top'. This is evident in the effeminate carriage of James as against the masculine carriage of Douglas.

On return from Douglas' so angry is Charles that he pushes James to the floor. The later ignores him and reminds him that if he truly desires admission into the university, Douglas is the key. At this point, there is close up on Charles as he weighs the options. The scene that follows is a flashback to Douglas' house. Charles enters and Douglas beckons him to come into the bedroom with him. Like a sheep being led to the slaughter house, Charles follows. As Douglas begins to caress him on the bed, the scene ends.

The scene that follows is between Charles and his uncle. His mother has reported him to his uncle for engaging in a sinful act. This is followed by a mother-son scene where the mother is dejected that her son has failed her. Dejectedly, she says, 'I'd rather you were caught in armed robbery than this, this..., disgraceful thing'. Charles responds that, 'sex is a personal thing. It doesn't matter who you have it with.' Here, we see the view of many Nigerians and Ghanaians about homosexuality through the mother. For majority of the people, homosexuality is worse than armed robbery.

A critical examination of the dialogue reveals that while the director attempts to balance the argument about homosexuality between the biological theorists and the social constructionist theorists using Charles and his mother, he has privileged the social constructionist by empowering Douglas and disempowering Charles from the outset by placing him at the mercy of Douglas. Charles' defence against his mother therefore, falls flat.

From this point in the movie, Charles becomes the envy of his colleagues as true to his word, Douglas gets Charles into the university. He passes his exams in flying colours. So popular is he that some girls attempt to date him. But as far as Charles is concerned, he has no attraction to women but to men. One important change in him, is that he seems to have 'become' a natural homosexual as he rebuffs all advances from girls. He even initiates his friend Eric into the fold of homophiles using Eric's poverty as bait. Like Charles who is lured into homosexuality with university admission, Eric is initiated into homosexuality because he couldn't afford to pay his school fees and is on the verge of dropping out of the university. This is a major weakness in the plot of

the movie as no one except Douglas is naturally homosexual. If Charles has actually changed from being heterosexual to being homosexual, it can be said, then, that sexual orientation is transient and not permanent. However, this contradicts the biological theorist position as advanced by Ritch (2006) that;

Although, sexual behaviour and identity are indeed, susceptible to alteration by aversive stimuli, and religious commitment. There is no scientifically reliable data that same-sex arousal and attraction can be permanently altered through relearning therapies.

The pressure on Charles becomes unbearable. We see him psychologically disturbed. To save himself from damnation and hell, Charles goes to the church to confess his sin and repent of it. However, when he comes face-to-face with the confessor, the enormity of his sin was such that he could not bring himself to confess it. Again, this is an effort by the director to argue that homosexuality is a gross sin and is frowned at by God and man. The director, therefore, becomes the voice of mainstream heterosexuality in the condemnation of homosexuals.

Faced with the difficulty of confessing his sin, Charles plunges fully into homosexuality as he not only begins to enjoy it but also decides to initiate his friend, Eric as mentioned above. The initiation of Charles by James and that of Eric by Charles follow the same pattern. The initiations suggest that the powerful and rich in Nigerian society use their wealth and position to lure young, poor, desperate and unsuspecting young boys into their fold. This is the view of mainstream heterosexuality which the movie sets out to promote.

From this point, Charles becomes a true homosexual as he makes love, not only with Douglas but also, James and Eric. Douglas catches them in the act and threatens them. With this discovery, Charles attempts to 'quit the stage'. He avoids Chief Douglas. With Douglas temporarily out of his life, his life becomes miserable; he is soon confronted by boys who beat him up for being a homosexual. They demand money from him to prevent them from beating him. The assault on Charles is a reflection of the assault meted out to homosexuals in some parts of the country after the passage of the anti-gay bill by the National Assembly.

It's true that police and vigilantes in a few cities have taken advantage of the new law to expose, abuse, and prosecute alleged homosexuals. and the law has certainly made queers across the country even more fearful of exposure than they already were. (Gaudio, 2014)

Therefore, just as homosexuals in real life ran further into their closets with the promulgation of the law which led to attack o their persons, Charles also runs underground. But he could not protect himself from constant abuse so, as a last hope, he runs back to Douglas for help. With Douglas, he is assured of his safety only if he remains loyal to him. Charles pledges his allegiance to Douglas and the boys stop beating him. This reveals the coercion in homosexual relationships as perceived by most heterosexuals who see the practice as the exclusive preserve of the affluent in society.

With the picture painted above, Dickson Iroegbu portrays homosexuality as a cult of the wicked that lures young boys with the promise of power and money. This is revealed in the scene where Douglas tells Charles that, 'I am the grand patron of the

homophiles, no one can kill me.’ With this, Iroegbu tows the familiar path of most Nollywood movies that resort to rituals and occultism in the resolution of their plots. The expectation of any critical mind would be a logical explanation of homosexuality. However, the director panders to mainstream heterosexual notion that homosexuality is satanic and occultic. This is because for many Nigerians and Ghanaians, the major attractions towards homosexuality are money and power. This is evident in the character of Chief Douglas who has power and wealth at his disposal. In fact, Douglas tells Charles, ‘Homophiles put enormous wealth in everyone’s palms for specific purposes.’ Charles is later to tell Eric, also, that, ‘Extraordinary power comes from doing extraordinary things.’ To him and to Chief Douglas, being homosexuals make the extraordinary people!

These statements, like the characterisation of Douglas and Charles are heterosexual conceptions of homosexuality. For many Nigerians and Ghanaians, as we shall see in the Ghanaian films to be studied later, no ‘normal’ human being, male or female would be sexually attracted to persons of same-sex except for spiritual, political and financial reasons. To reinforce my earlier argument that Nigerian and Ghanaian cinema have a lot in common, we shall move to a discussion of a Ghanaian gay-themed movie, *4play* after which we shall do a comparative study of the films studied in this chapter.

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tunjiomowumi@gmail.com





The Reception of the Weird Sisters in Welle's Macbeth and Kurosawa's Throne of Blood

Buket Akgün, Istanbul University, Turkey

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Abstract

This paper discusses the reception of the Weird Sisters of William Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (1606) in Orson Welles's *Macbeth* (1948) and Akira Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood* (1957) as supernatural beings with complete control over the destiny of mankind and over nature through a feminist, psychoanalytic, and semiotic reading of the play and the films. Unlike Shakespeare's witches, Welles's witches and Kurosawa's forest spirit do not acquire their knowledge and powers from Hecate or any masters. Since the word "weird" is derived from the Old English "wyrð" meaning "fate," it associates Shakespeare's and Welles's witches, who are referred to as the Weird Sisters, with the Fates in classical mythology and signifies their control over the fates of other characters. Welles's witches shape Macbeth's destiny by making his effigy, a clay doll, which they fashion out of the ingredients they put into their boiling cauldron at the opening scene of the film. In Kurosawa's film the forest spirit's singing and spinning a thread of life in the midst of the forest not only draws on the etymology of the word "weird," but also reminds us of mythological witches Kybele and Circe. Welles's witches and Kurosawa's forest spirit dominate both film adaptations through the agency of their extensions and substitutes as well—specific natural elements, such as the thunder, lightning, rain, fog, forest, and birds. Among other cinematic techniques, Welles's high-angle shots and Kurosawa's jump-cuts portray the dominion of the witches and the forest spirit over Macbeth and Washizu and over time and space.

Keywords: William Shakespeare, Orson Welles, Akira Kurosawa, *Macbeth*, *Throne of Blood*, witches, the forest spirit, reception studies, feminist theory

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This paper focuses on the reception of the three witches of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* (1606) in Orson Welles's *Macbeth* (1948) and in Akira Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood* (1957). While maintaining the fluidity of the witches, Welles and Kurosawa render them as all-knowing and all-powerful beings without any mistress Hecate, masters, or familiars. Welles's three witches and Kurosawa's forest spirit have complete control not only over the destiny of Macbeth and Washizu, but also over the destiny of the entire kingdom, over life and death, and over nature in general.

The fluidity of Shakespeare's and Welles's witches and Kurosawa's forest spirit echo the feminist theorists' definition of the female body as "[i]ndefinite, unfinished/infinite," (Irigaray, 1991, p. 55), as "a leaking, uncontrollable, seeping liquid; as formless flow . . . a formlessness that engulfs all form, a disorder that threatens all order" (Grosz, 1994, p. 203). This very incompleteness, this "infinite and mobile complexity" (Cixous, 1976, p. 885) of their form allows them constantly to defy any given definition and to change into something else. The witches are commonly described as old, pale, deformed, wrinkled women with crooked fingers, a crooked nose, a hunchback, and with an expression of melancholy (James I, 2002, Chapter 3). Banquo in Shakespeare's play mentions the choppy fingers, skinny lips, and beards of the witches along with the rags they wear. He cannot make quite sure whether they are mortal women or supernatural beings or whether they are female or male. Once again, pointing out to their fluidity, the vanishing of the witches is described by comparing them to the earth's bubbles, air, wind, and breath. Accordingly, Welles's witches are three old women with disheveled, long, white hair, wrinkled hands, crooked fingers and fingernails, wearing wide-sleeved, long, and ragged dresses. Their faces are barely, if ever, seen because they disappear and reappear in the constantly thickening and dispersing fog, which gives the impression that they hover through the fog and filthy air like Shakespeare's witches do at the end of the opening scene of the play. After they meet with Macbeth for the first time, they disappear altogether by running into a thick cloud of mist. They carry wooden forked staffs to represent their doublespeak and duality. They screech out their hails to Macbeth and hiss at the Celtic crosses. These animal noises are reminiscent of and actually replace the familiars (Graymalkin the cat and Harpier, possibly an owl) and the magic ingredients (the snake's fillet and the adder's fork) of Shakespeare's witches which are absent in Welles's film.

In Kurosawa's film an androgynous forest spirit—recalling the androgynous seers in Japanese legends as well as the old women and demons in Noh plays (Savas, 2012, p. 23; Somers-Hall, 2013, p. 79)—replaces the bearded witches of Shakespeare. Similar to Shakespeare's and Welles's witches, the forest spirit is old and wrinkled with disheveled, long, and white hair. When first seen, she is singing a sad song about the mortal fate and greed of mankind while spinning a thread at her spinning wheel. Her light-coloured hair, skin, and clothing, and the light-framed makeshift cage inside which she sits, surrounded by a fog, are juxtaposed with the dark forest and the two dark-clad, darker-skinned samurai captains, Washizu (Macbeth) and Miki (Banquo), riding dark horses. The framing of the forest spirit hints that she does not belong to this world. Correspondingly, Miki questions whether she is mortal or an evil spirit. Like her gender, her facial expression and mood are fluid as well. Like Shakespeare's and Welles's vanishing witches, after delivering her prophecies, she is spirited away. She slowly stands up with her back turned towards the audience. A strong wind takes

away first her coat and then the spirit herself, leaving behind a trail of fog hovering in the air. Shortly after, her cage vanishes, too. It is noteworthy that the kanji (氣) for the words "spirit," "mind," and "air" is the same, which instantly enables the Japanese-speaking audience to associate the forest spirit with the air and the wind and to assume that she can penetrate the minds of Washizu and Miki. Before Washizu rides to the forest to see the forest spirit again, strong winds and lightning fill inside his castle like a summons from her. This time she transforms into three samurai warriors as she delivers her premonitions among the skeleton mounds, in the thickening and dispersing fog, simultaneous with the temporarily blinding lightning flashes. Her white hair, light-coloured attire and the white framing are yet again juxtaposed with the dark forest and the dark clad Washizu to underline their antagonism.

The ambiguity, fluidity, and deviancy seen in the physical descriptions of the witch figures in the play and in both film adaptations seep into their language, their cauldron and the ingredients they use for their charms. In Shakespeare's play and Welles's film *Macbeth* mimics the reversed language and doublespeak of the witches. The very first line of *Macbeth* in the play ("So foul and fair a day I have not seen.") has echoes of one of the parting lines of the witches at the end of Act I Scene I ("Fair is foul, and foul is fair") (1.3.38, 1.1.11). Moreover, *Macbeth* and Lady *Macbeth* use an invisible language when they talk about the murder of Duncan. Regardless, both *Macbeth* and Washizu fail at interpreting the language of the witches and the forest spirit and at seeing the warnings cloaked under false assurances. Irigaray asserts that since the language of women "sets off in all directions," men cannot perceive its meaning (Irigaray, 1985, p. 29). Accordingly, the word "witch" is etymologically derived from the Old English word "*wican*," which is in turn derived from the Indo-European root "*weik*." "*Wican*" and "*weik*" mean respectively "to bend" and "bending." Among the derivatives of the word "*weik*" are "guile" and "prediction." The etymological origin and the derivatives of the word "witch" point out to the bent form and the beguiling character of the witch figures. Additionally, Heinrich Kramer and Jacobus Sprenger claim that women are deviant, twisted, and cunning by nature because, in the Bible, Eve was created out of the twisted rib bone of Adam and because the word "*femina*," meaning woman in Latin, is made up of "*fe*" (*fidem*), meaning "faith" in Latin, and "*minus*," meaning "less" (Mackay, 2009, p. 165).

The three witches are also referred to as the Weird Sisters in Shakespeare's play and in Welles's film. The word "weird" is derived from the Anglo Saxon word "*wyrd*" meaning "fate" and thus connects the witches to the Fates in classical mythology. It hints at the power of the witches over the fate, over the lives and deaths of both mortals and immortals. The three witches in the play, however, are not all-powerful or all-knowing. Neither is *Macbeth* governed by their words or charms. He calls them "imperfect speakers" (1.3.70) and "juggling fiends" (5.8.19), but he affirms that their "supernatural soliciting" can be neither good nor bad (1.3.130-131) and never blames them for the crimes he has committed. Moreover, in the play, the witches are deliberately not to be seen again after the cauldron scene, Act 4 Scene 1, which means that *Macbeth* acts on his own.

Shakespeare's witches gain their wisdom and powers of prophesying, shapeshifting into animals, hovering through air, controlling the weather, and depriving their victims of sleep from Hecate and from the spirits whom they refer to as their masters. Most importantly, their powers are limited, in that they can steal the sailor's semen,

make him sterile, and make him suffer tempests, but they cannot make his ship disappear. It could even be suggested that the witches in the tragedy merely play the role of messengers to Macbeth. Hecate, however, is quite angry at them for choosing the "wayward son,/[s]piteful, and wrathful" Macbeth "who . . . [l]oves for his own ends" to deliver their prophecies (3.5.11-13). In Shakespeare's play and Welles's film Macbeth links Hecate to the moon, the night, and witchcraft because, in classical mythology, Hecate is the queen of the three realms, night, spirits and witchcraft. She has control over life, death, rebirth, and magic. Being an intermediary between the world of the spirits and the world of the living, she guards the boundary between life and death. She can summon spirits. (Illes, 2005, pp. 386-88). Hecate is a tripartite goddess portrayed in art with three bodies—as the maiden, the mother and the witch—each facing different directions. Similarly, in Shakespeare's play and in Welles's and Kurosawa's films, the witches and the forest spirit hail Macbeth thrice, using his past (the Thane of Glamis), present (the Thane of Cawdor), and future (the King) titles. In the play the three apparitions show and tell him about the past (the birth of Macduff), the present or near future (the immediate threat posed by Macduff and Malcom's war tactics), and the (distant) future (Banquo's children becoming kings). Furthermore, the witches' enchantments are repeated three times or multiples of three in both the play and Welles's film. Hecate's symbols of fertility, medicine, and wisdom, such as the toad, the snake and the cauldron, can also be traced in the play among the familiars, ingredients, and possessions of Shakespeare's and Welles's witches. In Kurosawa's film, the crescent moons attached to the helmets of Lord Tsuzuki (King Duncan) and Captain Washizu, the crescent moon seen in the sky the night Washizu murders his lord, and the three cries of the ominous black bird before the murder represent Hecate, the tripartite moon goddess.

The cauldron is a vessel used to turn something natural into something cultural. A housewife uses the cauldron to cook for her family. A wise woman, a herbalist-healer, a midwife, or a witch uses it to make potions and medicine. Due to its shape, which looks like a pregnant woman's belly, and due to its functions such as feeding and healing, the cauldron is resembled to the womb. It is a symbol of transformation, associated with death and the tomb as well as life, birth, rebirth, nourishment, and the womb (Barstow 1995; Neumann, 1991, p. 39-54; Grimassi, 2008, pp. 25-26; Purkiss, 2003, p. 212-213, Walker, 1985, p. 122). In Shakespeare's play the witches put inside their cauldron, among other ingredients, a venomous toad, poisoned entrails, a snake's fillet, an adder's fork, a blind worm's sting, limbs of animal and human corpses, such as the finger of a baby strangled at birth, and a witches' mummy, that is death itself. Next, the apparitions, the masters of the witches, assuming the guise of a head and two babies, emerge out of the same cauldron and then descend back into it after delivering their premonitions. Besides, the cauldron sinks down and is buried at the end of this scene, right before the witches vanish once again, but, as mentioned above, this time not to reappear. As for the apparitions, the head with a helmet symbolizes the series of murders committed, directly or indirectly, by Macbeth as well as the violence of the warrior society in which he lives. The baby covered in blood symbolizes Macduff's unnatural birth. The baby wearing a crown and holding a twig shows the truth of the prophecy regarding Banquo's children becoming kings and Birnam Wood's marching to Dunsinane Hill (Akgün, 2014, p. 318). In Welles's film, the cauldron scene is moved to the opening of the film and the ingredients are reduced to animal blood and human grease and limbs. As mentioned above, the wooden forked staffs of Welles's witches seem to have replaced the adder's fork and the

worm's sting to punctuate their duality. Eventually, Welles's witches plunge their hands into the boiling cauldron and bring out a clay doll of Macbeth. In a manner of speaking, the witches' cauldron devours death and gives birth. The potion that the witches concoct in their cauldron substitutes the umbilical water of the womb.

In Kurosawa's film the spinning wheel of the forest spirit and the mounds of human bones in the forest replace the cauldron of the witches while the Spider's Web Forest replaces the blasted heath, where Shakespeare's and Welles's witches dwell, as well as the Birnam Wood. The mounds of human bones, right behind the cage of the forest spirit, reflect the period of civil wars in Japan, known as *Sengoku jidai*, the warring states period, which started in 1467 and lasted until the late sixteenth or the early seventeenth century. Replacing the wilderness where nothing grows with a forest, the heart of nature, draws a sharp contrast with Shakespeare's play. However, making the forest as the abode of the spirit, who substitutes the three witches of the play, is actually reminiscent of the witch lore. Portraying the forest spirit, singing and spinning a thread in the depths of a forest, the screenwriters Oguni, Hashimoto, Kikushima, and Kurosawa interconnect her with mythological witches Kybele and Circe. Kybele has founded witchcraft in the woods. Circe, a necromancer, lives in a stone mansion in the midst of an island covered with a thick forest. Like Hecate, she knows about the world of the spirits; she instructs Odysseus on how to get to and what to do in the Underworld. Like the forest spirit, she is singing and weaving at her shuttle when she is first introduced in Homer's *The Odyssey*.

Forests are dangerous and uncanny places that are not under the control of mankind, not bound by laws, but places where the powerful ones survive and where the spirits reign (Illes, 2005, pp. 657-59). The original title of the film 「蜘蛛巣城」 (*Kumonosu-jō*) translates as the Spider's Web Castle. Lord Tsuzuki's castle is made out of the trees of the Spider's Web Forest. Hence the name the Spider's Web Castle. Also, the castle is surrounded by the forest as a means of protection against the enemies who would get lost in the maze-like forest. The forest would catch them up like flies entangled in a spider's web. One could also argue that the castle, hence the kingdom, is entrapped within the forest and, thus, governed by the forest spirit. Furthermore, trees served to build the strongest castles and shrines in Japan. They are considered to be divine and respected as gods giving life and energy. For this reason, the Spider's Web Forest also brings to mind the growth and fertility pattern in Shakespeare's play (Rosenberg, 1978, p. 385). All the grain and seed analogies in the play, such as Duncan's planting Banquo to make him grow to the fullest and Banquo's being "the root and father of many kings" (3.1.5-6), are juxtaposed with Macbeth's "fruitless crown" and "barren sceptre" (3.1.60-61). Similarly, the forest spirit tells Miki that his fortune turns slower, but will last longer than Washizu's and that his son will eventually reign in the Spider Web's Castle. In the meantime, she starts to turn her spinning wheel slower, which discloses that she has indeed been spinning the two captains' threads of life.

To return to Welles, his film opens and closes with the witches; he changes the order of the witches' scenes and lines. The title of the film is seen as soon as the three witches finish their opening lines by saying the name of Macbeth. Welles gives the final words to the witches, too: "Peace!—the charm's wound up." The charm they wind to avenge the sailor for his wife's misdoing in the first act of the play turns into a charm they have wound to bring the downfall of Macbeth in Welles's film. Furthermore, Welles gives the witches ultimate control over Macbeth by having them

make a clay doll of Macbeth, which they use as an effigy. They put a necklace and a crown on the effigy as they hail Macbeth with his three titles, heralding that he will be the Thane of Cawdor and the King of Scotland. Just as Atropos, one of the three Fates, cuts the thread of life when she decides when and how one must die, so do the witches cut off the doll's head when Macduff beheads Macbeth at the end of the film. The witches seem to have control over the deeds of Macbeth as well as his destiny. The thick fog, the owl, the barren tree, the forked tree alongside Macbeth's V-shaped throne, banner, and his army's V-shaped shields can be interpreted as the extensions of and substitutes for the witches, interwoven as a leitmotif in the film. They can be traced in the background when Macbeth contemplates or commits a series of murders or when his crimes are mentioned. Therefore, the audience wonders if it is indeed the witches who make Macbeth commit regicide—kill King Duncan and his guards—and have Banquo and Macduff's family killed.

By plunging their hands into the boiling cauldron in the opening scene, Welles's witches metaphorically penetrate Macbeth's unconscious. Moreover, Welles cuts out the lines of the witches and replaces them to make the witches responsible for Macbeth's sleep deprivation. It should be noted that the witches also haunt Banquo's dreams both in the play and in Welles's film. In the play the first witch plans to avenge herself on a woman who refused to give her chestnuts by sending her sailor husband a tempest and by depriving him of sleep. In Welles's film that part is cut out except for some of the lines of the first witch which suggest that the sailor will not be able to sleep. Welles uses these lines as a voice-over in the scene where Macbeth, after murdering Duncan, claims that he hears voices which say that he has murdered sleep and therefore shall sleep no more. Again, in both Shakespeare's play and Welles's film Macbeth asserts that his mind is full of scorpions. In other words, his mind is full of the contents the cauldron, what the witches put in it and what came out of it, that is poison, death, and the premonitions.

In Welles's film the witches literally penetrate Macbeth's physical world, his castle and his kingdom, too. Macbeth does not seek the witches out in the heath. He conjures them at his castle and they deliver their warnings as a voice-over. That the witches are not shown in this scene renders Macbeth as the gazer. Being the object of the gaze, he is subordinated and threatened by the witches whom he cannot see. He acknowledges their powers by listing their most terrible deeds such as causing tempests and destroying nature, faith, kingdoms, and civilizations. The high-angle shots further emphasize that Macbeth is merely a puppet at the hands of the witches: a tiny figure in the dark night, barely standing still against the strong wind and thunder, which replace the witches, holding his hands in front of him like a helpless little child who has been naughty, and looking up while addressing the witches who are not corporeally there. Macbeth can also be seen mimicking the hand gestures of the witches. What's more, when Macbeth and Banquo see the witches for the first time, the witches are standing at the top of a rock, with the clay doll of Macbeth resting at their feet. The witches look down at Macbeth and Banquo whereas the two captains, in return, have to look up at the witches. This scene denotes the supremacy of the witches over mankind. Furthermore, there are no visual warnings to accompany and to underline the ambiguity of what the apparitions tell Macbeth in Welles's film. However, the first witch repeats her double warning against Macduff as soon as Macbeth assures himself that, according to these prophecies, he does not need to fear Macduff. Welles inserts the first witch's second double warning within Macbeth's

lines and, thereby, has her make Macbeth change his mind about letting Macduff live. Towards the finale of the film, as if to mock Macbeth and to rejoice over the unraveling of their charm, the witches are heard once again as a voice-over, echoing Macduff's words "untimely ripp'd" as he reveals the truth about his birth before he beheads Macbeth. The shot of Macbeth behind a barred window as the English army marches towards Dunsinane points to his being confined and entrapped by the witches as well.

Likewise, in *Throne of Blood*, the jump-cut close-ups and framings of Washizu and the slow motion march of the forest give the impression that the forest spirit governs time and space. Washizu and Miki are entrapped by the forest spirit the moment they enter the Spider's Web Forest at the beginning of the film. They get lost and draw circles in the forest, claiming that an evil spirit is blocking their way. This theme of entrapment is further emphasized with the framing and caging of the two samurai captains by the vertical and horizontal tree branches when they listen to the song of the forest spirit and the encircling of Washizu by the forest spirit when he goes to see her for a second time. Instead of going around a cauldron like Shakespeare's witches do, the forest spirit draws an invisible circle around Washizu by vanishing and reappearing in the guise of three different spirits. The three spirits, clad in warrior attire, deliver three premonitions similar to the ones told by the apparitions in the play. The forest spirit, reminiscent of a spider, spins a web around and entraps Washizu, the mere prey of the spider, as suggested by his clans symbol, the millipede (Somers-Hall, 2013, p. 80) by drawing a circle around him with the spirits she invokes or rather transforms into. As opposed to Shakespeare's and Welles's witches, Kurosawa's spirit openly mocks Washizu with her eerie laughter (Jin, 2004).

In the stage directions of Shakespeare's play the entrance of the witches is accompanied with thunder. Along with the thunder, lightning, rain, foggy air, tempest, blood or references to blood, haunting dreams, sleep deprivations, and ominous birds, such as the raven and the owl, can also be traced as the extensions of the witches in the play. Similarly, the fog, strong wind, thunder, lightning, rain, ominous birds, and even the arrows—made out of trees and bird feathers—shot at Washizu by his own army, are the extensions of the forest spirit, in that they either accompany her or substitute for her in Kurosawa's film. A black bird cries three times the night Washizu murders his lord, heralding the murder. First, as Washizu's men prepare the room of the former master of the castle, a traitor who killed himself in that room. Second, after Washizu's wife Asaji tells him about her plan to murder the lord. Third, after Asaji hands Washizu a spear with which to kill the lord. She suggests that the birds are telling Washizu to commit regicide as well. A flock of black birds infests Washizu's castle towards the end of the film. Once again, Washizu fails at seeing the warning; he claims that it is a good omen which means the enemy is trapped. The birds are probably left homeless, for Inui's (King of England) armies led by Noriyasu (Macduff) have been cutting down the trees of the Spider Web's Forest to use them as camouflage in order not to be seen from the castle. So, the ominous birds are actually harbingers of Washizu's imminent death, like the raven, in Shakespeare's play, heard upon Duncan's entering Macbeth's castle, the owl screeching when Macbeth murders Duncan, and Harpier, the third witch's familiar, which is possibly an owl. In other words, the forest spirit's premonitions penetrates the castle of Washizu in the form of lightning, strong winds, birds, and arrows.

Finally, Welles's high-angle shots of the surface of the witches' bubbling cauldron, which fills up the entire screen, and Kurosawa's shots of the forest spirit's spinning wheel bring the image of movie reels to the minds of the audience in a rather meta-textual manner (Forsyth, 2007, p. 294). Just as the lines and the presence of the three witches dominate the entire play, including the scenes in which they are not present, so the three witches and the forest spirit overshadow both films in their entirety.



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Contact email: akgun@istanbul.edu.tr



***Thai Film Industry's Competitive Advantage:
Comparative Study with Korean Film Industry***

Paninya Paksa, Bangkok University, Thailand
Supachet Chansarn, Bangkok University, Thailand
Karnjana Songwathana, Bangkok University, Thailand

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Abstract

This qualitative research aims to examine the status and competitive advantage of the Thai film industry, both the overall industry and each activity in the film industry's value chain, in comparison to the Korean film industry which represents the best practice in this study. It also aims to provide a number of guidelines for promoting the Thai film industry's competitive advantage. Additionally, a literature review and an in depth interview with stakeholders in the film industry are employed as primary tools in this study. Findings reveal that the Thai film industry's competitive advantage is far weaker at both domestic and international levels than that of the Korean film industry. This study thus presents policy recommendations in terms of production, marketing and location incentive in order to strengthen the Thai film industry's competitive advantage.

Keywords: Competitive Advantage, Film Industry, Value Chain, Thailand

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I. Introduction

National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) has specified a policy called Creative Economy as the key national development policy in order to transfer Thailand from “Factor-Driven Economy” to “Creativity-Driven Economy” (NESDB, 2009). This policy includes such main objectives as to enhance Thailand’s competitiveness in the global market, which enables the country to expand its exports relentlessly and brings about economic growth and higher standards of living among Thai people.

“Creative industries”, defined by UNCTAD (2008), is a cycle in creation, production and distribution of products and services which are built on creativity and intellectual capital. In other words, in developing the mentioned creative industries in a country, creativity and intellectual capital are the key mechanisms driving a country to achieve the status of creative industries. As for Thailand, film industry is one of the creative industries that draw a great deal of attraction. This industry has tremendously prospered, with a rapid value increase from 23,512.06 million baht in 2002 to 41,822.79 million baht in 2010, and with a considerable increase in export from 94.84 million baht in 2002 to 1,270.41 million baht in 2010 (NESDB, 2013).

Such a rapid growth points to the importance of film industry as one of Thailand’s strategic industries that help push forward the country’s creative economy and contribute to the continuous economic growth. It is therefore necessary to understand and develop the knowledge about the current status of the Thai film industry’s competitive advantage, which can lead to guidelines and policy recommendation to promote such competitive advantage.

II. Research Objectives

The present study aims to investigate the potential and competitive advantage of the Thai film industry by comparing its performance with that South Korea, which represents the best practices in film industry. In so doing, this study expects that useful guidelines for promoting the Thai film industry’s competitive advantage will be developed.

III. Literature Review

In Thailand, issues of the Thai film industry’s competitive advantage have been moderately explored. For example, Viwatsinudom (2002) examined guidelines on how to promote Thai films for export from the perspectives of film directors and producers. Viwatsinudom (2006) also sought to develop Thai films for distribution. In addition, Tadaamnuychai (2009) investigated the potential and guidelines for improvement of the Thai film industry.

Apart from academic research, there are policy reports conducted by several government agencies with a focus on studying the development process of Thai film industry. For example, Department of Trade Negotiations (2006) carried out a study on possible ways to open a market with one of Thailand’s trade partners, the USA. Department of International Trade Promotion (2012) reflected the status of Thai film

industry by analyzing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and offered strategies that can enhance competitiveness in the Thai film industry.

Drawing on the literature review, the current research found that most of these studies seemed to focus on the enhancement of competitiveness and competitive advantage in the overall Thai film industry only. None of them have studied each activity in the industry's value chain. Further, most research appeared to study guidelines for strengthening the Thai film industry's competitive advantage by solely considering domestic factors and policies while disregarding any comparison with film industries in other countries which may offer some better insights into promoting the Thai film's competitive advantage.

IV. Research Methodology

Based on a qualitative approach, this research has drawn on a literature review and in-depth interviews, which were conducted between October 2013 and September 2014. Research participants consisted of three film directors; three directors of photography; a film producer; and a film scholar. This research has developed the following research methods:

Stage 1: Develop the value chain of the Thai film industry to use as a frame to analyze the status and competitive advantage of the industry.

Stage 2: Study and analyze the status of Thai film industry both overall and each activity in the value chain, in order to compare the performance of the Thai film industry with that of the Korean film industry which represents the best practice in this case.

Stage 3: Study and analyze legal and policy factors which significantly impact competitive advantage of the Thai film industry and compare the performance of the Thai film industry and that of the Korean film industry.

Stage 4: Study and analyze strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the Thai film industry.

Stage 5: Develop guidelines for promoting the Thai film industry's competitive advantage.

Stage 1: Value Chain of the Thai Film Industry

Value chain is a set of activities implemented by any business organization to create products and services to the market (Porter, 1985). This chain presents the value offered by a business organization to customers; each activity in the chain takes part in creating value to the whole business organization. Drawing on the literature, the current research has developed a value chain of the Thai film industry as displayed in Figure 1, which consists of main five activities:

- 1) Development
- 2) Financing and Pre-sales
- 3) Production: Shoot and Post
- 4) Distribution
- 5) Exhibition

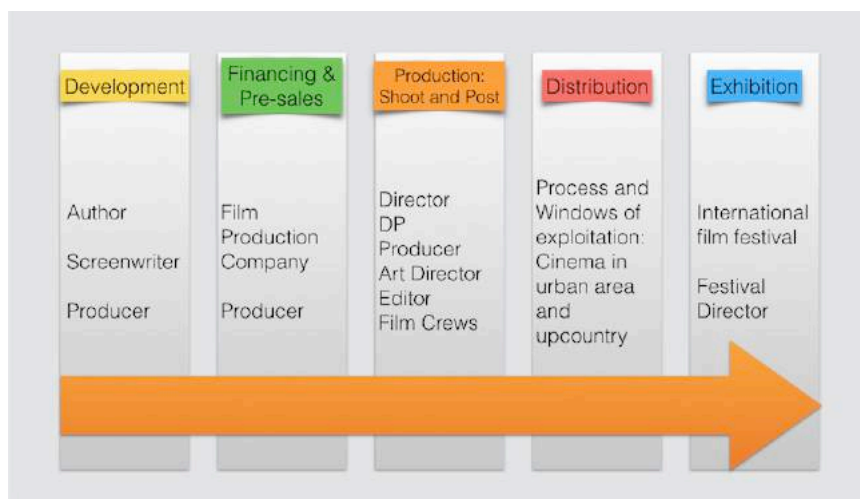


Figure 1: Value chain of the Thai Film Industry

Stage 2: Status of the Thai Film Industry

The present research chose South Korea as representative for the best practice in film industry because this country has been highly successful in promoting its film industry in both domestic and international markets. It is noteworthy that the Korean government plays a key role in such a great success, which reflects that any success can happen by the strong and effective promotion from the public sector.

Development

Table 1 reveals that Thai film industry is inferior to Korean one in terms of a variety of genres and income generation listed on the box office. It is noteworthy that in the Thai film industry, there was a lack of some other genres than comedy e.g. sport drama, war history drama, crime drama, and sci-fi/fantasy.

Table 1 A summary of Thai and Korean films categorized by genre from 2011 – 2012

Film Genre	Thailand	South Korea
Action / Action Comedy	1	10
Comedy / Romantic Comedy	18	11
Drama / Romantic Drama / Comedy Drama / Action Drama	7	16
Sport Drama	0	2
War History Drama	0	2
Courtroom Drama	0	1
Crime Drama	0	1
Horror	2	1
Disaster	0	2
Thriller / Crime Thriller / Mystery / Erotic Suspense	1	9
Sci-Fi / Fantasy	0	1
Animation	1	1
Total	30	57

Note: The listed films were among the top 50 high income films in Thailand and South Korea from 2011 to 2012 solely.
Source: Thailand source is Box Office Mojo. (2014a); and South Korea source is Box Office Mojo. (2014b)

Financing and Pre-sales

However, in terms of financing as displayed in Table 2, the difference between Thai and Korean film industries was small. That is, there was some competition among a small number of major film companies: Sahamongkol Film, GTH, Phranakorn Film, M-Thirtynine, and Five Star Production in Thailand; and C J Entertainment, Lotte, Showbox, and Next Entertainment World in South Korea. Interestingly, Korean films had a greater variety of genre as compared to the Thai counterpart, which may suggest that Korean film companies are more willing to take risk in filmmaking investment.

Country	Company
Thailand	Sahamongkol Film, GTH, Phranakorn Film, M- Thirtynine, and Five Star Production
South Korea	C J Entertainment, Lotte, Showbox, and Next Entertainment World

Production: Shoot and Post

Another weakness of Thai film industry, in contrast to the Korean counterpart, is the film making ability. As seen in Table 3, it is obvious that Thai films produced annually was of far lower in number than those of South Korea or about half of the number produced annually in South Korea. In 2012, for example, there were **140** Korean films while only 64 Thai films, suggesting Thailand may have more problems and limitations in securing funds for film production than the Korean counterpart.

Country	2009	2010	2011	2012
Thailand	50	62	52	64
South Korea	118	140	150	140

Source: Thailand source is MPC (2013); and South Korea source is KOFIC (2014)

Distribution

Distribution seemed to be the biggest problem in the Thai film industry. As seen in Table 4, Thai films in the box office were smaller in both the number and the market share than international films. From 2012 to 2013, Thai films on the box office top 50 were worth only 23.98% and 25.76% only out of the total income of the 50 films combined. This was totally different from the Korean film industry, in which its box office top 50 was mostly Korean. Also, Korean films had the bigger market share than international ones. Korean films on the box office top 50 made for 64.33% and 63.92% out of the total income of the 50 films combined.

Table 4 Income records of Thai and Korean Films on the top 50 ranks between 2012 and 2013 (USD)

Country/Year	Thailand		South Korea	
	2012	2013	2012	2013
Number of local films on the top 50 ranks	15	11	31	27
Percentage of local films on the top 50 ranks	30.00	22.00	62.00	54.00
Total income of films on the top 50 ranks	104,760,069	121,941,650	1,037,859,291	1,139,246,522
Total income of local films on the top 50 ranks	25,123,162	31,413,210	667,654,317	728,208,226
Percentage of total income of local films on the top 50 ranks	23.98	25.76	64.33	63.92

Source: Thailand source is Box Office Mojo. (2014a); and South Korea source is Box Office Mojo. (2014b)

This problem may also be derived from the fact that Thai people view movies at cinema at the lower rate, or three times lower than Korean viewers. From Table 5, the frequency of viewing films at cinema of Thai people ranged between 0.44385 and 0.53916 times annually, while that of Korean people between 3.29596 – 3.5594 times annually.

Table 5 Frequency of viewing films at cinema in Thailand and South Korea

Country	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Thai	0.53916	0.53915	0.53538	0.44385	0.4836	0.46099
South Korea	3.31034	3.46075	3.5594	3.36346	3.48356	3.29596

Source: UNESCO (2014)

A key factor for the low frequency of moviegoers among Thai people is the high price of tickets. As seen in Table 6, the ticket price in Thailand was USD 3.80 while it was USD 5.46 in South Korea. Comparing this price with the GDP per capita, the research found that Thai ticket was 0.096 % of GDP per capita, three times higher than that of Korea which was worth 0.032% of GDP per capita.

Table 6 Average ticket price in Thailand and South Korea in 2012

Factor	Thailand	South Korea
Ticket price (USD)	3.80	5.46
GDP per capita (USD)	3,978.9	16,958.7
Percentage of ticket price to GDP per capita	0.096	0.032

Source: Average ticket price source is UNESCO (2014); and growth domestic product (GDP) per capita source is World Bank (2014)

In terms of the opportunity for international distribution, Korean films were better. As seen in Table 7, there were solely 17 Thai films generating income in the US whereas 42 Korean films could sell there, which suggests the higher variety of Korean films.

Thailand	South Korea
17	42
Source: Thailand source is IMDb (2013a); and South Korea source is IMDb (2013b)	

Exhibition

In Thailand, there is currently an international film festival, World Film Festival of Bangkok, as the only channel to exhibit Thai films at international level. This festival, organized by Nation Multimedia Group, has been ongoing for 13 years, yet remains a small-scale, which may be due to the fact that it is hosted by the private sector without any government support.

On the other hand, the Korean film industry, local films can be shown at several major international film festivals. For example, Busan (Pusan) International Film Festival, which is Asia's biggest film festival; Puchon (Bucheon) International Fantastic Film Festival, which focuses on horror and fantasy; Seoul International Youth Film Festival, which is Korea's biggest youth film festival; and International Women's Film Festival in Seoul, which is Asia's biggest women's film festival.

In addition, films and directors in South Korea are better internationally recognized in quality than those in Thailand. Table 8 shows that Thai films won only 4 awards at Cannes Film Festival, Venice Film Festival, and Berlin International Film Festival, whereas Korean films received 17 awards in these festivals.

Film Festival	Thailand	South Korea
Cannes Film Festival	3	10
Venice Film Festival	0	3
Berlin International Film Festival	1	4
Source: Cannes Film Festival (2014); Venice Film Festival (2014); and Berlin International Film Festival (2014)		

Stage 3: Factors determining Thai Film Industry's Competitive Advantage

Law

1. Most of the Thai law seems to control, rather than promote and support the film industry. There appears, however, the only law which promotes and supports this industry: the Film and Television Board's Regulations 2009 on Supportive Measures in Promoting Film and Television Industries, initiated with the objective to promote and support financing to film producers. This may suggest that the Thai law has the far lower context than the Korean Film Promotion Law.

2. The above mentioned regulations are highly political, making their mission in supporting funds for film production complete only once. This is totally different from the case of Korean Film Promotion Law which has established Korean Film Council (KOFIC), thereby being able to consistently perform its duties.

3. The Korean Film Promotion Law stipulates that the president and board members of KOFIC must come from those with film expertise or experience, which

facilitates the effective implementation in promoting and supporting the Korean film industry in response to the industrial needs.

Government policy

1. There is a lack of concrete government policies that truly promote and support the Thai film industry, while the Korean policies focus on concrete promotion and support of the industry.

2. Policies for developing the Korean film industry are managed by KOFIC as core agency. This can make for the comprehensive promotion and support, including production and sales locally and internationally on a regular basis, whereas the Thai policies lack continuity and comprehensiveness.

3. KOFIC policies include a range of supportive measures: funding aid for film production; the establishment of cinemas catered for independent films; marketing support for independent films; financial incentives for film producers and media from overseas to do the film shooting and media production in Korea; the establishment of the Alternative Market Outreach (KOME) with objective to regulate and control the film distribution via online downloading and prevent piracy. Importantly, support is provided for organizing international film festivals in Korea, namely, Busan International Film Festival (BIFF), and also creating a marketing campaign for Korean films in the international market by opening the Korean Film Biz Zone (KOBIZ) for public relations activities as well as information center for Korean films.

4. Thai policies for promoting and supporting the film industry, both previously and currently, have been implemented by agencies not directly related to the industry. This is opposite from KOFIC, which is managed by those with film expertise and experience, thereby being able to formulate policies that meet the needs of the film industry.

5. Korean policies for promoting and supporting the film industry place importance on international relations and cooperation by establishing branch offices of KOFIC in the US and China and also assigning KOFIC representatives in France and Japan, including initiating cooperation agreements with European Union, France, and New Zealand, which have opened new opportunities for Korean films in the world market, while there is no such a policy in Thailand.

Stage 4: SWOT Analysis

Strengths

1. Costs are lower, but with high quality crews and facilities, when compared to other rival countries.

2. Thai film crews are friendly and service-minded.

3. Thai film entrepreneurs in each activity, together with beautiful and diverse shooting locations, are available to support the comprehensive process of film production.

4. Thai private sector e.g. Nation Multimedia Group is strong and thus capable of consecutively hosting an international film festival known as World Film Festival of Bangkok

Weaknesses

1. There is a shortage of both variety and newness in the Thai film industry. A number of Thai films lack internationalization, identity, and contemporary cultures reflex.

2. There is a lack of strong professional associations, which cover all dimensions of the industry.

3. A number of film entrepreneurs have insufficient funds for the comprehensive film development, especially funds for public relations and marketing. These entrepreneurs are also short of marketing knowledge and skills.

4. World Film Festival of Bangkok is solely organized by private sector, thereby leaving it with insufficient funds.

5. Database and management of information technology for the film industry, including the database for international market, are unavailable.

Opportunities

1. Film is among one of the industries supported by the government.

2. Thailand has a variety of arts and cultures, which makes for a good asset for film production.

3. Thailand is rich in natural resources and historical sites, thereby being able to present a range of locations in response to the demand of filmmaking in Thailand and overseas.

4. All Thai universities nationwide offer a course directly and indirectly relevant to films.

5. Integration of economic zones makes for the better opening of free trade and services in entertainment.

6. Growth of the Thai tourism sector, combined with the better renowned Thailand internationally, make it easy and effective for public relations of the Thai film industry.

7. There are several attempts of private sector in developing the film industry e.g. the establishment of foundations for script development, cinemas catered for independent movies, and budget cinemas.

8. Thai film industry is becoming more popular as Thai directors were awarded internationally, namely, at Palme D'or at Festival de Cannes.

Threats

1. Law enforcement against piracy is ineffective.

2. There is a lack of financial incentives and other benefits for film entrepreneurs both in Thailand and overseas.

3. There is a lack of central agency for overseeing and supporting the film industry, drawing on the integration of public and private sectors.

4. There is a lack financial support from the government and financial institutions to entrepreneurs in all phases of the whole cycle of film production. Also, there is no systematic promotion, support, and development of film personnel, including government support in organizing international film festivals in Thailand.

5. Laws relevant to films remain inflexible and unsupportive to film production.

6. Public agencies regulating and controlling the film industry still lack understanding about the industry.

7. Thai people disregard Thai films and believe that international films have better quality.

8. Global film industry is highly competitive.

9. Monopoly in cinema business has led to relatively expensive tickets, thereby Thai films with not so many viewers these days being likely to have screening reduced.

Stage 5: Guidelines for promoting Thai film industry's competitive advantage

Domestic changes

1. Public sector needs to focus on developing the film industry together with other industries so that each industry can rapidly grow and develop together.
2. Public sector needs to study the feasibility of improving laws relevant to the film industry and place promotion and support over regulation and control.
3. Thailand should establish an independent agency under the government, which can be modeled on KOFIC, in order to function as specifically promoting and supporting the Thai film industry, allocating sufficient budget and authorize to regulate, control, promote and support the Thai film in a comprehensive manner.
4. Executives of such an agency must come from those with film expertise, experience, and recognition both in Thailand and overseas.
5. Such an agency must oversee and support every professional association relevant to the film industry in order to facilitate the implementation of policies for career development in film industry, and to coordinate among professional associations as well as between the associations and the public sector.

Policy to promote and support Thai film industry can be divided into three groups: (1) production; (2) marketing; and (3) location incentive.

Production

1. Establish an institute to develop skills required in the whole process of film production targeted for personnel in the Thai film industry, which may be initiated in cooperation with some current private agencies such as Kiat-Charoen Iamphungporn Foundation.
2. Establish funds for Thai film development with objective to provide funding support for Thai film production with quality and potential for international standard.
3. Arrange for shooting locations, equipments and facilities for film production and make them available for rent in order to support small entrepreneurs with limited funds in producing budget films.
4. Specify professional standards and appropriate fees for each position in the film industry in order to standardize the quality of personnel in the industry.

Marketing

1. Establish funds for Thai film development, which functions as providing financial support in marketing purposes for entrepreneurs in film industry.
2. Create budget cinemas with affordable ticket prices, which promotes for the screening of Thai films, especially independent ones.
3. Organize a system in support of viewing and downloading movies online to prevent piracy.
4. Organize and support the hosting of international film festivals in Thailand.

Location incentive

1. Assign a one stop service agency to facilitate and attract overseas film producers and other media to do the shooting in Thailand.
2. Provide more financial incentives to overseas entrepreneurs who use Thailand as shooting locations for films or other media. (At present, Thailand offers international actors who shoot films in Thailand with 10% fixed tax rate, which is far less attractive than the Korean cash rebate at the rate of 20% to 30 % of costs)

V. Conclusion

In an attempt to promote the Thai film industry's competitive advantage, changes at the national and policy levels in terms of production, marketing, location incentive, and other supporting policies are necessary. Whether this attempt is successful or not depends on how seriously the government takes in promoting the Thai film industry's competitive advantage. If every recommendation is seriously taken, and implemented with concrete and continued efforts, it is likely that the Thai film industry, with its human resources and equipment, will be able to step forward to international recognition in the near future.

VI. Acknowledgement

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The logo for the International Association of Film and Documentary Researchers (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 red one on the left and a blue one on the right, which together form a partial circle around the text.



***Digitizing Local Trip: Global Connectivity of Spatial Narratives
in Indonesian Web-series***

Ratna Erika M. Suwarno, Universitas Padjadjaran, Indonesia

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Abstract

Indonesia's local film creation has further flourished into many kinds of innovative narratives, giving them power to be autonomous and independent within Indonesia documentary/web-series industry. Popular Indonesian travel narratives emerge in an overflowing number, bringing the story of places in Indonesia within reach of global access. This paper takes analysis examples of an Indonesian popular web-series *Jalan Jalan Men!*. With familiar and unique style of travel presentation, *J2M!* exploits the constructed closeness with the places it presented and the story they narrated for young viewers. These narratives are originally designed, produced, and showcased to enhance the joy and appeal of travelling and promote the act of travel and its destinations. This paper will propose a reading of *J2M!* as result of de-construction of place/space connectivity and interactivity, in its relation with global digital distribution of not only the places of Indonesia but also filmic documentation of Indonesian tourist destinations. I will also pose important extended questions: how the power correlates with spatial, filmic, and narrative power over the selected places in Bandung and Indonesian archipelago and in what form of power these web-series portray connectivity and interactivity with production and distribution process. Through critical reading of *J2M!*, examination of the position and voice through web-series will provide new insight of the production and distribution of new media in Indonesia.

Keywords: connectivity, distribution, Indonesia, interactivity, Travel narrative, Web-series.

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Connecting By Travelling: A (Late) Beginning

Travel writing has thrived as one of the literary genres on Indonesia's Internet: weblogs pages filled with travel stories, photos of sceneries on instant-photo-posting platform, tidbits of travel experience in no more than hundreds of characters messages, and videos of tourist destinations in video-sharing websites. Popular travel narratives emerge in an overflowing number, almost limitless in its creativity, bringing the story of places in Indonesia within reach of global access. Due to global Internet access, local creativity further flourished into many kinds of innovative narratives. The act of telling the travel stories advances further into the act of telling a story; this story is designed, produced, and showcased to enhance the joy and appeal of travelling and promote the act of travel and its destinations.

In connection to the grand idea of globalization, contemporary sense of distance in space and length of time has shifted along with the rapid access toward Internet technology. Not only that the Internet has provided space to promote place, it also serves as a global space for local creativity. In connection to the theme of globalization, Doreen Massey (1994), a contemporary social scientist and geographers in a chapter of her work about politics of space and identity, states that "[a] long tendency on the left has been either to denigrate [struggles around globalization] for being 'only local' or to romanticize them for their supposed rootedness and authenticity." Instead of contesting the binary of local/global, I would like to pose much more pressing question: what kind of globalization does Indonesian archipelago need? And what kind of places should this process be creating?

Spatial narratives are defined as complex relations, forming an experience that involves passing from 'ordinary' culture to scientific discourse from one experience to another. As stated by French philosopher Michael de Certeau (1984), in his seminal production and consumption everyday life theory, "[t]he chain of spatializing operations [that...] produces a representation of places or to what it implies." I use the term of operation in this research to view travel narratives as relations of storytelling practice and experience production within cyber culture. This will put cyber culture realm and, in extension, the emergence of New Media studies central to this research, providing an academic platform to explore relationality of digital formats and their representation of experience. Furthermore, Berry, et al, (2010) argues that "the media do not just represent—accurately and inaccurately—a place that it is already there." They suggest that places are conjured up, experience, and in that sense produced by the media.

This paper analyzes an episode of Indonesian popular web-series *Jalan Jalan Men!*, particularly featuring the city of Bandung (2013). *J2M!* has been running for 4 years in 3 separate releases on Youtube video sharing website. With familiar and unique style of travel presentation, *J2M!* exploits the constructed closeness with the places it presented and the story they narrated for young viewers. These narratives are originally designed, produced, and showcased to enhance the joy and appeal of travelling and promote the act of travel and its destinations. This paper will propose a reading of Bandung episode of *J2M!* as result of de-construction of place/space connectivity and interactivity, in its relation with global digital distribution of not only

the places of Indonesia but also filmic documentation of Indonesian tourist destinations.

Narrative Plot, Spatial Stories, and Filmic Treats

The two *J2M!* protagonists, Jebraw and Naya, are leading the show as they visited the place they put story on. Their main narration centers on their adventure around places in Indonesia. Narrowing the focus for this analysis, I focus on the specific episode of Bandung, the capital of West Java, published in 2013. In this episode, Bandung, tagged as a creative city, is presented as a challenge for Jebraw with Naya asking him to come visit her right away. Mixing this challenge theme as a game, they go on a short tour in Bandung with a stake; is Bandung is truly the creative city? The underlying plot of their connection is also a focal point in this series: Jebraw has been developing his crush for Naya, constantly teasing her into going out with him, and received subtle rejection every time. This subtle and light romance highlight gives the plot additional layer of events—while these web-series focus on the travel adventure, their romance plot also proposes closeness with young people's everyday life. In those tourist destinations, both Naya and Jebraw, and also the viewers, are given opportunities to participate in the attractions. They are seamlessly and eagerly involved with the places: introducing a green hotel with one of Naya's relative as the owner, visiting a museum and enjoying the art exhibition casually, and participating in *angklung* classes in a workshop. These acts of participation build deeper connection with the places. They are not merely visiting the places as a 'special' tourist with a camera documenting the journey, but they are actively participating in the locality and immersing themselves with the locals. The last highlight of the web-series is presentation of places through time-lapsed 'beauty shot', giving the viewers a thorough filmic treat. Identical to the concept of beauty shot in photography, cinema has long been utilizing this method to emphasize visual aspect of places. In particular, *J2M!* has relies heavily on these emphasizing shots, focusing on alluring landscape or specifically timed skyscape. This act of place highlighting also contributes to connectivity. Viewers are enchanted and regaled with the most attractive aspects of the place, taken with time-lapse technique, presenting the beauty at its best.

In relation with the power as theme, the research question shifts to ask how power then correlates with narrative, spatial, and filmic aspects. Interlacing these three aspects together has proposed an exposition of negotiation. The subtle power of presenting places for the viewers, for the tourist, for Indonesia, for the world, has become important in this discussion. These web-series have consciously been using the power of connectivity and interactivity. Building connection with the places they visited and interacting with the locals are important forms of advance communication and identity construction. Places are not treated as meaningless destination. Tourist destination is not objectified as barren space. *J2M!* works through weave of personal relations, creating fluid and dynamic negotiation of places. Without setting a fixed and static place on screen, each place is reconstructed from the articulation of trajectories. Each place is treated as a complex story, intertwining multiple stories of people at the place, people visiting the place, and the place itself. And by acknowledging that each local struggle and local authenticities are already given, examining spatial narratives will be a broad response to each of place narrated.

Positioning Bandung and Voicing Locality

Travel web-series are composed of spatial complexities. What exists as a tourist destination, somewhere around different places, does not only create a story but also receives one. The story revolves around the place, showcasing the destination. The story produces sub-stories and layer of interconnections of journeys between places, interactions within the place, and the characters of the places. When these stories are put forward in the cyberspace, those journeys, interactions, characters and connections are also further connected toward other journeys, other connections. What started as a story of one place, one destination, then becomes a part of global interconnections.

The tourist destination involves mobility, changing place, and filling space. One will leave his/her own familiar space, his/her comfort zone and taking the time to go from home to another place. The experience of place is presented with intertwine of narrative, spatial and filmic aspects of the web-series. The story will have their own base on the Internet—seen and available for global viewers, practically every denizens there are. The specific episode of *J2M!* in Bandung has portrayed and showcased the experience for the city in specific. Within the episode, the narration includes travel details, helpful maps, and tips from the locals. Nevertheless, the story consistently focuses heavily on the space—emphasizing its spatial story—and beauty shots. At some parts, we can see not only the place they visited but also the journey to arrive at the place. At some other parts, we can see the producers taking their time to emphasize the beauty of one place by presenting breathtaking view through landscape and time-lapse shots. These acts have become their signature, and in extension, openly addressed the issue of connectivity. The journey presented in the video signifies the real connectivity, a simple trend how-to in travel between places in reality. While the time-lapse connects time spend in one place, condensing longer time in shorter frame, in shorter space.

Narrative-wise, the heavy voice-over narration as one of the main ways to deliver the story—voiced by Jebraw as the main protagonist—is delivered in Bahasa Indonesia. Despite the initial concern of limiting viewers with language, technology in form of new media once again lends its power to connectivity. With its dual-language and subtitle service, Youtube as its medium has provided wider access by providing/enabling the choice to feature English subtitle. No longer does this video limited to viewers in Indonesia. Subtitled with English as global lingua franca, the episode has further made its place in and provided access to its global viewers' screen. What started as a simple story of a place, a destination becomes a part of global interconnections. This process of settling in global realm and connected to a dynamic domain is in a way liberating. The story is no longer bounded within its material place, but grounded in connections the collective imaginary place—of the producers, of the narrator, of the travellers, and of the viewers.

With distribution through Youtube channel, production of local spatial knowledge is parallel with the production of global spatial knowledge. The medium and the space that these spatial stories inhabit (cyberspace) will break controlled boundaries that formally limit the narrative of travelling. By publishing spatial stories in the cyberspace, the spatial knowledge production will be continuous. The inevitability of making space and places will be emphasized by the story of said space and places.

Furthermore, within Indonesian popular literature, travel digital narratives present alternative over prescriptive forms of travel writing. And by breaking the prescriptive forms it is releasing its potentials to be constantly incomplete, always in production stage.

Digitizing Indonesia: For Future Discussion

Story multiplies and branches its relationality with other stories, with other places, with other reality. Furthermore, spatial narratives provide the sense of being home at its cyber place, at a global place shared with its denizens. For Indonesia as an archipelago, interconnections of places—both in reality, in the media, and above all in collective imagination—are important. Therefore the emergence of Indonesia digital spatial narratives within the global Internet contributes greatly in enhancing interconnections. The emergence of new media is a significant constituent to the popular Indonesian literature. With a new form of literary work and creative product, Indonesia will not also set its spatial stand, but also places her narrative in the realm spatial stories and its multiple aspects but also emphasizes the growth culture of traveling and the act of experiencing place in Indonesia.

In the context of cyberspace, the concept of becoming becomes less important than belonging. Instead of trying to be someone, the identity struggle focuses on staying as self, not becoming some(one) else, and belong to the culture. Spatial narratives, in form of web-series, provide identity configuration of belonging. Beyond the social values of becoming—one of the aspects in post-colonial studies, this presupposition will assign specific political configuration for Indonesia as an archipelago and as one of the active participants in the global cyber culture. Bandung that has been toured by, presented in, and placed among the global cyber culture brings forward a narrative response toward global Internet culture. This representation of place in digital cyber culture builds not only well connected but also inter-connected relationality with the global. Bandung spatial narratives—in this case—thus form multi trajectories (instead of one directional relation) toward the world, providing new space in and viewpoint of self-expression, centering its home in the cyberspace.

As a culturally diverse population, Indonesia's uniqueness lies in its self-positioning within the challenge of globalization and bringing its own terms to the process of negotiation. Whilst uniqueness also represents the negotiation against the formal rules (of writing places, of travel accounts, of spatial narratives), travel stories will provide a method to set the storytelling of place as events. These events are offering reconceptualization of place with its own distinctive narrative and unconventional medium. By presenting tourist destination in web-series, instead of assumption of the pre-given collective identity of the place, narratives of places (their stories, and of their connections to the global) will be put forward. Thus, digital connectivity and interactivity can then act as a vital medium of cultural production and cross-cultural communication today and for the future of Indonesia.

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Wartime Colonial Paradise and Postwar Doom: The Uses of Place, Time, and Memory in Mikio Naruse's Floating Clouds

Patrick McCoy, Meiji University, Japan

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Abstract

Japanese director Mikio Naruse made over 89 films over the course of his career and many of them are considered classics. However, his best-known film is probably the 1955 film *Floating Clouds* (*Ukigumo*). It is based on a novel by Showa-era novelist and prose writer Fumiko Hayashi, a writer's whose work he frequently adapted for the screen. *Floating Clouds* is an affecting study of abjection, spiritual resignation, and unrequited longing. In this film the Japanese occupied colony of Dalat in Indochina serves as a sort of touchstone of happiness and the bedrock of the relationship between the central characters Yukiko and Tomioka. There are frequent flashbacks to the time these characters spent in Indochina. Conversely, Japan serves as the backdrop of postwar chaos and eventual doom of the relationship between the two embittered lovers. The settings in Japan range from the Kanto area to as far away as Yakushima off the coast of Kyushu. This presentation will analyze Naruse's use of Indochina as the positive touchstone and foundation of love between Yukiko and Tomioka and how their return to Japan results in the ultimate annihilation of their relationship.

Keywords: Naruse, *Floating Clouds*, place, time, memory

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Introduction

The pantheon of great Japanese directors known world wide usually includes Akira Kurosawa, Yasujiro Ozu, and Kenji Mizoguchi. There is a fourth director who deserves mention among that elite group of internationally recognized filmmakers- Mikio Naruse. He made over 89 films in his career and many of them are considered masterpieces. Naruse was considered a classic Japanese film director whose career embraced two golden ages of Japanese cinema. He made mostly intimate domestic dramas, but his films were seen as darker and more depressing than the cheerful and playful family dramas of Ozu. At the beginning of his career he worked as a prop man and an assistant director at Shochiku's Kamata studios, at the same time as Ozu, for 10 years before getting a chance to direct. However, once he was allowed to direct his own films he did not reflect the light entertainment style of the studio in his films. It is not unlikely that the sadness of Naruse's own life, in which saw the early death of parents, and that was filled with poverty and loneliness, inspired this bleak outlook. Thus, the studio was more than glad to see him leave the studio because of his heavy, somber, and depressing films. He would go on to work at variety of different film studios throughout his career including Toho, where he was a contemporary of Kurosawa. His best-known film is probably *Floating Clouds* (*Ukigumo* 1955). This film is analyzed in terms of how Naruse uses time, place, and memory to construct a tragic tale of a doomed romance in postwar Japan.

The Narusean World

"If they move even a little," Naruse famously remarked of his characters, "they quickly hit the wall. From the youngest age, I have thought that the world we live in betrays us; this thought still remains with me." Richie and Anderson (1981 p.364) In the Narusean world of films there are several characteristics that define his films and worldview. Freiberg (2002) points out that Naruse is essentially a materialist. This means that his cinematic world is one of disillusion rather than illusions. That means that it is a place of survival, rather than resignation or suicide for the many of the film characters. Unlike the films of Ozu, there is an absence of comforting types of self-transcendence – like religion, aesthetics, or poetics- people are focused on more earthly needs and desires. This means that in Naruse's world, the focus is on the daily physical existence. An existence that is subject to the everyday social and economic conditions of life and survival, not on spiritual transcendence of the soul. The characters in his films look to fulfill elemental needs: the physical, social, and economic. This often means comfort and security, which can be found in relationships with family, friends and their romantic partners. Many characters are determined to extricate themselves from troublesome relationships. Their essential needs are the basics: food, clothing, shelter and sex. As a result there is often a need for money to pay for food, clothing, rent or the doctor's bills. As a result, in Naruse's films there are incessant images of money being exchanged or being counted. Often the main characters are single women dealing with problems like making a living, being financially responsible for supporting a sick family member, searching for companionship and sexual partners, as well as looking to lessen their burdens and make their lives better. "There are no happy ending for Naruse, but there are incredibly enlightened defeats." Audie Bock (1985 p.118)

Floating Clouds: Background

Floating Clouds is based on Fumiko Hayashi's last completed novel (1949-1951), *Ukigumo*. It is often translated as "drifting clouds" and is a common metaphor for an aimless life. Hayashi is said to have borrowed the title from Futabatei Shimei's "first modern novel" (1887-89). Hayashi's novel shifted the point of view from male (Tomioka-Masayuki Mori) to female (Yukiko-Hiedeko Takamine) protagonist throughout the novel. (Ericson, 1997) However, the film version focuses only on Yukiko's perspective. Yukiko is a typical Hayashi heroine who is stubborn and resilient in the face of life's obstacles. Tomioka, on the other hand, is disconsolate and defeated like Japan. He turns to drink and womanizing since he does not feel in control of his life. He is moved around the country by outside forces in his struggle for survival. The love affair between Yukiko and Tomioka is equally related to postwar conditions and the state of a defeated nation with periodic flashback to their wartime posts in Indochina. They are caught in the sweep of history and are not in control of their lives in postwar Japan. This film is something of a departure for Naruse, because he avoided the "two adjacent rooms" set up (a common Naruse domestic set). This fact suggests a lack of stability (Hasumi as cited in Russell, 2008) as the film takes place in a number of locations outside in different parts of Tokyo, as well as their travels to different parts of Japan through the course of the film. The film was a great critical success and it led to wins in the Best Film, Actor, Actress, and Director award categories at the *Kinema Junpo Awards* for 1956.

Film Summary

The film has a complex flashback narrative structure, however, a chronological depiction of the film will be useful in discussing Naruse's uses of place time and memory later. The viewer will learn through the flashbacks and character references to the past that Yukiko had volunteered to work in Indochina for the forestry service in order to escape an awkward living situation with her brother-in-law Iba who has raped her while she was visiting and helping out her sister. While in Dalat, Vietnam she meets and falls in love with the married Tomioka and they plan to return to Japan and get married after a divorce when the war ends. The film begins with Yukiko's repatriation to Japan. When she arrives she immediately seeks out Tomioka at his residence. His wife answers the door and Yukiko tells her that she is a former colleague and has business with Tomioka. They go out to talk and Tomioka tells her that he feels obligated to stay with his wife, since she stayed by him through out the war and is sickly. He then sells his house to invest in a business and moves the family into the countryside. He takes a room in Tokyo in order to oversee his business venture. Yukiko left to her own devices, takes up with a US soldier for survival. At this point Yukiko contacts Tomioka and he comes to visit her in her room and they quarrel. Some time later, Tomioka contacts her and says he wants to make amends for the quarrel from the last visit. He then invites her to Ikaho *onsen* (hot springs) in Gunma. At the *onsen* Tomioka says that he is at the end of his tether and they decide to commit suicide, but ultimately forgo that plan. During their stay at the *onsen* Tomioka meets the young, attractive wife of the guesthouse owner, Osei. They return to Tokyo and they argue again. Yukiko is upset at Tomioka's betrayal of her with Osei and they part after. Later Yukiko searches for Tomioka's room, and when she finds it, she learns that Osei is living with him. When he finally arrives, she tells him that she is pregnant with his baby. He promises to break with Osei and raise the baby with Yukiko, but she refuses to believe him. After she learns that Osei was murdered by her husband while reading the newspaper in the hospital after her abortion, Yukiko

returns to try and make up with Tomioka. They quarrel once again and Yukiko leaves as another girl arrives. After this we learn that she has accepted Iba's proposal to be his mistress. Tomioka visits her there to tell her that his wife has died and he wants to borrow money for her funeral. Because Iba has become rich through a religion he has started, she robs him and asks Tomioka to join her on the run. There is more talk about suicide, but they forgo it once again. Yukiko learns that Tomioka has taken a forestry job on Yakushima island. When she finds Iba in her room she begs him to take her in her weakened state on his journey to Kagoshima. They travel to Kagoshima where it is raining heavily and she catches cold. They go onto Yakushima in poor weather where Yukiko dies of tuberculosis and Tomioka finally admits his love for her.

Place and Memory

Throughout the film Naruse has used flashbacks to wartime in Dalat to draw attention to the mindset of Yukiko and Tomioka as they try to navigate the new postwar world of Japan. "Flashbacks in film often merge two levels of remembering the past, giving large-scale social and political history the subjective mode of a single, fictional individual's remembered experience." (Turin, 1989 p. 2) Here we have two individual's remembered experiences that reflect their present mental states and attitudes toward the world. The first flashback to Indochina occurs when Yukiko was waiting for Tomioka to come meet her after her return and visit to his house. This flashback shows Yukiko's arrival in Dalat and first meeting with Tomioka. It is a striking contrast from the dark,

shabby desolate postwar Japan that the viewer is exposed to at the beginning of the film. The flashback in Dalat reveals a bright, sunny dream-like fantasy world. This world represents an escape from social conventions for Yukiko. Furthermore in the background of this new atmosphere there is a Western colonial house, flowers, servants, good food and alcohol, a landscape of babbling brooks, leafy forests, and flowery meadows. Furthermore, in this new atmosphere she dines with bureaucrats who are outside her social circle in Japan. If is not apparent to the viewer, it is spelled out by Kano, one of Yukiko's colleagues who says: "It's paradise here in Dalat." When Tomioka returns to meet her and they stop an inn, there is a second flashback to Tomioka flirting with Yukiko in Dalat. Then they are strolling through the forest and having their first kiss. The there is a dissolve to another kiss in the run down inn in postwar Tokyo. Yukiko reminisces about their affair and Tomioka tells her that she must forget the past-it was like a dream and everything is different in the present. But Yukiko clings to the past saying: "For us the past is the only reality. Without it, where would we be?"

When Yukiko dies and Tomioka applies lipstick to her lips there is a final flashback. The final flashback is of a young beautiful Yukiko in the forest of Indochina. At this moment Tomioka finally realizes his love for Yukiko. This memory reflects Tomioka's repressed memory shut away because of rupture between the past and the present. He is unable to restore life to Yukiko nor to his dead memories (Otilia, 2008). Thus, these flashbacks offer different representations of the past for Yukiko and Tomioka. For Yukiko, it represents independence from Japan's national discourse and freedom from patriarchal institutions. For example, it offers an escape from Iba's sexual exploitation and Japanese institutions of womanhood in the homeland. In Dalat Yukiko has found happiness, freedom, and empowerment. It is a lost paradise that

connects her to Tomioka through nostalgia. She wants to restore this lost paradise. She is trying to bridge the gap between past and present. On the other hand, Tomioka wants to repress the memories of the past in Dalat. He was sent to Indochina as part of Japan's colonization and those privileges he experienced were the fruits of invasion. Since the war is over and Japan has been defeated there can be no return to this situation. "Being a colonizer during the war has devastated him mentally: the defeat of Japan in the war is his personal defeat, and Japan's postwar devastation is his own devastation." (Mizuta, 1996 p. 341) For Tomioka, the past is a foolish moment to be forgotten. Thus, he has repressed his memories because the present is so burdensome.

Conclusion

Throughout the film Yukiko and Tomioka have been drifting and changing locations, which reflects a spiritual drifting. For them the only stable thing is the shared past in Dalat. However, while back in Japan Yukiko tries to bridge the gap between past and present, while Tomioka finds it insurmountable. He has repressed his memories since the present is so unfulfilling and painful. There are a couple of other conclusions put forth by critics that interpret the film somewhat differently. For example, Jean Douchet (as cited in Russell, 2008) sees in Yukiko's death the sorrow of a defeated nation. It is a reactionary reading where Yukiko's death is symbolic of a national death. Another critic, Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto (as cited in Russell, 2008) sees Yukiko's death an indictment of imperialism. However, there is no evidence that Naruse had these ideas in mind when he was making the film. However, one can surmise that there is no social rebirth, and that the paradise the lovers dream of and remember becomes Yukiko's graveyard. And after her death, Tomioka is doomed to continually drift aimlessly after she dies.

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Left Behind: The Rural Children of China's Alternative Cinema

Edson Ng Li-Chun, National University of Singapore, Singapore

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Abstract

Against the narrative of success propagated by the Chinese government, China's independent filmmakers have committed themselves towards articulating an alternative vision of her phenomenal transformation in recent years. One important subject is that of rural children being left behind by parents who go in search of better job prospects and lives in the city. Using the documentary form or fiction, films such as Wang Bing's *Three Sisters* (2012), Huang Ji's *Egg and Stone* (2012) and Fang Lixin's *Last Train Home* (2009), depict the dire situations of these children that tacitly question the heavy price of China's economic miracle. Although the child as a subject is often seen as a tactic used by filmmakers to evoke pity and sympathy in audiences, the children in these alternative films are far from being portrayed as powerless. Despite the condition of their marginal situations, they portray a grit and tenacity towards the harsh circumstances they face, exuding a zest and determination to learn, discover and deal with what life throws at them. My paper examines the critical function that this depiction of rural children plays in constructing a narrative of resistance in alternative films, towards the dominant perspectives of how rural spaces are portrayed in China, the seemingly lack of agency that is attached to them and the complex relationship of power that resides between the State and these 'abandoned' children.

Kids who have a mommy are the happiest in the world! -Zhenzhen singing a famous Chinese mother's day song in Wang Bing's *Three Sisters*.

Introduction

In a remote mountain village ten thousand feet above ground, situated in the province of Yunnan known as Xiyangtang, three sisters Fenfen, Zhenzhen and Yingying who are four, six and ten respectively are on their own. Their mother has abandoned the family for unknown reasons while their father works in a city far away from this remote mountain village. They are seen to be building fires for themselves, playing dangerously with big metal pliers, helping their aunt to tend to the pigs and harvesting what seems to be a potato crop. The cold and lonely situation of these three sisters, which is also the title of Wang Bing's biting documentary, is juxtaposed with the vast rural mountain range emphasizing the cruel realities of China's left behind children. At the end of the documentary, Zhenzhen ironically sings a famous Chinese mother's day ditty *shishang zhiyou mama hao* which literally translates to mean "The only best thing in the world is mum". Documenter Wang Bing captures the cold cruel reality of what it means to be forsaken by family, modern comfort, and the State.

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By 2025, China intends to shift seventy percent or 900 million of her rural population into cities. This will amount to transplanting some 250 million rural villagers into urban spaces gradually over the period of a decade.¹ This intensification to urbanize China is driven by two primary motivations: the first is to enlarge China's base consumer market in order to ensure that her economic growth is sustained. And the second, to reduce rural poverty through forcibly moving a substantial mass of villagers to newly built cities and urban spaces. Ever since Deng Xiaoping engaged in liberalising the economy in 1976, China has experienced unprecedented economic and physical transformations. It is against this backdrop of propagated success in her mainstream media and cultural industries, that China's independent filmmakers have committed themselves towards articulating their alternative visions of this perceived progress.

Mainstream cinema in China is flooded with images of city living where the urban often stands in place for the nation and country (in this case Shanghai or Beijing). This trope of representation in China's cinema is problematic as it has become *the* dominant mode of defining her identity. Sociologists Alexander R. Thomas et al has come to define and problematize such modes of understanding and by extension, seeing, as a situation of "urbanormativity" where the urban is ideologically understood to be "normal and real, and [the] rural as abnormal and unreal, or [even] deviant" (Thomas, 5). Essentially, the result is an ever expanding mode of imagining China as largely urban that correspondingly excludes and ignores the space of the rural, and concomitantly the marginal situations of her rural inhabitants. In other words, this urbanormative mode of imagining and seeing China has progressively whitewashed the rural poverty and problems faced by the larger part of her population, which incidentally, is caused in part by her rapid urbanization. Another point that these alternative films from China surfaces, is the embedded interconnections that lie between the rural and the urban. This relationship has long been ignored or conveniently forgotten as much focus has been placed on researching cities and urban life. This condition is exacerbated by urbanormative efforts of mainstream cultural industries in China that invariably further normalise the idea of the city through their respective performances. They unconsciously bury and relegate the significance of the rural into oblivion by ignoring the relationships and roles that the rural plays in contributing to the progress of the city. My paper argues that through the lenses of China's alternative cinema, the symbiotic relationship that exists between the rural and the urban is not only surfaced through the medium of film but problematizes the manner in which the urban is perceived.

China's Left Behind Children

One important and interesting relationship that exists between the rural and the urban in China's alternative cinema is the problem of "left behind children", otherwise commonly known in Chinese as *liushou ertong*. The words literally translate to mean "left to guard or watch the place" in Chinese and serve to illustrate the condition of these children who remain in the rural villages, awaiting the return of their parents from the city. While waiting, they go to school, farm and watch over the property of their parents. Such a situation occurs as these children are unable to follow their

¹ Refer to Ian Johnson's article in *The New York Times* titled "China's Great Uprooting"

parents to the city due to the Chinese policy known as the *hukou* or China's household registration system. This system forces them to stay behind as their identification is tied to their birthplace and only allows for them to be enrolled in the schools there and nowhere else. Also, they can only receive subsidised medical benefits and other forms of social welfare within the province they are born in. This means that bringing a child along to the city becomes untenable due to high costs. They are likewise barred from enrolling their child in the city's public schools due to the *hukou* system. Migrant labourers and their children hence become second class citizens as this system disadvantages non locals, aiding the Chinese government in managing the flow of the rural population into the major Chinese cities. As a result, grandparents or close relatives take over the role of caring for these children who not coincidentally, are usually girls. This occurrence is largely due to the more relaxed enforcement of the one child policy in China's vast rural countryside, when often more than one girl child is born into the family, perhaps the result of trying repeatedly to bear a male heir. Being female, these "left behind children" are stereotypically deemed as more capable to help around the house with domestic chores and all sorts of agricultural duties. This mind-set contributes to the array of reasons as to why more female children are left behind. The *Economist* in a recent study concluded that in 2010, some "106m children's lives were being profoundly disrupted by their parents' restless search for jobs" (*Economist*, 24) where many of these children perform poorly at school and are damaged socially and emotionally as well. These "left behind children" reveal a social problem that China is gradually facing and seeking to solve, as the numbers have greatly increased over the years due to a spike in the rural-urban movement of labour.

With such a burgeoning problem amassing at the margins of Chinese society yet remaining largely invisible, it is not surprising that China's alternative filmmakers have chosen to capture this dark and dismal side of her urbanizing efforts. They examine the disruption to rural lives created by the lure of better paid jobs and prospects that comes along with living in the city. This is conversely juxtaposed with the hopelessness experienced by their children who are neglected, unloved and even abused by relatives or guardians tasked to look after them on their parents' behalf. Besides depicting the sense of abandonment that these "left behind" children experience which is very pronounced in Fan Lixin's documentary *Last Train Home* (2009), some alternative filmmakers like Huang Ji, also deal with issues of betrayal and guilt that comes about from suffering sexual abuse by close relatives. Her debut feature film *Egg and Stone* (2012) is a fictionalised re-enactment of her personal trauma where she was sexually abused by her uncle. She has in interviews placed the blame on her parents for being made a "left behind child" in her home village that subsequently placed her in a very vulnerable position.

These alternative films though frequently regarded as "opportunistic" in their choice of subject matter, not only engages in revealing an unseen side of China but intrinsically constructs an ironic relationship that exists between the rural and the urban. The city cannot stand on its own and requires the rural to meet its needs whether in terms of labour or other natural resources. Chiefly motivated by capitalism and profit, the city consumes the rural extensively and is entirely dependent on the countryside for core resources that allow for it to function smoothly in today's globalised world. For example, labour intensive construction work is highly dependent on cheap migrant labour. Big construction corporations therefore exploit rural migrants who come to the city looking for work, hiring them cheaply and even

cheating them of their wages at times. Ironically, with closer scrutiny, one realises that the city must be supplied with that labour in order for it to progress and survive. It is dependent on the rural for survival and not vice-versa though the latter has become the dominant view.

To make things worse, mainstream cinema in China is gradually erasing the space of the rural by filling it with narratives and images of the city. Conversely, the space of the city is increasingly being promoted onscreen with approval from the Chinese authorities. These films define modern living in present times as only possible in the city. Hence the idea of having to move to the city for a better life becomes a necessity, propelling the phenomenon of “left behind” children. Ultimately, urban normativity as a dominant mode of imagining subjectivity in relation to space in China, results in the continued exploitation of the rural. These children, being subjects of the rural suffer the consequences of such sorts of imaginings and perceptions. Their sufferings are correspondingly made invisible and they become disenfranchised being unable to fit into that equation of success that measures and equates urban development with the country’s progress. The abandonment of these children arises out of this unequal treatment towards these two spaces and alternative filmmakers in China are seeking to provide a more balanced view of the situation. At the very least they bring to surface this deep seated problem for the world to see as the Chinese authorities seek to downplay or ignore this issue altogether. They capture the unequal treatment towards these two spaces, and using the medium of film they bear witness and give a voice to this marginalised space and the “left behind” children who inhabit it.

Seeking to problematize the dire consequences of discounting the rural by merely embracing a simplistic narrative of China’s urban success, I will argue that the works of China’s alternative filmmakers provide a voice for these vulnerable children by depicting the terrible situations that they endure. And though it can be argued that the use of the child is a tactic that these filmmakers simply employ to evoke pity and sympathy in audiences, the children in these films are portrayed as far from powerless. Despite the dismal conditions that these children are left with, they portray a grit and tenacity towards the harsh circumstances they face, exuding a zest and determination to learn, discover and deal with what life throws at them. It is the medium of film that empowers their condition through representation, where audiences can witness the resilience of these “left behind” children. Furthermore, by engaging in close examination of the films and drawing connections between the different conditions of the three sets of children in Fan Lixin’s *Last Train Home* (2009), Huang Ji’s *Egg and Stone* (2012) and Wang Bing’s *Three Sisters* (2012), I will argue that such depictions of “left behind” children play a critical function in constructing a narrative of resistance towards dominant mainstream perspectives of how urban and rural spaces are portrayed in China’s cinema. In doing so, I hope that this line of argument will encourage a more equal treatment of rural spaces when we begin to think about how urban-rural spaces function in cinema. And if possible, such treatments of the rural space should move beyond film studies into urban studies as too little critical attention has been paid towards this space, rendering it almost invisible. Ultimately, these alternative filmmakers construct a powerful statement to collectively reveal how China’s current economic miracle and the corresponding success of her major cities are built upon the suffering of these “left behind” children. Using the medium of film, they make present and visible, the invisible sacrifices that these rural families make, and the heavy price that they pay in the name of personal and national progress.

From Pity to Power

It is easy to feel a great sense of pity and sympathy for the children depicted in *Last Train Home*, *Egg and Stone* and *Three Sisters* as parental figures remain largely absent in their lives. This is compounded with the images of raw and intense conditions of rural living that is marked by varying stages of poverty as captured by these three filmmakers. A grandparent, uncle or aunt who lives close by often becomes the substitute parent that either fails to or becomes too effective in replacing the parent who has gone to the city to work. The consequence of this, is a kind of neglect that these children face which is so severe that audiences are made to sense their lack of self-worth through the subtle self-destructive acts that they engage in. The distance they feel from their parents is keenly felt by audiences as the films show the rare occasions of yearly family reunions during the festive Chinese New Year holiday or a brief returning home visits that the parent makes. Whether through semi-autobiographical narratives or documentaries, audiences are made privy to the appalling conditions that these “left behind” children face. They get to observe the exploitation and abuse by proxy guardians, the nature and fragility of parent child relationships, and witness the absence of a viable future for the main female protagonists.

All three films point to dark and uncertain futures that these children will eventually have to face. Qin in *Last Train Home* leaves on a train for Shenzhen after a fight with her parents in a bid to escape their expectations and out of a sense of being abandoned by them in her growing years. Previously working as a seamstress like her parents, she switches occupations to become a waitress in a nightclub. Audiences are left with questions as to whether she will succumb to prostitution or a more horrible fate in the future. In *Egg and Stone*, Honggui moves into her grandmother’s place after suffering from an involuntary induced abortion. Her parents remain absent despite the occurrence of a series of traumatic events where she was sexually abused by her uncle to being tricked into an abortion by him. Despite calling to speak with her mother, her younger brother picks up the phone and relays the message that their mother is too busy tending to domestic matters to talk to her, asking her to call back at a more opportune time. The sense of being abandoned by her parents is further intensified as her grandmother’s place is even more remote and isolated than the place she used to stay in before. Honggui at the end of the film is seen to be trying to come to terms with her body after having undergone those series of dreadful events. Symbolically at the end of the film where she is seen washing herself, the scene subtly suggests her guilt towards the unclean state of her body. Moreover, in a deeply ironic fashion, the discovery that her menstrual cycle has begun while she was cleaning herself ambiguously points to her relief that she is no longer pregnant, as well as the fact that she literally has absolutely no control over her body in light of the recent events that had befallen upon her. Lastly, ten year old Yingying in *Three Sisters* bears the responsibilities of the family by caring for her sisters and seeing to the household chores like a mother. Both Ying and Zhen help their Aunt by feeding the animals and sorting the harvested crop. When her father comes to bring Zhenzhen and Fenfen with him to the city as they are too young to attend school anyway, the lone struggles of Ying become even more pronounced as the camera captures her struggles to keep herself alive and focussed on her studies.

Most significant perhaps in all three films, is the use of cinematography to highlight this state of vulnerability that these children are in. Long shots of an endless vast landscape that engulfs the tiny physical presence of these forsaken children are repeated consistently in these three films, amplifying their helpless states. Contrasting the figure of the small child with an immense landscape reinforces the extent of their abandonment and intensifies the struggles they face. Audiences see the immensity of their loneliness and how the immense countryside envelopes their identities and being. They face nature and its accompanying challenges all on their own. However, being in many ways “orphaned” and left to their own devices, Mother Nature remains paradoxically the only figure of comfort to these children when they turn to her in their acts of harvesting, or when they sit against the vast landscape, as though in silent conversations with her.

Although these “left behind” children are documented or portrayed to be highly marginalised, the medium of film empowers these children in spite of their dire straits. When we consider the manner in which these children deal with the circumstances that they are thrown into, they ultimately survive and make the best of their situations. In *Last Train Home*, though rebellious and angry at her parents’ lack of understanding for her, Qin forges her future and decides to take matters into her own hands by defining her own destiny. Despite being uncertain of the road ahead, she takes responsibility and is fully aware of the realities ahead. She candidly tells documenter Fan Lixing in an interview on the train that, “I don’t know if I will realise my dreams in Shenzhen”. Honggui in *Egg and Stone* on the other hand refuses to remain a victim and play into the hands of her manipulative uncle. She hits him with her stone when he visits her at the hospital. This marks the end of her abuse as all is revealed and thus she is thrown into the care of her grandmother. Lastly, Yingying’s determination to be educated in *Three Sisters* bears testament to the grit of this young child who is unwilling to give up on life despite the utter poverty and terrible circumstances she has to endure. She fends off bullies and doggedly tells them off when they falsely accuse her. Also, she bravely exclaims that “I never ask for help” when a fellow villager’s child bullies her.

On a deeper level, these films in articulating the circumstances of this marginal group of children, serve to provoke questions and curiosity in audiences about the contexts that have created these circumstances. In so doing, alternative filmmakers have given voice to these children by representing some of their struggles and stories to the international film audience. Through the portrayal of the plight of these “left behind” children, alternative filmmakers effectively problematize and destabilise the State’s rhetoric and construction of her identity as “having arrived” after spending two decades of trying to play catch up with the rest of the modern world. Principally, these alternative narratives of “left behind” children can be seen as additions to the dominant narrative that documents the unseen side and failures of China’s economic success.

Between Rural Children and their Urban Parents

Through their works, China’s alternative filmmakers have effectively created opportunities to relook these important roles by broaching on the subject of “left behind” children in their films. The migrant workers in major towns and cities that engage in menial labour fuel the economies of those spaces. While the city is the

epitome of modern living today, it is unable to sustain itself without a hinterland or rural base to support it.

The rural with its harsh conditions nonetheless remains a place that is self-sustaining, not really needing the city to survive. When looked upon from this perspective, the space of the urban creates a draw and attraction which is the ability to construct and fulfil capitalist desires. This in turn causes the urban space of the city to reign over the space of the rural. In *Last Train Home*, Qin's parents work in a garment factory in the city of Guangzhou sewing clothes in shifts. They produce under tight schedules, countless pieces of clothing to be shipped and sold. Qin's parents are seen to be typical migrant workers who suffer exploitation for meagre pay. When the garment factory goes bankrupt during the 2008 Asian Financial Crisis, both husband and wife lose their jobs. But by that time, they have already lost more, namely a daughter and health.

Promising to reclaim their daughter after two years, Honggui the protagonist of *Egg and Stone* has been left in the care of her aunt and uncle for seven years. Honggui's Aunt begrudges her sister's callousness in going against her promise and further asking to loan money to expand the business they have carved out. In fact through Honggui's aunt, the audience learns that her parents work in the city of Guangzhou, selling soil by the truckload. They actively avoid picking and returning Honggui's calls to them for trite reasons. Honggui parents are in many ways invisible as they do not appear in the film at all, unlike in the other two documentaries.

Lastly, Ying's father in *Three Sisters* appears periodically in the documentary to see to the caretaking arrangements of his daughters. Wang Bing follows him to his workplace situated in the city of Kunming and reveals to audiences that he engages in hard labour bagging and shifting bags of what seem to be a coal like substance. Due to the rapid build-up of cities, there is an abundant need for factory and construction workers. Prospects of carving out a better living for their families in the cities attract rural farmers like those in these films to leave their impoverished farming lives behind for more stable, sustainable and higher incomes. However, the higher price that they pay in turning to these job opportunities in the city is their children's welfare as they fail in their parental duties to them. The health of these migrant labourers suffer as well, as the working conditions are often appalling as can be seen from Ying's father who is often observed smoking a very elaborate pipe to perhaps help ease his mind of work. More devastating is the recognition by audiences that urbanites enjoy the comforts of city living derived from the exploitation of the rural for its resources including that of migrant labour and the neglect of these "left behind" children. The rural engages in building the urban but the inequality in treatment to these two spaces have resulted in the thorough abuse of the rural space and its inhabitants. Thus, the need to reintroduce and emancipate the position of the rural in academic thought from the invisible shackles that define it as subservient to the city becomes ever more urgent and important.

Conclusion

The films of China's alternative filmmakers reveal the realities of the problems that China faces in this current decade. The choice to focus on the space of the rural is not coincidental as it brings to forefront the price of urbanization for China. The problems of these "left behind children" in her rural areas require a paradigm shift in terms of mind-sets towards the notions of progress, global capitalism and consumption habits to address the issue at hand. That being said, the medium of film does however empower these children by allowing their "invisible" situations to be made visible. Likewise, these films through documenting their situations bring to the surface the embedded interconnections that lie between the rural and the urban where their relationship of mutual dependence is problematized. The rural is not dependent on the city for its survival yet it is ironically treated as the dependent "poorer cousin" of the city. Hence, China's alternative cinema engages not only in critiquing rapid urbanization but engages in problematizing the praxis of power and ideological motivations that accords the urban or the city with such importance. By critically resisting the normalising of the urban, the resultant impact will perhaps remove some forms of exploitation, foster more concern for the environment and maybe encourage deeper thought about pursuing sustainable living by rethinking consumerist lifestyles. China's alternative filmmakers construct powerful statements through their works to precisely create such sorts of awareness towards the darker side of China's economic miracle.

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Contact email: edsonng@u.nus.edu





Looking Through 'Her' Eyes: Productive Look in Jean-Pierre Jeunet's The Fabulous Destiny of Amelie Poulain

Pelin Aytemiz, Başkent University, Turkey

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to unravel further what the film *The Fabulous Destiny of Amelie Poulain* (Le Fabuleux Destin d'Amelie Poulain -Jean-Pierre Jeunet, 2001) is saying about critical seeing and vision. Presenting a discussion of the film by depending on the concepts of *gaze*, *look*, *screen* and *productive look* by Kaja Silverman, this study focuses on the ways the film problematizes seeing by the way the society and culture demands. Perceiving the world with a critical eye and not accepting the visions provided by the society without questioning can be regarded as the idea underlined by the main character Amelie (Andre Tautou). Via locating its main concern on the issue about seeing and by displaying examples of *productive look* that Silverman defines, the film challenges the way people see through visual representations such as film, photography and video, which are discussed by depending of critical literature on visual culture. The paper argues that *The Fabulous Destiny of Amelie Poulain* is a film, which not only comments on seeing but also challenges the visual regime of societies by using everyday visual production tools.

Keywords: Amelie, productive look, vision, gaze, screen, visual culture

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Introduction

The Fabulous Destiny of Amelie Poulain (Le Fabuleux Destin d'Amelie Poulain) directed by Jean-Pierre Jeunet (2001) is a peculiar film that uses visual representations based on presence that have an indexical quality such as footprints, film, photography, audio recordings and videos in its narrative in order to comment on the society of spectacle, and the technological mediation of social relations. Focusing on the cultural and social usage of image through the main character might open up questions of on the traditional visual regime of the society. Depending on the critical literature on visual culture, this article will try to understand how the characters interact with different images (still and moving) they encounter in their diegetic world, and will try to unravel further what the film is saying about critical seeing. As a methodological track, it depends on Kaja Silverman's (1996) description of *gaze*, *look*, *screen* and *productive look* introduced in *The Threshold of the Visible World* where she analyzes how one is positioned in social order by visual representations such as film, photography and video. So, the study focuses on the ways the film problematizes seeing and considers the usage of visual metaphors as including a subversive comment on vision and visual culture.

About *The Fabulous Destiny of Amelie Poulain*

The Fabulous Destiny of Amelie Poulain is about a charming young woman (Andre Tautou) who retains her child-like ingenuities and prefers to live in an imaginary world. As a grown up, her powerful imagination does not changed. One day when she coincidentally finds a hidden box containing the mementos of a stranger's childhood, her ordinary life alters. She tracks the owner of the box and returns it to him by her secret gift-giving method. When she saw the joy of the man when getting his treasure box back, she finds her life's mission -to serve mankind. She decides to bring happiness to people by creating extraordinary strategies and witty little tricks. Mixed with wonderful little subplots the film introduces several interesting characters and narrates how Amelie changed their mundane lives.

On vision

As Guy Debord (1977) famously has written, we now live in a society of spectacle. We live in an economy of the image where the social relationship among people is mediated by images. In such an era, as Susan Sontag (1990:85) observes, "we learn to see ourselves photographically: to regard oneself as attractive is, precisely, to judge that one would look good in a photograph". For her (1990:52) people in industrialized countries "seek to have their photographs taken because they believe that they are made real by photographs". The reification of certain binary oppositions and concepts through representation creates standards and essentials what those images refers to. Many cultural norms start to rely more and more on the production of cultural image repertoires. These normative representations create social identity through what Kaja Silverman (1996:165) calls "the cultural screen". According to Silverman there is a possibility to stay aside the screen via learning to see productively. Embodied look is always active and have a potential to counter the screen that is to say; the societies visual regime. There is always a resistance in look. For her "productive look" entails to realize the otherness. A subject, who has the ability to see with a *productive look*, does not assimilate with what s/he sees in the screen or does not reject the other. The one who discovers the other in them or realizes that the other, which is rejected is very similar to their own, lets the other alter them. Such an understanding allows opening up the unconscious to the otherness. In

this sense, the main character of the film *Amelie*, presents a character which is able to accept her own otherness and able to see without aligning herself to the screen. What makes *Amelie* a special character is her ability to see differently than the dominant cultural image repertoire. Unlike the other children who lose such ability when they grow up, *Amelie* maintains her *productive look*. She notices minor details and feels sympathy for those who stand apart; like the man working in the grocery shop Lucien, the blind man, the ill painter glass man Dufayel, the hypochondriac tobacconist; Georgette and Nino who makes bizarre collections. All these character can be regarded as outsiders who are not totally accepted in the society.

When *Amelie* was a child, she was not totally affected by her society's visual regime. Like the other children she has the ability to see things the adults do not notice. When she gets a camera as a present, she captures details that represent a *productive look*. Kaja Silverman takes camera and gaze together and defines it like a social lens which is always upon the subjects. However, *Amelie*'s camera functions different than the gaze while she is a child and do not watch the world from the screen like the others do. Since she discovers animal figures in the clouds; a teddy bear and a rabbit when she looks through her camera, (See Figure 1) the photos she takes expresses her *productive look*. Kaja Silverman (1996:160) says, "I know even as I look and even as I see, I am changing what is there". For her the look is always shadowed by our feelings, fears and desires and in this society of spectacle all are mediated by representations. All people have the ability to transform what they see but in order to avoid the coercive ways of seeing implemented by the society Silverman suggest to gain a *productive look*. Perceiving the world with a critical eye and not accepting the visions provided by the society without questioning, can be regarded as the idea underlined by the main character *Amelie*.



Figure 1: Productive look of young *Amelie*, screenshot from the film.

I want to give concrete examples from the film, which shows different characters that has *productive look*. In the film, when *Amelie* describes what she likes and dislikes,

the spectator sees her in a movie theater. In the saloon while all the audience is all watching a black and white film, Amelie breaking the 4th wall, faces the camera and start to talk with the spectator. She says that instead of watching the film, she prefers to observe cinemagoer's emotional change with the movie. In this self-conscious scene one watch Amelie, observing people while they are watching the film. At this point it is important to note that Silverman uses gaze and the camera interchangeable to mention their likeness. In this sense although the camera/gaze is invisible to the other cinemagoers in the scene (the audience), Amelie faces the camera and rejects its invisibility and therefore it's power. If we consider this scene metaphorically, and regard the film's screen as the *cultural screen* Silverman defines, the scene becomes more interesting. Because by saying that she likes watching people who are immersed in the film, she stays out of the immersion power of the film and therefore the *screen*. Silverman defines the *screen* as the *repertoire of images*. If we assume that the audience in the film are watching a conventional film than we can consider the filmic screen as the *screen* of culturally and historically defined images. Amelie by looking at the audience who are watching the screen becomes an eye, which is not affected by the *screen*. Then her act can be considered as an act of *productive look*.



Figure 2: Productive look of Amelie, screenshot from the film.

The scene continues with her talk to the camera/spectator, which is still invisible to the audience in the scene. She says that she likes to discover details, which does not take the attention of the audience. When the audience in the movie theater was touched by the romantic scene, where the main characters are kissing, we are seeing Amelie paying attention to a fly on the screen standing in between a kissing couple. She says: "I like noticing details that no one else sees." The ideal image repertoire provided by the gaze and reflected on the screen is ironically broken by the presence of the bug. Her realization of such details represents that the field of vision is very much different for Amelie than the audience that are aligned with the gaze of the culture.

The blind man and the glass man

Including a blind man (Jean Darie L'aveugle) in the film is not an arbitrary choice. It can also be read as a comment on seeing and looking. Despite all the visual impact, particular color tones selected by art direction and multiplicity of visual elements in the film, the blind man's sight represents lack of visuality. His presence, reminds one another aspect of seeing: sightlessness. He does not have an ordinary access to the field of vision therefore the cultural *screen* might work in a different manner for this character. In the film Amelie helps this senior blind man to cross the street. On their way walking together she described every ordinary thing she saw on the street becoming the eyes for the *blind man*. It can be interesting to wonder what the blind man made out of the sentences he hears. How he made sense of the immaculate details of vibrant scenery he has never experienced. I think the "look" of his mind that is not affected by the *visual regime of the society*, can be considered as *productive look*. To make this moment a surreal one that represents the joy of the blind man who have been captured in darkness, a specific camera movement and supplementary special effect is used to show him surrounded in a brilliant magical glow (See Figure 3). As if Amelie brought color to his dull life.

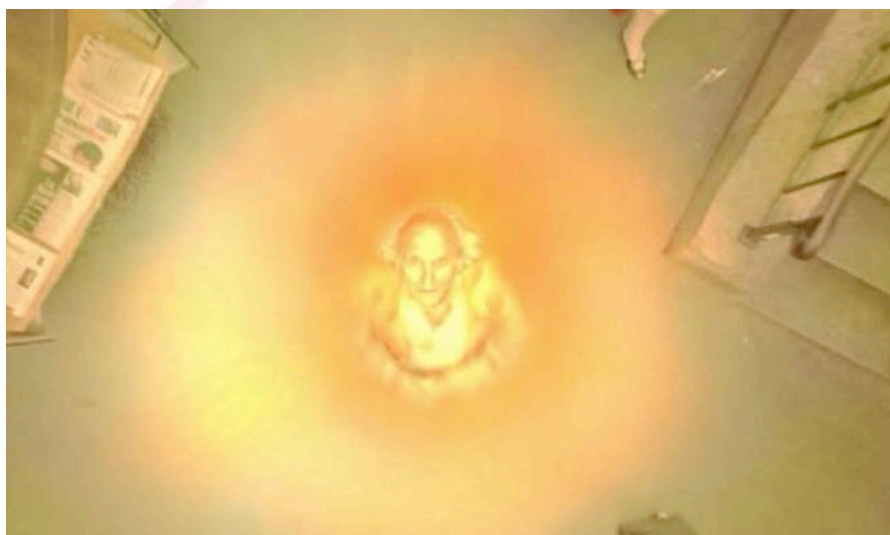


Figure 3: Blind man seeing with the words of Amelie, screenshot from the film.

One other key character is called "glass man"; the senior painter Raymond Dufayel (Serhei Merlin), who never leaves his apartment because of his brittle-bone disease, is also a comment on seeing in a similar way. Like the blind man, he also has limited access to the outer world and the society's visual regime while he keeps himself at home all day. The only contact he has with the outer world is his video camera and binoculars. His video camera is trained on a nearby watch as if counting down the time he has in this world and his binocular is trained upon the apartment of Amelie. Through his binoculars he follows the efforts of Amelie to help other people, and in the same way Amelie spies on Dufayel.

In order to help the old painter Dufayel, Amelie records interesting and enjoyable scenes from the TV showing outside, in which a horse is racing a team of bicyclists, in which a man with one wooden leg tap-dances joyfully and sends the cassettes to him. Dufayel gains information from the outer world with the mediation of these mediums. I think in Dufayel's case, the mediated perception of the world and his

being forced to stay at home results him to stay out of the visual forces of the society. In both of these special character's life (glass man and the blind man) Amelie functions as a mediator, which transmits moments of daily life. Their presence in the film as characters representing lack of seeing reinforces Amelie's *productive look*.

Photographs as indexical prints

I think *The Fabulous Destiny of Amelie Poulain* is a film, which not only comments on seeing but also challenges the social use of photography and the visual regime of societies. In Amelie's diegetic world the digital technologies of image making are not mentioned. Yet, the immediacy, presence and human contact are welcomed by the analogue technologies that have indexical quality. Even the photographs used are always analogue and Polaroid and instant photo booths are crucial elements in the film.

To trace the effects of society on individuals are very easy in the case of photographs. Because as Silverman writes; (1996: 135) "when a real camera is trained upon us, we feel ourselves subjectively constituted, as if the resulting photograph could somehow determine 'who' we are". In this sense, camera/gaze is a medium which forces people to act accordingly. The resulting photo is like the evidence to the subject's existence in terms of the society, which s/he belongs, while photos name and identify people. In this sense photo albums, which are full of "best" photos, can be seen as a self-formation practice according to the *screen*. I think this idea is clearly visualized in the film by Nino's photo album. Nino Quicampoix (Mathieu Kassovitz) is a character that collects things that are discarded and does not have any value for anyone (See Figure 4). He records laughs of strangers, takes snapshots of footprints and collects torn ID photographs that he finds underneath coin operating instant -photo booths. As Elisabeth Ezra (2008:102) describes, he is "an archivist attempting to preserve indexical traces of presence... Nino saves things from oblivion".



Figure 4: Nino hunting discarded photographs, screenshot from the film.

He collects such torn and discarded ID photos, reassembles and pastes them in his special photo album (See Figure 5). I think Nino's collection of anonymous people's unwanted photo booth strips challenges the practice of creating family photo albums and subverts the idea essential to it. For Ezra (2008:104) Nino's attempt to save things that are actually not intended for archival preservation can be characterized by

“noise”. By preserving it he “turns the refuse of daily life into something worth preserving” (Ezra, 2008:104). In this context Nino’s album is defined by the narrator as “a real family album”, which can also be read considered as an ironic comment of the director that challenges the practice of traditional family photographs in albums.



Figure 5: The photo album of Nino, screenshot from the film.

Conventionally photo albums tell the story of its owner, but Nino’s album is full of strangers. Although photo albums are in a very personal domain, the effect of the gaze can be clearly seen, because posing is the moment in which people define themselves according to the gaze. Photo album is like the evidence of its owner’s acceptance by the society. On the contrary the photos in Nino’s album are all unwanted photographs, which include an error in their owner’s process of posing. Every time it is posed for the camera, the subject recreates his/her ideal image again. Therefore the resulting photo is very crucial to the subject. If the captured moment does not suit the *image repertoire of the screen*, then it is not worthwhile to be preserved in time. Thus it is doomed to be denied and torn into pieces and does not have a chance to have a place in an album or used in an ID card as an identification of the subject. However according to Nino, such photograph, which stays out of reach of the screen, are very valuable and deserves to be included in his precious photo album. In this sense Nino’s photo album challenges all those conventional usages of it and reveals how social gaze in the instance of ID photographs frames the subject. Nino’s *productive look* discloses that; photo albums can be seen as a reflection of people’s life confirmed by the gaze and through them one can trace the effects of power and dominant discourse.

The traveling kidnapped garden gnome of Mr. Raphael Poulain

In the film, in order to help her father’s schizoid state and to encourage his wish for traveling, Amelie kidnaps her father’s beloved ceramic garden gnome. She gives the gnome to her flight attendant friend and asks her to snap pictures of the gnome in front of the famous buildings in abroad cities. Then from time to time her father receives letters from Moscow, New York etc., which includes the Polaroid photos of his kidnapped gnome posing and enjoying his holiday in touristic landmarks.

I think this sequences in the film takes the spectators attention on the act of posing and photographs ability to force the subject to align themselves with the cultural screen. Travel photos, which are commonly taken in front of landmarks, are a proof of

the ideal image of a holiday for the subject since subjects perceive the city with a reference of an already seen image. By posing in the viewing points the subject guarantees to be in that already seen image of that place and make his/her vacation a real one. In this context Robert Smithson expresses the idea of existing in an image, which is seen several times before, in an impressive way in these words;

Noonday sunshine cinema-ized the site, turning the bridge and the river into an overexposed picture. Photographing it with Instamatic 400 was like photographing a photograph. The sun becomes a monstrous light bulb that projected a detailed series of “stills” through my Instamatic into my eye. When I walked on the bridge, it was as though I was walking on an enormous photograph that was made of wood and steel, underneath the river existed as an enormous movie film that showed nothing but a continuous blank. (Smithson qtd. in Silverman: 1996, 200)

Being exposed to too many images of touristic cities “the world becomes image-like” (Flusser, qtd. in Silverman: 1996, 197) and people tend to be in this image by taking photographs. By representing the tourist as a gnome I think the film pushes the viewers to investigate the idea behind such travel photographs.

Also the ritual of taking photos in order to make the travel real and ideal is teased in the film by putting a gnome ceramic instead of a real person. Although the gnome does not travel, Amelie’s father assumes his travel as a real one since the gnome has Polaroid photos, which proofs his trip. According to Susan Sontag (1990) people “seek to have their photographs taken” because they believe that they are “made real by photographs”. Similarly gnome’s travel is made real for Mr. Poulain by the photographs.



Figure 6: The travelling garden gnome of Mr. Raphael Poulain

The gnome’s rigid and stable posture as a ceramic sculpture can be read also as another comment of the director about photographs. The gnome as a ceramic

sculpture represents the posing subject's attitude like a non-living statue. When Silverman comments on the mortification aspect of the experience of being photographed, she says that mortification involves "the congealing of the body into a statue like rigidity" (1990:199). By freezing while posing the subjects behave like an image in the picture although ironically everything around him/her moves. Barthes (2000: 14) while meditating on the close relation between photography and death describes how photography turns him to a specter:

The photograph represents that very subtle moment when, to tell the truth, I am neither subject nor object but a subject who feels he is becoming an object: I then experience a micro version of death (of parenthesis): I am truly becoming a specter.

I think by putting an object (the gnome) instead of a subject (a tourist) in the photos at the instance they are taken, the film reveals the transformation of the person to a dead image/specter.

I tried to analyze some example scenes, which I believe that represents the critical attitude of the film. Although there is not a direct verbal comment on photography, vision or seeing in the film, I think the scenes I discussed displays the subversive potential of the film against the visual regime of the society which Silverman names as the *screen*. Via locating its main concern on the issue about seeing and by displaying examples of *productive look* that Silverman defines, the film can be argued to challenge the *cultural screen* and mainstream traditional look one entails. The paper argues that *The Fabulous Destiny of Amelie Poulain* is a film, which not only comments on seeing but also challenge the traditional visual regime by using the medium of photography.

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Contact email: pelinaytemiz@gmail.com

The logo for the International Association of Film and Documentary Researchers (iafor) is centered on the page. It features the lowercase letters 'iafor' in a light blue, sans-serif font. The text is surrounded by several overlapping, semi-transparent circular arcs in shades of red, blue, and purple, creating a dynamic, swirling effect.

***Memory Devices:
Reflections about the Animated Documentary Films***

Bianca Suárez Puerta, Universidad Manuela Beltrán, Colombia
Ángela Urrea, Universidad Manuela Beltrán, Colombia

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Abstract

We consider that cultural devices aren't neutral. These devices are extremely varied and are keys to foster massive and reciprocal knowledge between societies in this increasingly global and technology-mediated world. This face us to the unavoidable task of memory construction of the recent past and challenge us to create ways to approach it and transmit it to a large public, both at local, regional, national and international levels. In this way, this chapter aims to position animated documentary films as a 'transcultural device' for the construction and transmission of memories of traumatic events of the Colombian armed conflict.

In order to expose this statement, we will develop the theoretical aspects of memory: acknowledge its cultural, social, political and temporal dimension; for instance, the social frameworks of memory, the cultural mediation of language, the multiplicity of memories, the fact that past action remains open to interpretation. On the other hand, we will stress on memory transmission, and therefore of memory transmitters; the act and means of enunciation. Finally, we will consider the ethical questions that emerge from representing per se and from representing traumatic past events; for example, the politics of memory, the right to forget, the spectacularization of violence and the need of testimony.

Pursuing these paths will lead us to posit animated documentary films as a transcultural device that can show what memories by themselves are not able to represent.

Keywords: documentary, animation, transcultural device, memory construction, memory transmission, Conflict

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Introduction

In this chapter we present some academic reflections resulting from the research student seminar "Animated documentary and Postconflict"¹ that has taken place in the Manuela Beltrán University, Colombia. In here, we have analyzed several animated documentaries, have reflected on its communicative functions, and have encouraged the participants to take account of these findings in order to develop future transnational animated documentary scripts.

We consider that cultural devices aren't neutral. These devices are extremely varied and are keys to foster massive and reciprocal knowledge between societies in this increasingly global and technology-mediated world. Additionally, Colombia is ad portas of a pos-conflict scenario. This face us to the unavoidable task of memory construction of the recent past and challenge us to create ways to approach it and transmit it to a large public, both at local, regional, national and international levels. In this way, this chapter aims to position animated documentary films as a 'transcultural device' for the construction and transmission of memories of traumatic events of the Colombian armed conflict.

In order to expose this statement, at first we will develop the theoretical aspects of memory. On one hand, we will acknowledge its cultural, social, political and temporal dimension; for instance, the social frameworks of memory, the cultural mediation of language, the multiplicity of memories, the fact that past action remains open to interpretation. On the other hand, we will stress on memory transmission, and therefore of memory transmitters; the act and means of enunciation. Finally, we will consider the ethical questions that emerge from representing per se and from representing traumatic past events; for example, the politics of memory, the right to forget, the mirroring of violence, and the need of testimony.

This sociocultural representation not only implies Colombian society public, also lets other contexts approach to this complex problem. Transnational and cross-cultural understandings have become critical to a country's cultural, technological, economic, and political health. The creation of cross-cultural works involves protecting the 'national' sense of valuable production to renewal legislations, followed by changes and advancements in economic relationships, political systems, and technological options that began to break down old cultural barriers, and the historical conditions of unequal development within the socio-cultural space.

On the second part of the chapter we will delve into this and in the possibilities offered by digital technologies in relation to storytelling, screenwriting, narrative and memory construction. We believe that animation and digital technologies allow aesthetic transformations, new creative horizons, the exploration and recreation of not filmed pasts and of the depths of human emotions. This way of making documentaries is a starting point for empowerment.

Create an artwork that will have an effect on the community, involves producing the increased communication: it must start from the fragmentation of a unique landmark

¹ <http://semillerodocumentalanimado.blogspot.com.co/p/contenidos-para-discusion.html>

event in its essential qualities, which must be re-created with the voice of the witnesses, with other constructions as metaphors, synthesizing its information with graphics and infographics. Sounds represent the blasts of the bombs in the war, harangues the crowd clamoring for justice, the sound of rain depicting distress and helplessness, its colorimetry leads to the perception of the viewer to experience the moment of heat, powerlessness and violence. Documentary films must represent the annihilation of a reality of which they were part, and the destruction of structures that were part of their heritage and their collective memories.

Pursuing these paths will lead us to posit animated documentary films as a transcultural device that enables the transmission of traumatic events of the Colombian armed conflict by re-creating and resignifying them, and by reaching a large public. In a few words, animated documentaries can show what memories by themselves are not able to represent.

1. What is an animated documentary film?

Animation, associated with children's and family stories, where heroes and villains have a moral; on the other hand, documentary films, associated with adult stories on social issues evidence of reality. These two genres with opposite slopes, as a foreign pollination, spring from the same root: cinema.

Unbeknownst to the cinema began as documentary. The Lumiere brothers were pioneers because it was the basic form that could exist to document reality and everyday life. Meanwhile, cartoons emerged from experiments with motion pictures accelerating superimposing a film images with other paintings and frame by frame signs of movement, becoming the first signs of animation. The artistic possibilities in the two fields intersect to establish a clear definition of animated documentary: an audiovisual closely based on journalism which allows use illustrations to recreate evidence, testimonials, or historical facts. While some scholars recognize the authority of the documentary as derived from its indexical relation to reality, others like John Grierson argued that the documentary never fully confirmed these characteristics and that the film is itself is a creative treatment of reality (Honest, 2013). Therefore along this paper we will develop how the animated documentary is able to present an alternative view of the world.

Documentary films are supported by more conventional alternatives, such as photographs, sequences of live action footage. Major broadcasting networks like BBC series, Discovery Channel or National Geographic, use animation to increase the sense of their documentary researches. This animations, as indexical signs used as well through fictional media has the ability to handle feelings by recreating scenes that people have no idea has passed, or if they were very recent, were not registered, or if it occurred long time ago.

In this memory process, it is necessary to recognize its cultural, social, political and temporal dimension. Furthermore, we will emphasize the transmission of memory, and we will emphasize how documentary animated films are memory transmitters; and it means how is made the proper act of enunciation, arising from representation itself on behalf of past traumatic events, the politics of memory, the right to forget and

the need of testimonial. This cultural representation allows to approach this complex problem to other contexts by its animated features that began to break the old cultural barriers and the historical conditions.

In the second part of the chapter we will dig into digital technologies and its relation with storytelling, scripts, narrative and cultural aesthetics building. We believe that animation and digital technologies allow aesthetic transformations, new creative horizons to explore the possibility of recreating a past and not filmed the depths of human emotions. This way of making documentaries is a starting point for empowerment because it may create an artwork that will have an effect on the community to produce increasing social communication.

2. Memory

(a) Memory: Theoretical aspects

Speaking of memory is complex. Its multiple theoretical approaches from psychology, neuroscience, psychoanalysis, history, cultural studies, political science, social sciences, among others, as well as the many implications that has had its insertion into the public and political exceeding the academic boundaries with ambiguous and imprecise definitions. An increasing interest in memory, its constitution as a concern in the social and human sciences as well as in the political evolution of different societies. For this reason, we must begin by exposing the theoretical aspects on which this chapter is based.

Memory is fundamental to social life. Here we start to define it as the active subjective process by which builds and gives sense and meaning to the past from a present; past regarding specific events, situations, social actors. We consider it from a social and cultural dimension to extent what its recalled within the specific, changing and in correspondence with the socio-cultural present with specific interpretive frameworks; and highlight its political character to extent its power relations and tensions.

At the same time, the memory is inserted into the time and temporal dimension undeniable (Jelin 2002; Schwarztein 2002): The past is over, is something-ended, cannot be changed. The future, however, is open, uncertain, indeterminate. What can be changed is the sense of the past, subject to reinterpretation rooted in the intent and expectations towards the future (Ricoeur en Jelin 2002: 39).

But then who remember? What is remembered? From where? According to Halbwachs (Aguilar 2008), memories are recalled within specific social frameworks. This means that all memory occurs in a social context and needs of concepts developed socially to register and then to be evoked. Always we remember from the point of view from where we feel we belong (Halbwachs in Aguilar 2008: 46). This does not mean that the memory is independent of individuals, the context in which memory occurs is as well a mediation through cultural and social facts; although it is the subject who remember, it is a socially and culturally located subject, which makes use of language, technology and culture to understand and construct meanings to the collective memory. This is why memory is neither a static process, not rigid or over, is organic, is subject to constant change; not only because the contexts change, but

also the subjects, their frames of reference, and therefore the senses. This implies that one cannot speak of a memory, firstly because there are so many memories as groups and individuals, on the other hand, because the memory emitted from the same place is subject to a process of transformation over time.

The political struggle for memory and the politics of memory are related with the conflicts and disputes in the interpretation and sense of the past (Jelin 2002); and strategies for different reasons and there are reports that prevail over others, which involves insertion of specific power relations. For example, how and from where the story of a nation is built?

With regard to the policies of the memories we refer to efforts to disseminate or strengthen a particular interpretation of a past event (Aguilar 2008: 53); in other words, the emission and construction of certain memories as a selection from a political field choosing what to remember and what to forget. As Gomez, et al (2007) wrote: there are politics of memory in which the structures of the past, last by a logic of power, and are established in different social spheres defining what has to be remembered and what must be forgotten; and of course, this is not like any other, a battle between equals (31-32). However, in recent decades we have witnessed a revisionist shift of historical narratives by the initiative seeking for other historical interpretations to challenge major historical stories listening to those little voices important to historical transformations.

(b) Memory Vehicles

Areas in which memory can be deployed are innumerable, we want to address the animated documentary as a memory vehicle we refer to objects that make the transmission of reports that help reflection, to mobilize and realize memory, which cause and construct senses. Therefore, memory sense is not crystallized in stone monuments or text engraved on a plaque, but is a process of exchange in which messages generate some response and from which the subjects construct and transform, the sense does not stay in the intent of the sender, but it is also actively produced by the receiver.

Memory, then, occurs as there are subjects that share a culture, while there are social agents who try to 'realize' these senses of the past in diverse cultural products are conceived, or which become vehicles of memory, such as books, museums, monuments, films and history books. It also manifests itself in actions and expressions, before re-presenting the past, incorporating performatively (Van Alphen in Jelin 2002: 37).

As a memory vehicle, we want to make some initial remarks on the animated documentary (on this delve into the following separately). First, it is not neutral, it is given from a place of enunciation and someone, which means it is located and arises from and somewhere. As Sontag notes regarding photography: Photography cannot be mere transparency of what happened. It is always the image he chose someone; photograph is framed, and framed to exclude (2011: 45). For this reason, there may be a subject to a functionalization and instrumentalization, a subject not limited to a creative and expressive dimension that is part of defined context and for certain purposes and intentions. However, returning again to Sontag and establishing a parallel with photography, "the photographer's intentions do not determine the

significance of photography, will continue his own career, driven by the whims and loyalties of the various communities that will find some use” (39).

(c) Ethical issues

Now, what does give an aesthetic dimension to the horror? Why to show violence? Again, why remember? Saturation - society of the spectacle - callousness, right to oblivion. While there is a bombing of images related to war and violence, they are also an invitation to pay attention, to reflect, to learn. In last instance, what images tell endow reality. In addition to wonder about the meaning of reality, how it affects us and what we should do, we cannot deny the existence of that reality to which they refer, and that is where the images are. Animated documentary films can be an opportunity for the story from a different aesthetic that allows visibility to the protagonists of the conflict from an active role and reach the general population who consume audiovisual products.

3. Documentaries and animated genre elements

There are no history of film excluding the strong role played by the documentary on the evolution and development of motion pictures. Although the main driver has been the entertainment, many filmmakers felt the need to record some phenomenon giving birth to documentary filmmaking. With her birth we had access to inaccessible worlds, fantastic characters, testimonies of the past and moments that changed the course of history. Louis Lumiere and Thomas Edison, who disputed the invention of the cinematographer, performed experiments to show the reality with creative ways, recording sounds, observing domestic state of affairs, with an educational and commercial value. Although aesthetic to this design experiments, they captured scenes that the entire world recognizes.

In the years that followed the invention of cinematography, film growth declined. The best known manifestations of ethnographic documentary were produced in the 30s and 40s with projects on the Canadian Arctic as *Nanook of the North*, 1922, from Robert J. Flaherty who researched issues on the otherness. Often features to represent the Other as the main character, is an attempt to present its core theme: a man's relationship with nature and his primal instinct for survival. That lat primal narratives were necessarily reductive to permit the audience confront issues of sexuality, self-sufficiency, exotic natural environments, and both the appeal and the threat of 'the Other'.

Some years earlier the *Lusitania Sinking* in 1915 is a documentary about a liner that sailed from New York for Liverpool in the English coast and was sunk by the Germans off the coast of Ireland. This fact prompted Windsor McCay to make an animated documentary because there was no photographic or film records of what happened. Here the animation comes not as a mere entertainment for children, or an educational component, but a tool to represent a historical fact. In this first documentary appears to be no distinction between live action and animation in terms of their ability to show the reality in a curious and creative way. This first animated documentary is the only historical record of this tragedy.

Many other animated documentary appeared on the audiovisual scene, but was only *Persepolis*, a feature animated documentary film by French-Iranian animation Vincent Paronnaud and Marjane Satrapi which was the only film that could tell a particular political story, of how Satrapi grew up in a fundamentalist Islamic regime that would eventually lead to leave Iran, her home land. The animation is done entirely in black and white, and was inspired by a graphical novel of 2002, is not only written and drawn by Marjane Satrapi, it is also based on her life. The comic starts from 1979, when Satrapi is ten years old and since her childhood perspective is witnessing a social and political change that ends more than fifty years later with the reign of the Shah of Persia in Iran and gives way to an Islamic republic. Was released in France on June 2007, and since then the Islamic Republic of Iran expressed concern about the selection of this film with what it sees as an unreal picture of the impact and achievements of the Islamic revolution. *Persepolis* was also forbidden to broadcast in Lebanon. Following the release of the film in Tunisia in 2011, about 200 Salafists tried to burn the building occupied by the Nessma television, and many other civil disorders in nearby countries. The film has disappeared from the website of the Cinémathèque de Tanger. Nevertheless, the first scene is in color because Marjane puts in the time of exile car, which connects the present with memories, and this retrospective helps the viewer to understand what led to this moment.

Not many years later *Waltz with Bashir*, an Israeli-French-German co-production animated documentary film by Ari Folman made and released in 2008 tells a story in 1982 during a military operation. The young Ari Folman with nineteen years old, did his military service. Twenty-four years later, in 2006, talking to a friend of that time, he told him about a strange dream about the war. Ari tries to remember his war period, have a dream and he thinks that these scenes are from the massacre of Sabra and Shatila. Ari Folman decides to meet some fellow soldiers of the period, so the film is based on actual interviews with friends, most of them testify under their real names.

Just as several other contemporary documentarians, Folman sets the quest for the truth, himself on camera as the protagonist. Ari Folman says that the drawings of his film are made rotoscoping each drawing of the film, created from scratches of an emotional jigsaw puzzle. However, unlike others, Folman turned his war memories a master piece animation, from the most unreal form of filmmaking.

In the same way Andy Glynne encourages *Animated Minds* with a singular style to recreate a mental illness; conceived in 2003 as an attempt to communicate the subjective experience with mental health problems to a wider audience. Glynne create the animation, which plays a key role to show real psychological aspects of how mental patients feel; and this mental illnesses are very much a subjective experience. As a psychologist, Andy Glynne used to sit with patients who were talking about their difficulties and there's a struggle to depict what its like. Symbols or metaphors give another way to express them, but Does animation add more of a sense of understanding their specific situation? *Animated Minds* create short narratives rich in visual metaphors, make beautiful, amazing images, and compelling storys. Story always comes first.

(a) Documentary films

Although it is as old as cinema itself, documentaries cannot be clearly definable as it lends to multiple interpretations. There is a tacit agreement between the director and the audience where content submitted must act from reality. Between this world and the fiction it is a minefield of nuances: the documentary must tread cautiously with integrity because documenting everyday life must be treated with respect to the principles of good journalism without bias. Also the documentary films invite subtly to understand the essence of the nonjudgmental research, features that are not available in any other audiovisual genre.

The documentary should know how to choose the story, and have an effective rhetorical talent to lead history for an entertaining way. The director journalistic vocation will collect data, to the statement of facts and obtaining alternative views, with a penetration level that transcends the mere narration. The representation of reality, negotiating with the reality or the creative treatment of reality will not make the documentary the reality itself. It can be a vehicle for memory in a unique way, impossible to tell otherwise. Not simply retelling the life of a person or an event of social order, it must explain honestly and creatively, the background in which the events occurred. To increase the effect of meaning, it must start from the fragmentation of a unique landmark event in its essential qualities, which must be re-created with the voice of the witnesses, with other constructions as metaphors, synthesizing its information with graphics and infographics. Sounds can represent the blasts of the bombs in the war, harangues the crowd clamoring for justice, the sound of rain depicting distress and helplessness.

But the ultimate goal of the documentary is not only to inform, or arouse interest, but must also entertain, as it is forced to compete for time and space with all kinds of content that exists in the audiovisual market. One of the techniques used to draw the attention of the audience is to characterize a recognized identity and bring it to the screen. This recreation can represent the fantasy world of the character but at playing a real person must display:

- his perspective,
- his identity,
- cultural rootedness, traditions,
- his habits, and
- how has reinvented himself according to his losses and needs.

This development can be shown how the irruptor fact transformed his everyday life, the habits and customs of the community and appropriated the crisis to later social construction; to translate in an audiovisual animated construction the essence of this social changes, it must involve a nonlinearity and non-homogeneous actions, using imaginary creations to print subsequent feelings to the observer. It is vital the role of observer.

Photography, the expectant document to be analyzed, gives an introduction on the context, places and characters that have been actors in the social construction of a fact. Working with photographs and archival, provides a recognition that enables the preservation of memory, and its also the struggle against civilians to stay safe from armed conflict like pictures of the missing people for example.

A very used technique is drawing pictures in the photographic archive, which allows the artist to give the sense of fragility, craft and gives some human characteristics to the audiovisual. As of found photographic and audiovisual file, the artist can make illustrations of new scenes, characters, the original nature of the place can be encouraged.

Filmmakers have also used graphs to summarize, clarify or emphasize reality elements, animating them as a powerful memory tool. The use of old newspapers or old advertising creates an effect of reality, also build the idea of attaching the observer to the story. Depict personality aspects of characters, show common characteristics of places and emblematic events context, these details resemble reality and can outline the development of the script accurately. To show figures that provide a real spectrum to clarify the dimensions of emblematic facts, explaining step by step the image. This use of informational texts sets sensations in the viewer through graphic sequences, in just a glance giving a greater impact without saying many things. Colorimetry leads to the perception of the viewer to experience a moment of heat, powerlessness and violence. Also, the sound of the documentary in sync with animation is simply a work of persuasion. These multi-dimensional, synthetic, aesthetic, also typographical, iconic elements facilitate the understanding of events, to explain detailed some significant aspects, creating the illusion of reality.

To choose a frame, even the choice of time points is already itself a manipulation of reality.

(b) Animated films

As in the documentary, animation represents the same role: to recreate in a unique way emotions and feelings never recorded, and would have been impossible to have photographically.

The animation genre is based on simple stories, happy endings and usually have some ethical teaching implicit in his argument. Many previous studies on animation gender were limited to analysis Disney's animation productions, with its huge popularity in the past decades. This genre must be at the same time for the hole family, which in turn brings some appeal for children, satisfying younger entertainment needs but also their parents needs. The main goal of this genre is to show the heroic side of the characters.

Technically, the animation requires certain elements like physical principles that made them credible, as mass, weight, acceleration, and produces an effect that can be predicted in physical terms.

(d) Representing with digital technologies

The media construct spectacularized events, make us witnesses of events. Thus, the animation features are a resource to bring ideas that people did not know occurred, allowing aesthetic transformations, bringing twists, emerging new creative horizons, modeling fantasy thanks to digital technologies.

To attach a global framework to local cultural productions, they must be adapted to the conditions of contemporary visual productions. For this reason it is important to

consider the new order of transmedia communications, and the state of global communication policies. In other words, new languages have emerged for communication and that forced to acquire new languages: rotoscoping, 3d graphics, flash animations, visual effects, hypermedia, interconnection between subjects. This new media and new languages to reach a wider audience, brings its own characteristics. New forms of production, bringing new forms of circulation and consumption.

5. Conclusions

The documentary must represent the annihilation of a reality of which we are all part. Since Internet everything is registered, the representation crisis and the destruction of structures from heritage conflicts, is part of our collective memories. Annihilation of the previous collective memory and traditions are made to create new ones.

In the viewer's mind, a true story is kept it in the past. His mind completes the illusion of creating a fact that could effectively occurred, then some other images like ones from the newspaper is a 'benchmark', and explanatory text to make the viewer understand that that images are made from real facts. In the documentary context, this coded meaning from the journalistic news makes them a vehicle that function to make the audience believe and be informed about how past could happened. This communicative function makes an active process of imagination: the interpreter intelligence recreates facts from codes from other genres.

Documentaries must start from the fragmentation of a unique milestone in its essential qualities, which must be re-created with the voice of the witnesses, image constructions as metaphors, synthesize other data with graphics and infographics. Sounds could be metaphors too, or represent explosions of bombs in the war, harangues the crowd clamoring for justice, the sound of the rain that could represent the anguish and helplessness; colorimetry leads to the perception of the viewer to experience the moment of heat, powerlessness or desolation. The documentary should represent the demolition of a reality of which the characters were part, and the destruction of the structures that were part of their heritage and collective memories.

Following these paths will lead the director and the artist to raise animated documentary as a transcultural device that allows the transmission of non neutral images for recreation and resignifying traumatic events, but made to reach a large audience. The message of the film is set in the collective memory and thus transforms collective cultural expressions, producing the way this involves an increased communication. This is why documentaries have a starting point for empowerment. In summary, animated documentary can show what memories themselves are not able to represent.

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Contact email: blancasuarezpuerta@gmail.com

Visions of Postwar Fascism: A comparative observation between Wakamatsu Kôji's Secrets behind the Wall and Ôe Kenzaburo's Seventeen

Maxime Boyer-Degoul, Université Libre de Bruxelles, France

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Abstract

This paper explores connections between a novel by Ôe Kenzaburo and a film by Wakamatsu Kôji through the way both of them reflect identity crisis within the Japan of the 1960s. In his 1960's (censored) novel, *Seventeen*, Ôe depicts a teenager who finds way to externalize his masturbatory urges through violence of an ultra-nationalist party. A Wakamatsu's film shares strong similarities with Ôe's novel: *Secrets Behind the Wall* (1965). Through a neighborhood spied under the eye of a teenager, Wakamatsu portrays same disoriented youth, postwar modernization's alienation and the connection between sexuality and repression, violence and political power. Both of these works. Accused of promoting a decadent picture of Japan within the period of new rebuilding and prosperity, Wakamatsu's *pinku eiga*'s works reached a political tone like Ôe's books such as *Hiroshima Notes*. The filmmaker's ultimate fate in 2012, the year of his last film focused on Mishima's last play, has some echo to Pier Paolo Pasolini's. Political fate. Both Ôe and Wakamatsu depict a slow but efficient fascism growing within the 1960s. With a society in which everyone appears being watched, sexuality seems to be the only subversive way of freedom but in the same time the reflection of repressive actions from politics.

Keywords: Japan, cinema, literature, Wakamatsu, Ôe, fascism

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The 1960s put an end to Japan postwar period and a beginning to the Japanese miracle that is a time of urban reconstruction and economic prosperity.

On one hand, there is some ideological discourses and pictures depicting this Japanese miracle. In that way, cinema delivered examples like in Ichikawa's movies. For instance, *Fires on the Plain* (1959) depicted the atrocities of war to promote Japanese pacifism while *Tôkyô Olympiad* (1965) used 1964's Olympics in Tôkyô to promote the prosperity of this Japan rebuilt through new urban landscapes. But in the same time, this rebuilding led to the erasure of entire popular neighborhoods considered as a shame for Japan's new international position.

In the other hand, and in response to the erase of the Japanese shame, some films are what Pierre Sorlin calls "counter-analysis"ⁱ. Many intellectuals were concerned by a heavy expectation of Japan on the way to a cultural death. Filmmakers such as Ôshima Nagisa, Teshigahara Hiroshi or Wakamatsu Kôji took part in this counter-analysis of the Japanese miracle through a counter-cinema. Such criticism provided by these filmmakers highlight the so-called Japanese miracle like a repressive system. The miracle is an ideology that Japanese authorities want to promote even at the cost of individuals' sanity and freedom. In that view, this ideology appears like a fascist system oppressing individuals and driving them to schizophrenia and violence. The obsession for perfection leads to denial of identity crisis that Japan tries to hide but eventually fails to.

In *Secrets Behind the Wall*, Wakamatsu depicts the normal and boring life of a Japanese neighborhood. A housewife cultivates an adultery with a friend she had known since her youth, a former militant for peace and against war. In the meanwhile, they are watched by a teenager spending his time to spy the residents of the neighborhood with a spyglass from his room rather than to prepare test for university.

In *Seventeen*, Ôe focuses on a teenager, who called himself "seventeen". He considers himself as an ugly and weak boy seeking for a purpose in life. But he can only express his frustration resulted from his personal failures through masturbatory and violent urges. Some urges he can let go when he joins an ultra-nationalist party and eventually commits in an infernal spiral.

I – Crisis of masculinity

Japanese postwar period led significant reforms about the status of the individual within the society. One of the most famous reform is the fall of patriarchal authority at the favor of egalitarianism and independence of women. That's what embodies a common figure that Wakamatsu's movie and Ôe's novel share: a teenager cultivating masturbation.

In both novel and movie, the character is confined to studies which are supposed to ensure a bright future. But promises of a bright future are perceived as promises of delusion. A feeling of isolation is felt like a state of sleep which leave the being empty of emotion and sensation. This feeling of isolation is emphasized through the *danchis*, this new type of residential building related to postwar period and rebuilding Japan in echo to the promotional of the new middle-class embodied by white-collar and black suit's *salaryman*.

Like Maurice Pinguet says, "overpopulated masses of concrete" match with despairⁱⁱ. *Danchis* reflect the Japanese society as a façade. A façade made of naked walls and surfaces which crystallize the existential anxiety of their residents such as the housewife and the teenager. Walls which isolate people instead of making them belong to a community. Isolde Standish provides same conclusion by associating *danchis* from Wakamatsu's movie to "sexual 'deviances' and male inadequacies". Both aspects also echo Ôe's teenager as this masculine

alienation is even more accentuated by others characteristics such as the “high pressure of education system, Hiroshima Bomb victims and the Anpo struggles”ⁱⁱⁱ.

In this time, Mishima criticized the fact that postwar Japan denied “all the values which once were worth dying for”. In that case, if there is nothing for everyone but life and if life itself reveals to be nothing, “how is it possible to avoid anxiety, scandal of absurd and despair?”^{iv}. That’s why, by banishing this value of sacrifice, Mishima perceives modernity as the hollowness of life and as the source of boring and rage.

In that way, the symbol of prosperity, the *salaryman*, embodies a world which makes people and men as well impotent, symbolizing the opposite model of the masculinity. In Wakamatsu’s movie, the housewife is deeply disappointed when she discovers that her lover makes money based on investments connected to the Vietnam war. In Ôe’s novel, same sort of character appears through a man the teenager despises for such reasons. In a postcard, this man says:

“I’ve finally managed to set aside 200,000 shares of stock. And already they are steadily increasing in value. I’m 24 now; by 25, I’ll be an assemblyman; by 30, a representative; by 35, a Minister”^v

Westernization and rise of Japanese modernity and urbanity isolate people from both identity and pride to confine them in what Pier Paolo Pasolini called “slow fascism”. Of course, there is a huge distance between Mishima and Pasolini but both of them are concerned by seeing their country fall in this type of fascism characterized, among other things, by consumerism.

In that way, Mishima found new meanings and ancestral values through the body that he builds himself. Through physical trainings matched on the way of samurai, he found a way to have Japanese masculinity back. He liked to expose himself in ambiguous and physical positions, such as Sebastian’s martyr, a samurai with a katana or wearing a *fundôshi*. But the true purpose of this corporality is not such a bodybuilding but its consecutive destruction. Because physical trainings have to serve an ultimate purpose, that is death. Consequently, physicality is not to be considered as the Japanese true spirit but as a way to reach it. It is truly significant that Wakamatsu dedicated his last film to Mishima’s last moments. Through his consecutive death, occurred the same year than his film’s release, he let, like Mishima as well as Pasolini did, a similar trace of himself as a martyr who paid with his life the price for talking too much about an enduring fascism.

Wakamatsu’s and Ôe’s common teenager is the victim of the rise of a new fascism, a barren society. Boring and rage are both aspects of the Wakamatsu’s and Ôe’s common teenager. The character perceives his condition as a confinement within a life with no meaning nor value which are worth dying for. In that way, Ôe’s character, that feeling of repression leads the character to join an ultra-nationalist group. Two reasons motivate his choice. First, to break this façade of hypocrisy. Second, to recover a masculine power. Because, like Mishima thought and like Pinguet says, the sense of self can only be found through the futures struggles^{vi}.

In the opposite way, Wakamatsu’s character doesn’t find new values and can only express his frustrations through violence against his sister and the housewife he’s spying. But eventually, that act of violence only means the failure of the teenager consequently stuck in a dead end.

II – Visions of fascism

As a matter of fact, in Wakamatsu's movie, teenager's voyeuristic position emphasizes his own loss of phallic and masculine power. But it is also a way to see beyond appearances and to make them collapse. Through his spyglass, the teenager unravels hypocrisy of such a façade like a mask claiming to be true.

The very first shot of Wakamatsu's film is an eye. Like the one opening Michael Powell's *Peeping Tom*. But in the case of Wakamatsu, the eye fulfills a more political role. The consecutive shots of *danchis*' walls and windows echo the vision of teenager's eye as a sort of panopticon watching neighbors like prisoners in their cells.

The opening is followed by the first scene of adultery in which the housewife and her former militant lover share intimate and sexual intercourses in front of a picture of Staline. Both icon of revolution and dictatorship, the portrait of Staline illustrates both idealism of the couple and the feeling of repression related to their situation. She is a former militant for peace and against war. He is a *hibakusha* survivor of the A-Bomb. In some way, he embodies the forgotten people, those who embody History itself that Japanese authorities want to forget in favor of economic prosperity related to this decade.

But beyond this melting of the bodies as a reflection of Japanese History, sexuality appears as an even more subversive protestation exposing this fascist system. His first release in the Festival of Berlin was consequently followed by protestations from Japanese authorities, talking of the film as a shame of Japanese cinema released at the eyes of the whole world.

Significant status of sexuality in a transgressive way have been highlighted by none other than Ôshima, who deeply admired Wakamatsu and who delivers with *In the Realm of the Senses* the most famous or maybe infamous example of sexuality in a way of transgression and contestation, exposing the Japanese authorities' contradictory position about censorship and obscenity. So, many years before such a movie, he said:

“In Japan as well as in the rest of the world, there is no doubt that the sexual mores tend, overall, to freedom, liberation. This freedom, this liberation are not directly connected to sexuality, but to what imposes limits to sexuality, that is norms of the State, of the Society, and the Family”^{vii}.

That's why this scene from Wakamatsu's movie makes sexuality so significant. Because, like Ôshima says, sexuality symbolizes freedom by contrast of its own restriction under the name of the norms dictated by the State, the Society, the Family. Through an act of adultery and under the panoptical sight of Staline as well as the spectator's, the couple deliberately defies these three institutions and their norms as well. The housewife, as well as the teenager himself, no longer believe in such norms.

Wakamatsu criticizes power through sexuality. In that way, this opposition is emphasized by the teenager and the housewife. If the housewife embodies sexuality as an act of freedom, the teenager both from Wakamatsu's movie and Ôe's novel embodies sexuality an almost complete opposite way. His sexuality is indeed always connected to violence. Like if as a consequence of repression of sexuality, the character is driven mad as he finds outlet only in violence.

At the end of the novel, the vision of a dead female student in a riot causes Ôe's character to enjoy an orgasmic feeling. A same situation occurs in Wakamatsu's movie when the teenager masturbates himself and ejaculates on a newspaper relating recent events of the Vietnam war. Wakamatsu's combination of violence and sexuality is especially emphasized towards the end of the movie. Firstly, he assaults his own sister and rapes her by using sausages and vegetables. Then, he goes to visit the housewife and blackmails her about her adultery in exchange for sexual intercourses. But when she willingly accepts to give herself to him, the teenager is somehow unable to accomplish the sexual act. Unable because when the time

comes, he loses his dominant position and is in turn dominated. He is now watched by the “object” he used to watch, symbolically castrated by the woman. Consequently, the teenager goes mad and mortally stabs her with a pair of scissors.

In both Wakamatsu’s film and Ôe’s novel, the teenager embodies violence of power. But in *Seventeen*, political connection is even more significant. Violence is taught to him through the actions of the political party and is consequently morally acceptable from his point of view. The young man is involved in violent riots because he feels a belonging to a group, a community. And no matter if he believes or if he doesn’t believe in their ideals because he finds a way to his repressed urges and in the same time a meaning of his actions as a good right. Because the urge of killing is common to the people who perceive the failure of a society based on a façade made of concrete and beneath which it wants to bury everything that norms dictate as “ashamed”.

Like Wakamatsu, Ôe’s story was affected by censorship as well for depicting same fascism in a frontal way. Originally, the novel was split in two parts. The first depicts the teenager and his joining in the ultraviolent group. The second one was supposed to show him killing a politician before committing suicide in jail. But this part of story was very similar to an actual incident occurred in 1960: the assassination of a politician man of socialist party, deadly stabbed by a student. Confronted to a certain level of threats, Ôe was forced to remove this last part.

In this context, the representatives of the crisis of masculinity are all weak. But they are also all guilty because ready to this game of massacre. So, in Wakamatsu’s movie as well as in Ôe’s novel, if the teenager appears like a victim of a postwar fascist system, he also embodies it. And in that way, both Wakamatsu and Ôe find a troubling echo to Pasolini who spent most of his life to criticize the “slow fascism” and “the great conservatives of a horrible order founded on possession and destruction” and who find peace by making drawers they can close immediately.^{viii}

Conclusion

The Japan of the 1960s highlights aspects of schizophrenia resulted from contradiction between the perfection of Japanese miracle’s picture and the underground crisis within. Westernization is perceived as a repression in favor of a fake perfection and happiness. In specific ways, Mishima and Wakamatsu denounced this new fascism and, like Pasolini, at the cost of their lives. After his last film dedicated to Mishima and before starting next project involving Tepco’s scandal, Wakamatsu is killed in an unsettling similar way than Pasolini was, that is run over by a car.

From the point of view intellectuals such as Mishima, Tanizaki, Hijikata, Japan was on the similar way that Pasolini perceived in his Italy: a cultural genocide same as those preceding physical genocide, which were already in some way embodied through, quoting both Imamura Shohei and Teshigahara Hiroshi, *ningen jôhatsu*, the evaporation of man.

Wakamatsu’s troubling death as a martyr let the feeling that such a system still endures in the contemporary Japan. Indeed, it still concerns intellectuals, artists and filmmakers such as Kurosawa Kiyoshi or Tsukamoto Shinya. Kurosawa is still concerned by similar feeling of evaporation of people echoing evaporation of values and stable existence. Tsukamoto focuses on the crisis of models resulted from this contradiction within Japanese identity. Recently, he delivered a second adaptation of Ôoka Shohei’s novel, *Fires on the Plain*. But there is a significant difference between Ichikawa’s film made in 1959 and Tsukamoto’s in 2014. In the context of the postwar period, such a movie like this one as well as the famous *The Harp of Burma*, contributed to promote this idealized pacifism but, to quote Catherine Russell, “cloaked in the rhetoric of nationalism, colonialism and cultural imperialism”^{ix}. In present

time, Tsukamoto's version highlights this hypocrisy by refusing to serve this pacifist purpose but on the contrary, depicting this pacifism as an illusion, a façade.

Tsukamoto doesn't serve any political role in any way. And he doesn't deny pacifism of Japanese people neither the atrocities of war. But in the middle of a trouble time resulted from the reform project of the Constitution of Japan – involving the reinterpretation and the modification of Article 9 related to the renouncement of any way of belligerency in favor of peace – he evokes the same contradiction of this pacifist façade that the novelist Murakami Haruki himself evoked many years before in a correspondence with his homonymous Ryû. The fact that Japan is the only country with a constitution rejecting war, but paradoxically, with an army, tanks and fighter planes. Such a contradiction leads contemporary intellectuals like Murakami and Tsukamoto to hope that they are not living in a disguised lie.



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New Media/New Films: Smartphones and Evocative Documentary Practices

Dean Keep, Swinburne University of Technology, Australia

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Abstract

Smartphones are part of a convergence culture that is reconfiguring our relationship with media and arguably shifting our understanding of documentary practices. Smartphones may now be understood as powerful enablers that provide users with the tools and resources necessary to capture and share mediated traces of the people and places that form part of our everyday habitus.

As smartphones proliferate our private and public spaces, it would appear that our relationship with media and personal computing is changing to fit the parameters of a networked digital world. The ubiquitous and pervasive nature of the smartphone arguably makes it well placed to produce a wide range of digital media content that can be edited and/or manipulated via a plethora of mobile applications then used in the production of digital stories that can be shared across online platforms and social networks.

In this paper the author puts forward a proposition that the smartphone is more than a dynamic networked media tool, rather it is a 'digital wunderkammer', a portable database to aid the storage and retrieval of captured moments that can be later used for the production of a wide range of documentary stories.

Using examples drawn from the author's creative practice, this research explores the idea that the smartphone is both production tool and memory site (Nora, 1989). Here I suggest that the smartphone may be utilized as an enabler for a poetic intervention, whereby the smartphone may be used to promote the production of factual stories that evoke notions of personal identity, memory and place.

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Introduction

Smartphones may be understood as a transformative new media technology that is changing the ways in which people communicate in a networked digital media environment. But smartphones are much more than communication tools, they are also sophisticated portable media devices that present opportunities to capture, share and edit the mediated traces of everyday life.

As smartphones with cameras proliferate our private and public spaces, it would appear that our relationship with film and photography is also shifting to fit the parameters of a digital world. According to Manovich (2001: p.xv), ‘cinematic ways of seeing the world, of structuring time, of narrating a story, of linking one experience to the next, have become the basic means by which computer users access and interact with all cultural data’.

The use of smartphones to create photographs and video content has become a routine practice as people go about the process of making and sharing the digital representations of the world around them. Unlike traditional film and photographic cameras, the smartphone requires no specialized skill and provides users with a simple means of creating high-resolution digital media content. But smartphone technology is arguably doing much more than simplifying image-making processes, smartphones are also changing our understanding of the ways that visual media can be used to construct, share and screen a wide range of personal narratives.

As observed by Germen (2014):

The omnipresence of smartphones as imaging devices has a strong impact on the fact that they encourage, help us to take photos in places, instances, settings, occasions we would not otherwise think of photographing (p. 307).

Whereas traditional film and photography is often defined by the technical and aesthetic conventions of the medium, it may be said that the smartphones due to their size, portability, and hybrid nature, promote a more informal and spontaneous approach to media production.. From self-portraits (selfies), images of travel, food, friends and family, the smartphone is ever at hand to capture the evidence of our personal experiences.

In a world of portable digital media devices, our streets are transformed into backdrops and/or settings in which to participate in a wide range of media production practices. The ubiquitous nature of mobile media means that we now arguably live in a panopticon where smartphones with cameras are ever present. As we move through the urban landscape, we often negotiate the gaze of the roving mobile eye as the people around us use smartphones and tablet computers to capture the ebb and flow of life on the streets. As observed by Kracauer (1960) “this flow casts its spell over the flaneur, or even creates him. The flaneur is intoxicated with life in the street” (p.72). With smartphone in hand, we are both ‘flaneur’ (Beaudrillard) and ‘phoneur’ (Luke) as we drift through private and public spaces using smartphones to capture the mediated traces of the people, places and events that shape our day-to-day lives.

As we learn to negotiate the technological challenges of an increasingly digitized and networked media space, it may be said that our relationship with media is shifting to meet the demands of an ever-changing new media ecology. As noted by Bruns (2006, p.271), “Media play an important part in shaping our consciousness and understanding of the world around us, as well as our place within it” and the smartphone has emerged as a powerful enabler whereby users are able to easily collect digital renderings of personal and collective experiences in the form of digital

media assets that can be stored within the device or disseminated across the networks. But smartphones are not just enablers for the production and sharing of visual media, they may also be perceived as a 'techno-cabinet of curiosities' in which we store, and sometimes treasure, the digital artefacts that connect us to significant moments.

In this paper I put forward a proposition that the smartphone is more than a dynamic networked media tool, rather it is a 'digital wunderkammer', an archive in which we can store and retrieve mediated moments that can be later used for the production of a wide range of non-fiction stories. Adopting Nora's (1989) 'Les Lieux de mémoire' (the site of memory) as a travelling concept, this research interrogates the role that smartphones play in the recording of personal experiences and how the media captured on our phones may be used to create digital stories that promote the revisiting of memories.

Smartphone: Digital Storytelling and Mediated Memories

The smartphone with its cameras and media production software can be used as a tool to capture the traces of personal experience in the form of photographs and video content. Like a digital scrapbook, the smartphone is perhaps the ultimate archiving tool; messages, website histories, social media apps and audio-visual material provide a record of our interactions in both physical and virtual spaces. Inside the digital heart of the smartphone we store tiny moments, audio-visual fragments of the world around us. But as we use smartphones to create personal histories or 'micro-biographies', we are not only engaging in media production practices, we are also building a library of memories.

In his essay 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire' Nora (1989, p.14) notes that "the imperative of our epoch is not only to keep everything, to preserve every indicator of memory-even when we are not sure which memory is being indicated -but also to produce archives" Nora (1989) goes on to say that:

the archive has become the deliberate and calculated secretion of lost memory. It adds to life - itself often a function of its own recording - a secondary memory, a prosthesis-memory" (p.14).

But is the digital content (text messages, photos and videos, etc) that we store on our smartphones simply a way of escaping the burden of memory, or might these digital artefacts help individuals to unlock a remembrance of the people, places and events that occupy the past? I suggest that the personal photographs and videos we capture on smartphones provide artists and filmmakers with an opportunity to create innovative modes of visual storytelling that highlight the tensions that exist between history and memory.

As we use smartphones to collect the traces the everyday, we are also engaging in auto-ethnographic practices. The photographs and videos that we take using smartphones arguably plays an important role in understanding our place within the world, both at the moment of capture and in the future.

Van Dijck (2007) observes that:

Media technologies are not just a method of building up a stockpile of personal memories, but their function is concurrently formative, directive and communicative. They enable the self to grow and mature, to give meaning and direction to one's past and present. (2007, p. 171)

A case in point is a concert I attended by U.K. band Goldfrapp, where a group of teenagers were running in and out of the theatre constantly filming each other on smartphones. To the people outside of this circle of friends it may have appeared that

these teenagers were disengaged from the musicians performing onstage, but I would argue that this group of teenagers were actively engaged in using smartphones to consciously curate and construct the media narratives that will inform their future memories of the event.

Could it be that the videos we capture on smartphones also invite an engagement with personal memories? Are smartphones memory sites to aid the storage and retrieval of personal memories? Nora (1989) suggests that 'sites of memory' are material, symbolic and functional and that even a purely material site such as an archive can become a 'lieux de memoire' "if the imagination invests it with a symbolic aura" (p.19). So with this statement in mind, I put forward a proposition that smartphones may be understood as 'lieux de memoire', an interactive archive in which where mediated moments await retrieval, to be played and re-played on the screen of the smartphone, shared across local and global networks or re-mixed and re-imagined as evocative narratives that extend our understanding of factual storytelling in a new media ecology.

Smartphones: Mediated moments and Documentary Practices

The Smartphone has arguably become a role model of technological convergence, whereby it seamlessly meshes the technology of the telephone with the language and tools of cinema and photography to create a portable networked media device that enables its users to become media content producers. Jenkins (2001, p.1) suggests that "we are entering an era where media will be everywhere, and we will use all kinds of media in relation to one another" to construct narratives that exploit the parameters of digital media devices and communication networks. The smartphone is a one-stop-shop for the planning, production and post-production of the media assets we capture throughout the day. Media content in the form of photos, videos and audio files captured on smartphones can now be easily manipulated and edited using a plethora of inexpensive or no-cost editing applications (apps) and visual effect filters that may be downloaded to the smartphone.

Digital technologies, and in particular the smartphone, are shaping our understanding of media and reconfiguring the ways we engage with media tools and digital artifacts, therefore presenting new ways to construct, distribute and experience stories. Wood (2007, p.48) suggests that digital technologies not only organize what we see and how it is seen, but they are also framing and expanding our understanding of narrative space.

On a daily basis we often engage in digital storytelling practices whereby we find ourselves using smartphones to produce digital videos of our interactions with the people that share our physical and networked spaces. According to the 'Forecast and Methodology, 2014-2019 White Paper' (Cisco, 2015, n.p.) global mobile data traffic is predicted to increase 10-fold between 2014-2019 as more and more people engage in the uploading and downloading of user generated media content via mobile devices. Whether it be capturing photographs or video of the profound through to the banal, these digital artefacts are central to an emergent storytelling culture that exploits the potential of portable digital media devices and communication networks for the purpose of creating and sharing mediated personal moments across the internet.

According to Keep and Berry (2009)

The portability and technical capabilities of mobile technologies significantly alters the user's relationship with media and creative practice, presenting new ways for film-makers to interpret and shape the ephemera of everyday experiences (p.6).

Smartphones provide users with an inexpensive means of engaging in media production practices that exploit the portable nature and connectivity of the mobile phone. Smartphones, not being a conventional video camera, invite experimentation as users mesh old and new media production techniques and strategies to push the creative parameters of both smartphone technology and storytelling. As noted by Schlessner, Wilson & Keep (2013) “As a media practice, mobile film-making opens up alternative means of film production and viewing, thus creating new modes of cinematic discourse (p.126). The smartphone arguably presents us with opportunities to liberate ourselves from the constraints and pre-occupations with traditional cinema, and in particular the documentary film genre.

Bill Nichols (2001) notes that, “every documentary has its own distinct voice” (p.99) and that like every speaking voice, cinematic voices carry their own unique fingerprint or signature. I would argue that due to the highly personal and intimate nature of smartphones, the images and video captured on these devices are also imbued with their own unique voice and style. Making digital media with smartphones may be understood as a spontaneous process, whereby individuals are engaged in the act of capturing fragments of lived experiences. With this in mind I embrace the term ‘evocative-documentary’ a way of describing non-fiction narratives that do not easily fit within the parameters of the documentary genre but involve aspects of auto-ethnographic practices. For me, the term ‘evocative-documentary’ invites a poetic turn, whereby I find myself asking, not what is a documentary is, but rather what a documentary might be in an age of the smartphone. In the next section of this article I will refer to examples drawn from my creative practice to highlight the ways that smartphones may be used to extend our understanding of digital storytelling, personal memory and documentary genres. Since 2005 I have been using a variety of mobile phones with built-in cameras as a tool to aid the production of photographs and video works that interrogate the relationship between portable media technology and personal forms of digital storytelling. From the considered construction of a photographic archive documenting my recovery from open-heart surgery between 2006-2007, through to the creation of video works that repurpose the moving images captured on my phone to explore notions of personal memory, these works exploit the technical parameters, reflexive nature, and the potential offered by mobile media to create evocative forms of documentary storytelling. Below are two examples of documentary projects made by the author using smartphone technology.

Example 1: Memory Cathedral (2011)



Figure 1: ‘Memory Cathedral’ (2011) production still, Dean Keep.

In the case of the single channel looped video projection ‘Memory Cathedral’ (2011), the smartphone was used as a means to create a collection of short duration videos capturing the flow of daily life in the city of Melbourne, Australia. ‘Memory Cathedral’ adopts the visual metaphor of the stained glass window to make reference to the profound nature of the routines and rituals performed by individuals in day-to-life. Using experimental approaches to montage, such as those pioneered by Russian documentary filmmaker Dziga Vertov, this project asks that viewers impose their own interpretation of the myriad of videos drawn from real life events. As viewers navigate from frame to frame, they are required to impose their own narrative structures on the videos embedded within the arched window.

Rather than present the videos in a linear format, all videos play simultaneously in order to promote a multiple readings and sequencing of the visual information. The result is a mix of stories, observations and documentation that form both singular and parallel narratives within the luminous panes of this documentary storytelling experiment.

Example 2: Decombres (2014)**Figure 2: “Decombres’ (2014) production still, Dean Keep.**

In the case of Decombres (2014), the aim of this project was to repurpose and construct a digital story using existing video and text messages stored on my smartphone. In Decombres, it’s title aptly taken from the French word for rubble, the project adopts bricolage techniques as a production methodology. Working only with digital artifacts stored on my smartphone, video footage from a long forgotten train trip to a country town and remnants of text messages form a series of conversations with a friend over the past 5 years were used as source material to construct an experimental documentary narrative.

Decombres appropriates the digital debris of captured moments whilst arguably auto-biographical accounts of the author. Decombres is drawn from my memories of the people and places I would see as a child when my family and I travelled by car to visit my Grandmother. The landscape featured in the video now seems unfamiliar to me, and it drifts past the train window, I am increasingly aware of the construction of a liminal space where my remembrance of the past is folded over the present to create and entanglement of history and memory. Decombres is arguably an example of an evocative documentary project that meshes factual storytelling, biography and smartphone technology to extend the definition of the documentary genre.

Projects such as Memory Cathedral (2011) and Decombres (2014) may be viewed as

examples of the ways in which smartphone technologies may be harnessed to capture and preserve the ephemera of the everyday.

Conclusion

The Smartphone has emerged as an important media device in an era dominated by convergence cultures and networked media technologies. Smartphones with cameras instigate new screen cultures and production practices whereby individuals use smartphones to capture and share personal stories in the form of photographs and videos that can be stored inside the phone or shared with others via dedicated online media platforms (YouTube, Vimeo, Flickr) and/or social media applications (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter).

The ubiquitous smartphone, being relatively cheap and accessible, presents opportunities for individuals to engage in a wide range of media production practices and recording the traces of our personal experiences and observations has become an important form of personal expression in the 'new media ecology'. The intimate nature of the smartphone, being a device that is generally not shared and kept close to the body, means that it is almost always close to hand and ready to capture events as they occur.

As we capture the traces of our lives using smartphones, we are creating expansive digital archives in which to store media assets related to our personal histories and memories. This media may be used to aid the production of innovative narrative forms that remix and refashion documentary practices. Smartphone technology is arguably changing our relationship with media and reconfiguring our understanding of documentary narratives and production practices, and in doing so providing valuable opportunities for personal expression.

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Contact email: dkeep@swin.edu.au

Communication of Anti-Violence and Anti-Vengeance Themes in Revenge Films

Alan Nguyen, Melbourne Polytechnic & Griffith University, Australia

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Abstract

Narrative film is potentially a powerful means to reflect, reinforce or alter attitudes within society. In Asia, popular martial arts films frequently depict acts of violent vengeance as arising from a sense of duty, honour, or justice. As for the West, Simkin (2006) points out that while many revenge films of the 1970s and of the post-September-11 era portray vengeance as heroic acts of justice, earlier revenge tragedy narratives of Elizabethan theatre tended to provide a more complex and critical treatment of vengeance.

Given the prevalent use of violence to achieve catharsis in films of this genre, it is of interest to enquire how themes of anti-violence and anti-vengeance can successfully be communicated in such films. This presentation will examine various narrative and filmic techniques that have been used in support of, or against, the notion of violent vengeance as a means of obtaining justice.

Examples will be drawn from classic films, as well as from *Firebird*, a science-fiction revenge film written and directed by the author-presenter. Techniques to be discussed include: (1) othering of the enemy vs. sympathetic portrayal of the enemy, (2) presence or non-presence of the enemy's perspective, (3) exhilarating/ stylised vs. horrific/ realistic depictions of death and violence, (4) revenger-protagonist as hero, anti-hero or as villain, (5) portraying psychological consequences for the revenger, (6) misdirected acts of vengeance against an innocent, (7) quelling of violence vs. an escalation of violence and (8) triumphant ending vs. tragic ending.

Keywords: revenge, film, cinema, vengeance, othering, violence, anti-violence, anti-vengeance, anti-revenge, *Firebird*, revenge film

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Introduction

Vengeance has served as a central theme in many films throughout cinematic history - an example from early cinema being D. W. Griffith's silent film *Broken Blossoms* (US, 1918) in which a Chinese Buddhist man ultimately kills the abusive father of the murdered American woman that he cared for and adored. The theme of vengeance in film can be seen as a continuation of revenge as a longstanding narrative trope in religious, folk, literature and theatre traditions (Kuhn & Westwell, 2012).

While vengeance is a recurring theme within many films, the term 'revenge film' may be used to describe films specifically in which the pursuit and/or enactment of vengeance is the driving force or at the core of the narrative.

Revenge films cannot be neatly classified as a genre unto themselves, but span across multiple genres. Revenge films may take the form of thrillers, action films, westerns, samurai films, horror films, kung fu films, blaxploitation films, melodramas, film noir and heist films.

Pairing vengeance and justice: a comparison of various eras of revenge narrative.

This paper is concerned with the communication of messages and themes in revenge films that are pro-vengeance or anti-vengeance. Throughout the text, the term 'pro-vengeance' will be used in describing films, or aspects of films, that portray violent vengeance in an approving or sympathetic manner, as an effective means of obtaining justice. The term 'anti-vengeance' will be used in describing films, or aspects of films, that portray violent vengeance in a disapproving, non-approving, or ambivalent critical manner. Before discussion turns to specific film techniques that are used in support of these messages, I will provide a brief comparison of different eras of revenge narratives with regard to trends of pro-vengeance and anti-vengeance themes.

It has been noted earlier in this paper that film revenge narratives may be seen as a continuation of the narrative trope of revenge in religious, folk, literature and theatre traditions. Revenge narratives of the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras are of particular interest in this discussion, in that they often serve anti-vengeance themes, which contrasts with many eras of revenge narrative in cinema. While this paper is concerned primarily with revenge films, references will be made to this period of revenge narrative as it provides potent examples of how anti-vengeance techniques may operate. Prosser states:

Elizabethan moralists condemned revenge as illegal, blasphemous, immoral, irrational, unnatural and unhealthy – not to mention unsafe (1971,8).

In contrast to this, vigilante films of the 1970's often portrayed revenge as an effective and heroic means of obtaining justice. Theorists, including Simkin, posit that the presence of pro-revenge themes in films such as *Joe* (1970) and the *Death Wish* and *Dirty Harry* film series were indicative of rising right-wing backlash against the liberal social and political climate of the 1960's and 70's (Simkin, 2006).

Revenge films were also prominent in the 2000's. At the beginning of May 2004, three out of the four films at the top of the US box office were revenge films: *Man on Fire*, *Kill Bill Vol. 2* and *The Punisher* (Simkin, 2006). It is notable that all three of these films feature pro-vengeance themes. The popularity of pro-vengeance revenge films in the 2000's could be attributed to a cultural desire for revenge in the wake of the September 11 attacks in the US.

While much of contemporary revenge films are pro-vengeance in theme, there are notable exceptions. Simkin states:

[A] number of the [revenge films] challenge, disrupt, or attempt to subvert the concept of natural, or 'poetic' justice, and it is at these moments that the genre ignites some of its most potent and provocative flashpoints" (2006, p. 23-24).

As a theorist and filmmaker, I have a particular interest in revenge films that provide complex or critical portrayals of vengeance. It may be of use to fellow theorists and filmmakers to examine alternatives to the pro-vengeance revenge film, what forms these alternatives take, and how they may operate. Discussion will now turn to specific techniques used in film in support of either pro or anti-vengeance themes.

Key techniques used

This next section will identify and discuss several narrative and filmic techniques that portray the use of vengeance and violence as a means of obtaining justice in either supportive or in critical ways. In discussion of the techniques, examples will be drawn from popular films. References will also be made to *Firebird*, a short science fiction film written and directed by the author.

1. Establishing the justification for vengeance

One technique used in revenge films, in service of both pro-vengeance and anti-vengeance themes, is to establish the justification for vengeance. In a majority of revenge films, the protagonist is the revenger. The characters of Paul Kersey in *Death Wish* (1974), The Bride in *Kill Bill Volume 1* (2003) and *Kill Bill Volume 2* (2004) and Avner Kaufman in *Munich* (2005) are the revenger-protagonists of their respective films. South Korean film *Oldboy* (2005) is an interesting and somewhat rarer case, as the protagonist, Oh Dae-su, as well as the antagonist, Lee Woo-jin, are motivated and driven by revenge.

To get the audience emotionally invested in the actions of the protagonist for the film's duration, films are often designed to get the audience 'onside' with the protagonist and their goal – in the case of revenge films, with the goal of vengeance. In order to achieve this, early on in the narrative, a revenge film will very often depict a terrible injustice or act of violence that inflicts the protagonist directly (as in 1967's *Point Blank*, 2003's *Oldboy* and *Kill Bill Volume 1*) or people who are close to the protagonist (as in 1974's *Death Wish* and 2013's *Prisoners*). In some cases, the initial violence affects a victim or victims not directly connected to the protagonist but who call upon the protagonist to exact vengeance on their behalf (as in 1992's *Unforgiven*, 2005's *Munich* and 2010's *13 Assassins*).

In the case of pro-vengeance revenge films, this early justification may allow the audience to enjoy the acts of violence that are later inflicted in the name of vengeance. Simkin (2006) states that:

More often than not, the revenge narrative establishes the revenger as a figure so profoundly wronged that the audience is coerced into feelings of sympathy and understanding that it will often find impossible to resist... Frank Castle in *The Punisher* (2004), Sean Vetter in *A Man Apart* (2003) and Paul Kersey in *Death Wish* (1974) suffer brutal assaults upon, or the slaughter of, their wives and children... In such instances, the audience is invited to relish, within safe, fictional boundaries, the acts of vengeance (p. 23).

Simkin goes on to note that certain film reviews of Tony Scott's *Man on Fire* (2004) reported that audiences cheered and applauded during the protagonist's extreme acts of violent vengeance.

Occasionally, the justification for vengeance or original harm is not only depicted at the beginning of the film, but through the use of editing, later on in the film (eg. as a flashback from the character) right before an act of violent vengeance. In *Django Unchained* (2012), writer-director Quentin Tarantino introduces the character of Django without depicting the original harm at the beginning of the film. However, due to the nature of the character (a slave in America's deep south) audiences are conscious of a past where the character has endured abuse. Specific depictions of abuse (eg. his wife Broomhilda being whipped by slave-owners while Django begs for mercy) are later included in the film, edited right next to the violent retribution upon the slave-owners.

In the case of Quentin Tarantino revenge films *Inglourious Basterds* (2009) and *Django Unchained* (2012), the depictions of violence are perhaps intended to be enjoyed, not only because the acts are justified by what the protagonist has endured onscreen, but because of what the targets of vengeance mean to an audience historically. In the case of *Django Unchained*, audiences can revel in characters being shot and killed, because they are slave owners existing in a more racist period in American history. As an audience of *Inglourious Basterds*, we see characters being scalped, shot apart and burned alive, and have cause to feel justified in enjoying ourselves because they are Nazis. In these cases, the justification for vengeance comes from a shared understanding and emotional position on history, as well as the narrative events depicted in the film.

In films that portray vengeance in more complex or critical ways, it seems similarly important to depict a justification for the vengeance. *Unforgiven* (1992) and *Prisoners* (2013) provide critical depictions of vengeance. However, the reasons for the goal vengeance are just as compelling. In *Unforgiven* (1992) a sex worker is slashed multiple times on her face by a violent customer. In *Prisoners* (2013) we follow the journey of parents whose children go missing. There is clear evidence (presented to Hugh Jackman's character Keller Dover, as well as the audience) that a loner, Alex Jones, is the culprit. The fact that the audience is emotional invested in the goal of vengeance, not only keeps the audience engaged, but creates an

opportunity to have them question their own beliefs or emotional responses to injustice, once the narrative depicts problems that arise in the pursuit or enactment of vengeance.

In the first scene of *Firebird*, Liam, the main character of the film, is told that his brother has been killed in a fight with a rival gang 'The Firebirds'. We see the emotional impact that it has on the protagonist. Through the use of a POV (Point-of-view) shot that becomes increasingly blurred, audiences are invited to take the subjective perspective of a character undergoing disassociation upon hearing tragic news. This scene is designed to create an emotional connection with the main character and his motivation and actions for the rest of the film.

2 Portrayal of enemy-targets

2.1 Othering vs. sympathetic/ humanistic portrayal

Another technique used in pro-vengeance revenge films is to *other* the enemy-target characters. By depicting enemy-targets of the revenger-protagonist as being fundamentally different in nature to the protagonist and of the audience, the depictions of violent vengeance become easier to enjoy.

In his book *Film and Morality* (2012), Gillett discusses depictions of war in film and media and its influence on society during times of war. He states:

Killing the enemy becomes easier if their humanity is played down, which was the rationale for caricatures of German soldiers bayoneting babies which appeared in the British press and on screens during the First World War (2012, p. 59).

Simkin discusses how the depiction of enemies that are foreign to the protagonist (and perhaps to the primary audience) is significant:

It is also worth noting the South American setting for *Man on Fire...* The villains are corrupt, brutal and barbaric non-Americans, and the casting of Dakota Fanning as the abducted girl suggests the film's sub-text is about the threat to the all-American representative by kidnapers as swarthy, filthy and ruthless as the imagined al-Qaeda terrorist (2006, p. 86-87).

In *Harry Brown* (2009), enemy-targets of the titular character (played by Michael Caine) are drug addicts, criminals and gang members. The audience has no insight into their lives apart from the vile behaviour they display. They are depicted as being fundamentally different to the main character and with little humanity. In a scene where Harry purchases a gun from some young men, we see them taking drugs in three different ways (snorting lines of powder, injecting liquid into their toes and smoking methamphetamine from a gun chamber) all in the space of a couple of minutes, during the gun deal. Their quarters are bathed in a sickly-yellow light. Deep tones in the sound design contribute to a feeling of dread and unease. When one of the gun dealers scratches himself, the foley-sound is accentuated. All these elements contribute to a sense of disgust for the young criminals. Harry later shoots them.

Harry Brown can be seen as a modern descendent in a line of revenge-vigilante films, where a white man exacts vengeance on not only the people who he believes hurt his loved one/s, but all criminal elements in the community. *Death Wish* (1974) is an earlier example of the urban-vigilante revenge film and will be discussed in a later section.

In contrast, anti-vengeance films portray the targets of vengeance as being not incredibly dissimilar from the protagonist. By depicting enemy-targets as rounded characters with humanity, an uncomfortable tension may be created through depictions of violent vengeance. Through this tension, the morality of vengeance may be questioned.

In Spielberg's *Munich* (2005), we see brief glimpses into the lives of the characters targeted by Avner Kaufman (played by Eric Bana) and his team of revengers. In these moments we see that the enemy-targets are relatively normal people with personalities, interests and families that are separate from villainy and evil deeds. At the scene of his assassination, the first enemy-target Wael Zwaiter is seen conducting a reading from a book of Arabic poetry he has translated into Italian. The second enemy-target Mahmoud Hamshari is depicted in a scene with his wife and young daughter in their family home. The third enemy-target Hussein Al Bashir strikes up a friendly conversation with his unbeknownst-to-him assassin-revenger.

2.2 Representation of enemy perspective

Connected to a more sympathetic portrayal of the enemy-target, is the portrayal of the enemy-target's perspective. This goes one step further than simply depicting enemy-targets as humanistic characters - time is allocated within the film's duration to explore the point-of-view of the enemy-target.

Director Sam Raimi's *Spider-Man 3* (2007) explores the perspective of protagonist Spiderman's enemy-target, Flint Marko (aka 'Sandman') - the murderer of his Uncle. Towards the end of the film, Flint tells Spiderman that the shooting was accidental and that the incident has haunted him ever since. We see images of the event and aftermath from his perspective. Spiderman, once vowing revenge, forgives him.

3 Portrayal of protagonist-revenger

3.1 Hero, antihero or villain

Whether the revenger-protagonist is portrayed as the hero, anti-hero or villain of a story can greatly affect the degree of pro-vengeance or anti-vengeance themes in a revenge film. An audience may be more willing to sympathise with the actions of a revenger-protagonist who is portrayed as hero or anti-hero, thus supporting pro-vengeance themes. If a revenger-protagonist is portrayed as a villain and their actions judged unsympathetically, this may serve an anti-vengeance theme.

Contrasting with early modern revenge theatre works, in contemporary cinema, it is rare for the protagonist to be portrayed as a villain. The character of The Bride in *Kill Bill Volume 1* and *Kill Bill Volume 2* is a hero seeking vengeance for the violence

inflicted upon her. When The Bride kills one of her enemy-targets, justice has been served.

With films featuring an anti-hero as the protagonist, an audience may recognize significant flaws within the character, but nevertheless may sympathize with them and their goal. In this scenario, an audience is given opportunity to enjoy cathartic moments viewing depictions of violent vengeance, whilst intellectually judging the anti-hero protagonist for committing acts of questionable morality. Simkin states:

The protracted, graphic display of the plotting and enactment of revenge allows the audience a space in which they may indulge their own frustrations and fantasies, while allowing them to endorse the orthodox abhorrence of such base drives and emotions in the real world (2006, p. 23).

3.2 Portraying psychological consequences of vengeance

Portraying negative psychological consequences for a character who has committed, or is in the process of committing vengeance, is an element that can support an anti-revenge theme or message. Simkin discusses this technique in early modern theatre:

The revenger protagonist's tragic journey often involves a gradual descent into moral confusion and mental disorder" (2006, p. 70).

Examples of similar techniques are present in contemporary cinema. In *Munich*, over the course of the film, the revenger-protagonist Kaufman appears to become increasingly psychologically disturbed. In one scene, Kaufman, unable to sleep, flips his bed mattress over, slashes it apart, and takes apart the room's phone. While these actions may be a direct consequence of the character's paranoia of retaliation against him, it is significant that the places he checks (a bed and a phone) were the very places that Kaufman and his team used for bomb-activation in their own violent acts. At the beginning of the film, Kaufmann is a calm, steady man, by the end of the film, he is shaking and sweating as he makes love with his wife - images of violence playing in his mind.

In contrast to this, pro-vengeance films often omit psychological effects of committing violent acts of retribution, with a lack of emotion being paired with psychological strength. When psychological effects are depicted, it may be early on the in course of the protagonist-revenger's character journey that they free themselves of - as if gaining strength in their revenger role.

After the revenger-protagonist Paul Kersey's first acts against a mugger in *Death Wish* - hitting a mugger with a bag of coins - he is depicted physically shaking. After his first killing of a mugger, he goes home and vomits in his bathroom toilet. With future killings, Kersey appears dispassionate and acts without hesitation.

It is interesting to note that an inexpressive persona has been identified as a core aspect of heroes of Westerns (Mitchell, 2001), a film genre heavily populated by revenge films. This same stoicism and lack of emotion (even after committing acts of violence) can be seen in revenger characters from other genres (eg. the titular

character in the *Batman* franchise) and is perhaps necessary for the ‘no mercy’ stance that many revenger characters adopt.

4. Depictions of violence

4.1 Stylised/ Exhilarating vs. Realistic/ Horrific Depictions of Violence

Another aspect of revenge films that can be used in service of pro-vengeance or anti-vengeance themes, is the nature of its depictions of violence. Stylised and exhilarating depictions of violence, where the violence takes the form of acts of vengeance by the protagonist, are often used in service of pro-violence and pro-vengeance themes. Realistic and horrific depictions of violence, can be used in service of anti-violence and anti-vengeance themes.

It can be difficult to assess the nature of depictions of violence in cinema, as one sequence experienced as exhilarating to one audience member, may be deemed horrific by another. Nevertheless, by looking at the structure of a film, the techniques used, and the content of the depictions, we may make educated guesses as to the intended effect upon the audience: either to provide audiences with an exhilarating and enjoyable experience or to reveal the horror of violence and its consequences.

With regards to the nature of the depictions of violence, we may have two related dichotomies:) 1) realistic or stylised depictions (whereby the stylisation may draw from prior representations of violence); and 2) depictions designed with the intent of eliciting an exhilarating or horrific reaction from the audience.

Depictions of violence are often stylised in film, where the depictions form a core part of the entertainment of a film. Examples of this can be found in kung fu films and other action films. Slocum argues that where realistic representations may provoke thought in audience, stylised representations do nothing to challenge audience’s prior assumptions. He states:

More routine examples of violence in contemporary horror and action films merely rework and recirculate self-consciously spectacular images that tend to affirm, in their familiarity, the conservative status quo (2001, p. 21).

Slocum argues that in a postmodern age where film representations of violence draw from prior cinematic influences rather than from reality, that films exist as purely as entertainment for consumption, with meaning and provocations of thoughts to the real world stripped away.

As discussed earlier, an audience may sympathise with a protagonist’s goal to enact vengeance. When the revenger commits acts of violence that are depicted in an exhilarating, dynamic or stylised manner, the audience may experience catharsis and enjoy the sequence of sound and image. *Kill Bill Volume 1*, drawing from various genres of martial arts film, is filled with action sequences where the violence is stylised, spectacular and at the heart of the entertainment experience. In some cases, violent acts committed by the revenger-protagonist are portrayed as skillful, ingenious

and even artistic, further allowing the audience to appreciate the depictions of violence.

If the violent acts are depicted as horrific, this may serve anti-vengeance themes or messages. An audience watches a depiction of violence, witnesses the ugliness of it and may feel discomfort. The discomfort may influence an audience's attitudes regarding the use of violent vengeance as a tool for justice.

In *Prisoners*, the character Keller Dover (played by Hugh Jackman) abducts and imprisons a mentally disabled man he suspects of kidnapping his daughter. He sets about torturing the man: beating him and scalding him with hot water - occasionally asking his close friend, Franklin, for assistance. The editing is not rapid and the camera angles are not dynamic. Rather, the action is shot in wide, unflinching shots, allowing the acts to unfold for the audience's gaze and judgment. The after-effects of the violence are seen and heard. Monstrous swelling affects the man's face, such that he can barely open his eyes. There are sounds of the man howling with pain as he is scalded. As an audience, we not only witness the ugliness of these acts, but other character's reactions to them. Dover's wife and another couple share the same motivation (they all have missing daughters) but they are shown to be profoundly disturbed by Dover's acts of torture.

4.2 Misdirected acts of vengeance against innocents

Another technique that can be used in service of anti-vengeance themes is the inclusion of acts of vengeance misdirected at innocent parties.

In *Munich*, the adolescent daughter of the revenger-team's second target, narrowly misses being blown apart by the group's bomb. When the young girl answers the telephone (inside which a bomb has been planted), the members of the revenger team scramble to call the detonation off. As members of the revenger team scramble, music and diegetic sound fall away to intensify the moments. Images of the revenger team members running are intercut with close-up shots of the detonation device being primed for use. Tension is created as an innocent party comes close to being harmed as a result of violent vengeance. Even though the girl is ultimately not killed, a scenario is presented whereby an act of vengeance may result in the harming of an innocent.

In *Prisoners*, the aforementioned mentally disabled man, Alex Jones (played by Paul Dano) is tortured by Kelly Dover. Later in the chronology of the film, it is revealed that another party (Alex Jones' "Aunt" Holly) was guilty of the crimes and that Alex was actually a former victim of Holly - now mentally damaged from the incident. Dover's acts of torture are even more horrific, considering they have been inflicted upon an innocent man.

In *Unforgiven*, the audience is also aware of a young man (Davey Boy)'s relative innocence in the original harm. The revenger-protagonists, lacking the insight that the audience possesses, shoot the young man.

If the aim of committing acts of violence is to gain justice, than filmic depictions such as these provide audiences with scenarios where violent vengeance does not only fail in gaining justice, but can create further injustice.

5. Consequences and ending

5.1 Quelling vs. escalating violence

In pro-vengeance film, the successful execution of vengeance may be depicted as quelling violence. In 2009's *Harry Brown*, the elderly revenger's acts of retribution and vigilantism, serve to reduce violence, creating an environment of relative peace. At the beginning of the film, the tunnel underneath Harry's apartment was overrun by a gang of violent youths. Harry watches from his window as the gang intimidate and harass people. The same youths were responsible for his close friend's murder. At the end of the film, Harry is able to walk along the tunnel unencumbered – he has reclaimed what is his. In the film, the one tunnel serves as a symbol for space and power in England – as a battleground between older, conservative values and what may be seen as morally wayward youth.

In contrast to this, anti-vengeance films may portray an escalation of violence through the pursuit of vengeance. *The Prestige* (2006) shows a continuous back-and-forth cycle of revenge between two rival magicians. After Angier (played by Hugh Jackman) blames Borden (played by Christian Bale) for the drowning of his wife in a magic trick accident, he attempts to shoot and kill Borden, shooting off two of his fingers. Borden retaliates during a public performance of Angier's, ruining his performance and reputation, killing a bird and maiming an audience member in the process. The acts of vengeance continue, causing significant harm to one another and to themselves.

In *Firebird*, the cyclical nature of revenge and further retaliation is depicted throughout. In the Goats' lounge-room, Liam speaks of how plans for vengeance against Atum and the Firebirds gang have resulted in the death of Goats members. He, however, has a plan that he believes once and for all, can put a stop to this cycle.

5.2 Triumphant vs. tragic ending

Contemporary film narratives often end with the protagonist succeeding in realizing their goal. Revenge films that use this form may depict a revenger-protagonist succeeding in their goal of vengeance, with a sense of justice being restored, and pro-vengeance themes supported. Tragedies, while less common in contemporary cinema, may support alternative themes. The structure of a tragedy can work to demonstrate to an audience the error of a character's ways or their attitude, functioning as a warning: if one were to follow this path (eg. revenge), then it will end tragically.

While the form of the traditional tragedy may be less common in contemporary cinema, tragic endings occasionally occur. In *Boyz in the Hood*, a series of onscreen text passages overlay the closing images of the film. We learn that Doughboy is killed two weeks later. However, a purely tragic ending has been avoided. The main protagonist, Tre, is rattled by the events contained in the film, but is perhaps a

stronger, more developed and wiser person by the film's end. The onscreen text reveals that he goes to attend college, as does his girlfriend.

Firebird ends in tragedy. The main protagonist, Liam, attempts to kill Atum, but is instead stabbed by Atum in act of self-defence and reflex. Not only is our hero killed, but the wiser, now peaceful mentor has (at least momentarily) returned to a violent state in the face of impending vengeance.

Conclusion

While pro-violence and pro-vengeance themes may often be supported in revenge films, examples of films that provide complex and even critical portrayals of vengeance are present in cinema, such as the examples discussed in this paper: *Boyz in the Hood* (1991), *Unforgiven* (1992), *Munich* (2005), *The Prestige* (2006), *Prisoners* (2013) and the author's own *Firebird* (2015). Techniques used to support anti-vengeance themes include: 1) sympathetic/ humanistic portrayal of enemy-targets, 2) representation of enemy perspective, 3) portrayal of revenger-protagonist as villain (although this is rare in contemporary cinema), 4) portrayal of the psychological consequences of vengeance, 5) realistic/ horrific depictions of violence, 6) portrayal of misdirected acts of vengeance against innocents, 7) portrayal of acts of vengeance as escalating violence and 8) a tragic ending.

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Contact email: nguyen.alanATgmail.com

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Japan 460-0008
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