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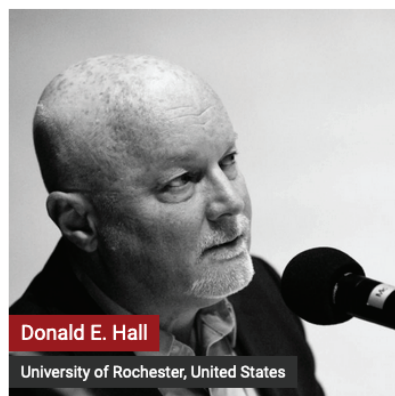
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The Reimagined Migrant Portrait – Exploring the Lives of Chinese and Taiwanese Minorities Living in South Africa

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Abstract

This multimedia project explores the lives of Chinese and Taiwanese migrants living in South Africa and how language, culture, community and marginalisation have come to shape their identities and to visually represent them in a way that is not prevalent in mainstream media. It uses two visual mediums – photography and video interviews – to understand these migrants' experiences, how they perceive themselves and how they think society perceives them. Data analysis consisted of a process of coding the video interviews and structural analysis of the visuals. Rising worldwide migration has simultaneously increased the spread of diasporic communities. China's positionality as an economic powerhouse and the influx of East Asian migrants to South Africa in recent years has shone a light on this minority population group. However, much of what is known about them tends to be through forms of mass media which perpetuates stereotypical representations. This paper draws on various literature including acculturation, diasporic communities, representation, languaging and xenophobia to explore the lives of East Asian migrants living in South Africa and search for more empowered forms of representation.

Keywords: Migration, East Asian, Diasporic Communities, Identity, Language, Documentary Photography

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Introduction

The number of international migrants has rapidly increased particularly in recent years and by 2017, there was an estimate of around 258 million migrants worldwide – up from 173 million in 2000 (United Nations, 2017). To date, South Africa has the largest number of international migrants in Africa and recent decades have seen an increase in the population of East Asian migrants. The Chinese population in particular has seen an increase. About 250 000 – 350 000 Chinese people now live in South Africa, however there is no official figure of the estimate of Chinese in South Africa due to factors such as corruption and poor record-keeping at Home Affairs and an increase in illegal migrants (Park, 2009). On a smaller scale, other East Asian immigrant populations in South Africa include Taiwanese, South Korean, Hong Kong and Japanese. The recent influx of Chinese migrants to South Africa is in tandem with China's rapid rise and increasingly dominant position in the world, and its established relations with various countries.

South Africa is the only country in Africa that is home to three distinct communities of Chinese; the local Chinese, the Taiwanese and Hong Kong industrialists and the new wave of migrants from PRC (Park & Rugunanan, 2010). There are also smaller groups of other East Asian ethnicities living in South Africa. From the 1970s, South Africa established relations with Taiwan which led to the influx of Taiwanese industrialists. Small numbers of Taiwanese industrialists started arriving in South Africa, motivated by incentives offered by the South African government such as covering costs for relocation, subsidising wages and rent among others. At its height, there were approximately between 30 000 and 40 000 Taiwanese industrialists in South Africa (Wilhelm, 2006). Many of the immigrants started up small businesses across South Africa, oftentimes in small towns. Huynh et al., (2010) points out that the immigration of the Taiwanese to South Africa was not a “permanent uni-directional migration” and that many migrants were largely taking advantage of the incentive scheme and indeed by the early 1990s, the Taiwanese population had started decreasing – with many returning to Taiwan or relocating to other Western countries due to concerns such as family and security. This was further perpetuated by South Africa's official recognition of China in 1996 and cutting ties with Taiwan. Today, there are about 6 000 Taiwanese immigrants left in South Africa and the number continues to decrease, whereas there is a steady rise in Chinese immigrants settling in the country.

It is against this backdrop that this multimedia project explores the lives of Chinese and Taiwanese migrants living in South Africa and how language, community, marginalisation/xenophobia have come to shape their identities and to represent them visually in a way that is not prevalent in mainstream media. The goal is to promote a deeper understanding of these ethnic groups located within the larger landscape of the country, provide a more representative lens into their lives and reflect upon their positionalities in South Africa. Thus, it will use two visual mediums – photography and video interviews – to explore how these migrants perceive themselves and how they think society perceives them.

Literature Review

Diasporic communities

Although migration from the East to the West can be traced back to the 19th century, the bulk of this international migration has occurred in recent decades. Several international studies have researched the movement and of East Asian migrants to Western countries. In a study

carried out amongst Taiwanese and Hong Kong migrants in Australia, it was found that these first generation young migrants were provided with an international Western education as a means of enhancing their social standing (Chiang and Yang, 2008). Although they experienced many challenges such as language, relationships, familial bonds and adjusting to school and workplaces, they would tend to accept the traditional ways of their culture of origin (Chiang & Yang, 2008). Furthermore, the authors point out that many of them identify as “Taiwanese” and the minority perceive themselves as “possessing a hyphenated identity” and less “Australian”. Another study looked at the lives of Taiwanese migrants in Vancouver, Canada which attracted migrants due to family ties and the thriving Taiwanese and Chinese community (Chu, 2002). Similarly in this study, “better quality of life and educational prospects for children” were often stated as motivation for many Taiwanese migrants when compared to their home country which they perceived was “limited” and “declining” (Chu, 2002). These studies illustrate that enticing economic opportunities, attractive environments and prestige are some of the core reasons for the migration and that the level of acculturation into the host environment is dependent on a multitude of factors such as age, generational status, culture, social, language abilities, household and personal perspectives.

Xenophobia and racism

South Africa has an ethnically and culturally diverse population, although certain minority groups tend to be continuously treated as foreigners. Furthermore, xenophobic acts of violence have often been targeted towards the general immigrant population in South Africa. Whilst black African migrants living in South Africa are more likely to be targeted in these attacks, various groups of Asian immigrants remain visible and vulnerable to violent xenophobic attacks (Park & Rugunanan, 2010). Moreover, Gordon (2016) points out that causes for xenophobia particularly in South Africa have often been linked to the economic conditions, labour market competition and political subjectivities. Furthermore, tensions continue to exist not only between the East Asian and local South African populations but also amongst themselves: the local Chinese, Taiwanese and the new wave of Chinese migrants. Park (2009) also talks about the different levels of “Chineseness” among Chinese immigrants and Chinese locals, which brings about questions of self and identity.

Representation

Despite increasing worldwide migration – which suggests societies becoming more ethnically and culturally diverse – representations of minority groups remains problematic. In societies where there are imbalances in power relations, dominant groups use ideology as a means to legitimise power over other groups and one way is through mass media (Paek & Shah, 2003). Stereotypes can be explained as a “set of representational practices that are key mechanisms by which one group’s generalised and widely accepted beliefs about the personal attributes of members of another group are constructed” (Paek & Shah, 2003: 228). It essentially reduces people to having certain characteristics which are seemingly “fixed”. Negative perceptions of East Asians migrants in South Africa can be linked back to the late 1800s and early 1900s when Chinese workers were perceived as a threat by local workers as illustrated in early cartoons, postcards etc. (Harrison et al., 2017). Furthermore, national news coverage of East Asian migrants in South Africa tend to focus on highlighting their economic activities in the country; the importance of learning Mandarin; the dominance of China; the growing presence of Chinese migrants and their involvement in illegal trade such as rhino poaching, abalone poaching and the donkey skin trade. This has not come without backlash as the Chinese community has become progressively aware of xenophobic and racist comments and have

issued public statements to denounce these acts (News24, 2017). Both international and local representations of East Asians in the media tend to be stereotypically driven. Regardless of whether they are “positive” or “negative” stereotypes, ultimately these portrayals have consequences which feed into maintaining the status quo and attitudes towards East Asian migrants.

Methodology

This study used qualitative methods to address the research objectives. It included the participation from 15 people: eight Taiwanese migrants and second-generation migrants; one Chinese migrant and one second generation Chinese migrant and lastly, five local Chinese people. In this paper, the term migrant refers to someone who relocates to another country from their home country and second-generation migrant is someone who was born and raised or spent most of their childhood and adult years in the host country. The participants were based in four cities – Cape Town, Newcastle, Johannesburg and Pretoria – and between the ages of 21 and 69. Due to potential difficulties in accessing migrants, research participants were recruited through a snowball approach. I made initial contact with friends and family who are ethnically Taiwanese and Chinese and residing in South Africa. Snowball sampling is based on the assumption that there is an established “link” between initial participants and others in the same population group which allows for referrals to be made (Berg, 1988). My prior association and access to the Taiwanese community helped facilitate finding Taiwanese participants in Newcastle. The search for local Chinese contacts was found through friends and secondary sources such as blogs, Facebook pages, Instagram as well as inquiring at certain workplaces (restaurants, shops etc). New Chinese migrants were the hardest to make contact with and make up the smallest percentage of my project.

Content analysis of the interviews will be used in this study to explore relevant themes that occur frequently. The content that will be analysed will come from the full interview transcript, not just the final edited version. The photographic portraits and video interview will also be analysed and how its meaning is communicated to the audience. Interviews were conducted either at the participant’s home or place of work, depending on what was convenient for both participant and researcher. The interviews took on a semi-structured format and I asked established questions but allowed for flexibility in follow-up questions to explore a topic further (Brennen, 2013). The interviews were carried out in either English or Mandarin, depending on what language the participant was most comfortable with. The participants responded in their language of choice, either English, Mandarin or Taiwanese Hokkien. The use of multiple languages allowed me to develop a closer rapport with my participant and for them to speak freely, without limitations. Consent forms were provided for the video interviews and photographs. Each interview was digitally recorded and later transcribed, translated, coded and analysed.

Results

Identity and community

The rise of cross-border migrations mean that migrants are required to adapt in some way to their new host society and thus often expected to coincide different identities. Identities are essentially social constructions, and are about “questions of using the resources of history, language, and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not ‘who we are’ or ‘where we came from’, so much as what we become, how we have been represented and how

that bears on how we represent ourselves” (Hall, 1996: 4). Most of the younger second generation participants identified with being South African and East Asian simultaneously, referring to themselves as South African Taiwanese or South African Chinese. This suggests that they’ve embraced both identities and therefore created a category of identification for themselves. Younger participants have acculturated at a faster rate than their migrant parents due to being in contact with various cultures, diverse environments, people and languages from a young age. Out of all the generation groups interviewed, this group showed the most adaptability between the “two identities”, being able to shift between being South African and Taiwanese or Chinese. This suggests a smoother transition into a western society compared to their parents – most of whom are first generation migrants. The process of acculturation can take years and is likely to include different forms of “mutual accommodation”, which ultimately results in “longer-term psychological and sociocultural adaptations between both groups” (Berry, 2006, p. 699). The older second generation migrants who only arrived in South Africa in their teens experienced slightly more conflicted feelings towards their identity.

The first generation migrant group have the shortest exposure period in their host country and the least developed local language skills. They are more likely to visit Taiwan and China regularly due to family and friendship ties in the country and this has also largely influenced the second generation group who have continued this ritual and most return to their country of origin at least once a year. Local Chinese readily identified with being South African but also acknowledged their Chinese heritage. They’ve essentially assimilated into the South African society, often participating in local customs and have well established bonds with other South Africans due to being in the country for decades.

Ultimately, most of the participants (regardless of generation status) struggled to pinpoint their identity and have conflicted feelings – often feeling “foreign” when visiting their country of origin and also being perceived as foreigners in their host country. At times, there may be a sense of a loss of home or foundation and thus attempting creating a home within a new space. Most participants continue to maintain ties with other East Asians living in South Africa. Many consider themselves to be part of a local Asian community which is often perceived to be tight-knit as a support group although the downside includes the tendency for gossip. The Taiwanese community is seemingly slightly larger than the local Chinese community, however both tend to hold various functions throughout the year, especially in celebration of traditional events. It is evident all the participants have come into contact with Asian communities at some point due to parental and peer influences. Their decision to maintain this contact depends on a host of factors such as personal values and preferences, social circles and family. The presence of tight knit diasporic communities illustrates the need for kinship – connected through shared cultures, languages, identity, religion and challenges encountered in a western society.

Language

One of the biggest challenges that migrants encounter in their host country is communication. Language is integral to the acculturation of migrants into the new society and their experiences and perceptions are predominantly moulded by various forms of languaging. Language significantly impacts business, formation of social circles and family relations and the establishment of self. The first and second generation participants grew up being exposed to more than one language: Mandarin and other dialects of Chinese and Taiwanese and later English in addition to other national languages of South Africa. Many first generation

participants initially experience prominent language barriers which largely influence a successful integration into their new community. It also results in the tendency for migrants to mostly associate with other migrants due to language familiarity, which enhances the widening chasm of decreasing contact with local languages. Thus, these communication barriers can persist for many years even after initial relocation and is dependent on the migrant's adaptability and willingness to acquire knowledge of local languages. Additionally, research shows that multilingual speakers tend to use English for "utilitarian purposes with a pragmatic attitude and they won't develop a cultural affinity with the language or attempt to represent their identities through English" (Canagarajah, 2007: 199). This is demonstrative amongst older migrants who learned English after relocating to South Africa and second generation migrants that arrived in South Africa in their teens or later years. They tend to reserve the use of English and other local languages for business and administration.

Second generation participants are exposed to a variety of languages such as English, Afrikaans, Zulu, Xhosa etc. through formal education in addition to their home languages Mandarin and Taiwanese Hokkien. The steady language exposure from a young age increases their fluency levels and many also attend Chinese school on a daily or weekly basis. Many second generation participants tend to mix languages in their communication with parents and with their East Asian peers. In contrast, the local Chinese participants primarily spoke English growing up. They tend to know at least one other local language that was taught at school, or learned from their peers or helpers at home. Some of the participants indicated that despite their parents having knowledge of Mandarin and other dialects, they generally did not communicate with their children in these languages and would default to English. There also seems to be a sense of shame or embarrassment amongst some participants for not being able to speak Mandarin or other dialects. Edwards (2013) argues that subtractive bilingualism occurs in a setting in which one language is more dominant; where one is on the ascendant and the other is declining. The use of Mandarin in the local Chinese community has clearly declined over the years in favour of local languages which they perceive as more practical within the given environment. Furthermore, when visiting countries in East Asia, some participants are faced with feeling like outsiders or foreigners amongst people who look like them, particularly due to language barriers.

Marginalisation, stereotypes and xenophobia

Migrants are often faced with issues such as discrimination, stereotyping, racism and xenophobia when residing in another country. Berry (2006) argues that migrants tend to be viewed less favourably since they are typically dissimilar to the local population. Therefore, those who "seek to assimilate and who undergo greater behavioural shifts (towards receiving society norms) may experience less discrimination (Berry, 2006, p. 622). Due to the diverse range of interviewees, their experiences varied. First generation and older second generation participants experienced discrimination due to their limited English abilities and certain cultural practices. There is also a prevalent fear of being targeted by criminals especially amongst those involved in the manufacturing industry. There seems to be a general consensus amongst migrants that locals perceive them to be wealthy. These migrants tend to be particularly cautious in their business dealings and many have experienced robberies at work or know of other migrants who have been targeted. Many migrants also reside at their place of work such as at the factories, but due to previous experiences of crime, some have mentioned that they have relocated to residential areas to return to after work for safety reasons. Park & Rugunanan (2010) point out that although Africans continue to bear the brunt of most of the xenophobic violence in South Africa, various groups of Asian migrants

are becoming increasingly vulnerable to crime and harassment due to certain perceptions associated with them.

The second generation participants spoke about being predominantly discriminated against at school due to factors such as a lack of English abilities, cultural aspects including the food they brought to school and their ethnic appearance. A few still experience discriminatory attitudes in their adult lives however it has become less frequent. The acculturation theory proposes that the decline in incidents may be the outcome of increased acculturation over time and by the time they reach adulthood, the participants may be adapted into society. The local Chinese are the most integrated in South Africa. However, many report that they have also received some level of discrimination such as stereotyping and racist attitudes.

Regardless of generation status, the participants tend to feel that there has not been overt discrimination towards East Asians in South Africa apart from a few instances mentioned. However, many continue to feel like an outsider or foreigner to some extent even after years of living in the country, largely due to their appearance. Ultimately, many of the issues experienced by the participants stem from language barriers, cultural differences, appearance and the negative perceptions targeted towards the population group at large as a result of isolated incidences.

Constructed visual representation

In approaching other East Asians, the image making and interviews became a form of dialogue, therapy, knowledge sharing, support, empowerment and a sense of kinship. The photographs are constructed, the subject posed, aware and usually looking directly into the lens as the photo is taken. There is some resemblance between these portraits and the portraits of African photographers such as Seydou Keita (Malian portrait photographer) and Yoruba photography. Both Seydou Keita and Yoruba photography seemingly strive to counter the colonialist gaze, by the subject reinventing themselves and reclaiming their identities through carefully constructed poses in the portraits. The subjects tend to be well-dressed and sit facing the camera with a dignified expression and looking at and through the camera (Sprague, 1978). My participants' attire consisted of their everyday wear and some took extra effort to be well-presented for the photograph. Details of the clothing, environment make up the sociological aspect. I opted to take the portrait in landscape which offers a glimpse into the environment in which the participants are in. A classroom; a master bedroom; a restaurant kitchen; a salon; a factory or a martial arts storeroom – these settings added context and were crucial to the individual's identity. The psychological aspect is contained in the facial expressions and gestures. It was a collaborative effort; we would share ideas as to where the photograph can be taken and a few participants would ask for assistance on posing, particularly if they felt awkward or unsure of what to do with their body. Furthermore, the photos were generally taken at either eye level to the participant or from a slightly lower position. This method was to represent them in a dignified manner, exuding presence and power.

Although placement and location were relatively straightforward, the photographs do offer hidden narratives, juxtapositions and questions that the viewer may feel compelled to inquire. Who are these people? What are their stories? Where do they come from? What are they doing here? One of the main goals of this project is to highlight a small participant group taken from a minority population group in South Africa and answer some of these questions. Still photographs are essential in order to provide the initial impression. However, I needed a

deeper level of engagement which I felt was missing in the representation of East Asians in mainstream media, and particularly in South Africa. The interviews were integral for this process. An ongoing and prevalent issue in documentary filmmaking is the attempt to elicit truth in the presence of a camera. Naturally, people feel defensive and may put on a level of performance in front of the camera. For many of my participants, it was their first time on camera. Some felt anxious because they were hearing the questions for the first time. Nonetheless, they answered the questions thoroughly and started warming up and answering more naturally due to the extended length of the interviews. A few participants mentioned that the interview was therapeutic, one said it helped him do some soul-searching and a few were curious as to what other participants said.

Conclusion

This study provides a deeper understanding into the transformed lives of Taiwanese and Chinese migrants in South Africa and their positionality in society. The results show that first generation participants tend to be involved in entrepreneurial activities in manufacturing, restaurants, small businesses and other types of sales whereas subsequent generations are prone to be well-educated and enter white collar jobs after university. Only a few return to assist their family's businesses. Regardless of their generation status, the primary reason for relocating to South Africa was in search of improved economic opportunities and living conditions. Second generation migrants have also acculturated at a faster rate than their migrant parents and readily identified with being both South African and Taiwanese or Chinese. First generation migrants often first identified with their country of origin which they considered their primary home and the local Chinese strongly aligned with being South African, but acknowledging their Chinese heritage. Although many participants continue to feel foreign in South Africa, they experience a similar feeling of being perceived as an outsider when they visit their country of origin due to factors such as language barriers, cultural and social norms. Arguably, a significant factor which affects the participants' experience and level of integration in a different country is language abilities. This is particularly evident amongst the first generation migrants in South Africa whose struggles are predominantly a result of limited English and cultural clashes. Furthermore, a preference for a particular language is highly dependent on environment and social circles and the diminishing use of Mandarin and Taiwanese Hokkien can be seen amongst the second generation and onwards. Amongst the local Chinese, very few can speak the Mandarin and other dialects, with most having a preference for English. The majority of the participants have been discriminated against from a young age due to language, appearance and culture but experienced it less as adults. Those involved in the manufacturing industry tend to perceive themselves as "easy targets" and more susceptible to crime. Although the local Chinese are more acculturated than the other participants, they also mentioned episodes of discrimination which suggests that East Asians are continued to be perceived as "other" despite efforts of integrating into society. Finally, carefully constructed photographs portray a personal and dignified representation of the participant as they reclaim the space they are in. It is a disruption of the prevalent narrative of East Asian migrants in a western country, offering a more explorative perspective into their lives. The curation of quotes, photographs and videos on a website provides an efficient and interactive space for viewers to engage, learn and share.

This visual project focused predominantly on the lives and stories of fifteen first and second generation Taiwanese and Chinese migrants and local Chinese. Future studies and the continuation of this project can incorporate more participants, particularly new Chinese

migrants. Furthermore, this study only includes a certain demographic of East Asian migrants and limited to ones that hail from Johannesburg, Newcastle and Cape Town. Future research can incorporate a wider range of participants living in various towns and cities across South Africa and even in other African countries. It can also potentially expand to include other East Asian ethnicities such as Japanese, South Korean, etc. and include other exhibition formats such as a feature length documentary, a photo story and an online web-series.

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Unveiling the Pragmatics of Maguindanaon Greetings

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Abstract

This study examines the pragmatics of Maguindanaon greetings using the S.P.E.A.K.I.N.G. tools of situation, participants, ends, speech acts, key, instrumentality, norms of communication, and cultural or traditional speech genres, drawing from the theory of Dell Hymes' ethnography of communication (1974). This uses an ethnographic research tool to investigate how greetings function among the Maguindanaon as a sociocultural linguistic practice. Participant observation, in-depth interviews, ethnopragsmatics, and reflection are all used in this inquiry. The length and content of greetings may vary depending on the situation, the setting, and the people being addressed. It could be formal or informal, simple or complex. The standard Maguindanaon pleasantries serve as a vehicle for replicating dominating politics and social stratification, which ironically also promote social bonding and reciprocity.

Keywords: Ethnography, Pragmatics, Maguindanaon Greetings, Social Stratification, Politics of Dominance

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Introduction

Greetings are employed to acknowledge the presence of another person or persons (Goffman 1971). It is frequently used in everyday social interactions. A greeting can be as simple as a nod of the head or a wave of the hand. It also can be a statement that forms an adjacency pair, where there is an initiation of contact followed by a response, which can be either verbal or nonverbal and may conclude with a warm embrace (Omar 1991).

Appropriate greeting behavior is crucial for the establishment and maintenance of interpersonal relationships. As Firth (1972:30) comments, greetings are 'a system of signs that convey other than overt messages. Greetings appear to be a universal construct that all languages engage them in some form.

Maguindanaon interaction norms include greetings that are conventionalized, predictable, communally owned and shared communicative daily activities that use specific linguistic items and performances in routinized encounters. According to Foley, greeting is a setting in which ideologies of equal relativism of culture are portrayed through linguistic practices (Foley, 1997).

The complexity and diversity of the people's customs and behaviors are expressed and described through language. A person can examine and comprehend social customs and everyday actions of a society, including greetings, by using language as a tiny lens. Language acts as a microscope, moving beyond what is communicated to what is actually practiced in the socio-cultural reality.

There are literatures already available on greetings from Africa and other regions of the world. There has been research done by Duranti (1992, 2001) on Samoan society, Ferguson (1976), Salmani-Nodoushan (2006) on English and Persian greetings, etc. in non-African societies. According to Ferguson (1976), welcomes and expressions of gratitude are considered to be a universal phenomena of human languages. However, the use and structure of the routines may vary from language to language, despite the fact that their functions may be the same (Bonvillain, 1993).

Greetings in Africa particularly among the Yoruba and the Sesotho of South Africa had been investigated by Akindele (1990, 2007), the Limba of Sierra Leone was scrutinized by Finnegan (1969), the Wolof of Senegal was explored by Irvine (1974), the Swahili was examined by Yahya-Othman (1995). In addition, Dzameshie (2002) and Egblewogbe (1990) have also conducted research among the Ewes in Ghana.

Even though the pragmatics of greetings has been conducted by some scholars from some other countries, such kind of research is under research in the Philippines and has never been conducted under the Maguindanaon context. So, there is a need to conduct a research that evaluate the types, functions, and features of greetings of the Maguindanaon people using Hyme's ethnographic framework of SPEAKING.

Using ethnography, this research will explore on greetings; its main types, features and functions; the actors involved; the specific situations for greetings; the major changes in Maguindanaon greetings; and how do the elements of S.P.E.A.K.I.N.G. such as situation, participants, ends, speech acts, key, instrumentality, norms of communication as well as the

cultural or traditional speech genres constitute the ideology on social stratification among Maguindanaon?

Main Types of Greetings

Maguindanaon people usually greet both familiar and strangers as part of their lingua-cultural courtesy and etiquette.

Simple greetings

Simple greetings conclude at the level of “How are you? or even before that as in the simulated dialogue 1 below.

Dialogue 1:

- | | | |
|----|------------------------|--------------------------|
| A. | Mapiya malulum umie. | Mother, good eafternoon. |
| B. | Na mapiya malulum bun. | Good afternoon too. |
| A. | Ngin a betad nengka? | How’s your day? |
| B. | I am fine. | Mapiya bun. |

Complex greetings

A Maguindanaon greeting that is complex and ritualized usually develops into a discussion and discourse. Complex greetings are longer and wordy. Dialogue 2 below is a meeting between two friends that basically starts with greetings and develops into conversation.

Dialogue 2:

- | | | |
|---------------|--|--|
| Sittie Aisha: | Mariam mapiya mapita. | Mariam, good morning. |
| Mariam: | Mapiya mapita bun. | Good morning too Aisha. |
| Sittie Aisha: | Ngen a bedtad nengka? | How are you? |
| Mariam: | Na mapiya bun. Seka? | Im good. How about you? |
| Sittie Aisha: | Na mapiya bun man. Ngen a betad sa kaluma nengka endo so mga wata? | Doing fine too. How’s your husband and children? |
| Mariam: | Alhamdullilah, mapiya bun. Seka? | Thanks to Allah, they are fine. How about yours? |
| Sittie Aisha: | Metu bun ba sa ika. Ngen a betad so galebek nengka? | Same with you, how about your job? |
| Mariam: | Mapiya bun, alhamdullilah. Seka? | By Allah’s grace, its ok. |
| Sittie Aisha: | Metu bun ba. Endaw ka mangay? | How about you? |
| Mariam: | Pedlu ako ba sa padian. Seka? | Fine too. Where are you going? |
| Sittie Aisha: | Mangay ako sa baryo. Aden pagasekasuen ko | Im going to the market. What about you? |
| Mariam: | Pya pya ka bu. | Im going to town for a transaction. |
| Sittie Aisha: | Seka bun. | Take care. |
| | | Ok. Take care too. |

In this exchange of pleasantries, it includes questions about the other person's family, job, and destination. Thus, greetings could also include additional topics related to social, political, religious, economic, and educational life. The environment, venue, participants, and amount

of time available to the interlocutors can all influence the duration and format of greetings. The Maguindanaon people hold that a brief hello might lead to a more in-depth conversation.

Informal and Formal greetings

Greetings can be formal or casual depending on the situation, the people involved, and the genre (Hymes, SPEAKING). According to Ferguson (1976), politeness formulas generally vary in constituency and severity in respect to a number of social factors. Dzameshie (2002) states that the form of greetings may also be influenced by the following factors: 1) the social distance between the communicators, 2) the communicators' relative social status, power, age, and gender, 3) the number of people in the relevant groups, and 4) the amount of time since the previous encounter. The complexity of the current greetings encounter may increase with the length of time between the last interaction, and vice versa (Dzameshie, 2002; Ferguson, 1976; Irvine, 1974). Accordingly, greetings could be categorized into informal or casual and formal and ceremonial.

Informal and casual

The use of honorifics in Maguindanaon is a basic communicative form in their culture. These may denote position, power, social status, age, achievement, gender, and kinship (Agyekum, 2003). There are address forms like tuwa(grandpa/grandma) ama/abe(father), ina/umie(mother), bapa(elderly man), babo(elderly woman), datu(a man from a royal blood or with high status), bai(woman from high status), madam, doctor, attorney, etc. that are used by Maguindanaon as they utter their greetings.

Dialogue 3:

- | | | |
|----|------------------------|---------------------------|
| A. | Mapiya maudtu abe. | Good noon father. |
| B. | Mapiya maudtu bun. | Good noon too son. |
| A. | Ngen na bedtad nengka? | How are you? |
| B. | Mapiya bun. Na seka? | I am fine, how about you? |
| A. | Mapiya bun abe. | I am fine. |

Dialogue 4:

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| A. | Endaw kanu ebpun Madam? | Where are you coming from Madam? |
| B. | San bu. Ngen na bedtad nengka? | Just around the corner. How are you? |
| A. | Mapiya bun manisan. | Im doing well beautiful lady. |

Dialogue 5:

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| A. | Endaw kanu mangay mga manisan? | Where are you going beautiful ladies? |
| B. | Lo sa eskwela manisan. | We're going to school beautiful lady. |

Maguindanaon culture uses mapiya mapita(good morning), mapiya maudtu(good noon) mapiya malulum(good evening), ngen a betad (how are you), endaw ka'b pun(where did you come fom) endaw ka mangay (where are you going), as forms of informal or casual greetings. These are uttered to acknowledge the presence of other person. These expressions are commonly heard among ordinary individuals engaged in casual conversation in the street, at the market, at the farm, or in any public space.

Formal and ceremonial greetings

Based on specific locations, participants, genre, and anthropological elements, formal and ceremonial welcomes are tied to the norms of Maguindanaon interaction. Laver (1981), after studying British English, comes to the conclusion that the choice of linguistic routine depends on the formality of the context and the nature of the interaction between the participants.

According to the theory, language used in interactions that are more formal or institutional tends to be more sophisticated (Duranti, 2001). There are some rules that must be followed in institutional settings; for example, greetings in these contexts are dependent on the circumstances. One could describe a formal welcome as a ceremony in which cultural conventions, values, and diplomacy are scrupulously observed. Schools, offices, and other official public meetings are among the formal locations.

Formal welcomes are also exchanged in meetings where the interlocutors' cultural differences and social inequities are present. Recognition of the power, rank, prestige, and other social factors ingrained in communication is predicated on the diversity of language used in human contact. It also affects language usage styles and forms. Language distinctions, according to Gumperz (1982), play a crucial positive function in signaling information as well as in establishing and sustaining the fine lines of power, position, role, and vocational distribution that are the foundation of social life (Foley 1997; Irvine, 1974; Maryns and Blommaert, 2002)

Dialogue 6:

- A. Assalamu Alaikum Bapa.
- B. Alaikumi Salam.

Maguindanaon usually employs the Arabic greetings Assalamu Alaikum which means “peace be upon you” as a form of greetings when in formal occasions or events. The appropriate response is Alaikum Missalam which means “to you also”. This form of greetings is also used when interacting with religious people such as imam, pandita or ustadz. Furthermore, it is also utilized when talking to individuals viewed to have high educational attainment, political leaders, and those with high status in life.

Language of greetings

Both verbal and nonverbal behaviors, such as physical movement in the direction of one another along with gestures and facial expressions, hand waving, eye contact, and smiles, are a part of greeting rituals. Some gestures can be observed among Maguindanaon people. Others include kiss in the cheeks especially among women as they utter their greetings. Males on the other hand, put their hand on their heart as they express their acknowledgement to the other person. Sometimes, men shake hands while others hug. These non verbal behavior were not the original tradition of the Maguindanaon. According to an informant, the kissing, hugging, putting of hands on one's heart, and shaking of hands might be adopted from other culture such as the Arab especially those who have gone abroad to work.

The Maguindanaons employ greetings to negotiate status relationships; as a result, if an older and a younger person cross, the younger person is expected to welcome first. Failure to do so conveys contempt and suggests that the lower-ranking party is attempting to equalize with the

higher-ranking party. However, it is customary for the guest to introduce themselves to the host first.

When Maguindanaon individuals fails or refuses to greet, the socio-cultural norms and social contract which state that greeting must take place between two parties making contact is said to be disrupted (Foley, 1997; Salzmann, 2004). According to Dzameshie (2002), failing to welcome when the social situation demands for it is seen as a display of misdemeanor in Ewe society because it is such an expected sociolinguistic behavior. It is also known that the Asanthe greets everyone who attended after most public meetings at Manhyia, the asante kingdom's capital. He claims that this is a sign of his intimate relationships with the people, and the greeting thus denotes and honors multiple connections.

The chief displays mutual respect to the gathering people and conveys his responsibility for their welfare, as well as their great regard for him. Through repeated greetings from one another, this mutual understanding is achieved. The role of an Asante king named Kofi karikari, who would visit his citizens' homes in the mornings to inquire about their well-being and living situations, is described in Asante history.

Finnegan (1969) states the following in his discussion of the Limba chief's relationship with his people:

The idea that to welcome someone is to honor him, to acknowledge a relationship with him, and, very often, to commit oneself to recognizing his authority, seems to thread across different greetings, whether in the form of a brief interchange or a formal visit with gifts to greet a superior.

In Maguindanaon, there are similar ideas. Chieftains (datus) or political leaders (at the present time) are recognized appropriately by their subordinates through greetings. Christians, Muslims, and their religious leaders all share the same observation of African traditional religious practitioners. Words can operate as a type of active power to bring people together, just like gifts do. People can come together through performative behaviors like greetings that include both illocutionary and perlocutionary behaviors (Finnegan, 1969).

Modern Maguindanaon Society's Form of Greetings

Each change in the social, political, or cultural dynamics is accompanied by an equivalent shift in language use and style. A society may change its practices throughout time. For instance, a society might completely renounce a long-standing custom and substitute a foreign custom instead. The traditional Maguindanaon greetings have changed as a result of Maguindanaon society's evolving trends. Diachronic change is a phenomenon that causes other cultural factors to spread into the structure and usage of politeness formulas like greetings.

The majority of individuals in cities utilize the English greetings good morning, good afternoon, good evening, and hi! hello! etc. Some of the most common greetings and responses have been replaced by more archaic versions in young people's thoughts, and they are no longer used in casual conversation.

The Elements of S.P.E.A.K.I.N.G.

Greetings are expressive speech acts that are used in accordance with societal conventions. It starts a series of verbal and nonverbal interactional acts that express social meanings (Austin, 1962; Searle and Vandervan, 1985).

The analysis of the elements of S.P.E.A.K.I.N.G. (situation, participants, ends, speech acts, key, instrumentality, norms of communication as well as the cultural or traditional speech genres) reveals that greetings in the Maguindanaon context are rule governed. Particular greetings such as Assalamu Alaikum are viewed as appropriate greetings to religious individuals, political leaders, and people with high status in life particularly the educated or professional one.

Maguindanaon greetings in a particular context reveal social class and denotes social inequalities. Moreover, it can be used to show power structure.

With these, we can say that linguistic routine of Maguindanaon greetings become a means of reproducing politics of dominance and social stratification that also ironically bring social cohesion and reciprocity.

Conclusion

Maguindanaon welcomes are used to categorize social norms amongst speakers. Age, sex, social standing, power, and occupation of the people involved in the meeting are all significant indicators of how a person is received and how they respond. The way greetings are structured can be used to determine if the interlocutors are equal or unequal, formal or informal. The variety in language use during interaction acts as both a cultural manifestation and a prerequisite for recognizing social factors.

Maguindanaon welcomes are intended to increase social ties and courtesy between participants. Additionally, it is utilized to lessen social anxiety and distrust. When welcomes are warmly received and reciprocated, both parties are optimistic that the interaction will improve. The speaker's socialization process and socio-cultural norms include greetings as necessary and expected cultural language practices. Depending on the situation, place, and interlocutors, greetings may vary in length and content. Greetings can be formal, informal, simple, or complex, and they are all predictable.

The many uses and variations of Maguindanaon greetings suggest that they have much to give to coming generations of Maguindanaon. Since greetings are a part of socialization, several actors in the development of the Maguindanaon language should assist in restoring them.

Better interactions are hampered by the absence of greetings and other linguistic customs.

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Understanding Wabi and Sabi in the Context of Japanese Aesthetics

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Abstract

Whether consciously or not, aesthetics in Japan often takes precedence over other cultural elements. In fact, the whole idea of "Japanese beauty" is the very foundation of Japanese culture and the unifying medium of national identity. Though Japanese aesthetic concepts are deeply rooted in the country's cultural fabric, it doesn't mean that they cannot appeal to the tastes of non-Japanese. Moreover, they are well-known and appreciated abroad and have become part of the non-Japanese cultural and artistic fabric, especially in recent decades. The aesthetic concept of Wabi is probably the most well-known one outside Japan. However, it is almost always used as a part of the "Wabi-Sabi tandem". This paper will challenge the validity of using both concepts only as a tandem. While an object most often possesses qualities attributed to more than just one aesthetic concept, and there are times when applying Wabi and Sabi together works, most of the time it seems inaccurate to blend them as one. This paper will discuss the challenges of cultural borrowing and possibly wider applications of these borrowed aesthetic concepts beyond art, in such areas as education, for example, as well as a phenomenon of cultural "borrowing back" where "well-travelled" aesthetic concepts may possibly reinforce their place in their culture of origin.

Keywords: Aesthetics, Culture, Chanoyu, Mindfulness, Contemplation, Intercultural Studies

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Introduction

Rapid cultural globalization makes inter-cultural borrowings easily accessible. Sometimes, terms are being adapted and applied rather freely or even changed once used in a different cultural context, with little regard to their origins. In Japan, aesthetics and the conscious or unconscious appreciation of beauty is built in the whole cultural fabric of the society from high art to the everyday elements. There is a wide range of beauty forms specific to the place and time carefully protected and passed down through many generations virtually unchanged. While they are uniquely Japanese, they certainly can be and are appreciated by non-Japanese both actively and passively, however in both cases appreciation of the cultural context is the key. Aesthetics concepts in Japan also do not stay unchanged as new materials, new artistic forms, and new artists constantly emerge. While deeply rooted in the past, the concepts themselves are not static or archaic, they are a vital source for the new inspirations. I suggest that application of so called “Japanese beauty” to a wide range of life and living makes Japanese aesthetics concepts valuable for other cultures.

Wabi

Wabi is probably the most widely used (and misused) Japanese aesthetics term. Traditionally, most aesthetic concepts are introduced indirectly, through poetry for example. Two poems by Fujiwara Teika (1162-1241) are often mentioned when explaining wabi. One depicts a thatched-roofed hut on a seashore at dusk in autumn. It describes the specific state of an object, certain place in certain time of the day and season. Things wabi are appreciated “as they are” - natural, unadorned, in their natural state. They are also considered friendly, human, approachable.

The other poem talks about the very first green shoots in spring peeping through the snow, which are compared to the splendour of the cherry blossoms. Humble, modest, unpretentious beauty that need to be noticed, found, experienced as an active process.

The spirit of wabi is particularly well seen in wabicha – a wabi style of Chanoyu, commonly known as a Japanese tea ceremony. Instead of highly prized Chinese utensils ideals of wabi inspired simple, accessible utensils such as a wooden well bucket, green bamboo lid rest or unglazed pottery often shaped by hand. Started by Takeno Joo (1502-1555), continued by Sen Rikyu (1522-1591) and perfected by his grandson Sen Sotan (1578-1658) wabicha nourished simple austere type of beauty to compliment the serene transcendental state of mind of Chanoyu (“Hot Water for Tea” – an older name for tea ceremony). Wabi style was informed by the hermit’s hut built and described by Kamo no Chōmei (1155-1216) as well as much earlier unglazed pottery of Jōmon and Yayoi.

Wabi as a method inspires creativity and the development of new ideas. While tea procedures and methods in a tearoom are consistently traditional, creative thought brings immediacy and freshness to each encounter in Chanoyu. Denis Hirota writes: “The creative vision was, I think, associated in Joo’s mind with humility and sincere aspiration of the beginner and the amateur.” (Hirota, 1980). In the “Broom Tree Record” the accomplished amateur is termed “wabi sukisha” - “one devoted to tea in the spirit of wabi”. (Hirota, 1980) While this chajin (“person of tea”) could not take possession of the priceless tea utensils of the Chinese origin, and therefore could not be considered a true connoisseur by then common standard, but instead is characterized as “possessing creativity” and would by necessity be inclined to develop the new ways and objects. In the “Letter on Wabi” Takeno Joo characterizes

earnestness and freedom as “shojiki” – sincerity, openness and straightforwardness. It stands against merely mimicking the style of the accomplished master but connecting deeply to the tradition and finding best possible the ways of expression under the circumstances. Takeno Joo comments on the cultivating “illuminating discernment” by unassuming appreciation of things.

While wabi can characterize objects, poetry, spaces, it can also describe human relations, groups of people, approach or attitudes. Wabi can characterize music, scent, cuisine. In fact, kaiseki meal, served to the guests prior to partaking the tea is rooted in a temple meal “shojinryōri” – “a meal to advance the spirit”. This kaiseki meal is cooked from local seasonal ingredients with minimal cooking and is served in small portions on mostly black lacquer to bring out their natural colours. Its partaking is slow paced, mindful and attentive. For example, white rice is served in a black lacquer lided bowl. It is served three times, as it is continuously cooking, naturally offering three different stages of it. In the end hot water is poured over the “crust” and offered as a kind of digestive.

Wabi doesn’t necessarily capture you immediately. Its appreciation is a destination, a journey, a process. The more one looks the more one sees. That is why one doesn’t get tired from wabi objects and spaces but rather continues to enjoy them over time.

Sabi

The category of Sabi refers to the appreciation of age and aging as part of an aesthetic experience. Rust, patina, natural change of material is appreciated and highlighted rather than “cleaned” or polished. It refers to the aesthetics of tarnished silver, aged wood, moss grown stones, etc. Objects or constructions created from organic materials are of course beautiful when they are brand new. But Sabi describes the new and different phases of beauty that evolve during their use and enjoyment, and the conviction that the aesthetic value of things is not diminished by time but enhanced. The wear and tear of daily use carefully repaired doesn’t detract but adds new aspects of beauty and aesthetic depth.

However, not just the appreciation of such a change of an object but also codified sign of time becomes an intended aesthetics in many cases. Marks of nails on the wooden well bucket rusted in time are now recreated as such. In other words, they are depicted as old and rusted from the very beginning becoming an important and often integral part of the object, the very central point of its appreciation. In Chanoyu koshiguro yakkan metal pourer is used to replenish fresh water in a water container. Black on the lower part depicts the effect left by the use on the fire in the farmer’s kitchen. Though this object has never been used for boiling water, it carries the aesthetic mark of its distant predecessor as an aesthetic norm.

Kintsugi is a method of highlighting repairs of the utensils in gold rather than hiding them using the invisible materials. Such repairs are made either in gold or silver, which will tarnish in time changing the colour and the visual impact, or in red, brown or black lacquer, all very visible and even highlighted. The objects will continue their life as they are in their new imperfect state. The whole idea of perfection and the Japanese aesthetic view of perfection and imperfection is a conversation for a different paper, I am using the term to describe the original form. Once the bowl is broken, it will always be a broken bowl. However, it doesn’t take away its other qualities in the view of the tea masters. In Chanoyu, repaired utensils are commonly used in the month of October, which is called “nagori” - a season of nostalgia for

the warmer days of summer and early autumn. This is the time when mismatched sets and repaired objects are used.

Kirei sabi or “beautiful rust” is another style that makes repairs themselves into a work of art, a canvas for an additional artwork often completely clashing with the initial aesthetics of an object. For example, a portion of a rustic bowl was repaired and restored in black lacquer and a landscape scene will be depicted on the repair in gold adding yet another, completely different dimension to the object.

Wabi-Sabi

We often see terms Wabi and Sabi used together and used as one to characterize rustic beauty. It is especially visible in the works published in English where the terms are almost never used separately. I argue that while every object can reflect more than one aesthetic concept, it is misleading to say the least to merge two terms together and use them collectively or interchangeably while denying them their unique individual qualities.

Sabi refers to an outer, exterior form and cultivates attention, respect and appreciation of time passing and things naturally changing their appearance. Wabi doesn't only describe the outer form, visible state but also refers to the inner quality. Wabi refers to a wider spectrum of qualities. It refers to both outer and inner state, as well as the quality of reception. Appreciation of Wabi objects is a process, a journey, that requires an active participation of a receiver while Sabi aesthetics can be grasped faster. Objects can be made look Sabi but they cannot be made look Wabi, they can only “be” it or not. Objects can be artificially aged, but they can only be left natural. They can't be made Wabi.

Kimura Sōshin mentions that Japanese traditional culture is supported by “sensitivity” and “emotion”. Ability to see art needs to be learned, practiced and developed. It doesn't simply happen, nor does it happen because of simply being born in Japan.

Maybe the very way of defining Japanese aesthetics may need to be adjusted to be rather “dusk-clear” than exact. Maybe most Japanese aesthetic categories are simply best left vague and ambiguous. They can then inhibit overlapping and partially merging spaces rather than being strictly defined and placed in the cells created with a completely different cultural approach in mind. Defining an area rather than drawing the exact line may be a better approach.

Conclusions

Aesthetics and the sense of beauty in Japan occupy a special place and are at the foundation of the Japanese national identity. As an important part of education, upbringing etc. study of Japanese aesthetics certainly helps to better understand Japan, its culture and people. But it isn't only Japan that we are getting to know.

Mara Miller writes: “The value of Japanese aesthetics lies less in the knowledge they give us about the Japanese...than the truths they expose about the human condition...” (Miller, 2011)

The influence of Japanese aesthetics has reached far beyond Japan. Arguably, it is one of the most influential canons of beauty in world culture today. It has had and continues to have

significant influence on world architecture, painting, design, culinary arts, garden and flower arts, fashion and so on.

The traditional function of aesthetics in the West is to produce visual, aural, emotional impact and move the audience of spectators. While it is also true when we speak about Japanese aesthetics, there are additional areas where the latter expands the aesthetic experience.

In addition, aesthetics in Japan play an important role in politics, education, ethics, environment, maintaining of national identity, and many other areas. There are simply more categories in which beauty is manifested. Understanding the complex and multilayered categories the way they were intended to be understood will help to get a better cultural context where they originated and where they function. At the same time, aesthetics is also applicable to issues of environment, socialization, team building, leadership, and education just to name a few. I think it would be particularly interesting to apply Japanese aesthetics to the many walks of life outside Japan.

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Mental Stress in The Streaming World: Decision Fatigue in Leisure Time Among Young Adults in Dubai

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Abstract

The phenomenon of decision fatigue has been long explored in workplace and other task-related domains of human life. However, the studies of mental stress and negative emotions related to decision-making in leisure time are relatively recent and can provide insight on the impact of the overabundance of digital content that we experience nowadays. The current pandemic caused by Covid-19 has accelerated habits such as at-home consumption of content offered by streaming platforms and has occupied a significant part of people's lives. With so much time in our hands, we couldn't help but turn to streaming platforms like Netflix and Amazon Prime amongst many others. The researchers were able to observe that a pattern arose: an increase in mental stress in the decision-making process due to the increase of streaming content supply. This study aims to investigate the relationship between streaming services content offering and the mental stress users experience during the decision-making process. To do so, the study presents an overview of the current state of the streaming landscape in the GCC region, including both global as well as local streaming services, followed by an analysis of data collected by administering a questionnaire among 330 young adults in Dubai during the months of October and November of 2021. Significant correlations between variables such as the number of subscriptions, content catalog size and the platforms' automated recommendations are expected to increase the probability of users experiencing negative emotion and mental stress during the decision-making process.

Keywords: Media, Streaming, Decision Fatigue, Decision-Making, Mental Stress

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Introduction

This paper is the result of a research project initiated during the capstone course of the M.A. in Leadership and Innovation in Contemporary Media at the American University in Dubai. The graduate students and authors of this paper, under the guidance of the course supervisor, by utilizing a series of design thinking methodologies, identified a potential issue that hypothetically has seen a surge during the pandemic caused by Covid-19. We find ourselves looking for ways to detangle and de-stress from today's fast-paced world, where we're overbooked, overstressed and with barely any time to spare. Indulging in a series or planning for a movie marathon for many has become the highlight of the week, a new norm and something to look forward to. According to a survey done by *Healthywomen* magazine, getting lost in a scene or two has proven to be a form of escapism. Describing it as a "common stress management tool" (Feintuch, 2019). The exercise of watching finds its place in everyday life for an array of different characters, from your children coming home from school to working mums who need a moment of calm for themselves. With at-home watching becoming an integral part of our wellbeing and with an overabundance of content available on streaming channels, an unexpected phenomenon has taken place.

Times have evolved and so has the nature of content consumption. Channel-switching has become rare as on-demand watching becomes the new norm. Due to the new forms of distribution and the abundance of different streaming services, consumers have also become more aware of their freedom to choose what they want to watch when they want to watch it. New technologies and their penetration into the watching culture have created a sort of numbness to decision-making because not only is there a variance when it comes to choosing what to watch but there is also the fact that some content doesn't emerge to the surface thus, viewers are never aware of its existence.

Decision-making is already dubbed a burden in everyday life, amplifying anxiety and frustration. Our research recognizes and acknowledges indecisiveness in ordinary day-to-day life but simultaneously is looking to understand the presence of indecisiveness in the streaming world and the effect it has on viewers experiencing it. With a sea of options to choose from in today's streaming world and time being a luxury, have our binge-watching days come to a dead end? This study works towards shedding light on whether decision fatigue plays a huge role on viewers' lives and how much impact it really has on their feelings, whether it's through wasting time or not being able to maneuver in a flood of content to choose from.

This specific phenomenon is a natural unfolding of the "attention economy," a term coined in the 1990s but already articulated by Herbert Simon back in 1971 to define how cheap parallel computing and a growing penetration of technological devices in our society would bring a scarcity of attention, among other things:

"(...) in an information-rich world, the wealth of information means a dearth of something else: a scarcity of whatever it is that information consumes. What information consumes is rather obvious: it consumes the attention of its recipients. Hence a wealth of information creates a poverty of attention and a need to allocate that attention efficiently among the overabundance of information sources that might consume it (...)" (Simon 1971, pp. 40–41).

Since at-home watching has become such a huge part of our lives and even more so in the past few years as we stayed inside amid lockdown, it was crucial to understand if the process

of finding something to watch had a downside to it. During the pandemic, many of us became part of a culture that couldn't help but turn to platforms like Netflix and Amazon prime, amongst many others, for basic entertainment. With easy access to streaming services thus allowing viewers to go through the process almost daily, a pattern arose. There are too many OTT platforms available, yet users are not being exposed to enough related and valuable content in good time.

Literature Review

In this literature review, we thoroughly explore past and current work on this issue. This helps further define the problem. From our research we can see that trying to look for something to watch can really be distressing for the viewer. The search not only takes a toll on the person emotionally, but also socially as viewers waste so much of their valuable time trying to find the right content for them.

According to an article written by Digital Content Next's (DCN) Vice President of Research, Rande Price, "Consumers have an appetite for new content. Half of consumers (55%) report they are looking for a new TV show or movie to watch at least once per week; 83%, a few times per month". Price also highlights the major frustration that naturally accompanies the searching process. In her article, she mentions very significant figures on how the process can sometimes make users feel discouraged. "Nearly two-thirds (62%) of consumers agree that they often struggle to find something to watch, despite there being many choices available to them. Further, the findings show that half of consumers (50%) are frustrated when they search for content to watch compared to finding content to read (37%) or music to listen to (32%)". Furthermore, Price's article explains how consumers find it difficult to trust a platform's recommendations, describing it as "not the go-to source". Instead, consumers prefer to have more clarity on the context of these recommendations, or they simply look for other ways to get suggestions (Price, 2018).

According to an article by *The Independent*, Odeon cinemas conducted a study on Britain's viewing habits. According to their research, British people alone have spent around 187 hours a year looking for something to watch. That's around eight days of browsing through content on OTT platforms ("Brits spend 187 hours browsing Netflix in a year, study claims | The Independent").

As stated by the software company *Reelgood*, there is an infinite amount of content floating around on different channels and OTT platforms. The list only gets longer as new content is produced and released almost daily. *Reelgood* shed some light on the difficulties consumers' face when trying to keep up with the amount of content coming their way. "How do consumers keep track of all these shows and movies that keep getting bounced around?" They proceed to try and answer this question and through doing so they come across the point that because data on this matter is scattered, consumers find it hard to trust the platforms' recommendations "without a central source of truth for this data" ("48% of users don't know where to watch their movies and shows online").

Author and Opinion Writer, Jill Stark defines the paradox of choice in an opinion piece for WA Today. In this piece, she expresses the uneasy feelings she gets and how scrolling through content has quite the toll on her. "I kept scrolling, scrolling, scrolling — searching for the 'right' viewing option. Nothing felt satisfying. I was like a junk food addict who had

binged so heavily on cheeseburgers and ice cream; I could no longer enjoy the taste. It all felt so bland and disappointing” (Stark, 2019).

In this article, we are introduced to the terms “Cord-cutting” and “Paradox of Choice”. Cord-cutting is the growing trend of a great portion of the population no longer subscribing to traditional cable TV, and instead subscribe to newer OTT platforms like Netflix, HBO, and Amazon Prime etc. The Paradox of Choice is defined as the result of now being presented with so many choices and options that consumers are less likely to choose a satisfactory outcome (“Why do we spend 20 minutes browsing Netflix and fail to watch anything?”).

This article discusses the concept behind the OTT recommendations and explains that this is a two-way road concept. It is important for viewers to understand that AI requires as much information as possible to be more accurate, and that giving up personal data will harvest better suggestions (Griffiths, 2020).

According to a survey carried out by PwC, consumers can choose to stick with a streaming service if it provides them with specific features. For example, if the service has “a clean, intuitive user interface (UI) that understands consumers even better than they know themselves”. Additionally, this survey highlights that many consumers want to go beyond the personalization feature on streaming services. What they’re really longing for is “viewing recommendations based on factors such as mood, length of content, who they are with, and what content they are currently watching”. Throughout the whole study, we keep coming back to how finding something suitable to watch is a major factor consumer struggle with and constantly look for in new services (“Consumer survey of on video streaming preferences and attitudes”).

This article explains in depth what the Paradox of Choice is, and how it is becoming a major concern in the modern world where we are being exposed to more and more options. The theory behind the Paradox of Choice is that while it is believed that having multiple choices makes it easier to choose an option that the consumer will be happy with. However, having an abundance of choices causes the buyer to make more effort in the decision process, and most likely will leave the buyer unsatisfied with the choice. As a result, this theory suggests that being offered too many choices limits the consumer's freedom (Ward).

The shift to streaming video services has been inevitable, and the media and entertainment industry has had to adjust and adapt to the changing needs and habits of consumers. According to a survey ran by Deloitte, it was found that in the US, at the start of 2020, consumers subscribed to an average of three paid streaming video services. However, by the end of that year, consumers were subscribed to an average of five paid video streaming services. Although this may seem like a positive statement for providers, consumers were also cutting services more frequently and switching from one platform to another. Although consumers are subscribed to more platforms than ever, they are most likely to not keep the same service subscription for a long period of time (Deloitte, 2021).

Research Methodology

The authors have developed an online survey and distributed it in two rounds: October/November 2021 and May/June 2022. The survey was shared with university students in Dubai.

The online survey aimed to understand and study our targeted group by knowing their needs and temperaments and how OTT platforms might affect their overall emotional state. This survey was crucial to conduct, especially given the fact that the number of OTT platforms available in the market is increasingly higher by time. Within our survey, we made sure to also identify the age group, gender, and financial situation of the OTT platform subscribers to help us recognize and point out any correlations with decision-making and good watching experiences. We targeted university students (graduate, undergraduate and fresh-graduates) located in the emirate of Dubai since they represent the audience that possesses enough purchase power to pay for their own subscriptions and at the same time, they are more adapted to the streaming culture and usually don't subscribe to cable network services (also known as the "cord-cutters").

Survey Description

The research group put together a survey of 22 questions that was shared among university students and fresh graduates. 330 responses were received in both rounds, which have been analyzed in the section below. The purpose of the survey is to identify how the respondents feel regarding OTT platforms and the decision-making process when choosing something new to watch.

The survey's first couple of questions were designed to understand the demographics of the respondents. It was found that 77% of the participants were females, whereas 70% of them were aged between 16 and 25 years old.

Survey Results

The next set of questions in the survey were intended to understand how the respondents feel about subscribing to several OTT platforms at the same time. *Netflix* is by far the most consumed streaming service (92.9% of the surveyed; *YouTube* is the second most consumed streaming service (91%); 36% of the surveyed subscribe to the region's main streaming service, *Shahid*; 23% of the surveyed subscribe to *Amazon Prime* streaming service.

The survey's following questions looked at understanding how much time the respondents spent watching movies or series per day. Results showed that almost half of the respondents (49%) spent between 1 to 3 hours a day watching movies or series. The remaining respondents were divided between 21% spending 45 minutes or less consuming video content while 13% watched movies or series for 3 hours or more, and 15% said they do not watch movies or series every day. Following this question, it was important to understand how much time the respondents spent searching for new content to watch. The authors identified that 49.2% of the respondents 1 said that it takes them between 5 to 10 minutes to find something to watch.

The next question in the survey was added to help identify where people get their recommendations from when looking for something new to watch. The responses for this question included friends and family, social media, forums, Google search, the platform's recommendations feature as well as the option to choose 'other'. For this question, respondents had the ability to choose multiple responses. The response which was selected the most with 88% was friends and family followed by social media with 62%, then the platform recommendation feature with 42%, then followed by Google search with 12%, and finally 7% found their recommendations through other sources and 2% from forums.

Keeping in mind that every OTT platform has a ‘recommended for you’ feature, it was important to understand whether the respondents made use of these personalization features, for example the like and dislike a movie or series feature that can be found on Netflix. Responses for this question came back relatively evenly split with 51% responding ‘Yes’ and 49% responding ‘No’.

The next question was aimed at understanding the number of negative emotions those participants felt when struggling to find something to watch or binge on. 77.5% identified their emotion as “frustrated” and 47% felt that they were wasting their time during the browsing process.

To tag along their viewing journey and understand what our participants did when they couldn’t find something of interest to them to watch on these OTT Platforms, we asked one more question, also providing them multiple options to select from. Participants had the option to select one or more of these responses. We discovered that switching to social media was the ultimate option for them.

Here is the list of options they had to choose from along with the number of responses we received.

- **Switch to social media** (61%)
- **Go to sleep** (27%)
- 20% of the respondents stated to **read a book** instead
- The remaining 14% responded that they switched to traditional TV, listened to a podcast or just gave up.

Conclusion

The authors could not identify a direct correlation between the number of subscriptions to streaming services and negative emotion. Instead, negative emotions, specifically feelings of frustration, boredom, tiredness are prevalent among 88.7% of the respondents. The authors identify a correlation between browsing for streaming content and negative emotions experienced by the users. This might lead to higher churn of subscribers and take users to other platforms, since humans tend to avoid negative emotions by nature. In user experience language, this is understood as “friction” between the system and the user, and may lead eventually to the user giving up on the platform or service for another one that provides less friction during the user journey. Another important thing to consider: mental stress has been connected until now with work-related issues, not with leisure activities. Even though our modern times offer us many convenient solutions, those solution sometimes can add stress to other dimensions of our lives that had not been affected by it up until now.

Potential Solution: A Content Recommendation Platform

For these reasons and given the insightful data provided by the surveys, the authors identify an opportunity for developing a recommendation platform that simplifies and gamifies the search process. that the solution consists of creating an AI-programmed engine that generates recommendations based on one’s moods and personal preferences. Our recommendation engine, called *Spectar*, (from the Latin word *spectare* which means “to watch”) would facilitate finding new content to watch across all platforms available. Since the respondents are not able to find new content to watch on the platforms they are currently subscribed to, we thought an AI generator and recommendation engine would help generate a distinctive

scope of new content to watch. The idea is that the AI would learn and understand the different habits of a specific consumer and depending on how he/she is feeling on a certain day, would recommend a list of movies or series to watch across all platforms.

The thought behind this solution is not to limit the suggested content to a certain video streaming service platform. Instead, the aim is to consolidate all the content across all possible platforms and suggest content that would be valuable and interesting to a specific person individually. Additionally, *Spectar* comes with another feature that allows users to link their social media platforms to the generator. By doing so, it feeds off more information from the user to pinpoint a better recommendation stack. The reason this solution was sought out and thought of is because consumers can easily switch from one video streaming service to another with little to no cancellation fees. Furthermore, the results from this survey already showed that many respondents were already subscribed to several video streaming services while also willing to subscribe to more. This indicated that there is room to offer a paid solution that would facilitate the decision-making process when searching for something new to watch.

Spectar's design allows for a seamless and very much interactive experience that resonates with each user differently. This allows our product to have a more humane approach rather than it being too stiff and robotic for users to see or even interact with. The flow of our product would be clean and easy-to-use. The dialogue itself is light-hearted and quick to digest.

This solution would not only benefit the user to form a stress-free searching process but it would also expose various video streaming services and platforms to users which would in return also generate more subscriptions and revenue for them, all while staying conscious of time.

Despite the success that OTT platforms have witnessed in the past few years, there are still areas of improvements and technologies that these platforms can invest in to improve the viewing experience and gain customer loyalty.

Most of the available recommendation systems are focused on suggesting content for viewers to watch but not the platforms that offer the content. The purpose of this study was to identify whether decision fatigue was an issue in the video streaming services industry. The results of the survey ran for this study in fact showed that there was a significant issue. Respondents did claim that they were often not able to find new content to watch even after spending over 10 minutes searching. The surveyed also did mention that not finding content to watch often led them to give up the search and turn to social media or another occupation. In addition to this, video streaming providers are also facing the issues of either not being able to retain their customers, or of simply losing subscribers because they are unable to find things to watch. The research has also shown that consumers have gotten into the habit of switching from one platform to another to simply watch the content they are interested in, rather than remaining subscribed to all platforms at the same time. To reduce decision fatigue our study also aims to point out to a potential a solution (still at an early stage) for choosing the appropriate content on multiple OTT platforms that fits one's personal preferences.

The results from this study have allowed us to come up with a sketch product called *Spectar* which would be an AI-based recommendation engine that will learn the preferences and watching habits of an individual and recommend accurate suggestions. Our AI

recommendation engine will consider each users mood, overall preferences, as well as factors like weather outside and how the user's day went. We want our users to feel like they are being understood and thought of. Unlike any other OTT platform or recommendation service, *Spectar* is designed purely to satisfy the needs of our subscribers. To conclude, the authors expect to make a positive contribution to the scientific community by providing more clarity to the issue of overabundance of content on streaming platforms, as well as by pointing out to a potential solution that aims to minimize the overall frustration during the browsing process.

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Creating Brand Identity in Museums, the Troy Museum

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Abstract

The Troy Museum was founded in the ancient city of Troy, which is included on the UNESCO world heritage list. For the establishment of the museum, the National Architectural Project Competition was held in 2011 and the foundations of the museum were laid with the project of the winning team in 2013. 2018 was declared the Year of Troy by the Çanakkale Governorship and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, thus the Troy Museum was opened in the same year. Troy has Homer, Iliad, Trojan legends, and a history dating back to 4000 B.C. The purpose of the museum is to exhibit and protect the archaeological artifacts unearthed from excavations at the Troy Ruins. The Troy Museum, which was constituted with a contemporary museum understanding, has become a successful museum by increasing its recognition throughout Turkey. The Troy Museum has carried its national recognition to the international arena as well. The Troy Museum received the 2020/2021 European Museum Academy (EMA) Special Mention Award and won the European Museum of the Year Awards (EMYA) special commendation in 2020 for its innovative exhibition approach and structure which is combining the past and the present by addressing contemporary issues. Despite the emergence of the coronavirus in 2020 and isolating the whole world, the Troy Museum has become known for crossing the border and showing cultural resistance. The museum, which has a short history, has become a brand by achieving a lot in a short time. This study will focus on how the Troy Museum increased its prestige in all circumstances through applications and policies before and during the coronavirus.

Keywords: Museum, Troy, Cultural Heritage, Pandemic, Brand Identity

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Introduction

Contemporary museums are among the most important institutions that increase the visibility of the city by contributing to the city they are located in. The new museum of the ancient city of Troy, Çanakkale, which is on the UNESCO World Heritage List, was opened in 2018. The Troy Museum stands out with its visitor-oriented, educational museum approach and the use of technology.

The first steps of museum activities in the city of Çanakkale took place in the time of Atatürk and the collection of historical and stone artifacts started in 1936 and then the Museum Directorate was established in 1965. A museum collection began to form through the artifacts obtained because of the excavations and the return of the artifacts smuggled abroad. With the expansion of the collection and the proliferation of finds, a museum building was needed. In line with this goal, the museum building was built in 1984. However, due to the inadequacy of the museum building over time, a new museum building was needed and the idea of establishing the Troy Museum emerged (Troya Müzesi Stratejik Plan 2018-2023). The National Architectural Project Competition was held in 2011 and the construction of the museum building was started in 2013. Troy Museum, which opened its doors to its visitors on October 10, 2018, is in Tevfikiye Village of Çanakkale.

The decision to build the Troy Museum was taken by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism to exhibit the excavated artifacts from the Troy archaeological region, which has a historical and mythological background. Çanakkale Archeology Museum was closed and the Troy Museum was built in its place. The most important point when creating the exhibition area is the Trojan War and its heroes, which form the basis of the Trojan narratives, the current excavation findings, and excavation techniques of Troy to the visitors (Troya Müzesi Mimari Yarışması Şartnamesi, 2011, p.15).

The museum where the artifacts obtained from the excavations in the ruins are exhibited and preserved, was built because of the architectural project competition held in 2011. For this purpose, it was deemed appropriate to hold a competition for the construction of the new museum and was organized as a national, free-participation, one-stage architectural project competition (Troya Müzesi Mimari Yarışması Şartnamesi, 2011, p.15). It is aimed to increase the economic and social value of Çanakkale city in the eyes of local and foreign tourists and to make the city a tourist attraction point through the Troy Ruins and the Troy Museum.

The Museum of Troy is classified as an archeology museum with its mission of exhibiting, protecting, and transferring the artifacts of the region where it is located. The Troy Museum is located in a three-story building. Visitors who start their tour inside the museum follow the story consisting of seven parts: Archeology of Troas Region, Bronze Age of Troy, Iliad Epic and Trojan War, Troas and Ilion in Antiquity, Eastern Roman and Ottoman Period, Archeology History, Traces of Troy (Troya Müzesi Stratejik Plan 2018-2023). The museum consists of exhibition, storage, administrative units, conservation-restoration laboratory, temporary and permanent exhibition halls, cafe, restaurant, and sales areas.

Peace and belonging come first among the elements that inspired the Troy Museum. From Alexander the Great to Mehmet the Conqueror, every thought in the geography of Troy brought its own hero to the fore. The Museum of Troy includes all the heroes of Homer, the best example of this is that there is a section in the exhibition even in the name of Heinrich Schlimann, who smuggled the Treasures of Priam. For this reason, the Troy Museum has a

language of peace that is free from arguments and ideologies. In addition, the Turks became a part of Troy for the first time by creating identity awareness by reading together with the Anatolian ties of Troy (Gölcük, 2020b).

Creating a Museum

The city brand refers to the whole of the historical, cultural, and social values that create the unique elements of a city itself. The thoughts of society express the image of the city. In line with this purpose, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism conducted research to provide better service and it was informed that local and foreign tourists visited the region in a short time like two hours. For this reason, it has been decided to build the Troy Museum, which will develop the city of Çanakkale socially and economically, make the region more attractive in the touristic area, and as a center with an interactive exhibition method (Troya Müzesi Mimari Yarışması Şartnamesi, 2011, p.15).

The city of Çanakkale, which has hosted many civilizations in history, is one of the most important cities in Turkey in terms of history and culture. Excavations in the ancient city of Troy were carried out for the first time in 1871 by Heinrich Schlieman, and then it became a world-renowned place. The ancient city of Troy has a long history with the epic of the Iliad, the legend of Troy, and its 4000-year history. The region, which has national and international recognition, was declared Troy Historical National Park in 1996 and was included in the UNESCO world cultural heritage list in 1998. The year 2018 has been declared the Year of Troy by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, as the twentieth year of its inclusion in the list.

It is known that the Troy Museum has participated in many competitions since its establishment in 2018: The European Museum of the Year Award- EMYA 2020 Application, 2020 Baksı Culture and Art Foundation “Anatolian Awards” Application and Attraction Star Awards' Application (Troya Müzesi Stratejik Plan 2018-2023). Troy Museum won the European Museum of the Year Awards special award for 2020 (the European Museum of the Year Awards (EMYA) special commendation in 2020), but the results were announced in 2021 due to the coronavirus. “Çanakkale Biennial” competed in the Baksı Culture and Art Foundation competition in the "Timed Events" category, and a part of the biennial held at the Troy Museum. Troy Museum received the “most successful museum” award out of eighty museums because of the Attraction Star Awards' application. At the same time, the Troy Museum was included in the "World's Greatest Places 2019" list in Time Magazine (Time).

The city of Troy keeps its long historical past alive in its own museum and makes its name known in a short time with the successes of the museum. The museum is established in 2018, it received the 2020 European Museum of the Year Commendation Award and the 2020/2021 European Museum Academy Special Award. It is also justifiably proud of being the first Turkish Museum to receive both awards. The awards received by the museum during the pandemic process were held in an online ceremony under the conditions of the day (Özdener, 2021).

Creating a Brand During the Pandemic Period

During the pandemic period, the Troy Museum did not interrupt its activities and continued its activities on social media (Image 1). In 2019-2020, the Troy Museum was provided visit the museum in the accompany of experts. In this context, Zeytinburnu Municipality brought visitors twice a week and supplied guidance services to 1461 people in total. A "visitor

welcome" was held in the accompany of a museum staff assigned as of September 2020 and within three months, the museum's score in Turkish Museum increased from 4.5 to 4.9, and visitor satisfaction was increased by strengthening the institutional image of the museum (Troya Müzesi Stratejik Plan 2018-2023). However, the "visitor welcome" application could not be continued due to the lack of museum staff. On the other hand, The Troy Museum started to make social media events and live broadcasts with the slogan "We are not closed! We Opened a New Door". The museum set out with the aim of being together without being side by side (Gölcük, 2020a). The museum announced these activities with the following text:

"As you know, museums and archaeological sites in our country are closed to visitors due to COVID-19. However, in this environment we are in, we think that the social function of museums has emerged more clearly. Museums can become a place of "escape" from the wide world they contain. These places, which fit the history of humanity, can be a shelter for us today. At this point, a "physical" meeting is not necessary. Yesterday you were our visitors, today the Museums will be your visitors to your homes. We are ready to stay connected to each other and to ensure the continuation of cultural transfer with the tools offered by the era.

There is nothing "closed". We have opened a new door, and through this door, we are ready to be together, communicate, share, and cooperate. Today, museums are needed more than ever. The new and predominant role of our "visitors" is now to "follow". Contrary to popular belief, our communication with you has become stronger during this time. We interact more than ever before. This desire you show pushes us to produce. We are not side by side, but we are 'together'. We closely follow the developments in the world. We are aware of our responsibilities. As the Museum of Troy, we are trying to be more interactive with you during this process. In this context, we will be together with Instagram live broadcasts from now on. We will continue to share the world of Troy with you. From Troy with Love..." (Troya Müzesi Stratejik Plan 2018-2023).

The Museum of Troy became the first museum to start social media live broadcasts in Turkey and was among the pioneers in Europe. One of the most important branches of social media, whose importance has increased with the Coronavirus, the number of Instagram followers of the Troy Museum increased by 278% after 25 live broadcasts, and while the average age of followers is 44 and above, it has managed to include young masses by falling to the age range of 24-34 (Troya Müzesi Stratejik Plan 2018-2023).

Aeneas Culture Route, the first European Cultural Route of Turkey, of which the Troy Museum is a project partner, was registered in 2021. Starting from Troy, the route proceeding through the Aegean Sea reaches Europe. The route provides intercultural transition and serves as a contact between five countries on the continent with the passage of sea routes. The selected countries and routes include the ports and archaeological sites that Aeneas visited on his journey to the founding of the Roman Empire after escaping the Trojan War (Ünsal, 2021).

In 2021, the 150th anniversary of the Troy excavations was celebrated during the pandemic. The 150th anniversary of the first excavation permit given to Heinrich Schliemann by the Ottoman State was commemorated. To this end, on 27 August 2021 "The 150th Anniversary of Troy Excavations in the Light of Ottoman Documents" exhibition was held. Considering

the subject through the Ottoman State archives, which permitted Schliemann to excavate, what the Ottoman bureaucracy did with the artifacts and treasures smuggled abroad; how the Troy excavation was followed; it has been tried to illuminate how and under what conditions the legal process initiated by the Ottoman Empire in Athens was carried out (Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı).

A 3D Mapping show is planned for the Troy Museum, which will provide better service to the changing visitor profile with the developing technology during the Coronavirus period and will also be beneficial in terms of tourism. However, on International Museum Day in 2022, 3D mapping was presented to the visitors for the first time in the garden of the Troy Museum, accompanied by laser, pyrotechnics, light, sound, and music (Çanakkale Valiliği, 2022).

The transition of museums to the virtual environment began in March 2020, which is the period when the pandemic emerged in Türkiye. Troy Virtual Museum had a total of 1,179,479 virtual visitors between March 2020 and March 2021 (Batuhan, 2021, p.127). This shows that there has been a visitor density in the virtual environment of the museum during the pandemic. During the pandemic, the Troy Museum carried out activities on social media on 25 different topics. Online activities, which started with Troy Museum Director Rıdvan Gölcük, continued with evaluations on different names and subjects.

ACTIVITIES ON SOCIAL MEDIA DURING THE PANDEMIC PROCESS		
Name	Presenter	Date
Historical Outbreaks in Troy	Rıdvan GÖLCÜK	31.03.2020
The First Treaties in History	Rıdvan GÖLCÜK	2.04.2020
The Light that Shines Through the Ages: “Glass”	Güney Can GÜLŞAN	6.04.2020
Troy Museum and Architecture	Rıdvan GÖLCÜK and Ömer Selçuk BAZ	8.04.2020
Trade from Amphora to Plastic Bottle	Kemal ÇİBUK	7.04.2020
The Memory of Troy: Akköy Jugs	Hazal FIRAT	9.04.2020
Protecting Troy Treasures from Hitler	Rıdvan GÖLCÜK	13.04.2020
Troy Museum in the Context of New Approaches in Museology	Özgür ÇAVGA	15.04.2020
Reflections of Antiquity: Assos	Osman ÇAPALOV	17.04.2020
From the Mother Goddess to Anatolia	Kemal ÇİBUK	21.04.2020
Were the Trojans Turks?	Rıdvan GÖLCÜK	22.04.2020
Polyxena – At the Beginning of a New Age	Musa TOMBUL	27.04.2020

Wars, Fires, Destruction, and Aftermath in Troy	Prof. Dr. Rustem ASLAN	29.04.2020
Assos 1881-1883 Diplomacy – Archeology - Human	Prof. Dr. Nurettin ARSLAN	1.05.2020
The Ancient City of Parion, Pearl of Northern Troas, and Cultural Heritage	Prof. Dr. Vedat KELEŞ	6.05.2020
Alexandria Troas Excavations	Prof. Dr. Erhan ÖZTEPE	6.05.2020
Beyond: The History of Troy in the 20th Century	Rıdvan GÖLCÜK	8.05.2020
Maydos Kilisetepe Mound Excavations	Doç. Dr. Göksel SAZCI	11.05.2020
Underwater Archeology in Turkey	Doç. Dr. Hakan ÖNİZ	15.05.2020
During the Turkish World Museums Week Event, the Troy Museum was introduced in the Zoom Live Broadcast for “the Museums of the Turkish World”	Rıdvan GÖLCÜK Moderator: Firuza SULTANZADE	21.05.2020
Interview on “The Legend Continues Museum of Troy” on the page of the Association of Archaeologists.	Rıdvan GÖLCÜK Moderator: İlkay İVGİN	29.04.2020
Interview on "Museums and Communication in the Days of Pandemic: Museum of Troy" on the Page of the Association of Archaeologists	Rıdvan GÖLCÜK Moderator: Canan Cürgen GÜLTAŞ	30.05.2020
41st Museum Meetings	Rıdvan GÖLCÜK	14.05.2020
Readings of the Iliad	Rıdvan GÖLCÜK, KemalÇİBUK, Güney Can GÜLŞAN and Osman ÇAPALOV	23.03.2020 (5 broadcasts)

Image 1. Source: Troya Müzesi Stratejik Plan 2018-2023.

Conclusion

Troy Museum provides the branding of Çanakkale city and is the symbol of Çanakkale. The museum has extended the time spent by visitors in the region in terms of cultural tourism.

The Troy Museum is an institution that has been working actively since the day it was opened and works within the understanding of contemporary museology. It has shown that the sustainability and continuity of museums are possible during the pandemic process. The museum, which is new in terms of its establishment date, has become visible both nationally

and internationally. It is seen that the museum continues to create and develop itself with its online activities and contemporary efforts during the pandemic period.

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Dialogue Between Religion and Technology: Case Study of Fo Guang Go

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Abstract

The use of technology to recreate and enhance religious experiences has been increasingly present nowadays. An important Buddhist organization based in Taiwan, Fo Guang Shan, practices Humanistic Buddhism. Its founder, Master Hsing Yun, is famous for his use of technology in Dharma propagation. The purpose of this study was to investigate the case of Fo Guang Go mobile application sponsored by Fo Guang Shan Monastery and to gain a better understanding of how religious experiences were recreated and perceived. So far, Fo Guang Go has undergone three major iterations. Three major research questions guided the design of this study, including: (1) What functionalities are included in Fo Guang Go? How do they evolve over the iterations? (2) What are the ideas and intentions of Fo Guang Go and their relation to Dharma propagation? and (3) How do users perceive Buddhism in Fo Guang Go? Qualitative interviews were adopted as the major research method. Participants were recruited, including the director of the monastery, one information officer, and two users. In addition, video clips and presentation notes on Fo Guang Go were also collected for further analysis. The research results indicated: (1) The drive for iterations evolved from presenting tourist information to attracting young people and later to establishing religious practices; (2) Technology was regarded as a convenient tool for Dharma propagation, and the technology-mediated experiences were carefully crafted to fit religious teachings; and (3) Fo Guang Go was perceived as informative and comforting and made Buddhism approachable to the public.

Keywords: Religion and Technology, Fo Guang Go, Dharma Propagation

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Introduction

The use of technology to recreate and enhance religious experiences has been increasingly present nowadays. For example, people used to go to temples to worship gods and ask for signs. Nowadays, people watch sermons on the internet and worship gods via mobile applications. Cutting-edge technologies such as artificial intelligence are adapted and become means of Dharma propagation. In Beijing Long Chung Temple, Xian-er Robot, empowered by the technology of artificial intelligence, is responsible for welcoming tourists and answering questions.

Fo Guang Shan is an international Chinese Mahāyāna Buddhist organization founded in 1967 by Master Hsing Yun. The monastic order practices Humanistic Buddhism. The headquarters, Fo Guang Shan Monastery, is the largest Buddhist monastery in Taiwan. Master Hsing Yun promotes Humanistic Buddhism and emphasizes keeping up with the times. He is known for his efforts in the modernization of Chinese Buddhism. Master Hsing Yun plays a pioneering role in introducing records, slides, broadcasts, TV, and the Internet into Dharma propagation. In Fo Guang Shan Buddha Museum, there is even a 4D movie theater playing the life story of the Buddha.

Buddhism and Technology

Buddhism especially Mahāyāna Buddhism has a long tradition of holding science and technology in high esteem. According to the Buddhist scripture, Buddhists should diligently study five sciences. The five sciences include the science of language, the science of logic, the science of medicine, the science of fine arts and crafts, and the inner science of spirituality. The knowledge of the five sciences is believed to have to do with the ability to serve the needy masses altruistically. Master Hsing Yun took the Buddha as an example to illustrate the relationship between Buddhism and technology and said,

When the Buddha was young, he studied the five sciences. After he became a monk, he visited various teachers and ascetic monks. Because the Buddha knew the worldly law and the eternal law, he was able to teach and transform people, give medicines to the sick, and relieve their physical and mental afflictions. (Shih, 1999)

The relationship between Buddhism and technology is rather complementary and cooperative. Veidlinger (2017) claimed, “Buddhism has long been considered a religion that is more amenable to scientific ways of thinking than many others.” He suggested that Buddhism focuses on techniques that can be scientifically investigated. From a Buddhist perspective, Buddhism is the subject and technology the object. The use of various technologies seems to be taken for granted on religious occasions as long as they can assist in the implementation of the Buddhist teachings. Ma (2005) mentioned that Buddhism regards technology as a way of Dharma propagation, convenient living, and validating Dharma.

In addition to the fact that technologies are used in the context of Dharma propagation, Master Hsing Yun believed that Buddhism can guide the development of science and technology. He said,

Looking at science from the standpoint of Buddhism, Buddhism is actually a beacon that guides science. In Buddhist teachings, there are many profound ideas and concepts related to the spiritual and material world, which can provide ideas and directions for the

development of scientific research. The more developed it is, the more it will prove the rationality and authenticity of Buddhism. Therefore, the advocacy of Buddhism not only has no conflict with science but also provides accurate verifications in terms of scientific methods and effects. (Shih, 2008)

Founder of Fo Guang Shan, Master Hsing Yun, a major promoter of Humanistic Buddhism, devoted himself to the modernization of Buddhism. As the scripture goes, the Buddha Dharma is in the world, not apart from the world. In order to achieve this goal, he made an effort in utilizing various modern technologies, such as records, slides, broadcasts, TV, and the Internet to increase the effect of Dharma propagation.

Fo Guang Go Mobile App

In this research project, Fo Guang Go is the subject under investigation. It is a mobile application sponsored by Fo Guang Shan Monastery. Users can download it from the Apple App Store and the Google Play Store. The available language settings are traditional Chinese and simplified Chinese. As shown in Figure 1, Fo Guang Go falls into the category of tourism and is free for all users. The current version is 3.1.2 and was submitted about two years ago. In total, 27 raters rated this application, and the rating is 4.7 on a 5.0 scale. The current functionalities include three major components: tourist information, interactions, and practices.



Figure 1: Fo Guang Go Introduction Page on the Apple App Store

Tourist Information

The first component of Fo Guang Go is tourist information. It presents visitor information about the scenic spots in Fo Guang Shan Monastery, Fo Guang Shan Buddha Museum, and Fo Guang Shan Satra Repository. For each scenic spot, the information covers its location, introduction, services, photo album, and opening hours as shown in Figure 2.



Figure 2: Tourist Information

In order to enhance visitor experiences, the technology of augmented reality is adopted. With the assistance of Bluetooth, Geo AR (location-based augmented reality) is initiated when visitors get close to geo-based markers attached with interactive and digital content. This cutting-edge technology allows visitors to navigate the surroundings and provides guidance on their tours.

In addition, interactions are designed for specific locations. For example, the Great Compassion Shrine is embedded with two interactions, Buddhist Quiz and Dharma Water. While touring the site, visitors can participate in these two activities to improve their understanding of Buddhism and learn Buddhist practices.

Interactions

Interactions are activities that visitors can carry out while they are visiting Fo Guang Shan or at home. Interactions include AR Post Card, AR Camera, Interactive Games, and Dharma Words. AR Post Card and AR Camera are mainly for visitors to use on-site. They can take pictures of the scenes along with the animated monk.

Interactive games are games embedded with Buddhist teachings. Different from typical computer games, these games are specially designed to teach Buddhism. For example, Little

Monk Run is a game similar to Temple Run, in which players need to grab lotus flowers (good merits) and avoid bad desires (stones) in order to win the game as shown in Figure 3.



Figure 3: Little Monk Run Instruction Page

Dharma Words is an activity similar to drawing lots when people visit temples physically. Different from drawing lots, Dharma Words is facilitated by technology and can randomly select good words for users. The good words fall into six categories including career, health, virtue, study, family, and doing things. This activity is for users to read good words to encourage themselves or to send the good words in the form of photos to others via email or social media.

Practices

Practices are the latest development and include religious activities such as Prayer, Meditation, Chanting the Buddha's Name, Walking Meditation, and Sutra Transcription. These activities are mainly for visitors to carry out at home. Different from Buddhist daily practices, these activities are facilitated by technology. Users can get easy access to sutras and timers. In addition, Fo Guang Go will keep track of their progress. Figure 4 is the demonstration of Chanting the Buddha's Name. There are various sutras for users to choose from. As they press the play button, audio will be played, and users can chant with the audio with the assistance of the timer.

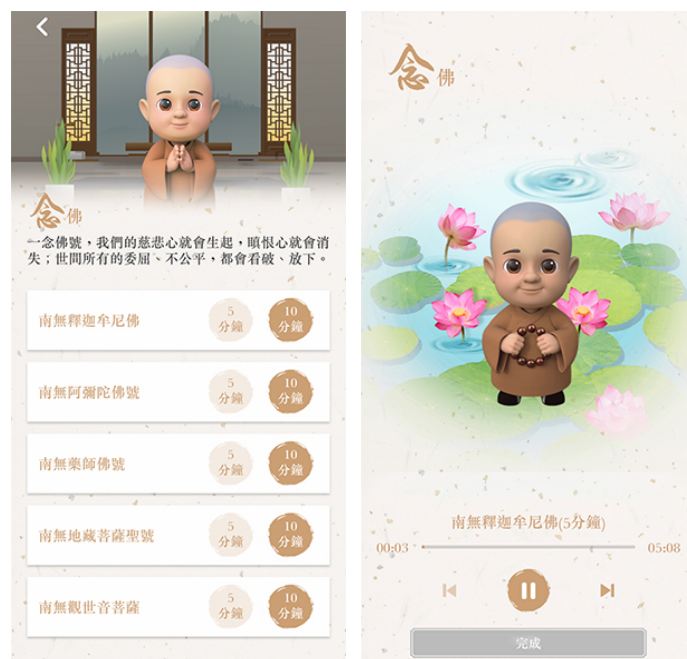


Figure 4: Chanting the Buddha's Name

Sutra transcription is a popular practice done by a lot of Buddhists. Some temples even print sutras for followers to transcribe. The origin of sutra transcription can be dated back to the Han Dynasty. At that time, the circulation of Buddhist scriptures relied on manual transcription with paper and ink. The style of transcription was deeply influenced by Chinese calligraphy and became part of the culture. Followers would transcribe sutras using various calligraphy styles. Buddhists believe that sutra transcription has a lot of good merits and can calm the body and mind easily (Shih, 1997). In Fo Guang Go, sutra transcription can be done easily. Without the preparation of paper, ink, and brushes, users can select their favorite sutras and use their fingers to write on the screen of mobile phones as shown in Figure 5.



Figure 5: Sutra Transcription

Methodology

The purpose of this study was to investigate the case of the Fo Guang Go mobile application in order to gain a better understanding of how religious experiences were recreated and perceived. Qualitative interviews were adopted as the major research method. Participants were recruited, including the director of the monastery, one information officer, and two frequent users. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a set of guiding questions. Each interview lasted approximately one hour. The interviews were later transcribed and subjected to thematic analysis. In order to gain a broader understanding, video clips and presentation notes on Fo Guang Go were also collected for further analysis. Three major research questions guided the design of the study, including: (1) What functionalities are included in Fo Guang Go? How do they evolve over the iterations? (2) What are the ideas and intentions of Fo Guang Go and their relation to Dharma propagation? and (3) How do users perceive Buddhism in Fo Guang Go?

Results and Discussions

RQ1: What functionalities are included in Fo Guang Go? How do they evolve over the iterations?

Fo Guang Go originated from an encounter between the director of the Monastery and the CEO of a computer game company in 2015. In November 2015, the CEO came to Fo Guang Shan for a visit. He hoped to turn technologies such as online games into an educational method to benefit students. The director of the Monastery felt that the CEO agreed with the teachings of Humanistic Buddhism. At that time, Fo Guang Shan would like to build a touring system for the whole campus, and the CEO's offer of help just came in time. During the development process, they often communicated with each other in order to make the application fit the need of Fo Guang Shan.

Fo Guang Go was first launched in 2017. There were three major developmental stages. Stage one was the trial period when Fo Guang Go was first implemented as a touring system for Fo Guang Shan. Stage two was the attraction period when interactive games were added to make it appealing to people, especially young people. Stage three was the practice period when Buddhist practices were introduced to provide in-depth religious experiences.

Stage 1: Trial Period

The main purpose of the first version was to enhance the visitor's on-site experience during the Chinese New Year. During the Chinese New Year, a lot of people came to Fo Guang Shan for sightseeing. With the aid of the application, visitors could receive tourist information and enjoy interactive games while visiting specific scenic spots. In the first version, the technology of Geo AR was a major attraction. The application instructed users to turn on Bluetooth and the positioning service of the device as shown in Figure 6. When they approached certain spots, visitors could receive the tour information and participate in the activities of various scenic spots. After collecting points in the activities, visitors could even redeem souvenirs.



Figure 6: Beacon Instruction Page

The first version of Fo Guang Go was well-received by the visitors during the Chinese new year in 2017. The director of the monastery was deeply impressed by how one interactive game attracted a young couple to stay in the monastery. He said,

Then one coworker took a picture and showed it to me. At that time, I did not know what she meant by the picture. She said that the family in the photo consisted of three members: Father, Mother, and Kid. The parents were playing the AR game of catching lotus flowers and forgot the existence of the child. When I heard this, I was very curious. It never occurred to me that the game designed by Buddhists could attract this young couple so much that they even forgot the existence of their kid.

As nowadays more and more young people are moving away from religion, Fo Guang Shan viewed this application especially gaming as a bridge between religion and young people.

Stage 2: Attraction Period

Interactive games were seriously implemented in the second version. In version one, there was only one AR game for visitors to catch lotus flowers. In version two, five interactive games were added including Receive the Great Compassion Dharani Water, Catch Master Hsing Yu's Calligraphy, Build the Buddha Statue, Little Monk Run, and Little Monk Spring Festival Couplets. In order to distinguish themselves from the common computer games, the design of these interactive games had a strong tie with Buddhist teachings and practices. For example, Build the Buddha Statue is a game for users to collect and move building materials to the construction site in order to build a big Buddha statue as shown in Figure 7. It is a game for users to experience the difficulties encountered in building Fo Guang Shan Monastery.



Figure 7: Build the Buddha Statue

Fo Guang Go had a formal debut in the Chinese new year in 2018. The monastery encouraged visitors to download Fo Guang Go while they were touring Fo Guang Shan campus. Due to the promotion, the number of downloads reached 10,000. Though Fo Guang Go was popular and well-received when visitors came to Fo Guang Shan, there were still problems. The first problem was that the usage of the application dropped after people left. Fo Guang Go did not attract users to use them on a daily basis. The director felt that the attraction of technology was short-lived. Second, interactive games provided limited religious experiences. More religious activities were needed for people to have a better understanding of Buddhism. In order to solve the above problems, the development team decided to offer religious activities that people could do after they left Fo Guang Shan.

Stage 3: Practice Period

In the third iteration, religious practices were added to the application. Widely observed Buddhist practices such as meditation, prayer, and sutra transcription were included in Fo Guang Go. These activities were incorporated into the application and formed a new category called Practices. In total, four religious practices were implemented; they were Prayer, Meditation, Chanting the Buddha's Name, Walking Meditation, and Sutra Transcription. All these activities are mediated by technology. As long as users have the application with them, they can perform Buddhist practices anytime and anywhere.

RQ2. What are the ideas and intentions of Fo Guang Go and their relation to Dharma propagation?

Fo Guang Shan practices Humanistic Buddhism and emphasizes the importance of keeping up with the times. Its founder, Master Hsing Yun, is famous for his use of technology in Dharma Propagation. Technology is regarded as the conduit of culture including religion. The purpose of using modern technologies is to let people know about Buddhism and then understand Buddhism. Two major themes emerge as Buddhism encounters technology. The

first theme illustrates the use of technology in Buddhism, and the second theme discusses the formation of technology-mediated religious experiences.

Theme 1: First entice with desire, then lead into the Buddha's wisdom

Fo Guang Go is the first touring system introduced into Fo Guang Shan. It has undergone three major stages: trial, attraction, and practice. The original intention was to enhance visitor experiences. In the beginning, it was functional in the sense that the purpose of its existence was to help tourists in their visits. But after witnessing the potential of the application among young people, the development strategy was changed into attracting people to use it. As said in the Buddhist scripture, "First entice with desire, then lead into the Buddha's wisdom." Thus, in the second stage, interactive games with Buddhist teachings were implemented in Fo Guang Go. After users got familiar with the application, in the third stage, religious practices facilitated by technology were introduced for people to have a better understanding of Buddhism.

The director of the monastery was enthusiastic about the use of technology in religion. During the three development stages, he was able to see the potential and opportunities of Fo Guang Go and led its development in the direction of Dharma propagation. He explained the reason for introducing interactive games into Fo Guang Go and said,

One of our ideas for implementing games at that time was just to entice people with desire, and then lead them into the Buddha's wisdom. Gaming is not my real focus. My real intention is to get people to know Master Hsing Yun's Humanistic Buddhism. I want people to know that in fact Buddhism can be found in all walks of life and in all places.

According to the director, gaming was like a lure to attract people to know Buddhism. He went further and explained what technology was like. He said,

After we achieve our goals, we don't need to care about the means. We treat all kinds of technological devices in the game just as a way to help guide people into Buddhism. In Buddhism, it is what we called the finger that points to the moon. So all the technologies employed are just fingers pointing to the moon (the heart). This is the intention that I originally planned. Otherwise, it is no different from others.

In the context of Fo Guang Go, technology served as a convenient tool to achieve the goal of attracting people to know Buddhism.

Theme 2: Design of religious experiences

The design of experiences is a major consideration in the development of Fo Guang Go. Such considerations were first revealed in its naming. The information officer said,

We hope that the application could be highly accepted by the public. But at the same time, we hope that people would not feel that the application was highly related to religion. Consequently, we named it Fo Guang Go because we would like people to associate it with Pokemon GO, which was popular at that time.

In the very beginning, the development team knew well about the kind of technology-mediated experiences that people liked and tried to comply with the interest of the public. By increasing the association with Pokemon GO, the application was likely to be accepted.

Fo Guang Go, However, was designed with the intention to propagate Buddhist teachings. In order to distinguish Fo Guang Go from ordinary applications, the technology-mediated experiences had to be carefully crafted and anchored in Buddhist teachings. In the interview with the director, he shared with us several examples of how to redesign the technology-mediated experiences to make them loaded with Buddhist teachings. For example, he transformed a popular racing car game into a game with religious meanings. He said,

When people get close to the art museum, a car racing game will be initiated. It was originally a car racing game with many obstacles. But we changed it into a little monk walking on the smooth road of life. On the road, the little monk encounters a lot of bad things like greed, hatred, and ignorance. In order to win the game, he needs to know how to get rid of greed, hatred, and ignorance. In addition, he has to carry out the three acts of goodness and four givings. When he sees lotus flowers, he has to catch them, indicating doing good things and speaking good words. When he sees stones, representing greed, hatred, and ignorance that hindered the progress of his life, then he has to avoid them.

In addition to the car racing game, the director mentioned the redesign of a VR game for visitors to experience during the Chinese new year. In order for the game to fit the Buddhist teaching, he explained how he designed the technology-mediated experience. He said,

In the beginning, I did not know what to do with the VR game. The game was full of fighting and killing and did not fit what we promoted in Buddhism. People would think the game played in Fo Guang Shan was no different from the game played elsewhere. So we kept thinking about how to solve the problem...In the game, there was a thief running out. The player was standing in the castle and holding an arrow aiming at the thief. The scenario was like what was described in the scripture, "Studying Dharma is like guarding a city, guarding against six thieves day and night." It means that greed, hatred, and ignorance would come to people all the time. The player needed to shoot the troubles one by one. But in the end, the development team told me that the idea would be too dangerous to carry out in a VR game.

The design of the technology-mediated religious experiences has to consider the capabilities of technology as well as the appropriateness of religious connotations. Even though the director was able to redesign the game to fit Buddhist teachings, the idea was unable to be carried out due to the safety issue.

Later, the VR game project was pursued by adding a device to simulate horse riding. As players would sit on the device, there was no risk of falling. The scenario was changed into horseback riding and shooting. The director had to resort to other religious connotations. He said,

As a result, the VR game became a horse-riding shooting game. We began to think about how it should be designed. In the end, we gave a definition to it. I said that this bow was called the Zen bow. Because if you want to shoot arrows, you have to hold it very firmly. This is the power of meditation. I called the arrow the wisdom arrow because without wisdom you can not get rid of the devil. This is why they were called the Zen bow and the

wisdom arrow. And this is why I entitled the game Overcoming Demons by Wisdom Arrows.

The director felt that it was an important practice for a Buddhist to overcome demons every day in order to keep a clear mind. When it came to designing the interactions in the application, the developers tried hard to build connections with Buddhist teachings. Fo Guang Go intended not only to attract users but also to provide meaningful religious experiences.

RQ3. How do users perceive Buddhism in Fo Guang Go?

Fo Guang Go has three major components, including tourist information, interactions, and practices. The two users were interviewed about how they perceived these functions and their relation to Buddhist teachings.

Tourist Information

In terms of the first component, tourist information, both of the users believed that it was important for first-time visitors and that the tourist information helped visitors obtain geographical information and gained a better understanding of the religious meaning of the locations. One interviewee said,

When I visited Fo Guang Shan without Fo Guang Go, I felt that I only had a superficial understanding of the locations. Now I have the app, I can have a basic understanding of the locations. So when I visit the scenic spots, I come to realize the meaning of the locations and know more about the geographical environment.

Interactions

In terms of interactions, Dharma Words was popular with the two users. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, they used this function to distribute good wishes to important others and encouraged their family members to use it. As to interactive games, they felt that these games were embedded with Buddhist teaching. One interviewee said,

You can also learn some Buddha Dharma in the games. The Buddhist teachings are simple and easy to understand. As long as you try to comprehend them with your heart, you can learn Buddhist teachings about being kind, compassionate, and benevolent to others. The games also have to do with three acts of goodness and four givings. They encourage people to practice Buddhism in this direction.

Practices

As to practices, the two interviewees felt that Prayers for different occasions were comforting and meaningful. They played the audio of the prayers whenever they were free. They indicated that prayers were colloquial and easy to understand and thus could increase the understanding of Buddhism. One user said,

Prayers can increase the belief in Buddhism. Buddhism may seem difficult to understand. But Prayers simplify Buddhist teachings and make them colloquial. By listening to Prayers, people without contact with Buddhism can quickly understand its teachings.

Conclusion

The research sought to examine the relationships between Buddhism and technology by means of Fo Guang Go. Drawing from the interviews with the director of the monastery, one information officer, and two users, this study illustrated the development process of Fo Guang Go, and the strategies adopted in each developmental stage. As Fo Guang Go was a technological product serving religious purposes, the development team had to keep a balance between Buddhist teachings and technological capabilities. Therefore, they needed to carefully redesign the technology-mediated experiences to fit the Buddhist context. Such an effort was perceived by the users as expressed in their interviews. The research results indicated three major findings in correspondent to the three research questions. First, the drive for iterations evolved from presenting tourist information to attracting young people and later to establishing religious practices. Second, technology was regarded as a convenient tool for Dharma propagation, and the technology-mediated experiences were carefully crafted to fit religious contexts. Third, Fo Guang Go was perceived as informative and comforting and made Buddhism approachable to the public. The research findings highlighted the case for the integration of information technologies into Buddhist practices and would contribute to the understanding of the relationships between Buddhism and technology.

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***Fantasized Romanticity:
Rethinking the Role of Curtained Motels in Thai Contemporary Culture***

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Abstract

Examining through the lens of social-sexual production, this paper focuses on the curtained motel, known to Thais as *rong raem man rud*, in Thai contemporary culture, which has long been determined by Thai sex-gender discourse or so-called “hetero-normality”. In general, these are enjoyable places for anonymous sexual activities or having sex without any strings attached. For many, they are condemned and tainted, while for some they are partially legitimate and culturally tolerated. This paradoxical meaning of the curtained motel is our point of focus. It is important for us to explore curtained motels before they close down due to rapidly changing mobile culture, which allows people to meet virtually and initiate sexual interaction elsewhere, not limited to hotel facilities. This paper aims to analyze the curtained motel in terms of social-sexual production of space, through the question of what and under which conditions curtained motels have arisen, and to argue for an alternative value and meaning to that given and/or imposed by mainstream sex-gender discourse. Methodologically, this paper embraces Michel Foucault's “Other Space” as the theoretical framework for collecting and analyzing data from a field survey based on 6 curtained motels, built between 1977-1991, in Chiang Mai Municipality. This paper also aims to use the curtained motel as a point of reflection, opening up for discussion dominant cultural values, leading then, perhaps, to an alternative meaning in Thai contemporary culture.

Keywords: Other Space, Heterotopias, Hotel, Chiang Mai, Thailand

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Introduction

Architecture regarded as a materialization of how people interact with each other is this paper's standing point, that we also use as a lens through which to research and explore specific architectural programs in our city. This paper is interested in a specific type of architectural program featuring curtains attached at the front of rooms, called "curtained motels", commonly known to Thais as *rong raem man rud*. The curtained motel is a Registered Hotel Type 1, which facilitates only separate rooms and, of course, parking spaces. In general, curtained motels are one-story in height with one main internal roadway at least 6 meters wide running through the center, surrounded by individual rooms with parking spaces in front of them. Importantly, there is an opaque plastic curtain attached to the entrance way of each room.

Based on the way local people frequent curtained motels, many people believe that these are places for having casual sex, engaging in sexual activity without any strings attached. Moreover, we find that many Thai contemporary soap operas broadcast on television choose curtained motels as the scene of secret sexual activity, or one-night-stand sexual activity, as many locals may know. It is not surprising then that people perceive curtained motels as bad, condemned, and perhaps sinful. Many people believe that curtained motels should be located on the outskirts of the city.

Yet, instead of being destroyed or eliminated, curtained motels can still be found in other major cities. The question arises, if curtained motels are understood as bad and sinful places, paradoxically, why are they found in many major cities? For some people, the way they are still used as part of everyday life may reflect something related to Thai contemporary socio-cultural construction, from which the physicality of their built form manifests. The aim of this research paper is to unearth these ambiguous and paradoxical relations with curtained motels while, at the same time, exploring and elaborating on the spatial organization of curtained motels through their physicality and visibility.

To be able to go beyond the built form of curtained motels and explore their socio-cultural as well as political construction, the paper "A Place for One Night Stand" by Sant Suwatharapinun can act as a starting point¹. Using "Other Space" as a theoretical framework, coined by Michel Foucault, opens up the possibility of conducting field work, data collection, and questioning how the meaning imposed onto curtained motels has been constituted as such². In short, this research is an extension of the speculative and conceptual approach of Sant's paper based on how curtained motels have been politically and socially constituted and how their spaces have been secretively operated – expanding into real spaces and real cases of curtained motels.

Physical Construction and Social Structure of Curtained Motels

The question of what curtained motels are, in actual, may not reveal the whole spectrum of what we would like to discover, as we aim to examine both physical and social aspects. The first curtained motel was erected in the 1960s in Bangkok, which we may call the first period

¹ Suwatharapinun, S. (2012). A Place for One Night Stand. *Journal of Sociology* 1-2 (2011)(23), 53-80. And also see Charoensinolarn, C. (2017). *Development Discourses: Power, Knowledge, Truth, Identity and Otherness*. Bangkok: Matichon.

² Foucault, M. (1967). Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias. in N. Leach (Ed.), *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory* (pp. 330-336). New York: City Routledge.

of curtained motels in Thailand, before they spread to other parts of the country. It is important to note that curtained motels are legitimate businesses and most of them are registered as Hotel Type 1 – servicing for room only. Yet, the curtain has nothing to do with this registration.

In terms of physicality, most curtained motels are generally hidden behind a 2.5-3.0 meter sparsely decorated wall, tending to appear as plain to the public as possible. We find two types of spatial organization: one with a 6-meter wide, two-way road – through the center of the property, surrounded by rooms; the other with a 3-meter-wide one-way road – circling the property, with rooms in the center. A curtain can be seen from the roadway at the head of each parking space, at the entrance to each room. Next to the parking space is the room entrance. We find that most are simple studio units – a bed with ensuite bathroom. The typical size of a room is around 4.00 x 12.00 meters including the parking space. Vivid decoration seems to be preferred. Various styles can be found in the hotels, including Western countryside or cowboy theme, seaside view, old traditional or Thai local styles, Japanese tearoom, boxing ring, and even outer space. Essential decorative features are found in some special rooms, such as dimmable lighting, black lights, and mirrors on the wall and ceiling reflecting directly the position of the bed.

While the physical construction of curtained motels tends to be simple, their social structure seems to be more complex and ambiguous. People perceive them differently, not solely as hotels but rather as places for having casual sex. These are places related directly to the social construction of sex-gender discourses. For some, curtained motels are seen as locations where different norms regarding sexual activity can be explored. Could it mean that curtained motels are accepted by locals because they are easily found on the streets in many cities? To answer this question may not be so simple. Many scholars argue that when we discuss the differentiation of sex-gender discourses in Thailand – alternative forms of sexual activity or sexual practice outside of social norms and institutions – the situation could be regarded as tolerated, but not accepted³. Perhaps curtained motels may need to be theorized in the same way. It is important to go beyond physicality into the social as well as political constitution by which curtained motels have been placed. In short, we need to look at curtained motels in relation to dominant Thai sex-gender discourse, meaning that patriarchy and hetero-normality may need to be taken into account.

Somchai Yensabai and Supaporn Assasamongkol mentioned that the dominant social structure in Thailand is related directly to heterosexual social thought, including the institutions of family and marriage, laws and social norms which collectively and simultaneously help to maintain power. These lead to the meaning and value given to appearance and behavior in Thai society, where sexual activity has many obligations⁴. The domination of sex-gender discourse is evident in various scrutinized forms, such as people dressing according to beliefs about their biological sex, sexual activity outside the realm of marriage, or the notion that reproduction should be condemned and marginalized. The role of space then becomes vitally important because it offers a way to escape from the public and permits different forms of sexual practice to occur, if only fleetingly. Sometimes it can be

³ Jackson, P. A. (1999). Tolerance but Unaccepting: the Myth of a Thai "Gay Paradise" In *Gender & Sexualities in Modern Thailand* (pp. 226-242). Chiang Mai Silkworm Books.

⁴ Yensabai, S. (1999). *Politics of the Body: a Natural Case of Homosexuality* Bangkok: KledThai, p. 318; and Assasamongkol, S. (2011). *Femininity, Truth, Illusion of Prejudice in Patriarchal Society* Bangkok: Woman's Foundation, p. 2.

hidden at home, or performed outside in public where a specific space is required⁵. Regardless, space is needed which allows time for breaks, self-concealment, and safety from scrutinization by mainstream discourse.

In short, this research argues that curtained motels can be understood as another tolerated form and an integration between spatial, sexual, and political construction that allows different social values and sexual practices to be possible.

Conceptual Framework

To explore curtained motels in the light of spatial, social, and political construction, our research project embraces “Other Space” coined by Michel Foucault both as a conceptual framework and research tool.

“Other Space” allows us to investigate architectural formation in terms of social construction, leading to discussion about the “discursive formation”, the way in which the constitution of dominant sex-gender discourse – hetero-normality – originates the constituent meaning and value of what is good and what is bad sex. It opens up the possibility of examining the built form, without sole reliance on physical form, but also as a form of negotiation. “Other Space” can be conceptualized as a mirror for discussion of apparent phenomenon, while simultaneously addressing the causes, reasons, why and how such forms manifest. Also, it is important to be aware of employing Foucauldian concepts of space and using them in different cultures or contexts⁶.

“Other Space” is also used as a research tool. The notions of seen/unseen, hidden/apparent, known/unknown run through all architectural and urban features related to the curtained motels from which we collected data. Data pertaining to location, street network, view from the street, signage, walls, entrance, room, decoration and, importantly, use of a curtain was collected and analyzed. We would like to elaborate the discussion in two directions: (a) socio-political aspect – by re-investigating social meaning and value imposed by Thai sex-gender discourse; (b) architectural aspect – by looking at built form in terms of how sex-gender discourses have materialized.

Methodology

Data is collected from Chiang Mai Province, home to the second largest city in Thailand, located in the North. The city has a long history dating back over 720 years and was formerly the center of the Lanna Kingdom before being subsumed into Siam in 1874 (during the reign of King Rama V) and then designated a province of Thailand in 1909. Today, Chiang Mai is a center for the tourism, health and spa industries, and seems to be perceived by many elderly people as an ideal place for long stay business, while also being a university city due to the 7 universities located around Chiang Mai. Our focus site is found within Chiang Mai Municipality, named Chet Yod Sub-district, where 6 curtained motels were operating during the research period.

⁵ Sanders, J. (1996). *Stud Architecture of Masculinity*. New York City: Princeton Architectural Press.

⁶ Foucault, M. (1967). *Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias*. in N. Leach (Ed.), *Rethinking Architecture: A Reader in Cultural Theory* (pp. 330-336). New York: City Routledge.

The objectives of this article are: (1) to identify the social constitution of curtained motels in Thailand; (2) to analyze laws and various building regulations related to the appearance of curtained motels; (3) to elaborate on how curtained motels may be regarded as “Other Space”. This article divides data collection into (1) a document section for collection of relevant literature studies and 2) a field survey for collection of architectural data, including floor plan and side layout, and conduction of in-depth interviews with hotel owners. All field data was collected by the authors during the period spanning January to December 2018. Data for each case study was collected over an average period of 1 month, including in-depth interviews. Architectural data was collected in the following order: (1) city level - regarding location, characteristics of the area, and street networks; (2) district level – accessibility, visibility, surroundings; (3) architectural level – room layout, orientation, internal roadway, and service rates, including examples of curtained motel interior and exterior design. The authors use sketches, photographs, computer 3D models, and architectural drawings to represent information collected during field survey.

Case Studies

The author now presents a brief summary of the 6 case studies, divided into (1) Santitham District and (2) Chet Yod Sub-district.

1) Santitham District



Figure 1: Location of case studies 1 and 2 in Santitham District (graphic by Jakkit Mancha)

In Santitham District, case studies 1 and 2 are located adjacent to the main road. (see figure 1) Complex street layout is characteristic of this district. The numbers above indicate main routes routinely used to access the case study. (see figure 2 and 3)

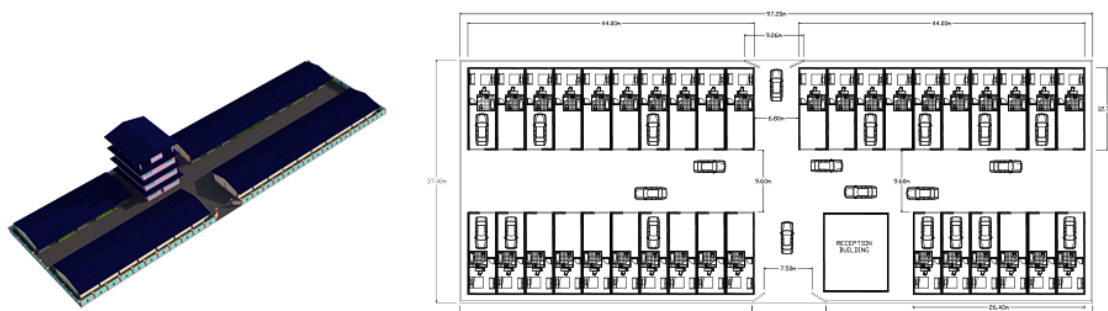


Figure 2: Case Study 1: Gasalong Inn, built in 2004, 36 rooms. (graphic by Jakkit Mancha)

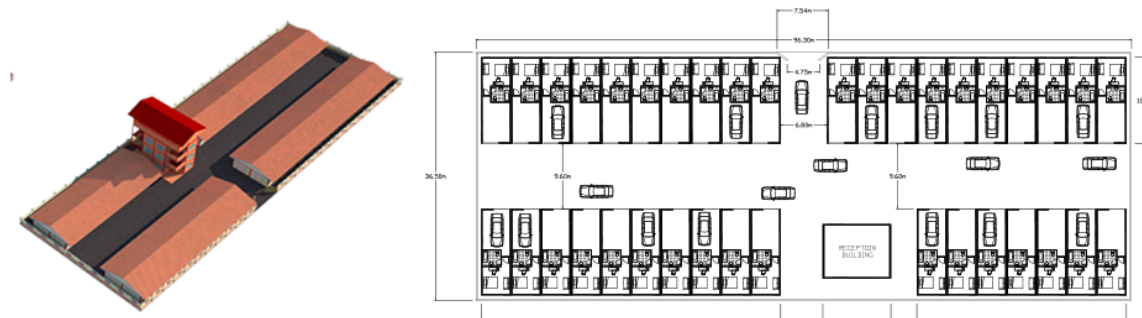


Figure 3: Case Study 2: Honeymoon Inn, built in 2004, 37 rooms. (Graphics by Jakkit Mancha)

Case studies 1 and 2 share the same building shape as they belong to the same owner. Therefore, building plan and rooms, including service fee, are the same. The locations of both cases are very close to the main road, giving the advantage of quick access. Because the layout of Santitham District is very complicated, whilst also being completely obscured by buildings from the outside, accessing case studies is difficult. Familiarity with routes in the area is therefore necessary to a certain extent.

2) Chet Yod Sub-district

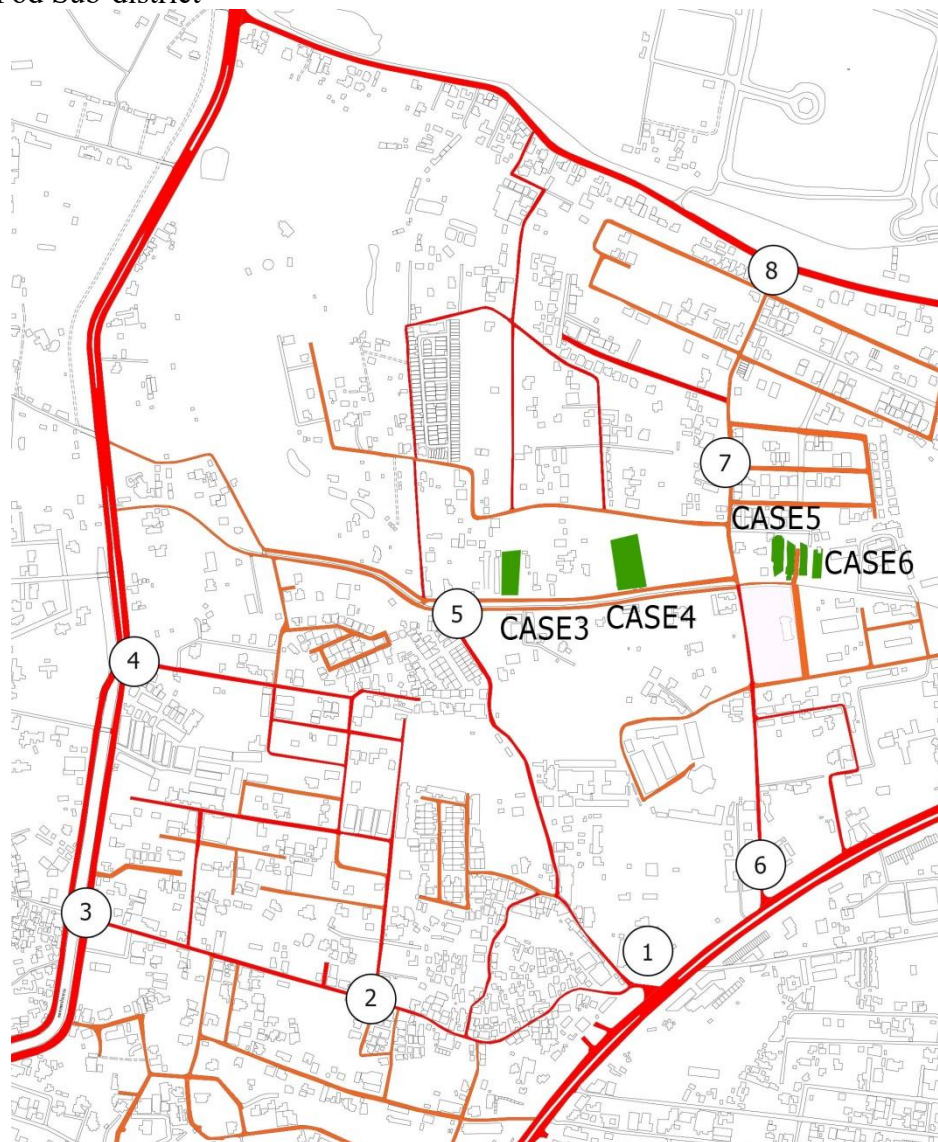


Figure 4: Location of case studies 3 to 6 in Chet Yod Sub-district (graphic by Jakkit Mancha)

The case studies in Chet Yod are located in the center of the district and are more difficult to reach than in Santitham because of the one-way road system. Also, trees obscure the motels from the outside. However, in case studies 3 to 6, there are slight architectural differences. (see figure 4)

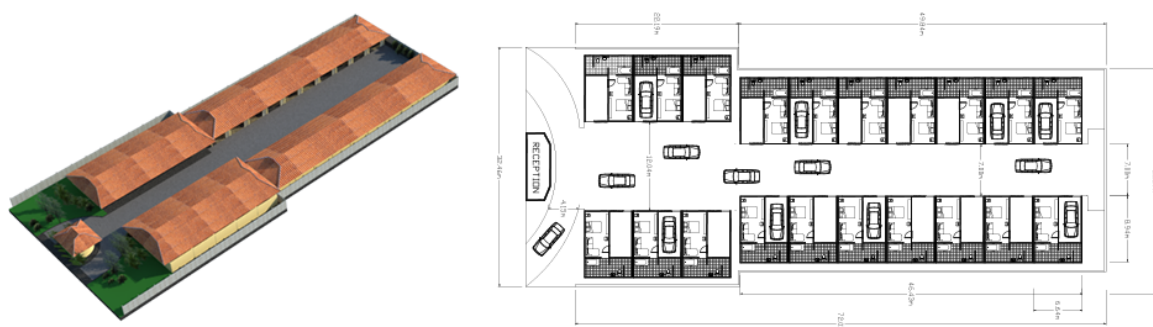


Figure 5: Case Study 2: China Chic, built in 1989, 20 rooms. (Graphics by Jakkit Mancha)



Figure 6: Case Study 4: Time Movement, built in 2004, 18 rooms. (Graphics by Jakkit Mancha)

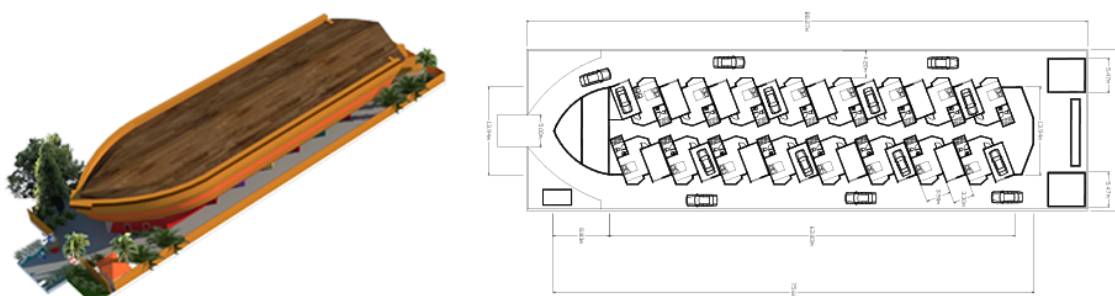


Figure 7: Case Study 5: Love Boat, built in 2004, 16 rooms. (Graphics by Jakkit Mancha)



Figure 8: Case Study 6: Mixx Motel, built in 1996, 18 rooms. (Graphics by Jakkit Mancha)

For case studies 3 to 6, all motels are separately owned and were constructed at different times. (see figure 5-8) Therefore, with respect to design concept and building plan, even though the layouts are similar, they differ in terms of number and size of rooms, as well as service rate. Case studies 4 and 5 have the highest service fees, but the rooms are larger in size and feature more decoration than other case studies, and come complete with equipment and entertainment systems. Field data indicates a highly similar building style between the six case studies, including adjacent rooms and an internal roadway through the motel property. The case studies are located at 6 sites specific to the route, and order of access is also quite specific. Ordinary people or tourists who are not familiar with the area may not be able to access the case studies at all, as visibility is completely obscured from the outside. The interior design of each case study is different, including room layout, depending on the decorative sense of each entrepreneur. For example, case studies 4 and 5 impart uniqueness to each room by way of particular themes.

Curtained Motels and Their Accessibility

Field surveys show that the 6 case studies are not located on a main road, but rather subordinate roads connected to a web of inner streets. This may be due to the perception of curtained motels as inappropriate and 'shouldn't-be-seen-easily'. Their response to such notions may be to hide themselves from public view. Their locations seem to reveal not only a method of avoiding scrutiny and judgement by the normality of Thai sex-gender discourse, but also a physical technicality to protect and maintain the privacy of patrons and ensure they remain unseen and unknown.

First priority at the urban planning level of research are the areas of Santitham and Chet Yod, densely populated communities, encompassing their original areas – former agricultural areas that were divided into sub-plots. This structure eventually effected a particular business model within said areas and consequent dense residential communities due to urban development. Visitors tend to be students and residents rather than tourists, resulting in lack of easy access to the area for both tourists and provincial residents. Therefore, to reach an area, one must know the neighborhood and routes to be able to reach different areas without confusion⁷.

Second, thoroughfare within the district is the next important link to the concept of “Other Space”. Because the thoroughfare is a large road that surrounds the district, it is a dense traffic route. But at the same time, these routes within the two research areas are generally not used by foreign tourists. The complexity of the labyrinth-like streets within the district is a key block that disguises occupants from the surrounding context. Therefore, the use of main thoroughfares and turning vehicles within the neighborhood gradually makes patrons fade away, ingeniously preventing them from being seen from outside the district, especially at nighttime.

The key issue arising from accessibility of the study area is the subject of sighting/non-sighting perspective. Access data collected for each case study in both areas shows that the main surrounding thoroughfares suffer from very heavy traffic due to turning vehicles in the neighborhood. Surrounding visibility immediately narrows and locations are even more difficult to find after having entered the area, to a certain degree.

Discussion

This research aims to elaborate discussion in two directions: (1) socio-political aspect of curtained motels by re-investigating the meaning and value imparted by Thai sex-gender discourse; (2) architectural aspect of curtained motels through examination in terms of materialization of sex-gender discourse.

Socio-political aspect of curtained motels

The earliest period of curtained motels in Thailand occurred around 1957 and gradually transformed their services from that of typical hotels to low-cost motels. We can argue that such change seems to arise from social context in relation to sex-gender discourse. The physical appearance of motel buildings may not change that much compared to decorative

⁷ Kitika, C. (2013). *Closet Space of Gay Show Bars in Santitham Area, Chiang Mai*. (Master of Architecture). Chiang Mai University, Chiang Mai.

items, in particular the curtain, which hangs at the entrance of each room along the parking lot.



Figure 9: (Left) Peep Inn Hotel, Bangkok (Right) inside Peep Inn's driveway (Resource: <https://thestandard.co/peep-inn-motel>)

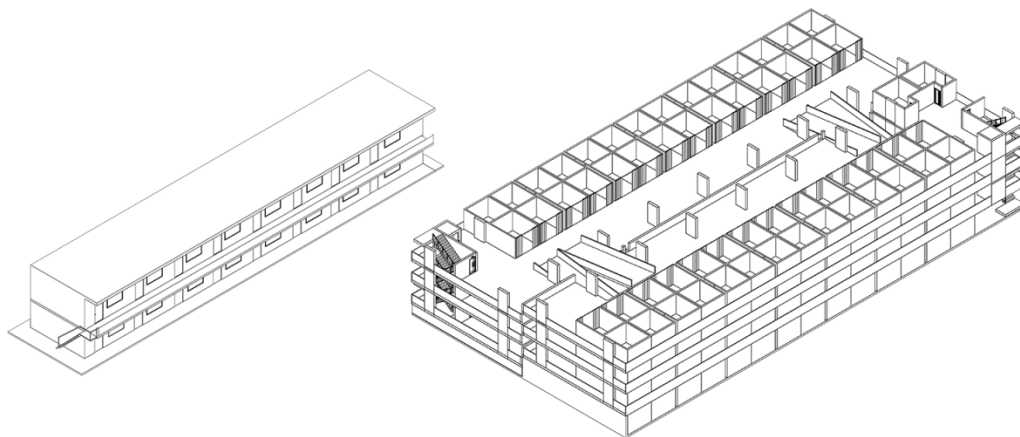


Figure 10: (Left) Isometric view of motel in 1943 (Right) Isometric view of motel in 1957 (Graphic by Jakkit Mancha)

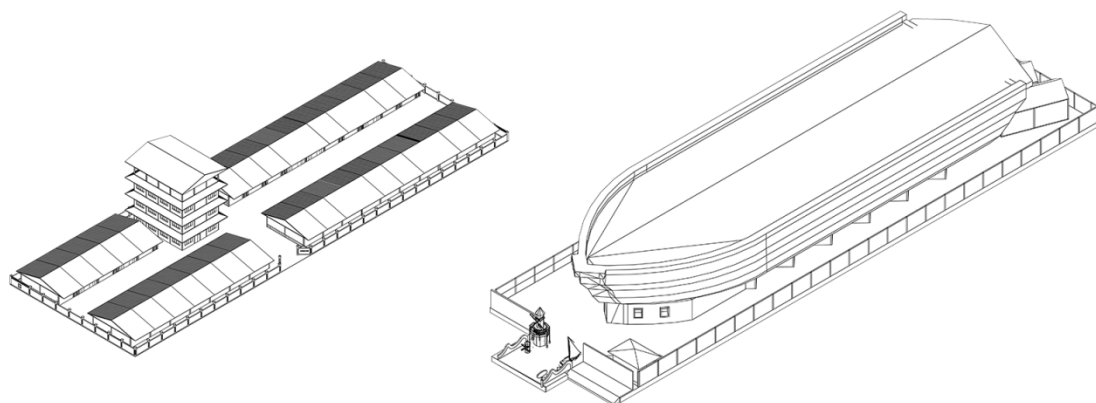


Figure 11: (Left) Isometric view of motel in 2004 (Right) Isometric view of motel in 2004 (Graphic by Jakkit Mancha)



Figure 12: Inside area of case study 4 (photograph by Jakkit Mancha)



Figure 13: Case study 4: closed curtain while room in use (photograph by Jakkit Mancha)

The first generation of curtained motels circa 1957, although often containing their rooms within a single-story building as what we find today, also featured a variety of spatial arrangements, e.g. public road in front of the hotel, multi-story building with ramp, private roadway through the center with rooms on each side (see figure 9-11), private roadway circling around the building with rooms in the center (pic x), etc. Yet, the common key feature is easy access with a simple plan to allow motel patrons to access rooms as quickly and easily as possible. They should be able to easily understand how to drive in and out of the motel without need for traffic signage or contact with staff. (see figure 12-13)

By embracing “Other Space” as a theoretical framework, we can argue that curtained motels tend to respond to social value based on Thai sex-gender discourse. It is important to note that the perception of curtained motels is based on negotiation with dominant sex-gender discourse, which currently includes both patriarchy and heterosexual normality. Behind the curtain, people can go in and out without being seen or noticed, remaining anonymous. The idea of “nobody knows what happens or where” seems to be crucial for curtained motels. They permit alternative forms of sexual practice and offer spaces outside the realm of sexual practices determined by the institutions of marriage, monogamy, reproduction or the notion of vice and virtue. Not only does this process physically prevent visibility, but the dominant influence of sex-gender discourse regarding the notion of visibility is also dismantled at the same time. Curtained motels tend to also include other spaces within the property, in addition to rooms. When finished using a room, people are able to return subtly to mainstream discourse. To some extent, the spaces provided by curtained motels allow people to abstain from long-term commitment, even if for a very short time.

Physical appearance of curtained motels

By examining the appearance of curtained motels in the light of building regulations, we begin to understand that curtained motels design and organize their space in response to laws and building regulations, in particular those regulations concerning driveways, parking, and visibility of vehicles. Simply, we can argue that curtained motels look as they do today because of building regulations.

Four building regulations are particularly relevant: Ministerial Regulations No. 7 (1974), Ministerial Regulations No. 41 (1994), Ministerial Regulations No. 55 (2000), and Ministerial Regulations: determine the types and rules for hotel business operations (2008). Curtained motels (and their physical attributes) are constructed accordingly. For example, based on Ministerial Regulations No. 7 (1974), the width of a roadway must be 3 meters for one-way and 6 meters for two-way. Based on Ministerial Regulations No. 41 (1994), perpendicular parking spaces require a minimum dimension of 2.4 x 5.0 meters. Based on Ministerial Regulations No. 55 (2000), bedroom size must be no less than 8 square meters, while height of fencing must not exceed 3 meters. Based on Ministerial Regulations: determine the types and rules for hotel business operations (2008), cars parked in front of rooms must be visible at all times. These examples show how laws and building regulations have materialized and manifested through the physical appearance of curtained motels. “Other Spaces”, according to laws and building regulations, could thus include the case of curtained motels.

To maximize usable area of the property, the simplest method is to construct a roadway 6 meters wide through the center and place rooms on both sides. Connection between the roadway and parking spaces in front of the rooms can be easily created. Importantly, because most customers travel by car, this specific road connection allows customers to traverse the roadway and park directly in front of a room without any assistance from motel staff. The only sign customers look for are room curtains. When a curtain is lifted, this means the room is available, and when it is closed, it means otherwise. The privacy of customers must be preserved, hidden, and exclusive, meaning they can go to a room without contacting staff, for both checking-in and checking-out. This transitional process, the connection between car and room, can be regarded as beginning inside the car and ending inside the room. This is a continuous space which attempts to impart a sense of “super-privacy”. (see figure 14)

Most of the curtained motels we observe are surrounded by a wall 3.00 meters in height – the maximum height allowed by building regulations. This high wall functions as a “fortress”, aiming to limit visibility from within and outside the motel. Only a few things can be seen or are allowed to be seen, including motel signage and logos which suggest the nature of business.

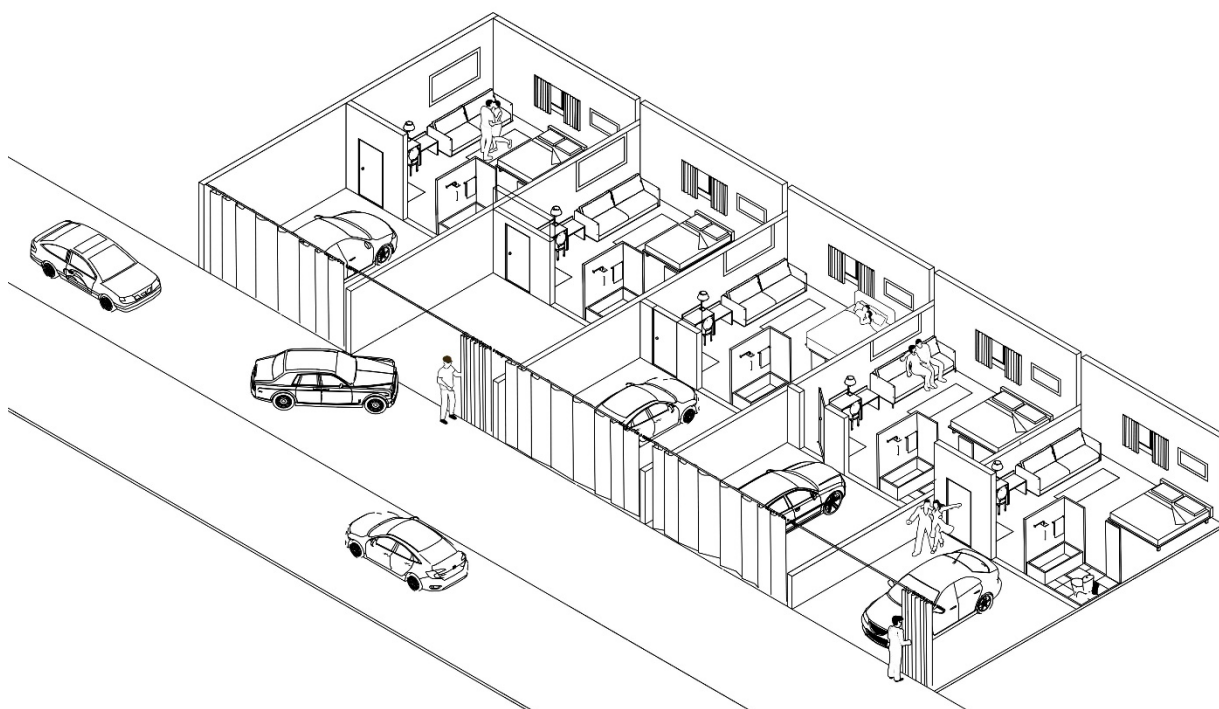


Figure 14: Isometric view showing how the motel's rooms are operated
(Graphic by Jakkit Mancha)

The curtain can be understood on two levels: the physical level and the abstract level. For the physical level, it functions as another decorative feature, allowing customers to maintain their condition of privacy, while motels use it as a signal for room availability. Importantly, the curtain is not a permanent structure according to laws and building regulations. Although Ministerial Regulations: determine the types and rules for hotel business operations (2008) states that cars parked in front of rooms must be visible at all times, this curtain, being a temporary decorative item, does not intend to block or render the parking space invisible. At the abstract level, the curtain takes on the semantic ambiguity of a veil. Because people perceive curtains as temporary or decorative features, the decorative veil can be interpreted as neither permanent nor temporary, aiming to conceal, but not permanently or forever. The curtain can be regarded as a channel through which mainstream discourse and laws are negotiated with, thereby placing curtained motels in the realm of "Other Space".

Interior decoration, such as pictures and colors, may be used to stimulate imagination for the activities to take place in the room. Selected decorative themes range from 'under the ocean', 'inside the boxing ring', to outer space and Japanese tearooms. Chosen themes are very interesting because they reflect, simply, how people relate sexual fantasy to such themes. This subject may need to be explored further. Examined through the notion of "Other Space", we may argue that these themes themselves constitute the notion of "Other Space". They allow people to be out of place, to be different from usual everyday life. For many people, such themes allow them to detach themselves from reality by being provided a space to romanticize, even for a very short moment.

Conclusion: Curtained Motel, Architecture of Other Space

Curtained motels can be seen as a physical, socio-cultural, as well as political construction. They can be interpreted as a form of negotiation. We can allocate them in opposition to what is understood as good sex, reproduction, marriage and family institutions. In short, curtained

motels have been situated on the fringes of mainstream sex-gender discourse, including both patriarchy and heterosexual normality.

Examining through the notion of “Other Space”, coined by Michel Foucault, allows us to theorize curtained motels as a socio-cultural production. In terms of their abstraction, curtained motels can be regarded as sites for romanticized fantasy, sub-ordinated discourse, places of male-dominated car culture. In terms of physical appearance, they are the fortress, the hidden and secret land, escape routes, which have different apparent social codes to those perceived from the outside. The main space of curtained motels, the room, is very intriguing because it is designed to maintain a high level of privacy, allowing people to remain in unbroken privacy and exclusivity from inside the car to inside the room.

Paradoxically, the physical appearance of curtained motels can be understood as the result of how to negotiate with building code regulations size of parking spaces, width of the internal roadway, setback, and especially codes pertaining to visibility. The curtain is a vital decorative feature which need not be counted as structural. The curtain becomes symbolic of a temporal condition – taking a break from the mainstream discourse, to breath or do something not allowed by such a discourse. People perceive curtained motels differently – tolerated but unaccepted, as is the behavioral norm of Thai people when encountering conflicting perspectives, differing concepts of sex-gender discourse, and differing notions of proper space. We could say, perhaps, that curtained motels need to be present in society because, paradoxically, they assist mainstream social structure based on sex-gender discourse and heterosexual normality. For us, curtained motels can be viewed as an architectural program that reflects the interplay between built form and social constitution. They are a reflection of how forms of negotiation materialize and become established as the architecture of “Other Space”.

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Challenges and Opportunities: Musicals in China in the Era of Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

The emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic undoubtedly affected every single aspect of human life, resulting in devastating socio-economic challenges across the world. After the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak, China's performing arts market has shrunk as a whole, the performance market has repeatedly stopped, and the musical industry in China has been in trouble. This paper, however, discusses not only the challenges but also the opportunities of musicals in China in the era of the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic provides opportunities for the development of Chinese musicals. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, the lion's share of China's musicals market is dominated by imported Western musicals such as *The Phantom of the Opera*, *Chicago*, *Cat*, and *Rent*. During the normalization stage of prevention and control of the pandemic, there has been a window of opportunity for Chinese original musicals and Chinese adapted musicals with the rapid recovery of the domestic performance market and the lack of competitive foreign musicals. The strong momentum of producing popular Chinese original musicals like *The Orphan of Zhao* and Chinese adapted musicals like *Apollonia* has brought great confidence to the musical industry in China. Through historical research, data analysis, and interviews, this paper will comb the history of musicals in China, analyze the resilience of Chinese musicals during the pandemic, and provide possible solutions for Chinese musicals' further development.

Keywords: Chinese Musical, The Covid-19 Pandemic, Chinese Original Musical, Chinese Adapted Musical

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Introduction

A musical is a form of theatrical performance that combines songs, spoken dialogue, acting, and dance. The story and emotional content of a musical—humor, pathos, love, anger—are communicated through the words, music, movement, and technical aspects of the entertainment as an integrated whole. Modern western musicals emerged during the 19th century and the most famous venues that present musicals are the big-budget Broadway in New York and West End in London.

Musicals have been introduced into China for over 30 years. Western musicals open the Chinese musical market and introduce the marketing system to China. However, the negative impact is that they impair the growth of Chinese original musicals in the long term because western musicals take the lion's share of the musical market, leaving little room for Chinese musicals to develop.

The Covid-19 pandemic, however, also provides opportunities for the development of Chinese musicals. During the normalization stage of prevention and control of the pandemic, With the rapid recovery of the domestic performance market and the lack of foreign musicals, Chinese original musicals have ushered in a window period of creation and market cultivation while also facing various challenges.

The 30-year history of Western musicals spreading in China

The introduction of western musicals into China could not be separated from the efforts of the older generation of Chinese artists. In the early 1980s, writers and artists who had the opportunity to visit or study abroad came into contact with musicals and introduced them to China. As one of the pioneers of Chinese musicals, Mr. Shen Chengzhou visited the United States in 1980 and spent a year investigating American musicals. In 1981, the first national opera conference was held, where Shen Chengzhou showcased an investigation report on Western musicals, arousing a warm response from the participants. Its significance lies not only in introducing western musicals to China but also in initiating the single mode of Chinese musicals and into a diversified world of Chinese musicals.

The year 1987 is special and memorable in the history of Chinese musicals. For the first time, two famous Broadway musicals *The Music Man* and *The Fantasticks* were introduced into China. The Chinese version of the musicals was produced by the China National Opera House and guided by American artists of Eugene O'Neill Theater Center. (Liu 1987, p.61) After the premiere in Beijing, *The Fantasticks* went to Hangzhou, Shanghai, and Nanjing on a tour, which was also the first musical tour in China. For China, the dissemination of these two American musicals represents the introduction of the Broadway marketing model.

The early dissemination of the original western musicals in China was mainly for cultural exchange, so both the number and the scope of the musicals were limited. It was not until 2002 that the Shanghai Grand Theatre introduced the original musical *Les Misérables* that many original musicals began to be introduced into China, including *The Sound of Music*, *Lion King*, *Rent*, and other famous western musicals. From then on, musicals have become a familiar sight in Chinese big cities. In recent years, the domestic musical market has become increasingly prosperous. According to the data released by the Beijing Trade Association for Performances, in 2018 Beijing alone had 775 musical performances performed in major small, and medium-sized theaters in the whole year, an increase of 16.9% over the previous year. An

audience of 429,000 people watched musicals in 2018, an increase of 26.7% year-on-year. (Li 2019)

The spread of the original western musicals in China not only enriches Chinese audiences' cultural life but also helps to cultivate the Chinese musical market. In recent years, many Western musicals have been introduced to China, some of them covering a large number of Chinese audiences and hitting high box office in China. Take the year 2015 as an example, according to the data of Dao Lue (2016), 2,088 musical performances were performed nationwide, 570 more performances than in 2014, which is an increase of 37.5%. The audience number of national musical performances was 1.24 million, an increase of 41.5%, with a box office growth of 44%, yearly growth of 230 million yuan. In 2015, the box office revenue of the original musical increased by 110% and reached 145 million yuan. Most foreign musicals spreading in China are market-tested musicals, so they are exceedingly popular in China. However, the box office growth of domestic original musicals is relatively small, and the box office of Chinese-version musicals is bad. Therefore, the growth of the musical box office in China mainly relies on the introduction of western musicals.

Take American musicals as an example. Before the pandemic, from 2004 to 2019, there were more than 30 original American musicals introduced into China. The author of this paper collects part of the original American musicals introduced into China at this time in the following table:

Year	Part of the Original American musicals introduced into China
2004	<i>Chicago</i>
	<i>The Sound of Music</i>
2006	<i>Rent</i>
	<i>The Lion King</i>
	<i>West Side Story</i>
2007	<i>The King and I</i>
	<i>42nd Street</i>
2008	<i>Aida</i>
	<i>Hairspray</i>
	<i>Cinderella</i>
2009	<i>High School Musical</i>
2011	<i>Kiss me, Kate</i>
2012	<i>Shrek the Musical</i>
	<i>Man of La Mancha</i>

2013	<i>The Little Mermaid</i>
2014	<i>Robinson Crusoe</i>
	<i>Chicago</i>
2015	<i>Sister Act</i>
	<i>I Do! I Do!</i>
2016	<i>Ghost – the Musical</i>
	<i>My Fair Lady</i>
2017	<i>Ghost – the Musical</i>
	<i>West Side Story</i>
	<i>Wicked</i>
	<i>The Bodyguard</i>
	<i>The Producers</i>
	<i>Jersey Boys</i>
	<i>Sister Act</i>
	<i>Legally Blonde: the Musical</i>
2018	<i>Rent</i>
	<i>Chicago</i>
	<i>Kinky Boots</i>
	<i>The Producers</i>
2019	<i>The Wizard of Oz</i>
	<i>An American in Paris</i>
	<i>PAW Patrol</i>
	<i>Chicago</i>

Table 1: Part of the original American musicals introduced into China (2004-2019)

Take the musical *Rent* as an example, it was introduced into China more than one time. It has been performed in more than 150 cities in nearly 50 countries and has been translated into 25 languages, receiving more than \$1 billion in box office revenue worldwide. *Rent* is a typical American musical, reflecting the lives of ordinary Americans who persist in their dreams despite their lives of adversity. The composer Jonathan Larson suggested setting the play “amid poverty, homelessness, spunky gay life, drag queens and punk” (Tommasini 1996, p. 7) in the East Village neighborhood of Manhattan, which happened to be down the street from his Greenwich Village apartment. On the one hand, it brings socially sensitive topics such as

poverty and disease onto the stage; on the other hand, it shows a ubiquitous passion for life. The belief in being brave and not bowing to fate shapes the spirit of a generation of Americans. The thematic concerns of AIDS, homosexuality, and impoverishment are relatively new to Chinese audiences. Nevertheless, *Rent* arouses the same sympathetic response from the Chinese audience by depicting the struggles and triumphs of young people whose hearts are filled with love, hope, and a thirst for life. What's more, the music style of this musical is a novel and interesting one for Chinese musical fans. In addition, *Rent* expands the limits of its sub-genre known as rock opera. The small orchestra of *Rent* includes keyboards, synthesizers, drums, a bass guitar, and two electric guitars, which fulfills all of the requirements of rock music set for the stage. It also attempts to mix other genres of music, ranging from the soul in "I'll Cover You" to techno in "Today 4 U" to Latin rhythms in "Tango Maureen" to funk and gospel. In 2006, it was introduced to China for the first time and received a warm response. At that time, this musical was performed only in three or four first-tier cities. However, in 2018, the 20th Anniversary Tour of *Rent* expanded its stages and performed in seven Chinese cities: Shanghai, Nanjing, Hangzhou, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Beijing, and Chengdu.

The introduction of classic Broadway musicals to China guarantees the box office but it affects the growth and the reputation of domestic musicals. The introduction of classic western musicals has become such a trend that they squeezed out a lot of original Chinese musicals. Take the year 2017 as an example, the introduction of nine western musicals this year reached a record high, among which there were seven American musicals. Among the top ten box office musicals, 50% of them are original foreign editions, and there is only one Chinese original musical on the list (CAPA & Da Mai 2018).

The Rise of original Chinese musicals

In general, Chinese musicals follow a three-stage development: the first stage is the introduction of the original western musicals. The second stage is the localization of western musicals, followed by the third stage of the creation of the original Chinese musicals. When various western musicals have been introduced into China, attempts at localizing western musicals began in 2008 when *Fame* was produced in Mandarin with a full Chinese cast at The Central Academy of Drama. Since then, other western musicals have been staged in China in Mandarin with a Chinese cast.

The Gold Sand is the first large-scale original Chinese musical. Premiered in 2005, the musical created a public sensation. Hailed as the first modern fusion musical in China, the show has inspired a new wave of creativity in Chinese original musical creation and production. With its successful premiere, the show created a new model for promoting Chinese original musicals. The musical was inspired by the ancient Shu culture and the discovery of the Jinsha Ruins in Sichuan Province. The show, with stunning backgrounds, magnificent battlefield scenes, beautiful music, and excellent performances by its energetic young cast, was created by famous Chinese artists and composers San Bao and Guan Shan. Its touching storyline features a legendary romance between Jin and Sha; the two main characters of the play. Performed every night at the Chengdu Jinsha International Theatre, the musical has become a regular addition to the city of Chengdu's tourism trade.

Compared with western musicals, Chinese musicals are relatively young. The good news is that the national and local governments, cultural companies and groups, and musical practitioners have contributed a lot to promote the development of Chinese musicals. Under

the stout support of the National Art Foundation policy, nearly 20 Chinese original musicals with different styles have been created in 2018. Besides, On November 2, 2018, musicals entered the public horizon through “Super Vocal”, a Chinese TV talent contest for opera singers and musical performers. According to iQiyi, a Chinese online video platform, up to June 2022, over one hundred thousand people rated “Super Vocal” and the show scores 9.1 points out of 10 on Douban, a review aggregation platform for Chinese TV shows and movies. This new type of televised singing contest in China that showcases the vocal prowess of classically trained singers is not only taking the country by storm but also fueling the Chinese audience’s interest in musicals. Zheng Yunlong, a rising musical star in China who won the 2018 Musical Academy Awards in China, said that “I think Super Vocal is a way to communicate with a broader audience and this is what I should do as a Chinese musical actor for the development of musicals at this stage of time.” (Wei, 2019) After “Super Vocal” season 1, season 2 started to broadcast on July 19, 2019. In 2022, another competition TV show “The City of Musical” is produced and it seeks to introduce musicals and the musical industry to the audience. The show not only shows the respect and love of musical actors but also presents numerous stages of high quality, attracting more and more talents and audiences to the musical industry and promoting the prosperity of the ecology of Chinese original musicals.

As musical TV programs attract more audiences towards musicals, governments have also made great efforts to promote Chinese musicals. Since the original musical *Les Misérables* was introduced to Shanghai in 2002, Shanghai has grown into a city with the biggest musical market in China, leading the national musical industry with the ambition of becoming China’s Broadway. The membership of SAIC Shanghai Cultural Square grew to 30,000 in the first quarter of 2019; the six sets of original Chinese original musicals sold out in an hour, and the sales revenue of environmental protection bags designed from the image of a musical star amounted to 400,000 yuan. The growing enthusiasm of the audience for cultural consumption contributes to Shanghai’s efforts of promoting high-quality musicals over the years. In December 2018, Shanghai International Musical Festival opened as the first professional and systematic musical festival in China, attracting attention from all over the world. In 2019, there were 6 performances in the exhibition season of the original Chinese musicals, which reached a new record in terms of quality and quantity of performances. Since the beginning of the “2019 Musical Singing Contest” and the “Original Chinese Musical Cultivation Project” proposed by the Shanghai International Musical Festival, they have attracted more than 150,000 people online and offline (Wang 2019). Since February 2019, the “Original Chinese Musical Cultivation Project” provided an incubation platform for the majority of musical creators, and actively supported and cultivated the new strength of the original Chinese musicals. The “2019 Musical Singing Contest” has received contributions from nearly 400 applicants from all over China, and the related videos have accumulated 100,000 viewings on the network’s platform, which significantly expanded the talent reservoir of Chinese musicals (Wang 2019). The contestants have different backgrounds in their ages and occupations. Among them are students from art colleges, students from ordinary high schools and colleges, workers such as dessert makers, environmental supervisors, and business managers. Grace Chen Rui, the winner of the first prize of the 2021 Musical Singing Contest, spoke out what many musical practitioner’s hearts at the award ceremony, “I wish that one day, Chinese musical would be on equal terms with Broadway musical.” Besides, the Musical Development Forum of Shanghai Spring International Music Festival has been successfully held since 2012. Over the past years, this professional forum focusing on the development of Chinese original musicals and the operation of professional musicals theatres has become a platform for communication between musicals practitioners in China and around the world. Thus,

Shanghai has attracted the attention of musical's producers both at home and abroad. In other Chinese cities, many parties also support the development of original Chinese musicals. For instance, in Chengdu, the original Chinese musical *Golden Sand* was supported by Chengdu Municipal Bureau of Culture, Chengdu Radio and Television Administration, and Chengdu Daily Press Group. The musical exhibits idiosyncratic Chengdu culture and the local government expects it to become one of the cultural symbols of Chengdu city.

Opportunities of Chinese Musical during the Covid-19 pandemic

On the one hand, the domestic musical market becomes increasingly prosperous; on the other hand, the Covid-19 pandemic restricts the introduction of foreign musicals as musicals' world tour involves the mobility of actors and stage properties. Both give more room for Chinese original musicals to develop. "In the absence of imported musical dramas due to the pandemic, domestic musicals have grown up, bringing a certain number of original works into the musical market and increasing its confidence," said Zhang Zhilin, an original musical producer and founder of Shanghai C-Musicals Cultural Communications (Ji 2022).

After experiencing the impact of the epidemic in 2020, the domestic musical industry witnessed a recovery and a blowout in the number of works in 2021. Taking Shanghai, the industrial center of Chinese musicals, as an example, the "2021 Shanghai Theater Performance Data Summary" released by the Shanghai Performance Industry Association shows that a total of 148 musicals were performed in Shanghai in 2021, with 911 performances, a year-on-year increase of 142%, and 524,000 performances, a year-on-year increase of 129%. The original musicals have gained a good reputation and cultivated a group of audiences. According to data from the Damai.com ticketing platform, there are 15 original Chinese musicals to be staged in 2021. Chinese original musicals such as *The Orphan of Zhao*, *On the Road*, and *No Longer Human* as well as many IP adapted musicals of Chinese versions such as *Romeo and Juliet*, *Apollonia*, *Flowers for Algernon* appeared in major theaters, ranking at the forefront in performance times, audience times, and box office revenue. According to Shanghai Culture Square 2021 Musicals Annual Report, among the average single-performance box office top 10, 6 are Chinese original musicals (*No Longer Human*, *The Orphan of Zhao*, *On the Road*, *Into the White Night*, *Spirit of Life*, *Hangover*) and 4 are Chinese-version adapted musicals (*Fanletter*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Agatha*, *Flowers for Algernon*). Among the top 10 in the box office of large and medium theater performances, 7 are Chinese original musicals (*The Orphan of Zhao*, *The Orphan of Zhao*, *On the Road*, *Hangover*, *The Long Night*, *A Dream of Two Cities*, *Spirit of Life*) and 3 are Chinese-version adapted musicals (*Romeo and Juliet*, *Flowers for Algernon*, *Interview*). Among the top 10 in the box office of small theater performances, 4 are Chinese original musicals (*Want to Sing Me to You*, *Drunk Heart*, *The Murder of Hanging Garden*, *Waiting for You*) and 6 are Chinese-version adapted musicals (*Apollonia*, *Thrill Me*, *Santa Lucia*, *Flames*, *Light Keepers*, *Superstar*).

Average single-performance box office top 10	Top 10 in box office (Large and medium theater performances)	Top 10 in box office (small theater performances)
《人间失格》 <i>No Longer Human</i> (2021.12)	《赵氏孤儿》 <i>The Orphan of Zhao</i> (2021.5)	《阿波罗尼亚》 <i>Apollonia</i> (2020.8)
《赵氏孤儿》 <i>The Orphan of Zhao</i> (2021.5)	《罗密欧与朱丽叶》 <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (2021.11)	《危险游戏》 <i>Thrill Me</i> (2020.12)
《粉丝来信》 <i>Fanletter</i> (2022.1)	《隐秘的角落》 <i>The Bad Kids</i> (2021.8)	《桑塔露琪亚》 <i>Santa Lucia Mio Fratello</i> (2021.4)
《罗密欧与朱丽叶》 <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> (2021.11)	《在远方》 <i>On the Road</i> (2020.11)	《FLAMES 火焰》 <i>Flames</i> (2019.12)
《在远方》 <i>On the Road</i> (2020.11)	《醉后赢家》 <i>Hangover</i> (2019.11)	《灯塔》 <i>Light Keepers</i>
《阿加莎》 <i>Agatha</i> (2021.12)	《沉默的真相》 <i>The Long Night</i> (2021.9)	《想把我唱给您听》 <i>Want to Sing Me to You</i> (2020.11)
《白夜行》 <i>Into the White Night</i> (2018.11)	《献给阿尔吉侬的花束》 <i>Flowers for Algernon</i> (2019.12)	《芳心之醉》 <i>Drunk Heart</i> (2021.7)
《献给阿尔吉侬的花束》 <i>Flowers for Algernon</i> (2019.12)	《双城环梦记》 <i>A Dream of Two Cities</i> (2021.6)	《宇宙大明星》 <i>Superstar</i> (2021.5)
《当爱已成往事》 <i>Spirit of Life</i> (2021.11)	《面试》 <i>Interview</i> (2020.1)	《空中花园谋杀案》 <i>The Murder of Hanging Garden</i> (2012.7)
《醉后赢家》 <i>Hangover</i> (2019.11)	《当爱已成往事》 <i>Spirit of Life</i> (2021.11)	《等你爱我》 <i>Waiting for You</i> (2014.12)

Table 2: Shanghai Culture Square 2021 Musicals Annual Report¹

More and more musical practitioners are joining the ranks of original Chinese musicals, telling Chinese stories with their works. In general, there are three kinds of Chinese original musicals: the first kind of musicals derives from Chinese classic stories. For example, the musical *The Orphan of Zhao* is based on an ancient Chinese play paying homage to sacrifice and loyalty. The play *The Orphan of Zhao* was the first Chinese play to be translated into a European language and it was adapted by English poet and playwright James Fenton in 2012. The musical version of *The Orphan of Zhao* is developed from Fenton's adaptation and the

¹ The date in the table represents the premiere date of the musical.

director Xu Jun said that the ghost role that appeared in Fenton's play is further developed in musical to "build an emotional rapport with audiences." (Ma, 2021) The show will premiere at SAIC Shanghai Culture Square on May 27, 2021. After its premiere, it will go on a nationwide tour for 50 performances in 14 theaters. The second kind of musicals tells contemporary stories that show the spirit of the times. For example, the musical *On the Road* tells a story of the dramatic fortunes of an ordinary deliveryman Yao Yuan over 20 years starting in the late 90s. The producers of this musical have taken a Western style of entertainment but made it quintessentially Chinese. The third and the most common kind of musicals are IP (Intellectual Property) adapted musicals because a popular IP is a safe bet at the box office — it already boasts a considerable fan base. For example, the musical *The Bad Kids*, *The Long Night*, and *The Pretender* adapt from popular Chinese TV series while *Into the White Night* and *No Longer Human* adapts from famous Japanese novels.

Overall, watching a musical has become one of the leisure choices for more and more people, which not only drives a substantial increase in the box office revenue of musicals, but also drives Chinese musicals to seek innovation and breakthroughs in content and production. The outcome of 2021 makes Chinese musical industry insiders and fans optimistic about the development of Chinese musicals, because musical industry is exploring ways to grow.

Challenges and Solutions

The performance industry is greatly affected by the pandemic. The most severe challenge for Chinese musicals during the pandemic is that many performance markets have to be shut down due to the pandemic. In general, the performance industry in China has been shut down twice from the year 2020 to the year 2022. The outbreak of Covid-19 in early 2020 suspended the performance industry, and the performance industry gradually recovered in 2021 but was halted again in the first half of the year 2022. If the year 2020 is regarded as "the first cold winter of China's performance industry", then the first half of 2022 is regarded as "the second cold winter". As for the musical industry practitioners, the vast majority of the income comes from live performances, so the delay or cancellation of the performance hit the crew particularly hard. According to Zhao Jiayan, a musical actor, there is a big gap between rehearsal income and performance income of domestic musical actors, and the daily rehearsal fee is only 200-250 yuan. During the epidemic period, actors can't even have rehearsal income (Cheng 2022).

Take Qingdao Performance Industry Association as an example. On March 21, the Association released the appeal for social assistance of Qingdao Performance Industry Association on its official platform, saying that the operating cost pressure was huge, the performance market shrank as a whole, and the zero-income situation of enterprises was common. Data shows that after the epidemic in 2020, more than 60% of Qingdao's performance brokerage enterprises were closed, more than 35% of cultural and media enterprises were closed, and the main body of the cultural performance industry shrank by about 45%. In March 2022, a new round of pandemic broke out in Qingdao, and all the cultural and performing arts industries in the city were closed in mid-March.

Since March 2022, outbreaks of the pandemic have occurred in many Chinese cities. The outbreak caused by the Omicron variant and became the most widespread in Shanghai began on February 28, 2022, and authorities responded with mass COVID-19 testing and a strict lockdown of the city, which marked the largest one in the country since the lockdown of Hubei in early 2020. From March 11, 2022, to June 2022, all song and dance entertainment

and game entertainment venues in Shanghai have been closed, and theater performances in 16 districts have been stopped. Shanghai is the hub of musicals in China that gathers a large number of musical production companies, actors, and audiences. The outbreak caused substantial economic disruption across Shanghai with consequences felt elsewhere. According to the China Association of Performing Arts, from mid-February to mid-March of 2022, more than 4000 performances have been canceled or postponed, and in late March, 80% of the performances (about 9000 performances) have been stopped or postponed. As of March 18, the number of performances in the first quarter of 2022 decreased by 25% compared with the same period in previous years, and the box office revenue decreased by 35%.

Fortunately, the vacuum caused by this physical shutdown did not stop performances. Instead, productions went online, showcasing the potential of modern technology to bring theatre to wider audiences despite a lack of traditional performance spaces or funding. After the cancellation of the performance, many theaters and troupes began to move to the “cloud” and meet with the audience online. In order to survive during the pandemic period, theatre needs to adapt, and notable examples of genius such as online performance and pre-recorded theatre productions reinvented the genre entirely. For example, the company Shiji Duoyun united with the company Haoxi to launch a series of activities of “cloud appreciation of good drama” from March 31st to April 29th in the form of online script reading and crew communication, introducing five original works (two plays and three musicals) born in Shanghai. For instance, in the last activity of introducing the Chinese original musical *Light Keepers*, the director, the music director, and actors gathered together online to share the bits and pieces behind the musical.

Conclusion

The outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic severely hit the musical industry in China as the lockdown breaks the continuity of conventional proscenium theatre. Seen from another viewpoint, however, the pandemic provides opportunities for the development of Chinese original musicals and Chinese adapted musicals. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, the lion's share of China's musicals market is dominated by imported Western musicals, but during the pandemic, there has been a window of opportunity for Chinese original musicals and Chinese adapted musicals with the rapid recovery of the domestic performance market and the lack of competitive foreign musicals. More and more musical practitioners are producing original Chinese musicals and modern technology helps bring theatre to a wider audience online despite the controlled conditions during the pandemic.

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