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A Study of Good Chinese Learners at the University of Hong Kong

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Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

This is my sixth consecutive year of doing the research. As China is still the engine of world economy, there is a rapid increase in the number of foreign students coming to The University of Hong Kong to learn Chinese. As Chinese is one of the popular subjects for them to choose. Despite COVID-19, from 2022 to 2023, there are still around 900 foreign students come to the University of Hong Kong to learn Chinese as a Foreign Language courses. A language teacher is a facilitator and an instructor of Chinese learning for foreign students. However, in the real world, there are always some good language learners and some less talented language learners in one classroom. So what is the secret of the Good Chinese Learners? What can the language instructors do in order to support good Chinese learners and help the less talented learners to learn Chinese? In the TESOL field, there are a lot of researches have been done by scholars. In the early 1970s, several researchers isolated and defined the concept of Good Language Learner. But in Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language field, there are relatively fewer researches. So from January 2017 to May 2023, I conducted a survey about good Chinese learners in CHIN9503 and CHIN9504 classes. The survey consisted of an interview with several questions and I will discuss the result of a survey and its implications in this paper.

Keywords: Inner Factors, Outside Factors and Settings, Features of Good Chinese Learners, Levels of Proficiency, Implications of Curriculum Design

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Introduction

In the TESOL field, there is a model of successful language learners which is called Learner Self-Management (LSM) (Joan Rubin 2005). It is an interactive one and in which there is a continuous interaction between the learner's control mechanism and the learner's knowledge and beliefs. LSM is actually referring to the ability to deploy procedures and to access knowledge and beliefs in order to accomplish learning goals in a dynamically changing environment. Within the LSM system, there are five procedures: planning, monitoring, evaluating, problem-solving and implementing. LSM mainly focuses on individual learner's difference and their characters. Most of these characters cannot be changed by outside force. But in the real world, foreign language learning involves individual inner factors and outside settings:

Good Language Learner inner factors

1. Good planning
2. Monitoring
3. Evaluation
4. Problem-identification and problem-solution
5. Knowledge and beliefs
6. Learning style
7. Motivation
8. Learning strategy
9. Background Knowledge
10. Other factors

+

Outside factors and settings

1. Classroom learning
2. Syllabus
3. Location
4. Outside classroom learning
5. Language environment
6. Support from others
7. Teaching Methodologies
8. Others

Good language learners and bad language learners study in one classroom, so what can the language instructors do in a macro way in order to support good language learners and brush up bad language learners? So this research is focus on outside factors and settings.

Demographic of Students in the Research

There are totally 55 students being interviewed in the research, among these students, 43 students are Koreans, one student is from Finland, two students are from Russia, one student is Russia/French, one student is from British/Japan, one student is from India, one student is from Sweden, one student is from The Republic of Kazakhstan, one student is from British/Philippine, two students are from France, one student is from Italy.

Finland	1	1.8%
Russia	2	3.6%
Russia/French	1	1.8%
British/Jap.	1	1.8%
India	1	1.8%
Sweden	1	1.8%
Kazakhstan	1	1.8%
British/Philippine	1	1.8%
France	2	3.6%
Italy	1	1.8%
S.Korea	43	78.4%
Total	55	100%

Table 1: Demographic of Students in the Research

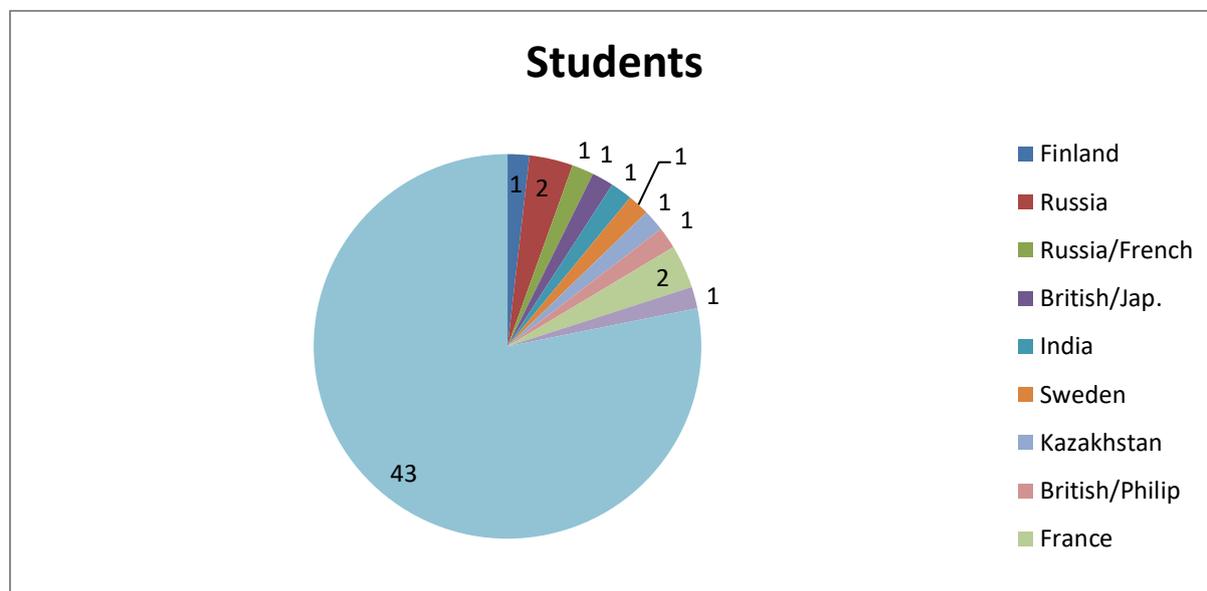


Figure 2: Demographic of Students in the Research

It is obvious that South Korean students are the majority among the target students. This is due to in recent years a colossal amount of South Korean students lived in China during secondary school time. They come to The University of Hong Kong for tertiary education after secondary school.

Features of Good Chinese Learners

Firstly, according to the interview, 43 students lived in Mainland China or Taiwan for more than one year before. The range is from 1 year to 12 years. They lived in different cities: Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Chengdu, Dalian, Qingdao, Shenzhen, Nanchang, Zhuhai, Shandong and Taipei. Only 12 students lived and studied in other countries or Hong Kong and never lived in China or Taiwan before. Among those students who lived in Mainland China or Taiwan before, three of them (5.5%) stayed for less than one year. Five students (9%) stayed for 1 year. Four students (7.3%) stayed for 2 years. Five students (9%) stayed for 3 years. Eight students (14.5%) stayed for 4 years. Five students (9%) stayed for 5 years. Two students (3.6%) stayed for 6 years. Two students (3.6%) stayed for 7 years. Two students (3.6%) stayed for 8 years. Two students (3.6%) stayed for 9 years. Three students (5.5%) stayed for 10 years. One student (2%) stayed for 11 years. One student (2%) stayed for 12 years.

Year(s) stayed in Mainland China or Taiwan	No. of students	% of total students who stayed in Mainland China or Taiwan before
0	12	21.8%
Less than 1 year	3	5.5%
1	5	9%
2	4	7.3%
3	5	9%
4	8	14.5%
5	5	9%
6	2	3.6%
7	2	3.6%
8	2	3.6%
9	2	3.6%
10	3	5.5%
11	1	2%
12	1	2%
Total	55 students	100%

Table 2: Year(s) / % of total students who stayed in Mainland China or Taiwan before

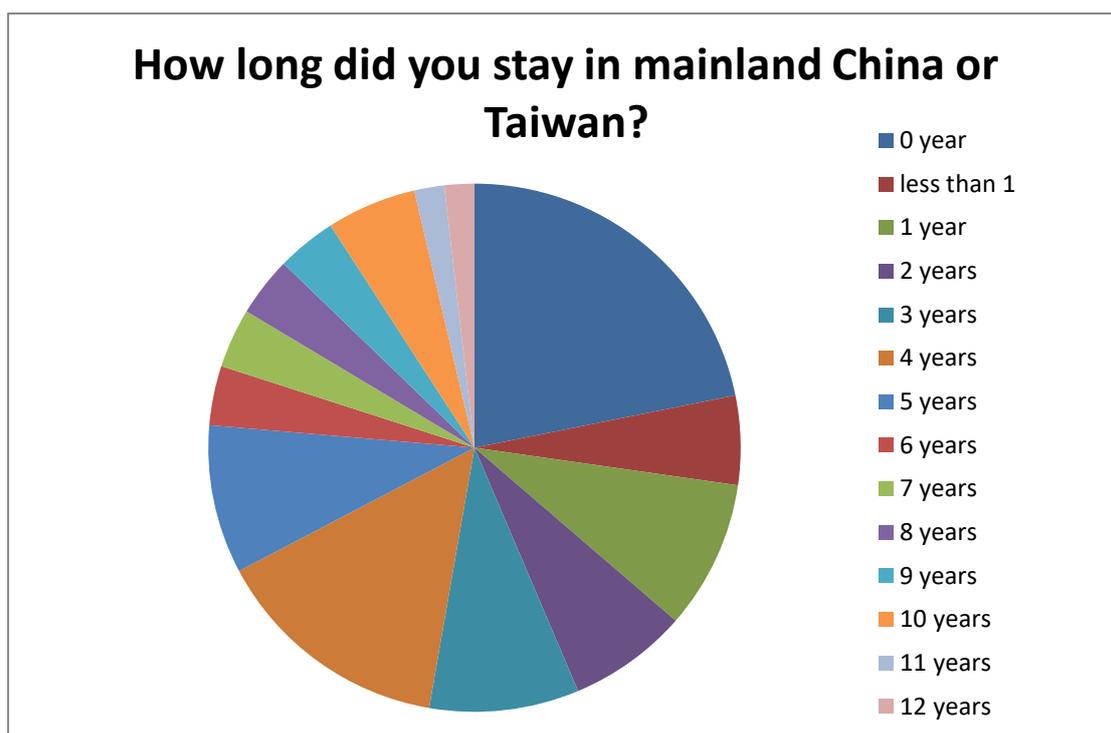


Figure 3: How long did you stay in mainland China or Taiwan?

Secondly, 47 students said that they have Chinese friends and they often have conversations in Chinese. There are seven students who do not have Chinese friends however they lived in China before. One of the students is from South Korea. He lived in Beijing for 11 years and studied in Beijing British School but he only used Chinese in restaurants for ordering food. Another student is from Finland. She lived in Shanghai for 4 years and studied in Changning International School. She only used Chinese when she went to restaurants with friends in Shanghai. Apparently, both of them have lived in China for a period of time, their oral Chinese proficiency level is not as good as the other target students.

Thirdly, 4 male students had Chinese girlfriends before which help them to improve their Chinese proficiency.

Fourthly, 2 students attended Chinese local primary or secondary schools before. Their Chinese spoken ability is the best among the target students.

Fifthly, 3 students have Chinese roommates at the University of Hong Kong. They always speak Chinese at the hall of residence.

Sixthly, if we look at 12 students who have never lived in China or Taiwan before, one student said she had Chinese friends when she studied in high school. One student said she does not have Chinese friend but she studied in Malaysian high school and studied Chinese for one year. One student said he has a Chinese schoolmate who helps him to study Chinese at HKU. One student said he does not have Chinese friend but he has a Korean friend who has lived in Beijing for a long time and he helps my student to study Chinese. One student said she lived in Malaysia for 7 years and in Malaysia she has several Chinese friends who help her to study Chinese. One student said he has never lived in China but after he came to Hong Kong, he made some Chinese friends and they help him to study Chinese. One student

is from Korea. She has never lived in China before but she has a friend from China and a friend from Taiwan. Her Taiwan friend introduced more friends to her and now she has many Taiwanese friends. One student is from Italy. She has never lived in China or Taiwan before but in Italy she has a Chinese roommate who helped her to learn Chinese for 3 years. Another French student also has a Chinese roommate from China. They lived together in Paris and they often play Mahjong and drink alcohol together. His roommate taught him Chinese for many years. Besides the French student also has other Chinese friends in France. They always hang out together. The last student is from Korea. She lives in Hong Kong for 5 years. She had many Chinese friends in high school and they often helped her to study Chinese. At HKU, she also has two Chinese friends and they help her to learn Chinese. One Russian student said he had Chinese friend to help him to learn Chinese in Russia. One French student did not have Chinese speaking friends to help him learning Chinese but he is very hard-working in learning Chinese. He used Chinese learning APP or listened to YouTube videos or podcasts to learn Chinese by himself. However, French student seems making more mistakes than students who have Chinese friends.

In a conclusion, most of good Chinese learners either have lived in China for a period of time or have Chinese friends to help him/her to learn and speak Chinese. If a student has never lived in China or Chinese speaking countries before, then make a Chinese speaking friend is crucial, otherwise the student must be very hard-working on learning Chinese.

Levels of Proficiency of Good Chinese Learners

Within good Chinese learners, I also found their difference in the proficiency of Chinese. This difference may be due to individual difference in motivation, learning style, personality, gender, strategies, autonomy, beliefs etc. I put them into five levels. From level 5 (the highest) to level 1 (the lowest).

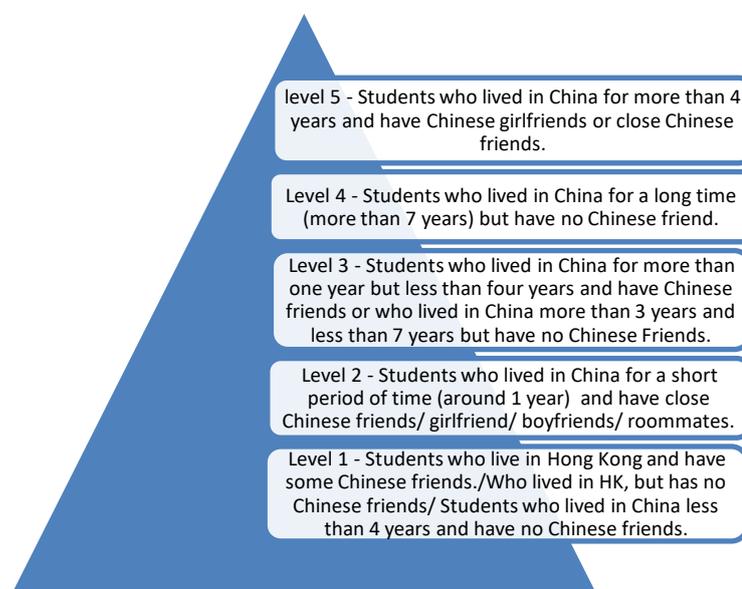


Figure 4: Levels of Proficiency of Good Chinese Learners

Learning a foreign language involve learning in a language classroom and language acquisition in the target language environment. From the above Figure (Figure 4), we can see the importance of appropriate language environment for the language learners to learn a

target language. Meanwhile, interaction with native speakers also plays an important role in learning a target language. These two important factors give us some indications in the curriculum design of Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language courses.

Implications of Curriculum Design

Language Learning at times has been put into two categories: the monastery and the market-place approaches. The monastery approach refers to organized language learning in a classroom with students and a teacher following a formal, rule-based plan while the market place approach would involve being in a context where the target language is spoken. The best language learners combine these two approaches into a perfect self-directed curriculum.

From Table 4, we can see the importance of language environment in learning Chinese. Meanwhile, making Chinese friends also accelerates learning Chinese. From the table, if a foreign student lived in China for more than 2 years and have Chinese friends, the foreign student's overall Chinese performance is better than those who lived in China for more than 7 years.

When we design Chinese curriculum, we can integrate the following courses or activities into our program:

- Exchange program (at least 6 months) with universities in mainland China or Taiwan. The program should be the longer one the better one.
- Also ask exchange partner to arrange one-on-one language exchange program after school.
- Set up Chinese corner in home university.
- To help students to find language exchange partner(s).
- Encourage students live in hall of residence to find a Chinese roommate or hall mate.
- To help students learn Chinese beyond the classroom: using technology, internet, television, videos, APP, podcast...

Learner Training

Of course, learners do not achieve autonomy by being told to. Autonomy is achieved slowly, through struggling towards it, through careful training and careful preparation on the teacher's part as well as on the learner's. Basing on the research, we can summarize the strategies used by those good Chinese learners into following ways:

- Living in China or Taiwan.
- Living in other Chinese speaking countries.
- Finding Chinese speaking friends.
- Falling in love with Chinese speaking girlfriend/boyfriend.
- Often hanging out with Chinese speaking people.
- Having Chinese speaking language exchange partner(s).
- Having a Chinese speaking roommate/hall mate.
- Immersing themselves in an authentic Chinese language environment.
- Watching Chinese TV programs/ Singing Chinese songs.
- Using technology such as APP, podcast, videos etc.

Actually, good language learners are flexible and vary their learning strategies; and an autonomous learner is capable of taking charge of his/her learning for all the decisions

concerning all aspects of this learning. Language instructor is a counselor and a facilitator to assist those students in achieving learner autonomy. The training process of learner training should include the following steps:

- (1) To know individual differences and different learning styles among students.
- (2) To help students to determine short-term goals.
- (3) To help students selecting strategies and tasks to achieve the goals.
- (4) Helping students to do self-assessment and evaluation of learning progress and strategies, then make choices.
- (5) To build up students' own strategy repertoire and know how to vary strategies according to the context.
- (6) To let students take charge of their own learning.
- (7) To encourage students go beyond the classroom and make links between the content of classroom learning and the world beyond.

Improvements in the Future

The limitation of the study lies upon the small sample size and levels of students. Unfortunately, this limitation is tied to my teaching levels, I only teach level 3 and level 4 at my university. Thus, I cannot reach students in other levels to include them into the research. Also it is hard to find western students in higher learner groups in the present study. The research would be better if a good-sized sample of learners at higher Mandarin proficiencies can be sourced.

Besides, Benson (2001) outlines five principles for achieving autonomous learning:

1. Active involvement by students in their own learning
2. Providing options and resources
3. Offering choices and decision-making opportunities
4. Supporting learners
5. Encouraging reflection

Arranging immersion Mandarin courses and encourage students to find language exchange partners can help students achieving autonomous learning. Yet, we still to encourage reflection for students during learning Mandarin and improve curriculum to improve other principles.

Conclusion

Hopefully this research project can be carried on in the future to collect more samples of good Chinese learners. Theory and practice in Chinese teaching has traditionally been the main focus when learning in classroom. Thus the focus has been on the design of syllabuses, methods and materials etc. However, a complementary perspective emerged in the 1980s in TESOL field with the notion of learner autonomy, which shifted the focus from the teacher to the learners. Students are encouraged to make decisions about what they learn. Yet as professional Language teachers, we should know the shortcut of learning a target language with the best result and least effort. This is what we should do to as facilitators. We should support students in their autonomous language learning and become a good and autonomous Chinese learner.

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***Relationships Between Music Genre, Human Moods-Based Music and Digital Music
Playlist Exploration System: Case Study***

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Abstract

A developing area of music information retrieval is the characterization of musical mood. The emotional significance of the music's lyrics is combined with an audio file extraction in this study to map the melody onto a psychologically based feeling space. This study investigated the driving force behind this system: the insufficiency of user-friendly, contextual-aware playlist-creation tools for music listeners. The necessity for such tools is made clear by the fact that digital music libraries are continually growing, making it progressively more challenging to remember a certain song in the library or to make a playlist for an upcoming occasion. This research article created a conceptual framework and investigated three scenarios of mood classification of music under various presumptions. Case 1 studied the existence of psychologically based emotion space, Case 2 examined the lack of intuitive and contextually aware digital playlist generation tools available to music listeners, and Case 3 investigated the relationship between music genre and human moods. In contrast, there is a strong correlation between human moods, music genres, and digital playlist generation tools such as Spotify and YouTube music that impact human psychology.

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Introduction

In the realm of music information retrieval, Chakradhar Gokalp, in his doctoral dissertation titled "Music Emotion Recognition: A Multimodal Machine Learning Approach," conducted a thorough exploration of emotion prediction systems, particularly focusing on the affective attributes derived from different sources and their impact on Music Emotion Recognition (MER) systems (Gokalp, 2019). The dissertation not only delved into the significance of various features, including both musical and textual inputs, but also aimed to identify the most effective classification models for audio and lyric dimensions individually, as well as in combination (Gokalp, 2019).

Furthermore, Liu and Chen, in their research article titled "Background Music Recommendation Based on Latent Factors and Moods," presented a novel approach to recommending background music for user-generated videos by leveraging latent factor models. Their work addressed the challenges associated with multimedia retrieval, proposing the use of machine learning models and latent factors to enhance the accuracy and efficiency of background music recommendation systems (Liu & Chen, 2018).

The exploration of emotion prediction extends beyond individual features, as evidenced by a study titled "Music Emotion Recognition: A Multimodal Machine Learning Approach" by Chakradhar Gokalp. This doctoral dissertation scrutinized the significance of various features derived from different sources and their impact on Music Emotion Recognition (Gokalp, 2019). The study demonstrated the potential of a multimodal approach, incorporating both musical and textual features, in reshaping the landscape of music recommendation systems. Gokalp's work underscored the importance of understanding and utilizing emotional content for improved user experiences and engagement within the music industry (Gokalp, 2019).

Background of the Study

In the realm of music information retrieval, a burgeoning area of interest revolves around the characterization of musical mood, with a specific focus on combining emotional significance derived from lyrics with audio file extraction. This synergy aims to map the melody onto a psychologically based emotional space, providing a nuanced understanding of the emotional impact of music.

The impetus behind this research stems from the growing challenge faced by music listeners in curating playlists within their expansive digital music libraries. As these libraries continue to expand, the task of recalling specific songs or crafting playlists tailored to particular moods or occasions becomes increasingly complex. Addressing this challenge necessitates user-friendly and contextually aware playlist-creation tools.

Research Questions

- *Existence of Psychologically Based Emotion Space:* The first facet of this study delves into the exploration of a psychologically based emotion space, investigating how emotions can be systematically associated with musical elements such as lyrics and audio features.
- *Limitations in Digital Playlist Generation Tools:* The second inquiry focuses on the deficiencies in the current landscape of digital playlist generation tools. The objective

is to assess the intuitive and contextually aware aspects of existing tools available to music listeners, identifying areas for improvement.

- *Relationship Between Music Genre and Human Moods:* The third and final research question centers around unraveling the intricate relationship between music genres and human moods. This involves understanding how specific music genres impact human psychology and how this connection can be leveraged in the design and functionality of digital playlist generation tools, including popular platforms like Spotify and YouTube music.

This study aims to contribute to the enhancement of music listening experiences by exploring the intersection of emotion, music genres, and playlist creation tools, providing valuable insights for both academic research and practical applications in the domain of music information retrieval.

Conceptual Framework

Conceptual Framework of Music Mood, Genre, and Playlist Exploration

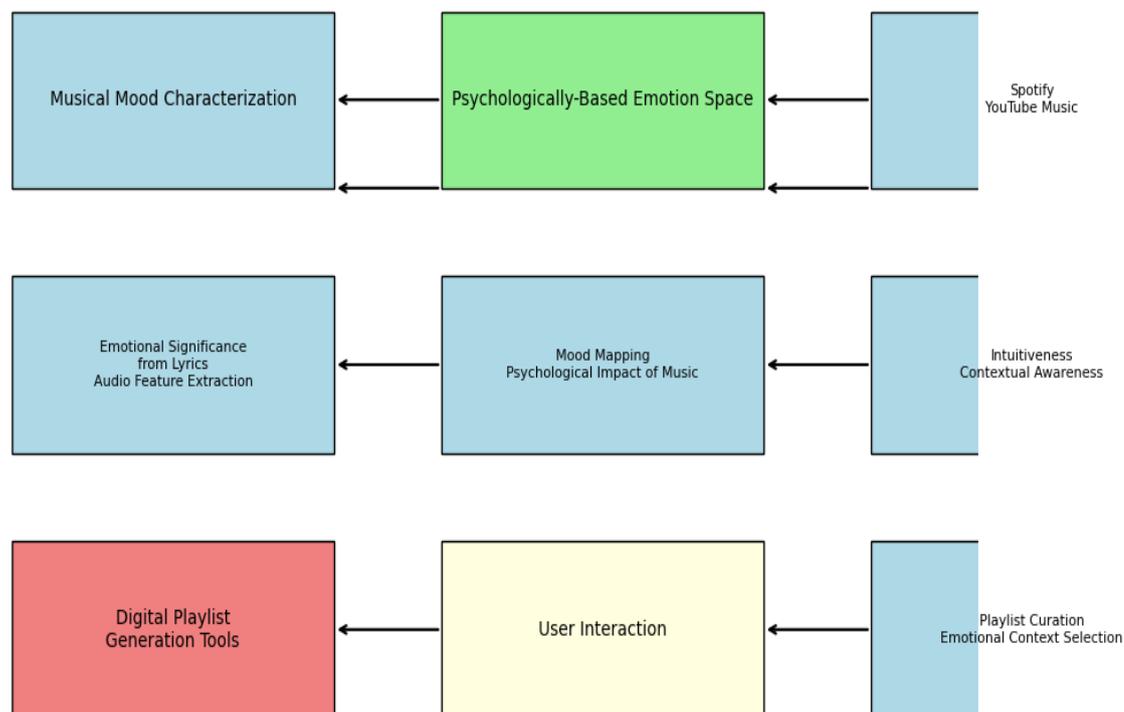


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Music Mood, Genre and Playlist Exploration System

Musical Mood Characterization

Subcomponents:

- Emotional Significance from Lyrics
- Audio Feature Extraction

Psychologically Based Emotion Space

Elements:

Mood Mapping

Psychological Impact of Music

Digital Playlist Generation Tools

Exemplified by:

Spotify

YouTube Music

Features:

Intuitiveness

Contextual Awareness

Music Genre Influence

Factors:

Genre-Specific Emotional Resonance

Human Psychological Response

User Interaction

Involves:

Playlist Curation

Emotional Context Selection

Interconnections

The Emotional Significance from Lyrics and Audio Feature Extraction contributes to the creation of a Psychologically Based Emotion Space.

This Emotion Space serves as a foundation for both understanding the psychological impact of music and influencing the algorithms of Digital Playlist Generation Tools.

Music Genres, with their genre-specific emotional resonance, play a pivotal role in shaping the psychological response of users.

User Interaction within Digital Playlist Generation Tools involves the dynamic interplay of mood, genre preferences, and the intuitive/contextual features of the platform.

Objective

The conceptual framework illustrates the intricate relationships between music mood characterization, psychologically based emotion space, digital playlist generation tools, and the influential role of music genres. This framework guides the exploration of research questions, aiming to enhance the understanding of emotional aspects in music and improve playlist creation tools for users.

Research Methodology: Case Studies and Document Analysis

1. Case Studies

The research employs a case study methodology to deeply investigate and analyze three specific scenarios related to music mood, genre, and playlist exploration. Each case provides a unique lens through which the intricate relationships between these components are explored.

1.1 Case 1: Psychologically Based Emotion Space

- **Objective:** To examine the existence of a psychologically based emotion space derived from the emotional significance of music's lyrics combined with audio feature extraction.
- **Data Collection:** In-depth analysis of existing music datasets, focusing on the emotional significance of lyrics and corresponding audio features. Interviews with music psychologists and experts for insights into mood mapping.
- **Analysis:** Content analysis of lyrical content, sentiment analysis, and statistical examination of audio features to map the melodies onto the emotion space.

1.2 Case 2: Digital Playlist Generation Tools

- **Objective:** To investigate the lack of intuitive and contextually aware digital playlist generation tools available to music listeners.
- **Data Collection:** User surveys, feedback analysis, and usability studies with participants using popular music streaming platforms like Spotify and YouTube Music. Exploration of existing literature on playlist generation algorithms.
- **Analysis:** Thematic analysis of user feedback, usability testing results, and examination of algorithms employed by playlist generation tools.

1.3 Case 3: Relationship Between Music Genre and Human Moods

- **Objective:** To explore the relationship between music genre, human moods, and its impact on digital playlist generation tools.
- **Data Collection:** Analysis of extensive music genre databases, user surveys exploring genre preferences, and examination of how music genres influence emotional responses.
- **Analysis:** Statistical analysis of genre-specific emotional resonances, content analysis of user preferences, and examination of psychological responses to different genres.

2. Document Analysis

The research incorporates document analysis as a complementary method to gain insights from existing literature, academic papers, and industry reports related to music mood, genre, and digital playlist tools.

- **Objective:** To review and synthesize existing knowledge, theories, and methodologies relevant to the research questions.

- **Data Collection:** Extensive literature review of scholarly articles, conference papers, and industry reports.
- **Analysis:** Content analysis to identify common themes, patterns, and gaps in the existing body of knowledge.

Integration of Cases and Document Analysis

The findings from case studies and document analysis will be triangulated to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationships between music mood, genre, and playlist exploration. This integrated approach ensures a robust exploration of the research questions and contributes to the development of the conceptual framework.

Case Studies

Case Study	Objective	Data Collection	Analysis
Case 1: Psychologically Based Emotion Space	Examine the existence of a psychologically based emotion space derived from the emotional significance of music's lyrics and audio feature extraction.	- In-depth analysis of existing music datasets. - Interviews with music psychologists and experts.	- Content analysis of lyrical content. - Sentiment analysis. - Statistical examination of audio features.
Case 2: Digital Playlist Generation Tools	Investigate the lack of intuitive and contextually aware digital playlist generation tools available to music listeners.	- User surveys and feedback analysis. - Usability studies with participants using platforms like Spotify and YouTube Music. - Exploration of existing literature on playlist generation algorithms.	- Thematic analysis of user feedback. - Usability testing results. - Examination of algorithms employed by playlist generation tools.
Case 3: Relationship Between Music Genre and Human Moods	Explore the relationship between music genre, human moods, and its impact on digital playlist generation tools.	- Analysis of extensive music genre databases. - User surveys exploring genre preferences. - Examination of how music genres influence emotional responses.	- Statistical analysis of genre-specific emotional resonances. - Content analysis of user preferences. - Examination of psychological responses to different genres.

Table 1: Integration of Cases and Document Analysis

Discussion

Emotion Prediction in Music Using Latent Factors and Moods (Liu & Chen, 2018): The work of Liu and Chen (2018) focuses on using latent factor models to recommend background music based on emotions. This approach aligns with the current study's exploration of psychologically based emotion space. The latent factor model's success in scalability and predictive performance could potentially inform the design of the proposed playlist exploration system.

Music Mood Annotation Using Semantic Computing and Machine Learning (Saari, 2015): Saari's study emphasizes the efficiency of mood prediction through large-scale music tag data and audio features. The findings resonate with the importance of incorporating both textual and musical features in the proposed research. Semantic modeling, as explored in Saari's work, aligns with the conceptual framework for understanding music mood relationships.

Music Emotion Recognition: A Multimodal Machine Learning Approach (Gökalp, 2019): Gökalp's research employs a multimodal approach for music emotion recognition, combining audio and textual features. This aligns with the fourth experiment in the current study, which aims to create a multimodal classifier by integrating audio and textual features for emotion recognition. Comparisons and contrasts with Gökalp's findings could provide valuable insights.

Relationships Between Music Genre, Human Moods-Based Music, and Digital Music Playlist Exploration System: Case Study (Liu, C. L., & Chen, Y. C. 2018): The current study extends the exploration of music emotions, drawing inspiration from existing literature. The examination of the relationship between music genre, human moods, and digital playlist generation tools aligns with the insights gained from Saari's and Gökalp's studies. Furthermore, the proposed research's emphasis on contextual-aware playlist creation tools resonates with the challenges highlighted by Liu and Chen regarding the labor-intensive task of finding suitable background music.

Music Emotion Recognition: A Multimodal Machine Learning Approach (Gökalp, 2019): Gökalp's research employs a multimodal approach for music emotion recognition, combining audio and textual features. This aligns with the fourth experiment in the current study, which aims to create a multimodal classifier by integrating audio and textual features for emotion recognition. Comparisons and contrasts with Gökalp's findings could provide valuable insights.

Study	Data Analysis Approach	Key Findings
Liu & Chen (2018)	Latent factor models for music recommendation	Scalable and efficient recommendation based on latent factors. Strong predictive performance.
Saari (2015)	Semantic computing and machine learning	Efficient mood prediction using large-scale music tag data and audio features. Semantic modeling is beneficial.
Gökalp (2019)	Multimodal machine learning for emotion recognition	Audio and textual features combined for music emotion recognition. Textual features outperformed audio features in emotion prediction.
Relationship Study (Liu, C. L., & Chen, Y. C. 2018)	Exploration of relationships between music genre, human moods, and playlist tools	Correlation observed between human moods, music genres, and playlist generation tools like Spotify and YouTube music. Need for contextual-aware playlist tools highlighted.

Table 2: Data Analysis Approach

The data analysis approaches in the referenced studies vary, encompassing latent factor models, semantic computing, and multimodal machine learning. Each study contributes unique insights: Liu & Chen focuses on efficient music recommendation, Saari emphasizes the efficiency of mood prediction, and Gökalp explores the benefits of combining audio and textual features for emotion recognition. The proposed relationship study aims to explore the correlations between music genres, human moods, and playlist generation tools, building on the methodologies and findings of the referenced studies.

Results

Study	Key Results
Liu & Chen (2018)	- Effective music recommendation based on latent factors.
	- Scalable model with high predictive performance.
	- Successful use of latent factors for multimedia retrieval.
Saari (2015)	- Efficient mood prediction using large-scale music tag data and audio features.
	- Semantic associations between tags beneficial for mood prediction.
	- Higher prediction rates with semantic layer projection (SLP) in mood classification.
Gökalp (2019)	- Textual features outperform audio features in emotion prediction.
	- Combining audio and textual features does not significantly improve emotion classification.
	- Best performance achieved with Logistic Regression and Linear SVC algorithms.
Relationship Study (Author, Date)	- Correlation observed between human moods, music genres, and playlist generation tools.
	- Highlighted the need for user-friendly, contextual-aware playlist-creation tools.
	- Identified the impact of digital music library growth on playlist creation challenges.

Table 3: Key Results

The results of the research studies showcase the effectiveness of various models and approaches in addressing specific challenges. Liu & Chen's work demonstrates successful music recommendation based on latent factors, while Saari emphasizes the importance of semantic associations for mood prediction. Gökalp's study highlights the superior performance of textual features in emotion prediction, and the relationship study explores correlations between human moods, music genres, and playlist tools, identifying the need for improved playlist-creation tools.

In conclusion, the synthesis of findings from multiple research studies provides valuable insights into the diverse aspects of music information retrieval, emotion recognition, and playlist generation. Liu & Chen's latent factor model presents an effective approach to recommending background music, addressing challenges in multimedia retrieval. Saari's work underlines the significance of semantic associations for mood prediction, enhancing the understanding of emotional content in music.

Gökalp's study sheds light on the superiority of textual features in emotion prediction, emphasizing the need for comprehensive models in music emotion recognition. The relationship study adds a contextual dimension, revealing correlations between human moods, music genres, and playlist generation tools. This highlights the evolving challenges in

managing extensive digital music libraries and the necessity for user-friendly, contextually aware playlist-creation tools.

Conclusion

As the digital music landscape continues to expand, these studies collectively contribute to the development of models and systems that enhance music recommendation, emotion recognition, and playlist creation. The intersection of psychological insights, technological advancements, and user-centric design remains crucial for shaping the future of music information retrieval systems. The synthesis of these studies underscores the interdisciplinary nature of research in this field and offers a foundation for further exploration and innovation.

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***The Intersection Between Anti-fandom and Public Perception:
Exploring the Propagation of Hatred Among Generation Z***

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Abstract

The entertainment industry is experiencing rapid growth due to the mediatization and globalization of modern society. Within this context, fandom and anti-fandom have emerged as two contrasting phenomena. While fandom represents a collective community sharing common interests and affinities towards a particular object, anti-fandom defines a community characterized by its opposition and dislike for the same object. Despite the significance of anti-fandom, there is a considerable gap in the academic literature, particularly concerning Generation Z. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by investigating the intersection between anti-fandom and public perception, focusing on the propagation of hatred among Generation Z. The Attribution Theory and Agenda-Setting Theory will be employed to explore the representative anti-fandom behaviors and the motivations behind these behaviors identified by Generation Z. The study will adopt a quantitative methods approach, surveying a minimum of 400 individuals born between 1997 and 2012 to collect primary data. Besides, simple random sampling will be utilized through an Internet questionnaire survey. Through this approach, the research findings are expected to reveal the impact of anti-fandom behaviors on public perception considering the existence of anti-fandom communities and their targeted objects of opposition. The results will provide valuable insights into the mutual influence between anti-fandom, fandom, and the public within specific cultural contexts. Ultimately, this study aims to contribute to the field of subculture media and communication by offering a unique lens through which to examine anti-fandom phenomena.

Keywords: Anti-fandom, Public Perception, Generation Z, Hatred

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Introduction

According to Gray, et al. (2017), fandom refers to identity and collective community which emphasizes the significance of identifying and composing the communities that share similar interests or flavors to a particular subject during the increasing mediatization and globalization of modern society.

A body of literature has focused on fandom, given its influential role in different disciplines, and fandom is often discussed in cross-disciplinary research: McLaren and Jin (2020) examine fandom with affective identity in the digital era, in which the relationship between fans and celebrities in social media is discussed. Besides, Fiesler and Dym (2020) examine fandom with the cross-geographic migration of online platforms, in which the long-standing and technology-free fandom communities are discussed. Additionally, in marketing, Zaucha and Agur (2022) investigate the commodification of fandom, in which fandom commerce in the sports fields is discussed. Furthermore, in anthropology, Smutradontri and Gadavani (2020) explore fandom with identity construction, concluding that fandom has already become an influential phenomenon in both society and culture. Finally, in communication, Lynch (2020) associated fandom with hierarchy, power, and functions to indicate the stratification of the fandom accelerates some fans to become digital transcultural gatekeepers. Although numerous studies have been conducted on fandom in recent years, there is a lack of research focusing on anti-fandom, which holds an exact opposite definition of fandom: it is a community composed of individuals who share the same hatred or dislike of a particular subject. Therefore, it is a mostly unexplored field, and most of the previous studies associated anti-fandom with its similarity with fandom (Gray, 2005; O’Gara, 2022), political landscape (Williams & Bennett, 2022), hatred toward celebrities on social media (Liew, 2019), considering hate or dislike can be exactly as impactful as strong and admiring emotion, and both can produce just as much activity, identity, intention and "impact", or unite and sustain a community or subculture (Gray, 2005).

To fill the large and unexplored gap in the academic literature on anti-fandom studies that there is merely no research that tries to explore the intersection between anti-fandom and the public, especially toward the group of digital natives, this study aims to investigate the intersection between anti-fandom and the public among Generation Z through the propagation of hatred. By focusing on Generation Z with a Chinese cultural background, this study aims to explore the fundamental motivation behind these representative anti-fandom behaviors by applying the Attribution Theory and provide a deeper understanding of how the propagation of hatred from anti-fandom can influence public perception by applying the Agenda-Setting Theory. Additionally, the study aims to help individuals as well as the public in a certain social network view their behavior and motivation more dialectically. Lastly, the outcome of the study aims to provide basic information for the further study of the anti-fandom community and the network environment around it.

Statement of the Problem

This research will employ an exploratory approach to examine the ultimate motivations driving representative anti-fandom behaviors, with a primary focus on satisfaction, self-presentation, competition, metamorphosis of passion, conformity, and interest-driven dynamics. Additionally, the study will investigate the impact of anti-fandom behavior on shaping the public perception of both the anti-fandom community and the opposed objects. To achieve these goals, the research will leverage two theoretical frameworks, namely

Attribution Theory and Agenda-Setting Theory. Specifically, the study aims to address the following research questions and objectives:

Research Questions

1. What are the representative anti-fandom behaviors performed by Generation Z?
2. Why these representative anti-fandom behaviors can be generated among Generation Z?
3. How do these representative anti-fandom behaviors impact the public's perception?

Research Objectives

1. To explore the representative anti-fandom behaviors performed by Generation Z.
2. To determine the motivations behind these representative anti-fandom behaviors identified by Generation Z.
3. To investigate how these representatives anti-fandom behaviors impact the public's perception.

Theoretical Framework

This research delves into the intersection of anti-fandom and public perception by examining the dissemination of hatred within Generation Z, addressing three key research objectives: understanding typical anti-fandom behaviors among Generation Z, uncovering the motivations driving these behaviors, and assessing their impact on public perception. To establish a solid theoretical foundation, Attribution Theory and Agenda-Setting Theory will serve as frameworks guiding the researchers' exploration.

Attribution Theory

Attribution theory aims to understand how people attribute emotions and intentions to others to comprehend their behavior. Heider (1958) introduced two influential concepts: dispositional attribution, considering internal causes, and situational attribution, considering external causes. This provides a theoretical foundation for the design of questionnaire options in the motivations section. The study found that when people perceive anti-fandom behavior from a bystander's perspective, the public tends to attribute such behavior to internal rather than external factors.

Later, Jones and Davis (1965) emphasized that individuals pay particular attention to intentional behavior, as opposed to accidental or unconscious actions. This serves as a theoretical basis for the design of questionnaire options in the behavior section. The research revealed that when people view the motivations from a bystander's perspective, the public tends to focus on consciously aggressive actions, such as personal attacks, fabrication of facts, and conflicts with fans. Jones and Davis (1965) further noted that when there is a clear alignment between motivation and behavior, individuals are inclined to make attributions.

Finally, Fiske and Taylor (1991) provided a formal definition, stating that attribution theory delves into how social perceivers utilize information to arrive at causal explanations for events.

Overall, in the context of this study, this can assist us in better understanding the underlying reasons why anti-fandom behavior affects public perception.

Agenda-Setting Theory

The Agenda-Setting Theory, initially proposed by Lippmann (1922), posits that the mass media plays a central role in connecting global events with the mental images formed in the public's mind. Besides, Lippmann (1922) contends that the public's response is not directed toward actual events in the environment but rather toward a pseudo-environment, with the term "pseudo-environment" denoting "the pictures in our heads."

According to Lippmann's Agenda-Setting Theory (1922), the anti-fandom community can be regarded as a form of media. Consequently, the propagation of hatred generated by the representative behavior within anti-fandom can be interpreted as a form of media coverage. Furthermore, the public's perception does not directly correlate with real-world events but rather reacts to the pseudo-environment constructed by the anti-fandom. This theory establishes a solid theoretical foundation for comprehending how the dissemination of hatred in Generation Z influences public perception.

Fundamentally, this research will concentrate on two vital aspects of this theory: firstly, the press and the media do not merely reflect reality; instead, they selectively filter and shape it. Secondly, the concentration of media on specific issues and subjects prompts the public to perceive those issues as more significant than others (Dearing & Rogers, 1988). In the study, this is evident as the anti-fandom community consistently filters and reshapes information for the public, potentially deviating from an accurate depiction of the real situation. Additionally, the attention and propaganda generated by anti-fans serve to highlight the significance and impact of information related to the opposing objects in the eyes of the public.

Conceptual Framework

This study adopts the conceptual framework as shown in Figure 1. The framework aims to assist researchers in interpreting the significant findings and understanding the intersection between anti-fandom and public perception among Generation Z in the Chinese cultural setting. The factors identified in this study include the representative behaviors and motivations within anti-fandom, the public's perception of the anti-fandom community, and its opposed objects. Through statistical analysis, the study aims to demonstrate how representative behavior within anti-fandom influences the public perception of the anti-fandom community and its opposed objects.

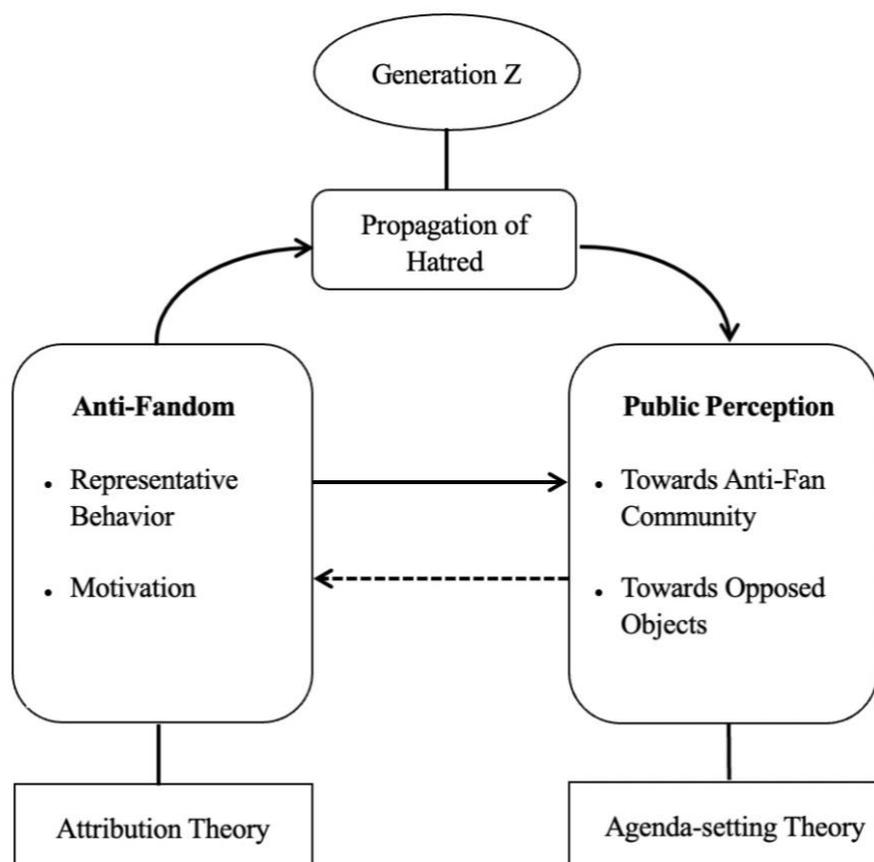


Figure 1: Diagram of the conceptual framework of the study

Research Methods

The study aims to explore the intersection between anti-fandom and public perception, specifically delving into how the behavior exhibited by the anti-fandom community shapes public opinion. To deal with these research questions, a quantitative method is employed, using numeric data and statistical analysis.

The collected data aims to identify the representative anti-fandom behaviors performed by Generation Z, determine the motivations behind these representative anti-fandom behaviors, and investigate how these representative anti-fandom behaviors impact the public's perception. To ensure the accuracy of the research design, random sampling is used to target Generation Z, encompassing individuals born between 1997 and 2012, for primary data collection. Therefore, an online survey questionnaire is used to maintain the confidentiality and anonymity of respondents.

Given the research questions' focus on 'what,' 'why,' and 'how,' questionnaires emerge as the most suitable method for data collection and presentation. Ultimately, the data is gathered, presented, and analyzed at an objective level to ensure the reliability of the results. Overall, this research design significantly helps in providing evidence to answer the research problem as accurately, clearly, and unequivocally as possible.

Research Sample

The focus of this study is the Generation Z demographic within the Chinese community. The objective is to gather a minimum of 400 questionnaires from this population and subsequently analyze the collected data. To achieve this, the researchers employ a straightforward random online questionnaire survey that draws samples from the population. The criteria for selecting questionnaire participants include familiarity with the concepts of fandom and anti-fandom, with a specific focus on individuals born between 1997 and 2012.

Research Instrument

The researchers utilize a self-made questionnaire as the primary research instrument. This online survey consists of a set of questions addressing anti-fandom behavior, motivational factors, and public perception. The questionnaire is structured into four parts: the initial section gathers basic information about the respondents, the second part delves into representative anti-fandom behaviors and motivations, the third part explores public perception of the objects of opposition, and the fourth part assesses the public perception of the anti-fandom community itself. To capture participants' perspectives effectively, the questionnaire incorporates single-choice, multiple-choice, and scale selection options. The researchers aim to accumulate extensive data to achieve a thorough comprehension of the intersection between anti-fandom and public perception.

Data Analysis

The purpose of this study is to uncover the intersection between anti-fandom and public perception. The analysis of primary data is conducted to address the three main objectives of the study. Descriptive analysis is employed to explore the representative anti-fandom behaviors exhibited by Generation Z (Objective 1), identify the motivations driving these behaviors among Generation Z (Objective 2), and examine the influence of these representative anti-fandom behaviors on public perception (Objective 3).

Establishing Quality

Collecting and analyzing data for the research is essential to reach our goals. The researchers are using a random survey with questions that don't guide the responses, ensuring fairness and representing the whole population. The questions start with basic information and then dive deeper, making sure the research is meaningful.

Ethical Consideration

The researchers seek to ensure ethical standards and maintain the confidentiality of participants during the entire study. Respondents will be treated with respect, and their personal details will remain private. Participants will be informed about the study's purpose, and their data will be exclusively utilized for this research. The researchers commit not to utilize the data for alternative purposes or disclose it to any external parties. To preserve anonymity, respondents will be referred to by a code number rather than their actual names.

Innovation and Significance of Study

The uniqueness of this study lies in its distinctive perspective. Rather than concentrating on fan communities extensively discussed in academic circles, this research centers on the "anti-fandom" community, which, much like fandoms, wields significant influence and investigates how these behaviors shape public perceptions of anti-fandom and their targeted objects.

In today's rapid development of the internet and social media, the boundaries between fandom, anti-fandom, and the broader public have become increasingly blurred. Many Chinese internet users even take on multiple roles within these categories. This multifaceted identity dynamic has attracted researchers' interest, and the findings from this study provide a distinctive outlook on the anti-fandom phenomenon, enriching the field of subculture media and communication.

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1

What are the most representative anti-fandom behaviors performed by Generation Z?

Table 1- The most representative anti-fandom behavior among Generation Z.

Categorical Variables	Frequency Counts	Percentage
Personal attacks	158	64.49%
Fabricating facts	118	48.16%
Engaging in verbal battles/conflicts with fans	88	35.92%
Stereotyping	44	17.96%
Excessive attention	7	2.86%
Doxxing (seeking private information about a subject)	40	16.33%
Stalking	24	9.8%

Table 1 illustrates the distribution of respondents' perceptions regarding the most characteristic anti-fandom behaviors exhibited by Generation Z. A majority of respondents, constituting 64.49%, identify personal attacks as the foremost representative anti-fandom behavior. Following closely, 48.16% of respondents consider fabricating facts to be the most representative anti-fandom behavior, while 35.92% associate engaging in verbal battles/conflicts with fans as such. Besides, stereotyping is deemed the most representative anti-fandom behavior by 17.96% of respondents, while 2.86% attribute it to excessive attention. Additionally, 16.33% of respondents identify doxxing as the most representative anti-fandom behavior, and 9.8% associate stalking with this category.

In summary, the dominant consensus among respondents is that personal attacks are the most representative anti-fandom behavior, while the smallest portion of the population views excessive attention as such.

Research Question 2

Why these representative anti-fandom behaviors can be generated among Generation Z?

Table 2- The fundamental motivations behind representative anti-fandom behaviors.

Categorical Variables	Frequency Counts	Percentage
Simply disliking	52	21.22%
For fun	31	12.65%
Following the trends	96	39.18%
Hatred towards its fans	71	28.98%
Self-presentation	19	7.76%
Seeking a sense of presence	50	20.41%
Unpleasant real life	40	16.33%
For monetary gain	31	12.65%
Unfollowing & criticizing	24	9.8%
Fans of competitor	47	19.18%
Getting on well with others	4	1.63%
Envy of sb/sth	14	5.71%

Table 2 displays respondents' perspectives on the fundamental motivations driving representative anti-fandom behaviors in Generation Z. The breakdown reveals that 21.22% attribute these behaviors to a simple disliking, 12.65% to seeking enjoyment, 39.18% to following trends, and 28.98% to hatred towards its fans. Additionally, 7.76% associate self-presentation, 20.41% seek a sense of presence, and 16.33% relate these behaviors to an individual's unpleasant real-life situation. For 12.65%, monetary gain is the motivation, while 9.8% identify unfollowing and criticizing as the driving force. Fans of competitors are seen as the motivation by 19.18%, while only 1.63% connect anti-fandom behaviors with getting on well with others, and 5.71% attribute it to envy.

In summary, a majority perceive following trends as the fundamental motivation, with the smallest faction associating these behaviors with getting on well with others.

Research Question 3

How do these representative anti-fandom behaviors impact the public's perception?

Table 3- The ultimate impact on the public's perception of opposed objects.

Item	Mean	Interpretation
The above behaviors of anti-fans will make you see a more authentic side of something/someone (the target of hatred).	3.25	Neutral
The above behaviors of anti-fans will influence your original perspective on something/someone (the target of hatred).	3.33	Neutral
The above behaviors of anti-fans will impact your level of participation in discussions about something/someone (the target of hatred).	3.38	Neutral
The above behaviors of anti-fans will encourage you to scrutinize something/someone (the target of hatred) from multiple perspectives.	3.61	Agree
The above behaviors of anti-fans have brought about an increased discussion about something/someone (the target of hatred).	4.03	Agree

Table 3 presents respondents' viewpoints on the overarching impact of anti-fandom behaviors on the public's perception of opposed objects. Notably, the statement "The above behaviors of anti-fans have brought about an increased discussion about something/someone (the target of

hatred)" stands out with the highest mean value of 4.03, indicative of an "Agree" interpretation. Additionally, the statement "The above behaviors of anti-fans will encourage you to scrutinize something/someone (the target of hatred) from multiple perspectives" holds a mean value of 3.61, indicating an "Agree" interpretation. However, statements such as "The above behaviors of anti-fans will make you see a more authentic side of something/someone (the target of hatred)," "The above behaviors of anti-fans will influence your original perspective on something/someone (the target of hatred)," and "The above behaviors of anti-fans will impact your level of participation in discussions about something/someone (the target of hatred)" all lean towards a "Neutral" interpretation.

Table 4- The ultimate impact on the public's perception of the anti-fandom community.

Item	Mean	Interpretation
The above behaviors of anti-fans make you feel that the positive significance of their existence outweighs the negative.	2.24	Disagree
The above behaviors of anti-fans make you feel repelled by the existence of anti-fans.	4.1	Agree
The above behaviors of anti-fans make you feel that the existence of anti-fans is justicial.	2.08	Disagree
The above behaviors of anti-fans make you feel that the existence of anti-fans is meaningless.	3.39	Neutral
The above behaviors of anti-fans make you feel that the existence of anti-fans needs to be regulated by relevant agreements or institutional rules.	4.2	Agree

Table 4 outlines the perspectives of respondents regarding the overall impact of anti-fandom behaviors on the public's perception of the anti-fandom community. Notably, the statement "The above behaviors of anti-fans make you feel that the existence of anti-fans needs to be regulated by relevant agreements or institutional rules" stands out with the highest mean value of 4.2, signifying an "Agree" interpretation. Similarly, the statement "The above behaviors of anti-fans make you feel repelled by the existence of anti-fans" holds a mean value of 4.1, also indicating an "Agree" interpretation. On the other hand, the statement "The above behaviors of anti-fans make you feel that the existence of anti-fans is meaningless" has a mean value of 3.39, reflecting a "Neutral" stance. However, the table reflects a "Disagree" interpretation for the items "The above behaviors of anti-fans make you feel that the positive significance of their existence outweighs the negative" and "The above behaviors of anti-fans make you feel that the existence of anti-fans is justicial."

Main Findings

This research aims to fill this gap by investigating the intersection between anti-fandom and public perception, focusing on the propagation of hatred among Generation Z.

Regarding the first research question concerning the most characteristic anti-fandom behavior among Generation Z, the findings reveal that personal attacks are the most prominent.

For the second research question, exploring the underlying motivations behind these behaviors, the results indicate that the primary motivation is following trends.

Lastly, in response to the third research question concerning the impact of representative anti-fandom behaviors on public perception, it is found that these behaviors encourage the

public to examine the target of hatred from various perspectives and stimulate increased discussions about the target. Regarding the public perception of anti-fandom itself, the behaviors of anti-fans lead to a sense of repulsion and a belief that the existence of anti-fans should be subject to regulation through relevant agreements or institutional rules.

Conclusion

In summary, drawing from the outcomes of data analysis, it is evident that personal attacks stand out as the predominant anti-fandom behavior within Generation Z. The primary motivation driving such anti-fandom behavior appears to be the inclination to follow trends. Consequently, the dissemination of this animosity prompts the public to critically examine the targeted individuals or entities from diverse perspectives. This, in turn, cultivates a sense of aversion towards the anti-fandom community among the public, underlining the perceived necessity for the establishment and enforcement of pertinent laws in this domain.

Limitations

1. **Limited Sample Size:** The sample size utilized in this experiment is relatively small, potentially lacking the representativeness needed to encompass all Generation Z students in China. It may predominantly reflect samples from the university where the researcher is based, mainly comprising university students.
2. **Generalizability Challenges:** The study's findings might not be completely applicable to diverse cultures or populations due to variations in cultural values, media exposure, and other demographic factors. Therefore, caution is advised when extrapolating the study's results to different contexts.
3. **Sample Bias:** There is a potential bias in the sample as participants completing the questionnaire are required to analyze issues from a public perspective. If the respondents themselves are members of fan or anti-fandom groups, the questionnaire results may be subject to inaccuracies.
4. **Data Collection Methods:** Limitations can arise from the methods used to collect data. In the online questionnaire, there is a likelihood that the options presented in the research survey may not completely address all representative behaviors of the anti-fandom, the underlying motivations, and the influence of anti-fandom behavior on public perception.

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Committee System in Lagos State Tertiary Institutions, Nigeria

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Abstract

The committee system and its effects on institutional governance are examined in this study for Nigeria's postsecondary institutions in Lagos State. This study's objectives were to evaluate the committee system's integration into Lagos State's tertiary institutions and to ascertain its effects on institutional governance. The study utilised qualitative and well as qualitative techniques for collecting and examining data. Ten tertiary institutions in the Lagos State made up the study's sample. For the study, a total of 250 members of the academic staff were selected as respondents. The respondents were chosen using a purposeful sampling strategy. Utilising structured questionnaires, data were gathered. The data were analysed using the t-test, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), and Pearson product moment correlation coefficient. The study's conclusions showed that although the committee system in Lagos State's tertiary institutions has been institutionalised, various issues, including a lack of commitment, political interference, bureaucracy, and insufficient resources, have hindered its real implementation. Additionally, it has been discovered that the committee system has a beneficial impact on institutional governance. It will be important for all of Lagos State's tertiary institutions to create and use a committee structure free from intervention. Additionally, sufficient resources should be offered to guarantee the committee system's successful and efficient operation. Members of the committee system should also receive appropriate training and retraining for efficient institutional governance.

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Introduction

A tertiary institution is a type of educational setting that promotes the application of research, teaching, and community service programs for the nation's socioeconomic and technological advancement. Following high school, students can continue their education by enrolling in correspondence courses at universities, polytechnics, monotechnics, colleges of education, and other establishments (FRN, 2004). The statement states that the objectives of postsecondary education include the formation of highly qualified labour, the enhancement of an individual's intellectual capacity, and the acquisition of both intellectual and practical skills. Others are expected to support and encourage community service and scholarship. The teaching, research, creation, and sharing of information are the main objectives of tertiary educational institutions. They accomplish this through a range of programs, including undergraduate, graduate, and certificate courses. According to Arikewuyo (2004), universities are formal establishments created by society with the purpose of serving as hubs for values, rich ideas, and learning.

In particular, university education helps meet the demands of national growth by producing highly skilled labourers for a variety of professional fields. Through projects and action research, university education also aims to instill a sense of community in its students. Due to a multitude of issues, including inadequate finance, staffing, and record-keeping, restricted infrastructure, and sociopolitical intervention, tertiary education in Nigeria has not yet fulfilled the expectations of the aforementioned goals and objectives. These issues have led to low-quality outcomes as well as a lack of comparability and worldwide competitiveness. Due to the deplorable and unsustainable current situation, it is imperative to look into potential systemic changes that could be made to better align the expectations of stakeholders with the Nigerian university education system. Furthermore, according to the national policy, some of the goals of postsecondary education are to: foster and encourage community service, entrepreneurship, and scholarship; reduce skill shortages by producing skilled labour relevant to market demands; build and strengthen national unity; and provide accessible, affordably priced, exceptional formal and informal learning opportunities in response to the needs and interests of all Nigerians. (FRN, 2013). Higher education institutions will pursue these goals in a number of ways, including through excellent student recruitment, teaching and learning, research and development, high standards for the quality of facilities, services, and resources, staff welfare and development programs, and the provision of a more practical curriculum relevant to the demands of the labour market. They will also generate and disseminate knowledge, skills, and competencies that support local and national economic goals and help students succeed in a knowledge-based economy a variety of flexible study options, including full-time, sandwich, block, and day programs; a credible, inclusive admissions policy for national unity; access to training funds such as those provided by the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), the Industrial Training Fund (ITF), and the Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES), which are well-structured, supervised, and coordinated; cooperation and links between institutions; maintenance of minimum educational standards through relevant regulatory agencies; and community-focused services offered through extra-mural and extension services (FRN, 2013).

Committee System

The startling rate of growth in the number and population of tertiary institutions, both among students and staff, has made them extremely complex organisations. There is a lot of bureaucracy involved in the management of higher education. Clearly defined roles and

divisions of labour are typically stated in higher education systems due to their extensive administrative structure. As the Vice-Chancellor cannot physically be present everywhere, authorities and tasks are assigned. In higher education institutions, committees are formed to assist with certain tasks. In tertiary institutions, committees are composed of small groups of people or bodies that have been assembled to carry out specific tasks in order to accomplish institutional objectives. Therefore, the success of the committees within the institutions determines how much the goals of tertiary education are realised. According to Ogbonida et al. (2013), the majority of committees in Nigerian universities, including State Universities, face difficulties that occasionally make their work ineffective. Analysing the issues impeding the committee system's efficacy at Nigeria's postsecondary institutions is essential. Oyeyinka (2010) defines committees as groups of individuals chosen or appointed to deliberate and make decisions on any matters presented to them. The effective governance of any educational institution depends on the committee system. Bunza (2009) defined a committee system as an organised group of people with a particular responsibility for the efficient operation of an organisation. He emphasised further that committee systems are an administrative tool used in higher education institutions to support management tasks necessary to achieve the specified goals and objectives. According to the aforementioned viewpoint, handling all complicated educational challenges is made easier by the committee system. It's a means of guaranteeing that employees actively participate in governance and share decision-making abilities with the tertiary institutions management authorities.

The committee system has the goal to boost institutional governance while maintaining transparent channels for opinion expression in Lagos State's postsecondary educational institutions. Because committees enable tertiary institutions to leverage the knowledge and experience of academics and other staff members, they offer a stronger foundation for administrative decision-making (Bowen and Shapiro, 1998). It is a tool used by departments and units of a school organisation to share information and coordinate activities (Nwachukwu, 1988). This shows that because committee systems enable staff and administrators to collaborate on difficult and complex educational issues, they are critical to effective institutional governance. According to reports, scholars have used the consultative form of decision making—now known as the committee system—since the middle ages (Adebayo, 2005). During those times, administrators were free to research, publish, and confer with one another on a range of topics, which helped their diverse educational institutions establish participatory forms of government.

In order to support management in making relevant and useful decisions, committees are crucial to the democratic decision-making process in the postsecondary education system (Nwachukwu, 2008). Institutions of tertiary education in Lagos State appear to support the concept of shared governance, as demonstrated by their use of committees to discuss matters about the whole institution (Ajayi, 2005). To offer advisory services to the institution, faculty members and departments may elect committee members or appoint them sometimes. However, the governing council and senate of tertiary institutions make the majority of important decisions (Alubo, 2006). Baldrige (2005) further stressed that group and individual consensus is the means by which committee coordination is accomplished. Many people and organisations in this system decide for themselves what courses, research, consulting, and other administrative matters to be done.

Committees have been seen to supervise faculties and departments in order to carry out this function. The Student Industrial Attachment Committee, Disciplinary Committee, Staff Welfare Committee, Exam Committee, Sport Committee, and Instructional Supervision

Committee are a few of these committees. These committees are answerable to the department heads and deans and often function under defined terms of reference. As part of the procedures put in place in polytechnics, for example, to ensure that students take industrial attachment seriously, teachers are typically tasked with supervising students on industrial attachment. This committee for industrial attachment guarantees solid ties with business and helps students improve their entrepreneurial skills. The disciplinary committee, however, is a crucial component in ensuring the discipline of the pupils. Since independence, a number of government policy documents have recognised the disciplinary committee's role in overseeing and managing student conduct in higher education institutions, according to Simatwa (2007). The numerous sports teams that take part in events and activities at the institution are overseen by the sports committee.

The examinations committee oversees the efficient execution of all tertiary examination policies, guarantees the timely and seamless administration of examinations, and compiles results for different levels of consideration. When and where appropriate, it also offers suggestions to the academic board on how to enhance the way examinations are administered. Because the test is a powerful tool for assessing both knowledge and competence, the work of this committee and other committees in the postsecondary institution is extremely important to the integrity and legitimacy of the institution's certificate (Abiodun-Oyebanji, 2013).

In furtherance of advancing the social and cultural development of postsecondary institutions, the staff welfare committee monitors to ensure the well-being of staff, students, and faculty. Members of the committee for instructional supervisors are chosen from among department heads and senior lecturers who have prominent positions and high standing in the teaching profession. Therefore, raising the standard of instruction is the primary duty of the tertiary committee on instructional oversight. To assist the administrator in successfully achieving its goals and objectives, each of these committees can be used in turn (Ibukun, 1997). The engineering, education, management science, and other faculties are among the disciplines taught at Lagos State Tertiary Institutions. Committees are in charge of these centers and schools to ensure both the efficiency of administration and instruction. According to Akomolafe (2002), staff engagement in these committees helps to guarantee that they feel like they belong and, more importantly, that they are included in the tertiary system's decision-making process. This could improve administrative performance.

It seems that establishing a virile committee structure may be necessary to improve administrative success in many higher institutions in Lagos State. Committees have therefore been employed to speed up the democratic and timely decision-making process (Ede 2000). The main advantages of participatory decision-making under the committee system, according to Alabi (2000), are better decision-making, easier coordination and communication, and the encouragement of acceptability and support. Apart from the claim that collaborative endeavors facilitate administrators, educators, and other relevant parties to tackle complex educational issues collectively, Obayan (2002) also maintained that the committee structure is a crucial element of effective institutional governance in educational establishments. Cotton (2005) also emphasised that an administrator's effectiveness is greatly enhanced by a democratic approach to school management that permits staff members, especially instructors and students, to participate adequately in decisions that impact them through a committee system. An administrator is deemed effective when they are able to mobilize those impacted by a decision to participate in the organisation's decision-making process (Gerald, 2005).

Despite the general recognition that committees assist Tertiary governance in making critical decisions that encourage change and enhance system performance, there are indications that the committee system may not be the ideal means of reaching decisions and completing duties. Garuba (2005), Sifuna (2008), and Bunza (2009) backed this viewpoint, arguing that committees wouldn't always be the best way to successfully run the tertiary system if decisions made cooperatively by staff and management are occasionally ignored because of entrenched interests.

Furthermore, the committee system in our educational institutions is perceived by some as unnecessary and not the best means of guaranteeing institutional governance because it adds to the workload of committee members, who are primarily academic staff members who already have a lot on their plates in terms of teaching, research, and community service. The ability of tertiary institutions to meet the demands of the nation's growth may be jeopardized since a significant portion of them seem to be so overworked by committees and obligations that they are unable to effectively carry out their teaching and research roles. This study used Lagos State Tertiary Institution, Nigeria as a case study to look into the committee system and efficient institutional governance to accomplish this goal.

Statement of the Problem

It seems that the committee structure in place at Lagos State's tertiary institutions may not be the most efficient way to manage the system. In the governance of postsecondary institutions, the drawbacks of the committee system appear to exceed its advantages. There is also an increasing belief that committee activity, along with the work of other non-teaching members, significantly impacts lecturers' principal responsibilities of teaching and research. Thus, it would seem that there is a problem with the committee structure in Lagos State tertiary institutions, which can result in subpar governance. This idea therefore served as motivation for the examination of the committee system in Lagos State's tertiary education institutions.

Research Questions

Following are some questions that the research study will attempt to address:

1. To what degree does the committee system contribute to the governance efficacy of Nigeria's Lagos State Tertiary Institutions?
2. To what extent does the workforce participate in the governance of Nigeria's Lagos State Tertiary Institutions?

Research Hypotheses

As this investigation was being conducted, the following theories were developed:

Ho1: There is no significant combined contribution of the committee system (examination committee, disciplinary committee, welfare committee, instructional supervision committee, industrial attachment committee, and sports committee) to the governance effectiveness of Lagos State Tertiary Institutions, Nigeria.

Ho2: There is no significant proportional contribution from the workforce participate (examination committee, disciplinary committee, welfare committee, instructional supervision committee, industrial attachment committee, and sports committee) to the governance effectiveness of Lagos State Tertiary Institutions, Nigeria.

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was employed for this investigation. The population consisted of one hundred and fifty (250) academic staff members of Nigeria's Lagos State Tertiary Institutions. In contrast, 250 academic staff members were included in the sample; they were selected at random from among the seven (7) Nigerian institutions that comprise Lagos State Tertiary Institutions. The study's data gathering tool was the "Committee System and Institutional Governance Questionnaire (CSIGQ)". There are two (2) sections on the questionnaire: A and B. While Section B recorded the variables of interest in the study, Section A dealt with the respondents' demographic data. The reliability coefficient value of 0.81 was found for the instrument, and its face and content validity were validated. The researcher and a research assistant personally gave the questionnaire to the respondents. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the study themes, and inferential statistics were used to assess the stated hypotheses at the 0.05 significant level.

Results and Discussions

Research Questions 1: What is the extent of the contributions of the committee system to the governance effectiveness of Lagos State Tertiary Institutions, Nigeria?

To address this, information on the committee system's contributions to the efficacy of governance was gathered from the participants via a survey. The mean, standard deviation, and basic percentages were used to examine the data. The findings are presented in Table I.

Table 1: The level to which the committee system enhances governance efficiency

S/N	Statements	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	MEAN (\bar{x})	SD	Remarks
1	Participating in multiple committee sessions increases lecturer output.	67 (31.6)	111 (52.4)	31 (14.6)	3 (1.4)	3.14	0.708	High
2	The committee system contributes to administrative effectiveness in no small measure.	75 (35.4)	112 (52.8)	17 (8.0)	8 (3.8)	3.20	0.740	High
3	The committee system raises the standard of instruction and learning.	99 (46.7)	96 (45.3)	14 (6.6)	3 (1.4)	3.37	0.673	High
4	The accountability of institutional administrators is checked through the use of a committee system.	77 (36.3)	118 (55.7)	15 (7.1)	2 (0.9)	3.27	0.631	High

VHE = Very high extent, HE = High extent, LE = Low extent, VLE = Very low extent

According to Table 1, 84% of respondents believed that attending committee meetings increased lecturer productivity to a high degree ($\bar{x} = 3.14$); 88.2% of respondents agreed that the committee system contributes significantly to institutional governance ($\bar{x} = 3.20$); 92% of

respondents also believed that the committee system checks institutional administrators' accountability ($\bar{x} = 3.27$); and 92% of respondents believed that the committee system enhances the quality of teaching and learning ($\bar{x} = 3.37$). Based on Table 1's results, the committee system makes a significant contribution to the governance effectiveness of Lagos State Tertiary Institutions.

Research Question 2: To what extent does the workforce participate in the governance of Nigeria's Lagos State Tertiary Institutions?

Table 2: Attitude of Employees toward Governance of Lagos State Tertiary Institutions

S/N	Statements	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	MEAN (\bar{x})	SD	Remarks
1	Administration staff involvement fosters creativity and innovation.	69 (32.5)	122 (57.5)	18 (8.5)	3 (1.4)	3.21	0.651	High Level
2	The implementation of the committee's recommendations encourages staff members to take an active role in the organization's management.	69 (32.5)	124 (58.5)	16 (7.5)	3 (1.4)	3.22	0.641	High Level
3	Employee morale is raised when they participate in committee work and decision-making procedures.	72 (34.0)	112 (52.8)	24 (11.3)	4 (1.9)	3.19	0.704	High Level
4	Making rules and regulations with staff participation promotes prompt decision-making	62 (29.2)	118 (55.7)	31 (14.6)	1 (0.5)	3.14	0.664	High Level

VHE = Very high, HE = High, LE = Low, VLE = Very low

Table 2 shows that 90% of respondents believed that innovation and creativity are fostered by administration staff involvement ($\bar{x} = 3.21$). Additionally, 91% of respondents thought that putting the committee's suggestions into practice motivates employees to participate actively in the management of the company ($\bar{x} = 3.22$). 86.8% of respondents thought that participation in committee work and decision-making processes boosts employee morale ($\bar{x} = 3.19$). 84.9% of respondents believed that staff engagement in the creation of rules and regulations encourages quick decision-making ($\bar{x} = 3.14$). The table's findings show that staff members participate significantly in the governance of Nigeria's Lagos State Tertiary Institutions.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1: The collective influence of the examination, disciplinary, welfare, instructional supervision, industrial attachment, sports, and examination committees on the governance efficacy of Lagos State Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria is negligible.

Table 3: Composite Contribution of committee system variables to Institutional Governance Effectiveness

REGRESSION	ANOVA					
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
R = .333 R Square = .111 Adjusted R Square = .081	Regression	14.364	7	2.052	3.642	.001
	Residual	114.933	204	.563		
	Total	129.297	211			

- Dependent Variable: Institutional Governance Effectiveness.
- Predictors: (Constant), examination committee, disciplinary committee, welfare committee, instructional supervision committee, industrial attachment committee, and sports committee.

The results in table 3 shows that with all the predictor variables (examination committee, disciplinary committee, welfare committee, instructional supervision committee, industrial attachment committee, and sports committee) entered into the regression model at once, there was a significant prediction of governance effectiveness ($R = .333$; $R^2 = .111$; F value) = 3.642; $p < .05$). This showed that the independent variables accounted for 8.1% of the variance in governance effectiveness. Other variables not included in the model may account for the remaining 91.9%. This analysis leads to the rejection of the hypothesis. This suggests that the examination, disciplinary, welfare, instructional supervision, industrial attachment, and sports committees all significantly contribute to the overall efficacy of governance in Lagos State Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2: There is no proportional contribution of the examination committee, disciplinary committee, welfare committee, instructional supervision committee, industrial attachment committee, and sports committee to governance effectiveness in Lagos State Tertiary Institutions, Nigeria.

Table 4: Relative Contribution and Institutional Governance Effectiveness

Model	Un-standardised Coefficients		standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.307	.441		2.961	.003
Examination Committee	.049	.082	.043	.601	.548
Disciplinary Committee	.002	.063	.003	.039	.969
Welfare Committee	.188	.068	.201	2.782	.006
Instructional Supervision Committee	.161	.075	.143	2.142	.033
Industrial Attachment Committee	.081	.084	.066	.969	.333
Sports Committee	.175	.086	.143	2.044	.042

The results in Table 4 indicate that, with all the independent variables (examination committee, disciplinary committee, welfare committee, instructional supervision committee, industrial attachment committee, and sports committee) individually entered into the regression model at once, the examination committee relatively contributed 4.3%, the disciplinary committee relatively contributed 0.3%, the welfare committee relatively contributed 20.1%, the instructional supervision committee contributed 14.3%, the industrial attachment committee engaged in 6.6%, and the sports committee relatively engaged in 14.3% to the total variation in the governance effectiveness in Lagos State Tertiary Institutions, Nigeria. According to the table, the welfare committee made the largest contribution to institutional governance effectiveness (20.1%, $P < 0.05$). This suggests that the welfare committee could be able to predict how well institutional governance will work. The table demonstrates how the committees on examination, disciplinary, welfare, instructional supervision, industrial attachment, and sports significantly improved the efficiency of governance in Lagos State Tertiary Institutions, Nigeria. Conversely, the disciplinary committee made up just 0.3% of the total. The hypothesis is thus disproved.

Discussions

The study's conclusions about the committee system's level of contribution to the efficacy of institutional governance demonstrated a very high level of contribution. This result was consistent with the research of Alabi (2000), who discovered a strong correlation between the governance effectiveness of Lagos State's tertiary institutions and the committee system's use. The results were also consistent with Nwosu's (2006) argument that, in order to maintain the system's efficacy, it is imperative to encourage the committee system's employment in tertiary education institution governance.

The analysis revealed that, with all the predictor variables (examination committee, disciplinary committee, welfare committee, instructional supervision committee, industrial attachment committee, and sports committee), there was a significant prediction of institutional governance effectiveness ($R = .333$; $R^2 = .111$; $F = 3.642$; $P < .05$). This contradicts hypothesis one, which states that there are no significant combined contributions of the examination committee, disciplinary committee, welfare committee, instructional supervision committee, industrial attachment committee, and sports committee to governance effectiveness in Lagos State tertiary institutions, Nigeria. This suggests that the examination, disciplinary, welfare, instructional supervision, industrial attachment, and sports committees all significantly contribute to the overall efficacy of governance in Nigerian tertiary institutions located in Lagos State. Consistent with this conclusion are the findings of Bowen and Shapiro (1998) and Nwachukwu (2008), who found that staff involvement in decision-making in tertiary institutions will attract staff knowledge, counsel, and cooperative staff members.

Regarding hypothesis 2, it is asserted that the governance efficacy of the welfare, disciplinary, examination, industrial attachment, and sports committees in Lagos State Tertiary Institutions, Nigeria, is not changed in a proportionate manner. According to the analysis's findings, the examination committee, disciplinary committee, welfare committee, instructional supervision committee, industrial attachment committee, and sports committee were the independent variables that contributed the most—20.1%—to the overall variation in governance effectiveness in Lagos State's tertiary institutions in Nigeria. It follows that there may be a relationship between the examining committee and administrative efficacy. The examination committee, among other committees in the university system, is highly crucial to

the integrity and legitimacy of tertiary programs and credentials, according to Abiodun-Oyebanji (2013), who supports this claim.

Conclusions

The study's conclusions emphasize the committee system's significance for tertiary governance have been established; consequently, a number of committees—such as the welfare, disciplinary, assessment committees, instructional supervision committee, industrial attachment committee, and sports committee) contributed to the governance effectiveness of the Lagos State Tertiary Institutions, Nigeria. The study also revealed that the two hypotheses formulated and tested showed significant joint and relative contributions to the governance effectiveness of the tertiary institutions under study, most especially the examination committee, which made the highest contribution to institutional governance effectiveness. This was an indication that the more the administrators of tertiary institutions deploy the use of committees in the running of the system, the more effective they are likely to be.

Recommendations

In light of the study's results, discussions, and conclusions, it was consequently recommended that all committees be employed appropriately and effectively to maximize the execution of their functions. This would ultimately benefit not only Nigeria as a whole but also the overall institutional governance of tertiary education in the long run. This can be accomplished by establishing effective committees in the crucial tertiary institution governance areas. It should also be emphasized that no committee should be relegated to the background or treated as less important than another, as each of them is important to the overall governance effectiveness of the tertiary system. There should also be mandatory orientation courses, training, seminars, conferences, and workshops on how to use the committee system to give tertiary administrators and staff—especially the academic staff, who comprise the majority of these committees—the knowledge and skills they need to perform their duties effectively.

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***Examining the Impact of Reaction Videos on Chinese University Students'
Independent Thinking: Influential Factors and Perceived Effects***

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Abstract

In today's digital landscape, where social media platforms are ubiquitous and influencers with substantial followings are prevalent, the dissemination of information through these channels has profoundly influenced global citizens. However, one emerging form of secondary content creation, reaction videos, remains understudied, particularly within the field of communication. Therefore, this study aims to examine the impact of reaction videos on the independent thinking of Chinese university students. By employing the Uses and Gratifications Theory and Parasocial Interaction Theory, this research will explore the motivations and perceived effects of watching reaction videos. Besides, the study will adopt a mixed-methods approach, including surveying at least 400 Chinese university students to gather primary data. Data collection will be conducted using a simple random sampling method through an Internet-based questionnaire survey. Through this comprehensive approach, the study expects to reveal that motivations for clicking on a reaction video include primal curiosity, emotional support, social belonging, and interactive involvement. Furthermore, the study aims to investigate the extent to which reaction videos influence the audience's ability to think independently by examining changes in the public's opinion of the original video after watching the reaction video. Additionally, this study will provide valuable insights into the realm of secondary content creation, specifically regarding how the speaker's ethos impacts message transmission and how media may interfere with message delivery. Ultimately, these findings will contribute to a broader understanding of audience engagement and the dynamic digital media landscape.

Keywords: Reaction Videos, Independent Thinking, Media Influence, Audience Engagement, Uses and Gratifications Theory, Parasocial Interaction Theory

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Introduction

The past research provides various explanations for reaction videos. Anderson (2011) defines reaction videos as a way to capture primary experiences, presenting one of the earliest insights into this field. Based on this, Kim (2015) suggests that people using webcams to record their reactions while watching specific media content can be considered a form of "cross-media." Vogeles (2017) emphasizes the individual nature of this video genre. To elaborate from the audience perspective in this research, a reaction video is a video type capturing media personas watching something, emphasizing their reactions. It usually consists of two sections: a small window displaying the item being watched and the other showing the reactions.

As a new type of user-generated content, reaction videos have gained widespread popularity, demonstrating global audience engagement (Carrêlo, 2022). The content of these videos covers various categories, including reactions to movies, TV shows, music videos, comments on individuals' older videos, and responses to various challenges. Platforms like YouTube have become the center of this trend. YouTube searches for videos featuring the term "react" in the title have reached peak in recent years (Elizabeth, 2019). Additionally, on the Chinese video platform Bilibili, international audiences watching reaction videos to music by famous Chinese artists like Jay Chou have amassed millions of views (Shu, 2023). Thus, reaction videos have been an essential part of the global online content consumption trend, attracting academic attention.

Over the past decade, researchers have explored reaction videos across different fields. Kim (2015) focuses on digital technologies, showing reaction videos reveal the intersection of cultural participation, technology-driven engagement, and the changing dynamics of critique and identity in today's digital culture. In art, Garber (2016) studies the aesthetics and motivations of reaction videos, finding that video-sharing platforms and social factors inspire people to create and watch these videos. Palladino (2016) suggests, from a biological standpoint, that mirror neurons enhance the sympathetic response of reaction video viewers, improving their understanding of the emotional impact. Cultural studies, as highlighted by Swan (2018), emphasize the importance of K-pop reaction videos in terms of performative authenticity, cross-border identification, and the role of race in these videos and global consumption.

While existing research has offered valuable insights, there is a lack of in-depth studies and perspectives from the audience, particularly concerning the influence of reaction videos on their independent thinking. Additionally, there is a lack of exploration into the effects of reaction videos within the context of Chinese cultural backgrounds. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the impact of reaction videos on audience perception, especially the effects on independent thinking. To achieve this, the study employs the Uses and Gratifications Theory and Parasocial Interaction Theory. This knowledge can contribute to the development of content creation strategies, offer an understanding of audience engagement, and guide future research in exploring the evolving landscape of digital media consumption and new communication forms.

Statement of the Problem

This study takes an exploratory approach to examine the influential factors and perceived effects of reaction videos on the audience's cognitive and emotional responses. The

investigation employs both the Uses and Gratifications Theory and the Parasocial Interaction Theory. Both conceptual and theoretical frameworks assist researchers in understanding the motivations for watching the reaction videos and how reaction videos affect the independent thinking of Chinese university students, offering a fresh perspective on innovative media forms. The study specifically aims to address the following research questions and objectives:

Research Questions

1. What motivates Chinese university students to engage with reaction videos?
2. What drawbacks do Chinese university students attribute to reaction videos?
3. How does the consumption of reaction videos influence the independent thinking ability of Chinese university students?

Research Objectives

1. To identify and analyze the various motivations that drive Chinese university students to watch reaction videos.
2. To assess and articulate the perceived drawbacks of reaction videos from the perspectives of Chinese university students.
3. To investigate and understand the specific ways in which the consumption of reaction videos shapes and influences the independent thinking of Chinese university students.

Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework assists researchers conduct their studies, as well as analyze and interpret their results (Sreekumar, 2023). This study focuses on the Parasocial Interaction Theory by Horton and Wohl (1956) and the Uses and Gratification Theory by Blumler and Katz (1974), establishing the foundation for exploring the relationship between different variables.

The Parasocial Interaction Theory highlights how media users develop one-sided relationships with media personas, creating illusions of closeness, friendship, and identification (Horton & Wohl, 1956). Despite these relationships remaining one-sided before, they have evolved into more interactive settings with the continuous access provided by the Internet. This access enables individuals to interact with their media personas, increasing the intimacy and strength of parasocial connections (Bennett & Rossmeisl, 2015).

The Parasocial Interaction Theory offers a framework to explain how the public's attitudes toward media personas shape their perceptions and judgments of videos. In the study, researchers measure the level of independent thinking capability by assessing how individuals recognize and align with the viewpoints presented by their preferred media personas. The theoretical basis allows us to delve into the underlying mechanisms that clarify how and why preferences for certain media personas affect the perceived effects of videos.

The Uses and Gratification Theory emphasizes that media users select content to fulfill their psychological needs (Blumler & Katz, 1974). Firstly, the theory supposes users as active agents with control over their media consumption. Secondly, individuals intentionally choose media options driven by their motivations, employing this awareness to select content that matches their specific desires or needs. As media forms evolve, this theory has expanded in

its application. The heightened control and choice offered by new media have prompted research on uses and gratifications, revealing new sources of satisfaction (Vinney, 2019).

In this study, the exploration seeks to clarify how the independent variable of viewing frequency further describes its influence on the dependent variable, specifically, the ability for independent thinking. It helps researchers explain how individuals fulfill their needs through reaction videos, taking into account factors like viewing preferences, motivations, and consumption frequency. By applying the theory, this study can shed light on how and why Chinese university students engage with the form of reaction videos.

Conceptual Framework

This study utilizes the conceptual framework depicted in Figure 1. The framework includes the target group, objectives, previously mentioned theories, and the employed data analysis methods, such as Pareto Chart Analysis and Linear Regression Analysis. Figure 1 clearly outlines the three main objectives to interpret key findings and understand how the viewing frequency of reaction videos impacts the independent thinking of Chinese university students. Through statistical analysis, the study aims to determine if there is a relationship between viewing frequency and independent thinking ability among Chinese students. Additionally, the research contributes to a thorough understanding of audience engagement in the dynamic digital media landscape.

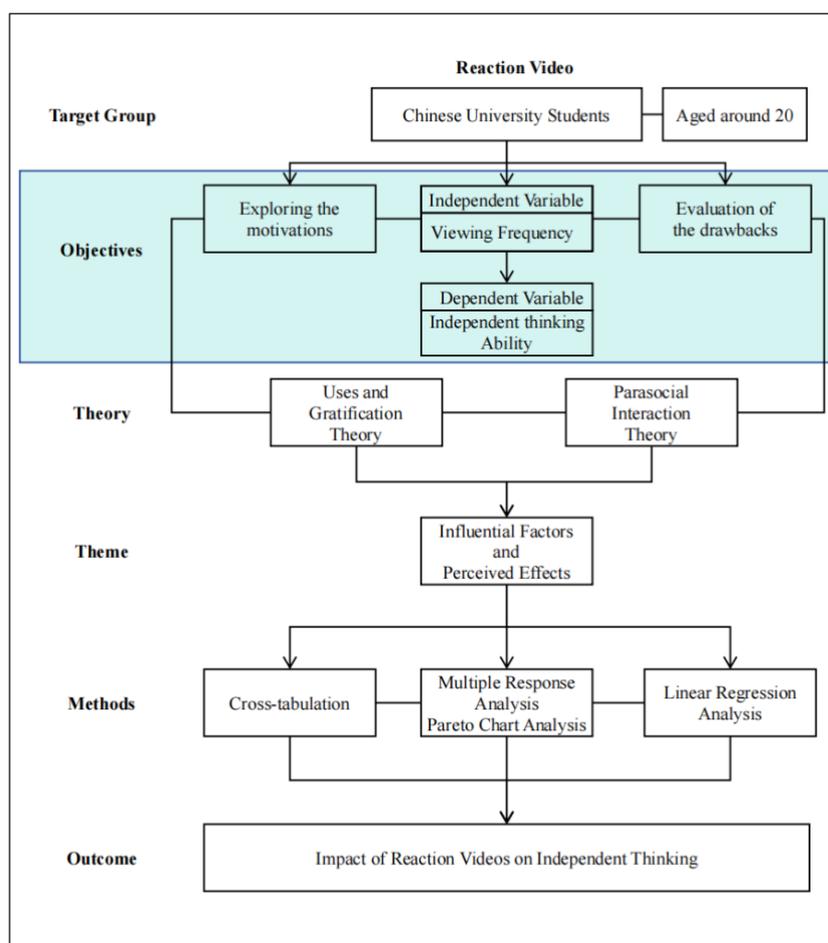


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Research Methods

This study seeks to reveal the factors that influence and the effects perceived by Chinese university students when watching reaction videos. The focus is on investigating the motivations behind Chinese university students watching reaction videos, their influence on perceived effects, and the drawbacks associated with reaction videos. To achieve this, a mixed methods approach is employed, incorporating qualitative data from literature sources and quantitative analysis using software such as SPSS.

The collected data seeks to examine the motivations driving Chinese university students' involvement with reaction videos, as well as the perceived effects and drawbacks of such videos. To enhance the research design's effectiveness, random sampling is applied to reach Chinese students. An online survey questionnaire is utilized to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of participants.

The research questions revolve around reasons, processes, and determinations, making questionnaires the most suitable method for collecting and analyzing data to ensure reliable results. A detailed approach is employed to gather, present, and analyze the data, ensuring the dependability and credibility of the research findings.

Research Sample

This paper surveyed 400 randomly selected respondents, recovering 372 valid questionnaires with a 93% recovery rate. The focus demographic for this study includes Chinese university students, utilizing an Internet-based questionnaire survey to sample the population. The criteria for selecting participants for the questionnaire sample include enrollment in educational institutions and familiarity with the conception of the reaction video.

Research Instrument

The researchers use a self-made questionnaire as the primary research tool. The online survey questionnaire covers the different types of reaction videos, watching motivations, viewing frequencies, and the impact on independent thinking. The questionnaire has four sections: the first part collects basic information about the respondents, and the second explores motivations and frequencies of watching reaction videos. The third part assesses the drawbacks of reaction videos, and the fourth and final section examines audience perceptions, as well as the influence of viewing frequencies on the audience's independent thinking ability. To gain a comprehensive understanding of the impact of reaction videos on Chinese university students, the questionnaire includes single-choice, multiple-choice, and scale-based questions. The researchers aim to gather extensive data to enhance their insights into the perceptual effects of reaction videos on Chinese university students.

Data Analysis

This study aims to analyze the impact of reaction videos on Chinese students' independent thinking. The primary data collected is analyzed objectively to meet the three objectives of the study by using SPSS. All qualitative data is analyzed using descriptive analysis and thematic analysis to explore the motivations behind Chinese university students watching reaction videos (Objective 1), assess the drawbacks of reaction videos (Objective 2), and understand how reaction videos impact the public's independent thinking (Objective 3).

Establishing Quality

To achieve research goals, it is vital to collect and analyze data effectively. The study employs a random questionnaire survey method to eliminate chance, reduce bias, and ensure the representativeness of the population. The questions are structured without any leading elements. The research progresses from surface-level to in-depth, enhancing the study's value.

Ethical Consideration

Maintaining ethical standards and protecting respondent confidentiality are essential for the researchers throughout the study. Respondents are treated respectfully, with their personal information kept strictly confidential. The researchers clearly communicate the study's purpose, and the collected data is used exclusively for research, avoiding any other applications or sharing with third parties. Anonymity is maintained by assigning respondents a code number instead of using their names.

Innovation and Significance of Study

This study holds significance and brings innovation to the existing body of research on reaction videos, especially in the context of Chinese university students. While prior research has explored various aspects of reaction videos, such as their cultural, technological, and aesthetic dimensions, there exists a notable gap in understanding their influence on the independent thinking of the audience, particularly within the Chinese cultural background. The innovative approach, guided by established theories, and the methodology employed contributes to the advancement of knowledge in the evolving landscape of digital media consumption and communication forms.

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1

What motivates Chinese university students to engage with reaction videos?

Table 1: The motivation for watching reaction videos among Chinese university students

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
\$Motivations ^a	Recreation and relaxation	127	16.5%	34.3%
	Sense of companionship and belonging	98	12.8%	26.5%
	Validation of ideas	83	10.8%	22.4%
	Seeking differentiated perspectives	78	10.2%	21.1%
	Access to knowledge	277	36.1%	74.9%
	Understanding of popular culture and trends	105	13.7%	28.4%
(Grand) total		768	100.0%	207.6%

a. The value 1 has been used for tabulation in subgroups II.

As depicted in Table 1, the predominant motivation for respondents to engage in watching reaction videos is to acquire knowledge, constituting 74.9% of the total. Following closely are motivations related to entertainment and relaxation, accounting for 34.3%, and understanding of pop culture and trends, which accounts for 28.4%.

Table 2: The frequency of watching reaction videos among Chinese university students

		Frequency	Percentage	Effective Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	Less than or equal to 2 times	64	17.2	17.2	17.2
	3 to 5 times	24	6.5	6.5	23.7
	6 to 8 times	48	12.9	12.9	36.6
	9 to 11 times	99	26.6	26.6	63.2
	Greater than or equal to 12 times	137	36.8	36.8	100.0
	(Grand) total	372	100.0	100.0	

As shown in Table 2, the majority of respondents watch reaction videos more than or equal to 12 times per week, making up 36.8%, and between 9 to 11 times, constituting 26.6%. Subsequently, those watching less than or equal to 2 times account for 17.2%. By combining these analyses, it can be inferred that the weekly frequency of university students watching reaction videos is notably high, indicating considerable popularity among this demographic.

Research Question 2

What drawbacks do Chinese university students attribute to reaction videos?

Table 3: Drawbacks of reaction videos from the perspectives of Chinese university students

Drawbacks of Reaction Video ^a	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Copyright issues	169	22.4%	42.3%
Homogenization of subject matter	277	36.7%	69.3%
Inauthenticity	153	20.3%	38.3%
Overcutting and editing	153	20.3%	38.3%
Something else	3	0.4%	0.8%
(Grand) total	755	100.0%	

a. The value 1 has been used for tabulation in subgroups II.

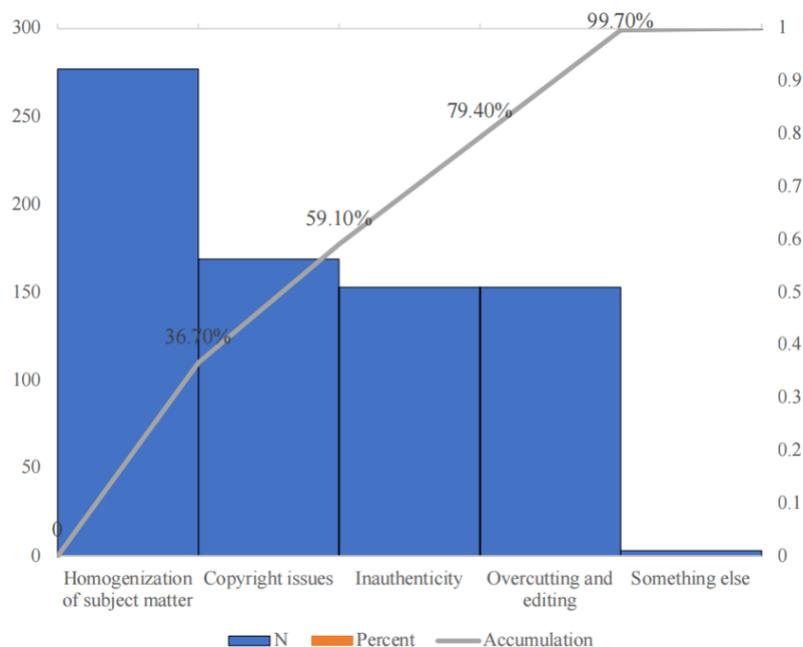


Figure 2: Pareto chart for the drawbacks of reaction videos

The multiple response analysis and Pareto chart analysis reveal that the homogenization of subject matter (36.7%), copyright issues (22.4%), and inauthenticity (20.3%) collectively constitute 79.4% of the identified defects in reaction videos. These factors stand out as the primary influencers.

Research Question 3

How does the consumption of reaction videos influence the independent thinking ability of Chinese university students?

Table 4: The impact of viewing frequency on independent thinking ability

Model		Unstandardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.46	0.12		20.522	0
	frequency	0.385	0.031	0.544	12.468	0
Dependent variable: endorsement of viewpoints in reaction videos						
2	(Constant)	2.781	0.133		20.864	0
	frequency	0.296	0.034	0.409	8.616	0
Dependent variable: the degree of recognizing the media persona's point of view on an unfamiliar topic						
3	(Constant)	2.658	0.14		18.939	0
	frequency	0.337	0.036	0.436	9.329	0
Dependent variable: possibility of seeking a consensus viewpoint for the viewpoint of interest						
4	(Constant)	2.904	0.133		21.828	0
	frequency	0.271	0.034	0.38	7.893	0
Dependent variable: approval of favorite media persona's opinions						
5	(Constant)	2.719	0.129		21.158	0
	frequency	0.33	0.033	0.46	9.972	0
Dependent variable: recognition of influential media persona's views						
6	(Constant)	2.371	0.132		17.908	0
	frequency	0.391	0.034	0.512	11.467	0
Dependent variable: the extent to which the media persona's viewpoint in the reaction video influences the initial viewpoint						
7	(Constant)	2.45	0.133		18.421	0
	frequency	0.375	0.034	0.495	10.947	0
Dependent variable: endorsement of the expression of the media persona in the reaction video and reduced exploration of the original video						
8	(Constant)	2.188	0.127		17.232	0
	frequency	0.46	0.033	0.59	14.059	0
Dependent variable: reduced commenting or social media discussion engagement after watching a reaction video						

The analysis considered the frequency of watching reaction videos as the independent variable. The dependent variables included the degree of recognition of viewpoints in the reaction videos, the recognition of media persona's viewpoints on unfamiliar topics, the likelihood of seeking consensus viewpoints, the recognition of viewpoints of preferred media personas, the recognition of viewpoints of influential media personas, the influence of media personas' viewpoints on initial viewpoints, the recognition of media personas' expressions, and reduced exploration of the original video, as well as the reduction of comments or participation in social media discussions after watching reaction videos.

The regression coefficient values corresponding to the viewing frequency factor were 0.385 ($t=12.468$, $p=0.000<0.01$), 0.296 ($t=8.616$, $p=0.000<0.01$), and 0.385 ($t=8.616$, $p=0.000<0.01$) for the linear regression analysis of recognizing the expression of the media persona in the reaction video and reducing the exploration of the original video, and reducing comments or participation in social media discussions after watching the reaction video ($p=0.000<0.01$), 0.337 ($t=9.329$, $p=0.000<0.01$), 0.271 ($t=7.893$, $p=0.000<0.01$), 0.33

($t=9.972$, $p=0.000<0.01$), 0.391 ($t=11.467$, $p=0.000<0.01$), 0.375 ($t=10.947$, $p=0.000<0.01$), 0.46 ($t=14.059$, $p=0.000<0.01$). These findings imply that the frequency of viewing has a significant positive relationship with the respondents' ability to think independently. In other words, the more frequent the viewing, the more substantial the effect on the ability to think independently.

Conclusion

In summary, the findings indicate that reaction videos are widely consumed for entertainment and educational purposes. Importantly, concerns persist regarding the originality, legality, and authenticity of the content. In addition, the study reveals a significant positive correlation that students who watch reaction videos more frequently experience a greater impact on their independent thinking skills. Overall, these results underscore the intricate dynamics of digital media consumption and its potential impact on audience engagement.

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Modern Witchcraft and Identifying With the Dead

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Abstract

The modern witchcraft movement is a spiritual activism that began in the UK in the 1950s and spread to the U. S. in the 1970s. According to Starhawk, who is an American leading feminist witch, compared to other spiritual practices, one of the unique traits of this movement in the U. S. is that modern witches are trying to identify with the victims in witch hunts and to “take responsibility for shaping a world in which prejudice claims no more victims.” But how is it possible to identify with the dead who lived in another time and region? This paper shows how contemporary witches, in their practice, identify with the victims in the historical event. In order to reveal this, this paper analyzes artworks by Yumeno Goto, who is known as a modern witch in Japan and does oil painting as an act of modern witchcraft and examine the ways in which Goto fills the gap between depicting the past and saving the today’s people as an artist witch.

Keywords: Modern Witchcraft, Neo-Paganism, Feminist Spirituality, Starhawk, Yumeno Goto

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Introduction

This paper begins with a discussion of the definition of a witch in *The Spiral Dance* by Starhawk, a best seller book about modern witchcraft. Starhawk writes, “To be a Witch is to identify with nine million victims of bigotry and hatred and to take responsibility for shaping a world in which prejudice claims no more victims.” As Starhawk defines it, modern witches are those who identify with the dead who lived in other times and regions. This essay discusses how this definition of modern witches influences and informs artworks by Yumeno Goto, who is known as a modern witch in Japan and does oil painting as an act of modern witchcraft. Specifically, this paper analyzes the *Thorn Maria* series to examine the ways in which Goto fills the gap between depicting the past and saving the today’s people as an artist witch. Through an analysis of the *Thorn Maria* series, I seek to understand how modern witches identify with the victims of history.

On Modern Witchcraft and the Goddess

The modern witchcraft or neo-pagan witchcraft movement is a spiritual movement that began in the UK in the 1950s, when the law against witchcraft, the Witchcraft Act 1735, was repealed (Du Chene 171). The abolition of the law led to some people claiming that they had been practicing modern witchcraft in secret. Modern witchcraft reconstructed a pre-Christian, pagan religion that is believed to have been hidden from society because of witch hunts. This pre-Christian, pagan religion worshipped Goddess as well as God, unlike other major religions that are often male-centered. Because of the unique gender relationship in its ritual, the modern witchcraft movement spread to the U. S. in the 1960s and 1970s, adopted by feminists. Feminists did not simply embrace the movement but also developed new aspects under the second-wave feminism (Salomonsen 6).

One of the leading books that have contributed to this feminist shift in modern witchcraft movement is the aforementioned *The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess* by Starhawk, released in 1979. This book is well known for its influence on Dana Haraway’s *a Cyborg Manifesto*. In *The Spiral Dance*, Starhawk defines a witch as a person who identifies with the victims of witch hunts and resists the prejudice all over the world. But the question that arises from this definition is, how is it possible to identify with the dead who lived in different times and different regions? I suggest that the key to the answer lies in her concept of the Goddess. Starhawk formed a coven, called Reclaiming, in San Francisco in 1979 where people worshipped the Goddess. *Reclaiming Newsletter 01*, published in 1980, opens with the declaration that “We reclaim the Goddess: the immanent life force, the connecting pattern of all being” (*Reclaiming* 1). The Goddess here is not a transcendent deity, but a presence immanent in the world, including ourselves. According to Starhawk, the goddess is the eternally moving energy and sacredness underlying all we can touch, and thus all beings are connected and linked to it (Starhawk 164). The Goddess cannot be fully accessed by the ordinary consciousness. Therefore, witches would need to go into a state of trance by doing rituals and to access the Goddess who exists beyond the cultural limitations of their awareness, thereby gaining a different perspective on the world (Starhawk 42,167). By accessing the Goddess through rituals, the ordinal boundary in space and time can be overcome.

On Yumeno Goto's Artwork

The works of Yumeno Goto are good examples of modern witchcraft. Goto is an oil painter and a modern witch in Japan. She creates the arts of oil painting as witchcraft art works. She said, “I consider everything in terms of the Goddess,” in an interview published in 2022.¹ She creates paintings with “myths, folklore, magic, the Virgin Mary and the Goddess, and quotations from the history of art” as motifs. She stated that “through her senses and hands, she mourns, scoops up, and reweaves the sorrows of the oppressed and hunted in the past and stretches a hand to the future generations.”² In a Japanese TV show on April 26, 2022, she announced, “I want to shed light on the people who were oppressed in the past, so I would be happy if I can bring magic or salvation to people who feel that they don't fit in this world.”³ The *Thorn Maria* series by Goto are oil paintings on wooden panel supports. The five works from the series, *Thorn Maria XVIII* to *Thorn Maria XXII*, were exhibited at her solo exhibition *Recreate the Hidden Goddess* held at Ginza Tsutaya from September 9 to September 20, 2023. At the center of the paintings are the Virgin Mary with her skin exposed. There are several nails/thorns driven into the paintings. Some of the nails/thorns have their tips pointing toward the inside of the paintings, while others pointing toward the outside. Despite the nails/thorns, *Thorn Maria* has a peaceful look on her face. The surfaces of the paintings are rough like a rock surface.



Figure 1: Thorn Maria XVIII

¹ 『後藤夢乃インタビュー<後編>魔女として絵を錬成し、人々を救済する』 [Interview with Yumeno Goto <Part 2> Alchemizing pictures as a witch and saving people] by Tagboat: https://tagboat.tokyo/artistinterview/yumeno_goto2.

² Goto, Y (2023). Artist statement on *Recreate the hidden goddess*

³ Iura, T. (Executive Producers). (April 2, 2022). 『ブレイク前夜 ～次世代の芸術家たち～：画家 後藤夢乃』 [The Night Before the Break: Artists of the Next Generation: Painter Yumeno Goto]. BS Fuji.



Figure 2: Thorn Maria XIX



Figure 3: Thorn Maria XX



Figure 4: Thorn Maria XXI



Figure 5: Thorn Maria XXII

The *Thorn Maria* Series and “Carnal Contingence”

Although the *Thorn Maria* series depicts the Virgin Mary, there are several representations that remind us of the image of the historical witches fraught with prejudice against women. The nails/thorns hammered throughout the paintings are reminiscent of the needle test during witch hunts. The needle test involved pricking the accused person with a needle or pins to find a “witch’s mark” or insensitive spot on the body. It was believed that witches, due to their alleged pact with the devil, had areas on their bodies that were numb to pain. The logic behind this test was that if a person did not react to the pain of being pricked, it was seen as

evidence of their involvement in witchcraft. Despite being pricked with needles/thorns, Thorn Maria has a calm expression on her face and the corners of her mouth are slightly upturned. *Thorn Maria XVIII* and *Thorn Maria XXII* are painted entirely in blue, and *Thorn Maria XIX*, *Thorn Maria XX*, and *Thorn Maria XXI* are painted entirely in red, giving the impression that Thorn Maria is being thrown into a stream of water or into a blazing fire. It seems as if Thorn Maria is undergoing the swimming test and is burned at the stake in a witch hunt. Differently from many other Marian arts in which she wears blue or white clothes, Thorn Maria is naked. Many witches in western art history are also often nude.⁴

The *Thorn Maria* series, though being basically portrayals of Mary, has some features that recall the historical witches as victims of patriarchy. The image of the witch created by the delusion of a patriarchal society as a woman who has “insatiable sexual appetite” and engages in orgies with the devil in the night world, is the opposite of the Virgin Mary, who is known for her immaculate conception of Jesus (Naito 156). The cult of Mary is criticized by Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* as a “supreme masculine victory” (Beauvoir 225). This is because Christianity, abhorring and fearing the flesh and animality in women, venerates the Virgin Mary as “the image of the most perfected woman, propitious to men,” who is far from real women (Beauvoir 224–225). The cult of the Virgin Mary, who is a transcendent being created in the fantasies of Christian patriarchal society, functioned as an exclusion of women in society. It is estimated that women constituted 85 percent of those executed during witch hunts (Blumenfeld-Kosinski 105). Jung also points out the connection between the collective worship of the Virgin Mary and the devaluation of real women, and argues that witch hunts occurred as a result of the rising Mariolatry in medieval society (Jung 236). The cult of the Virgin Mary and witch hunts are linked together in that they both stem from a fear of the real female body. According to Beauvoir, the fear of the female body comes from men projecting “the horror of his own carnal contingency” onto women (Beauvoir 201). In other words, men find their fear of all the characteristics of the body that cannot be controlled by reason (e.g., aging, sexual desire, etc.) in the female body. The exposed skin of Thorn Maria can be seen as an emphasis on the presence of the body. By drawing *Thorn Maria* series, Goto attempts to unite the sacredness and the animalistic nature of women, which have been divided in society, and to reclaim the animalistic nature of the body as sacred. In *Witches*, Erica Jong observes, “The Virgin Mary is a sanitized version of the Mother Goddess—sanitized and fragmented,” since her real body is eliminated and only “motherhood” remains (Jong 30). Thorn Maria may be seen as a figure of the Virgin Mary freed from sanitization. “Carnal contingency” also includes pain, which we can’t control. The nails/thorns in Thorn Maria, who has a peaceful expression on her face, teach the viewers about the existence of pain she has in her daily life.

Witchcraft of Paintings Beyond Time and Space Through Sharing Pain

The pain of Thorn Maria is not confined to the picture but it reaches beyond the surface of the painting. In an interview published before “MEET YOUR ART FESTIVAL 2023,” an event for up-and-coming contemporary artists in Japan, Goto said that she makes her paintings transcend the boundaries of the surface by creating a rock-like surface with multiple layers of pigments. The nails/thorns in Thorn Maria play a similar role. Nails are used to join pieces of

⁴ Alprecht Dürer, *The Witch* (1501); Hans Baldunggreen, *The Witches* (1508–10); Francisco de Goya, *Witches’ Flight* (1798); Antoine Wiertz, *Young Sorceress* (1857); Albert Joseph Penot, *Witch On Broom Departure For The Sabbath* (1910), etc.

wood together.⁵ The nails/thorns connect the real world where we live and the world inside the picture. Many of Goto's works are not varnished on the surface. One of the reasons Goto does not varnish the surface of her works is, according to her interview on July 10, 2022, that, "varnish coatings add a single film over the surface of the painting," and "the painting would not be able to transcend the boundaries." Goto adds that this art style was established recently and she used to varnish her paintings to "make them shiny," but she had found that the people in her paintings "became people from the past" because of the coating.⁶ Goto paints about historical or mythological subjects, but she does not shut them up inside the "past." The pain of Thorn Maria goes beyond the surface of the painting and seeps out into the real world in which we are.

The nails/thorns express the pain of Thorn Maria, which is due to the hatred directed toward her body. The presence of the thorns/nails hammered into her emphasizes the "Carnal contingency" that all of us have, and yet is abhorred in civilized society. Some of the nails/thorns in *Thorn Maria* series have their tips pointing toward the outside of the painting. Thus, they represent the pain that viewers have as well. When I asked Goto about the *Thorn Maria* series, she said, "*Thorn Maria* series represents the crossing of the painting's boundaries and acceptance of pain by driving nails/thorns into the painting from both the inside and the outside." Through the pain of the Thorn Maria, the viewers recognize their pain whose presence has been ignored and suppressed. The thorns/nails that penetrate both the paintings and the viewers dissolve the boundary between the pain of Thorn Maria and the pain of the viewers. Sharing their pain, the viewers, including Goto herself, identify with the victims of witch hunts.



Figure 6: Thorns/Nails

Conclusion

The modern witchcraft movement emerged as a revival of pre-Christian, pagan traditions with a unique emphasis on the worship of the Goddess in the UK in the 1950s and spread to

⁵ MEET YOUR ART. (August 25, 2023). 『【アトリエ訪問 with 片寄涼太】キリスト教以前の欧州の土着の宗教観をテーマに制作する・後藤夢乃の森のアトリエ【THE BASE】』[*Atelier Visit with Ryota Katayose*] *The Forest Atelier of Yumeno Goto, who creates works on the theme of indigenous religious views in pre-Christian Europe* [THE BASE]] [Video]. Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9kqjV45eqSE>

⁶ biscuit gallery. (July 20, 2022). 『後藤夢乃×円香 魔女対談@2022年7月10日』 [*Yumeno Goto & Madoka Witches' Dialogue on July 10, 2022*] [Video]. Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bLCem1BwNV8>

the U. S. in the 1970s. According to Starhawk, this spiritual movement influenced by feminist perspectives in the 1970s United States, regards a modern witch as one who identifies with historical victims of persecution and resists prevailing prejudices. The key to this identification lies in the concept of the Goddess, an immanent life force connecting all beings, transcending ordinary consciousness through ritualistic practices. Yumeno Goto's artwork, particularly the *Thorn Maria* Series, is a good example of modern witchcraft. The *Thorn Maria* Series explores the intersection between the Virgin Mary's portrayal and historical prejudices against women during witch hunts, challenging societal constructs around female bodies. Goto's artwork transcends temporal and spatial boundaries, rejecting the confinement of historical or mythological subjects to the past. The nails and thorns, penetrating both paintings and observers, dissolve boundaries between the viewers living in the real world and the figure of Thorn Maria depicted in the paintings. The *Thorn Maria* series serves as powerful modern, enabling viewers to acknowledge and accept suppressed pain. In this way, Goto ultimately bridges the gap depicting the past and saving the today's people.

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***The Trees That Divide Us:
How Visual Language Presents the Theme of Economic Disparity in “Trees”***

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Abstract

Trees by Ellis (2016) and illustrated by Howard (2016) reimagines the metaphor of an alien invasion in the form of a comic book series through its unique view of a post-apocalyptic narrative—ten years after they landed, these aliens did nothing, standing on the earth’s surface, like trees. This comic book is an introspection of the human condition years after a horrific event—the characters in this world have been dealing with this situation for a decade. This presented Ellis and Howard many issues to explore in the series such as economic disparity. Because the comic book genre is a unique medium, this also gave the creators a challenging task to not only explore these issues from a literary perspective, but from a visual perspective as well. This paper does a close reading of the various elements of comic book art such as paneling, framing and the use of color, and how writer Warren Ellis and illustrator Jason Howard used these to present the theme of economic disparity in *Trees*. By looking at these elements, this paper posits that complex social themes, such as the theme chosen in this paper, economic disparity, can be revealed through the combination of the literary and visual language that the comic book medium can offer.

Keywords: Comic Book, Visual Literacy, Visual Language, Economic Disparity

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Introduction

In our modern times, the written word, from poetry to advertising copy, and the visual image, from painting to photography, can be seen in conjunction with each other. This convergence has been at the forefront of our information, media-driven society. We see advertisements with images combined with text beside many major thoroughfares around the world. In social media, the popularity of apps such as Instagram juxtapose the 1:1 aspect ratio for images on top of text you can input for your posts. With a combination of image and text, you can convey a message on your social media platform.

We are now very lucky to be in the age of multimedia arts, where multiple arts forms are combined, not only for its artistic values, but for making life more convenient. Children are now digital natives and are equipped to understand that the comic book genre can be as complex and, in many ways, more immersive than traditional forms of literature. This speaks to the capacity of humans to express concepts through multiple modalities (Cohn, 2013).

Cohn (2013) describes the issues when dealing with visual narratives in his book, *The Visual Language of Comics*. He begins to describe the differences between graphic structures and the narrative structures. The graphic structure gives information to lines and shapes, as well as connects to a spatial structure that encodes the spatial components of these meanings. The narrative structure, on the other hand, orders information into a particular meaning.

This intuitive and multimodal thought process is at the heart of comics. By being able to take a look at not only the graphic structure of a comic and give meaning to these images, but by providing them context through its narrative structure by understanding its sequence, we are able to understand, with more complexity, the underlying themes being explored by comics writers and artists. Cohn further elaborates this.

It is significant to note that these structures are separate: while event structure is the knowledge of meaning, narrative structure organizes this meaning into expressible form. Altogether, these different components mutually interact with each other in the process of comprehending a sequence of images.

Trees by Ellis (2016), illustrated by Howard (2016), and published by Image Comics, is a positively reviewed science fiction comic book series that deals with a silent alien invasion that stands on various surfaces of the earth, like trees. These gargantuan “trees” do not move and seemingly have no account for humanity and society. But upon their impact they created devastation with long term consequences such as pollution and flooding. With its unique science fiction proposition, the story revolves then not around the alien trees, per se, but around the people that live near or around these alien structures. As a science fiction title, the narrative begins a decade after the invasion, and takes us to different locations around the world both urban and rural, from Manhattan to Mogadishu, Sicily to Svalbard, where the protagonists investigate these “trees.” *Trees* also scrutinizes various social and cultural themes that its various characters experience because of this invasion such as gender, artistic expression, fascism and economic disparity, to name a few.

Scope, Limitations, and Objectives

Due to the constraints of this paper, this study will focus on various aspects of visual language found in the graphic novel and comic medium and how this affect and move the

narrative forward in a more meaningful way. Thus, although the focus of the study is on its literary benefits, the illustrations and their placements take precedence over this study as part of this broader literary study.

Furthermore, I wish to define the term *graphic novel* and *comic books*. Upon a cursory review of the two terms, a quick google search led me to the website masterclass.com. In technical terms, a graphic novel contains complete narratives, whether or not they are part of a larger series, but comic books contain serialized narratives, and it might be difficult to read a comic book issue if the previous comic book issue has not been read. (Is It a Comic Book or Graphic Novel? Learn the Difference Between Graphic Novels and Comics).

For the purposes of this paper, the term *comic book* will be used in reference to *Trees*. This is due to the fact that the nineteen issues of *Trees* were published serially in the span of six years, from 2014-2020 and that the narratives move throughout these issues. I recognize that this definition may be simple and there are deeper and more critical definitions for both terms. In fact, there are definitions both academic and non-academic, where the definitions of both terms overlap. However, for the purposes of this paper, only a simple definition is needed as the focus was to choose a term for constancy.

The first issue of *Trees* begins with a quick recap of the proposition that the world is put under. It reads,

“Ten years after they landed, all over the world as if there were no one here. And they did nothing and did not speak as if there were no one here and nothing under foot. Ten years since we learned that there is intelligent life in the universe but that they did not recognize us as intelligent or alive. They stand on the surface of the Earth like trees exerting their silent pressure on the world as if there were no-one here.” (Ellis, 2015)

Thus, the characters have dealt with living with this situation for a decade. This presented Ellis and Howard many issues to explore in the series such as police states, transgender identity, feminism, and economic disparity. And because the comic book genre is a unique medium, this also gave the creators a challenging task to not only explore these issues from a literary perspective, but from a visual perspective as well. This paper will look at the various elements of comic book art such as paneling, framing and the use of color, and how writer Warren Ellis and illustrator Jason Howard used these to present the theme of economic disparity in *Trees*.

The Visual Language of Trees

Paneling and Framing

Eisner (1985) explains that the fundamental function of comic art is to communicate ideas and stories by means of words and pictures that involve movement of images through space. In *Understanding Comics* by McCloud (1994), he called the phenomena of observing the parts but perceiving the whole as *closure*. Thus, the job of the comic book artist is to carefully choose what to include inside the page in the form of panels, in order to assist the reader into piecing together the narrative to form that closure. It is also the job of the artist to fill the gutter—the spaces between the panels—with color or background fillers, as the narrative requires. Closure, then, according to McCloud (1994), can be a powerful force within panels as well as between them, when artists choose to show only a small piece of the

picture. Furthermore, the choice of panel shape is also important in bringing the narrative or idea forward. As Eisner (1985) explains,

The frame's shape (or absence of one) can become a part of the story itself. It can be used to convey something of the dimension of sound and emotional climate in which the action occurs, as well as contributing to the atmosphere of the page as a whole.

In *Trees #1*, the panels and framing of the story contribute greatly to the theme this paper is exploring, that of economic disparity. The spread of pages 9 and 10 of the first issues introduces us to the second area where these alien trees have landed, New York City. In this spread, we see the juxtaposition of a location. On the left page, we see Vince and Del speaking to each other. Vince is running for mayor of New York City, while Del is his right-hand man. The page is dominated by Vince's office that boasts a view of the city that hosts two massive alien trees. We can assume that since Vince has an unobstructed view of the city, his office is in prime real estate that is not cheap. Thus, we can assume that Vince is well-off to be able to afford such office space. On page 10 however, we see three panels that show New York City up close. But, the illustrations on this page paint a different picture as compared to that of Vince's office. The third and bottom most panel is the most striking. It illustrates how other less fortunate New Yorkers live closer to the alien tree, compared to wealthy New Yorkers who see this tree from afar. A barrel is burning to show the lack of electricity for heating, while we see makeshift furniture everywhere. It is a venerable shanty town.

Paneling also plays a role in this dichotomy. On the left page, we have three panels in the bottom that show both Vince and Del. These panels are rectangular in shape but are positioned vertically. These mimic the *trees* in the background that are central to the story. Although these trees are silent, as the first few pages of the comic book explain, these trees exert a "silent pressure" on humanity. Thus, by the panel alone, we can assume that the political power and wealth, or a silent pressure, lies with the characters inside these three panels—the soon to be Mayor Elect Vince and his aide, Del. However, juxtaposed to the right of this, the three panels are also rectangular, but are horizontal. We see more of the actual city and the destruction caused by the *tree*. But since the panels are positioned horizontally, it looks as though a trunk has been cut, and is no longer whole, thereby providing a foreshadowing of what is to come—when Vince is elected as mayor, he will kill some people that call this area of New York home—the proverbial cutting of the roots.

The top panel of twelfth page of *Trees #2* provides us with further evidence that framing can show economic disparity. In the background, we see a building in the Roman architectural style. In the foreground, a fruit vendor has fallen to the ground, his wares all over the street and a fully armored person, presumably the guard of whoever is inside this building, aims his weapon at the vendor. But what is more striking is the wall or gate that divides this grand building and the poor vendor that has fallen. It is an object that physically keeps others away, thus providing more distance for the wealthy to the poor. This panel also bleeds throughout the page, with another smaller panel in front of it. As a result, the building that the wall protects seems to have more importance than the welfare of the fallen vendor.

What's the Color?

Van Ness (2010), in her critical study of the graphic novel *Watchmen*, writes,

Color, like any aspect of the panel, is most effective when the reader can determine a change or distinction between various panels. Think, for example, the change in Rorschach's word balloon shapes or between differing points-of-view and how these affect the reader's perception of particular subjects. If all of the colors are consistently bright and bold and never placed in contrast to more muted or subtle colors, any impact that they may have on the tone of the narrative is lost.

In *Trees*, color plays a vital role by determining scenes and locations, and in aiding the narrative as well. The bright yellow, pink and purple tones mimic Mogadishu, Somalia's warmer climate while the color palette changes to a blue-green and white palette when the scene shifts to Blindhail Station in Northwest Spitzbergen, Norway where the climate is cooler.

Color signals a change in class structure and presents us with a view of the economic disparity in Mogadishu, Somalia. In *Trees* #2, page twelve again depicts the roman style building covered in bright yellow sunlight to depict upper class society. As discussed earlier, this panel and framing presents the economic disparity of the location. If we look at the panel within the bottom panel on the same page, we are treated with a bird's eye view map of Mogadishu, Somalia. Not only does this small panel contrast well in color and brightness to the panel it is on top of, which helps direct our eyes to it, it is also the same color as the sunlight that drapes the building seen on the panel above. This then lends us to the assumption that the building on top must be an important building in this story arc. And as seen in the next few pages, this is indeed true, as the building is the office of the Somali president, Caleb Rahim, who incidentally is wearing yellow tinted sunglasses to add to this assumption.

In *Trees* #7, we see a scene in Cefalu, Italy, where a conversation between Eligia Gatti and Luca Bongiorno on pages five and six is happening. Both the left and right pages of this spread are dominated by the pair sitting by a cliff, overlooking three *trees*, one of which is right in the middle of Cefalu. The color tone of the cliff where Luca and Eligia are predominantly a reddish hue, but the town of Cefalu is covered in green. This is no coincidence as Luca begins to explain his knowledge of the trees. He explains,

People who could leave Tree landing sites did. As soon as they could. Those left under the shadows of their Trees are there because they couldn't go, for the most part. It costs money. Most cities under trees have a greatly reduced population compared to ten years ago. Police services reduced their numbers accordingly. Police cost money. Many cities under trees thereby become interzones of sorts. Shadow economies. Shadow politics. Nothing good grows in the shadow of a tree. This is one reason why your friends in the Great Work took root here. It's almost a pity they're so stupid and poor. (Ellis, 2015)

As Luca explains, it is the poor who have stayed under the shadows of these trees, and with the lack of police authority and a decreasing order, greed takes over. From the previous chapter, we find out that Tito, Eligia's boyfriend, is a gangster who makes money blackmailing the queer community into paying him protection money for his silence. Eligia is visibly upset about this as she leaves for a cigarette. This is the situation in Cefalu at present. Green, often associated with greed, is then a fitting color to drape around Cefalu. The red hue that paints Luca and Eligia, is also apt, as a foreshadowing of things to come. Luca ends the page by stating, "You may have to kill Tito the idiot yourself, after all" (Ellis, 2015).

Further into the same issue on page 13, the color red begins to reveal itself as complementary to death itself. As Luca and Eligia enjoy a bottle of red wine together, their conversation revolves around Cefalu and Luca's theory of the tree. However, at the end of the page, the last three panels present the turning point of this story arc. As Luca pours a glass of wine, he explains, "Of course, Italy's going to go to shit long before that happens. And the only people who'll survive that are the ones with their own support systems." The second to the last panel fills with red wine. Luca asks, "Start writing. I'm going to tell you some things about economics in Cefalu, Palermo, in general, and Italy as a whole. When are you going to kill Tito?" Then in the last panel, there is nothing but a complete red hue. Eligia replies, "Tomorrow night" (Ellis, 2015).

The red wine filling up the panel is a clear representation of the use of color in the story. As Eligia becomes increasingly tired and desperate to survive, seeing that the only way to do so is to kill Tito, the red here becomes a clear metaphor for the blood that will be spilt in the next few pages. Eligia explains her motives to Davide, "I want to live differently. I want to be comfortable and safe, and I don't want to work for a living. I never claimed to be a nice person. I'm just better than Tito." (Ellis, 2015) Davide realizes this as well when Eligia tells him, "You just wanted money and control and some respect. You don't have any of that right now." (Ellis, 2015). As Eligia and Davide ambush Tito on a cliff overlooking Cefalu, the last panel on page 19 brings the metaphor of red full circle. Tito crashes into the town with great force from a high distance, and only his splattering red blood is vibrant among the color muted buildings of Cefalu.

Conclusion

The examples above are but a few of the instances where the visual language of a comic book greatly aids in its narrative. Van Ness, (2010) explains that the meaning-making process is dialectical, words contribute to the meaning of the images and vice versa. Both function as text or context, and that function is determined by the reader's perception. She offers a deeper condition to McCloud (1994) on the potential of the genre; however, it relies on reader participation, a two-way communication between creator and reader.

How we define comics, and the graphic narrative form depends on how we as readers interpret the relationship between images and words at any given point in the narrative. The relationship (or lack thereof) between the two is not an inherent quality of the medium; no one answer is correct. What is an integral aspect of the medium is its reliance on the participation of the reader. Graphic narrative readers must actively read both images and words in order to take meaning from the text. (45)

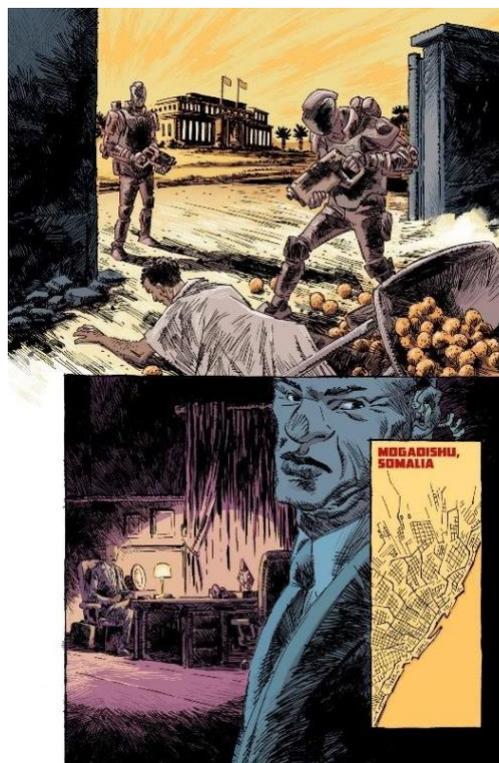
Trees is able to grapple with various issues and themes competently, even employing both visual elements and literary elements to effectively convey the message and idea. Berger, (1972) urges us to see what we only look at, that looking is an act of choice. In the previous examples, I have explained how paneling, framing, and even the use of color greatly supplements the theme of economic disparity in *Trees*. By looking closely, we can see that the symbolism colors bring with it helps us determine social standing and inner emotions. The shapes of the panels give us a glimpse of the power struggle in the comics and aids us in understanding who is in charge, and who is not. This exercise in visual literacy is only one of the few ways to understand that the graphic novel and comic book medium greatly complements the way we understand and see things in modern society.

Appendix

Trees #1 1, p. 9-10



Trees #2, p. 12



Trees #7 7 p. 5-6



Trees #7, p. 13



Trees #7, p. 20



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From Madeira to Hawaii: Augmented Reality Enhancing Creative Historical Education

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The IAFOR International Conference on Arts & Humanities in Hawaii 2024
Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

The project 'From Madeira to Hawaii' stands as an innovative educational initiative that has stimulated creativity and historical research among students. It explores the late 19th-century migrations from Madeira Island to Hawaii. Grounded in the principles of Action Research (Elliott, 1991), the pedagogical process culminated in the creation of an Augmented Reality (AR)-enhanced comic book. This achievement represents a collaborative effort between students and published illustrators from Madeira Island, who seamlessly merged in-depth research, creative illustrations, and AR elements to bring historical narratives to life. Participants explored Madeira and Hawaii's 19th-century art and culture, enriching the AR publication with vibrant artistic and historical elements. This fusion stimulated creativity and fostered a comprehensive understanding of the historical context of the migratory journey. The project employed an interdisciplinary approach, echoing Philippe Meirieu's emphasis on active learning, blending history, art education, and technology. Through active participation, students enhanced their critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration skills, transcending traditional learning methods and embarking on an immersive, dynamic historical exploration beyond the classroom. This presentation aims to critically analyze the construction of the comic book and the pedagogical process undertaken. The project fostered a deeper appreciation for history, art, and technology among students, as evidenced by their increased curiosity and the independent pursuit of further historical research. As a testament to AR's transformative potential, 'From Madeira to Hawaii' represents a significant stride in nurturing creativity and innovation, harmoniously integrating technology with history and art education.

Keywords: Augmented Reality Education, Historical Research, Interdisciplinary Learning, Madeira

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Introduction

Education plays a crucial role in shaping societies and creating well-informed citizens who can analyze, question, and transform the world around them. However, with the increasing pace of digitalization and globalization, education needs to adapt and evolve to meet the changing needs and expectations of new generations. This article delves into a fascinating educational project that combines three seemingly unrelated elements: comics, history, and Augmented Reality (AR). By bringing together these diverse elements, this innovative educational project creates a truly immersive and enriching learning experience that goes beyond the traditional limitations of education. Through its unique approach, this educational project helps students to understand history better by experiencing it in an entirely new way, making learning not only more engaging but also more effective.

The Transformative Power of Education

Education is a transformative process (Freire, 1970) that can change people's lives and shape their futures. Throughout history, it has transmitted knowledge, values, and culture from one generation to another. However, in the current era, education faces unique challenges and opportunities. The increasing digitalization, globalization, and rapid technological evolution are reshaping how we learn and teach.

In this context, it is imperative for education to embrace innovation and constant adaptation. Educators and educational program designers must explore new ways to engage students, spark their curiosity, and prepare them for a constantly changing world. One of the most promising approaches is the combination of traditional media with cutting-edge technology to create meaningful and effective learning experiences.

The Convergence of Educational Elements

This educational project is based on the convergence of three seemingly disparate elements: comics, history, and Augmented Reality (AR). Each of these elements plays a fundamental role in creating a unique and enriching learning experience.

Storytelling has been a powerful tool for knowledge transmission and connection between generations throughout history. In the contemporary era, education has evolved significantly, adopting innovative pedagogical approaches and emerging technologies to engage students in new and exciting ways. One approach that has gained attention is the combination of comics and AR technology as a learning vehicle. In this article, we explore how the educational project "From Madeira to Hawaii" merges these elements to create a unique and effective pedagogical experience.

The Power of Comics

Comics have been a medium of communication and artistic expression for generations. Their ability to tell stories through visual and narrative means has made them highly effective in engaging readers of all ages. Through juxtaposed panels and the intelligent use of images and words, comics can convey emotions, impart complex information, and stimulate the imagination uniquely.

Comics are not limited to fictional narratives; they can also address historical, social, and cultural topics in an accessible and engaging manner. Educators have recognized their value as an effective pedagogical tool to engage students and foster an understanding of complex concepts. In this project, the comic becomes the gateway to exploring the history of migration from Madeira to Hawaii.

Scott McCloud (1994), in his influential work "Understanding Comics," describes comics as a form of visual communication that uses sequential images to convey information and emotions. He defines comics as a series of illustrations in a deliberate sequence intended to convey information and/or produce an aesthetic response in the viewer. This definition underscores the unique capacity of comics to blend visual and narrative elements.

The significance of comics in education lies in their ability to communicate effectively and engagingly. McCloud argues that comics invite readers to fill in the gaps between panels with their imagination, creating a participatory experience. This active engagement is crucial for the learning process, as it involves both the intellect and emotion.

Comics can simplify complex concepts, narrate historical and scientific stories, and promote literacy. However, integrating Augmented Reality technology elevates this educational experience.

Augmented Reality overlays digital elements onto the real world, enriching comics with interactive components like videos, 3D objects, and additional content, creating a multisensory learning experience that appeals to students of all learning styles.

The project "From Madeira to Hawaii" leverages the synergy between comics and AR to offer a unique educational experience. Through comics and AR technology, students explore historical and cultural events in an immersive environment, promising to convey knowledge and ignite curiosity, creativity, and a love for learning.

The Importance of History

History forms the foundation of our understanding of the world around us (Freire, 1970). Knowing and understanding history is crucial for comprehending our current state and how past actions have shaped the present and future (Meirieu, 2010). However, history is often presented in a boring and decontextualized manner in traditional educational settings.

This project aims to recover a significant, yet often overlooked, part of history: the 19th-century migration from the Island of Madeira to the Hawaiian Islands. Despite its relevance, this story has largely remained unnoticed. By bringing this historical narrative to life, the goal is to inform students about the events and individuals involved and to connect them with their cultural and familial heritage.

The Augmented Reality Revolution

Augmented Reality (AR) is a technology that has revolutionized how we interact with the digital and physical worlds. AR combines real-world elements with virtual components, creating immersive and interactive hybrid experiences. Modern devices, such as mobile phones and AR glasses, allow users to see digital information overlaid on their real environment.

In the educational context, AR opens a vast field of possibilities. It enables the creation of interactive educational experiences that extend beyond textbook pages or classroom walls. Students can "touch" history, explore abstract concepts in tangible ways, and actively engage in their learning process.

In this project, AR serves as a bridge between the comic and history. This technology adds an additional layer of depth and understanding to the historical narrative presented in the comic "From Madeira to Hawaii." Readers can scan specific comic pages with their mobile devices, bringing illustrations to life. This reveals additional information, historical reconstructions, and three-dimensional objects that enrich the reading experience.

The Project Context

This educational project was developed as part of the INTERREG Atlantic TIDE project: Atlantic Network for the Development of Historical Maritime Tourism. The main objective of this project was to support organizations in the Atlantic region in identifying potential niche tourism packages in these areas. Through the initiatives supported by TIDE, Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) technologies were used in the fields of history, archaeology, and underwater exploration to enrich visitors' experiences and add a new dimension to the cultural heritage in these areas.

The "From Madeira to Hawaii" project aligns with this mission by highlighting the migratory journey of people from the Island of Madeira to the Hawaiian Islands in the late 19th century. This historical migration was significant not only to the Madeira archipelago but also left a lasting impact on the Hawaiian archipelago, where the influence of this group of migrants is still evident in certain religious, musical, and culinary traditions.

Project Objectives

The objectives of this educational project are multiple and ambitious, addressing both education and the preservation of cultural heritage. Through the combination of comics, history, and Augmented Reality (AR), it seeks to achieve the following objectives:

Rescue a Forgotten History: A fundamental objective is to unearth and highlight a significant part of history that has largely been overlooked. The migration of people from the Island of Madeira to Hawaii in the late 19th century to work on sugar cane plantations represents a historically significant episode often omitted in traditional education. By revitalizing this narrative, the aim is to educate new generations about the events and individuals involved in this migration.

Connect With Cultural Heritage: The migration from Madeira to Hawaii is more than a story distant in time and space; it is part of the cultural heritage of people in both regions. This project endeavors to connect students and readers with their cultural and familial heritage, encouraging them to explore their family genealogies and understand the religious, cultural, and social history they inherit.

Promote Historical Intelligence: In line with Meirieu (2010), this project aims to develop students' historical intelligence, encouraging young people to explore their cultural heritage, understand their origins, and how that history shapes their identity and perspectives. Education extends beyond developing formal intelligence to

cultivating historical intelligence, enabling individuals to locate themselves within the human collective with knowledge and insight.

Use Comics as and Educational Vehicle: Comics serve as a fundamental educational vehicle in this project. As McCloud (1994) notes, comics are an art form that combines sequential illustrations to convey information and evoke aesthetic responses in the reader. With their visual and narrative nature, comics are especially appealing to young readers and can communicate information in an accessible and engaging manner.

Leverage Augmented Reality Technology: AR technology is employed as a potent tool to enhance the educational experience. Beyond narrating the story through comics, AR adds an additional layer by enabling readers to interactively explore historical reconstructions, three-dimensional objects, and other pertinent information, immersing students in the history and culture of their region through engaging and participatory experiences.

Engage Students in Creation: A unique aspect of this project is the active participation of students in its creation. The primary creators are students, young people, and teenagers eager to contribute to a tangible project that goes beyond the classroom. They are motivated to assume roles of responsibility and engage in every project phase, from historical research to the development of AR content, providing a hands-on and significant learning experience.

Integrate Constructivist Learning: The project is founded on Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the zone of proximal development, which highlights the gap between what learners can achieve independently and with a more experienced mentor's guidance. This approach allows students to learn by collaborating with experienced comic authors, acquiring new skills and insights they could not have developed alone.

Promote Digital Literacy: In our increasingly digital era, digital literacy is an essential skill. This project gives students the opportunity to engage with AR technology, enriching their historical understanding and acquainting them with digital tools and concepts, crucial in a world where technology is integral to nearly all life aspects.

Reach Diverse Audiences: The project aims to reach diverse and global audiences. Besides the Portuguese version, an English version of the comic was created to allow readers in Hawaii to engage with this shared story, facilitated by contacts with the Honorary Consul of Portugal in Hawaii. This broadens the project's impact and fosters intercultural understanding.

Project Methodology

The methodology used in this educational project was based on a combination of pedagogical approaches ranging from constructivist education (Papert, 1993; Vygotsky, 1978) to the integration of cutting-edge educational technology. The choice of methodologies aimed at achieving deep and meaningful learning in students while fostering collaboration and active participation.

Constructivist Approach: Influenced by theorists such as Seymour Papert and Lev Vygotsky, the constructivist approach was fundamental to this project's design. This approach views students not as passive recipients of knowledge but as active constructors of their understanding, focusing on meaning-building through interaction with content and collaboration.

In this project, students were active learners and knowledge creators. They went beyond merely consuming information about the migration from Madeira to Hawaii and actively participated in research, storytelling, and content creation.

Interdisciplinary Collaboration: The project facilitated interdisciplinary collaboration by uniting students from different fields—history, art, and technology—with experienced comic artists. This diverse collaboration enriched the creative process and enabled a comprehensive understanding of the story, allowing students to learn about the migration from historical, artistic, and technological perspectives. Collaborating with comic artists offered insights into visual storytelling and artistic representation.

Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development: Based on Lev Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development theory, which highlights the difference between what learners can do independently versus with a mentor's help, this project saw students benefiting from this concept. By working alongside experienced comic authors Valter de Sousa and Samuel Jarimba, and mediated by the course teacher, students improved their skills and gained insights into professional creative processes, from plot development to character design and panel sequencing.

Augmented Reality Technology as an Educational Tool: Augmented Reality (AR) technology was implemented using web-based platforms, providing a technological framework to animate the comic's historical narrative and enhance the learning experience.

These accessible platforms enabled the integration of AR elements into the comic, offering interactive experiences. For instance, readers could scan panels with mobile devices to unlock three-dimensional historical recreations or listen to audio files of significant events.

The creation of QR codes linked to AR content facilitated easy access for any reader with a mobile device and internet connection, ensuring technology did not hinder student engagement. The inclusion of 3D objects allowed for exploration of historical artifacts from various angles, such as examining traditional musical instruments related to the migration in detail, enriching story comprehension and stimulating curiosity.

Communication and Collaboration Through Technology: Communication and collaboration were pivotal in this project, involving students, comic artists, teachers, and other collaborators. To ensure fluid and effective communication, a WhatsApp group was established, and a cloud platform was utilized for sharing and coordinating the project's progress. This setup allowed each contributor to post and view the work being developed by the team in real-time. Technology thus facilitated collaboration,

bridging the physical distance between participants, including comic artists working from remote locations.

In summary, the methodology of this educational project was grounded in constructivist learning, interdisciplinary collaboration, the integration of Augmented Reality, and the application of Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development theory (1978). These methodologies were synergistically employed to offer students a meaningful and enriching learning experience, enhancing historical understanding, digital literacy, and creative collaboration (Eisner, 2004).

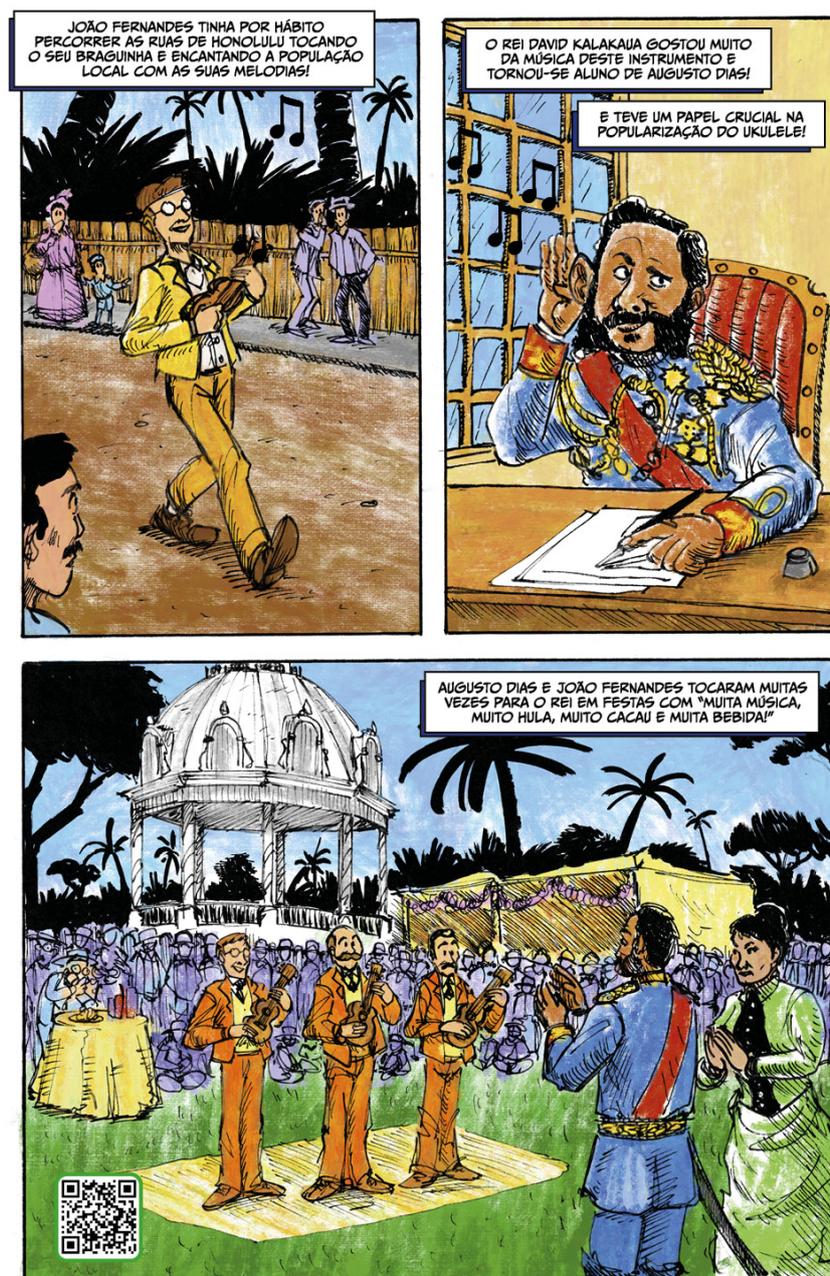


Figure 1: Page from the Portuguese edition of the comic "From Madeira to Hawaii" with a QR code that activates Augmented Reality content virtually superimposed over the printed image.

Project Results

The results of this educational project have been significant and manifested in the enhanced understanding of history among students. Delving into the 19th-century migration from Madeira to Hawaii, they have acquired a detailed knowledge of the events, motivations, and consequences of this historical phenomenon, exploring the lives and experiences of individuals involved in the migration.

Personal Connection With Cultural Heritage: The project has enabled students to establish a personal connection with their cultural heritage, particularly for those with roots in Madeira. Discovering stories of their ancestors has strengthened their cultural identity and sense of belonging to a broader community, highlighting the importance of preserving and sharing these stories with future generations.

Development of Research Skills: Historical research was fundamental in creating the comic and Augmented Reality experiences. Students utilized libraries, regional archives, and online resources to gather information about the migration, thereby honing their research skills, including source evaluation and information synthesis, valuable across educational and professional contexts.

Active Participation in Creation: Students actively participated in every creation stage, contributing to the narrative, illustrations, Augmented Reality designs, and decision-making processes. This engagement fostered a sense of agency and ownership over the project, enhancing their motivation (Silva & Fraga, 2022; Polli & Fraga, 2022).

Immersive Augmented Reality Experiences: Augmented Reality experiences have deepened historical understanding by offering interactive exploration of historical reconstructions and three-dimensional objects, sparking curiosity, and encouraging further exploration of the narrative (Eisner, 2004).

Promotion of Digital Literacy: The project has enhanced students' digital literacy through interaction with Augmented Reality technology, equipping them with digital skills essential for navigating the technological landscape of the 21st century (UNESCO, 2022).

Global Reach: The creation of an English version of the comic expanded the project's reach, attracting readers in Hawaii and globally through both print and free digital e-book distributions. This effort has fostered intercultural understanding and enriched the educational experience.

Impact on Students

One of this project's most notable aspects is its positive impact on students. Engaging in research, comic creation, and the implementation of Augmented Reality, they experienced significant growth in several areas:

Historical Understanding: The project achieved its goal of enhancing students' historical understanding. Participants learned about the migration from Madeira to Hawaii through research and comic creation. They developed a deeper appreciation of

the reasons behind these movements and their impact on both regions. This became a testament to the power of experiential learning.

Cultural Identity: Exploring their cultural and familial roots was an enlightening experience for the students. As they researched the history of their ancestors and their role in the migration, they began to question their own genealogy and cultural heritage (Meirieu, 2010). This self-discovery contributed to a greater awareness of themselves and their place in society (Freire, 1970).

Creative Skills: Collaborating with comic artists and creating visual content enriched the students' creative skills. They learned to bring characters and settings to life through art, which has applications in fields beyond storytelling, such as graphic design and illustration.

Technological Skills: Incorporating Augmented Reality not only enriched the learning experience but also improved students' technological skills. They learned to create Augmented Reality content and use digital tools to tell stories in innovative ways.

Curiosity and Continuous Learning: The project sparked students' curiosity and encouraged continuous learning. Research became an exciting endeavor, with many students continuing to explore the history of Madeira and Hawaii even after the project concluded.

Contribution to Contemporary Education

This project exemplifies how contemporary education can benefit from the integration of advanced technologies and innovative pedagogical approaches. Key aspects demonstrating its contribution to modern education include:

Project-Based Learning: The project adopted a project-based learning approach (Dewey, 1916), proving to be an effective methodology for engaging students in active and meaningful learning. Projects like this foster research, collaboration, and problem-solving.

Interdisciplinarity: The interdisciplinary collaboration among students from various fields, along with experienced comic artists, highlights the importance of interdisciplinarity in contemporary education. Real-world problems often necessitate a multidisciplinary approach, and this project equipped students to address complex challenges from diverse perspectives (Polli & Fraga, 2022).

Educational Technology: Incorporating Augmented Reality showcased how educational technology could make learning more engaging and relevant for students. Technology served not merely as a tool for storytelling but as an integral part of the learning process.

Promotion of Identity and Cultural Heritage: The project encouraged students to explore their cultural roots and understand how their ancestors' history influences their current identity (Meirieu, 2010). Such understanding is vital in an increasingly diverse and globalized world (UNESCO, 2022).

Limitations and Challenges

Despite its successes, this project faced limitations and challenges. A primary challenge was the need for technological resources, including modern mobile devices for accessing Augmented Reality. Not all students had access to these devices, leading to inequalities in the learning experience.

Moreover, integrating Augmented Reality technology required significant time and training, which sometimes posed a learning curve for participants. The availability of mobile devices and familiarity with technology varied among students, occasionally resulting in disparities in the learning experience.

Future Directions

This project lays the groundwork for future research and educational projects aiming to harness the power of digital storytelling, Augmented Reality, and project-based learning. Potential future directions include:

Exploration of Other Stories: Applying this project's methodology to explore other migratory and cultural narratives could enhance students' understanding of cultural diversity and global interconnections.

Development of Educational Resources: Comics enriched with Augmented Reality and other technologies could become valuable resources for classrooms worldwide. Developing additional educational materials using this approach is a promising avenue.

Teacher Training: Training educators in the effective use of educational technologies like Augmented Reality is crucial. Ensuring that more students can benefit from these innovations requires dedicated teacher training programs.

Conclusion

The educational project 'The comic "From Madeira to Hawaii": A pedagogical journey enhanced by Augmented Reality' has achieved its objectives of rescuing a forgotten history, connecting students with their cultural heritage, fostering historical intelligence, and employing comics and Augmented Reality as effective educational tools. It has demonstrated that education can be both meaningful and enriching when combined with technology and interdisciplinary collaboration.

This project has benefited not only the students directly involved in its creation but also a wider audience through the publication of the comic in both print and online formats. It has contributed to the development of digital literacy and promoted intercultural understanding.

In an increasingly digital and globalized world, this project underscores the importance of preserving and transmitting cultural stories and promoting meaningful education. By uniting history, art, and technology, it has created a powerful pedagogical resource that transcends traditional educational boundaries.

In summary, 'From Madeira to Hawaii' serves as an inspiring example of how education can be transformative when innovation is embraced and connected with history and culture. This project represents an innovative interdisciplinary approach that merges history, art education, and technology to create a comprehensive and meaningful learning experience. Comics and Augmented Reality emerge as powerful pedagogical tools, inspiring future generations to explore their cultural heritage and understand the world around them.

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*The Digital Transformation of Art:
A Comprehensive Examination on a Theater Center Case*

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Abstract

This article examines the experiences of the creative precariat in the age of digitalization, focusing on how they perceive mediated performances. The art world has undergone a profound transformation due to the advent of technology and digital disruption, with the COVID-19 pandemic further accelerating this shift. A theater campaign that showcased the uncertainties experienced by artists during the lockdown period was analyzed as a case study to understand the transformation of art. Data obtained through in-depth interviews with theater actors and owners were analyzed using discourse analysis techniques. Based on the collected data, the relationship between transforming art and artist insecurity was examined in the context of the artists' desire for physical existence within the realm of art. The analysis provides a theoretical framework by examining the measures and difficulties faced by art center owners, audiences, and artists regarding digitalization, drawing on Baudrillard's concept of "immortality" and Barthes's idea of "The death of the author". The research shows that physical stage artists who heavily rely on their presence on stage are becoming disconnected from art consumers due to the digital transformation. While the need for synchronicity in time and space remains, physical artists must adapt to the digital age to stay relevant. This study highlights the challenges faced by these artists in the process of digitalization, as their limited digital media knowledge and skills make them financially and socially vulnerable. Failure to adapt to digitalization creates uncertainty for physical stage performers, impacting their profession and social existence.

Keywords: Precariat, Mediatized Performance, Digitalization, Immaterial Artist, Digital Media

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Introduction

The art world, propelled by rapid technological advances and accentuated by the COVID-19 pandemic, has undergone substantial transformation. Prolonged theatre closures and disrupted art activities during social isolation have intensified financial challenges for many organizations. The digitization of art has significantly impacted production, perception, and consumption.

This case study in Istanbul's local theater serves as a concrete illustration to comprehend the impact of digitization on art. Focused on the "This Seat is Yours" campaign, the study explores existential experiences and the communication sciences perspective on people's relationship with art. Introducing a new research concept using metaphors of death, the examination delves into philosophical perspectives on existence and absence on stage. Investigating the connection between art and the digital world, the study explores if audiences feel real-life emotions during live broadcasts and how digitization influences the perception of the stage. This article aims to understand how the creative precariat adapts to the digital age and how the art sector responds to its challenges. In this study, the data collection method employed is in-depth interviewing. In-depth interviews are a method used to understand participants' experiences and determine research focuses. The outputs of in-depth interviews will be analyzed using discourse analysis. Discourse analysis is an appropriate qualitative analysis method since it aims to examine the meanings conveyed by verbal expressions and the social context in which the conversations take place. Thus, the study aims to delve deeper into the evolution of physical art in the process of digitization, the artist-audience interaction, and concepts such as existence and death. The emerging data will be metaphorically analyzed, drawing on Baudrillard's "immortality" and Barthes' "The Death of the Author." This study contributes to understanding digitization's impact on art transitions, providing a fresh perspective. It explores how physical art has transformed in the digital age, altering the boundaries and significance of art. Additionally, it delves into the evolving relationship between physical art and concepts like existence, death, and immortality due to digital transformation. The goal is not only to grasp the experiences of physical artists and audiences but also to scrutinize the unique evolution of physical art.

The hypothesis of this study is that physical stage artists encounter increased uncertainty due to the transition to mediated performance in the digital age. To test this hypothesis, three primary research questions have been identified:

1. What are the effects of digitalization on physical stage performance?
2. How effective is the experience of watching live broadcasts in making the audience feel like they are a part of the moment?
3. To what extent does the changing art landscape due to digitalization place artists in an uncertain position?

Method

This study examines how artists in precarious employment adapt to mediated performances (Auslander, 2008) in the digital age, focusing on the 'how' question. Qualitative analysis is preferred for understanding the processes that affect artists.

The research uses in-depth interviews and theoretical discourse analysis, considering factors such as social relationships, history, belief, values, and cultural ideologies that influence language and meaning (Van Dijk, 1997; Jones, 2012). Analyzing discourse by evaluating

participants' behaviors and deciphering the subtext is necessary (Phillips & Hardy, 2002, p. 3).

The study provides a novel perspective on the digitization of physical stage arts through theoretical discourse analysis and metaphors. It explores the philosophical aspects of art's existence, live broadcast experiences, the evolving concept of the stage, and existential questions arising from digitization. The goal is to understand technology's impact on local theater.

The Quest for Immortality in the Digital Transformation of Art

Roland Barthes declared the 'death of the author' in 1968, reminiscent of Nietzsche's proclamation of the 'death of God,' which, like Nietzsche's statement, symbolizes the erosion of religious and metaphysical foundations in modern thought. Similarly, Barthes' concept of the 'death of the author' signifies a transformation in which the author's texts gain meaning independently and are shaped by readers. Nietzsche's expression 'God is dead' emphasizes that tradition and religious beliefs are no longer suitable for modern thinking, while Barthes' concept of the 'death of the author' argues that tradition and authority no longer dominate the content of texts. At this point, both expressions symbolize the upheaval of specific authority or traditional structures, a changing intellectual paradigm, and an approach to texts that is more open and reader-centered. Both expressions denote a transformation in which old intellectual structures dissolve and new forms of meaning production emerge. Barthes' declaration is somewhat akin to a suicide note due to his assertion that, as an author himself, his own existence needed to cease for the true meaning and existence of his created texts to be realized. Barthes posits that 'The birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author,' (Culler, 1983, p. 11), and as an author, Barthes declared the death of the author with the following statement:

Undoubtedly, it has always been this way. A fact ceases to directly affect reality and, finally, beyond its practice as a symbol, outside any function other than the function of the sign itself, this detachment occurs, it loses its source of sound, enters the death of the author, and begins to write. (Barthes, 1968, p. 142)

In this article, echoing Barthes, the stage and artwork attain infinite existence in the digital realm only upon the artist's metaphorical death. Accessibility becomes crucial, as a theater stage or artwork lacking an audience loses meaningful existence. Real existence is achievable in the digital realm, where artworks, meeting the audience, can achieve infinite existence. Meditative performances in the digital age empower art and the artist. Drawing from Barthes' "Death of the Author," the text becomes independent, reinterpreted by the reader, and recreated, detached from the author's explanations. The true owner of the text is the reader, as any attempt by the author to explain limits interpretation and visualization.

As a result, text interpretation becomes elusive. The author's withdrawal from the text implies inviting the reader to contribute meaning. Similarly, when witnessing a live art performance, it transcends the artist; the audience reinterprets it on the screen, making the artwork belong to the audience rather than the artist. The stage performance, detached from the artist, endures as the audience engages with it. This continuity is facilitated by meditative performance. Without an audience, art cannot thrive; it necessitates the active participation of viewers to exist. In other words, this existence must take place beyond time and space. This thought is based on Barthes' quotations: "The text is made up of multiple writings, drawn from many

cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation, but there is one place where this multiplicity is collected, united, and this place is not the author, as we have hitherto said, but the reader" (Barthes, 2013, p. 67) and "The birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the author" (Barthes, 2013, p. 68). Fundamentally, this applies not only to literature but also to fields such as cinema and visual arts, where the interpretation of artworks by the art enthusiast is necessary for their existence.

The Immortality of The Uber-Artist

After examining the death of the author and the artist, Baudrillard's analysis places significant importance on the concepts of simulacra and simulation. Historically, Nietzsche and Barthes argue that certain concepts must metaphorically die for others to emerge. In contrast, Baudrillard offers a different perspective on the concept of death, describing the real-time immortality of species.

"What is being set in place here is, in effect, the immortality of the species in real time. We long ago stopped believing in the immortality of the soul, a deferred immortality. We no longer believe in that immortality which assumed a transcending of the end, an intense investment in the finalities of the beyond and a symbolic elaboration of death. What we want is the immediate realization of immortality by all possible means. we desire the immediate attainment of existence without end." (1994a, 89) As emphasized by Baudrillard, the desire for "instant existence" holds significant importance in this article. The reason for its significance lies in both the audience's and the artist's aspiration to attain immortality. This desire for immortality and how it can be achieved will be discussed in the analysis section, in conjunction with the findings from the interviews and the case study.

While Barthes talks about being in the moment, Baudrillard argues that immortality occurs here and now. According to this perspective, there is no "end" within real-time, and therefore, there is no "death" within real-time. The concept of "end" creates a void. Based on empirical data, I will discuss the end of art, the artist, and the audience in the context of the "end of real-time." In this way, an artistic work and a unity of the audience that surpasses the state of understanding consciousness will be evaluated. The situation where artists cannot present their stage performances and reach the audience is among the factors that directly affect physical stage artists materially and socially. The primary reason for adding this section to the article is this (Baudrillard & Adanır, 1998).

Baudrillard delves into the notion of what lies beyond the end, challenging the concept of technical immortality. The unsolvable nature of the end persists, with artificial solutions attempting to erase it from memory. The dialectical relationship between ultimate death and life implies the coexistence of afterlife and immortality. Baudrillard questions what humanity will do when freed from all beliefs, emphasizing the artist's potential for real-time immortality in the digital realm, free from traditional constraints of space and time. Technology's promise of immortality is crucial for the artist's artistic value and assurance. The artist, opting for meditative performance, can attain eternity through their creative work. In contrast, the non-conforming, precarious creative may face disconnection from their art, hindering interactions with audiences and limiting the production of original works in diverse environments.

In order for this harmony to be achieved, the human or artist must begin to accept themselves as the main subject of the world and history. In other words, they must transcend symbolic

meanings and beliefs and undergo symbolic purification. In the digital age, it is challenging to ascertain the artist's preparedness for this; however, at this juncture, a concept akin to Baudrillard's "Übermensch" can be examined. In fact, concepts such as God, soul, and immortality can be seen as spiritual, metaphorical, or symbolic expressions of human capabilities. When humanity rids itself of beliefs, it renders these concepts artificial and insignificant. In other words, humans have assigned specific meanings to certain concepts. An artist can make sense of the digitalization of their performances, and the symbolic meaning they attributed to physical stage art may not be as effective as before. However, for an artist who is free from the fear of existence or non-existence, life or death, they can continue to exist in a different form in the digital realm, perhaps even after death. At this point, the distinction between real and artificial becomes blurred and ambiguous. If the artist's desire to be in the moment is guided by the desire to live in the moment, they may be able to participate in various meditative performances on different digital platforms, and an "über-artist", much like the Übermensch, can be created.

Works, artists, and audiences may long for immortality. Whether it is true or not, as suggested by Baudrillard and Adanır (1998), "you choose to believe in it." In other words, there might be a desire to leave a lasting impact in this mortal world. This section of the article questions the promise of technology to offer immortality to artistic works, artists, and audiences, based on the abstract artist's longing for immortality and existential passion. When these concepts lose their meaning, artistic existence can only be achieved by liberating oneself from one's beliefs. The true power lies within the artist, and if they choose digitalization, they can attain a form of immortality in the digital realm, sustaining their existence indefinitely.

Scene to Screen

In this article, it is necessary to accurately define and distinguish theater and live broadcasting. Considering live broadcasting as "instantaneous" is challenging because, due to technical reasons, it is not possible for viewers to see the image simultaneously, with a delay measured in seconds. Furthermore, the fact that the performance takes place on stage implies the creation of a unique aura and atmosphere.

The term "live broadcast" denotes that television programs are conducted in real-time. However, television broadcasts are executed by transmitting signals to satellites first and then to receivers. This technical process often leads to several seconds of delay when transmitting the broadcast to the audience (Cremer et al. 1996). Achieving exact simultaneous sharing, even in a live broadcast, is technically unfeasible due to delays in television and online "live" content. The interviewee 1 underscores the impact of online theater, noting that the inability to share the moment diminishes the immersive experience compared to live stage performances. Connecting through a screen proves challenging, with technical delays and a lack of immediate interaction hindering the richness of the theater experience. Live broadcasting not only results in emotional and experiential losses but also introduces synchronization challenges due to technical difficulties. Internet asynchrony and varying connection qualities lead to irregularities in the viewing experience, making complete synchronization difficult unless viewers are physically present in the same location. In asynchronous settings, the true value of theater, characterized by being in the moment and engaging all senses in an uninterrupted experience, is compromised. Without active participation, theater risks becoming a mere watched performance, losing its original atmosphere and transforming into a reflection rather than a fully experienced art form.

In addition to the asynchrony caused by the internet, the level of interaction in live broadcasting can adversely affect the conveyance of art. Furthermore, establishing this interaction organically in a live broadcast can sometimes be challenging. Therefore, it's important to acknowledge that performance arts may not always be suitable for live broadcasting, as it goes beyond the quality of the internet connection and encompasses the loss of emotions and experiences.

The interviewee 2 asserts that equating live broadcast with theater is inaccurate. Staying focused on a screen for a full hour poses a challenge, particularly when the performance lacks physicality. Sharing issues over Zoom diminishes the crucial interactive aspect for performance arts. The limitations of digital consumption become apparent, as art performed with bodies necessitates physical presence and body-to-body interaction.

In a similar vein, as Brook emphasized the significance of being present with the audience on stage, he stated, "Compared to the mobility of cinema, theater once appeared heavy and creaky, but the closer we get to the true nakedness of theater, the more we approach a field that has a greater lightness and scope than film or television." (Brook, 1996, p. 107). With all this in mind, I can say that a performance happening on stage can only truly occur when the same physical space is shared. Otherwise, even if broadcast live, it will inevitably lead to disruptions. The absence of both the artist and the audience in the same physical space will introduce a different concept for stage arts watched over the internet. However, it may not be possible to label it as ballet, modern dance, or theater. When consumed online, art will take on a different form. Based on the above, I can add that, for art to sustain its recognized existence, it requires both the same time and place.

If a person can become a part of the moment by watching a live broadcast, what does he or she substitute for the experience being observed? While sitting in a room watching a live broadcast from afar, can one truly bear witness to an event happening elsewhere simultaneously? Because from this perspective, a person cannot be in multiple places at once; therefore, sitting in one's room and watching a digital live broadcast may not be equivalent to experiencing something happening elsewhere simultaneously.

Graveyards Constructed From Chairs

"Right now," "here," "instantaneous," and the distinct qualities that set theater apart from art forms that can be experienced on screens, such as film, seem to be under threat. Therefore, the local theater initiates the 'This Seat Is Yours' campaign. Interviewee 1 expresses the following: "The hundred-year-old building that houses the local theater holds an authentic cultural heritage. We launched our campaign on Monday and decided to make one final effort to save theater with the 'This Seat Is Yours' campaign. Looking ahead, we promise our audience on our campus a ticket. If the stages reopen one day, you will already have reserved your tickets for our first plays. We have created four different categories: 100, 250, 500, and 1000 TL. Those who donate 1000 TL will receive two invitations to the premiere of the play, and their names will be inscribed on our seats and our stage."

This resistance to safeguard theaters is tied to the changing nature of theater and artists' uncertain struggle for future existence. An interviewer in Beyoğlu, noting the scarcity of stages, staunchly opposes digitization and closure. He argues that digital transformation would strip theater of its vitality, stating that something does not live, and present is

incompatible with the essence of theater. The local theater symbolically joins this resistance, placing the names of donor art enthusiasts on empty chairs at the center of the stage.

Like tombstones, the people's names in all the halls are now gravelly on the walls and seats. With the silence of a cemetery in an empty space, names of donations such as tombstones that no one has seen are there. Taking Baudrillard's simulation into consideration, there is a case of unity of existence, so much so that the theater is dying, and the audience mourns. It remembers his presence in the world with many tombstones. But, at this very moment, the theater becomes digital and immortal. Baudrillard said "The second inaugurates the era of simulacra and simulation, in which there is no longer a God to recognize his own, no longer a Last Judgment to separate the false from the true, the real from its artificial resurrection, as everything is already dead and resurrected in advance." (1994b, 6) He discusses the resurrection of theater in a manner similar to the example I provided, likening it to the transformation of theater into a simulation. The revival of theater in the digital realm necessitates a focus on contemporary consumers who must actively engage in this process for it to thrive. Theater's authenticity and traditional essence are maintained when artists and art enthusiasts coexist. A theater without an audience is impractical, as it relies on their presence. Thus, the symbiotic relationship between artists and audiences is crucial; otherwise, the traditional (physical) form may not persist. The audience must support the artist for the art to endure. Without this support, theater may either be relegated to immortality through digitization or face complete disappearance. Peter Brook emphasizes the importance of presence in theater, distinguishing it from cinema. Without support, theater risks losing its original meaning, as Walter Benjamin argued, diminishing its aura in performing arts (1935).

At this point, there is a perception that the audience resists the screening process during this period of transition and transformation. In a part of our conversation with the Interviewee, I asked him, "Why did you want to write names on the seats? Where did you think of this?"

Interviewee 1 answered:

The audience doesn't want to lose physical theater. It might go digital, but through this support, the message is clear -I will occupy those seats one day, and I don't want to think otherwise. Instead of just having his name on a chair, he's offering the chance to sit in that seat someday. Next year, it won't be just digital; it will have names on those seats, and I'll be performing on that stage. We'll reopen that scene.

The theater, which died for a certain period of time, allows the audience to have a tombstone with the chairs and boards attached to the wall in its own cemetery. Perhaps what dies here is the death of the theater, apart from the theater's spatial and physical death, as well as the death of a part and its audience. Barthes declared the death of the writer, and as I mentioned earlier, the reader cannot exist by his interpretation without the author leaving the equation. The owners of the work and space got out of the equation by dying, and with their release, there was nothing left to be interpreted, in the name of the theater, in the audience. With this, I can say that traditional art has begun to transition from immortality to live in a simulation.

The metaphysics of reality itself; that is, Baudrillard interprets the principle of reality as an intellectual, mental process; in other words, he says that a society that loses its goals, hopes, and dreams for the future cannot have any option but to reproduce the existing system, order and life, and that this can only be a simulation universe. Upon examining the metaphor of graves and death here, those concepts are considered sacred because there are places where

the dead are buried. However, those places are feared and taboo areas. The eternal place for the deceased and the graves for the family members left behind by the deceased, whose ancestors believed to be protected and continue their lives, differ in structure. (Eren, 2012) Perhaps, for this reason, their feelings of respect, which they regard as sacred, are now cold, frightening, and alien in the theater in its empty state.

A part of the theater and its audience is dead and continues its life in the afterlife. The other world may have become the simulation world formulated with its meaning here. Baudrillard approaches this situation as follows: if there is only an ultimate conception of death and life, the concept of the afterlife and immortality also exists. If there is no ultimate death and life, there is no reason to believe in the afterlife and immortality. He states, "But we want this immortality here and now, this real-time afterlife, without having resolved the problem of the end. For there is no real-time end, no real time of death" (1994a, p. 90). Besides, in the culture of death and mourning, participating in the deceased's burial ceremony and throwing soil into his grave is considered an individual and social "duty". Here again, a group of art consumers supports the artist precariat (Standing, 2014), making their social duty perhaps a dead investment (Eren, 2021). They may also be promoting what they affirm as physical space art and their physical, artistic form, beyond just supporting the art and artist to stay in their physical space.

Similarly, Elitez (1996), in his work on cemeteries and tombstones, emphasizes that graves not only reflect the person buried but also convey information about the builders' social status, artistic views, cultures, religious beliefs, lifestyles, geographical conditions, and deaths (1996). Consequently, those with their names on empty walls and seats in a hall may not witness this reflection. Beyond supporting the theater's closure and acknowledging the challenges faced by the precariat, individuals desire their names inscribed for identity and existence. Aligning with this analysis, some art enthusiasts, unwilling to contemplate not occupying seats, backed the struggling venues that eventually closed. The primary challenge lies in resistance to digital transformation. In the era of hyperreality, humans, as the masters of the net, predominantly communicate through screens. Baudrillard contends that modern communication technologies have turned communication into a content-devoid field, reducing it to a one-person affair through satellites and interfaces. He illustrates this with the example of a Japanese-speaking car and asserts that electronic forms damage human communication (Baudrillard, 1983 p.127).

According to Baudrillard, modern communication is cold and schizophrenic. The boundaries of the human body are destroyed, as are the boundaries between the individual commodity and the web. The outer and inner worlds intertwine. Simulation appears to be more real than real. Society is faced with ultra-reality, augmented reality, a reality beyond reality; such are the terms used on television. What seems dangerous here is that even the human's own body cannot protect it anymore; that is, it cannot produce and stage the limits of its own existence. This brings with it that the person cannot produce himself as a mirror. It just turns into a screen (1983, p. 132). Society is starting to be people who are no more than an interface. Humans' physical communication is disappearing. People are getting stuck digital and starting to exist in another dimension. People who want to fight this are striving to survive as spectators in the theater. But for this, they pay a fee to survive there. It is like a reflection of the real world – the effort to exist in reality and the fear of getting stuck in simulation.

The impact of digitization on artists is profound. In this context, issues of immortality, hyperreality, simulation, and death become especially relevant. Art production has shifted

significantly towards digital screens, leaving artists facing an uncertain future. The fate of traditional theaters, and how they can sustain their income, is unclear. To adapt, traditional art forms that have historically relied on physical stages must now embrace digital platforms. Nevertheless, this transition requires the development of infrastructure and knowledge. Art forms that cannot adapt run the risk of fading away over time. While physical theater may not vanish completely, it is likely that many will face economic challenges.

Inaccessible physical theaters drive audiences toward digital art. Despite its benefits, Baudrillard's simulation theory contends that digital art blurs reality, merging physical and digital realms, undermining the simulation effect. Physical stage performances transition into digital reflections, facing resistance from artists and audiences. Artists hesitate to abandon physical performances, as digitization, while promising immortality, alters audience connections, risking the loss of 'aura.' The digital age prompts questions about the value of art in mediatized performances. Groys (2009) notes increased audience control but reduced contemplative distance, while Baudrillard emphasizes distance for critical art appreciation. Conversations with artists highlight constraints in mediatized performances, hindering artistic contemplation and impacting artist-audience relationships. Despite their artistic merit, mediatized performances lack the physical presence crucial for physical performance artists, posing challenges.

The resistance of art consumers to the closure of stages is deeply rooted in their connection to the reflection of reality, a concept highlighted by Peter Brook. People attend stage performances to experience something distinct, fully engaging their senses in the moment. The closure of stages requires the audience to leave a part of themselves behind and forsake their reflection on the stage, prompting them to choose having their name on seats resembling tombstones, symbolizing a sacrifice of self. However, the inevitability of digitalization looms for art lovers and artists. Baudrillard notes the desire for real-time immortality without resolving the problem of death. In this transition, art may fade in the real world but finds immortality in the digital realm.

Conclusion

In this study, the impact of digital transformation on the theater sector has prompted an exploration of the questioning of the physical nature of art and existential concepts. The evolution of art during the transition from the physical to the digital realm has been examined in various settings over time, investigating its dynamics in aspects such as the relationship with time and space, the unfolding of transformation, and the diverse outcomes in different settings. The study also delves into the dynamics of digitization in the art sector, its impact on existential concepts in art, and the new questions it raises about the physical nature of art. Throughout this process, the study questions the relationship between artists and the changing art environment due to digitization.

The challenges or resistance faced by artists in Istanbul during the digitization of their works have been examined as a case study, focusing on a local theater center's campaign. Drawing on Baudrillard's concepts of simulation and simulacra, the relationship between physical stage performance and performance artists has been analyzed in terms of space and synchronization in this context.

The analysis suggests that with the transition to mediatized performance, the line between reality and artificiality becomes blurred. Interviews indicate that physical performance artists

struggle to practice their professions, leading to a sense of uncertainty. The closure of physical stages and the inability of artists to interact with the audience have increased concerns among theater owners, directing them towards alternative methods such as fundraising. The campaign analyzed through theoretical analysis reveals the profound meaning of the end of physical art spaces. The connection of artists to physical art, both spatially and in terms of preserving their works, is examined. Baudrillard's concepts of "simulation" and "reality" emphasize artists' efforts to exist in the digital world, where the line between these concepts becomes blurred. At this point, artists seek their unique "realities" within digital "simulations." However, the interaction between physical space and the audience cannot be replicated in the digital environment.

Inspired by Barthes' "Death of the Author," artists aim for a form of immortality in the digital world by preserving their physical presence. However, this transition lacks the same audience connection, as screen viewing lacks the depth of a physical experience. Interviews stress the importance of physical space for stage arts, raising concerns about sustaining physical works in a fast-paced capitalist system. Digitization introduces a new form of performing arts, yet it can't fully replace the physical stage. While beneficial for artists wanting to adapt, digital art poses uncertainty and insecurity for some artists resistant to the digital transition.

In conclusion, digital art offers new opportunities but doesn't replace physical stages. The artist's physical presence remains crucial, requiring adaptation to evolving technologies. As digital experiences advance, preserving live performance authenticity becomes challenging. Adapting to the digital age is vital for artists to thrive. While the physical stage's importance endures, seizing digital opportunities is key. Beyond artists, digitization's uncertainty impacts various professions. Future research could explore uncertainty's effects across professions, incorporating new technologies like NFTs, augmented reality, and the metaverse. The finding has been reached through interviews and discourse analyses that the choice of the physical artist to remain connected to the physical space with traditional thinking instead of adapting to digitalization leaves them in an uncertain position, considering the artistic and financial needs. Therefore, adapting is not merely an option but has become a necessity for the artist to exist.

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***Oğuz Atay's 'Games': Transactional Analysis Theory in Oyunlarla Yaşayanlar
(Those Who Live by Games) and Its Analysis With This Theory***

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Abstract

In Transactional Analysis, as developed by Eric Berne, life is analyzed as being full of games that consist of transactions between the Parent, the Adult, and the Child ego states. As a result of these transactions, games causing bad consequences arise. Once they are reached, the players are filled with negative emotions, which is the cost of the games. This theory became more famous after *Games People Play* was published in 1964. Oğuz Atay, who made it clear in his diary by summarizing the theory and its concepts that this theory influenced him, wrote his play called *Oyunlarla Yaşayanlar* (Those Who Live by Games). *Oyunlarla Yaşayanlar* is about the “bad games” that a history teacher named Coşkun plays with other characters such as Saffet, Servet, Emel and Cemile. We analyze *Oyunlarla Yaşayanlar* with Transactional Analysis in an attempt to reveal the interactions between egos. As a result, we show that although not all elements in the play are entirely consistent with this theory, it is clear that Oğuz Atay benefited from Transactional Analysis while writing this play, and Coşkun and other characters play the games such as “Alcoholic,” “Kick Me,” “Now I’ve Got You, You Son of a Bitch,” “See What You Made Me Do” and “If It Weren’t For You”. The difference in Atay’s perception of this theory is that he gives a more sociological meaning to the concepts and “bad games” and thinks that they result from the Turkish social structure.

Keywords: Oğuz Atay, *Oyunlarla Yaşayanlar* (Those Who Live by Games), Eric Berne, Transactional Analysis, *Games People Play*

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Introduction

Transactional Analysis is a method of psychotherapy that became widely known after Eric Berne published *Games People Play* in 1964. In this method, which is applied through group therapies, the focus is on social relationships and to show the mistakes people make in building such relationships in order to get rid of them. Thus, even though this method is somewhat in the field of social psychology, its main goal is about individuals. Transactional Analysis has influenced not only psychiatrists but also writers, one of whom is Oğuz Atay, who uses the term “game” extensively while creating characters who have lost their grip on society. In his diary, which contains a draft of the play *Oyunlarla Yaşayanlar* (Those Who Live by Games), we can see this effect and the fact that this play is based on the concepts of Transactional Analysis. In this study, we talk about what Transactional Analysis argues and what concepts it includes. Then, we analyze *Oyunlarla Yaşayanlar* in the light of this method after finding out the extent to which he benefits from it while building the content and structure of this play.

In fact, the book *Games People Play* was rejected by many publishers before Berne published this different and groundbreaking book himself. However, this book became a bestseller and gained incredible fame, and its concepts were socially recognized after this publication. In other words, this succession turns this method into a popular psychological circus. As a result, the recognition of this book did not remain only in the field of psychology but also spread to every field that is somehow related to psychology. Oğuz Atay, as a man of letters, was one of those who read this book and found a basis for fiction in his mind. He particularly emphasized this source of inspiration and directly or indirectly touched upon concepts such as stimulus hunger, recognition hunger, structure hunger, three ego states and games.

The Concepts of Transactional Analysis in the *Diary* of Oğuz Atay

Oğuz Atay states in many places in his diary that he has read *Games People Play*. He also explains in the following sentences that he will use the concepts of this book in the play *Oyunlarla Yaşayanlar*: “Now I am in a situation where I feel that I have to write a play. I read the notes I wrote. I think I have to look at *Games People Play* again” (Atay, 2017, p. 104). He then gives a summary from his perspective, emphasizing the term “stroke,” which he calls a “pat on the back,” that is, a physical or symbolic touch that satisfies the hunger for stimulus and recognition. This term is so important to Atay that in the following pages he considers the “pat on the back” as the theme of *Oyunlarla Yaşayanlar* in a social context:

Berne talks about patting a child on the back and says that, according to the belief, this is the only way a child can straighten its back. People can only communicate by patting each other. Idioms also fit the main reason for this behavior: “Sırtını okşamak (to pat someone on the back)” and “belini doğrultmak (to straighten someone’s back).” Know me and I will know you, that is, you scratch my back and I will scratch yours (mutual back-scratching). This is the most played game in Türkiye. (Atay, 2017, p. 118)

Eric Berne, in defining the term stimulus hunger, says that an infant deprived of its mother’s stimulus for a long time will eventually succumb to diseases. He also says that it is necessary to stroke someone in order to satisfy stimulus hunger, or as the colloquial saying goes, the spinal cord of a person who is not stroked will shrink. Stroking corresponds to the physical intimacy of an infant with its mother during the period when the infant is hungry for physical

stimuli. However, after this close intimacy is over, the individual is confronted with social, psychological, and biological forces that prevent him or her from continuing the infant-style physical intimacy. This condition forces him or her to compromise and learn different ways of dealing with it. This process of compromise is usually successful and results in the partial transformation of the infantile hunger for stimulus into an adult specific contact, not physical but symbolic, i.e., the hunger for recognition. Thus, while in the hunger for stimulus a stroke corresponds to a physical and literal stroke, in the hunger for recognition it corresponds to “any act implying recognition of another’s presence.” Moreover, the exchange of strokes constitutes a transaction, which is the unit of social interaction (Berne, 1966, p. 13-15).

After the hunger for stimulus and recognition has been satisfied with strokes and pats on the back, a new hunger arises. This is the hunger for structure, and what satisfies this hunger is programming. “The eternal problem of the human being is how to structure his waking hours.” Just as the hunger for stimulus and recognition, when left unfulfilled for a long time, leads to mental disintegration and physical illness, the same disintegration occurs when an individual cannot satisfy his or her hunger for structure and cannot program his or her waking hours. Therefore, human beings must structure their time in order to be able to live, and when they are alone, they have two choices: Activity and fantasy. On the other hand, when a person is not alone but a member of a social aggregation of two or more people, there are many more options (Berne, 1966, p. 16-18):

In order of complexity, these are: (1) Rituals (2) Pastimes (3) Games (4) Intimacy and (5) Activity, which may form a matrix for any of the others. The goal of each member of the aggregation is to obtain as many satisfactions as possible from his transactions with other members. The more accessible he is, the more satisfactions he can obtain. Most of the programming of his social operations is automatic. Since some of the “satisfactions” obtained under this programming, such as self-destructive ones, are difficult to recognize in the usual sense of the word “satisfactions,” it would be better to substitute some more non-committal term, such as “gains” or “advantages.” (Berne, 1966, p. 18-19)

Atay, uses the term “boredom” when talking about the hunger for structure and mentions the two terms “activity” and “fantasy,” which he often touches on in his other written works, as the two ways of structuring someone’s time:

All bad games are the result of the boredom to which unstructured time leads. One structures one’s time in two ways: activity or fantasy (Berne). The ways of structuring time: 1-Pastimes 2-Rituals 3-Games 4-Intimacy 5-Activity. (Atay, 2017, p. 118)

“Pastimes and games are substitutes for the real living of real intimacy.” Games can be abandoned only when intimacy is established, that is, “when individual (usually instinctual) programming becomes more intense, and both social patterning and ulterior restrictions and motives begin to give way” (Berne, 1966, p. 18). According to Atay, this is a manifestation of hypocrisy, an inability to grow up, and a lack of a loving nature:

We are based on the principle that “any game is better than none” (a sign that we are still children). Games can be serious, even dangerous, and while people play them, their lives can be at stake. People who play games can feel serious to the bone. On the contrary, games are substitutes for real life and relationships when people lack them.

As long as there are restrictions and hesitations, these real activities are in danger (lack of a loving nature). (Atay, 2017, p. 118)

Atay mentions ego states in the following paragraph:

The child-adult-parent triad is the three sides of the ego (Berne). Child refers specifically to the creative side. It is important to know these states and it is not necessary to get rid of them. Games are based on these character foundations. Not reacting to an action in the same direction will cause a conflict between three of these characters. A change of direction can resolve the situation. A game is the existence of “apparent” mutual relationship along with “psychological” relationship, but in a contradictory situation with it (Berne). (Atay, 2017, p. 118)

An individual’s chain of behaviors, feelings and perceptions in the preceding moment cannot fit into those in the following moment during social activities. These changes and differences are the basis of the concept of ego states (Berne, 1966, p. 23). In a social aggregation, when two or more individuals meet, one of them will definitely speak and signal that he or she is aware of the presence of others. This is called a “transactional stimulus”. As for the other individual, he or she will do or say something in response to this stimulus. This is called the “transactional response.” Essentially, Transactional Analysis diagnoses which ego state implemented the transactional stimulus and which ego state executed the transactional response (Berne, 1966, p. 29).

The Child ego state represents “archaic relics, still-active ego states which were fixated in early childhood” (Berne, 1966, p. 23). However, it cannot be considered an unnecessary element that deserves to be destroyed, because creativity, joy and spontaneity are the built-in characteristics of this ego state. We further divide this ego state into two categories: Free and Adapted Child ego states. Creativity and spontaneity are more associated with the Free Child ego state than the other. In the Free Child ego state, a person is spontaneous, dynamic and creative, follows his or her physical needs, and behaves as he or she wishes (Keçeci, 2007, p. 6).

The Parent ego state has two primary functions. “First, it enables the individual to act effectively as the parent of actual children, thus promoting the survival of the human race.” Second, through this ego state, many responses become automatic and parents can save themselves from wasting time and energy (Berne, 1966, p. 27). The thoughts, feelings, and behaviors contained in this ego state are all learned or “borrowed” from the parents. On the other hand, this ego state is also divided into two categories, the first being the compassionate and loving Nurturing Parent ego state, and the second being the Critical Parent ego state. The Critical Parent ego state includes the prejudicial thoughts, feelings, and beliefs that someone has learned from his or her own parents (Solomon 2003: 15).

The Adult ego state contains patterns of behavior that help in logical analysis and problem solving. Each individual has the ability to process data objectively when the appropriate ego state is able to be active (Berne, 1966, p. 24). “Another task of the Adult is to regulate the activities of the Parent and the Child, and to mediate objectively between them” (Berne, 1966, p. 27).

Transactional Analysis of *Oyunlarla Yaşayanlar*

In the play *Oyunlarla Yaşayanlar*, the author tells the story of Coşkun Ermiş, the retired history teacher who begins to write plays, is influenced by the plays he has written, and, after meeting the stage actor Saffet Söylemezoğlu, plays in real life the games described by Berne. Atay enriches the narrative by often using Berne's terms to describe the process by which Coşkun wrote these plays and almost lived them. In this way, the psychological games of real life are manifested as concrete examples in this play.

The play begins with Ümit, Coşkun's son, asking his father about the history of the French Revolution. From this moment on, through many pages, we see the series of transactions in which the Child ego state is active. Ümit is a childish boy: "Coşkun's son. A little underdeveloped" (Atay, 2016, p. 112). For this reason, although Ümit can sometimes communicate in different ego states, he eventually returns to the Child ego state and plays an important role in Saffet and Coşkun's games. Saffet has the leading role in the strange situation Coşkun finds himself in. Saffet's active ego state is also Child, and when two of Coşkun and Saffet come together, there are simple and complementary transactions involving the Child ego state. In complementary transactions, "the response is appropriate and expected." A communication can go on forever as long as the transactions are complementary (Berne, 1966, p. 29).

In this relationship, Saffet appreciates Coşkun's importance as a playwright and Coşkun appreciates Saffet as a stage actor and mentor. As a result, the two are constantly stroking each other. "Coşkun and Saffet mostly play the game of 'patting each other on the back' in personal and social ways" (Atay, 2017, p. 122). These complementary transactions and communications are sometimes interrupted by the crossed transactions that occur when Cemile communicates with the parent ego state. The crossed transactions can interrupt the communication and easily disrupt the simple and complementary transactions (Berne, 1966, p. 33).

Saffet makes Coşkun meet Emel and Servet, and as a result of their encouragement, Coşkun surrenders completely to the playwright. The Child ego state is also active in the relationships between the members of this group. Servet provides Coşkun with money and the use of his theater. He often lets the reader feel his childish sentimentality and serves as the main driving force behind Coşkun's games with his money. As for Emel, Coşkun sees her as a savior when he loses his affection for his wife Cemile. There is no relationship between Coşkun and Cemile in which the Adult ego state is active. Cemile's active ego state is always Parent and Coşkun's active ego state is always Child. During this series of interrupted communication between Coşkun and Cemile, to make matters worse, Coşkun meets a stage actress named Emel, whose active ego state is Child, and starts having an affair with her.

When everything that happens in Coşkun's house becomes theatrical, Cemile blames Coşkun's new friends and tries to make him give up his new passion. She also notices her husband's love affair with Emel. However, the fact that Coşkun is only playing games becomes so obvious that Cemile does nothing but interrupt his games with antitheses. An antithesis is a refusal to play or an undercutting of the payoff despite the player's best efforts to continue the game. The player who is confronted with this refusal to play or undercutting of the payoff falls into a state of despair that in some respects resembles depression (Berne, 1966, p. 53). Hence, Coşkun really deteriorates and becomes isolated after Cemile's mother Saadet Nine dies and his bad games get out of hand. Emel, who feels that Coşkun is only

playing games in which she is also a player and that he has no power to do anything, leaves him. Eventually, Coşkun gets depressed when all his games are spoiled and runs away for the last time from his wife Cemile, whose active ego state has never been the Child and who tries to take care of him. Unlike his wife, there is no one to take care of him now, as his playmates turn away from him after his games are spoiled. At the end of the play, in parallel with Coşkun's psychological state, the boundaries between fantasy and games with reality and intimacy become so blurred that the narrative of Coşkun's death takes the form of a theatrical fiction and the reader doubts that he has died:

SERVET: Oh my God! What happened? (looks at Coşkun) I wonder if... I wonder if he died?

SAFFET (Continues to play): No, he did not die.

SERVET (Does not understand): Well, what happened?

SAFFET: He was rehearsing an old play. As everyone knows, he, the master, puts more emphasis on plays than is necessary and takes them very seriously.

SERVET (walks over to Coşkun, looks at him carefully and walks back): So what is wrong with him? [...] (Looks at Saffet doubtfully) Did he really die? (Saffet, nods his head as if to say "yes." Servet looks at Saffet frightened) So what do we do now?

SAFFET: The play is over, we salute the audience. (He steps forward and greets the audience. Servet, surprised, also nods in greeting. Coşkun's head also falls forward as if to greet them). (Atay, 2016: 109)

The characters in *Oyunlarla Yaşayanlar* play many games throughout the play. A psychological game, or simply a game "is an ongoing series of complementary ulterior transactions progressing to a well-defined, predictable outcome" (Berne, 1966, p. 48). Here we should mention what ulterior transactions are. Ulterior transactions involve "the activity of more than two ego states simultaneously and this category is the basis for games" (Berne, 1966, p. 33). To make it more complex, every game is superficially plausible but has a hidden motivation (Berne, 1966, p. 48). In addition, the main characteristic of each game is its payoff, for which every move of the games serves to set up the situation (Berne, 1966, p.61). If an operation, which is a simple transaction or a set of them, carried out for a specific and stated purpose, becomes disadvantageous for the giver, it is a game. Every game looks like a set of operations, but it becomes obvious that these operations are only maneuvers of the game after the payoff (Berne, 1966, p. 48-49). Some games we see played in the play are "Alcoholic," "If It Were Not For You," "Now I Have Got You, You Son of a Bitch," "Kick Me," and "See What You Made Me Do."

The "Alcoholic" game is a five-handed game, but the roles in this game can sometimes be reduced to the point where this game can be played two-handed. The roles in this game are Alcoholic, Persecutor, Rescuer, Patsy or Dummy, and Connection. The central role is that of the Alcoholic and the chief role is that of the Persecutor. The Persecutor is typically the spouse of the Alcoholic who disapproves of the Alcoholic's drinking and scolds the spouse for it (Berne, 1966, p. 73-74). In *Oyunlarla Yaşayanlar*, Cemile is obviously the Persecutor while Coşkun is in the role of the Alcoholic: "Play and play. It is better for you to deal with real games. [...] Or to put in order the game of spending money to drink alcohol" (Atay,

2016, p. 35). Patsy, or Dummy, provides the oney for the Alcoholic to drink alcohol. The person in this role may even sometimes say “Come have a drink with me” as in the role of Agitator. As for the Connection, it is the role of the person who is the direct source of supply, who understands bar talk, and who is in some ways the most important person in the Alcoholic’s life (Berne, 1966, p. 74). In the play, Servet plays the role of the Patsy, or Dummy, while Saffet plays each of the roles of Agitator and Connection:

SAFFET: I was exhausted during the rehearsals, boss. Could you not offer each of us a glass of alcohol as an advance?

SERVET (Happily): Of course! (Looks at Coşkun) We will not lose the excitement of having recently met in this way. (Atay, 2016, p. 44)

The third is that of the Rescuer, who tries to save the Alcoholic from this bad habit (Berne, 1966, p. 74). There is no one who directly plays this role in the play, but Emel, who, unlike Cemile, approaches Coşkun without judging him, encourages him to write plays, and tries to relieve him during the conversation in the bar, somehow plays this role:

COŞKUN: Look, I am being punished again.

EMEL: Stop saying such ridiculous things, you have done nothing wrong. [...] We really love you. (Squeezes Coşkun's hands in her palms) I love you. (Atay, 2016, p. 54)

The main goal of this game, i.e. the payoff, is to get a hangover. In other words, the drinking itself is only an incidental pleasure in the process leading to the real payoff, the hangover. The Alcoholic, who is in the Child ego state, as a drunk, unconsciously seeks to be punished by being scolded not only by the internal Parent ego state, but also by any parental figures, i.e. Persecutors in the environment. This attention-grabbing “self-castigation” leads the Alcoholic to the crux of the matter, which is to obtain forgiveness from the Persecutor. This game, although it is a five-handed game, is mainly played between spouses, and the Alcoholic is satisfied by being persecuted and then forgiven by his or her spouse (Berne, 1966, p. 75-76). Such a relationship exists between Coşkun and Cemile. Coşkun first tries to relieve his rebelliousness and anger by drinking alcohol, then he punishes himself while Cemile persecutes him and then he asks for her forgiveness.

The “If It Were Not For You” game is played between the restricted and domineering spouses. The restricted spouse playing this game is in the position of having chosen a domineering spouse to prevent him or her from doing the thing he or she is afraid of doing. Then, the restricted spouse can complain in that he or she could do anything “if it were not for you.” As we see in the relationship between Coşkun and Cemile, Coşkun, who is dominated by his wife, has unconsciously chosen a spouse who will dominate him because he is afraid of life. Thanks to Cemile who dominates Coşkun, he can say “I cannot do anything because of my wife” instead of “I cannot do the things I want to do but cannot do in my life because I am afraid to do them.” In this way, he can protect his self-esteem (Berne, 1966, p. 50). Furthermore, Cemile has some fears that Coşkun might leave her and reveals them by scolding and putting pressure on him. Thus, on the social level, this is a Parent-Child game whose transactions are “You stay home and take care of the house” and “If it were not for you, I could be out having fun.” On the psychological level, it is a Child-Child game whose transactions are “You must always be here when I get home. I am terrified of desertion” and

“I will be if you help me avoid phobic situations” (Berne, 1966, p. 54-55). The antithesis of this game appears when Cemile unwillingly reduces her pressure on him and he can no longer stand up to his wife. Because of this antithesis, he is so broken that he turns back to his wife, even though Emel says, “Let’s run away from here.” When his games are interrupted in this way and he understands that the reason for his failures is his fear for his life, he has a mental breakdown in the Child ego state (Berne, 1966, p. 53).

The factor that is the end of Coşkun is the interruption of the game “If It Were Not For You,” the consequence of which is a mental breakdown for him. It is likely that Cemile was aware of this situation from the beginning:

Coşkun! (Surprised) Why do you always leave, Coşkun? (Collapses on the couch) Do not you know that you will come back to this house? (Looking at the door) Do not you know that you cannot do anything alone, Coşkun? (Atay, 2016, p. 44)

Coşkun is also quite angry when Cemile interrupts the game towards the end of the play:

Oh my God! You could at least scream, “You cannot do this, Coşkun!” or you could cry and say something like, “How can you leave me?” and so on. How can you be as calm as a guardian?” (Atay, 2016, p. 99)

“Now I Have Got You, You Son of a Bitch” is a two-handed game in which the Agressor demonstrates his long-accumulated feelings of hatred and rage by taking advantage of the Victim’s small provocations. The objects of these provocations may be mostly worthless (Berne, 1966, p. 85-86). In *Oyunlarla Yaşayanlar*, Cemile reacts to such provocations by Coşkun with a massive wave of anger. The psychological background of this behavior is that Cemile has accumulated a lot of anger towards her mother since her childhood. Saadet Nine put pressure on Cemile as a child because she did not love her husband and forced her to marry Coşkun although she refused. Because of this, Cemile, who takes a hidden pleasure in Coşkun’s provocations, starts to criticize him at the slightest mistake in a way that encompasses his whole life. Actually, she is not upset because she is suffering, but she is delighted to be provoked and to have the opportunity to reveal her anger. This game is played in one of the opening sequences of the play when Cemile asks Coşkun to help Ümit with his homework. Coşkun responds to this request with the provocative sentence, “Why is this homework being done? Why is it necessary?” Cemile then vents her anger at Coşkun by harshly criticizing him:

I told you it would have been better if you had helped Ümit. [...] I wish you would take things seriously. [...] You have no other function than to confuse the boy. [...] Enough is enough, Coşkun! You have made everything look like your games. (Atay, 2016, p. 13)

The “Kick Me” game “is played by men whose social manner is equivalent to wearing a sign that reads ‘Please Don’t Kick Me’” (Berne, 1966, p. 84):

The temptation is almost irresistible, and when the natural result follows, White cries piteously, ‘But the sign says don’t kick me.’ Then he adds incredulously, ‘Why does this always happen to me?’ (Berne, 1966, p. 84)

However, he is actually proud of the misfortunes that have befallen him and compares his misfortunes to those of others: “My misfortune is better than yours.” Because just to be able to make this comparison, he makes all the provocations that he can and he ends up being excluded from all the environments that he is in. Actually, this situation is what he unconsciously wants (Berne, 1966, p. 84). Coşkun’s reactions to Emel’s “I love you” in the bar conversation obviously show that he wants to be kicked: “No, no! Do not love me. I want to live with worries all the time. (Leans back) I think this is better for me” (Atay, 2016, p. 54).

“See What You Made Me Do” is a marital game. The player marries someone who can take on all the responsibilities of marriage and thus avoid the bad consequences that could arise if he or she made the decisions during the marriage. If their children are brought up badly or the household economy is bankrupt, the blame will fall on the spouse who is the decision-maker and the player will be able to say, “Look, I am blameless” (Berne, 1966, p. 88-89). Coşkun also gives Cemile all the responsibilities that keep the marriage going, including the daily chores, and does not take care of their son Ümit. In this way, he is ready to blame his wife for everything and make her responsible for the bad consequences. This situation is revealed throughout the play in the form of confessions:

I got married in such a confused mood and surrendered to my wife. I let her do everything, have a child, and even grow a flower in a pot. (Atay, 2016: 42) I pretend not to know that my wife sews to earn a living for our family. In other words, I live as if I know nothing. I openly and seemingly pretend not to know that I got married to live a more comfortable life, that I took shelter with a woman I do not love, that my mother-in-law has become senile, and that my son is rebellious. (Atay, 2016, p. 52)

Conclusion

The play *Oyunlarla Yaşayanlar* is based on the concepts of Transactional Analysis, which Oğuz Atay talks about in his *Diary*. The structure of the characters’ false relationships and the games they play are in line with the concepts that Transactional Analysis defines and categorizes. All of the characters play “bad games,” in Atay’s words, establishing distorted relationships in false ego states. Therefore, the characters in *Oyunlarla Yaşayanlar* make many mistakes in their social relationships, play bad games instead of establishing intimacy, and get negative feelings as a payoff. As a result, this situation causes a mental breakdown for Coşkun. Finally, some of the games that we see played in the play are “Alcoholic”, “If It Were Not For You,” “Now I Have Got You, You Son of a Bitch,” “Kick Me,” and “See What You Made Me Do.”

On the other hand, the definitions and interpretations of these terms in *Oyunlarla Yaşayanlar* and in his *Diary* are different from what Eric Berne means in his book because Atay gives a new interpretation to these terms. He does this in order to express a more sociological reality through the concepts of Transactional Analysis. While Eric Berne defines the hunger for stimulus as a basic and unconscious need of the human physiology, this term turns into a more conscious, pragmatic and hypocritical behavior as in the words “Know me and I will know you” in Oğuz Atay. However, according to Berne, this feeling is only harmful if it is misdirected and tried to be satisfied with bad games. Furthermore, Atay touches on “staying childish,” which is a result of someone’s Child ego state remaining wounded, as the general structure of the Turkish society: “a homeland of children.” On the one hand, Atay sees games as fake social interactions that substitute for intimacy, which he describes as “the real

relationship,” and on the other hand, he points out that this situation stems from the lack of loving nature as a sociological generalization.

Consequently, the interpretations of the terms on which the play is based do not fully correspond to the way in which Berne explains them and are adapted according to Atay’s point of view, which is critical of Turkish society and intellectuals. Nevertheless, we can see that many of the games that Berne schematically mentions in his book are played throughout *Oyunlarla Yaşayanlar*. In *Oyunlarla Yaşayanlar*, the concepts of Transactional Analysis are not part of a psychotherapeutic theory but, a means of expressing a criticism of Turkish society, some of whose members, especially intellectuals, are childish and have no intimacy, but only false social relationships. In other words, this play depicts the broken, disappointed and childish intellectuals of a political atmosphere of the 70s and 80s in Türkiye, which led to a coup d’etat and of which Atay was also an idealist but disappointed intellectual. These intellectuals run away from activity and intimacy, which are painful, to fantasy and games, which seem safer and more joyful.

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***The Indian Kalamkari (Vraathapani):
A Case of Optimism, Resilience and Transformation in Cultural Textiles***

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Abstract

Indian craft practices are inherited through family traditions and nurtured with reverence transforming them as traditions. The Indian Kalamkari/ Vraathapani is well recognized in the textile circle for its use of natural dyes rendered through painting with an indigenous tool, 'Kalam'(pen), or 'Vraata' (writing) and 'pani' (work) in Telugu, the local language. A product that was crafted for propagating Hindu mythology the Kalamkari/ Vraatapani pieces depicted elaborate folk style story translations of imaginative forms of Gods and Goddesses as described in the mythological literature. These visually extravagant portrayals have influenced the textile trade markets in the 17th - 18th centuries leading to creation of a new league of textiles built upon the indigenous technique but different in expression. The craft since then optimistically progressed into new frontiers with certain amendments in form and format that are perceived as features of resilience in its journey towards transformation as an Indian cultural textile.

Keywords: Kalamkari, Dye Painted Textiles, Indian Textiles, Temple Cloths, Srikalahasti

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Introduction

Application of color on textiles was an age-old practice and the brilliance of these colors generated through indigenous processes fetched Indian textiles high esteem within the global trade markets (Bhushan, n.d.). Of the many such natural dyed textiles of the country Kalamkari/ Vraathapani of Srikalahasti in the South Indian state of Andhra Pradesh is unique for its indigenous painted style of patterning. Kalamkari/ Vraathapani, a name that signifies the art of painting on cotton with natural dyes has a popular presence among the traditional Indian textile domain.

Once a vital part of the Hindu temple tradition this craft has oriented and accommodated itself to suit the fancies of the changing (also challenging) political and geographical situations. As a result, its gradual transformation from a temple cloth to a textile craft, religious to secular format and traditional to efficient techniques have empowered the craft to thrive in new frontiers. This transformation of the craft reflects on the artistic capabilities and adaptability of the craftsmen along with the relevance and aesthetic appeal of the craft of Kalamkari/ Vraathapani.

This paper highlights the many stages of transformation of this cultural craft while it suffered, endured, thrived and mesmerised a global clientele. The optimistic approach of its practitioners coupled with resilience of procedures resulted in transformation of Kalamkari (Vraathapani) into a cultural textile that is relevant even in the 21st century.



Figure 1: Painted and dyed Temple cloth, Andhra Pradesh, South India 1880.

Picture Source: V & A museum <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O143773/temple-cloth/>

Historical Narrative

With 3000-year-old history, Kalamkari is believed to be known in Persia in addition to India (Varadarajan, 1979). Referred to as “Vraata Pani” (‘Vraata’ meaning writing and ‘pani’ meaning work) in the native Telugu language, the craft was baptized as Kalamkari (‘kalam’ meaning pen and ‘kari’ meaning work in Urdu) by the Qutub Shahi dynasty (Chetty, 2012). The Kalamkari tradition of painting on cloth with vegetable dyes utilising an indigenous bamboo pen (kalam) is unique in many respects. The craft gradually diversified into a block printed secular medium to suit the Islamic aesthetics and is today practiced in printed and painted styles while both the styles share the same popular title ‘Kalamkari’. The commercial capital of the Nizam ruled Golconda state along the Coromandel coast; Masulipatnam (Machilipatnam in the present day) in Andhra Pradesh has been the base of this craft.

The earliest and closest reference to the term Kalamkari appears to be recorded by Watt (1903) as quoted by Tavernier, a dealer in the early 17th century as “*chintzes or painted calicuts, which they call Calmendar, that is to say done with a pencil are made in the kingdom of Golconda and particularly around Masulipatnam*”.

Patronized by the Moguls and later by the Europeans in India, the art form reached its pinnacle between the 16th and the 19th centuries (NFSC, 2002). The cotton paintings classified as ‘Early Coromandel’ are the earliest and also among the most impressive specimens of that class of work from which the European ‘chintz’ tradition subsequently developed (Irwin and Brett, 1970). The south-east coast often referred to, as the Coromandel Coast by the Europeans has been a flourishing stretch for trade of Kalamkari products. The first Kalamkaris to reach Western Europe in the 16th and 17th centuries excited immediate attention by their rich colors and fascinating detail (Hall, 1979).

The Painted

The trend in painting religious themes of Hindu mythology prevailed in and around Kalahasti in the North Arcot close to the temple of Tirupati. The Kalahasti style was more than just an art; it was rather a form of worship. Because of which the Kalahasti style was confined to local consumption for its religious base (Das, 1992). These temple hangings were executed with strong bold lines and simple contours, which enabled them to be readily appreciated across a distance. Kalahasti Kalamkari has a strong black outline, which remains something of a folk form and not anything like the finely painted Golconda cloths (Chishti, Jain and Singh, 2000). The entire story was laid out in rectangular panels (like those in present day comics) surrounding the main theme depicted in a square or circular panel. Free hand spontaneous drawing, with no prior planning of episodes is usually noticed (Ramani, 2007).

The need for religious hangings could have been originally responsible for the development of the skills involved in making large hangings and that subsequently these talents came to serve more secular commercial needs (Gittinger, n.d.) “*The process of painting was so complex that one wonders how it was discovered*” (Chattopadhyaya, 1985). The very great demand for patterned trade goods may have forced out the kalam in favor of the more productive block method of work which may be perceived as a stage of adaptation.



Figure 2: Kalamkari/ Vraathapani depicting a scene from Ramayana with the detail written in Telugu script.

The Printed

Alongside the kalahasti temple cloths, a secular trend of the Kalamkari art, particularly flourished under the Muslim court patronage. The fall of the Vijayanagar empire in 1565, resulted in migration of the Hindu artists, as some moved to other courts in the Deccan, from which their influence spread northward. Under the patronage of the Mughal emperors secular format evolved from the existing religious Kalamkari. The dominant ideas that have differentiated this art into widely different forms may be said to be the uses to which they are put to. While the Hindus used them as canopies over the idols, the Muhammadans utilised them as prayer carpets or tents. By the 19th century, with the Industrial revolution in Europe, Iran had become the main market. The repetitiveness of the motif has encouraged a shift from the kalam (pen) to a block. In due course of time it is understood to have completely adapted to printing, for which Masulipatnam has and continues to be an important center in the South.

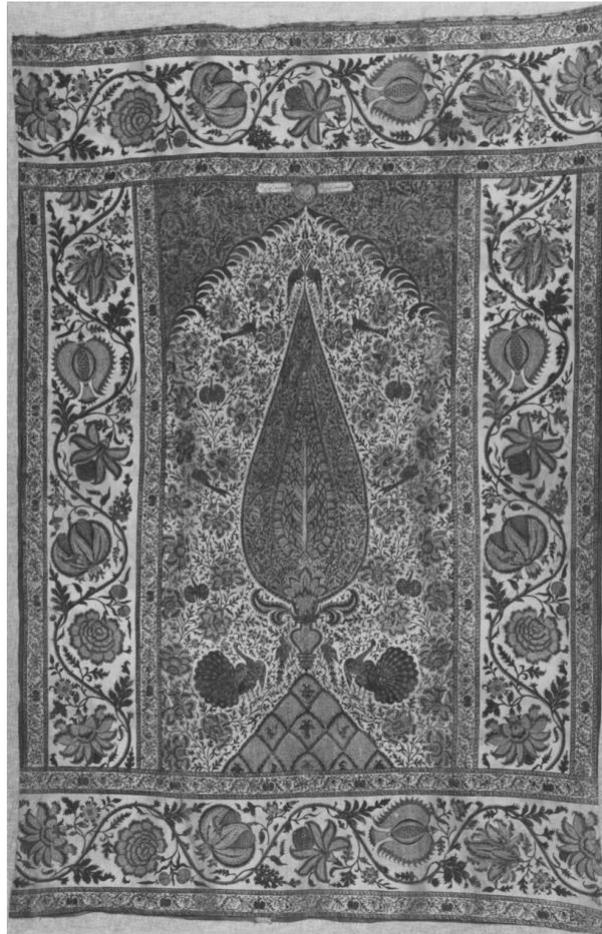


Figure 3: Ceremonial block printed, mordant dyed and resist dyed cotton from Coromandel Coast made in 1815.

Picture Source: V&A Museum <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O34080/hanging-unknown/>

The Chintz

Cotton paintings classified as “early coromandel” are the most impressive specimens of that class of work from which the Indo-European Chintz tradition subsequently developed (Irwin & Brett, 1970). These fabrics known as the Coromandel chintz were hugely popular among the European markets. The term appears in Indo-European trade records of the 17th and 18th centuries, and is derived from *chitta*, ‘spotted cloth’. It was gradually superseded by the Europeanized word ‘chintz’ (Irwin and Hall 1971, Irwin and Schwartz, 1966). Words may change in meaning with the passage of time and that the medieval connotation of the term Kalamkari would be conterminous with Chintz, while each region referred to them through different terms describing the nature of its technique. Their craze for this particular art- fabric and the resultant flourishing trade gave rise to different denominations used by the European buyers. The Portuguese termed it *Pintado* (painted or spotted); the Dutch named it *Sit* (painted) and the English referred to it as *Chintz* (Das, 1992). Probably, the English created much confusion by using painted and printed synonymously with *chintz* while the Portuguese and the Dutch used *pintado* and *sits* in the sense of Kalamkari (Varadarajan1979).



Figure 4: Woman's overdress of hand painted and dyed cotton.
Coromandel Coast 1760-1770 (made)

Picture source: V & A Museum <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O73105/overdress-unknown/>

Discussion

The Endurance

While it is assumed that terms art and craft are similar, craft objects are segregated as those, which often have what are loosely called practical or utilitarian functions, while paintings have depending on the view no function at all only an aesthetic use (Markowitz, 1994). Believed to be successors of the ancient texts with illustrations on palm leaves, Kalamkari diversified simplistically from an art to craft format. The temple art featuring the Hindu Gods and Goddesses evolved into a diverse medium of floral, geometric or abstract art formats under the Islamic influence. And further with the European influence it transformed as Chintz featuring hybridised & stylised florals on cotton fabrics. Featuring an array of floral compositions Chintz fabrics at first decorated walls, tables and bed covers. However, the rich vibrance of color, dainty detail of motif and the smooth cotton surface enabled its progression into clothing. This transition from temple art to the textile craft had a much meaningful impact as with the Chintz the kalamkari technique garnered global prominence.

As the Indian artist gradually transformed into a textile artisan the Kalamkari shifted in the form (i.e., the motif), the format (i.e., the product) and the technique (i.e., painted, printed or painted & printed). These adaptations could be attributed to the failing traditional/ religious markets initially followed by the restricted trade of the Chintz by the late 18th century and then the Industrial revolution in the 19th century. However, by the mid 20th Century Kalamkari (Vraathapani) was a dying craft. With the timely structured revival by the Government, it survived and prevailed as a prominent Indian traditional textile within the painted and printed textile category. All through these stages of transition the art and the artisans remained truly optimistic by practicing, teaching and sustaining the traditional indigenous knowledge. With a known history of five centuries (the oldest surviving examples date from the 15th -16th century and were made for export to South-East Asia, according to Dallapiccola and Crill, 2015) the journey of the craft through the highs and lows can undoubtedly be described as an optimistic existence.



Figure 5: Religious wall hanging. Artist: Mr. Theertham Balaji.

The Adaptation

Historically any reference to global Indian prominence in textile trade has never failed to mention the clever use of natural dyes by the Indian artisans. Though several writers described a ‘cotton painter...’ at his work, no name- no personality emerged; the Indian craftsmen who produced these lovely cloths remained anonymous, while the very simple Indo- European dress fabric remained a mere shadow of the rich technical resources evident in the large Kalamkaris made for covers, hangings and floor spreads (Hall, 1979). Neither the vernacular identity, Vraathapani nor the adopted title, Kalamkari, nor the Indian artisan gain much recognition in the global frontiers while the Chintz garnered appreciation as an exotic

Indian textile in Europe. It is this meagre and unpretentious nature of the Indian artisan (dyer or painter or printer) that made them remain in the background while they re-appropriated the indigenous knowledge to suit global appeal.

The patterned trade goods of the Coromandel coast were popularly referred to as the Masulipatnam paintings by the contemporary merchants and travellers. Though these were not made in Masulipatnam, it being the only good port on this part of Coromandel Coast served as a common ground for trade. In the Golconda style the subject matter inevitably reflected Persianized tastes, while Kalahasti inherited strong links with the art traditions of Vijayanagar. Yet transcending these recognizable differences of local tradition was the uniting factor of trade while both areas specialized in fine patterned cottons. The distinct visual differences between the two carved a new visual identity resulting in fruition of a new technique - the printed. In spite of the aesthetic and technical variations the craft co-existed sharing a common nomenclature featuring a resilient and a confident bond.

Subsequently when the production popularity of Kalahasti fell into deep decline at the beginning of the 20th century and the temple patronage declined and the local landlords lost wealth and powers of patronage, the craft suffered a setback. The revival in 1958 provided a platform to the few surviving artists (only two) to pass their knowledge to a modern generation of craftsmen. Until then, traditional crafts in India were ancestral and inherited through family links, but this revival was a structured intervention that broke the norms of ancestral inheritance indicating the keenness to nurture and sustain this cultural knowledge.

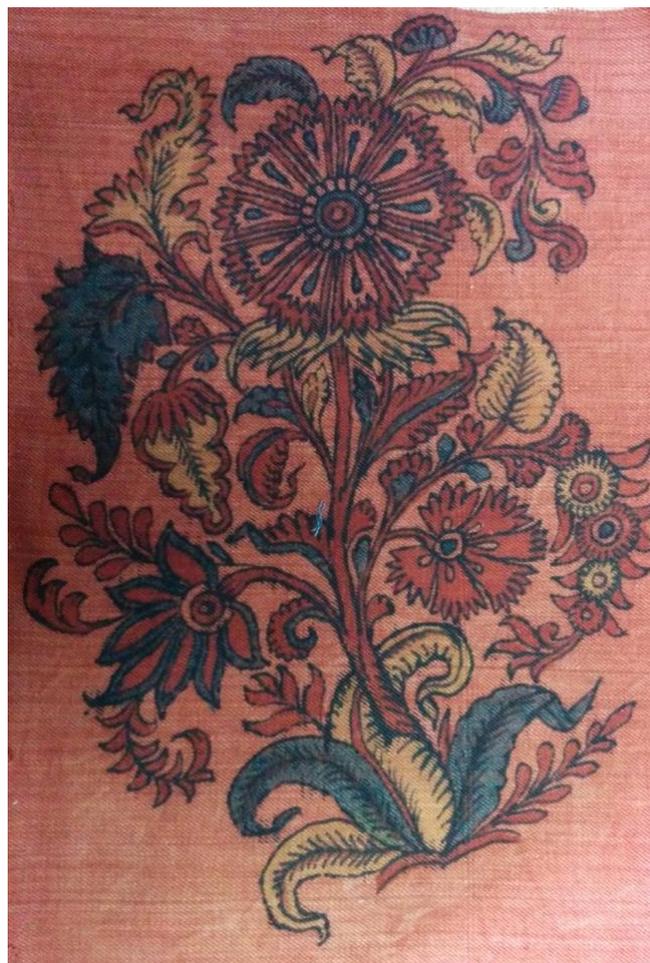


Figure 6: Floral painted Kalamkari/ Vraathapani on Denim. Artist: M Kailasam

The Transformation

“To preserve tradition is to continuously develop it” (Nugraha, 2010). While, crafts cannot just be limited to perform the role of keeping the traditions alive, they can only be alive when they serve to earn a livelihood.

The contemporary dimension of Kalamkari/ Vraathapani as a cultural textile may be perceived as an extension of its historical adaptation of Chintz. The technique of Kalamkari/ Vraathapani that was initiated as temple cloths gradually extended its application as Islamic prayer mats, tents, bed spreads, wall décor, and as an apparel fabric that grew into a phenomena called Chintz- Indo European fashion fabric. With this as an inspiring factor, the contemporary Kalamkari/ Vraathapani artisans soon were open work with the technique as a textile material.

This adaptation as a textile craft necessitated certain adjustments, for which the Vraathapani artists adjusted and reinvented some of the processes to suit the contemporary demands. The widened perspective of this tradition and heritage demanded a contemporary appeal with changes in the motifs, layouts, sizes and fabrics. Artists as they practiced the craft began to refine drawing styles while experimentation of motifs was initiated. Craft motivators in the form of non-profits or individuals with creative ideas encouraged this visual articulation. The gradual awareness of natural dyeing and its importance further complimented this progression.

The fashion orientation initiated by a few fashion designers proved helpful in projecting the craft as a medium of green fashion, making it pertinent for the socially responsible markets. Non- profits created societies with some craftsmen, trained women in skills of applying color with the use of kalam and generated employment while they executed independent design orders. Meanwhile the master craftsmen forged linkages through craft bazaars and set up independent workspaces while once again they employed skilled women labor. Such methods of work generated employment opportunities as it also propagated skill while the diversification as textile application gave more prominence to the craft.



Figure 7: Painted Kalamkari/ Vraathapani as a fashion textile by Designer Mr. Shashikanth Naidu

Conclusion

The indigenous art of ritualistic hangings endured variations and gradually progressed into a craft of lifestyle, textile and fashion relevance while the craftsmen showed restraint in holding the skills. The historical divergence into secular (Islamic influence) and ornamental (European influence) textile formats demonstrate the adaptable nature of the art form and the that of the artists. If not for this resilience of the art and the artists the traditional wisdom of Kalamkari/ Vraathapani would have vanished.

Textile crafts play an important and intermeshing role in creating a cultural identity, while fashion shares a sturdy bond with textiles. Similar to India's religious traditions craft traditions are a part of its great past. The indigenous production of Kalamkari marked with local identity that was restricted to ritualistic usage, had gradually diversified into a manner that perhaps the Kalamkari/ Vraathapani artists in the past would have never anticipated. But, the art with its characteristic regional identity has endured and extended its presence into a modern markets. The changing formats of the markets prioritised a shift in the focus of the craft. This change in reorientation of motif, the technique and product demanded role of craft traditions to be altered. Though a challenging task, the craftsmen with the limited resources but abundant skills attempted to reach newer and wider markets. Thus facilitating a change in

the orientation of the craft from a visual aid to a decorative hanging that pivoted the craft to churn into a meaningful occupation and a viable means of livelihood.

The show of resilience, coupled with optimism in re-orienting the format of the Kalamkari/Vraathapani has enabled an emergence of new markets, new linkages, creative occupation, and a dynamic image as an Indian cultural textile relevant even in the 21st Century.

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***Class Styles in a Private Japanese College:
A Qualitative Study of Student Experiences of Face-to-Face and Remote Classes***

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic forced many Japanese universities to broaden their classroom methods. This presented a challenge for students and faculty. To improve future education, effectiveness of remote classes is important. At Doshisha Women's College of Liberal Arts (DWCLA), there are 11 departments in six faculties across two campuses in Kyoto, Japan. The diverse types of departments mean science-focused programs with labs and liberal arts-focused programs with group discussions, make it difficult to evaluate effectiveness. A project team of seven faculty members from six departments conducted a mixed-methods study to discover how DWCLA students viewed their experiences of remote and face-to-face classes. In 2022, our research team conducted a survey and collected 752 responses from students from six departments. We then conducted interviews with 12 students. This paper will focus on the interview results. Over half of the interviewees favored face-to-face classes; however, some preferred remote classes, both on-demand and synchronous online classes using online class conferencing tools. We found that students especially felt it important to do face-to-face classes for subjects that had practical class activities such as lab work. However, some students preferred remote classes for large classes of required subjects. This led us to see the necessity of adapting various ways of conducting classes. It is important to use more than one education style to help more students learn effectively. However, to do this, it is necessary to help teachers improve their skills using online technology and encourage them to continue to develop their classes in the future.

Keywords: Class Styles, Ideal Classes, Remote Classes, Face-to-Face Classes, Qualitative Study, Japanese College

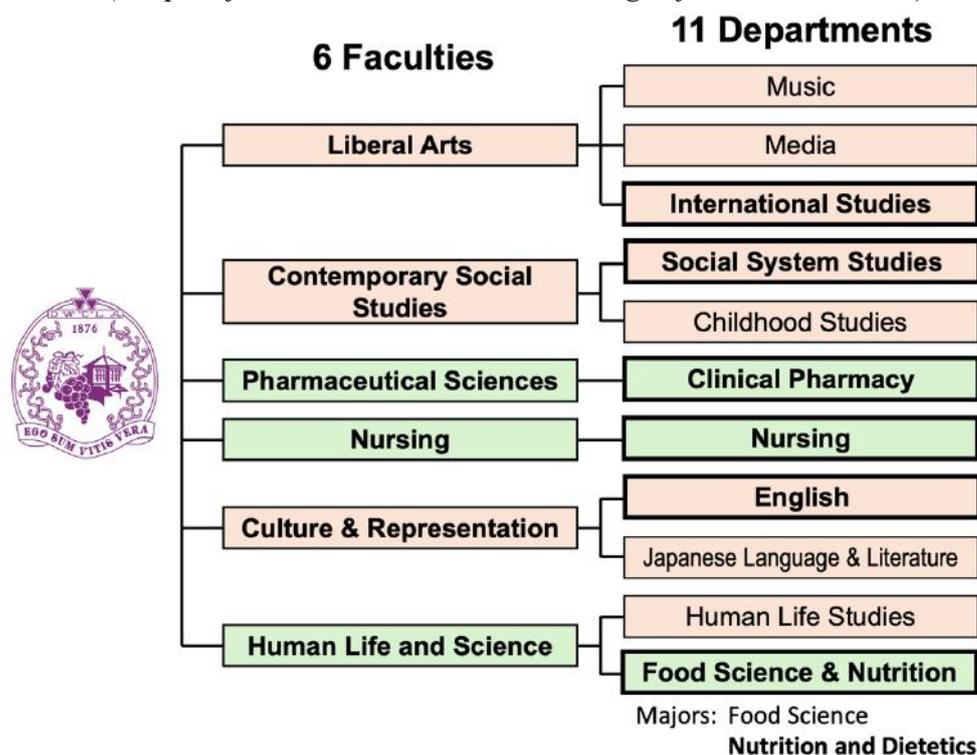
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Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic forced many Japanese universities to broaden their classroom methods. This presented a challenge for students and faculty. To improve future education, effectiveness of remote classes is important. At Doshisha Women's College of Liberal Arts (DWCLA), there are 11 departments in six faculties across two campuses in Kyoto, Japan. The diverse types of departments including science-focused programs with labs and liberal arts-focused programs with group discussions, make it difficult to evaluate effectiveness. A project team of seven faculty members from six departments conducted a mixed-methods study to discover how DWCLA students viewed their experiences of remote and face-to-face classes. The departments were the Department of International Studies, Department of Social Systems Studies, Department of Clinical Pharmacy, Department of Nursing, Department of English, and the Department of Food Science and Nutrition, shown in Figure 1. In 2022, our research team conducted a survey and collected 752 responses from students from the six departments, three humanities and three sciences departments. We then conducted interviews with 12 students. This paper will focus on the interview results.

Figure 1: The Six Departments Involved in the Study
(adapted from Doshisha Women's College of Liberal Arts, n.d.)



Background to the Study

During the 2020-2023 academic years, the impact of COVID-19 caused our university to change the way classes were delivered. In April 2020 all classes were cancelled and went online from May to July, using a combination of live communication tools such as Zoom, Webex, and Microsoft Teams as well as Manaba Learning Management System (LMS). There were online classes and some face-to-face classes from September 2020. In 2021 we held face-to-face classes while requiring all faculty and students to wear masks. In 2022 and

2023 classes were face-to-face with masks optional. Figure 2 illustrates the class delivery styles DWCLA utilized from 2020 until the end of 2023 academic years.

Figure 2: *Theoretical Framework of This Study (based on Galloway & Rose, 2017; Doshisha Women’s College of Liberal Arts., n.d.; Warschauer, Heidi & Meloni, 2000).*



Because faculty members were not accustomed to using live communication tools, the Education and Research Center of DWCLA offered a series of workshops for teachers (both full-time and part-time) during the spring term of 2020. These workshops invited instructors from both inside and outside the college. Although the COVID-19 pandemic was a disaster, it inadvertently yielded benefits for both teachers and students: they acquired knowledge and skills for using digital devices both in and outside the classroom. Some have described this as “the most successful and large-scale” Faculty Development (FD) initiative (Oki, 2022). However, we argue that a single class style cannot be applied universally: One size does not fit all (Galloway & Rose, 2017). Depending on the nature of the class, such as large lectures or discussion-focused seminars, the appropriate class style should be selected. That is, teaching methods should be tailored to the characteristics of the class style and the specific department. Yet, the optimal class style has not been determined. This uncertainty forms the shared rationale for our study.

The Project

Our research project sought to clarify pros and cons of doing online classes and to explore ways to blend online and face-to-face classes in all 11 departments of six faculties while working towards the goals outlined in our college's Vision 150 (Doshisha Women's College of Liberal Arts, n.d.). We did this by clarifying the Pros and Cons of online classes and examining ways to blend online and face-to-face classes. We carried out the following two activities.

Activity 1: Clarifying the Pros and Cons of Online Classes

Our first step was to delve into the pros and cons of online classes. It's essential for both teachers and students to recognize that online classes, synchronous and asynchronous, are not merely substitutes for face-to-face instruction.

Activity 2: Blending Online and Face-to-Face Classes

Moving forward, we need to explore ways to blend online and face-to-face classes [education?] seamlessly. This exploration involves understanding how to combine these methods based on the distinct characteristics of the 11 departments and 6 faculties of our college. By doing so, we can create a dynamic and flexible learning environment.

Essentially, we explored ways to blend online and face-to-face classes seamlessly into the education programs at DWCLA. This exploration involves understanding how to combine these methods based on the distinct characteristics of the 11 departments and six faculties to create a dynamic and flexible learning environment.

Research Questions

The research questions to be explored in this study are as follows:

- RQ 1: What are the advantages and disadvantages of conducting online classes for college students in Japan?
- RQ 2: What are the ideal styles of college classes for students majoring in humanities and sciences?

Method

For this research project, we employed a mixed methods approach. We conducted individual structured interviews, each lasting approximately 30 minutes, with 12 female college students from six departments across six faculties over a period of approximately one month from March to April 2021. To maintain high reliability, interviewees were intentionally chosen from departments different from those to which the interviewers belonged. The interview guides were developed based on quantitative data analysis and the researchers' experiences over the last two academic years, 2020 and 2021. While we also collected quantitative data through a survey distributed to 752 college students, this paper will primarily focus on the interview data. The quantitative data were instrumental in developing our coding system, which focused on positive and negative responses to face-to-face and online classes, as shown in Table 1. For data analysis, we transcribed the recorded audio data and analyzed it using axial coding (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Additionally, we explored participants' preferences for ideal classes, categorizing online classes into three types: synchronous online (via Zoom/Microsoft Teams), asynchronous online (on-demand), and hybrid (a combination of face-to-face and online classes).

Table 1: *Coding System of Interviews for All Types Classes*

Parent Codes	Child Codes	Grandchild Codes
Face-to-face classes	(General)	Positive
	(General)	Negative
Online classes in general	(General)	Positive
	(General)	Negative
	Synchronous online (Zoom/Microsoft Teams)	Positive
	Synchronous online (Zoom/Microsoft Teams)	Negative
	Asynchronous online (on-demand)	Positive
	Asynchronous online (on-demand)	Negative
Ideal classes	Hybrid	Positive
	Hybrid	Negative

Results

Comments from the 12 students revealed a range of positive and negative experiences and perspectives on the different class delivery styles within both the humanities and science departments. These comments offer insights into their varied experiences. We present the results categorized by the codes outlined in Table 1.

Positive Experiences of Online Classes in General

There were predominantly three positive aspects of online classes mentioned in the interviews, illustrated by comments in Table 2. Regardless of the department, participants acknowledge the following advantages:

1. More chances to attend various classes on different campuses. As our college has two campuses, and participants found it convenient to attend classes on different campuses through online classes.
2. Being able to save time and money on commuting and lunch. Some interviewees also mentioned the convenience of not having to wear makeup for online classes. Since students did not have to commute, they were able to save time and money. Additionally, some interviewees mentioned the convenience of not having to wear makeup in online classes. This aspect is particularly relevant to our Women's College.
3. Actively being able to search for information while attending online classes to help them understand content more deeply immediately. Some participants admitted that they could search for information related to the lecture or discussion while attending a class online. This is usually difficult in face-to-face classes.

Table 2: Positive Comments on Online Classes in General

Characteristics	Humanities Departments; Science Departments
More Chances	“Attending classes at both campuses becomes possible.”
Saving Time and Money	“Because there's no time spent on commuting to and from school, it can be used for other purposes, saving time. It also saves on lunch expenses.”
Active Learning with Online Resources	“I find that my understanding deepens when I listen to discussions and simultaneously search for related information on the web.”

Negative Experiences of Online Classes in General

There are, of course, negative aspects of online classes mentioned in the interviews, as shown by students' comments in Table 3. The two main negative aspects were as follows.

1. Loneliness. Many participants experienced feelings of loneliness. Because they could only attend classes online, even small group discussions in Zoom breakout rooms led to a strong sense of loneliness.
2. Not Real Experiences. This comment came from a participant in the nutrition department. Concerning experiments, they said that merely looking at photos was insufficient. They emphasized the need for actual participation in experiments.

Table 3: Negative Comments on Online Classes

Characteristics	Humanities Departments	Science Departments
More Chances	“I feel a strong sense of loneliness and experience significant emotional lows.”	
Not Real Experiences		“The experiments are something that should be done by hand to deepen understanding. In online classes we only looked at photos of the experiments performed by the teacher and wrote reports based on that. I believe that true experimentation involves coming to school and doing it yourself.”

Positive Experiences of Synchronous Zoom Classes

There were also positive aspects of synchronous online classes mentioned in the interviews, shown in Table 4. Most classes used Zoom and were related to visual assistance and concentration.

1. Seeing visible facial expressions was one advantage. Unlike in a physical classroom, participants could join a class without wearing a mask, enabling them to see the

teacher's mouth. This was particularly beneficial for communication in English and for learning pronunciation.

2. Concentration was difficult. In Zoom classes, teachers often asked students to turn on their cameras. Unlike their on-demand classes, students had to maintain better concentration because they were visible to others.

Table 4: *Positive Comments on Online (Zoom or Teams) Classes*

Characteristics	Humanities Departments; Science Departments
Visible Facial Expressions	"Since we could take off our masks, we were able to see the teacher's mouth for pronunciation and such."
Concentration	"There's a sense of tension from being seen on camera and the possibility of being called on during the session, which helps me concentrate. We can share everyone's opinions, ask questions about things we don't understand right away, and also share others' questions on the spot."

Negative Experiences of Synchronous Zoom Classes

Regarding the negative aspects of synchronous online classes, limitations caused by using technology were mentioned:

1. Communication difficulties was one thing mentioned. Participants particularly faced difficulties in communicating when talking with students they didn't know, as interaction was limited to being only on screen.
2. There was instability and problems with Wi-Fi, Zoom, and Microsoft Teams. Sometimes, students borrowed a PC from the college, and when it malfunctioned, they had no means to report that their PC was not working correctly. Additionally, teachers and students accessed the internet from various locations and sometimes had unstable Wi-Fi connections.

While it may seem like a fundamental issue, network instability is critical to anticipate for the success of synchronous online classes. Figure 7 showed frustrations students experienced.

Table 5: *Negative Comments on Online (Zoom or Teams) Classes*

Characteristics	Humanities Departments; Science Departments
Communication Difficulties	"Since I sometimes take classes with students from other departments, it was difficult to speak up when everything went online, and I didn't know anyone at all."
Instability & Troubles with Wi-Fi, Zoom, and Microsoft Teams	"I couldn't attend due to issues with the laptop I borrowed from the university, and I wasn't able to explain this to the teacher, which I would have been able to do if it was in person."

Positive Experiences of Remote Classes: Asynchronous Online Classes (On-Demand)

Students had some positive things to say about asynchronous online classes, which were on-demand. The advantages were Repeated Viewing and Viewing Speed, shown in Table 6, the ability to control the speed of a recording and watch it several times.

Table 6: *Positive Comments on Asynchronous Online Classes (On-Demand)*

Characteristics	Humanities Departments; Science Departments
Repeated Viewing	“Because it was possible to watch the lessons (or course materials) repeatedly as many times as I wanted, I kept viewing them until I was satisfied with my understanding.”
Speed Viewing	“Can be viewed in fast forward (at 1.5x speed).”

Negative Experiences of Remote Classes: Asynchronous Online Classes (On-Demand)

Regarding negative things about asynchronous online classes, participants reported Understanding Difficulties and Procrastination. Procrastination especially emerged as a significant problem. As students had several days to watch on-demand recordings, some tended to delay doing their on-demand homework. Table 7 comments illustrate the struggles students had with on-demand classes.

Table 7: *Negative Comments on Asynchronous Online Classes (On-Demand)*

Characteristics	Humanities Departments; Science Departments
Difficulties Understanding	“During (face-to-face) lectures, I can listen attentively and the teacher's explanations make things easy to understand. However, with on-demand classes, there are no (additional) explanations, so I have to interpret everything on my own, and that was challenging.”
Procrastination	“Because it was possible to watch the lessons (or course materials) repeatedly as many times as I wanted, I kept viewing them until I was satisfied with my understanding.”

Positive Experiences of Hybrid Classes

Some students had positive experiences of hybrid classes as shown in Table 8 comments. Two positive things mentioned about hybrid classes were feeling comfortable with a hybrid style and ease of understanding through various styles of delivery. Details include the following:

1. Concerning hybrid classes, a mixture of face-to-face and online learning: students had very few experiences with them and, accordingly, very few comments. Participants found that face-to-face and online classes seemed to complement each other, and they felt comfortable with this a style of class that included both.
2. Easy of understanding: Particularly for experiments, understanding the entire procedure beforehand using video proved to be effective: two ways of getting class

content and complementary online approaches helped make it easier to understand and carry out face-to-face experiments for more effective learning.

Table 8: *Positive Comments on Hybrid Classes*

Characteristics	Humanities Departments	Science Departments
Two Channels	"When class meets, we have face-to-face sessions at the university, and during long holidays, we can discuss things with the teacher via Teams. This was very convenient and easy to do."	
Ease of Understanding (Experiment)		"I watched a video and gained some understanding of a procedure before doing the experiment. This approach was easier because, rather than receiving oral explanations from the teacher right before the experiment, I watched a video, understood the process to a certain extent, and then proceeded with the experiment. So, doing experiments in this way was more manageable."

Negative Experiences of Hybrid Classes

However, there were also negative aspects to doing hybrid types of classes: students experienced confusion and difficulty with their class schedules. Sometimes, students became confused, forgetting when they had face-to-face classes and when their online classes were scheduled. With several classes in one day, including a mix of face-to-face and online formats, they found it challenging to organize their schedules. Table 9 highlights some comments made by study participants.

Table 9: *Negative Comments on Hybrid Classes*

Characteristics	Humanities Departments; Science Departments
Difficulties Understanding	"During (face-to-face) lectures, I can listen attentively and the teacher's explanations make things easy to understand. However, with on-demand classes, there are no (additional) explanations, so I have to interpret everything on my own, and that was challenging."
Procrastination	"Because it was possible to watch the lessons (or course materials) repeatedly as many times as I wanted, I kept viewing them until I was satisfied with my understanding."

Positive Experiences of Traditional Style: Face-to-Face Classes

Besides being familiar modes of learning, experiences of traditional face-to-face classes showed positive aspects of that might be self-evident (Table 10). Students felt it was easier to communicate in face-to-face settings. They also felt teachers did things more spontaneously such as drawing diagrams on the blackboard or whiteboard when they noticed students needed help to understand concepts.

Speaking and Interactions were viewed more favorably in face-to-face classes. Students found it easier to communicate in face-to-face settings especially in classes that involve discussions and interactions.

Improvisation was also a positive aspect. Classes did not always have to proceed as planned. If teachers noticed that students' understanding was insufficient, they provided additional information by writing on the blackboard or whiteboard, as mentioned in Table 10. These kinds of additions contributed to students' in-depth understanding.

Table 10: *Positive Comments on Traditional Style (Face-to-Face) Classes*

Characteristics	Humanities Departments; Science Departments
Speaking & Interactions	“Classes that focus on activities like speaking and interacting with others are better conducted face-to-face.”
Improvisation	“When explanations are given using tools like blackboards or whiteboards, and diagrams are drawn, it makes it easier to understand.”

Negative Experiences of Traditional Style: Face-to-Face Classes

Students mentioned two negative things about face-to-face classes: 1) they felt not having the ability to replay a lecture like they could for on-demand class videos meant they had to concentrate more even though they could still ask the teacher to clarify something; and 2) they felt the burden of long commuting times to get to school as well as expensive train fares (Table 11).

Table 11: *Negative Comments on Traditional Style (Face-to-Face) Classes*

Characteristics	Humanities Departments; Science Departments
No Playback Option	“In face-to-face classes, it's not possible to easily go back and listen to important points again.”
Long Commuting Time to School	“It's a real pain to have to wake up early every morning and come in, especially when there are only one or two classes.”

Ideal Classes

Finally, we asked the participants about their ideal classes at the end of the interviews. The characteristics they thought should be part of ideal classes were as follows, with comments in Table 12 supporting the characteristics.

1. Receiving feedback from teachers.

2. Ability to attend classes at different campuses.
3. For practicum classes, hands-on experiences are considered essential.
4. Face-to-face styles are preferred for lab classes, practicums, and tutorials.
5. For lecture classes, including liberal arts lectures, on-demand options that allow for repeated viewing would be more effective.
6. A blend of face-to-face and online classes might represent the ideal class structure.

Table 12: Comments on Ideal Classes

Characteristics	Humanities Departments	Science Departments
Feedback	"The most important thing is to receive feedback from the teacher."	
Attending Classes in Different Campuses	"It is good that there are increasing opportunities to take courses offered on distant campuses through online classes."	
Repeated Viewing for Lecture Class & Liberal Arts Lecture Classes	"Face-to-face is preferable in all aspects, but for lectures, on-demand options that allow for repeated viewing are also effective."	
Blended Classes	"If everything is online, I really end up not going to university and become shut-in, so it's better to have a style where lecture subjects are taught face-to-face, and then the classes are also made available online afterwards."	
Emphasis on hands-on Experiences		"The value of practicum lies in the accumulation of hands-on experiences."
Lab Classes/Practicum/Tutorials		"Practical exercises (hands-on training) must absolutely be conducted face-to-face."

Discussion

Findings for Research Question 1

To summarize, in relation to research question 1, What are the advantages and disadvantages of conducting online classes for college students in Japan? There are two insights we can derive from students' experiences. Online classes offer several advantages. For online classes in general, these include saving time and money, having more opportunities, and actively using online resources during classes. In synchronous online classes, advantages are visible facial expressions and enhanced concentration. Asynchronous online classes provide the benefits of repeating and controlling the playback speed for viewing videos. For hybrid classes, the key advantages are dual learning channels and ease of understanding through complementary class styles.

Regarding disadvantages, online classes present various challenges. For online classes, these include loneliness and a lack of authentic experiences. Issues such as communication difficulties and problems with unstable Wi-Fi, Zoom, and Microsoft Teams are prevalent in synchronous classes. Asynchronous classes often lead to difficulties in understanding and

procrastination. Additionally, hybrid classes can cause confusion and complicate class scheduling for students.

Findings for Research Question 2

Regarding research question 2 about ideal class styles, what are the ideal college classes for students majoring in humanities and sciences? We can identify four key insights from students' experiences:

1. Face-to-face classes seem to offer significant advantages over online classes.
2. However, online classes should not be entirely dismissed, as they hold substantial potential for improving learning efficiency and for saving time and money.
3. The core issue is not choosing between face-to-face or online lessons but finding the most suitable class styles for each department and its students. A one-size-fits-all approach is impractical, as different students and departments have unique needs and preferences.
4. To achieve this, colleges need to develop flexible and efficient administrative curriculum designs.

A recent news article in Japan reports that Japanese educational institutions face challenges in transitioning from traditional analog methods to digitalization (Hisanaga, 2023). While reverting to pre-COVID-19 practices might seem easier, it is not the best option. The COVID-19 pandemic led all educators, from elementary to university levels, to experience online classes. Despite the challenges, this period introduced new methods of instruction and learning, including online lessons.

Table 13: Summary of Findings for Research Questions 1 and 2

Research Question	Findings
<i>RQ 1: What are the advantages and disadvantages of conducting online classes for college students in Japan?</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There are several advantages: saving time and money, more opportunities, active learning with online resources (online classes in general); visible facial expressions, concentration (synchronous); repeated viewing, speed viewing (asynchronous); two channels, smooth understanding (hybrid). 2. Quite a few disadvantages were also reported: loneliness, not real experiences (online classes in general); communication difficulties, instability & troubles with Wi-Fi, Zoom, and Microsoft Teams (synchronous); difficulties understanding, procrastination (asynchronous); confusion, difficult class schedule.
<i>RQ 2: What are the ideal college classes for students majoring in humanities and sciences?</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Overall, Face-to-face classes seem to have great advantages over online classes. 2. Online classes should not be totally abandoned: Possibilities for improving learning efficiency and saving time and money. 3. Each department and its students have their unique "best-fit class" styles; therefore, we should not promote a one-size-fits-all approach.

- College needs to have a flexible and efficient administrative curriculum design.

Class Delivery Models for Humanities and Science Department Classes

From 2020 to 2023, DWCLA used various styles of class delivery. Students commented on their experiences and views of the positive and negative aspects of each style. Figure 3 summarizes the various models that were used and can be used in future humanities department classes. Figure 4 summarizes those for the students in science department classes.

Figure 3: Class Delivery Models for Humanities Department Classes

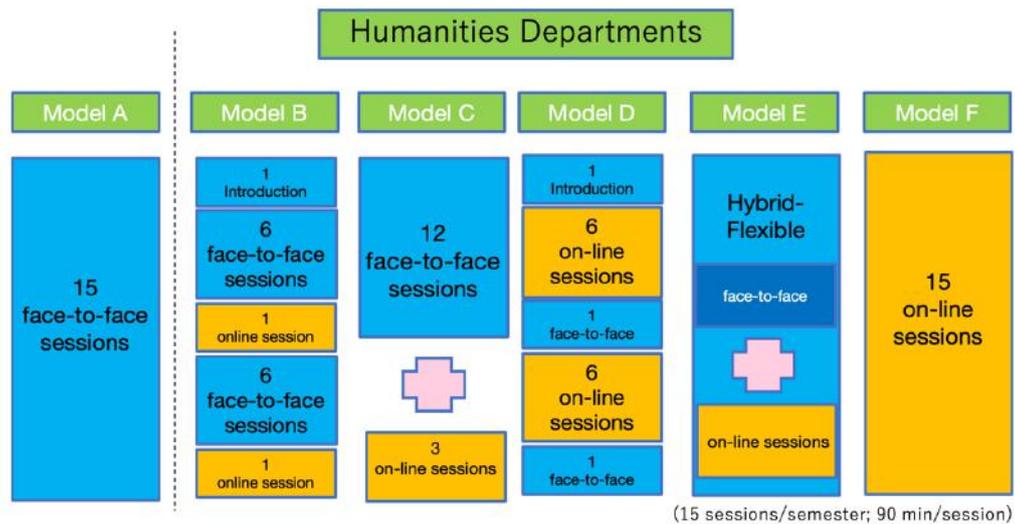
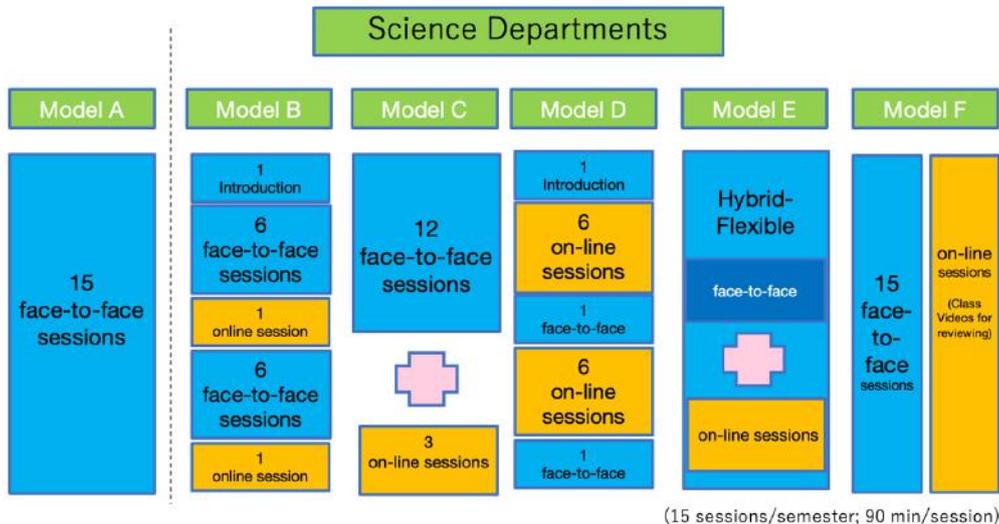


Figure 4: Class Delivery Models for Humanities Science Classes



Model A represents traditional face-to-face class styles, which we should not abandon. However, it's not necessary for all classes across different departments to adopt this model strictly. Models B to E offer teachers the flexibility to tailor their approaches to meet the unique and diverse objectives of their courses. For instance, Model E, the Hybrid-Flexible style, enables students to attend in person while also participating online with their digital devices, fostering an environment where students of different personalities can select their

preferred mode of engagement and achieve a higher level of active learning. In science departments, rather than holding all sessions online (as in Model F for Humanities Departments), sessions could be recorded for students to review through shared online videos (Model F for Science Departments). The key is not to adhere strictly to a class style determined by the Registrar's Office but for colleges to provide a variety of class styles. This flexibility allows teachers and even students to select the most suitable style to achieve their educational objectives. Now, with both teachers and students equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills for digital learning, and with a fully prepared digital environment, we must not miss the opportunity to realize ideal class settings in college.

Limitations of This Study

Upon completing our study, we found some limitations. We recognize there were limitations related to the data collection period and the amount of data we were able to collect.

- **Data Collection Period:** We collected interview data in 2021, when the online classes were nearly over, by asking participants to reflect on their academic year of 2020. The interviews might have been more effective if conducted one year earlier.
- **Limited Data:** Although there are 11 departments in our college, we collected interview data from only 6 departments. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the ideal class style, more data was needed.

Conclusion

In conclusion, colleges should provide a variety of class delivery methods, as exemplified in the models presented in the previous slides. This approach would enable teachers to select the style that best suits both themselves and their students. In the business world, we have already seen the remaining influences of COVID-19. According to Bloom (2023), three groups benefit, and three do not from changes in how business is conducted. The ones facing challenges are office building owners, transport companies, and large cities. The beneficiaries are workers, companies, and the environment. Workers can go to the office three or four times a week and work from home the other days. This lets some move to the countryside for bigger homes and better natural surroundings, saving time and money on commuting. Education institutions can learn from this. Using online classes wisely, we can see these five benefits:

1. Students learn more effectively.
2. Teachers improve teaching efficiency and have time for research.
3. Colleges can use resources better.
4. The environment benefits, helping to meet Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
5. Society can become more innovative.

Colleges/Universities should offer the choice of various kinds of class styles (face-to-face/online classes [asynchronous/synchronous] /hybrid/Hybrid-Flexible) so that departments and teachers can choose class styles that best fit them and their students.

To avoid a biggest loser (Bloom, 2023) and to achieve five wins, judicious use of online lessons should be seriously considered NOW to accomplish five wins in the field of college education:

1. Win for Students: Achieving success through efficient learning.
2. Win for Teachers: Enhancing instruction and increasing research time.
3. Win for Colleges/Universities: Resource optimization.

4. Win for the Environment: Fulfilling Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
5. Win for Society: Driving progress through innovation.

By selecting the best education delivery option, as illustrated in the various delivery methods shown in Figures 3 and 4, we can create a brighter future for education in Japan.

Acknowledgements

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***Re-entry Into the Heart of Darkness:
J. G. Ballard's Sci-Fi Retelling of Conrad's Novella***

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Abstract

British science fiction writer J. G. Ballard seemed to have been under the strong influence of Joseph Conrad's novella set in Africa, *Heart of Darkness* (1899), in the early 1960s, even though he intentionally blurred when he had first read it and how much he had owed his literary inspiration to it. One of the crucial texts proving Conrad's influence on Ballard is the latter's 1963 short story entitled "A Question of Re-entry." In this story set in the Amazon Rainforest, as its title indicates, Ballard seeks to "re-enter" *Heart of Darkness* by borrowing its framework and updates Conrad's legacies from postcolonial and planetary perspectives. Here, UN Investigator Connolly is on the patrol launch with Captain Pereira, an officer of the Native Protection Missions in Brazil, searching for the lost astronaut, Colonel Spender, who went missing with his spacecraft after his successful flight to the Moon five years ago. Then, during his investigation in the jungle, Connolly meets Ryker, a Kurtzian character from Europe who rules the native tribe by deceiving them with the power of science and technology. Although critics have already regarded this story as Ballard's Sci-fi parody of *Heart of Darkness*, they never deeply discuss his exploration of Conradian topics, from the depravity of Western civilization to the oppression of Indigenous people living in the Global South. In this sense, the current paper examines the political aspect of Ballard's science fiction by analyzing how he reinterprets Conrad's masterpiece in his own work.

Keywords: J. G. Ballard, Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, Postcolonialism, Science Fiction

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1. Introduction

In 1963, according to his autobiography, British science fiction writer J. G. Ballard had lunch with Victor Gollancz, an influential tycoon of the publishing industry of the time. After praising his first important novel, *The Drowned World* (1962), however, Gollancz sarcastically told him that he had “stole[n] it all from [Joseph] Conrad” (Ballard 2014b: 91). Although the novelist himself firmly declares that he had “never read anything by Conrad” before writing the novel (192), not only Gollancz but also various critics have compared Ballard’s works to Conrad’s 1899 novella, *Heart of Darkness* (John Baxter 2011: 117). As a matter of fact, in addition to Michael Delville, Sebastian Groes, Jeannette Baxter, and Andrzej Gasiorek who have sought to interpret *The Drowned World* in relation to *Heart of Darkness* (Delville 1998: 8; Groes 2008: 85; Jeannette Baxter 2016: 40–41; Gasiorek 2005: 30–31), David Ian Paddy reveals how the impressive opening scenes of Ballard’s fourth novel, *The Crystal World* (1966), resemble those of Conrad’s novella set in Congo (Paddy 2015: 70).¹

Despite his denial of reading Conrad and being influenced by *Heart of Darkness* in his early years,² Ballard admits in his autobiography that he “soon made up for” it (Ballard 2014b: 192). In 1992, talking about his fantasy novel set in Central Africa, *The Day of Creation* (1987), Ballard certainly said that he had not been able to “forget” Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* while writing it (Ballard 2014a: 268). Stressing the originality of his work in which the protagonist has a magical power to create a river, Ballard continues to argue that “it is impossible to write a novel just about a river without people automatically thinking of Conrad” (268).³ Furthermore, as Gasiorek puts it, there can also be an echo of Conrad’s text in Ballard’s later novel *Super-Cannes* (2000) (Gsiorek 2005: 193). And his 2003 work, *Millennium People*, has a chapter entitled “The Heart of Darkness.”

Although Ballard intentionally blurred when he had first read Conrad and how much he had owed his literary inspiration to Conrad’s legacies, one can at least claim that he seemed to have been under the strong influence of *Heart of Darkness*, even in the early 1960s. One of the crucial texts that may support this hypothesis is Ballard’s 1963 short story, “A Question of Re-entry,” in which he seems to respond to Conrad’s view of European colonialism by overtly borrowing the framework of *Heart of Darkness*. Although several critics, such as Paddy, Umberto Rossi, and D. Harlan Wilson, have already regarded this story as Ballard’s Sci-fi parody of *Heart of Darkness* (Paddy 2015: 194; Rossi 2009: 110; Wilson 2017: 183–84), they never deeply discuss his exploration of Conradian topics from the depravity of Western civilization to the oppression of Indigenous people living in the Global South. Hence, the current paper examines the postcolonial — and even planetary — aspect of Ballard’s

¹ Paddy also analyzes Ballard’s first published story “The Violent Noon” (1951), claiming that it “ends with the bitter taste of institutional corruption so familiar to readers of Joseph Conrad and Graham Greene, as well as George Orwell’s writings on Burma” (Paddy 2012: 183).

In an interview in 1976, Ballard also comments as follows: “It’s been said that I was influenced by Joseph Conrad. . . [.] but when the critics wrote that, I had still never read anything by Conrad” (Ballard 2014a: 101).

² Ballard also states as follows: “If the phone rings, it’ll be probably by Joseph Conrad, saying ‘Mr Ballard, you stole it all from me.’ But to be fair to myself, Conrad in *Heart of Darkness* is not in the least bit interested in the river” (Ballard 2014a 268). This shows how strongly Ballard was haunted by Gollancz’s sarcastic comment on *The Drowned World* in 1963.

³ Paddy regards this short story as one of Ballard’s “post-NASA stories,” including *Hello America* (1981). He argues that they are “not only pieces about a decline in space missions” but “also narratives about the decline of America” (Paddy 2015: 194).

science fiction by analyzing how he reinterprets and updates Conrad's masterpiece in his underrated story, "A Question of Re-entry."

2. *Heart of Darkness* and "A Question of Re-entry"

Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* portrays the young protagonist Marlow's voyage to the Congo River to meet Kurtz, a charismatic ivory trader sent by a Belgian company to the heart of the African jungle. The novella is set in the Congo Free State under the oppressive rule of Belgian King Leopold II, even though their names are not mentioned in the text. Kurtz is an attractive but deprived character who is worshiped as a demigod by the African natives. To borrow Cedric Watts's expression, "Kurtz is a modern Faust, who has sold his soul for power and gratification" (Watts 1996: 47). Kurtz violently rules the African tribe by utilizing his "power to charm or frighten" them (Conrad 2008: 155). In this sense, Kurtz's figure may reflect the tyranny of King Leopold II. Moreover, his dark charisma reminds people of the genealogy of literary villains — including William Shakespeare's Richard III, Milton's Lucifer, Emily Brontë's Heathcliff, and Fyodor Dostoevsky's Stavrogin — and anticipates the actual dictators in the twentieth century, from Adolf Hitler to autocratic African leaders.

In this context, what is interesting is the fact that several vital writers after World War II have attempted to adapt Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* into so-called dictator fiction. For instance, George Steiner, relocating the setting from Congo to South America, tells a story about Jewish Nazi hunters searching for Hitler hiding in the Conradian jungle in his novel *The Portage to San Cristobal of A.H.* (1979). Besides, V. S. Naipaul's *A Bend in the River* (1979) and Giles Foden's *The Last King of Scotland* (1998) satirize African dictators, such as Mobutu Sese Seko (Zaire) and Idi Amin (Uganda), by skillfully borrowing the motifs and frameworks from *Heart of Darkness*. In these works, Kurtz's characterization is thus transformed into horrible dictators. In this way, even though *Heart of Darkness* has sometimes drawn criticism since its publication, the most famous of which being from Nigerian author Chinua Achebe who called Conrad a racist (Achebe 2010: 12), the novella has never lost its appeal to several postwar writers.

Nevertheless, in his Sci-fi retelling of Conrad's novella, Ballard does not depict any dictators, politicians, or military leaders. In his short story, "A Question of Re-entry," UN Investigator Connolly is on the patrol launch with Captain Pereira, an officer of the Native Protection Missions in Brazil, searching for the lost astronaut, Colonel Francis Spender, who went missing with his spacecraft after his successful flight to the Moon five years ago. Connolly's mission is to find the astronaut who is said to have crashed "somewhere on the South American land-mass along a line linking Lake Maracaibo with Brasilia" (Ballard 2010: 439) and deny "the unofficial view" circulated by "certain of the UN Space Department agencies" that Spender "failed to select the correct attitude for re-entry" and that his capsule was "vaporized on the final descent" (439). Though Ballard's story is set in the Amazon Rainforest and thus has nothing to do with colonized Africa, its opening scene is based upon Conrad's depiction of Marlow's voyage on the Congo River. "All day they had moved steadily upstream," Ballard describes, "occasionally pausing to raise the propeller and cut away the knots of weed, and by 3 O'clock had covered some seventy-five miles" (435). Then, Ballard also depicts the forest that "followed its course" and "the aerial canopy shutting off the sunlight and cloaking the water along the banks with a black velvet sheen" (435).

In this way, despite his use of Sci-fi motifs, such as space journey and moon landing, Ballard's short story is mainly about Connolly's mission to discover Colonel Spender and his

spacecraft in the rainforest in Brazil, which reminds readers of Conrad's Marlow in search for Kurtz who is dying in the heart of Africa. In addition to such similarity in plot structure, Ballard's references to cannibalism might also be based on *Heart of Darkness*, in which one of the Blacks hired by the expedition party asks Marlow to catch a native guy from another tribe so that he can eat him (Conrad 2008: 144). Likewise, in Ballard's story, Connolly asks Captain Pereira whether the Indians are cannibalistic or not (Ballard 2010: 441). However, Captain Pereira answers him that cannibalism is "a rare practice" on the South American continent, uncomfortably asking Connolly not to "despite the Indians" (442). In the latter part of the story, he also explains that they are "not cannibal in the dietary sense of the term" (451). They only eat their dead "as a means of conserving the loss and to perpetuate the corporeal identity of the departed" (452).

3. Kurtz and Ryker

As Wilson summarizes in his book, Connolly, in Ballard's short story, "partakes in a terrestrial, psychological, and symbolic journey analogous to Marlow's" in *Heart of Darkness* (Wilson 2017: 36). However, whereas Marlow finally meets Kurtz dying in the deep jungle, Connolly cannot find the lost astronaut, who never actually appears in the story. However, during his investigation in the jungle, Connolly meets Ryker, a Kurtzean character from Europe who "seems to have maneuvered himself into a position of authority with the tribe" (Ballard 2010: 437). Like Kurtz, Ryker, described as "the Rajah" (443) and "the last of a race of true individualists retreating before the barbed-wire fences and regimentation of 20th-century life" (438), has ruled the Indians for twelve years. Ballard writes about Ryker's background as follows:

He [Connolly] had heard something in Brasilia of this strange figure, sometime journalist and a man of action, the self-proclaimed world citizen who at the age of forty-two, after a life spent venting his spleen on civilization and its gimcrack gods, had suddenly disappeared into the Amazonas and taken up residence with one of the aboriginal tribes. (438)

Connolly, on the other hand, wonders why the Indians meekly obey Ryker, even though they do not believe "in his strength of personality or primitive kingship" (448). According to Connolly's impression, they seem to be simply restricted "by a grudging acceptance that for the time being at any rate, Ryker possessed the whip hand over them" (448).

Despite his isolated life as "the Rajah" after dropping out of civilized society, Ryker collects clocks in his bungalow. However, what puzzles Connolly the most is the fact that one of Ryker's alarm clocks in his room "was telling the right time to within ten seconds" (447), which raises some important questions: How can he know the exact time, and why should he need to know it? Connolly, nonetheless, eventually solves these questions when he happens to find a paperback entitled "ECHO III: CONSOLIDATED TABLES OF CELESTIAL TRAVERSES, 1965–1980" in Ryker's room (454), by which one can calculate the exact time as well as "the elevations and compass bearings for sightings of the Echo III satellite" launched several years earlier (454). This thin book, in other words, is the secret not only to Ryker's accurate clock but also to his "casual, off-hand authority over the Indians" (448). "Armed with nothing more than a set of tables and a reliable clock," as Ballard writes, Ryker "could virtually pinpoint the appearance of the satellite at the first second of its visible traverse" (455). Ryker's power over the Indians, therefore, is "confirmed by his ability to control the time and place of its arrival" (455).

Connolly thus exposes Ryker's trick to be awed as a prophet by cunningly deceiving the "tribe with a strong cargo cult" (457). Hence, Colonel Spender's capsule falling from the sky might have strengthened their worship of Ryker. Significantly, such artfulness of Ryker shrewdly controlling the tribe by the power of modern science and technology is what distinguishes him from Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness*, who rules the Africans mainly by his dark charisma, his gift of rhetoric, and violence. Although Ryker is, unlike Kurtz, neither a tyrant nor a dictatorial figure, he seeks to colonize the natives more skillfully and indirectly. Pretending to be a straggler from modern civilization or a hermit who refuses Western materialism and a consumer society founded upon scientific ways of thinking, this man rather deceives and controls the innocent tribe in South America by making full use of the very technology and science that he enjoyed from the West. In this sense, Ryker's deceit in Ballard's story may be linked to the theme of "lie" that appears in the final scene of Conrad's novella, in which Marlow decides not to tell the truth about Kurtz's last words — he died shouting "The horror, the horror" (Conrad 2008: 178) — to his fiancé. However, unlike Marlow's thoughtful fabrication, which tells her that Kurtz called her name before his death (186), Ryker's lie in Ballard's fiction is a mere trick to maintain his superiority over the tribe by taking advantage of their innocence. Hence, in "A Question of Re-entry," Ryker's act of lying may reflect Ballard's critical view of the Western civilization recolonizing the Global South.

In this short story that explores the inner abyss of humanity, as its very title indicates, Ballard seeks to "re-enter" *Heart of Darkness* and updates Conrad's legacies from postcolonial and planetary perspectives. Here, the plot's background in which the United Nations launched Colonel Spender's rocket to the Moon may suggest the fictional situation where humans plan to colonize the Moon, probably for future migration.⁴ This huge project was promoted regardless of "some half-dozen fatal attempts" and at least three "luckless pilots" are still "orbiting the Moon in their dead ships" (Ballard 2010: 436). Hence, according to Connolly's statement that emphasizes the significance of his mission, "Colonel Francis Spender, by accepting the immense risks of the flight to and from the Moon, was owed the absolute discharge of any assistance that could be given him" (436). Assuming this is a planetary project for humankind promoted not by individual countries but by the UN, in that case, it can be said that the Brazilian natives in the Amazon Rainforest are excluded from such a category of "humans." They are left behind, and their lives have nothing to do with the civilization's ambitious project to develop space.

Certainly, Ballard's depiction of such a gap between those who are civilized and the innocent Indians is problematic when he emphasizes the savageness of the latter by writing that they may have eaten the astronaut as a holy god fallen from the sky at the end of the story (453). However, in general, finding and appreciating Conrad's political criticism of modern European civilization shown in *Heart of Darkness*, Ballard intends to push it forward to expand the possibility of this classic novella. In Ballard's Sci-fi retelling of Conrad's book,

⁴ In his 1962 essay entitled "Which Way to Inner Space?," Ballard famously claims that "science fiction should turn its back on space, on interstellar travel, extraterrestrial life forms, galactic wars and the overlap of these ideas that spreads across the margins of nine-tenths of magazine s-f." He also writes, "The biggest developments of the immediate future will take place, not on the Moon or Mars, but on Earth, and its inner space, not outer, that needs to be explored" (Ballard 1997: 197). From this perspective, it can be argued that "A Question of Re-entry," Ballard's piece published a year later, seems to demonstrate the writer's own literary manifesto.

the first person who realizes Ryker's trick is not Connolly but a son of the witch doctor (455), which may imply that not all the natives are blind supporters of Ryker. Moreover, Ballard's critical stance on his Kurtzean character, Ryker, is quite overt. After highlighting that "the Indians were at equilibrium with their environment," Ballard also writes: "Ryker had upset that equilibrium, and by using the Echo satellite had brought the 20th century and its psychopathic projections into the heart of the Amazonian deep, transforming Indians into a community of superstitious and materialistic sightseers, their whole culture oriented around the mythical god of the puppet star" (458).

4. Conclusion

As critics like Watts remark, "Kurz's charismatic depravity" in *Heart of Darkness* anticipated Hitler and the Holocaust in the twentieth century (Watts 1996: 50). Moreover, as writers like Naipaul and Foden have demonstrated in their novels dealing with African dictators, such as Mobutu and Amin, Conrad's work can also be reinterpreted in the historical context where the world saw the advent of tyranny and autocracy in postcolonial nations. However, although it is set in Brazil, Ballard's short fiction, written in the middle of the process of African decolonization in the early 1960s, perfectly anticipates a different aspect of the future situation where Western civilization — indirectly but cunningly — recolonizes the people in the so-called "peripheral" areas of the world by making use of science and technology.⁵ Therefore, Ballard's retelling of *Heart of Darkness* may indicate that his Sci-fi exploration of the enigmatic abyss of human nature is not far from Conrad's cynical views of humanity and Western civilization.

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***‘The Many Unruly Waves in the Earth and Sky’:
An Eco/Geocritical Study of Jibanananda Das’s Malloban***

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Abstract

Malloban (1948), a novel by the Bengali poet and novelist Jibanananda Das (1899-1954), deserves a dedicated reading from the contemporary ecocritical perspectives. The field of ecocriticism, ever-burgeoning as its domain is, is spiraling out in various directions at great speed. This brings into focus a recent critical development known by the various interdisciplinary schools as ‘geocriticism’. Geocriticism carries within its relatively cloistered microcosm numerous interfaces that have arisen in the macrocosmic development of ecocriticism over time. The palmiest of illustration would be that ecocriticism has basically been studied with its relation to literary theory, and/but geocriticism has lent it a far sharper edge, since it concerns itself with the axiom that Earth *evidences its own agency*. The idea of *cortesia*, moreover, as it has been introduced by George Steiner in *Real Presences* (1991), expands the frontier of geocriticism by recognizing the validity of literary craftsmanship such as the novel is; the impact is greater when the same validation comes as a critical response to Earth’s wholeness, the continuation of which can never be summed up in conclusive terms. This very sense of inconclusiveness invites us to probe deeper into the sense of dislocation vis-à-vis location/place in Jibanananda’s *Malloban*. Does *Malloban*’s lifelong attempt for carrying within him, like holy grail, the idea about the Earth’s wholeness catapult him into a solipsistic world? In response to these questions, the paper will demonstrate how Jibanananda’s *Malloban* excels as an idiolectic *eco-logos* within the ruling ecocritical-geocritical discourse.

Keywords: Place, Geocriticism, Ecocriticism, Solipsism

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Introduction: An Awakened Sense of Physical Location

Contemporary geocritical school of studies, by way of correlating place and consciousness, has lent a new edge to the meaning of “environmental unconscious” (Buell, 2005, p.142). If one fails to see the subtle correlation between the “environmental imagination” and “the imagination of place-connectedness”, one is surely in the state of “environmental unconscious”. This is the reason why Professor Lawrence Buell in the second chapter of his book *Writing for an Endangered World* urges us to take “a closer look at how the imagination of place-connectedness [...] works”: “... that an awakened sense of physical location and of belonging to some sort of place-based community have a great deal to do with activating environmental concern. Neither the imagination of environmental endangerment nor, for that matter, of environmental well-being can be properly understood without a closer look at how the imagination of place-connectedness itself works: its multiple dimensions, its cultural significances, its capacity to serve by turns as either an insulating or a galvanizing force” (Buell, 2001, p.56). Geocriticism has already gone a long way to accommodate into its fold the disciplines of various origins and perspectives. Till quite a long time, the subject of geocriticism had only been a subject of geography, or, a little more critically speaking, that of cultural geography. Contemporary geocritical discipline, however, has broken itself free from any unilinear genre-specific hegemony. It has dwelt on the reassertion of space by “developing and nourishing an approach that examines the underlying, often invisible interstices of power that invest the social body politic and landscape [...] and a range of perspectives from which to combine ecocritical and geocritical practices in order to make sense of the social, natural, and spatiotemporal world we inhabit” (Tally Jr., p.7). A re-evaluation of Jibanananda Das’s (1899-1954) Bengali novel *Malloban* (1948) offers us not just the disparate spatial anxieties of modernity but also examines how such anxieties “in unprotected darkness and depth” make us affirm that “there is no death, there is no void, there is no individual life, there is inexhaustible ineffable time--- only time” (Das, 2022, p.120).

The setting of the novel happens to be 1929 Kolkata when the Swadeshi movement is reverberating the whole length and breadth of the subcontinent. The protagonist of the novel is Malloban, a common man of forty-two, who lives in a dingy ground-floor room of a dingy two-storeyed rented house in College Street. Malloban’s wife is Utpala and the nine-year-old daughter Monu is their only child. Malloban works as a petty clerk in a foreign company; he is neither a man of sound academic calibre nor a committed careerist. His character pervades the novel only as a humdrum office-goer, a humdrum husband and an equally humdrum father. The arc of his life’s vicissitudes is too limited to be an apt stock-in-trade for a novel proper. It is the same College Street house of Kolkata in a chilling winter month that serves as one unchanging spatiotemporal backdrop for the novel. Malloban, however, refuses to espouse this unilinear spatiotemporal identity--- the identity that his immediate surroundings have extended to him, the identity that his quotidian office-job has bestowed on him, the identity that his punctilious family-life has thrust upon him. Unlike other people of his age, profession and responsibility, Malloban does not think that he lives solely for his family consisting of Monu and Utpala. His seeming idiosyncrasies, eerie gestures and, moreover, his solipsistic tendencies undermine the anthropocene’s convention of seeing spatiotemporality as nothing but a framing device for any sort of phenomenon-study. The perspective of the anthropocene, as Malloban comprehends, has deprived the spatiotemporality of its agency and hence, Malloban intends to see his intensely dwarfed self as an integral part of the more-than-human reality. His solipsism may seem summarily untenable but from within this meditative integrity, he struggles to internalize the nonhuman just as he struggles to internalize his own libido almost every single night. Like a poet “lost in the light of thought”,

he feels with his blood and lust that the nonhuman evidences its own agency but the pursuit of this belief doesn't come without a cost.

Spatiotemporality and 'All These Familiar and Half-Familiar Things'¹

The geocentrism² becomes apparent to Malloban only when he intricately feels that he is place-connected. The space around Malloban is his two-storeyed dwelling place in College Street---a typically value-neutral site for his regular correspondence with office and relations with family. A space, however, is never associated with a place. Only when meaning, values and sentiments are ascribed to a space, a space becomes a place. The space, place and one's subconscious are not just three isolated entities but given the right gaze, right perspective and the right time, they act as one neat unit through which we can try to measure out the boundary lines between the human and the nonhuman. The quality of being place-connected is one major issue here. The space is only a superficial projection of a reality which is necessarily palimpsestic and it is only natural that against the façade of the spatial territories, no authentic search for the subconscious is possible. Hence, all what Malloban grapples for is a place to which he can safely acknowledge his belonging. Figuring out such a place is important for him. Else, it is difficult to get a control over what we usually consider as human-centric viewpoints. It is necessary that Malloban should gradually discipline himself into taking a stance which is not exclusively human. Only by shifting his own gaze from within to without he can initiate the searches for places of his subconscious self.

This shift in emphasis--- from the human-centric to the more-than-human--- helps Malloban to tide over the cliché of "imagological" or "egocentered" approach. In fact, since "multifocalization³ is more meaningful in a geocritical, geocentered context" (Westphal p.126), Malloban struggles desperately to discover his own self or his "interior existence" in some wishy-washy "charcoal-sketches": "... Malloban was surveying the shadowy, incomparable images of the charcoal-sketches and woodcuts of his interior existence---eyes closed. He really had his eyes closed . . . He wasn't sleeping, he was thinking something; as if someone somewhere was giving accompaniment--- very far away. He was listening singlemindedly" (Das, p.81). There are three different spaces that seem to be looming and lengthening immediately around Malloban--- the built space (the house-environment backed by its socio-cultural stereotyping), the more-than-human space (the city of his living being peripheral to the socio-cultural concentricity of the house) and, finally, the bucolic memories of his fast-blurring childhood. Bertrand Westphal has cautioned the readership against getting carried away by the fallacy of *presentism* (Westphal, p.25), i.e., given a particular spatial-

¹ The marital relation is like a claustrophobic place to Utpala and, quite naturally, its exact coordinate is not available to her in the strict sense of the anthropocene. Neither time nor place can define it: "Not in time---not in timelessness, not in her own soul or in someone else's heart---nevertheless, in some kind of chance uninterruptedness of all these familiar and half-familiar things, Utpala bent her head and sank down into the life, darkness, death, and disregard of an incomparable otherworld" (Das, pp.82-83).

² "The specificity of geocriticism lies in the attention it pays to a place. The study of the viewpoint of an author or of a series of authors, which inevitably posits a form of identity, will be superseded in favor of examining a multiplicity of heterogeneous points of view, which all converge in a given place, the primum mobile of the analysis. A multifocal dynamic would be required for this analysis" (Westphal, 122).

³ "In order to escape from the perspectival limitations of a single author or interpretive community, the geocritic will consult as many texts, and as many different kinds of texts, as possible, emphasizing especially the juxtaposition or confrontation of texts written from different perspectives, be they cultural or identitarian or disciplinary. The goal is to develop a polyphonic or dialogical understanding of the place in question" (Tally Jr., p.24).

temporal reality, a place has always been in the same natural state as its visual version testifies to us.

The visual version of a place⁴, as geocriticism puts forward, is a blatant fallacy and Westphal's tenet of *polysensoriality* ordains that any study of place must be open to the haptic, olfactory and auditory dimensions of place. Thus, a polyphony of outlooks will come together and confront each other and they are, thus, expected to overthrow the hegemony of any one single perspective. Using a miscellany of senses and a miscellany of methods Malloban tries to come to terms with the epistemology of space, thus playing a second fiddle to his anthropocene ego. After all, geocritical study being a significant reversal of the traditional approach to the literary study of place relativizes the autonomy of human subject. "As if standing in a separate world of symbols, mysterious to this woman [Utpala] of the material world", Malloban is bracing himself to transcend all the stereotypes about his immediate spatiotemporality. This two-storeyed house is not at all Utpala's favourite; nor is Malloban. Mincing no words Utpala can squarely say that she wouldn't have felt so stifled if she could go halves on her responsibility for Malloban, even with a prostitute. Das captures Utpala's antipathy for her immediate surroundings in a vibrant oxymoron--- "the endless darkness of the inexhaustible sunshine". Unlike how the "endless darkness" dismays Utpala, it works as a fountainhead of new thought for Malloban, where "A certain vanished city comes to mind":

Darkness once again thickens throughout the sky:

This darkness, like light's mysterious sister.

.....

In this darkness, deepening, closing in upon a February sky.

A certain vanished city comes to mind,

In my heart wake outlines of some gray palace in that city. (Seely, 2019, p.43)

If it is the idea of 'a certain vanished' place that Malloban is trying to negotiate with, it comes to him not just through the sense of vision. The "monstrous jolt" of a wheezing lorry, the "brawl and scuffle and yowl" of two lusty cats, "the muffled cries of far-off fog-men", "the sound of dew falling" and "a marvelous, far-off, otherworldly jingling"--- all these multifarious senses are collaborating to form his immediate spatiotemporality. Malloban's ground floor room is dark, drab and cold. The sense of cold that pervades his cubicle emanates from the "strange outburst of blood and lust" of the two cats⁵ who have been fighting "in this astonishing cold, under pretense of a fight" (Das, p.8). For him, "the moribund lorry-voice has some significance" and since Malloban's desperate desire is to transcend the moribund corporeality around, he takes it [the sound of wheels or tires] to be "the torrential voice of a clouded night". The rainwater, which in village gutters, tanks and channels "goes babbling along as if talking to itself" (135) or the "ko-ko-koko" that comes "from the direction of the morning fog", when "they [the crows] go flying far off in the other direction to draw out the very earth" (159) represent the tactile or the auditory senses respectively. All these spatial considerations come so naturally to Malloban that we at once

⁴ ". . . the places themselves are not stable, free-standing entities but continually shaped and reshaped by forces from both inside and outside. Places have histories; place is not just a noun but also a verb, a verb of action; and this action is always happening around us, because of us, despite us" (Buell, 2001, p.67).

⁵ The feline image is redolent of the 'doe in heat' in Das's remarkably controversial poem "In Camp":

"That doe in heat calls on.

No sleep come to this heart of mine

As I lie here, alone" (Seely, 2019, p.23).

feel that without due recognition to the nonhuman around we cannot even approximate who we really are. The spatial studies also bring to light the inefficacy of the anthropocene epistemology about language. By endeavouring to reach out first to the more-than-human space and, then, to the vignettes of those precious childhood memories, Malloban does realize that every single object in nature has its means of articulation and there is nothing odd or supernatural about it: “Malloban feels a touch of magic. And yet it’s not supernatural--- how naturally ancient, this light, the birds, the sky’s language” (169).

The Many Unruly Waves: Beyond the Binary of the Social and the Natural

For Malloban, it is also clear that just as the absence of language turns out to be the best piece of correspondence with Banalata Sen in the concluding section of Das’s poem “Banalata Sen”⁶, the same loss of language inculcates in Malloban a consciousness of a different order. Malloban now knows that the meaning of life lies in counting “the many unruly waves in the earth and sky, arranging them according to some mysterious direction . . .” (151). Reconciled to this type of consideration about time, place and consciousness, Malloban finds no puzzle in the choric flight of the cawing Kolkata crows from the dense fog towards a foggier place of no direction. The fog may have blurred the vision but the jarring and repeating cawing of the crows completely blurs the stereotypical boundary lines between the human-centric and the post-human realities. The seeming absence of language of the more-than-human world, or, in other words, the solitude, persists as the one essential signpost of life: “From the direction of the morning fog, they went flying far off in the other direction to draw out the very earth, those crows, to bring out the shining sun for everyone---even those who aren’t crows, aren’t birds---ko-ko-koko---what a racket of a hundred consciousnesses, arbitration, solitude” (159). The sense of place is not just this unmitigated solitude for Malloban but it is also a river of life--- inscrutable, untraversable: “The name of the river of our lives---uncrossing, Malloban was thinking: nowhere can anyone cross over, never, anywhere in the course of this river; but still, so many people traverse it every day on the strength of pain, danger, failure, death” (122).

Just as in Malloban’s musings, the name of the river of our life is “uncrossing”, the same sense of uncertainty permeates what we earlier recognized as “reliable spatial or environmental markers”. Regarding the growing volatility in the distinction between “the social” and “the natural”, editors Robert T. Tally Jr. and Christine M. Battista in their “Introduction” observe: “What once seemed to be fixed, stable, or at least reliable spatial or environmental markers, such as national boundaries, regional borders, public or private properties, and even identifiable climate zones, are now threatened by the increasing volatility of both the social and natural worlds. Indeed, this distinction between the social and the natural is itself dubious and unhelpful, and it becomes increasingly untenable as the twenty-first century wears on” (Tally Jr., p.2). Given the increasing volatility in “the social and natural worlds”, Malloban feels like the protagonist in Das’s poem “In Fields Fertile and Fallow”:

Blinded by the brilliance of a bloody flood, this simple creature
Finds no relief as yet.
Here the earth is rugged

⁶ In the concluding two lines of Jibanananda Das’s poem ‘Banalata Sen’, the apparent absence of language is a fitting referent for the post-anthropocene: “All birds come home, all rivers, all of life’s tasks finished. / Only darkness remains, as I sit there face to face with Banalata Sen” (Seely, 2019, p.47).

With its cracks and fissures of an April field.
There are no more promises. (Seely, 2019, p.87)

Malloban's heavily battered marital life has turned out to be a site of "no relief" and "no more promises". To Malloban, Utpala's love is as empty as a "huge empty basket of sunlight" or as squalid as "porcupine-impertinence, cockatoo-mischief, civet-aggrievedness, cat-grimaces, cobra-fangs, and tigress-paws" (Das, p.57). Still, Malloban accepts Utpala without demur, all the while sitting like a "shamkol stork"⁷. Utpala's discontents and disgusts are not unknown to Malloban. The tortures, though Malloban does not deem them tortures, keep on coming in a spate but Malloban does not evaluate them in the stereotypical scales of "social" and "natural". Whatever it is, what frightens him most is that, if at all confronted, Utpala will fly away like "a peahen from branch to branch in some magic jungle." The paradox is that Malloban perceives too well what it all means by "flying away".

In fact, the desire of flying away from this claustrophobic urban setting, the place of his apparent belonging, is exclusively that of Malloban. The suffocating, sulking life of his menial job is far too removed from his care-free childhood which he has long abandoned in the dusty roads of his village. When the night deepens in the incorrigibly throbbing city-streets, he often feels that he is incapable of sleeping even after the day's ordeal. In those wee hours when the nastily honking lorries pass his house, he derives a special pleasure in the fancy that the "sound of wheels and tires" has turned into "the torrential voice of a clouded night" (8). In fact, "the torrential voice of a clouded night" is very much an integral part of his childhood memory. The clerk's job is his means of subsistence and it is for this job that he has chosen all this sordidness of the urbanity. Ostensibly he seems to be interested in his work, his work being his means of livelihood, but then, at the end of the day, it is the place-connectedness that best characterizes his interest.

If the work or the workplace is an indispensable component of Malloban's living, the marriage with Utpala is no less an insubstantial issue. The desire for gratification is crucial just as it is crucial for all living beings on earth irrespective of their status in the social hierarchy. The "strange outburst of blood and lust", for Malloban, serves as an equalizer. The consideration that humankind indulge in what we understand as carnal only due to a hearty love for each other does not make any sense for him. As another sleepless winter night comes and passes like the imperceptible sounds of dewdrops, his sleepless ears hearken the "deadly mischiefs of cats in heat" and he sees place-connectedness not as a weltanschauung of essentially human feelings but as a "great synthesis at which one arrives after analyzing all baser life forms" (9). The crudely spatial and the crudely marital, as Malloban sees them, are now synonymous with one another. Naturally, if a marriage takes place and continues due to something other than love, it is not at all surprising. It is not always that Malloban engages himself into identifying what exactly Utpala feels about him--- "indifference" or "distrust" or "displeasure". But these questions are not as intriguing to him as the "magnanimous magic in the chatter of birds" in the pre-marital times: "Those days before marriage, late fall before winter, early fall before late fall, the surprisingly transient possibility of fall in the fields, in the sunshine, in the faces of people, in the chatter of birds, the magnanimous magic in the imminent winter night, just so they seemed to him" (102). For Malloban, the "magnanimous magic" will only sustain if he can hold on to all these precious mnemonics of his boyhood through the constant sways of ambivalence. Had there been no eeriness, no strangeness, no unpleasantness, no ambivalence in the myriad and multiple responses from others including

⁷ "Shamkol stork" of the novel is actually the Asian openbill stork (*Anastomus oscitans*).

the human and the nonhuman, this wonderful consciousness about place would not have shone upon Malloban's psyche. The only consciousness is the sense of place (the heavily contingent senses of here and there) and only by transcending the dichotomy of "social" and "natural", can one reach the acme of a hundred consciousnesses: "but there's no end to time; after all, we dwell within time; the hand of time comes and wipes away this thing here---wakes up that thing there; [...] But Malloban has sub-imagination [...] As a result, instead of a sun of consciousness, he had found endless stars of subconsciousness" (134).

Here, it is evident that the more-than-human realities around, geocritically speaking, are equally fluent and equally effective in constituting the world of the 'endless stars of subconsciousness'. There is a time in the novel when Malloban is almost under a delirium due to his sudden bout of illness. The subconscious is the most poignant and the most fertilizing this time. The everyday world of consciousness has ceased to work; what is working instead is the unfiltered ebbs and flows of spatiality which are deeply embedded in the protagonist's subconscious or "sub-imagination". The human and the more-than-human world, at this point of time, have so overlapped with each other that Malloban's ceaseless talks and the ceaseless gurgles of the gutters do appear to be the same and indistinguishable: "Malloban went on talking, the way that when a deep rainy night is free of rain for a few minutes, in village gutters, tanks, and channels, water goes babbling along as if talking to itself" (135).

Malloban's stance towards the spatiotemporality around has come to the readership through random references to innumerable birds. The gaze of a bird is the most fitting for Malloban, for he has spent a considerable part of his childhood amid the birds of various colours and various origins. Birds are bold mnemonics for him, that wheel him back delicately to the days of his yore. Their art of flight, the ceaseless chatter and, moreover, the distinguishing gesture of each of the species happen to be a great reservoir of meaning for Malloban. The haplessness of his marital life gets meaningful to him only if he can think of a bird "torn from her mate . . . in a shoreless, unfathomable void" (60). Moreover, the daily tiff with Utpala, in its deadliest pitch, is without any message or sharpness in the absence of the right bird-metaphor. Utpala doesn't mind chiming and flying off as a duty-bound parakeet, while she is sure that the rest of the world will play a second fiddle to Malloban, the hornbill: "But it is not up to the shamkol to give me one [...] The hornbill will keep sitting there flaunting his beak---waiting for the Marwari trader to come and take his oil---the parakeet will fly off to her own throne, ..." (74). When after a stiff altercation both the contending sides give in, an all-passion spent kind of stillness lasts in the air, which only the right avian gaze can figure out in infallible wordings. Thus, a fatigued Utpala lying listlessly on the zoo's green grass is like a cold wet mollusk---unmoving yet unrelenting: "... she [Utpala] was lying there pathetically like a cold wet mollusk or parasite when the sea has slipped away, pulled back by the ebb tide" (74).

Malloban's predilection for a bird's gaze has not been an open secret. It is true that Utpala has used the shamkol bird image oftentimes to taunt Malloban's highly eccentric and eerily peripatetic behaviour but even she doesn't know why it is comfortable for Malloban to "mumble", "buzz" and "tingle" like a "lonely bamboo-bug on a late autumn afternoon---plaintive and pathetic, without heat, without warmth" (138). The avian image gives Malloban an objective tool for steering clear of this anthropocentrism of his immediate surroundings and see the world around him without the vantage-point of a conventional type. The gaze also enables him to appreciate the fact that the memories are nowhere static. There is a fantastic coming and going about all that we know as spatiality. If in the faceless anonymity of an

urban living, Malloban has lost his precious childhood, there is no doubt that he will also lose his interfaces with the present surroundings as well, including the frequent tiffs with Utpala. The light of the stars and the spilt sombreness in the background will continue to pervade as the only anagnorisis of life for Malloban when birds will just fly away from him like a boshontobouri bird: “Like a boshontobouri bird in the small hours of the night, as he gazed at a heap of stars and darkness before falling asleep again, spilling over a bit, with a laugh, going beyond the willing-unwillingness to wake up, to stay alive, ...” (139-140). This desire for flying and “going beyond” the immediate spatial constraints is, in a sense, a wistfulness of every such Malloban to escape “this world of values in disorder” (202).

Conclusion

In a poem, “Bengal the Beautiful # 1”, Jibanananda Das has, as it were, pinpointed the location where one could meet this “torn-white-sail” like Malloban: “Upon the Rupsa river’s murky waters a youth perhaps steers his dinghy with/ Its torn white sail--- reddish clouds scud by, and through the darkness, swimming/ To their nest, you’ll spot white herons. Amidst their crowd is where you’ll/ find me” (Seely, 2019, p.95). This paper in absolutely disillusioning terms shows how Malloban survives even in the most hostile of situations thanks only to the sense of place and more evolving sense of place. Beyond the binary of the social and the natural, the many unruly waves of life now look like a “stupid Nepali kukri”, giving a clear impression that “there’s no saving” anymore, not for “today’s world”: “The relationship between a woman and a man, between a human and a human, between a human and nature, has lost its subtlety--- its success, its simplicity; it’s lost its savor; in today’s indiscriminating world, severing all the neat bonds of relationship, the immeasurable strength of mind of innumerable utter fools have cleared themselves a path like a stupid Nepali kukri” (Das, p.196).

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***Introducing Pixar Shorts in the Greek EFL Classroom as a Means to Enhancing Empathy
Among High School Students***

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Abstract

For the Greek EFL classroom, film viewing is not a clearly defined objective of the curriculum. Neither is there an approved list of films corresponding to each language level. A careful scan of the registered films on the Digital Film Platform for Schools supported by the Hellenic Film Center, CINEDU, reveals a total absence of Disney animated films as resource material. On the occasion of the author's membership in the action group involved in her school's self-evaluation on the improvement of the students' relationships indicator, she was assigned to find films that nurture empathy. This paper not only proposes a more clear-cut policy framework in the case of film appropriateness but also makes a cross-curricular case for Pixar shorts' storytelling as an educational tool for enhancing empathy. Hence, five Pixar shorts (i.e., *Bao*, *Day & Night*, *Lou*, *Piper*, *Purl*) were used for making an empathy-raising intervention through TEFL. More specifically, the Harvard Project Zero's "perspective-taking" thinking category, with an emphasis on "Stories" thinking routine, served as the basis for the elaboration of a post-viewing writing activity that prompted the elicitation of emotional and cognitive responses. To this end, EFL students stepped in and out of the film characters' "shoes" to reflect upon the conveyed, the untold and the personal story. According to the final valuation report, student response essays gave the first indication in favor of supplementing the range of educationally acceptable films and suggestions were made for improving empathic awareness through TEFL as part of further action research projects.

Keywords: Empathy, Perspective-Taking, Pixar Shorts

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Introduction

In Greek public education, part of the teachers' board responsibilities is to organize workgroups for the school unit's self-evaluation. As a schoolteacher, the author became a member of one of the two formed workgroups. More specifically, she contributed to the development of an action plan aimed at the cultivation of empathy and acceptance of diversity and followed by a prospective improvement of the relationships between students. Because student occasional conflicts were marked by lack of tolerance and empathy, it was deemed necessary to come up with measures to prevent further negative trends in the management of their relationships. Therefore, managing certain aspects of their relationships with the appropriate degree of care and attention became the core goal to achieve throughout the school year. As an EFL teacher, her contribution to the action plan was finding relevant films to raise issues in terms of tracking themes that promote empathy and solidarity.

The first thought was that CINEDU, which is the movie streaming platform for schools in Greece, would provide the appropriate educational resources for responding to the task of raising awareness about the importance of empathy. A documentary, titled *Life, animated* (2016) which is proposed for all educational levels and is about an autistic boy's empathy with Disney secondary characters acted as a springboard for going deeper into what makes children identify with Disney characters in general. The decision to focus on the specific Pixar shorts sprang from the intuition that they would be the opportune choice to make where sampling movie themes and sidekick characters was concerned. The expectation was to give rise to the kind of empathy that stems from the contact with familiar situations and leads to familiar confrontation. Therefore, the engagement with ways of raising empathy in students was further reinforced by the teacher's enrollment on an online seminar about the cultivation of empathy and critical thinking offered by the Scientific Association for the Promotion of Educational Innovation (E.E.P.E.K.) with the prospect of acting as a knowledge multiplier for the other members of her workgroup. At the same time, her initiative as an EFL teacher was to explore Harvard Project Zero's "perspective-taking" thinking category, with an emphasis on "Stories" thinking routine. An interesting graphic organizer derived from Literacy in Focus website tied in well with the storytelling approach to the cultivation of empathy in the EFL classroom.

Toward a Definition of Empathy

The Cambridge dictionary definition that "empathy is the ability to share someone else's feelings or experiences by imagining what it would be like to be in that person's situation" gives the starting signal for emphasizing the distinction of empathy into "emotional or affective empathy" which is about the status of a person's emotional reactions, "cognitive empathy" which is about being aware of what it means to go to the root of a problem and "behavioral empathy" which is about acknowledging the need for changing one's behaviour (Karras, 2020). The prospect of scoring high on either dimension of the abovementioned reveals the significance of not only connecting with the reality of a situation but also of venturing new thoughts and feelings from different perspectives based on personalized assumptions. According to one of Project Zero's Thinking Categories, i.e., "Perspective-taking", which is "the capacity to look beyond one's own perspective and to consider others' experiences, thoughts, and feelings" is a routine that can be practiced in the classroom. On a further note, Puglisi (2018) brings to the picture another important kind of empathy, that of

“character empathy” which entails succeeding to “connect with” and “relate to” a character’s thoughts, emotions, and circumstances.

Developing the Research Question

As stated in the introduction, a careful scan of the CINEDU platform for a Disney movie produced a Disney-related documentary about an autistic boy who empathized with Disney characters to such an extent that he learned to communicate emotionally and cognitively through responding to their words and actions, hence the change in behavior. This is how the research question began to take shape: How can Disney characters become a means to enhancing empathy in the Greek EFL classroom among High School students? Three possible answers reveal the way:

- Through “character empathy” which is about identifying with a specific character whose display of specific traits strikes a familiar chord.
- Through “cognitive empathy” which is “about awareness, imagining and understanding another person’s perspective and realities” (Karras, 2020, p. 127).
- Through “imaginative empathy” which is facilitated “under the influence of moving audiovisual stimuli” (Greiner, 2021, p. 125).

In the framework of a more context-specific discussion about the use and meaning of empathy, what follows is a reference to the issue of film education opportunities in Greek school through the presentation of CINEDU which is the Digital Film Platform for Schools supported by the Hellenic Film Center and under consideration for approval by the Greek Institute of Educational Policy (IEP). More specifically, the Hellenic Film Center, which is the provider of approximately 92 films and educational resources free of charge for use in the context of all the available school subjects in Greek school, has been established under the aegis of the Ministry of Culture to be the main body for the implementation of film policy. The resulting Digital Film Platform for Schools project is co-funded by Greece and the European Union through the Operational Program "Human Resources Development, Education and Lifelong Learning".

Although animated films abound on this digital platform, Disney animated films appear to have been left out almost by oversight. Hofmann (2018) has also observed a similar negligence in German secondary school, especially in the context of Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) which, as she claims, can benefit from Pixar animated films because the addressed topics are closely linked to the daily lives of students. In Greek secondary school, the aim behind including *Life, animated* (2016) is to provide initiatives that indirectly have an impact on fostering alternative pathways to growth through film education. By observing how Disney characters have the power to affect the daily life of an autistic child who regains his voice through watching repeatedly the classic Disney films, students have the opportunity to respond to the agenda that an inclusive world full of empathy is a shareable vision inside the classroom. Just like Owen infers that feeling empathy towards the sidekick characters renders him capable of not only receiving support by but also of giving help to the main hero, an eager student draws a moral from stories that are about empathizing with empowered characters as an empowering option to confront an otherwise disempowering condition.

At this point, it has become obvious that Disney characters have the potential of becoming a means to enhancing empathy. Therefore, the question that takes form is the following: Can Pixar shorts become a means to enhancing empathy in the Greek EFL classroom among High

School students? Answering in the affirmative entails recognizing not only the guided identification with the characters' mindset but also the potential activation of emulating their way of acting through the storytelling power over the spectators' imagination. Therefore, yes, Disney shorts have the potential to become a means to enhancing empathy in the Greek EFL classroom because, through story(re)telling activities in the post-viewing stage, EFL learners are practically expected to:

- prolong their engagement with the movie themes (i.e., empty-nest syndrome, dealing with difference, bullying, perseverance, gender representation).
- make up for the lack of dialogue in most of the animated shorts by thinking out the story behind the moving images.
- imagine what it must feel like stepping into the characters' shoes considering the main conflict of the story from different perspectives.
- bring movie themes home to them how each situation can be resolved on a positive note.

The Pixar Shorts

The proposed choice of the specific Pixar shorts as a film education opportunity to integrate in the school curriculum has everything to do with bringing movie themes home to students. What follows is a short overview of the movie themes and characters.

To begin with, *Bao* (2018) is about a mother's fulfilled wish to bring to life a substitute for her son who left home to embark on his adult life. A piece of dough taking life form and becoming the new focus of a mother suffering from the empty-nest syndrome is a relatable theme in a relatable storyline that really connects with the student audience.

Day & Night (2010) is about two opposite characters who resolve their differences after going through a number of stages reminiscent of Bennett's (1986) six stages of Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS), namely Denial, Defense, Minimization, Acceptance, Adaptation, Integration.

Lou (2017) is about a "Lost and Found" objects box acting as a sidekick character who helps schoolyard bully J.J. fulfil his destiny, i.e., that of reaching the self-realization that giving to others can be more self-fulfilling than stealing from others.

Piper (2016) is about perseverance through thick and thin and going into full-on survival mode in adverse conditions, in which fending for oneself seems to be the only solution.

Finally, *Purl* (2018) is about gender equality in the workplace which could be extended to any case of a shared public space where a balanced gender representation should be accounted for.

Method

For the purposes of this study, the starting point was a film project aimed at cultivating empathy in students that matured into the implementation of pertinent post-viewing activities to assess the student's quality of responsiveness to relatable movie themes and characters. The participants were the EFL teacher as member of the action group involved in the school unit's self-evaluation and the EFL learners of the second grade of a Senior High School who became the target group. Greiner (2021, pp. 130-131) points out that "on the basis of

immersion, affect and empathy [...] we often enter into an intimate imaginary relationship with the film character, especially if that character's perception coincides with the film's subjective experience of the world". For the purposes of this study, the teacher and the students transformed into a film community that brought in its shared subjective experience to the data processing through storytelling.

The data came from:

- the EFL learners' written responses for the purposes of the post-viewing activities.
- the EFL teacher's oral feedback during classroom discussion on empathy.
- the EFL teacher's report at the teachers' meeting on the impact of Disney short films on enhancing empathy by expanding self-awareness.
- the action group's final valuation report on the improvement of the students' relationships.

The intervention activities:

- created the circumstances for a storytelling analysis of the movie themes and the issues of conflict among the students.

Perspective-Taking

To begin with, a warm-up activity on exploring the meaningfulness and purposefulness of perspective-taking was implemented with the aid of the graphic organizer on "differing perspectives" provided by Literacy in Focus. Figure 1 is an example of a student's completed worksheet where she has chosen to take, first, the perspective of Bao's mother and then, Bao's perspective. By internalizing their "thoughts", "feelings" and "actions", the student has taken a glimpse into their mindset and, even if only for a short moment, she has completely immersed into the story and its implications. By exploring different, almost contradictory, perspectives, she has also found out by herself that perspective-taking is thankfully different from taking sides as it involves analyzing one's behavior into different processes before passing judgment.

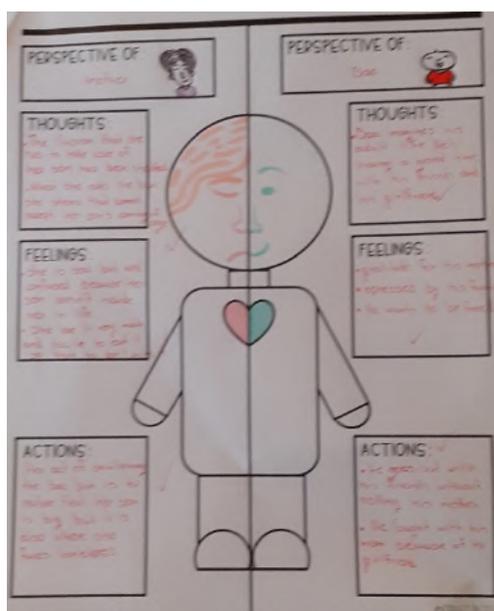


Figure 1: "Differing Perspectives" from Literacy in Focus

“Stories”

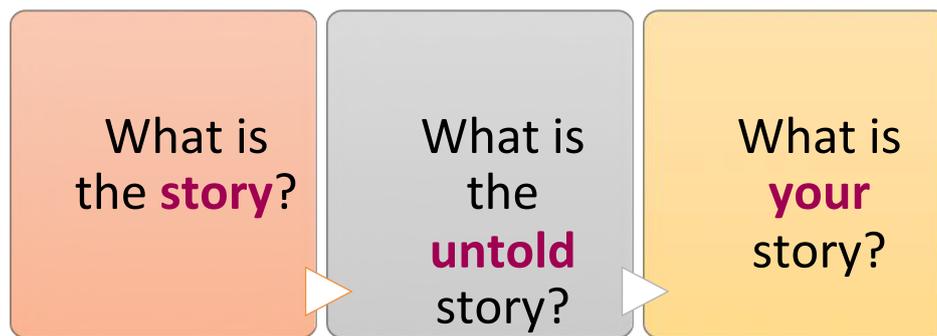


Figure 2: “Stories” thinking routine

Having warmed up to the concept of trying out different perspectives, students went on to develop this new thinking routine in accordance with the guidelines of Project Zero’s Thinking Routines. More specifically, according to Project Zero’s Thinking Routines toolbox, “perspective-taking” is about developing “the capacity to look beyond one’s own perspective and to consider others’ experiences, thoughts, and feelings”. More specifically, “Stories” is regarded as “a routine for uncovering complex issues”.

To take things one step further, the “Stories” routine encourages the kind of thinking that invites learners to “explore how accounts of issues, events, people, society are presented; tease apart and rethink the various angles, dimensions and scope of accounts; consider what has been left out in the account and take a stand on the kind of account that they would like to hear”. To achieve this, students were expected to tell the story following the storyline, retell the story filling in the gaps through empathy with the characters and trace back the story and reconstruct it through a different filter, personalized through their individual experience.

For the students to be able to develop connection to the story, finding and filling in the gaps in the story has been instrumental in their understanding of how empathy develops and brings about a massive change in mindset. What follows is two students’ retelling of the story of *Bao* and *Lou* from their own perspective, with the key gaps filled.

“Bao’s story is about the emotional turmoil that every mother goes through when her child leaves home. The habit that mothers ~~have to~~ be overprotective with their children and deprive them of their independence causes a lot of problems in their adult lives. Because of her emotional void, she created an imaginary son who represents the way a mother sees her son, that is fragile, in need of protection and special care. When he becomes a teenager, he asserts his independence and pushes his mother emotionally away, causing her to feel crushed. Swallowing him on an impulse reveals that she cannot bear to lose him. As soon as she does that, she realizes that her real son is still there for her and that he has not stopped loving her. Many young adults distance themselves from their parents causing them distress. This is normal as we ~~have to~~ realize that children have to reach maturation before they can accept mother’s unconditional love”.

Figure 3: Bao’s story

“Lou’s story is about bullying other kids to attract attention because that is the only way of getting others’ attention even if it is in a negative way. J.J. keeps on bullying other kids to give him their toys because he can’t handle seeing them having fun without remembering how he felt when someone else did the same to him. As a victim of bullying J.J. would rather replicate the bully’s behaviour instead of condemning it and avoiding to do the same. Obviously, wounds are not always visible which means that one has to look for them in order to find them and heal them. The boy has a chance to heal his own wounds when he recovers his own lost toy. Only then does he realize that he can show kindness to others and be rewarded for it. As soon as he gives everything back to their owners, kids who are good at forgiving and forgetting give him a second chance by inviting him to play with them. So, this story is not only about bullying and invisible wounds, but it is also about second chances and tolerance.

Figure 4: Lou’s story

For the students to be able to proceed with “relatability”, developing their personal view of how the story should be told so that messages are better conveyed and implications are better facilitated is a step that cannot be skipped in the developmental sequence proposed by the perspective-taking thinking routine “stories”. What follows is two students’ recontextualization of the story of *Day & Night* and *Piper* with a view to expressing what they would like to hear in order to reach a consensus on how empathy is about finding a happy medium between addressing ethical values and accommodating conflict concerns.

“Day was an accomplished businesswoman who always had a plan and knew what she wanted. Night was a carefree artist who lived the moment and followed his instincts. One day, they met at a New Year’s Eve party. There, they had the chance to meet and get to know each other. Day thought Night was irresponsible and without any goals in life, while Night thought Day was uptight and too focused on work. However, as they got to know each other better, they appreciated each other’s approach to life. Day learned to let go and enjoy the present, while Night learned to prioritize and make plans for the future. They became friends and learned to appreciate each other’s perspective”.

Figure 5: Day & Night’s story



Figure 6: Piper

“It was not long before Piper realized that if it was money that she needed to fulfil her extra wishes then she would have to rely entirely upon herself to earn it as her family could hardly get by. Getting a job at her age was not exactly easy as there were not that many employers who were in the habit of hiring minors to work for them. But she did persist and finally she managed to get a decent job for some extra pocket money. In fact, she was so content with her achievement that she felt she had to share her success story with her friends. When they asked her how she could possibly manage with both homework and a job, she explained that it was all about perseverance. If you really want something, then you will definitely find the way to achieve it sooner or later”.

Figure 7: Piper’s story

When students were first informed about the exclusion of Disney films, in general, and Pixar shorts, in particular, from the platform, one of them retorted that a primary school teacher had nevertheless shown them some of the same Pixar shorts implying that generalizing about assumed non-familiarity is like giving one’s backing to misjudgment. The same student who professed a certain familiarity with the story of *Purl* took the initiative to tell her “own untold story” about how she would have liked to reconstruct the story, i.e., intervene in the plot of the story, to make it more impactful for the viewer. To prove her point, she backed up her intervention with a drawing.



Figure 8: Purl

Watching Purl has made me think about a lot of things and most of all what it must feel like being the only woman in a workplace dominated by men. I have even tried to put myself in Purl’s shoes and try to think what I would have done and whether I could have reacted differently. I am still not quite sure how I would have dealt with the men’s attitude towards me, but recalling the image of Purl being squeezed between two men and not being allowed to the right of her opinion infuriates me. The idea of not being able to give voice to my ideas would probably generate feelings of retaliation. And then I realized that I would have liked the opposite happening. What I mean to say is what if a man was squeezed between two women, deprived of his turn to talk, feeling helpless and unappreciated? But then I also realized that this is not a matter of reversing roles so that either gender gets to experience how things are from a different perspective but mostly a matter of finding a way to co-exist in a harmonious way.

Figure 9: Purl’s story

Results, Discussion and Implications

At school level, the valuation report acknowledged the role of Pixar short films in the cultivation of empathy for providing student-related themes. It also underscored the importance of exploiting the resources for the purposes of in-school training on the issue of conflict management through fostering self-awareness and empathy. The proposal of a follow-up on the role of film education projects in the restoration of student relationships emerged naturally, along with the conclusions reached.

At classroom level, the intervention in the form of post viewing activities helped students adopt new thinking routines when it comes to analyzing the motives behind an individual's behaviour. At the same time, it invited students to experiment with new approaches to storytelling, i.e., through empathizing with movie characters. Their experimentation proved satisfactory and their experimental project worthy of being extended in time and to other school subjects.

At research level, the EFL teacher prepared a PowerPoint presentation for her fellow colleagues on the role of film-generated empathy in conflict management to formally propose the endorsement of new sets of criteria and to ensure their effective implementation in the school environment. These sets of criteria included investigating in practice why Disney popular culture should be embedded in the school curriculum as indispensable for charting and ensuring the emotional development of students.

On a practical level, the EFL learners saw the need to reflect the priority for the improvement of their relationships in the creation of a storyboard to illustrate how a growing empathic regard for others can lead to conflict resolution. For her part, the EFL teacher encouraged students to take the initiative for making a short film to take part in CINEmathia, the annual festival of student films from the North and South Aegean. The main idea behind this collaborative venture is that all voices should be heard and taken into account when defining the parameters of action through empathy. As for the board of teachers, the proposal of a follow-up on conflict management in the school environment through in-school training (e.g., corresponding E.E.P.E.K. seminars) verified the successful implementation of the initial action plan.

Directions for Further Research

At storytelling level, a further suggestion for cultivating empathy would be to explore Deardorff's (2019) Story Circles method for the development of intercultural competencies in the EFL classroom context. Encouraging students to "gain increased cultural self-awareness" through "developing relationships with culturally different others" would mean taking the idea of empathizing to another level, i.e., that of reconstructing the cultural self through restorying processes (Deardorff, 2019, p. 20). Thus, motivating students to reenact a film-viewing experience from the standpoint of the narrator who "practiced listening for understanding" (Deardorff, 2019, p. 20) before taking up the role of contact point between the fictional character and the real self entails reaching the pinnacle of their mission, i.e., that of going beyond everyday interpersonal and/or intercultural conflicts.

At film project level, incorporating Greiner's (2021) concept of "imaginative empathy" in relation to post-viewing activities in the EFL classroom is another suggestion for further research because it ties in with the core goal of aligning the school's agenda with the

students' potential for personal development and progress. The idea of offering the students an immersive experience, i.e., that of assuming the perspective of a character in order to look for familiarity in thought, feeling and behavioral patterns, is an appeal not only to the viewer's imaginative faculties but also to the viewer's capacity for empathy through "imagining" whilst "understanding another person's perspective and realities" (Karras, 2020, p. 127).

Conclusion

It is quite striking to realize that the issue of raising awareness through film-viewing is often entangled in discussions about "the rock the boat" argument when it comes to prompting students to step out of their comfort zone in order to get a glimpse of the different and parallel realities. Hence, the lingering question: why can we not help them expand their thinking beyond the obvious without finding recourse to stories and images that leave students with the blunt reality that everything is flawed and unlikely liable to change? And what is more to the point: Why can the use of film-generated stimuli not be merely evocative instead of point-blank? It ought to be noted that TEFL has a lot to offer on the subject of bringing home to students how popular culture can lead to thinking differently or imagining how things could be different instead of being just a source of temporary entertainment.

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***The Value of Online News:
Addressing the Problem of Online Investment Fraud Crimes in Thailand***

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Abstract

Investment fraud is not a new type of crime, but the number of victims has increased during the Internet of Things era. This crime is recognized both nationally and internationally as a significant financial threat. Thailand too has grappled with this form of crime. This research investigates whether the mass media, which should cover news about online investment scams, effectively informs and warns the Thai public about these crimes. Specifically, this study examines the frequency of news coverage on investment fraud. The methodology involves web crawling the top 5 most accessed news agency websites to extract all reports about investment fraud. The findings indicate that the 'Khaosod' news agency was at the forefront of reporting on investment crime, while 'Matichon' reported the least. Thairat news agencies often covered such crimes from midnight to early morning, whereas other agencies primarily reported during the day. There was no clear correlation between the frequency of news reports on investment fraud and the monthly number of reported victims. Notably, while the highest number of cases were reported to the Thai police in February 2023, the most news articles were published in January 2023. In conclusion, there may be a negative correlation between the volume of news reports on investment fraud and the actual number of victims.

Keywords: Investment Fraud, News Value, Online News Report, Ponzi Schemes, Romance Scam

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1. Introduction

Investment fraud has been classified as a national and transnational financial crime problem worldwide (Gee & Button, 2019). In terms of evidence, Kieffer and Mottola (2016) and Federal Bureau of Investigation (2021) revealed such problem in America. In 2021 alone, the reported number of victims stood at 92,371, with total losses amounting to \$1.7 Billion. Likewise, Deliema, Shadel, and Pak (2020) deeply explored the risky behaviors, mindsets and characteristic of investment fraud victims in America. Harvey, Kerr, Keeble and Nicholls (2014) highlighted the serious deception in Britain and in Japan (Kadoya et al., 2021).

Group-IB (2022) investigated fake investment schemes targeting European citizens. They explained the modus operandi of such crimes, which involves convincing victims to repeatedly transfer funds to fraudulent investment portals or bogus brokers. The Department of Financial Institutions in Washington State identifies common types of investment fraud, which can manifest in various forms. One such form is the Ponzi or Pyramid Scheme, named after the 1920s swindler Charles Ponzi. In this scheme, investors are promised returns derived from funds deposited by subsequent investors, resembling the structure of a pyramid. Scams can also involve real estate and cryptocurrency-related investments and may even take the form of romance baiting. In such schemes, scammers attempt to forge personal relationships with their victims, feigning love and intimacy. Over time, they subtly persuade their targets to invest.

Lev, Maha, and Topliceanu (2022) stated that estimating the number of financial fraud victims has become difficult. Meanwhile, data presented by the UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2022) revealed that 1 in 4 consumers in Southeast Asia fell victim to online scams in 2022. In light of these concerns, Lev et al. (2022) examined the motives and circumstances leading to individuals becoming victims, drawing from a sample of case studies in several developing countries. The results indicated that the majority of these victims sought to escape from poverty. Similarly, Thailand has faced this issue. There are likely many more victims who have been deceived. Thus, we aim to study whether the mass media, which is supposed to cover news about online investment scams, actually emphasizes and addresses this issue. This study attempts to answer the following research questions:

RQ 1) How do Thai news agencies report on online investment scam cases?

RQ 2) How does the frequency of news about investment fraud compare with the number of cases victims report to the Thai police?

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Psychographics of Victimization of Investment Fraud in Thailand

Lea et al. (2009) divided the victims into two groups. The first group includes motivational factors, such as the search for excitement in risk-taking, lack of self-control, and limited motivation for information processing. The second group encompasses cognitive factors, such as positive illusions, which manifest as an individual's tendency to perceive themselves in a favorable light, and social proof. In terms of gender, men tend to fall victim to foreign money fraud, network frauds, high-risk investments, and land investments more than women. Button et al. (2009) suggested that the degree of awareness regarding fraud can be categorized into four levels: 1) victims who are not even aware they have been scammed; 2) victims who are aware they have been scammed but choose not to report it to the authorities;

3) victims who are aware and choose to report to the authorities; and 4) victims who find it difficult to believe they were indeed scammed.

Poombundit and Yuadyong (2022) stated that online deception on social media in Thailand comprises two major factors: deception related to emotions, commonly known as romance scams, and financial deception. These types of deception can appear in mixed or hybrid forms. In terms of romance scams, most of the victims are women. (Tassanakulphan et al., 2020). Nildam et al. (2020) collected data on cheating methods, communication channels, and experiences of online fraud specifically targeting the elderly in a particular area: Chiang Rai Province, Thailand. Among these, online Ponzi schemes rank first, with victims reporting being enticed to invest. Similarly, Angkasit (2021) studied the factors influencing the decision to be involved with Ponzi scheme of Thai people. In the 2022 report by the Department of Special Investigation (DSI) from Udomsakpasin, significant data has indicated that online Ponzi schemes are the top-ranked official cases.

Eighty-five percent of the victims are familiar with Ponzi schemes, yet they decide to invest due to unrealistically high expectations of returns. Sixty-five percent of the victims notice that the money transfer destination is a company account, but this recognition does not guarantee their protection from deception. Only one in five victims report the scam, primarily because of concerns about their reputation and the fear of acquaintances finding out, leading many to decide against filing a report. More than 50 percent of the victims are persuaded to invest via social media channels. Additionally, 68 percent decide to invest based on solicitations from individuals they've never met in person, communicating only through messaging and phone calls. Once they realize they've been deceived, they can no longer contact these individuals. Seventy-one percent of the victims hold relatively good job positions and earn an average income of more than 40,000 baht per month or higher.

Kanthawong and Petmune (2020) studied the methods of Forex fraud and the factors that lead to individuals being victimized. One approach is where offenders entice victims by posing as specialists and inviting them to invest in Forex. Alternatively, they establish a seemingly legitimate identity to offer investments, using technology to create fake investment websites or applications that appear profitable.

This study emphasized the role of news as a leading force in helping to warn against such crimes, particularly issues arising from the advancement of digital media. Additionally, financial concerns can influence decision-making, leading individuals to mistakenly engage in online investment fraud.

2.2 The Concept of News Value

In a broad context, throughout history, the sharing of news information has typically satisfied fundamental human desires for direction, connection, and security (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001; Stephens, 2014). In the pioneering work of Walter Lippmann (1922), the paper sought to explain why the media select certain events and news while rejecting others. Lippmann introduced terms such as 'sensationalism, proximity, relevance, unambiguity, and facticity' to describe what makes them newsworthy. Later, Al-Rawi, Al-Musalli, and Fakida (2021) highlighted that the well-known concept of news values research began with the work of Galtung and Ruge (1965). They employed a list of 12 main news factors to define news value. In their study, they used the term 'news factors,' and subsequent scholars in journalism and mass communication studies have used this term synonymously with 'news values'

(Yamthap, 2021). In terms of perception, the six factors are: 1) impact, 2) frequency, 3) threshold (absolute intensity, intensity increase), 4) unambiguity, 5) meaningfulness, and 6) unexpectedness. Another three factors related to the pragmatics of media coverage are: 7) consonance (predictability, demand), 8) continuity, and 9) composition. The last four factors are culture-related and refer to 10) elite notions, 11) elite people, 12) negativity. As the news industry evolved with the digital age, the relationship between news providers and consumers has shifted. News content and its values have expanded to include categories such as bad news, celebrity, timeliness, immediacy, human interest, proximity, conflict, scandals, suspense, and a news organization's agenda. Furthermore, the shareability and dramatization of news on social media and websites have become commonplace (Harcup & O'Neill, 2001; Garrison, 1990; Gibbs & Warhover, 2002; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996).

Brighton and Foy (2007) argued that to reflect the evolving news landscape of the 21st century—which includes new media platforms and a more engaged audience—it's essential to broaden the definition of news values. They proposed a set of "fresh news criteria" that align better with the digital era, characterized by the convergence of various media formats. These seven criteria for news values are:

- **Relevance** – The significance of an item to the viewer, listener, or reader.
- **Topicality** – Pertaining to whether it's new, current, and immediately relevant.
- **Composition** – How a news item fits with other items that accompany it.
- **Expectation** – Whether the consumer anticipates being informed about the topic.
- **Unusualness** – What differentiates it from other events that go unreported.
- **Worth** – Whether it justifies its appearance in the news.
- **External Influences** – Evaluating if a news item's content is genuine or influenced by external pressures, such as from a proprietor, advertiser, or politician (Brighton & Foy, 2007, pp. 26).

In terms of user engagement, the audience controls how they consume news. Nowadays, they often choose to access news from their own social media channels which link to stories presented by various news outlets. Larsson (2018) noted that popular news organizations use their respective social media platforms to disseminate their news content. However, social media users tend to prefer a 'lighter' interaction with online news content. Al-Rawi et al. (2021) investigated the major news topics most 'liked' by Instagram audiences and compared them with the topics most reported on by news organizations. The results suggest that the Instagram audience prefers to consume general news and human-interest stories in a positive manner, unlike traditional news organizations which tend to focus on politics and other topics. There have been various studies on news values in the digital age that have built upon Galtung and Ruge's list of concepts. These studies also draw from ideas previously identified by scholars, such as emotional reactions, reviews of audience news choices, and descriptions of consumers' interactions with online content (Muddiman & Stroud 2017; Weber, 2014). Yamthap (2021) proposed that the procedures for news gathering and the quality of both content and photos, as well as the use of online media platforms, should add value to news presentation. Harcup and O'Neill (2017), however, emphasized news value with the question, "who is selecting news, for whom, in what medium, and by what means?" (p.1483). In the context of globalization and digitalization, no single theory of news values can explain every aspect, especially given the varied contexts of each region and the characteristic shift towards interactive media in the form of user-generated content (Harcup & O'Neill, 2017).

Methodology

This research employed web crawling from September 2022 to February 2023 to gather information related to the research questions. In essence, web scraping involves retrieving data from one or multiple websites, while web crawling focuses on locating and identifying URLs or links on the internet. Typically, web data extraction tasks require the integration of both crawling and scraping. The process begins with crawling to identify and obtain the URLs. Afterward, the HTML files are downloaded, and then scraping is used to extract the desired information from those files.

First, the research team searched for the top 5 news agencies on <http://truehits.net/>, a website statistics center in Thailand. The five most-visited news agencies were thairat.co.th, khaosod.co.th, mgronline.com, dailynews.co.th, and matichon.co.th, respectively. These agencies primarily publish in the Thai language, and their posts were analyzed over a 6-month period. For the scraping process, the keywords used were "investment scam" and "forex 3d." Next, we extracted all relevant information, including date, time, headline, and body of the news. Finally, the research team read all the news items and then categorized and grouped reports about investment scams. This extracted data can then be stored in a database or undergo further processing.

3. Findings

How are Thai news agencies reporting on online investment scam cases?

The top 5 news agencies are Thairat.co.th, khaosod.co.th, mgronline.com, dailynews.co.th, and matichon.co.th. The results indicated that all five agencies adopt a fundamental approach to news reporting that encompasses the key elements of the 5W1H: Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How. Notably, when a particular event occurs, dailynews.co.th tends to be the first online source to report on it, often providing comprehensive coverage within just one hour. For instance, on February 14, 2023, they reported: "The Department of Special Investigation (DSI) has issued a summons for 'Baitoei-DJ Man,' the defendants in the Forex-3D sharing case, to appear before the prosecutor's office."

Dailynews reported the event twice, first at 4:16 pm and then at 4:52 pm. Mgronline also covered it twice, initially at 4:31 pm and later at 5:28 pm. Matichon, on the other hand, was the last news outlet to report on this event, doing so at 8:57 pm. A distinctive feature of Mgronline is that it not only covers investment-related crimes but also provides warning news. For instance, on November 7, 2022, Mgronline reported that the Ministry of Digital Economy and Society (MDES) had proposed six urgent measures to combat online fraud, a report not found in the other four news agencies. On November 6, 2022, Mgronline issued a warning about the 'Romance Hybrid Scam' gang, who deceive individuals by feigning romantic interest and then encourage them to invest, revealing that victims lost a total of 861 million in just 8 months. However, Dailynews also reported this information. This overview illustrates how Thai news agencies covered online investment scam incidents from September 2022 to February 2023.

How does the frequency of news about investment fraud compare with the number of cases victims report to Thai police?

In terms of the frequency of news articles related to investment fraud and how it aligns with the number of cases reported to the Thai police by victims, Table 1 shows the Thai police records of the number of cases and the monetary value of the losses.

Table 1: Thai police records of the number of cases and the monetary value of the losses

Month	Number of cases	The monetary value of the loss	Submitted already	The monetary value of the loss
September 2022	175	3,306,326.98 USD	90	1,917,789.14 USD
October 2022	187	4,350,497.55 USD	52	1,622,143.18 USD
November 2022	230	4,134,411.67 USD	141	3,417,574.70 USD
December 2022	234	5,097,487.08 USD	143	3,332,051.06 USD
January 2023	233	4,450,026.86 USD	38	570,271.12 USD
February 2023	260	4,246,612.31 USD	114	2,705,689.12 USD

Source: Royal Thai Police (2023)

To understand how news agencies prioritize news about investment fraud in terms of frequency, we compared it with the cases victims reported to the Thai police. The results indicate that the Khaosod news agency ranked first in reporting on investment crime, while Matichon reported the least. Thairat news agencies typically reported such crimes from midnight to early morning, whereas other news agencies reported during daytime hours. There isn't a direct correlation between the frequency of news reports about investment fraud and the monthly number of victim reports. Although the most cases were reported to Thai police in February 2023, the highest number of news articles was published in January 2023. In conclusion, there might be a negative correlation between the volume of investment fraud news reported and the number of victims.

Table 2: Number of news reporting about investment fraud

Month	News Agencies				
	Thairat	Khaosod	Mgronline	Dailynews	Matichon
September 2022	10	23	19	12	10
October 2022	5	7	11	8	5
November 2022	10	9	7	6	3
December 2022	4	13	9	7	4
January 2023	33	22	19	10	4
February 2023	3	9	12	13	2

The correlation between the extent of news coverage and the incidence of investment fraud cases was particularly noticeable in January 2023. In that month, 88 news articles were published, while only 38 cases were officially reported to the Thai Royal Police. Conversely, in February 2023, there was a notable surge in reported cases, reaching 114, but the number of news reports remained low at just 39.

The number of reports from these five news agencies could indicate their concern or the importance they attribute to investment fraud in Thailand. However, the subject also aligns with established news values. According to Galtung and Ruge (1965), the topic of investment fraud in Thailand exhibits news values, particularly in its impact and the frequency of its

reporting. Concerning impact, the issue has had profound effects on the Thai population. A particularly tragic incident involved a 15-year-old who took their own life after being defrauded. News agencies extensively covered this event: Thairat published nine headlines, Khaosod eight, Mgronline six, DailyNews three, and Matichon two. Additionally, investment fraud in Thailand is consistent with Brighton and Foy's 2007 framework, which updated news values for the modern media landscape. Their definition emphasizes relevance and significance to the reader, as well as topicality—ensuring content is new, current, and pertinent.

4. Conclusion

This research suggests a potential need for more focused attention and awareness in news reporting on investment fraud crimes in Thailand. As the Internet of Things era emerges, investment fraud has become a pressing issue, impacting individuals and the nation alike. Data for this study was gathered through web crawling of the top 5 news agency websites in Thailand. Specific information regarding investment fraud was extracted, and a content analysis method was applied. Findings showed that while some news agencies, like "Khaosod," actively report on these crimes, others, such as "Matichon," might enhance their coverage. The observed lack of correlation between news reporting frequency and the number of reported victims suggests that a deeper investigation into the underlying factors is warranted. In conclusion, news agencies might need to focus more on investment fraud crimes, and Thais should be better informed and more cautious about such scams. We hope our study can guide authorities responsible for combatting online financial fraud, especially regarding the significance of news produced by the mass media about this crime.

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***From Text to Screen:
The Writing and Re-writing of Hansa Wadkar's (1923–1971) Life Story***

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Abstract

The autobiography of late Indian actor Hansa Wadkar (1923-1971), *Sangtye Aika* (1970) is a unique piece of writing that was ahead of its time. Initially, a collaborative project with the Marathi weekly *Manoos* (1961-1990) the process of which was documented, this book brought out Wadkar's story in her voice, as narrated by her. This autobiography was instrumental because, at the time, it gave Wadkar the agency to tailor her autobiographical self to the way she wanted to portray herself. Later, in 1977, inspired by Wadkar's book, noted Indian filmmaker Shyam Benegal made the film *Bhumika: The Role*, albeit with significant rewritings and departures from Wadkar's text. The paper examines both the writing of the text and its rewriting into the film to evaluate how the agency of the author got modified in the process of adaptation. It also argues that the film is partly a re-casting of Wadkar's image into the mold of the heroine from humble beginnings-turned-unsung-feminist-icon as Benegal saw her. In doing so, the paper questions the erasure of Wadkar's narrative authority by critically analyzing and comparing the film with the book. In pursuing these strands of inquiry, the paper addresses the research gap in the studies on autobiographical writings by South Asian women in cinema and the adaptations of such writings into film.

Keywords: Hansa Wadkar, *Sangtye Aika*, Shyam Benegal, *Bhumika*

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Introduction

Hansa Wadkar (1923-1971) was an actor most noted for her work in Marathi cinema and a few Hindi films. Her autobiography, *Sangtye Aika* (1966; 1970) was named after her most famous film, *Sangtye Aika* (1959). The film created an important milestone for Marathi Cinema as it was one of the first films that ran for almost 140 weeks continuously¹. It made Hansa Wadkar a household name synonymous with the *Lavani*² dance form that is a feature of *Tamasha*³ films like *Sangtye Aika*. Drawing from the title of this film, her autobiography was published in 1966 in *Manoos* (1961-1990) in a serialized format. This was an important publication as it was among the first of its kind in Maharashtra as the autobiography of a regional film actor.

The production process of the autobiography was also rather unique and this makes the text stand apart from the other texts within the genre. It was first published in Marathi in 1966 in *Manoos*, in a serialized format beginning with its Diwali edition and continued in installments across the three subsequent weekly issues. Later, in 1970, the team from *Manoos* conducted a second round of interviews to replenish the existing material and published the autobiography as a book through Rajhans Prakashan, who were also the publishers of *Manoos*. Like the articles, the book was also very well-received and was honored with the Maharashtra State award for the best autobiography in 1971. Unfortunately, Wadkar passed away shortly after its publication and could not witness the bestowing of this award on her autobiography.

In 1977, noted film director, Shyam Benegal (b.1934) made the film *Bhumika: The Role*, which was inspired by *Sangtye Aika*. Owing to the autobiography's unique narrative format, it could organically progress into the film, a potential Benegal was quick to realize. Though cited only as an inspiration, by using Wadkar's story for their film, Benegal, Satyadev Dubey (1936-2011), and Girish Karnad (1938-2019) validate Wadkar's vision and perception of her life as a cinematic panorama. Benegal also hints at this when he discusses the cinematic quality of *Sangtye Aika* in his interview with the British Film Institute. He mentions the significance of the text in the way it tells us about a very transient and exciting age in the Indian film industry.

As Wadkar was a seasoned film actor who was very well-versed with the cinematic medium, her autobiography reads differently. *Bhumika* validates Wadkar's reassessment and dismantling of the genre of autobiography through its own narrative format. However, the film features significant departures from the autobiography in its storyline and characterization. Through the discussions in the sections below, let us look into the writing and rewriting of Wadkar's autobiography more deeply and come up with an evaluation on how the text converses with the film and impacts the autonomy and agency of the author in telling her story.

¹ Hrishikesh Ingle in his book *Marathi Cinema, Cultural Space & Liminality: A History* (2022), mentions that the film ran continuously for 140 weeks.

² According to Meera Kosambi, *lavanis* were “short and compact songs that dealt imaginatively with emotions — mainly romantic or erotic love — with great sophistication. The *lavanis* often commented on contemporary events, and some were set to classical raga tunes and made into a form of concert music. (p. 9)

³ *Tamasha* films are a genre of Marathi films which derive their structure from the Marathi theatre form *tamasha*.

The Writing: *Sangtye Aika* (1966 and 1970)

The editor of *Manoos*, G. Majgaokar mentions in his editorial, published along with the first installment of Wadkar's autobiography that:

The details of the interview were decided and two or three representatives of *Manoos* would write down what Hansabai was telling, word by word. She would eloquently tell us everything; we would write it down. Though we would feel tired while writing, Hansabai would go on tirelessly. Whatever she said, we wrote. All her memories were collected and connected sequentially. We would then read it back to her. After making the corrections and changes suggested by Hansabai, we would read it to her again. After three weeks of continuous toil, this autobiography was finally complete - as told by Hansabai – in her own original words.⁴ (p. 41)

Through Majgaokar's essay, we know that the autobiography was the initiative of the editorial team at *Manoos* and that they collected the material through an interview process. He also states that Wadkar's autobiography was, truly, an oral narrative and an outcome of a collaborative project. Being an oral narrative, there is an inherent dimension of performativity attached to the text. This is to say that the autobiography was a site of performance – for Wadkar's autobiographical self, who is also the subject of the narrative. Furthermore, upon reading the autobiography, we get the sense of an acute awareness of the readership on Wadkar's part, which is not uncommon for life writings like autobiographies. Her narration is intended to reorient the understanding her readership has about her. Also, being an oral narrative with significant interplays of memory on narrative progression, it is fragmented and non-linear in its flow. These aspects also make it an uneasy fit within the genre of autobiography, as Jasbir Jain, one of the scholars who translated Wadkar's book in to English also notes.

Yet, since the very beginning the text has had ambivalent subtitles. The Marathi version published in *Manoos* carried the subtitle "*Ek Navinyapura Atmakatha*," which loosely translates to "an innovative autobiography." When it reappeared as a book in Marathi in 1970, this subtitle was removed. As for the English translation, a modified version of the subtitle was added, and it reads: *You Ask, I Tell: An Autobiography*. These instances indicate the non-conformity of the text owing to its ambivalent association with the genre of autobiography. However, the editorial team and Wadkar were not too concerned about this ambivalence. Majgaokar's objective behind publishing such stories was to bring forth the life stories that will inform *Manoos*' readers about the lived experiences of actors from their regional industry, *in their own voice*.

Majgaokar's editorial note indicates that Wadkar was closely involved with the production of the autobiography and that she was the ultimate editorial authority in selecting and curating what went into the articles and the book. The text demonstrates Wadkar's control over her readers' gaze. On closer engagement, the autobiography reads like a planned and rehearsed performance of her autobiographical self. While it contains moments of improvisation in the form of suddenly recollected anecdotes, it is carefully constructed with a particular objective in mind and Wadkar decides what and how much should be told. In such texts, there is always an objective. This can also be seen through the way in which such autobiographies are

⁴ Translated by the authors

organized. In Wadkar's autobiography, we see that there are no images from her personal life, as if what the readers get is a continuing performance of her on-screen, public persona. It becomes clear that she desires to tell her version of the 'truth' about her life and re-orient her readers towards an image of her that she has curated through this autobiography. She informs the readers many times in the autobiography of her desires to quit films to be a homemaker – this reiteration is to suggest that she is not, in real life, the boisterous, flamboyant character that the audience sees in films. She talks about *Sant Sakhu* (1941), her favorite film in which she completely merged with her character. She goes back to this twice in the autobiography, telling her readers that she shares the values of chastity, homeliness, faith, and fidelity, represented through the character of Sakhu and that is how she wishes to be understood as a person, outside of cinema.

In orally narrating the autobiography, Wadkar plays the role of a storyteller, making the text progress in disconnected fragments, placing it within in the long, continuous tradition of storytelling from the Indian subcontinent where the concept of space takes precedence over that of time. The author is more mindful and detail-oriented while describing the places, people, and emotions, but is not concerned with time frames. She does not give an exact timeline for any event or incident except for a few like her date of birth, date of marriage, and the time when Himanshu Rai (1892-1940), the owner of Bombay Talkies⁵ fell ill and died. The presence of these features in Wadkar's text affirms its position as a culturally rooted text.

Thus, Hansa Wadkar's autobiography had an inherent cinematic quality which allowed it to be easily assimilated into the cinematic medium. This is not only due to the fragmented structure and movement of her autobiography resembling the components of a cinematic storyline, but also because of the nature of descriptions, visual cues, insertion of fragments of songs, undertones of melodrama and the acute awareness of the audience or readership to whom this story is being narrated.

The Rewriting: An Evaluation of Shyam Benegal's *Bhumika: The Role* (1977)

Through *Bhumika: The Role*, Shyam Benegal presents his reading of Wadkar's autobiography. Being unfamiliar with Marathi, Wadkar's autobiography was read out to him by a friend. Recalling his experience while getting to know the story, in an interview with the BFI, Benegal discusses his realization of the cinematic potential of the text and his perception of Wadkar as a feminist icon. He saw in Wadkar a guide to the dynamic past of the Indian film industry, which he sought to bring to life through his film. However, the making of *Bhumika* was not a smooth process. There were several hurdles including an acute shortage of color film stock that was customarily used for shooting films.

Benegal had to come up with a creative solution to the conundrum. He chose to shoot the film on a variety of available stocks and to organize the narrative of the film by stock. *Bhumika* is, therefore, shot on a combination tinted black and white, black, and white, ORWO⁶ and Kodak Monopak color⁷ stocks. Interestingly, in doing so, he was also able to connect the different parts of the film to the corresponding technical conventions of filmmaking in

⁵ Bombay Talkies was a major film studio owned by Himanshu Rai and his wife, Devika Rani (1908-1994), who was also an actor.

⁶ ORWO, short for Original Wolfen, was a German manufacturer of black-and-white film products, established in 1964.

⁷ Kodak Monopak Color is a type of color film stock manufactured by Kodak that was used for shooting films.

practice at the time. This improvisation by Benegal and his team allowed the text to converse better with the film format. It also imparted the characteristic fragmentary nature of the text to the film. However, though Benegal retained some characteristic features of the text, he made strong departures from several other crucial aspects of Wadkar's story.

In the autobiography are many instances where Wadkar distances her narrative self from her subjectivized self, representing her past. She evaluates her past actions, associations and thought processes, arriving at thoughtful conclusions and judgements on herself. In the film, Benegal re-creates these moments of deep introspection through mirror scenes. These are scenes where the main characters in the film are shown to be in deep thought while looking at their reflections in the mirror. There are nine such scenes in the film, all of which have been placed at critical junctures in the plot. Usha, Benegal's protagonist based on Hansa Wadkar, has mirror scenes which mark moments of change and resolution, where, after reflecting on her actions thus far, she resolves to act in certain ways. For instance, in the autobiography, the moment when Wadkar leaves her husband, Jagannath Bandarkar and goes away with Joshi, the man she meets at a hotel, is a critical one.

In the cinematic recreation of this scenario, Usha stands in front of the mirror for a very profound moment. In the autobiography, at this point in the narrative, Wadkar expresses her dilemma – the difficulty in going home and the moral conundrum of leaving her husband and child, both of which weigh heavily on her mind. The scene from *Bhumika* conveys this very well through close-up shots and mirror scenes. Even in the absence of dialogues, the audience can sense what is going through Usha's mind. Wadkar highlights the irony of her leaving home in the autobiography through a confession that she used to be critical of women who left their husbands or opted to divorce them. Smita Patil presents a nuanced portrayal of the protagonist Usha, retaining the essence of Wadkar's autobiographical self without compromising with Benegal's vision of Usha as the feminist icon that he wanted to project through the film. The text in this manner converses with the film, with each filling in the gaps of the other, making Wadkar's autobiographical narrative clearer and more detailed to the reader/viewer.

However, the film does not call itself a direct adaptation and neither does it go beyond a certain point in Wadkar's narrative. Benegal also does not build a meta-narrative based on the para-text of *Sangtye Aika*, i.e., Majgaokar's editorial essay detailing the process behind the production of the autobiography. This leads to differences in the treatment of the narrative of the film from the autobiography. Yet, like the text, the film also progresses through a network of memories through flashbacks and flash-forwards. The time-leaps in Wadkar's narrative occur because of its orality. Benegal was able to enhance this effect by using different film stocks and editing. Usha recalls past events from her life without essentially narrating them. Thus, Benegal shows what Wadkar tells, which marks the distinction between the performance of narrative storytelling and cinema. Eventually the film, much like the autobiography, succeeds in conveying the complete narrative, despite its fragmentary narrative flow.

But, while Benegal honored certain aspects of Wadkar's autobiography, he also made significant departures from several aspects of it. Particularly, his rewriting of Wadkar through the protagonist Usha and casting her into the mold of a 'feminist icon' is noteworthy. Additionally, he has made extensive changes to characters and subplots; for example, Wadkar mentions a motorcycle accident when she went on a ride with director-actor Raja Paranjpe

(1910-1979) during the time she was shooting for *Sant Janabai* (1949). Both were under the influence of alcohol.

When our drinking session was over, Rajabhau took out his motorbike, I got on behind him and Rajabhau started to drive at a terrific speed... I egged him on, 'Drive faster, drive faster.' Rajabhau pressed the accelerator... Moving at such a high speed, the motorbike suddenly skidded. We were both thrown off. Rajabhau was badly injured. I, however, got away unscathed. (p. 65)

Wadkar is ambiguous in her autobiography about her friendship with Raja Paranjpe since working on *Pudhcha Paool* (1950). She says that she had only worked with him on two films – *Pudhcha Paool* and *Parijatak* (1951), and that she had a lot of trust and respect in him as a director and that that was all there was to it (Wadkar, 2013, p. 63). Benegal rewrites their relationship for the film and portrays Sunil, the character based on Paranjpe, and Usha in an extramarital affair. Sunil is essayed by Naseeruddin Shah (b. 1950). Furthermore, he completely changes the motorbike accident and instead adds a failed suicide pact between Usha and Sunil, wherein they book a hotel room to attempt to overdose on sedatives. This is a significant departure from the autobiography as it alters Hansa Wadkar's persona by arriving at conjectures on her state of mental well-being. This rewriting indicates that Usha succumbed to the psychological impact of the unfortunate circumstances and hardships she was going through in her life. But, in the autobiography, Wadkar refuses to show herself defeated by her circumstances and instead chooses to portray herself as a survivor rather than the victim. Thus, this aspect of the film appears jarring to the audience familiar with the autobiography.

In the film, Usha takes the sedatives and follows through with their decision, but Sunil changes his mind and does not take them. When the attempt fails and Usha wakes up, she finds an apologetic note from Sunil, bringing their relationship to its end, as also happens with Hansa Wadkar's relationship with Paranjpe after the motorcycle accident. Another significant departure from Wadkar's narrative happens in the part where she writes to her husband, Jagannath Bandarkar asking him to rescue her from Joshi's house in Marathwada⁸. In the autobiography, Wadkar shares the disturbing account of being raped by a magistrate while leaving Marathwada. Benegal rewrites this part and writes the sexual assault into a scene depicting a forced abortion procedure that Usha had to undergo. Wadkar also had to undergo forced abortions but does not mention any instance of sexual assault during the process. Furthermore, Benegal also rewrites the character of Joshi/Kale. In the autobiography, Joshi is a man with two surviving wives and a few children. In the film, Kale, essayed by Amrish Puri (1932-2005) is shown to have a bedridden wife, a mother and one child. These departures from the text can be taken as Benegal's creative liberty, but they also point towards a compromise of Wadkar's authorial integrity.

His rewriting of Wadkar's autobiography is particularly severe when it comes to the identity and lineage of the character inspired by Wadkar. In the autobiography, Wadkar mentions that she draws her lineage from the hereditary practitioners of performing arts; her father hails from the *kalavantin*⁹ community and her mother was the daughter of a *devadasi*¹⁰. In the film,

⁸ Marathwada is a region that approximately coincides with the Aurangabad region of present-day Maharashtra.

⁹ Kalavantin is the name of a community of hereditary practitioners of performing arts like music and dance.

¹⁰ Devadasi is a Sanskrit umbrella term that is used to define women with associations to temples, in parts of India. The usage of the term has been problematized and for further detailed insights, see Soneji 2004.

Usha's father is shown as a Brahmin, so, by making his protagonist the daughter born to a Brahmin father and a mother descended from the family of hereditary practitioners, Benegal succumbs to the caste hierarchies that influenced the social order within film studios of that time. We can infer from the works of Hrishikesh Ingle, who wrote on the discourse of respectability in early Marathi cinema¹¹ and Sarah Niazi, who argues that reputed studios like Prabhat (1929-1953) were conscious in ensuring that they were recruiting actors, particularly female actors from 'respectable backgrounds' and that they were able to provide a family-like idyllic atmosphere for the said 'respectable women'. Meera Kosambi states:

The women who entered the entertainment industry belonged either to upper caste families with connections to the literary-cultural scene, or to families of traditional women entertainers. (p. 372)

While Prabhat was devoted to producing social films on topical issues like women's empowerment, the discourse of respectability indicates that the caste location and social background of the artists influenced their casting. As argued by Niazi, such studios also prided themselves in being facilitators of social mobility for women actors engaged with them. They actively mobilized the respectable public perception of the female actors they hired through their films and their marketing strategies.

But Benegal's film came out in the late 1970s and therefore, the rewriting of Wadkar's identity and social background through Usha is deeply problematic. More so, because in the autobiography, Wadkar embraces her identity and lineage and does not try to conceal it. There was no apparent reason for Benegal to rewrite the character's social background also because Wadkar came from a family of hereditary practitioners with connections in the film industry, which was one of the known and legitimate ways for people to enter a career in films at that time. Her paternal aunts, Sushilabai and Indirabai were already in the film industry. Sushilabai was married to Master Vinayak Rao (Wadkar, 2013, p. 1) and Indirabai had taken the stage name Wadkar (Wadkar, 2013, p. 6), which Hansa also took when she started as an actor.

However, despite Benegal's rewritings, characters and the situations can quite clearly be traced to the autobiography. Yet, he only cites Wadkar's text as a source of inspiration and does not credit her as a co-author, for re-writing any story forges a co-authorial relationship between the past and present authors. Denying the text its status as a source of adaptation endangers Wadkar's autonomy as the narrator-author of her autobiography. Furthermore, it also foils the purpose with which *Manoos* ventured to publish narratives such as these. Majgaokar mentions in his editorial that their initiative was aimed at bringing out the voices of such experienced artists from the regional film industry, so that their stories can be told to the larger audience. Therefore, the autonomy and editorial agency lay with the narrator/writer by design. Benegal's rewriting changes this very critical aspect of the autobiography.

Bhumika received a lot of accolades, including the prestigious National Award for Best Screenplay, which was shared by Benegal, Karnad, and Dubey for their work on this film. Smita Patil (1955-1986), who essayed the character inspired by Wadkar, Usha, was also honored with the national award for Best Actress. This earned the film and its story an important place in the history of Hindi cinema. But, because of the accolades received by the

¹¹ Ingle, Hrishikesh. (2017) "Prabhat Studios: Early Marathi Cinema and Respectability". *EPW*, 52 (28), 43-48.

film and the reputation of Benegal himself as one of the pillars of the Indian Parallel Cinema, the modern-day audience is likely to be misadvised on the story of Wadkar. The publication of Wadkar's autobiography led to renewed interest in her life and work in the years that followed.

In rewriting, Benegal may inadvertently have taken the story away from Wadkar, endangering her agency and her voice as the author of her own story. The poignant silences, candid confessions, and certain omissions that Wadkar introduced are all punctuated with inferences and Benegal's rewriting ultimately ends up re-reading and rewriting it significantly. Thus, though Benegal attempts to honour Wadkar as an artist and a feminist icon (in his perception), he inevitably takes away her agency and speaks on her behalf instead of letting her speak through her own story.

Conclusion

Hansa Wadkar begins her autobiography by mentioning her familial roots. She was a descendant of a family of hereditary performers and was raised in Sawantwadi and Mumbai. Her paternal grandmother was a renowned courtesan and her maternal grandmother was a *devadasi*. Her father was among those who broke tradition and chose to marry. Due to the alcoholism of both her parents, Wadkar grew up in financially strained circumstances, which forced her at the age of ten to begin working as a full-time actor. Though she wanted to complete her education, get married and live as a householder, her financial circumstances forced her to continue working. The many instances of domestic, and psychological violence and many miscarriages, as well as her addiction to alcohol and tobacco, repeatedly prevented her from quitting her career in films and realizing her dream of living as a householder. However, she found success and adulation as an actor, which caused, in her words, her addiction to working in cinema. She says,

Once the intoxication of working with paint on your face and the accompanying experience, the accompanying atmosphere, takes possession, it becomes an addiction. Life without it is an unbearable longing. (p.102)

Her work in cinema, particularly in *Tamasha* films, led her to become a household name synonymous with the folk-dance form *Lavani*. One such film of Wadkar, *Sangtye Aika* (1959) became one of the most commercially successful films in the history of Marathi cinema. A theatre in Pune, Maharashtra is said to have played the film continuously even after two years of its release.¹²

Reading *Sangtye Aika*, one realizes that Wadkar's long and successful career allowed her to be well-versed with the contours of cinema, and this gave her a unique cinematic vision. She orally narrated her autobiography as it came to her and a team of editors noted it down and read it back to her and finalized it only with her approval. Inspired by her autobiography, Shyam Benegal made his film *Bhumika: The Role*, with significant rewritings and departures from Wadkar's version of herself and the events. Benegal's film focuses more on the different kinds of roles that the protagonist plays, both in cinema and in life, in her search for a meaningful life of her choice. As Benegal saw in *Sangtye Aika* of Hansa Wadkar a feminist icon and a pathway into the past of Indian cinema, he was inspired to turn the autobiography

¹² Priyadarshi. (1961) "Chitrapat Pareekshan: Chetana Chitra 'Sangtye Aika'." *Manoos*, 35-37.

into a film. But he rewrote many aspects of Wadkar's story and autobiographical self to create Usha, who was the feminist protagonist relevant to his context as a filmmaker in the late 1970s. Benegal only credits the text as an inspiration and shies away from calling his film an adaptation. He rewrites scenarios from the text and presents to us a reinvented version of Wadkar through his character Usha, who in the pursuit of her individuality, understands the fruitlessness of her dependence on men.

As the film was made during a difficult period, wherein there was a scarcity and resultant difficulty in procuring film stock, Benegal had to reorient his approach to making the film. He went back to the text, and in getting to explore the dynamic past of Indian cinema through Wadkar's autobiography, he chose to re-orient the narrative of the film by using different varieties of film stock, each corresponding to the timeline of the narrative as well as the prevalent technological conventions in filmmaking in India. This helped Benegal create a dialogue between his film and Wadkar's autobiography by recreating the fragmented, non-linear narrative driven by memory.

However, in significantly rewriting the story and citing the text only as an inspiration, Benegal inadvertently endangers Wadkar's autonomy and studied reflection of herself. He rewrites not only Wadkar's character and her origins but also several situations that she has mentioned in her autobiography. Furthermore, Wadkar's autobiography features punctuated silences, wherein, she exerts her authority as the author/narrator and leaves out certain things. These situations have been reinterpreted and presented in *Bhumika*, which eventually gives the viewers a different version of Wadkar. Due to such severe departures from Wadkar's text, Benegal's *Bhumika* risks misadvising the modern viewers whose first point of contact with Wadkar's story is, in most cases, the film.

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***The Roots of Reform: Understanding the Form, Content, and Meaning in
Habib Tanvir's 'Charandas Chor' (1975)***

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Abstract

The post-independence canon of Indian theatre is a manifestation of the socio-cultural turbulence that marks a paradigmatic shift in the reformist agendas of the playwrights. Some playwrights used the method of proscenium plays, while others relied on street or folk theatre to make reformist appeals. Habib Tanvir is one reformist playwright of the period whose works lie at the intersection of proscenium and rural/folk theatre. Tanvir's plays are considered milestones in the amalgamation of Indian folk theatre arts and the contemporary perspective of the world. Scholars such as Katheryn Hansen and Javed Mallick have credited Tanvir for bringing together the rural and urban paradigms of theatre arts and propagating a form that was of, for, and by the people. The present paper expands this proposition and studies Tanvir's *Charandas Chor* for its distinct representation of rural folk tales in an urban theatrical model. By studying Tanvir's texts closely, the paper examines the form, content, and meaning of the play analogously through Richard Scehner's lenses of drama, theatre, and performance. The paper also explores the trenchant reformist agendas that, in a 'carnavalesque reversal,' challenge the affiliation of qualities and etiquettes in a hierarchical social arrangement through Henri Bergson's idea of inversion. The paper establishes that Tanvir's theatre's uniqueness lies in harnessing the intersectional dimensions of rural and urban theatrical models, which he uses to express plebian issues represented through the vibrant performative elements of folk theatre and the urban techniques of theatre.

Keywords: Habib Tanvir, Charandas Chor, Reform, Modern Indian Theatre, Folk Theatre

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Introduction

Anjum Katyal¹ (2018) sums up precisely the socio-cultural scene when Habib Tanvir (1923 – 2008) started doing theatre. She notes in her introduction to the book *Charandas Chor and Other Plays*:

It was a period of nation-building, not just in the areas of economy or the political arena, but also in the cultural field. [...] How was one to balance the heft of tradition and heritage with the needs and sensibilities of the current, the present-day? How could arts be modern and contemporary and still remain distinctly ‘Indian’? Theatre in India had faced the same questions. (pp. viii–ix)

The question of accommodating contemporariness into Indian cultural heritages (in this case, theatre) arises from the dogma of tradition versus modernity and the criticism of Western influences on Indian theatre. Though it is futile to debate the impact European stage-craft had on Indian theatre by the time Tanvir came of age, it should not stop us from rethinking the response that the Indian playwrights, especially those who emerged in the wake of independence, had to the European influence. The answers begin to emerge from the various streams of theatre that propagated around the decades on either side of independence. One was the dominant stream of proscenium-style theatre, while the other was the re-staging of the Sanskrit classics. As Katyal states:

On the one hand, there was the colonial legacy of Western-style proscenium theatre, which stylistically ranged from classic naturalism to the modernist and avant-garde [...]

On the other, thanks to the rediscovery of Sanskrit texts and traditional performance forms there was a strong interest in indigenous performance conventions and forms. [...] (p. ix)

The above descriptions make apparent the interstices created by the vague bifurcation of the urban-proscenium theatre and the folk performance traditions, creating a void between rural India's rich cultural heritage and the urban theatrical models.

Habib Tanvir's works can be traced as his response to these interstices created by the folk-urban divide in the theatrical streams post-independence. The article explores his unique position as a reformist playwright among stalwarts such as Mohan Rakesh, Vijay Tendulkar, Badal Sircar, and Girish Karnad. It examines his methods that labeled his works as the bridge between the folk and the urban theatrical models, and while doing so, also scrutinizes the claims by scholars Katheryn Hansen and Javed Malick, who, although they credit Tanvir for using both, emphasize either folk or the urban elements in his plays. The paper advances their claims by tracing Tanvir's works in a liminal void between the folk and the urban theatrical streams of his era. Habib Tanvir can be credited for propounding an entirely new style of theatre that was distinct in form, content, and meaning. Katyal (2018) provides an apt assertion for his significance in the genre of post-independence Indian theatre when she notes, “Habib Tanvir's most important contribution to the Indian theatre scene, I feel, was his intervention in the fundamental discourse of modern and contemporary Indian theatre – its direction and its form” (p. viii).

¹ Renowned theatre scholar and critic. She has translated several of Tanvir's works, including *Charandas Chor*.

In terms of direction, Tanvir produced an entirely novel stream of theatre that was hitherto not attempted by other playwrights of his generation. Mohan Rakesh², for instance, is considered the first modernist playwright in Hindi theatre by scholar Aparna Dharwadker. He was among the first few playwrights to depart from the preceding traditions of drama, especially the nationalist and revivalist drama of Bhartendu Harishchandra³ and Jaishankar Prasad⁴, respectively. Rakesh chose to depict themes that affected the urban hoi-polloi. Two of his three plays were set in ancient times – *Asadh Ka Ek Din* (translated as *One Day in the Season of Rain*) during the times of Kalidasa⁵ and *Lahron Ke Rajhans* (Royal Swans of the Waves) during the times of Buddha. The ancient setting notwithstanding, all his plays present the complexities of human relationships and the characters' internal conflict on the urban proscenium stage, which established Rakesh as a pioneer and an experimentalist in the stream of modern Indian theatre. Dharwadker (2015) notes in her book *One Day in the Season of Rain*;

He is not only a ‘modern’ writer but a postcolonial modernist who defines a circumspect position for himself in relation to the effects of British colonialism, Euromodernism, and the complex literary history of a major modern Indian language such as Hindi, which in turn is embedded in the literary culture of the subcontinent at large. (p. 15)

We can infer that Rakesh’s works marked a period of transition – a liminal space – that Bjorn Thomassen (2014) defines as “moments or periods of transition during which the normal limits to thought, self-understanding and behavior are relaxed, opening the way to novelty and imagination, construction and destruction” (p. 1).

Similarly, Tanvir departed from Rakesh’s tradition and created a novel stream by integrating the urban with the folk. Tanvir’s oeuvre provides significant evidence of the new direction he gave to the stream of modern Indian theatre. He wrote his first play, *Agra Bazar*, in 1954. The play was based on the life of the eighteenth-century Urdu poet Nazir Akbarabadi and dealt with the conflict between the plebian concept of poetry placed against the cultural elites’ vision of it. Tanvir’s account (2020) of the circumstances while composing the play presents a vivid picture of how fresh his approach to playwriting was;

While composing the play in 1954, I did not have an ensemble of either professional or folk actors. [...] When we would rehearse on the open stage in Jamia, the audience, besides students from Jamia, also consisted of men and women from the nearby village of Okhla. [...] I told them, “You can watch the rehearsals from up close, take your goats, and find some space to sit on the stage.” The women obliged happily and moved swiftly to find a good view on the stage. Soon they were followed by the men and children from their family. Kalam Sahab already prepared the set, and thus, the drama was played⁶. (p. 17)

² Mohan Rakesh (1925–72) is a pioneer of the new short stories (Nayi Kahani movement) and the modern Hindi theatre.

³ Bhartendu Harishchandra is said to be the founder of modern Hindi drama. His plays, such as *Satya Harishchandra* (1875) and *Andher Nagari* (1878), sprung a tradition of Hindi drama that was to be later followed by Prasad and others.

⁴ Jaishankar Prasad (1889-1937) is regarded as one of the precursors of Modern Hindi drama. He was also a prolific poet associated with the Chhayavadi (romantic) movement in Hindi poetry.

⁵ The celebrated Sanskrit poet and dramatist who is believed to have lived during the times of King Chandragupta II (c.380 – c.415 CE).

⁶ The translations are all done by the author unless stated otherwise.

Tanvir's unorthodox composition of his plots and how he shapes them into complete plays marks the transition he initiated, culminating in an overarching presence of the folk-urban synthesis at the Nehru Centenary Festival of 1979. The liminal space that Tanvir's works belong to is represented by their distinctness in form – tragedies and comedies or tragicomedies presented upon an urban stage with rural/folk cast; content – improvised and adapted folk stories that concern the lives of the plebian populace; and meaning – the reformist motives of his plays that originate from his association with Indian People's Theatre Association⁷ for almost a decade.

Tanvir's was a praxis-oriented theatre. He never indulged in developing literary drama and then changing it to a script for performance. Instead, his plays were composed through rehearsals and several impromptu performances by the folk actors. The fact that his plays were several mini scripts stitched together as one whole script leads us to another pertinent question. How do we see his plays – as a dramatic text, a script, a theatrical text, or a performance? The answer lies in Richard Schechner's (1973) definition of these concepts, which he defines as;

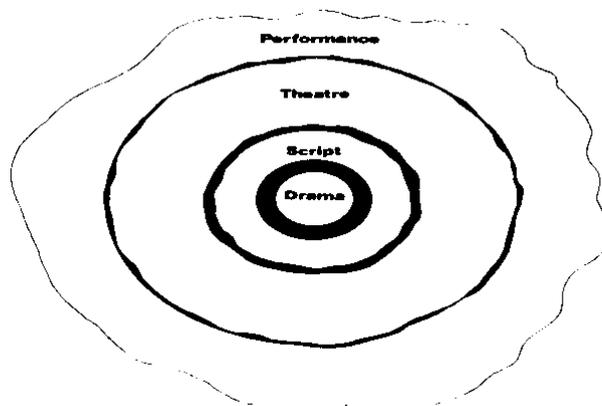


Figure 1. Schechner's Diagram - concentric circles of Drama and Performance.

Drama: the smallest, most intense (heated-up) circle. A written text, score, scenario, instruction, plan, or map. The drama can be taken from place to place or time to time independent of the person who carries it. [...]

Script: all that can be transmitted from time to time and place to place; the basic code of the event. The script is transmitted person to person and the transmitter is not a mere messenger; the transmitter of the script must know the script and be able to teach it to others. This teaching may be conscious or through empathetic, emphatic means...

Theatre: the event enacted by a specific group of performers; what actually occurs to the performers during a production. The theatre is concrete and immediate. Usually, the theatre is the response of the performers to the drama and/or script; the manifestation or representation of the drama and/or script.

⁷ IPTA was a left-wing cultural organisation that was established in 1943 – 44. It was devoted to presenting social issues through plays, especially those concerning the ordinary populace.

Performance: the broadest, most ill-defined disc. The whole constellation of events, most of them passing unnoticed, that takes place in both performers and audience from the time the first spectator enters the field of the performance – the precinct where the theatre takes place to the time the last spectator leaves (p. 7–8).

When these lenses are applied to Tanvir’s plays, we observe a disruption of the perimeters of these circles. His plays traverse the boundaries of these circles and bind them together; however, given the manner of their composition, the navigation takes place from “Performance” to “Drama” rather than vice versa. This reverse development problematizes the standard domains of drama and performance and, thus, places his works in a liminal space, “opening the way to novelty and imagination, construction and destruction” (Thomassen, 2014, p. 1).

In the context of these concepts and questions, the article studies *Charandas Chor*, arguably the most celebrated of Tanvir’s plays. It aims to explore his reformist ideas and how he intervened in the prevalent discourse in the post-independence Indian theatrical arena. Besides their form, enhancing the unique position of his plays is also the content – the stories he chose to present and their meanings. His plots are improvised renditions of folk stories, irrespective of their place or source of origin. Tanvir relied on the cohesive forces of these stories – the rural life and fabric they present, rendering them a universal appeal.

Understanding the Reformist Ideas of Habib Tanvir

We have established the socio-cultural scenario of the newly independent India when Tanvir began writing, his praxis-based approach to playwrighting, and his enthusiasm for presenting plebian issues on stage. While these characteristics are apparent in all his plays, *Charandas Chor* has carved a distinct niche for Tanvir. The play might appear as a moral fable about a thief who grows consciousness to avoid getting caught by the policeman and thus takes four vows before a guru to survive. His vows include: i.) never to eat from a golden plate, ii.) never to lead a procession on an elephant, iii.) never to marry a queen, and iv.) never to accept the kingship of a state. Although taken in jest, these vows withstand and come true as the story unfolds. Eventually, he has to confront them all, and possessing a morally incorruptible character, Charandas, to keep his vows, refuses to adjust to the ebbs and flows created by circumstances. He cannot compromise his actions in fulfilling these vows, which eventually lead to his death. Besides representing a moral fable, the play is also a landmark production that theatre scholar Javed Malick credits for refashioning Indian theatrical modernity (2021). He notes;

Tanvir was not only evolving a new style and idiom for his own work, he was also, in some ways, redefining the very concept of modernity [...] He was against the post-colonial project of modernity which [...] failed to give adequate attention or importance to India’s regional languages, cultural forms, traditions, and lifestyles [...] (p. 134)

Tanvir’s trip to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts in England in 1955 had already provided him an exposure to Western modernity and their modernist drama. However, as Malick points out, he realized immediately that his training in the European theatrical models was inadequate as a method to deal with “Indianness,” as he states in his interview (2016) titled *My Milestones in Theatre* with Anjum Katyal:

[...] I came right back to ‘Indian-ness’ in the sense of realizing that you cannot possibly excel in imitating western dramaturgy and western methods, you must come back to our Sanskrit tradition and folk traditions. (p. 25–26)

Tanvir’s novelty emerges from bringing together the folk ensemble on the proscenium stage. In the present section, we study how his amalgamation of folk elements with the urban theatrical model refashioned theatrical modernity in India. We also examine the tenets of Tanvir’s works that make him a reformist and placed him in a liminal void. He is both a reformist of the extant theatrical tradition and the pertinent social issues. We endeavor to comprehend what makes *Charandas Chor* Tanvir’s magnum opus by examining its form – how distinctly it is created as a performance and text; its content (or the source) – how Tanvir develops and utilizes a Rajasthani folk tale by Vijaydan Detha to create a play that resonates with contemporary sensibilities through the folk ensemble; and its meaning – how Tanvir uses *Charandas Chor* to present issues concerning society. While attempting to answer these questions, we also study his reformist methods, which include a reversal of the attribution of qualities and etiquettes such as honesty and nobility, usually attributed to the social elites, to a thief. Further, Tanvir uses the devices of inversion, mechanical rigidity, and automatism (Bergson, 1913) to infuse the character of Charandas with humor and asks profound reformative questions.

The distinctness of Tanvir’s works can be observed by merely looking at their form. They defy any straightforward definition (of plays) and cannot be put into the broad taxonomies of Indian theatre – primarily urban and folk theatre. Labeling them as tragedies or comedies is very difficult, and to comprehend their structural complexity, we need to understand how Tanvir composes his plays. Notwithstanding the apparent differences in the basic stories, Tanvir’s plays result from a series of improvised micro-performances. Structurally, Tanvir’s plays develop from an amalgamation of a minimalist proscenium stage, a folk ensemble (*Nacha* actors who bring the essence of the folk form with them), and a timeless folk story. This distinct approach is substantiated by its difference from the phenomenon that Richard Schechner (1973) calls “Scening,” which states that the plot appears as scenes to playwrights who then write them as “Drama” or a theatrical “Script.” Tanvir, on the contrary, applies a method that Anjum Katyal (2018) calls a feature of the oral performance traditions – “the collaborative practice” (p. xiv). Tanvir states;

We work like this. I put a story across to the group members and they think it over. The next time round we go over the storyline and each one puts in a word for an elaboration or a nuance he thinks should be fitted in at such and such a point in the course of the play. This is something I have always tried to do – get the actors to move the play in certain directions. (Tanvir, 1983, p. 6)

The process of the genesis of *Agra Bazar* and *Charandas Chor* presents substantial evidence of Tanvir’s method of composing his plays. *Agra Bazar* was developed through improvised performances on the open stage of Jamia with teachers, students, and the villagers of Okhla as participants. *Charandas Chor* emerged from his experimentations and improvisations on the Rajasthani folk story by the folklorist Vijaydan Detha. Javed Malick (2021) provides a detailed account of the genesis in his introduction to the play. He notes;

[...] Tanvir had first heard the story in 1973 from the writer-folklorist Vijaydan Detha, who had in turn, recorded it from the oral cultural tradition of Rajasthan [...] Tanvir presented this far-from-finished attempt at an all-night function of the Satnamis (a

religious sect) in the open-air Bhilai maidan [ground], incorporating into it a number of *panthi* songs and instantaneously improvising some others. This became the first, embryonic form of the play. It was about fifty minutes in duration and Tanvir called it *Chor, Chor...* (pp. 10–11)

The description of the play's composition makes it evident that Tanvir's method of creating a play inverts Schechner's concentric circles of 'Drama' and 'Performance.' It is also corroborated by what Bjorn Thomassen (2014) considers a sine qua non for liminality;

On the one hand, liminality involves a potentially unlimited freedom from any kind of structure. This sparks creativity and innovation, peaking in transfiguring moments of sublimity [...] On the other hand, liminality also involves a peculiar kind of unsettling situation in which nothing really matters, in which hierarchies and standing norms disappear [...] (p. 1)

The creativity and innovation in Tanvir's case resulted in a new approach and, while doing so, disrupted the "standing norms" of post-independence Indian theatre.

Tanvir's innovative approach also manifests in his stage design. In *Charandas Chor*, it was "a stage and, mounted on that stage, a rectangular platform which is nine inches high, six feet wide, and twelve inches long, with just foliage or a leafy branch of a tree behind it" (Tanvir, 2016, p. 11). Including such a minimalist stage design allowed the actors to move freely and perform the scenes and dance. The rectangular platform also allocated a separate space for rituals and was also used as an elevated seat for the guru and the queen. Tanvir notes in the stage direction of the first act;

The guru sits down on the platform, spreading his mat. His followers begin to gather around. A few of them come up and touch his feet, then join the others who start to sing a hymn. (Tanvir, 2016, p. 70)

Tanvir believed in creating images and scenes through the actors' bodies. He had witnessed the *Nacha* actors changing the locale by merely circling the stage. Although a counter-argument can be made that Tanvir's not using stage props and furniture was a function of the folk performance art he harnessed on stage, Tanvir (2016) negates it by stating that by not using props and sceneries, he found a sense of liberty. He notes:

Initially I used to hang things, which would keep dropping and going up to suggest a locale [...] I felt that the descriptions of the Sanskrit poets who wrote these plays are so vivid and so beautiful, so graphic, that in your imagination, before your mind's eye, any kind of picture of which you are capable can be thrown up. [...] Now that liberty, that faculty, will not be given full play if you paint the scenery on the stage. (p. 27–28).

His reluctance to use painted sceneries and place other props on stage is also termed a "strategy" by Siddarth Biswas (2017). It is further substantiated by Javed Malick, who affirms that this strategy "... allows the actors and their performances to be foregrounded" (2016, p. 12). The proscenium stage is inherently urban in dimensions and design. However, the presentation of folk songs and dance and the actors maneuvering this stage according to their will integrated it into Tanvir's liminal space and registered a new mode of utilization of the proscenium arena. Further, it also brought to focus the performance of the folk actors,

who were the driving force in Tanvir's plays. We shall examine what made the folk actors so critical to Tanvir's production below.

As established, the presence of a rural/folk ensemble is a significant element that adds to the distinctness of *Charandas Chor* and Tanvir's other works in general. Tanvir's engagement with the Chhattisgarhi Nacha led him to believe that to present the rural ethos and pathos and to connect with the folk tradition; he would need to present the stories through the folk actors. Also, the incorporation of Satnami ritualistic songs in the play meant these actors would not need to be trained to perform the songs. Nacha performances include religious or ritualistic scores performed by the same set of actors performing the story. Their long association with the *Nacha* form meant they were trained to act and speak according to the requirements of the form, which required them to move freely on an open stage surrounded by the audience and generate audience responses on whichever side they faced. Tanvir couldn't fathom this difference initially and realized the significance of the "freedom of movement" (2016) of the actors and the freedom to deliver the dialogues in their mother tongue (Chhattisgarhi). He notes:

I saw the *Nacha* again and again, and what do I see? A big platform and they are performing; thousands of people or hundreds of people on a small platform or no platform, at the same level – still performing; and nothing was lost. [...] I realized those who were responding to an audience for years in this manner could never try to unlearn all this and rigidly follow the rules of the movement...

Another reason was the *matrubhasha* [mother tongue] – he [the actor] wasn't speaking in his mother tongue, so it jarred my ears because he was speaking bad Hindi and not Chhattisgarhi, [...] Once I realized it, I used Chhattisgarhi and improvised, allowed them the freedom and then came pouncing down upon them to crystallize the movement – there you stay. (pp. 33–35)

By recalling Thomassen's definition of liminality, we observe Tanvir, with his folk ensemble, disrupting and reforming another dimension of India's modern urban theatrical conventions – acting. It is significant to note that during Tanvir's era, most of the plays, especially in Hindi, were performed by amateur and collegiate theatre groups in the urban centers of India. Tanvir distorted this tradition and created a new one by bringing in folk actors who were not trained in the urban stream of theatre but had the folk form imbibed in them.

The folk actors were also dexterous in presenting the ritualistic songs in the play that constitute an integral part of the stories. The songs in Tanvir's dramatic corpus are not only meant to enhance the performance as with Parsi theatre⁸. Malick also points to their complexity as subtle commentaries on the narrative. When applied to the songs, Malick's assertions lead us to another significant function of the songs as a dramatic device. However, before attempting to peruse their functions in the play, it is quintessential to define these songs and their ritualistic nature. Victor (1979) Turner defines rituals, particularly tribal rituals, as;

... orchestrations of a wide range of performative genres, symphonies in more than music, comprising several performative genres. These may include dancing,

⁸ A precursor to modern Indian theatre that developed in the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in parts of Gujarat and Bombay.

gesturing, singing, chanting; the use of many musical instruments; mimetic displays; and the performance of drama during key episodes. (p. 469)

Both Turner and Schechner agree upon one fundamental characteristic of a ritualistic performance, i.e., like any other performance, it has a beginning, a middle, and an end. Moreover, as observed in the Indian socio-religious context, a ritual always has a reformatory function – to purify, initiate, liberate, create an alliance, etc. Tanvir's songs perform similar functions. Nevertheless, a significant accouterment is their ironic nature. Besides being rituals, they act as dramatic devices and commentaries on the narrative. They have much more profound symbolic connotations as ironies than only as rituals and performances. The song in the first scene of Act I, for instance, is a testament to this argument;

Satyanam! Satyanam! Satyanam!
 Praise the truth, nothing better,
 Praise the guru, no one greater...
 Only a handful can
 Uphold the truth;
 And those few are gurus
 Who lead by example,
 They raise the world high,
 On the scales of truth.
 Satyanam! Satyanam! Satyanam! (Tanvir, 2016, p. 60)

While the lyrics praise the guru and the truth, as the story unfolds, the guru charges money from people to initiate them as his disciples, and the thief Charandas upholds the truth even at the cost of his life. A similar function of another song is observed in the first scene of Act II before Charandas robs the royal treasury;

The baba roams the forest alone,
 The sadhu roams the forest alone,
 Offer the sadhu a tiger skin,
 Offer the clerk some dough,
 Offer the peon a cup of tea,
 Need we say any more?
 With money it's done in a jiffy,
 That we know for sure. (Tanvir, 2016, p. 99)

Performed pleasurably by the musicians and accompanied by the dancing actors, the song points to the corruption of power-bearing people and accentuates Tanvir's reformist agendas for society. Besides performing as dramatic devices and rituals, the songs also complement the folk story, which can be called the soul of Tanvir's plays.

Conclusion

Habib Tanvir, in the legion of reformist avant-garde Indian playwrights, is the torchbearer of reformist ideas, which are reflected in every aspect of his craft. The plays he has written and produced are read as testaments to his innovation and propelling the modern Indian theatre in a new direction. We examine this argument by studying closely Tanvir's *Charandas Chor*. We begin by comprehending the socio-cultural scenario of the newly independent nation and

find that Tanvir came of age when there were two dominant approaches in theatre – the urban proscenium style and the rural folk traditions.

The article relies on the concept of liminality defined by Victor Turner and Bjorn Thomassen to understand the space that Tanvir created for himself and his works between the two prevalent streams of Indian theatre. The concept of liminality involves a disruption of the existing norms. Tanvir achieved it with both the form and the content of his plays. His reformist aptitude was visible, beginning with his method of composing his plays. His method of serial improvisations and several performances until he could freeze the sequence inverts Schechner's circles of 'Drama,' 'Script,' 'Theatre,' and 'Performance.' Secondly, his plays employed a folk ensemble with a minimalist proscenium stage design, making it a rarely achieved equal and reciprocal proportion of the urban and the folk (*Nacha*) elements. The folk actors who practically lived the form throughout their lives were untrained in the movements of the urban theatre. Nevertheless, Tanvir solved this problem by allowing them free agency on stage, thus resulting in all his plays coming alive.

Further, the use of songs as commentaries and as dramatic devices of irony is another reformative feature of Tanvir's oeuvre. Besides representing the folk elements in the play, the songs also present the audience with subtle references to the forthcoming events and provide them with information that is not available to the actors.

His play *Charandas Chor* is a potent reflection of his reformist ideas—besides reforming the extant tradition of theatre, it also transmits reformist questions to the audience. The play presents through Mikhail Bakhtin's (1984) idea of a carnivalesque reversal of the existing social order that every human being, irrespective of their position in society, is equally complex. It also challenges associating qualities such as truth and honesty only with the cultural and social elites. Instead, it affiliates them to a thief who dies upholding his vows.

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*Canción Sin Miedo- Juntanza de Mujeres Indígenas Colombianas:
An Indigenous and Feminist Protests*

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Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

The protest song genre in Latin America has gained significant momentum during periods of democratic threat, gaining popularity through contributions from countries like Argentina, Chile, Brazil, and others. This phenomenon has given rise to movements such as "canción nueva" or "nueva trova." Notably, these songs are often performed in Spanish and Portuguese, imbued with a poetic language (Miryam Robayo, 2015). Moreover, certain genres, like "canción nueva," incorporate string instruments like the guitar, as well as indigenous or regional instruments (Robin Moore, 2006), infusing them with specific meaning and intent within the realm of protest. However, a limited engagement with indigenous languages in Latin America has been observed within protest songs. As a result, this proposal seeks to analyze the Cover of "Canción sin miedo," performed by indigenous women in Colombia. The aim is to delve into the protest's intent by utilizing indigenous languages in a composition originally written in Spanish. To accomplish this, the song's lyrics are initially dissected in relation to the issue it denounces (violence against women). Subsequently, the song is contextualized within the framework of the Colombian version's lyrics. Lastly, I explore the incorporation of indigenous languages within the song and their significance in the feminist protest. This endeavor seeks to illustrate that the song, beyond being a feminist protest, also represents a challenge to the system from the perspective of indigenous women, presenting the marginalization of indigenous women within the state.

Keywords: Protest Song, Indigenous, Feminist, Indigenous Protest

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Introduction

The Song “Canción sin miedo” by Vivir Quintana was originally performed by Vivir Quintana and the collective El Palomar. The piece originated in Mexico in 2020 as a commemoration of international Women’s Day on March 5th of the same year. The song addresses the topic of femicides and the problem of violence against women that Mexico faces as, according to Blanca Ivonne Olvera (2020), femicides in Mexico increased by 1.6% from 2019 to 2020. Due to the increase in the violence against women, the song carries a political message and serves as a denunciation to this social problem.

Since its release, “Canción sin Miedo” has spread throughout Latin America with various covers and versions performed by other artists. In Colombia for example, there are two versions of the song. One in Spanish, sung by various artists, with the lyrics adapted to fit the Colombian context, mentioning groups and events that take place in the country. The second version of the song is sung in 6 indigenous languages spoken in Colombia (Embera Chamí, Nasa Yuwe, Inga, Duelegaya, Namtrik and Qwatsu). This version has the same lyrics from the Colombian version in Spanish and its difference remains in the performance as it is performed by indigenous women, each singing in a different language.

This paper aims to analyze the song performed by indigenous women from three perspectives, indicating that, beyond its feminist protest, this piece carries a indigenous protests within its message, specifically addressing the marginalization of indigenous women. Consequently, the initial segment of this essay delves into the song’s lyrics, highlighting its condemnation of femicides and violence against women. The subsequent section centers on the Colombian context, elucidating the connection between the song’s message and the prevalent issues within the country. The final section explores the significance of the song when performed in the indigenous languages, emphasizing on the use of these languages as a form of protest.

“Canción Sin Miedo” A Feminist Protest

The reading of the song’s lyrics as a feminist movement, can be made through an analysis of its discourse. Veronica Escobar (2020), developed an analysis of its content by using a discourse analysis framework in which she asserts that the lyrics portray women as primary agents in this protest. This can be seen in several verses such as “hoy a las mujeres nos quitan la calma”¹ casting women as central figures and thematic focus of the song. This agency bestowed upon women permeates the entire composition, as it can be seen in other verses “Nos sembraron miedo, nos crecieron alas” or “Nos roban amigas, nos matan hermanas”. Additionally, the song adopts multiple protagonists narrators, using the first person plural, referring to “we” to the women narrating. Escobar further explains that the song through declarative and imperative sentences claims for social justices. This assertion is exemplified in the following lines “Cantamos sin miedo, pedimos justicia / Gritamos por cada desaparecida /Que resuene fuerte: ¡Nos queremos vivas! /¡Que caiga con fuerza el feminicida!”. There is also another crucial segment when the song issues a plea for social justice, directing it specifically to the governmental authorities. “no olvide sus nombres por favor, señor presidente”.

¹ English translations can be found in https://lyricfluent.com/lyrics/vivir_quintana_cancion_sin_miedo_mon_laferte_english

To add to this idea, Escobar underscores how the choice of verbs in the song mirrors real-life events experienced by women. When Quintana sings "A cada minuto, de cada semana /nos roban amigas, nos matan hermanas/ destrozan sus cuerpos, los desaparecen" she chronicles, through the choice of tense and action verbs, the various forms of violence endured, such as killing or stealing. Importantly, the verbs in this context do not portray women as the active agents but rather as the recipients of these actions. While women remain the central theme of the song, they are not positioned as the actors. Escobar further suggests that the deliberate use of this language and the naming of individuals in the song aim to preserve their memory collectively or evoke empathy among other women. This is achieved through the naming of victims of violence in Mexico. In the Colombian version, names are altered to those of girls and women who fell victim to violence in Colombia, including cases of sexual abuse (Brenda, Ariana, Xiomara, Rosa Elvira, Alejandra, and Yuliana).

From another point of view, according to Sophie Yanik (2016), music serves as a medium for identity creation, shaped by both the lyrics and interpretation of the song and the audience's reception. At this stage, the song shapes identity in two key ways. Firstly, through the lyrics expressing solidarity towards women in specific events within the Colombian population, evident in the stanza: "Por todas las nasas luchando en el Cauca/ Por todas las mujeres reincorporadas/ Las niñas embera que han sido violadas/ Por las campesinas todas colombianas." By using the phrase "for all," the song makes a sweeping statement that the protest is on behalf of women facing violence and those actively resisting it, conveying a message of unity and acknowledgment. Secondly, the song's identity construction, as per Yanik's perspective, lies in its adaptability to the Colombian context as the grim reality of femicides is not different between both Latin American countries. As of August 2022, the Observatory of Femicides in Colombia reported 392 cases of femicide.

The melody of the song also takes on a political stance. The composition starts with a rhythm orchestrated by wind instruments and percussion, evoking an Andean beat. It then seamlessly transitions into the guitar and saxophone, harmonizing with the voices of the performers. This combination of instruments and rhythms in protest songs has historical precedence, seen in other genres like the Nueva Trova, where an emphasis on valuing folk traditions was pivotal (Moore, 2022). Another illustrative example comes from some creations in Bolivian hip-hop, where indigenous artists from the Bolivian highlands fused hip-hop rhythms with those of their ancestors, delving into the exploration of Aymara and Bolivian identity (Juan Dolce and Emanuel Talancon, 2017).

The Colombian Context

María del Pilar Espinosa (2020) reports that in the year 2020, 3951 women and girls disclosed instances of experiencing various forms of violence, whether physical or sexual, during the pandemic. Michael Vergel and Lizeth Martinez (2021) explained that indigenous women not only endure physical and sexual violence within their communities but also suffer the abandonment by the Colombian government and are victims of forced displacement due to the armed conflict. However, the precise figures for these cases remain elusive, given that indigenous women hesitate to report, fueled by the fear of societal stigma within their communities. Besides, Daniela Echeverri (2015) introduces another facet, focusing on women in guerrilla movements. According to Echeverri, the majority of women in the FARC guerrilla group are forcibly recruited between the ages of 13 and 15. She further reveals that around 80% of these women undergo forced abortions during their time in the guerrilla, facing abuse, beatings, and even fatalities, not only at the hands of male counterparts but also

from women in higher-ranking positions. This information underscores that women in Colombia confront various types of violence, including systemic oppression.

With this contextual shift, the song introduces another notable distinction by grouping women according to what we could term as identity labels—fundamental aspects of their lives that form a crucial part of their identity, such as race, gender, or social condition. This is a departure from Quintana's version. The lyrics now include verses like: "Por todas las nasas luchando en el cauca/ Por todas las mujeres reincorporadas" "Por las chicas trans que han sido asesinadas/ Las mujeres negras luchando en gayar/ Todas las wayuu defendiendo sus tierras/ Las niñas embera que han sido violadas/ Por las campesinas todas colombianas" It's noteworthy how, in this segment, the use of the word "all" generalizes the nationality of all these groups of women, thereby contributing to collective memory, identity, and the solidarity discussed earlier.

“Canción Sin Miedo” and Indigenous Protest

The version of "Canción sin Miedo" in indigenous languages stands as an artistic composition in terms of music and visuals, infused with protest messages. Crafted by the SentARTE group in 2021, the piece unfolds with each verse performed in a different indigenous language, with one stanza in Spanish. This prompts two questions: firstly, what is the intent behind interpreting this song in Colombian indigenous languages? And secondly, why are each stanza in different indigenous languages? SentARTE addresses one of these questions in the video description, stating:

From the sonic force that propels us as indigenous women, always accompanied by our indigenous and non-indigenous siblings contributing to our struggles, we adapt Canción sin Miedo based on our cosmogonies, feelings, and pains to six of our mother tongues and Spanish as the language that unites us.

Thus, departing from indigenous identity and the unifying force of Spanish, the language contributes a protest dynamic that can be divided into three facets. Firstly, in alignment with José Zanardini's (2013) perspective, indigenous languages play multiple roles within their communities. Initially, they foster connections within the community, followed by the construction of an identity and cultural principles they fiercely defend. Ultimately, the language becomes a sanctuary, shielding them against oppressive forces seeking to marginalize them. In essence, the song becomes an act of resistance and visibility, spotlighting Amerindian languages and affirming their existence in society.

The second facet alludes to the fact that a composition originally written in Spanish and adapted to indigenous languages serves as a unique form of protest. This adaptation reinforces the acknowledgment of their languages and signifies the continuous evolution of their ethnicity as they navigate the currents of globalization and societal impositions. Indigenous women, in this way, empower their ethnicity by taking a song in the imposed language and interpreting it through the lens of their linguistic and cultural characteristics.

The third and final facet involves a resolute denouncement of violence against indigenous women. In assuming the role of protesters, they direct their voices against various governmental figures. Isabela Figueroa and Noriana Franco (2020) argue that indigenous women represent one of the most vulnerable groups in Colombia, confronting social and political discrimination. This stems from their lack of inclusion and consideration in the

formulation of policies concerning gender and ethnicity. The indigenous rendition of "Canción sin Miedo" thus becomes a powerful tool for advocacy and a poignant expression of resistance.

Before proceeding, it's crucial to note that the reasons behind singing each stanza in a different language and the specific selection of these languages for the song remain unclear. Moreover, the motive for choosing these particular languages is unknown, especially considering that Colombia, as outlined by the National Indigenous Organization of Colombia, has over sixty five indigenous languages spoken throughout the country. Possible explanations could include selecting languages with a higher number of speakers or those with established alphabets, facilitating the translation process. Another consideration could be that these languages were spoken by the individuals actively engaged in the project. To know the specific reasons it would be necessary to communicate with the creators of this production.

This song can be seen as a tool of resistance with two primary objectives: to denounce and to include. Luz María de la Torre de Amaguaña (2010) recounts the challenges faced by indigenous women to break free from their domestic roles, confined to the "field of servitude" and limited by "systematic processes of racism, domination, exclusion, and annihilation of their identity as a social-public subject". In this case, the song denounces their invisibilized figures while reinforcing their identity through symbols that identify them as indigenous women. Furthermore, the song grants them a different agency, a fighting agency evident in the third stanza "por todas las nasas luchando en el cauca" and in the seventh stanza "todas las wayuu defendiendo sus tierras". The song also gives them a voice unafraid to seek justice, as expressed in "Si tocan a una respondemos todas". To clarify this argument, I'd like to quote one of the members of the SentARTE group, Francys Silva, who states, "Through the arts, I seek to decolonize thought," aiming to use this production as a means to shift the role of indigenous women from the colonial legacy that remains in our current society.

De la Torre Amaguaña further describes how the use of traditional attire (the anaco or huipil), is not only a tool to reaffirm identity, but becomes a political and protest act against discrimination created by the vision of the otherness. In this way she adds, "Through these spaces, we have begun to shout to the four winds that we want to be subjects with rights in each of the spaces that have systematically been denied to us" (3). Language, like clothing, becomes a tool of protest that allows them to raise their voices, demanding "Justicia, Justicia Justicia" at the end of the sixth stanza.

This rendition of "Canción sin Miedo" is one of many examples where songs or genres typically performed in dominant languages are adapted to indigenous languages. This indigenous representation in popular rhythms, primarily distributed in dominant languages, gives rise to a new genre of music and a novel distribution phenomenon. Joseph Cru (2017) presents a similar example where young indigenous individuals rap in their languages, and as the author notes, the use of their languages "has served as motivation for these young people to reclaim their language and strengthen their ethnic identity" (1). In this new movement, Dolce and Talacon (2017) express that the adaptation of these genres and rhythms by indigenous artists is part of the globalization and ethnic construction process, where ethnicities are in a constant state of formation and transformation. That is that the artist, by using their symbols, seeks to create a space in which they can represent both elements in their identities, their indigenous ethnicity and their latin American persona. This song allows us to

witness the blend of the imposed and the inherent through three elements that shape the musical piece: the melody, which integrates Andean rhythms, the video featuring indigenous women in traditional attire, indigenous flags, natural elements, typical instruments, and dances, and finally, the use of indigenous languages.

However, the song doesn't only protest from the perspective of languages; it also empowers indigenous women. Regarding this statement, De la Torre (2010) enounces, "We must teach the world and show them that many of us have achieved success in the midst of the worst and harsh ways; harassed by fathers, husbands, bosses, males, a patriarchal, exclusive, and violent country and society" (4-5). This sentiment aligns with the assertions of Figueroa and Franco regarding vulnerability. Therefore, it's reasonable that, indigenous women become the principal agents fighting for their lands "Por todas las nasas luchando en el cauca," for the girls in their communities "Las niñas embera que han sido violadas" and for women in general "Cantamos sin miedo pedimos justicia / Gritamos por cada desaparecida," assuming the role of the primary accuser, the victim raising her voice, "hoy a las mujeres nos quitan la calma/ nos sembraron miedo nos crecieron alas." The indigenous women are not longer a statistic discussed by others. The have become their own advocate, expressing their protest as a women who no longer wishes to endure violence " Yo todo lo incendio yo todo rompo /Si un día algún fulano te apaga los ojos/ Ya nada me calla, ya todo me sobra/ Si tocan a una respondemos todas."

Conclusion

The Colombian versions of "Canción Sin Miedo," both in Spanish and indigenous languages, when adapted to fit the Colombian context, transform and generate a different kind of protest message—a protest against the Colombian government. To achieve this, they employ various strategies that convey protest messages and denounce not only femicides but also other social issues. In the realm of lyrics, the composition seeks to appeal to solidarity and create a collective memory. Additionally, it denounces the state and government for their lack of action regarding cases of violence against women, implying another type of violence—state violence through negligence. This is done by placing women as the focal point of the song, not as the main actor but as the one receiving the actions (in this case, violent actions). The piece also aims for the development of a collective identity by narrating violent events referring to specific groups.

In addition to the feminist protest, the version in indigenous languages presents an indigenous protest. This adaptation allows indigenous women to use their identity elements for their message and grants them a position of protest against social problems. In essence, the song protests against three types of invisibilities: the invisibility of women, the invisibility of indigenous women, and the invisibility of the indigenous community and its value, giving rise to the theme of the reclamation of indigenous narrative tradition by addressing the problem in their languages rather than the imposed language.

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***From Learning to Earning:
Reducing Instructional Material Costs With Technology and Innovation***

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Abstract

“From Learning to Earning: Reducing Instructional Materials Costs with Technology and Innovation” is funded by a Department of Education 2023 Open Textbook Pilot (OTP) program Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) grant award. Decreases in student enrollment, precipitated by the global pandemic have directed attention by administrators on how affordable learning solutions such as Open Educational Resources (OER), and Open Educational Pedagogy (OEP) can be utilized by faculty to address what Colvard et al. (2018) refers to as the three most important concerns in higher education: academic quality, affordability, and high degree completion rates for students. Research on OER/OEP has demonstrated that performance gaps have narrowed, and failure/withdrawal rates have been reduced in some contexts, (Winitzky-Stephens & Pickavance, 2017), however, more attention is needed to ensure that culturally relevant content and pedagogy are an integral part of OER/OEP course adoption. Educators must be mindful to avoid solely replicating Eurocentric content and pedagogies in their OER/OEP selection. From our survey data, we highlight the impact of OER/OEP on student retention and success, with a focus on low-income and underrepresented minority student populations that we serve. We examine student academic motivation, engagement, and stress. We consider the resources that are necessary to provide students with equitable access to learning and examine what OER offers students who experience limited access to technology to learn. Our internal campus-wide survey illustrated some of the challenges and benefits of using OER/OEP for students with a pathway from learning to earning within the workforce.

Keywords: Open Educational Resources, Technology Innovation, Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

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Introduction

Decreases in student enrollment, precipitated by the global pandemic have directed attention by administrators on how affordable learning solutions such as Open Educational Resources (OER), and Open Educational Pedagogy (OEP) can be utilized by faculty to improve enrollment and completion rates to graduation. The recognition of the benefits of OER and OEP to student learning has helped to increase OER and OEP adoption. Additional pressure from Governor Newsom's Compact agreement with the California State University system, has instigated greater attention and interest to meeting the compact agreement of reducing instructional costs for students by 50% by 2025. As the California State University System is, the largest public system of higher education in the United States with 23 campuses spread across the State of California, the adoption of the California Compact will have significant impact for students economically and should subsequently increase graduation completion rates as well. This initiative has accelerated internal OER/ZCCM adoption campaigns across the CSU systemwide and has increased awareness of how technology and innovation can be utilized effectively to reduce instructional materials costs and improve opportunities for students from learning to earning.

Open Educational Resources (OER) and Zero Cost Course Materials (ZCCM)

Open Educational Resources (OER) consists of openly licensed and distributed learning materials that are free of charge (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, 2019). Zero Cost Course Materials (ZCCM) comprise materials that are free and have no-cost to access or obtain. OER are educational materials, from single lessons to entire textbooks, that are free for faculty and students to use, customize, curate, and share. Evidence suggests OER materials are a viable affordability strategy for higher education, saving students—and often institutions—money (de los Arcos, et al., 2014). Providing all students with free materials on the first day of class also tends to level the academic playing field. Immediate access to course materials can also help to move the commitment to equity in learning practices forward with the distribution of educational resources available to all students. Courses that are designed as OER/ZCCM ensure that course materials are open and freely available and therefore no student is left behind.

Justification for OER/ZCCM

Within the context of the central valley, (San Joaquin region of California) there is only one four-year public institution of higher education within a 100-mile radius. As a designated Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) and a Minority Serving Institution (MSI), the university is invested in serving undergraduate student populations where at least half of the institution's degree seeking students are low-income. According to 2023 CSUB Census data, the current student body consists of 9,399 students. Approximately 86% of those students are enrolled at the undergraduate level and earning their first bachelor's degree. Sixty-six percent of undergraduate students identify as female and 34% as male. Enrollment by race/ethnicity of undergraduate students consists of 68% Latino/Hispanic, 13% Caucasian or White, 7% Asian, 4% African American or Black, 4% race and ethnicity unknown and 2% of students as possessing two or more races. The majority of undergraduate students, approximately 74%, are under 25 years of age. Approximately 66% of CSUB students are first-generation college students (CSU, 2024).

Many of the students who attend the university have limited resources and are often working several jobs to afford the cost of their education. For many students today, the financial constraints associated with higher education, particularly in relation to textbook costs, enforces very stark choices between ‘to eat’ or ‘to learn’ (Correa & Bozarth, 2023). The escalating cost of textbooks remains a persistent impediment for students in general and specifically exacerbates difficulties that first-generation, low-income, and minoritized groups encounter in higher education. This is the case for public 4-year institutions in central California with a population that has been historically underserved, and consists of students who are Pell recipients, first generation, and many who are attending university part time (CSU, 2024). Furthermore, several students carry full time jobs to support their families while completing their degrees. Students must wager the price tag of their learning with realistic basic needs and lifestyle demands (Thune & Warner, 2019). In addition to the population demographic and socio-economic differences of the student body, there are also high levels of food insecurity within the local community. These differences are further noted in the stereotypical notions about the State of California and the level of wealth distributed across the State. Furthermore, while California is viewed as politically and socially liberal in terms of the State, Kern County is quite conservative. The major industries are oil and agriculture. Several people work in the big oil companies and can quickly earn high salaries with limited education, while a large population of an migrant worker works in the fields earning very low wages. This disparity is reflected also in the students that are served by the university.

Brief Literature Review

Research on Open Educational Resources (OER) and Open Educational Pedagogies or Practices (OEP) has demonstrated that performance gaps have narrowed, and failure/withdrawal rates have been reduced in some contexts, (Winitzky-Stephens & Pickavance, 2017), however, more attention is needed to ensure that culturally relevant content and pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995) as well as digital inclusion and equity (Sturm & Pinsent-Johnson, 2020) are integrals parts of OER/OEP course adoptions.

The erroneous assumption that invokes greater disparities amongst learners is that in every home, students have immediate access to electronic devices, broadband connectivity, and the technical skills needed to successfully navigate learning on-line. Access on or before the first day of classes ensures equity in the distribution of educational resources. However, not all students have immediate, unfettered access or appropriate skills to avail of free resources that maybe available. Therefore, while digital inclusion may be the goal of OER/ZCCM course adoptions, attention must also be focused on ensuring that meaningful access is available to utilize the benefits of freely open resources (Sturm & Pinsent-Johnson, 2020).

For many students a pressing concern is affordability as the rising cost of tuition and course materials continues to serve as a barrier for many students to complete their degrees. Across the nation, degree completion rates, academic quality, and affordability are the three greatest challenges in higher education for students, their learning, and student academic success (Colvard et al., 2018). Educators must also be mindful to avoid solely replicating existing mainstream content and pedagogies in their OER/OEP selection. Additionally, educators must be cognizant of how they use OER/OEP to avoid contributing to the effects of the digital divide between the “have nots” from the “have lots” (Haight et al., 2014), exacerbating the socio-economic impacts on marginalized communities (Van Dijk, 2020), and to work towards assuring equitable access to learning.

The benefits of OER and OEP must also be reflected in terms of the academic quality of the materials that are available and adopted for use. A major concern amongst faculty is in ensuring quality OER in lieu of textbooks. It is well documented in the literature that high quality OER can lead to significant financial benefits for students and/or institutions, as well as reduce the potential for financial debt (Bliss et al., 2013; de los Arcos et al., 2014; Farrow et al., 2015; Fischer et al., 2015). Additionally, several studies have indicated that OER can effectively support at-risk learners in their efforts to finish their studies (de los Arcos et al., 2014; Farrow et al., 2015; Winitzky-Stephens & Pickavance, 2017). The goal is for students to reach the finish line and not be encountering excessive amounts of debt. Hence, high degree completions rates are of paramount importance to students, and the use of OER can help substantially to alleviate some of the financial burdens and stress imposed with soaring textbook costs.

Faculty must also be mindful of the implications of limited digital access, stable Wi-Fi connections or connectivity, broadband availability, and digital literacy skills and how these various components contribute to different levels of digital distress when navigating learning on-line (Reid & Correa, 2021). Unstable internet connections can lead to frequent disruptions in students' learning experiences. These interruptions may lead to missed content, and hinder students' ability to stay on track with their coursework. Thus, it is important for faculty to make OER materials available for students to download and access offline so they may remain engaged with the class even with limited internet access. Additionally, many courses incorporate multimedia content such as videos, interactive simulations, and online quizzes to enhance learning. Students with poor digital literacy skills may struggle to access and interact with this content, limiting their ability to engage with course materials and understand key concepts (Buzzetto-Hollywood et al., 2018; Reisdorf, 2020).

The Remixing of OER Textbooks using an Equity Lens (ROTEL) offers opportunities to invite students to contribute to their own learning in scholarly conversations by using their own voices and experiences. ROTEL addresses issues of diversity, representation, and accessibility within educational resources. This involves examining existing OER materials and identifying areas where they may be lacking in terms of representing diverse perspectives, cultures, and experiences. Developing inclusive and culturally responsive educational materials that better reflect the diversity of students and communities can help reduce disparities in education and provide all students with access to high-quality learning resources that are relevant to their backgrounds.

Pilot Study Framework

In our pilot study we will highlight the impact of OER/OEP on student retention and success, with a focus on low-income and underrepresented minority student populations that we serve. We are seeking to address digital distress, and identify solutions to narrow the digital divide, creating more spaces for diverse voices to participate in learning opportunities designed to level the uneven playing field of education associated with soaring educational costs. Our collaborative initiatives have been working to help resolve the lack of digital literacy and address ways to narrow the digital divide for vulnerable groups.

Funded by a grant from the Department of Education 2023 Open Textbook Pilot (OTP) program Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE), we specifically consider the impact of OER/OEP on low income, underrepresented minority students on our campus. Institutional survey data will be examined with a focus on improving how faculty

seek, curate, expand, and promote OER/OEP adoption of free, culturally relevant, digitally inclusive affordable instructional materials and pedagogies.

We are specifically interested in student academic motivation, engagement, and stress. We raised the following preliminary questions for consideration: 1.) What impact will OER/OEP have on academic motivation? 2.) Will OER/OEP increase student engagement? and 3.) Does access to course materials 24/7 on their devices help to reduce stress for students? We were particularly concerned about avoiding the heavy reliance of ideas and approaches that privilege the global north context, and therefore, at a basic level, several questions will need to be considered in terms of what resources are necessary to provide students with equitable access to learning that is culturally relevant and inclusive? We recognized that educators must be mindful to avoid solely replicating Eurocentric content and pedagogies in their OER/OEP course and pedagogical selections.

Pilot Study Preliminary Findings

Research has found that there are several benefits of OER for students. For example, extracted from our preliminary end of the year department student survey (n=77) we noticed some strong trends and interest by students. Pilot study findings demonstrate that all students agreed or strongly agreed that the department should continue to utilize OER for courses at no-cost to students. Specifically, in terms of textbook fees, from our 2021 survey students reported the following: 79.5% of students reported spending **over \$100** on textbooks for non-major classes (e.g., general education courses, electives) and 18% of students reported spending **over \$300** on textbooks for non-major classes.

Some of the benefits and strengths identified by our students with the use of OER are as follows:

Table 1. Student Benefits of OER

Benefit	Students (n=77)
Save money	75.32%
Accessible	25.97%
Reduce stress	24.68%
Focus on learning/success	7.79%
Sustainable use	3.90%
Better understanding of content	2.60%
Support from faculty/staff	2.60%
Better attitude/motivation	1.30%
Physical health	1.30%

These responses indicate that cost savings, less strain on their physical bodies with not having to carry heavy textbooks, and access anytime, from anywhere are significant benefits to our students with OER adoption.

Table 2. Qualitative Student Feedback

“It’s lifesaving! I saved so much money I didn’t have to stress about my textbooks.”
“Saves money, trees, and space. Also is not a burden on our backs due to backpacks being overly heavy.”
“Can be accessed anywhere and by anyone at any time.”

Grant Research Study

As indicated, our research study is funded by a Department of Education 2023 Open Textbook Pilot (OTP) program Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) grant award. This is a 3-year grant that spans from 2023 to 2026. One main objective of the current grant is to develop a Child Development and Family Studies OER Pipeline from community colleges to the California State University system and be a model for other departments to follow.

In addition to the pipeline, other objectives include developing an OER Assessment tool, facilitating OER Workshops that include trainings in OER, ADA/Copyright Compliance, Universal Design for Learning, and Digital Literacy. We plan to upload all our materials to a shared repository to provide access to these resources to educators across the globe.

Finally, we will conduct a study on student learning objectives in the context of OER classes, with an OER Pipeline, OER Assessment, OER Workshops, OER Cloud/Repository, and OER Research Study.

Conclusion

The integration of OER and OEP in higher education demonstrates the potential to enhance student learning experiences, narrow the digital divide, and promote equity, inclusion, and accessibility in education. The CSU’s commitment to the California Compact of reducing instructional costs by 50% by 2025 further highlights the significance of initiatives aimed at implementing OER/OEP. Our project, supported by the U.S. Department of Education, aims to evaluate the impact of OER/OEP on student retention, success, and engagement, with a focus on low-income and underrepresented minority student populations. We plan to develop tools and resources to support the widespread adoption of OER across disciplines. By reducing instructional material costs with technology and innovation, we aim to create an inclusive environment for students to navigate their learning experiences towards earning degrees.

Acknowledgements

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*A Correlational Study of Political Accountability of Sangguniang Barangay and
Barangay Readiness for Climate Change*

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Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

Climate change is a worldwide phenomenon having far-reaching consequences in numerous areas of society, including the economy, government, and living conditions. To effectively mitigate these effects, the national government needs to develop and employ policies and directives that can fulfill the safety and protection requirements of its people through development efforts, therefore improving the overall quality of life for all citizens. This research endeavor intends to assess the political accountability of the Malabon Barangay Councilors, especially in the context of their readiness for climate change. It digs into the notion of decentralization, in which national policies addressing climate change are operationalized at the grassroots level through municipal rules, with the Barangay Councilors in charge of implementation, supervision, and reporting. Furthermore, this study delves into crucial concerns related to the administrative responsibility of the Sangguniang Barangay, which substantially impacts the level of readiness for climate change. These considerations extend to their degree of accountability, which often surpasses their prescribed responsibilities as delineated by the local government code. Moreover, the research evaluates the legislative powers vested in the Barangay Councilors, the nature of their priorities when enacting laws, and the extent of engagement they foster among diverse stakeholders, including sectoral leaders and residents. The active participation of these stakeholders serves to foster heightened community awareness, thus enhancing the effectiveness of climate change adaptation efforts.

Keywords: Climate Change, Barangay Readiness, Political Accountability

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Introduction

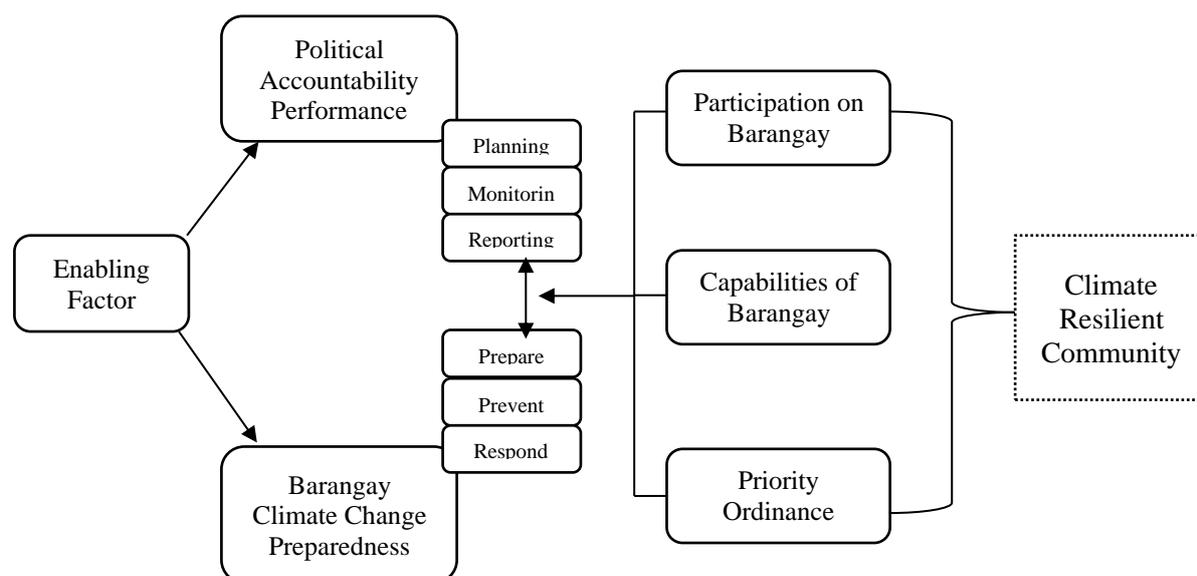
The Philippines is identified as one of the Asian countries most vulnerable to climate-related difficulties by the Climate Change Vulnerability Index (Global Adaptation Initiative, 2013), owing to its geographical position (Yusuf et al., 2010) and status as a developing nation (Fisher, 2013). According to research conducted by the Centre for International Sustainable Development Law in collaboration with the Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN), the Philippines is vulnerable to rising sea levels, which can cause devastating floods and severe tropical storms in various areas (Alliance Development Works, 2012; World Bank, 2013). In response, the Philippine government passed Republic Act 9729, popularly known as The Climate Change Act, to encourage long-term environmental initiatives. Furthermore, the Climate Change Commission was established to further research and implement climate change solutions (World Bank, 2013). Despite these attempts, the national government's policy failed to successfully oversee the local government climate change agenda (Perez et al., 1999). As a result, barangays, the Philippines' smallest administrative division, confront problems connected to climate change preparation, including concerns of priority and information transmission as a result of variables impacting barangay officials' responsibility (Canares, 2009; Polark, 2011). Furthermore, Canares (2009) of the HNU Center for Research and Local Governance identifies two key reasons for local government complexities in addressing climate change challenges: a limited understanding of the causes, effects, and local solutions to climate change and a pessimistic view of the ability of global solutions to be effectively addressed at the local level. These findings highlight the Philippines' Local Government Units' poor responsiveness to climate change challenges. The following therefore are the research questions of the study:

1. Is there significant relationship between Political Accountability Performance of Sanguniang Barangay in legislating barangay ordinances for climate change and the Barangay Readiness for climate change?
2. What are the enabling policy factors for political accountability of Sanguniang Barangay in legislating barangay ordinances which are related to climate change?

Sub-questions:

- What are the public participatory mechanisms which were employed by the barangay in performing their political accountability to improve citizen's awareness for climate change readiness?
- What are the capabilities of the barangay ordinances for climate change legislated by the sanguniang barangay?
- What are the priority ordinances which are enacted by the Sanguniang Barangay in the exercise of their political accountability that serve as the basis of the barangay readiness for climate change?

The Conceptual Framework of the Study



Research Methods

The Study aims to assess the observed political accountability performance of barangay councils in comparison to the expected performance based on the regulations outlined in republic acts (Giventer, 2008). It employs deductive questioning and inductive textual analysis to examine the influence of enabling policy factors, capabilities of barangay ordinances, and public participation mechanisms in their execution of responsibilities related to local ordinance legislation and its connection to barangay readiness for climate change. The research adopts a mixed-method approach, specifically the convergent parallel design, where both quantitative and qualitative data are collected concurrently but analyzed separately. This mixed-method approach combines various research methods, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative measures, to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research problem through data triangulation, enhancing the validity of the findings (David, 2011; Denzin, 1978).

Results and Analysis

What are the enabling factors of the political accountability performance of the Sangguniang Barangay in legislating barangay ordinances which are related to climate change?

National Government Policy for Climate Change.

The Philippine Constitution guarantees the full protection of life, liberty, and property, and it emphasizes the promotion of the general welfare for all citizens. Through this principle, the national government has planned and implemented various activities to address climate change vulnerabilities, emphasizing the importance of decentralization to cater to the needs of grassroots levels through local government units. The Local Government Code defines the structure and responsibilities of local governments, with the barangay as the smallest unit of the state. It serves as the primary planning and implementing unit for government policies, programs, and activities in the community. The Sangguniang Barangay, as the legislative body, holds the responsibility, answerability, and obligation in accordance with its powers

and duties as stated in the Code. National policies such as the Climate Change Act of 2009 and the Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010 recognize the interrelatedness of climate change and disaster risk reduction, highlighting the importance of local government units' participation in planning and implementing climate change readiness programs through ordinances. To ensure consistency, barangay ordinances are subject to review by the Sangguniang Panlungsod or Sangguniang Bayan, and suggestions or recommendations can be submitted to improve the barangay's welfare. Cooperation between local government units is crucial, not only through ordinances but also in coordinating activities for climate change mitigation and adaptation. The aforementioned rules serve as legal foundations for the political accountability of the Sangguniang Barangay in legislating climate change-related ordinances.

Local Government Policy for Climate Change.

Malabon, often referred to as the "Local Venice," is susceptible to severe flooding, particularly during heavy rains. The main factor contributing to high tides is the improper waste disposal by informal settlers. Data from the local government of Malabon reveals that approximately 26% of its population (400,317) falls under the urban poor category, and one-third of its residents reside in depressed settlements. To combat this issue, the Malabon government has enacted various ordinances aimed at addressing climate change-related challenges. Below are some of the existing ordinances pertaining to this matter:

- 01-2011 – City Ordinance Creating the Malabon City Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office and the Malabon City Disaster Risk Reduction Council as Mandated by Republic Act 10121 otherwise known as Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act 2010
- 09-2011 – Kautusang Panlungsod na nagtatakda sa Panata ng Kalikasan ditto sa Lungsod ng Malabon
- 14-2011 – An Ordinance prohibiting dumping, placing, throwing cigarette butts and the like in any place in the streets or public building or property including waterways, riverbanks not otherwise designated as garbage dumping place and providing penalties thereof
- 04-2012 – City Ordinance amending City Ordinance No. 14-2011 otherwise known as the Anti-littering Ordinance of Malabon City
- 11-2012 – An Ordinance mandating the use the pre-emptive measures during emergency situations such as forced evacuation during manmade or natural disasters and providing guidelines thereof
- 13-2012 An Ordinance creating the City Environmental and Natural Resources Office (CENTRO), providing personnel positions and functions thereof
- A01-2013 – An Ordinance amending Section 8 of City Ordinance No. 01-2013 otherwise known as an Ordinance Prohibiting the use of Plastic Bags on Dry Goods, regulating its Utilization on Wet Goods and Prohibiting the Use of Styrofoam/Styrophor in the City of Malabon and Prescribing the Penalties thereof

The mapping process of the City of Malabon ordinances focused solely on ordinances passed between August 2010 and October 2013. Within this period, only seven ordinances were identified as the city's specific measures in response to preventing and preparing for the effects of climate change.

Table 1 – Represents the number of ordinances legislated in the city of Malabon from 2010-2013

YEAR	ORDINANCE LEGISLATED	ORDINANCE FOR CLIMATE CHANGE
August 2010 – November 2010	5	0
February 2011 – November 2011	15	3
February 2012 – December 2012	17	3
October 2013 – December 2013	6	1
Total	43	7

Is there a significant relationship between Political Accountability Performance of the Sangguniang Barangay in legislating barangay ordinances for climate change and the Barangay Readiness for climate change?

Political Accountability and Barangay Readiness are underlying concepts requiring indicators for quantification. As per the study's operational definition, political accountability pertains to the responsibility, obligation, and answerability of the Sangguniang Barangay in enacting local ordinances to promote climate change readiness. The concept of responsibility, obligation, and answerability of the Sangguniang Barangay is reflected in the enabling factor, which is operationally defined as the policies serving as the foundation for exercising political accountability among the Sangguniang Barangay members. Consequently, the results yield three semantic roles: planning, monitoring, and reporting. The variables utilized to gauge political accountability performance are anchored in these components. On the other hand, barangay readiness for climate change is measured by the presence of the three elements, namely Prevent, Prepare, and Responds, in the ordinances and climate change programs. These elements are derived from Stern's (2007) study titled "The Economics of Climate Change."

Table 2 – Significant relationship between climate change readiness and political accountability performance

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Prevent</i>	<i>Prepare</i>	<i>Respond</i>	<i>Reporting</i>	<i>Monitoring</i>
<i>Prepare</i>	.478**				
<i>Respond</i>	.205*	.564**			
<i>Reporting</i>	.221*	.137	.134		
<i>Monitoring</i>	.127	.156	.086	.850**	
<i>Planning</i>	.184	.206	.157	.881**	.919**
* Significant at 0.05 level					
** Significant at 0.01 level					

The table illustrates the significant correlation between climate change and political accountability performance. Notably, there is a strong relationship between prevent and prepare ($r=0.48$), prepare and respond ($r=0.56$), reporting and monitoring ($r=0.85$), reporting and planning ($r=0.88$), and monitoring and planning ($r=0.92$), all of which are statistically significant at the 0.01 level. Additionally, prevent and respond ($r=0.21$) and prevent and reporting ($r=0.22$) show a significant relationship at the 0.05 level. On the other hand, prepare and reporting ($r=0.14$), respond and reporting ($r=0.13$), prevent and monitoring ($r=0.13$), prepare and monitoring ($r=0.16$), respond and monitoring ($r=0.09$), prevent and planning ($r=0.18$), prepare and planning ($r=0.21$), and respond and planning ($r=0.16$) indicate positive relationships, but no statistically significant level of correlation. Therefore it indicate that while there was no overall collective relationship between political accountability performance and barangay readiness, positive relationships were observed at the component level, showing a direct proportionality. The low positive level of association between the individual components of political accountability and barangay readiness suggests the presence of potential moderating factors that could influence their relationship, which aligns with the findings of the UNDP study (2008). As the research is evaluative in nature, it explores three potential moderating variables: participation, capabilities of ordinance, and the nature of prioritization. The simulation of these moderating variables could be the key determining factor behind this intriguing result. As highlighted in the studies by Brillantes et al. (2011), UN-ISDR (2005), Twigg (2007), and Tanner et al. (2010), governance mechanisms possess the capacity to respond and adapt to complexities related to climate change readiness (Birkbeck, 2009). Thus, the low level of relationship between political accountability performance and barangay readiness points to a moderate level of commitment between participation, prioritization, and the capabilities of the ordinance.

What are the public participatory mechanism which were employed by the barangay in performing their political accountability to improve citizen's awareness for climate change readiness?

The Malabon city government has taken proactive steps to address climate change by enacting and implementing various adaptation and mitigation programs. They have allocated

funds to support these initiatives and have also introduced new projects in response to climate change challenges. However, certain programs require crucial participation from the citizens to be successful.

Table 3 – Mean and standard deviation of citizen participation to the city programs for climate change

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
Anti-cigarette smoking campaign	2.94	1.08	Partial Participation
Proper waste disposal	2.93	1.25	Partial Participation
Urban gardening	2.87	1.11	Partial Participation
Walkable and Bike-friendly program	2.68	1.16	Partial Participation
Control of smoke belching vehicle	2.52	1.13	Partial Participation
TOTAL	2.79		Partial Participation

The table presents the mean scores for various programs: anti-cigarette smoking campaign (M=2.94, S.D.=1.08), proper waste disposal (M=2.93, S.D.=1.25), urban gardening (M=2.87, S.D.=1.11), walkable and bike-friendly program (M=2.68, S.D.=1.16), and control of smoke-belching vehicles (M=2.52, S.D.=1.13). The overall interpretation indicates a moderate level of participation with an average mean score of 2.79. The standard deviation reflects the variability of responses among the respondents.

Table 4 – Percentage of times of participation in barangay per year

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Once in a year	4	3.8	4.2	4.2
	Twice a year	23	21.9	24.2	28.4
	Three times a year	35	33.3	36.8	65.3
	Four times a year	10	9.5	10.5	75.8
	Five times a year	22	21.0	23.2	98.9
	Six times a year	1	1.0	1.1	100.0
	Total	95	90.5	100.0	
Missing	System	10	9.5		
Total		105	100.0		

Table 5 – Percentage of participation conducted in Barangay to improve awareness in climate change impacts

	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Orientation	54.3	100.0	100.0
Dialogue	28.6	100.0	100.0
Seminar	34.3	100.0	100.0
Symposium	28.6	100.0	100.0
Forum	25.7	100.0	100.0

The Table 4 and 5 indicate that the barangay has implemented various strategies to raise awareness among the residents about the implications of climate change on their lives. A significant percentage of respondents stated that they were encouraged to participate in climate change activities three times a year (33.3%), twice a year (21.9%), and five times a year (21.0%), demonstrating that orientations, dialogues, seminars, symposiums, and forums were organized by their barangay for climate change readiness. However, the data below presents the actual number of citizens who participated in these specific barangay programs for climate change. The findings indicate that citizen participation in government activities for climate change readiness is not fully voluntary, and this lack of participation affects the relationship between political accountability and climate change readiness. The study supports the Theory of Citizens Participation, as proposed by Patrick et al. (2011), which emphasizes the positive outcome of citizen participation in governance, leading to greater political satisfaction and successful governance systems.

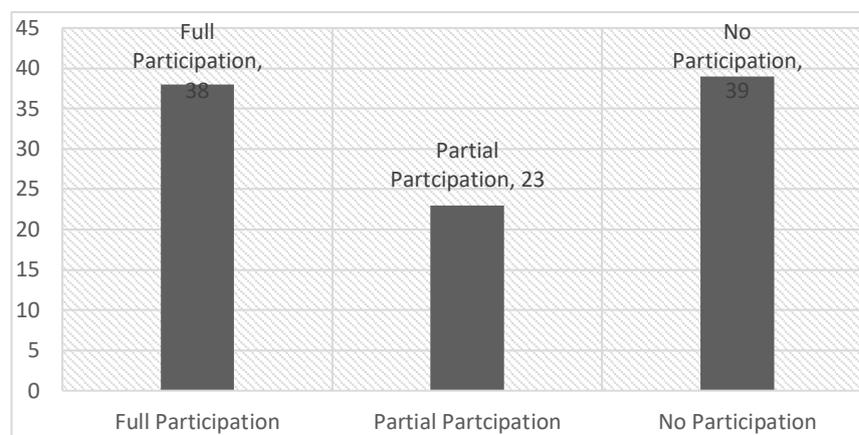


Figure 1 – Represents the percentage number of participants in barangay

The data presented illustrates the percentage of citizens who participated in barangay activities for climate change. The results show that 38 percent of the citizens participated fully in all barangay activities, while 23 percent participated partially as occasional participants, and 39 percent never participated in any of the programs or activities conducted by the barangay. The unexpected findings from the survey results were further supported by the documented data obtained from each barangay. These data indicate that not all citizens are fully committed to participating in the barangay's climate change programs. The partial participation of some citizens highlights the importance of not solely relying on the government's efforts, but also on the cooperation and involvement of citizens in achieving a climate resilient community, as emphasized in the study by Johnson et al. (2011).

What are the capabilities of barangay ordinances for climate change legislated by the Sangguniang Barangay?

Based on the operational definition employed in this research, capabilities pertain to the effectiveness and significance of the ordinances enacted by the Sangguniang Barangay for addressing climate change. The barangay has been granted the specific legal authority to adopt and implement existing ordinances from the city related to climate change.

Figure 2 – Percentage of ordinance adoption in barangay

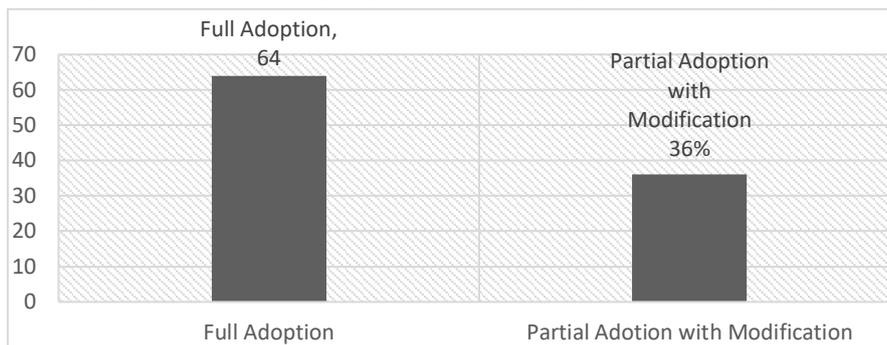


Figure 2 illustrates the percentage of ordinance adoption in each barangay. It shows that 64 percent of the Sangguniang Barangay respondents fully adopted their barangay ordinance from the city, while the remaining 36 percent partially adopted the city ordinance.

Figure 3 – Percentage of enacted activities for climate change

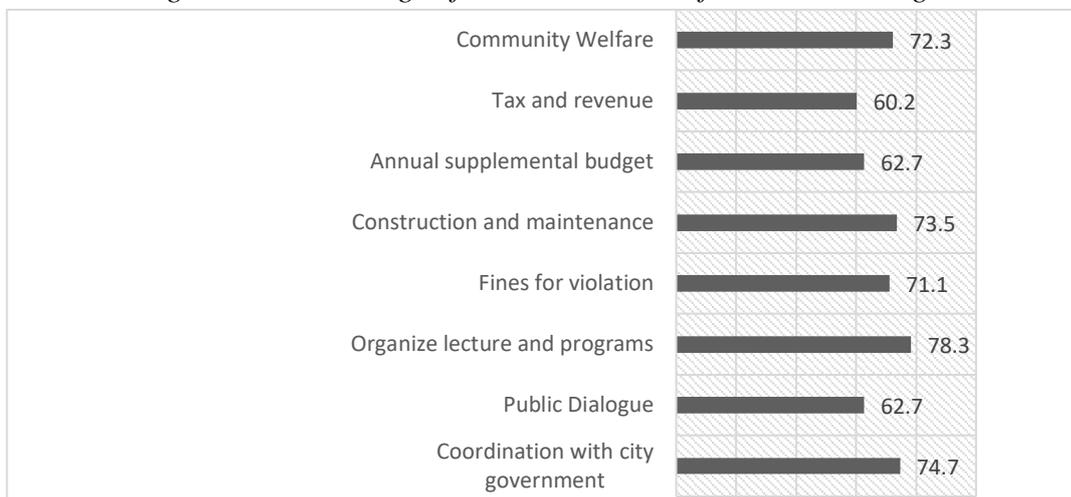


Figure 3 depicts the percentage of enacted activities by the barangay, which includes regular lectures, programs or fora on community problems related to climate change (78.3%), coordination with the City Government on matters relating to climate change (74.7%), promotion of community welfare relative to climate change (72.3%), construction and maintenance of barangay facilities for climate resilience (73.5%), prescribing fines for violation of climate change ordinances (71.1%), conducting public dialogues on climate change (62.7%), allocation of annual and supplemental budgets for climate resilience (62.7%), and enactment of tax and revenue ordinances (60.2%). The barangay's actions in coordinating with the city government on climate change matters (74.4%) and ensuring the construction and maintenance of facilities for climate resilience (73.5%) reflect their commitment to comply with R.A. 10121 sec. 12 par. (a), which emphasizes the direction, development, implementation, and coordination of disaster risk management programs to prepare for climate change impacts. Additionally, the barangay's responsibilities in imposing fines for climate change ordinance violations (71.1%), allocating budgets for climate resilience (62.7%), and enacting tax and revenue ordinances (60.2%) are in accordance with the local government code. These activities play a vital role in supporting the needs of individuals affected by natural disasters and act as authoritative strategies to monitor pollution caused by businesses or establishments in Malabon. Therefore, the capabilities of

barangay ordinances are divided into two dimensions: (a) Ordinance through Adoption and (b) Ordinance through Enactment.

Ordinance Through Adoption:

As per the provisions of the local government code, barangay ordinances must align with the principles and content of city ordinances. R.A. 7160 sec. 57 and sec. 391 (5) outline the role of the Sangguniang Panlungsod or Sangguniang Bayan in reviewing the ordinances drafted by the Sangguniang Barangay. Table 7 clearly indicates that most barangays in Malabon adopt the city's ordinance for climate change. The high percentage of total adoption from city ordinances reflects the varying nature of prioritization among the Sangguniang Barangay.

Ordinance Through Enactments:

Under R.A. 7160, sec. 391 paragraph (a), the Sangguniang Barangay is granted the authority to enact ordinances and is regarded as the legislative body of the barangay. Table 8 showcases the range of activities for climate change that are enacted by the Sangguniang Barangay. The significance of these barangay ordinances is based on the principles outlined in the Climate Change Act (R.A. 9729), Philippine DRRMC Act (R.A. 10121), and the city ordinances for climate change. These enacted activities represent the authoritative strategies employed by the barangay in fulfilling their political accountability.

What are the priority ordinances enacted by the Sangguniang Barangay in the exercise of their political accountability that serve as the basis of the barangay readiness for climate change?

The typical and pragmatic matters that commonly arise within the barangay, along with the problematic areas that require resolution, form the spheres of prioritization for the barangay ordinances enacted by the Sangguniang Barangay.

Table 6 – Mean and Standard Deviation of subjected area of concern which should be prioritized in barangay ordinances.

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Verbal Interpretation
Maintaining peace and order	3.90	.24	Strongly Agree
Communication and advocacy program	3.77	.66	Strongly Agree
Educational program	3.76	.58	Strongly Agree
Solid waste disposal	3.73	.70	Strongly Agree
Youth development	3.65	.57	Strongly Agree
Health and sanitation	3.62	.58	Strongly Agree
Disaster and risk preparedness	3.59	.78	Strongly Agree

Pollution control	3.57	.74	Strongly Agree
Infrastructure projects	3.55	.79	Strongly Agree
Livelihood project	3.54	.70	Strongly Agree
Poverty alleviation	3.06	1.11	Agree

The data presented in the table represents the mean scores for the areas of concern that should be given priority in the barangay ordinance. The areas include maintaining peace and order (M=3.90, S.D.=0.24), communication and advocacy program (M=3.77, S.D.=0.66), educational program (M=3.76, S.D.=0.58), solid waste disposal (M=3.73, S.D.=0.70), youth development (M=3.65, S.D.=0.57), health and sanitation (M=3.62, S.D.=0.58), disaster and risk preparedness (M=3.59, S.D.=0.78), pollution control (M=3.57, S.D.=0.74), infrastructure projects (M=3.55, S.D.=0.79), and poverty alleviation (M=3.06, S.D.=1.11). The results suggest that the Sangguniang Barangay respondents are highly attentive to their areas of priority, indicating that their subjective assessment is based on what they consider essential for their constituents. This premise is supported by the research of Canares (2009) and Polark (2011), which emphasize the challenges of prioritization in climate change initiatives. However, the surprising mean score of 3.06 for poverty alleviation, with a verbal interpretation of "Agree" and a standard deviation of 1.11, reveals that there is a diversity of perspectives among the Sangguniang Barangay respondents regarding poverty alleviation in their barangay, as indicated by the wide dispersion of responses.

Conclusion

The study's low positive correlation between political accountability performance and climate change readiness indicates the presence of intervening factors, as supported by UNDP (2008). Challenges in prioritization and participatory approaches between the government and citizens, as mentioned by Canares (2009) and Polark (2011), may have influenced this relationship. These factors are considered as moderating variables affecting the association between political accountability and climate change readiness. The study confirms that decentralization, citizen's participation, and accountability are interconnected elements for climate change readiness. Additionally, the findings indicate that citizen participation in government activities for climate change readiness is not fully voluntary, and this lack of participation affects the relationship between political accountability and climate change readiness. The study supports the Theory of Citizens Participation, as proposed by Patrick et al. (2011), which emphasizes the positive outcome of citizen participation in governance, leading to greater political satisfaction and successful governance systems. The capabilities and substantiality of barangay ordinances are influenced by the prioritization of specific areas of concern. Decentralization empowers the Sangguniang Barangay as the legislative body, but their personal beliefs and interests can shape their participation. The nature of prioritization in ordinances for climate change presents challenges to the political accountability of Sangguniang Barangay in legislating effective policies for climate change readiness. This affects the government's ability to respond adequately to the impact of climate change, especially when political interests of officials come into play. Given the nature of prioritization and varying political advocacies among public officials, there is a need for stricter implementation of important programs. The Sangguniang Barangay should enact

policies that align with the national campaign for a climate-resilient community. Sustainability of programs for climate change is crucial, and legislators must be mindful of ways to ensure program continuity. Some city ordinances have existed through different mayoral terms but lack strong enforcement. To achieve sustainability, follow-up measures must be put in place.

Recommendation

Malabon, located in Metro Manila, is known to be susceptible to severe flooding. According to the study conducted by Pornasodoro et al. (2014), each barangay in Metro Manila was categorized into different flood vulnerability layers, ranging from VERY HIGH to VERY LOW. Malabon falls under the HIGH flood vulnerability layer, indicating a significant risk of flooding by the years 2020 and 2030. The following is the list of barangays in Malabon that are considered to be at high risk of flooding.

CITY/MUNICIPALITY	BARANGAYS	
	HIGH RISK	VERY HIGH RISK
Malabon City	Dampalit, Catmon, Muzon, Conception, San Agustin, Niugan, Longos, Potrero	Tonsuya
***Pornasodoro et., al., Journal in Urban and Regional Planning (2014)		

The study conducted by Pornasodoro et al. (2014) emphasized the crucial importance of strong coordination and political commitment at the local level in prioritizing climate change efforts. The findings of this study revealed a significant aspect that challenges the relationship between political accountability performance and climate change readiness. Despite the government's provision of programs for climate change readiness, there are weak strategies in place that may be subject to alteration, especially with changes in public office terms. Therefore, the Sangguniang Barangay should focus on the following key areas:

1. **Strong Coordination with the City Government:** The Barangay needs to establish effective and robust coordination with the city government. This includes being aware of and aligning with prioritized projects of government agencies such as the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) in addressing recurring issues in Metro Manila.
2. **Sustainability of Programs:** The Sangguniang Barangay must develop a framework for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of climate change programs. Ensuring the long-term sustainability of these initiatives is vital to their success.
3. **Strengthening Citizen's Participation:** Encouraging active citizen participation is a common challenge faced by every barangay. The Sangguniang Barangay must implement practical measures that strategically encourage people to participate. Raising citizen awareness can be achieved by distributing pamphlets or paraphernalia containing essential and experience-based information about the impacts of climate change.

4. **Rigorous Implementation of Climate Change Programs:** The study highlighted that current barangay ordinances primarily focus on peace and order and reflect the Sangguniang Barangay's own perspectives for their constituents. To support the city's goal of becoming a climate resilient community, the Sangguniang Barangay must ensure that their policies are rigorous and well-aligned with the impacts of climate change on citizens' lives. An open-minded approach to understanding the complexities of climate change is essential in this regard.

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The Successful Graduate Students' Research Supervision Pedagogy

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Abstract

To make up the successful graduate students' supervision, pedagogical practices are presented in this research. Upon reviewing the existing research works in the same research area, together with the tested four hypotheses for this research, the analyzed raw data was collected by a questionnaire that was answered by ninety qualified respondents. Those hypotheses are: (i) the supervisor's expertise in the research domain has a lot to do with the successful graduate students' research; (ii) the regular supervisory research meeting positively contributes to the successful graduate students supervision pedagogy (GSSP); (iii) the feedback on the work in progress has a positive relationship with successful GSSP; (iv) graduate students' research supervisor's advice and morale positively contribute to the successful graduate research students' supervision pedagogy. On the 35 Likert-types statistically scaled queries, we used the Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis to test the relationship between variables of this study. In results, the highest correlation of 0.78 is found between the expertise of supervisors in the subject (EIS) and the regular group meeting (RGM): two of the designed statistical model's parameters. The universality of the truth might depend on the research disciplines, location, motivation, and system, but this research results in the successful graduate student supervision process that is based on regular research meeting favoring the interactive learning environments where the expertise of supervisors governs. In case of the distance learning, the supervised research work's report is preferably done on computer-mediated communication systems; based on which, together with the intelligent tutoring systems, plagiarism will certainly be avoided.

Keywords: Graduate Students Supervision Pedagogy (GSSP), Interactive Learning Environments, Computer-Based Tutoring, Cross-Cultural Projects

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Introduction

In this manuscript, the focus is on graduate student research supervision, which must be done following some pedagogical approaches; by defining pedagogy as the practice of teaching. Supervision and mentorship can be used interchangeably in this manuscript.

The hands-on pedagogy develops more trust and guarantees direct supervisors supporting hands to their research students. The hands-off pedagogy leads to a slow and even a non-completion status for the supervisees. According to Sinclair (2004, p. 26), the supports by supervisors are limited during the hands-off supervision pedagogy, and in that case candidates are always unwilling to approach their supervisors and this is often practiced in the social sciences, humanities and arts where the laboratory and workshop works can be replaced by software and simulation works done on computers. When hands-off pedagogy is practiced in the natural sciences and Engineering (without any idea of computer-mediated communication as well as the intelligent tutoring systems), supervisors are unwilling to co-publish with their students because they are not only unsure of the papers quality but also fear unethical behavior of parasitism.

The graduate students' research supervision process is the guiding of research students' activities, aiming at the successful completion. This is often based on relationship and trust between the supervisors and supervisees (Halse & Malfroy, 2010; Maor & Currie, 2017, p.14). The graduate students' research supervision has been mentioned as a research process of training a supervisee to be independent (Lee, 2008, p. 7). In any case, there must be a considerable amount of research works that were previously done by the supervisors themselves with the same functional approach and in same field as the research students.

Graduate students' research education is evaluated with a very big contribution to raise up good educators for the next generation (Kumar & Lee, 2011, p.22).

Regarding the supervisors and PhD students who are under a multicultural environment and sometimes working on the cross-cultural projects, according to Mcleod (2009), the research evaluated how cultural issues are handled while supervising academic research works under multicultural environment's relationship between the supervisory team and the research students. The collected data was analyzed using a phenomenological framework, where the recorded interviews were coded and put in different themes based on the experiences of the participants. The themes explained how cultural issues are solved during supervision process; the included are the setting of discussions among multicultural research members as well as the interaction between students of different academic levels. The interviewees also described the positive and negative issues in multicultural PhD supervision environment as well as their impact on relationship between the supervisors and Graduate Research students. The negative findings were the withdrawal of PhD students, the decreasing mutual confidence, and the lack of growth in competence and research abilities. The positive issues include self-confidence and success in individual research. For further information about the joint process of the Graduate Students' Research journey between the students and the entire supervisory team, more documentation can be made (Brew, 2003; Kobayashi, Grout, & Rump, 2013; Kumar & Lee, 2011; Lee, 2007).

In case of conflicts, the university will act as mediator between the supervisees and the supervisors and a research institution plays a crucial role in solving conflicts which might

obstruct the successful Graduate Students' Research supervision tasks (Nellis, Hawkins, Redico, & Way, 2011).

Supervisors must abide by the existing institution's regulations which would be surely in place. It is observed that the concept of Graduate Students' Research supervision is a universal procedure (Reguero, Carvajal, & Valverde, 2017) and supervisors normally learn as well (Halse, 2011, p. 3-4).

Supervisors need to listen to their research students' original ideas, and then the guidance switch would be accordingly tuned. The supervision situation worsens if the student isn't inquisitive at all, that's the self-centered students (Almeida-Souza & Baets, 2012).

Besides, the core idea to mentorship is based on a developed relationship, and some of the core functions of being a good mentor are, but not limited to: (i) the primary personal relationship between the mentor and the research students; (ii) providing emotional, psychological and moral supports; (iii) directly helping the research students' mind towards their future careers; (iv) being their role model on showing the way; (v) developing trust, confidence and mutual respect between the student and mentor.

According to Wade et al (2011, p. 46), the research is referred to as an act of "finding out what wasn't known before." Nonetheless, the research is, by definition, a process of collecting and analyzing the information to enrich the societal understanding of a certain topic. It generally involves the problem statement and the data collection to answer the posed problems (Creswell, 2008).

The high quality is needed in the tasks of postgraduate research supervision at all the concerned levels: individual, school and institutional (Garvis & Pendergast, 2012; Nulty, Kiley, & Meyers, 2016). The emphasized factors that influence the GSSP are based on skills of both the supervisees and the supervisors (Odena & Burgess, 2017).

Therefore, the research question in the present work is: "what would a successful graduate student supervision pedagogical approach be, and how would the poor graduate student supervision pedagogy be measured?"

The specific objective of this research is "to study the relationship between supervisor and graduate research students which can lead to the success."

Relying on the experience of the authors together with different ideas from the interviews with experts in the domain, the research objective is set along with four specific hypotheses which are expected to be scientifically proven by the data and results. The research hypotheses are:

- The supervisor's expertise in the research domain has a positive relationship with successful GSSP.
- The regular supervisory research meeting positively contributes to the successful GSSP.
- The feedback on the work in progress has a positive relationship with successful GSSP.
- The graduate students' research supervisor's advice and moral positively contribute to the successful graduate research students' supervision pedagogy.

This research is neither limited to regions nor any research disciplines (science, engineering, etc.), its scope is on the GSSP.

The remaining part of this research work is organized into the materials and methods which constitute a 2nd section where the conceptual research framework is designed, and the model formulated on basis of four hypotheses. The 3rd section presents the obtained results and the discussion based on those results; finally, the conclusion, the acknowledgments, and the list of references.

Materials and Methods

The research framework, as a set of interconnected entities built from the initially set objectives and principles, is designed under this section. Goals are normally identified along with objectives, which clearly put up the research concepts that help to achieve the initially set objectives. Learned from Williams (2015) and Smyth (2003), the descriptive and correlation-based research approach is applied on the questionnaire's data; the main ideas are summarized by the conceptual flowchart in Figure 1.

The inputs to the research theme were utilized as the parameters to design the research questionnaire and to formulate the research model.

The parameters and inputs to the questionnaire were formulated from opinions in the interview with experts as well as the ideas from some previous research works (Askew, Dixon, McCormick, Callaghan, & Wang, 2016; Maor & Currie, 2017; Sinclair, 2004). Different pedagogical issues as well as the interactive learning environments experienced by this manuscript's authors played a vital role to design the conceptual research method's framework as well as the inherent model.

There are many factors that influence relationship in the academic research environment, such as mutual interests, previous experience, prior knowledge at the research onset, the supervisor's roles, and supervisory styles. The effective and successful supervision of graduate students' research during the training stage is judged from multiple factors and processes that do not only involve the relationship, but also the research equipment as well as the research institution's rules and regulations to supervise (Askew et al., 2016; Orellana, Darder, Pérez, & Salinas, 2016).

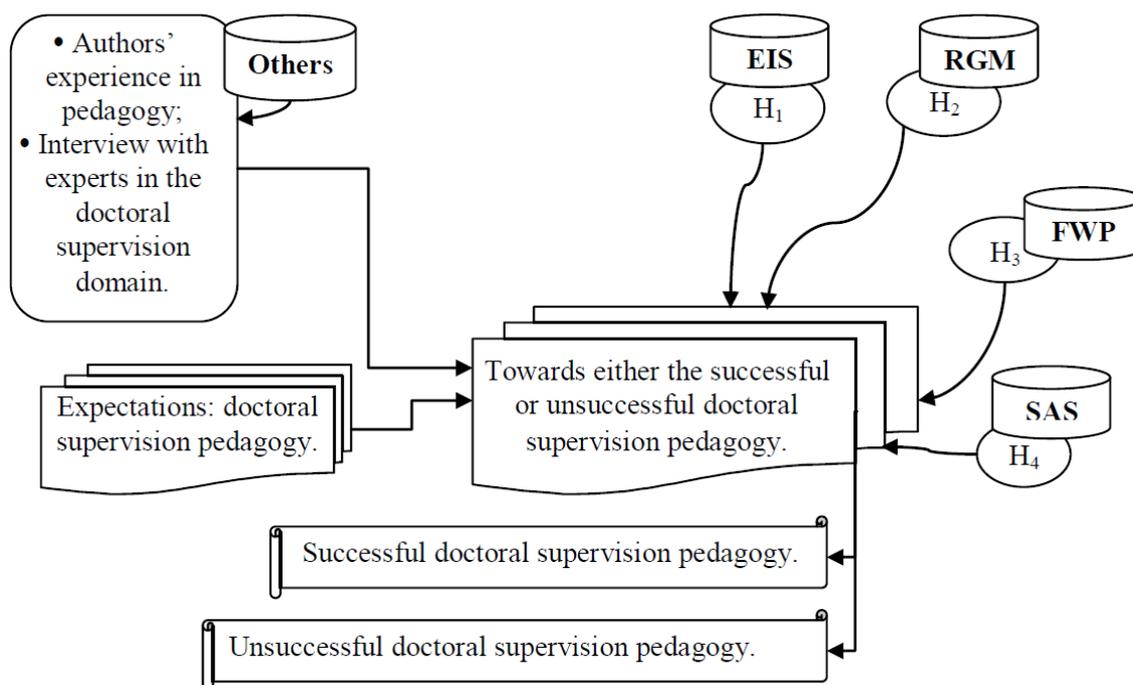


Figure 1: The conceptual research method's framework

A case of a single supervision session in comparison with a team of multiple supervisors from the faculty of life science was studied for relationship (Kobayashi, Grout, & Rump, 2013). They found out that opportunities were developed through the diverging voices of the supervisors.

In the current research, the designed questionnaire contains the total of 35 queries built on the 5-point Likert scaled responses. The study was conducted on basis of the convenience sampling method. For the distributed questionnaires, ninety (90) copies were returned in total. Respondents were from the five authors' host universities and research institutions, who have PhD or who are PhD Students.

The preponderance of previously published research papers is acknowledgeable; however, personal approval, based on individual authors' experience in the domain, significantly contributed to this research. Particularly, in terms of the eminence of the provided information, both qualitative and quantitative research methods are used, but qualitative methods are the most applicable to the studies emphasizing the relationship between the studied subjects. Thus, the study questionnaire's queries were based on the research objectives and hypotheses.

The questionnaire, as the main research tool, is subdivided into two main sections: the first section is compulsorily inquiring about the personal data of the respondents, targeting to know the respondents' age range, the education level, and the academic position. The personal information helped the research to judge on and accommodate the respondents' additional comments and opinions. The questionnaire's second section was oriented to the main queries organized into 4 sub-sections, which have been made the inputs to the research model. Under the four sub-sections, the queries aimed at testing the expertise of supervisors in the research subject and testing the admission time. They also tested the regular research group meeting, the feedback (and pressure) on research work in progress, and supervisor' advice and support.

Besides, the model has been designed and utilized on the data to generate the results. The four parameters which were considered as hypotheses as well as the inputs to the research model, are explained as follows:

- The first hypothesis (H₁): the expertise of supervisors in the research subject (EIS), to test the graduate students' admission process.
- The second hypothesis (H₂): the regular research group meeting (RGM) is set to test the progress of supervision and the contribution of both supervisor and student.
- The third hypothesis (H₃): the feedback on the research work progress (FWP), to test the pressure impact as well as the hands off/on pedagogy.
- The fourth hypothesis (H₄): the Supervisor's advice and support (SAS), to test the running time of the GSSP.

The mediating variables that had been identified during the interview with experts are the trust, respect, timing, and investment. It is worth stating that the research method's framework, in Figure 1, was designed based on the authors' experience of being supervised and performing the supervision duties. The experts' opinions given during the interview as well as the literature review's ideas contributed to shape the research methodology too.

The Model Formulation

The regression model, Y, is a function of hypotheses X_i, and coefficients, β_i, with i=0, 1, 2... such that:

$$Y = \beta_0 + X_1\beta_1 + X_2\beta_2 + X_3\beta_3 + X_4\beta_4 + \varepsilon$$

or

$$ESP = \beta_0 + \beta_1EIS + \beta_2RGM + \beta_3FWP + \beta_4SAS + \varepsilon \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

Y = ESP, the Expectation for the GSSP, varying from -1 to 1 when it comes to correlations matrix.

- EIS, the expertise of supervisors in subject.
- RGM, the regular group meeting.
- FWP, the feedback on the work progress.
- SAS, the supervisor's advice and support; ε is the error term.

For the test, the null hypothesis is H₀ such that:

$$H_0 = \beta_1 = \beta_2 = \beta_3 = \beta_4 = 0 \dots\dots\dots (2)$$

Alternative hypotheses are H_{1,2,3,4} and β_{1,2,3,4} such that:

$$H_{1,2,3,4} \neq 0 \text{ and } \beta_{1,2,3,4} \neq 0 \dots\dots\dots (3)$$

Any two of them are at least significant, as the overall model's significance is tested via F-test F(m₁, m₂), such that:

$$F(m_1, m_2) = \frac{V_1 / M_1}{V_2 / M_2} \dots\dots\dots (4)$$

- V₁ , the variation summation due to explanatory variable.
- V₂ , the summation of non-explained variation (squared residuals).
- M₁ , the degrees of freedom of K explanatory variables (K-1).
- M₂ , the residual degrees of freedom (N-K).

The information in the questionnaire was then edited (or rearranged) following the variables of the designed model, coded and tabulated by using SPSS (version 21), so as to generate the necessary results. Looking at Table 1, the R square evaluated to 0.796 units, which is greater than 0.70, explains the good fitting of the data with the designed model.

Table 1: The Model in Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.892 ^a	0.796	0.723	0.41175

^a stands for predictors: (Constant), EIS, RGM, FWP, AS

Analysis of the Research Data

To generate the research results in the purposed line of research and to test the hypotheses, the analysis of data was carried out by SPSS, a software tool. The data reliability is measured by the Cronbach Alpha (Azure, 2016; Croasmun & Ostrom, 2011). To meet the criteria of reliability, Cronbach Alpha should be equal to or be more than 0.70. Pearson correlation and multiple regression analysis was used as methods to test the relationship between variables of this study.

Results and Discussion

The Results Based on Reliability And Validity Test

Presented in Table 2, the test value of Cronbach alpha for the expertise of a supervisor in the subject is 0.838; that for the regular research group meeting is 0.754; that for the feedback on the research work progress is 0.790 and that for the supervisor's advice and support is 0.846. All the values are greater than 0.70, to means both the reliability and validity of the data are proven. Their representative mean, variance, and standard deviation are shown in Table 3.

Besides, the correlations Matrix, in Table 4, is built between all the parameters involved in the research model; all the parameters (otherwise referred to as variables) are in the positive correlation. The correlation coefficients range from 0.204 to 0.820, knowing that the benchmark is from -1 to +1. As the analysis of variance (ANOVA) is carried out, the findings are briefly summarized in Table 5 and Table 6; the predictors were evaluated through multiple regression analysis.

Table 2: The results based on Cronbach Alpha and descriptive statistical test
(Primary data source, 2022)

Variables	Cronbach Alpha Reliability Test	Descriptive Mean	Statistical test for the Standard Deviation
EIS	0.838	4.0500	0.79173
RGM	0.754	3.9200	0.52476
FWP	0.790	4.4625	0.45541
SAS	0.846	3.5625	0.85792

Table 3: Scale Statistics (Source: Primary data, 2022)

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
19.9750	7.141	2.67231	4

Table 4: Correlations Matrix

	EIS	RGM	FWP	SAS
EIS	1			
RGM	0.787**	1		
FWP	0.566	0.456*	1	
SAS	0.204	0.330	0.612*	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 5: ANOVA test

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Significance
1	Regression	9.265	4	1.853	10.929	0.000 ^b
	Residual	2.373	14	0.170		
	Total	11.638				

^b Predictors: (Constant), EIS, RGM, FWP, SAS

- For the third hypothesis, H₃, testing the feedback on the research work progress, there is a positive significant role, 1.4%, of expectations in the successful GSSP.
- For the fourth hypothesis, H₄, testing the supervisor's advice and support, there is a positive significant role, 0.3%, of expectations in the successful Graduate Students' Research supervision pedagogy. This shows that all alternative hypotheses are acceptably proven.

Table 6: Regression coefficient analysis

Model		Non-standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.216	1.113	(β)	1.093	0.293
	EIS	0.442	0.177	0.448	2.499	0.026
	RGM	0.605	0.327	0.406	1.853	0.085
	FWP	0.663	0.334	0.428	1.785	0.014
	SAS	0.428	0.251	0.418	2.305	0.003

All the values, in Table 6, are calculated on basis of the Likert-Type scale (Croasmun & Ostrom, 2011); thus, the effects are studied:

- For first hypothesis, H₁, testing the significance of expertise of a supervisor in the research subject. The first hypothesis has a positive significant role, 2.6%, as expected for the successful GSSP.
- For the second hypothesis, H₂, testing the regular research group meeting, there is a strong relationship with expectations in the successful GSSP. The significance is 8.5%.

Discussion

The supervision process requires both dedication and skills. To be a good and successful graduate students' research supervisor, there is a need of the deep involvement into the continuous and interactive learning dialogues by both the supervisory team and research students. The relationship and interactive learning environments should not only be developed in academic affairs but also in cultural awareness and appreciation of cross-cultural differences in learning approach. The cross-cultural projects are especially important when Graduate Students' Research students are increasing in number and cultural backgrounds as well as topics and methodologies that students might undertake (Wisker, as cited in Knowles, 2007, p. 101).

A graduate students' research scholar must be given a certain freedom to think and judge.

A successful graduate students' research supervisor is a moral person who oversees, trains, and assists the minds of the researchers to make original scientific outcomes, to publish articles in leading and no-predatory journals, to possibly publish books with leading publishers and to make technical designs. The graduate student supervision process is not an act of putting much pressure on a graduate student; it is rather a wise way to regularly assess the success of the pre-planned and scheduled research activities. In case of any distant separation between supervisors and supervisees, the modern era of computer and network technologies must be exploited and supervisors would better get familiar with the intelligent tutoring systems (Aleven, McLaren, Sewall, & Koedinger, 2009). A training on some tutoring systems is necessary, an example is taken on Moodle (Krassa, 2013); it would be an added pedagogical issue to make sure the research works match with the current standards.

The research supervision, at the graduate students' research level, is merely considered as readiness to being consulted by students. As documented from Määttä (2012), and putting together with the findings in this research work, four qualities of the good supervision process are (i) the supervisor's will or commitment to do the supervision duties; (ii) the knowledge if not the understanding of the supervision process; (iii) the practice of the supervision to ensure the research is done under scientific quality; (iv) the institutional updates, training, and proficiency in the matter of Graduate Students Supervision Pedagogy (GSSP).

All those points must be combined with the maintained good personality and professional ethics in teaching which is technically assessed as the very good teaching portfolio.

It is argued that the distant graduate students' research programs can be done online (depending on the major field of research), supported by video conferencing calls. Through these channels, the communication with supervisors cannot be restricted as it would be while scheduling regular research group meeting. The distant relationship should be authentic and the inherent feedback during the online communication must be timely done. That's to say, supervisors should be interested and motivated in teaching the supervisees, in a way that makes the supervised students feel supported and encouraged. This relationship should involve bi-directional trust.

For the brighter academic future, the graduate students' research supervision should be based on the true knowledge where any kind of superstition (Cortes-Ramírez, 2014, p. 27) must be avoided. This research puts forward the relationship in the hands-on pedagogy, necessary for

the successful graduate students' research supervision practice; but, the emphasis is put on the regular group meeting organized in such a way that graduate students research students get enough time to present their work progress reports. During the meeting, a sharp eye must be put on the pre-scheduled time; the graduate students research supervisor's advice and supports in the same research direction are valuable, in the mutual academic respect. The meeting will be organized in the form of forums where graduate students and research supervisors are invited, at least once per month or per trimester. In academic forums, not only supervisors normally comment on the presented research progress reports, but also the Graduate Students research fellows give comments with enough supports. In the contrary, the hands-off supervision, under whatever circumstances, is evaluated unsuccessful graduate students' research supervision pedagogy. The hands-off pedagogy often ends up with plagiarism; an example is taken from publications which were made by translating other languages' published works, and such graduate research students can neither defend the source of their research data nor explain their paper's results. Such behaviors are academically rejected, if not banned. Plagiarism checking software tools are recommended: the successful supervisor should beware of originality; not only the text, but also data and results must be scrutinized.

Conclusion

Successful graduate students' research supervision strongly relies on a relationship between research students and their supervisors. A superstition-free relationship is suggested for the successful graduate student supervision process, which will be balanced and rooted on regular research meeting. Viewing the graduate student supervision in three-dimensions (3D) with the mindset that a graduate student must be given freedom to think and judge as a first author of his/her research, the group size and nature (cross-cultural projects or not) will be one of the dimensions. The supervisor's role would be a second dimension and finally, the supervisory team would be considered as a third dimension.

Based on this research data and results, this research is an added value to the existent research works in the field of education: the research methodology engaged many parameters as inputs to the pedagogical issues for the successful graduate students' research supervision.

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Appendix: The Research Questionnaire: Assessment of the "successful graduate student supervision pedagogical approach and hand the poor graduate students supervision pedagogy "

Dear respondent, as Supervisors of several research topics, we are conducting a research on the **"successful versus unsuccessful graduate student research supervision pedagogy"** with the motives to be published. We wish that readers would improve their skills in the graduate student supervision pedagogy by referring to our article. Though we have got some eye-witnessed findings and have reviewed substantial publications, we'd furthermore contribute to this research; your valuable inputs are highly appreciated. You'd, please base on your experience being the PhD student, the PhD theses Supervisor or/and the co-supervisor, to fill in this questionnaire, which takes less than 20 minutes. In any case, you may have any further inquiry regarding this issue, please reach out to us, via the email: g.rushingabigwi@gmail.com or phones: +250 785 469 187.

As you fill in the questionnaire's soft copy, you'd please copy this box and paste it where you want to tick (just replacing the empty box). If you are filling it in hard, you'd please use a pen to tick only one choice. Thank you!

Part I: Personal Data: *Very Important, Thank You!

1. Age*

- 20-25
- 26-30
- 31-35
- 36-40
- 41-50
- 51-60
- 61 and above

2. Education Level*

- PhD
- PhD Student

3. Position*

- PhD Theses Supervisor
- PhD Theses Co-Supervisor
- Postdoctoral Researcher
- PhD Student
- None of the above. *Please precise:*

Part II: The Questionnaire

Please note that, throughout, “1” means “**Strongly disagree**”; “3” means “**Agreed on average**” and “5” means “**Strongly agree**”.

Admission Time (Please tick one with)

1. A PhD Thesis Supervisor should be involved in the Admission of PhD Students (*ie.* during the candidates selection process).
 1 2 3 4 5
2. The PhD Research Proposal should fall in the category of the Supervisor's research fields and interests, no exceptions; 1 2 3 4 5
3. The initially proposed PhD Research Topic can be modified several times.
 1 2 3 4 5
4. The supervisor would better contribute to the inputs in the PhD Research Proposal.
 1 2 3 4 5
5. A PhD Student should be assigned a Supervisor by the Admission Office; a Supervisor should not be involved in the process of Admitting PhD Students.
 1 2 3 4 5
6. The Department should make sure that PhD Research Proposals' Quality is assured in agreement with the with the schools goals and standard.
 1 2 3 4 5
7. The initially proposed PhD Research Topic cannot be modified at all.
 1 2 3 4 5
8. The supervisors would expect innovation points from their PhD Students; contributing to their proposal equals to confusing their PhD Students.
 1 2 3 4 5
9. The background's culture as well as where the previous studies were done, surely influence the PhD supervision tasks in the matter of misunderstanding between the Supervisors and the PhD Students.
 1 2 3 4 5
10. Your additional inputs under this sub-topic. Please write down in not more than THREE lines:
.....

During the course of PhD Training (Please tick one with)

11. A regular (weekly) meeting should be organized between PhD Students and their Supervisors (and co-supervisors if any).
 1 2 3 4 5
12. The PhD Student should be dismissed upon failing onto the first PhD Thesis assessment by the Department's Research Panel. 1 2 3 4 5
13. The PhD Student should be better assigned a new Supervisor upon failing onto the first PhD Thesis assessment by Department's Research Panel.
 1 2 3 4 5
14. For sake of a better and a timely completion, the PhD Student would better evaluate themselves and be given the rights (an option) to change the supervisor scheme, just after one year of research.
 1 2 3 4 5

15. I know some PhD Students who graduated on time, thanks to regular contacts (group meetings), call it the teamwork or the hands on pedagogy, organized by their Supervisors.
1 2 3 4 5
16. The failure as well as the success of a PhD Student to be awarded a Degree equals to the failure of his/her Supervisor.
1 2 3 4 5
17. Each PhD Student should be given the regular (weekly) and individual/private advice by his/her Supervisors.
1 2 3 4 5
18. The PhD Student should be always reminded that if s/he fails s/he will be immediately dismissed upon failing onto the first PhD Thesis assessment by Department's Research Panel. 1 2 3 4 5
19. The supervisors would expect innovation points from their PhD Students, and they'd always be the first and corresponding Authors for their PhD Students' Publications.
1 2 3 4 5
20. The success of a PhD Student is only indicated by the high quality of publications s/he will have made: SCI papers only; the conference publications are qualified as rubbish papers.
1 2 3 4 5
21. The PhD Students should be assigned any other tasks such as supervising (as a co-supervisor) the undergraduate and Master's students, just to re-sharpen his academic maturity.
1 2 3 4 5
22. Your additional inputs under this sub-topic. Please write down in not more than TWO lines:

Working under pressure during the course of PhD Training (Please tick one with)

23. Putting much pressure on a PhD Student rather confuses his/her mind.
1 2 3 4 5
24. A PhD Theses Supervisor should first listen to the student before pressurizing him/her.
1 2 3 4 5
25. The PhD Student should be better given the written research-work guidelines, s/he must follow the pre-set time schedules and s/he must be assessed accordingly.
1 2 3 4 5
26. I know some PhD Students who succeeded, thanks to much pressure by their supervisors.
1 2 3 4 5
27. Putting much pressure on a PhD Student often help him/her to meet the deadlines; otherwise, most students spend time in computer games, chatting and listening to the online news.
1 2 3 4 5
28. A PhD Theses Supervisor always understands more than his PhD Students; s/he should always remind them that s/he is their supervisors and they should 100% follow his/her guidelines. 1 2 3 4 5
29. The PhD Student should work with all his/her efforts to have the good publications, otherwise, no success at all.
1 2 3 4 5

30. The direct involvement of the Department (or School) is necessary while there is a need to solve the conflicts between a PhD Student and the supervisor; this should be done as soon as possible, before reaching to the middle of the totally scheduled time of the PhD research activities.
1 2 3 4 5
31. I know some PhD Students who failed on their PhD Studies due to much pressure induced by their Supervisors , or call it poor supervision due to high pressure.
1 2 3 4 5
32. I know some PhD Students who gave up their PhD Studies due to much pressure induced by their Supervisors, or call it poor supervision due high pressure.
1 2 3 4 5
33. I know some PhD Students who died due to much pressure induced by their supervisors, or call it poor supervision due high pressure.
1 2 3 4 5
34. I know some PhD Students who over-extended their pre-panned schedules do to hands off pedagogy of Supervision.
1 2 3 4 5
35. Your additional inputs under this sub-topic. Please write down in not more than TWO lines:

Part III: Acknowledgments

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Queering Asian-American Masculinities in David Henry Hwang's "M. Butterfly" and Ocean Vuong's "On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous"

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Abstract

Asian-American masculinity has been a critical topic in cross-cultural studies as well as gender studies. Previous studies have relied on the historical context to examine the Asian-American masculinities in contemporary literature. However, not much attention has been given to the transformation of queering Asian masculinity in contemporary literature. By analysing David Henry Hwang's *M. Butterfly* (1988) and Ocean Vuong's *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* (2019), this research examines the movement of queering Asian masculinity in contemporary texts between the twentieth century and the twenty-first century. Drawing on Judith Butler's ideas on the performance of gender and Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity, this research will focus on how do Hwang and Vuong present the relationship between queer body and gender in the context of Asian-American masculinity? To what extent do both authors question traditional gender assumptions and renegotiate the value of masculinity? How does the topic of Asian-American masculinity shift in David Henry Hwang's *M Butterfly* and Ocean Vuong's *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*? By taking a close look at the descriptions of the protagonists' bodies and their performativity in both texts, this research considers how Hwang starts to reveal the Asian-American body covertly, whilst Vuong queers the Asian-American body in a more overt way to embrace the possibilities of hybrid Asian gender identities in contemporary Asian American contexts.

Keywords: Asian-American Masculinity, *M Butterfly*, *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*, Hybrid Asian-American Gender Identities

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Introduction

Asian-American masculinity has been a critical topic in cross-cultural studies as well as gender studies. Previous research has relied on examining the historical context in order to deconstruct Asian-American masculinity through various literary works. However, not much attention has been given to the transformation of queering Asian-American masculinity. By focusing on the Asian-American bodies in David Henry Hwang's *M. Butterfly* (1988), and Ocean Vuong's *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* (2019), this research will analyse the movement of queering Asian-American masculinity in two centuries. Although Hwang's *M. Butterfly* was published in the twentieth century and Vuong's *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* is a more recent publication, these two texts reveal distinct approaches to queering Asian-American male bodies. To demonstrate the contrast of queering masculinity between these two texts, this research will shed light on the shift in the protagonists' bodies by zooming in on some dialogues and content. Meanwhile, this research considers that how do Hwang and Vuong present the relationship between queer body and gender in the context of Asian-American masculinity? To what extent do both authors question traditional gender assumptions and renegotiate the value of masculinity? How does the topic of Asian-American masculinity shift in David Henry Hwang's *M Butterfly* and Ocean Vuong's *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*? This paper will conclude by examining the impact of changing representations of the Asian-American bodies in the twentieth century and twenty-first century in Asian-American literature through these two texts. To frame these analyses, Raewyn Connell's definition of masculinity as "the patterns of practice" (Connell, 2005, p. 832) by males and females will be utilised, highlighting the dynamics of masculinities in society. The view of hegemonic masculinity, which explains men's power over women, will be used to explain how a character conforms to traditional gender roles expected of men, revealing how the writer demonstrates a disruption of the fixed notion of masculinity. Furthermore, Judith Butler describes gender and body as always being understood as "citational repetition" (Leitch, 2010, p. 2374). She believes that the relationship between the body and gender is a social construction. In her article, she argues that gender is performative. It is "an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a stylised repetition of acts" (Butler, 1988, p. 519). Butler's theoretical framework will inform the analysis of how the author offers insights into the hidden gender and sexual melancholy, as well as the ongoing inner struggles of the protagonists, to shape the journey toward becoming gendered characters. Therefore, this research suggests that Hwang covertly queers the Asian-American body, while Vuong overtly embraces the possibilities of hybrid Asian-American gender identities in contemporary Asian American contexts.

The Metamorphosis of Asian-American Bodies

In *M Butterfly* (1988), Hwang blurs gender boundaries and opens up the topic of queerness to straddle boundaries between cultures, gender roles, and sexual identities, while Vuong deconstructs problematic binary oppositions in *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* (2019). To challenge the idea that gender is a fixed and immutable characteristic, Hwang gives various hints at the ambiguous nature of gender boundaries in the play. One of the key moments in the play is a conversation between Chin and the protagonist, Song, in which Chin expresses disapproval of his friend, Song wearing a dress. This conversation serves as a highlight of questioning the concept of traditional gender norms and gender roles for the readers, which also allows them to consider the rigidity of traditional gender roles. Additionally, Hwang deliberately implies the issue of the protagonists' gender identities and appearance to allow

the readers who should rethink the gender norm and construct a space to re-establish traditional boundaries around the male body. Another hint is a costume transformation scene,

(Galliard exits, Song turns to us). The change I'm going to make requires about five minutes..... I'll be there, when you return, right where you left me. (Song goes to a mirror in front of which is a wash basin of water. She starts to remove her makeup as stage lights go to half and houselights come up). (Hwang, 1988, p. 59)

Through this costume transformation scene, Hwang leaves an issue to the readers to expand the gender boundaries by themselves. As Song who is wearing the female customs and acting as a female character at the beginning of this play, she starts to remove her clothes and makeup. After that, Hwang takes the readers or audience to another court scene, where Song is in a suit. The transformation of the costume implies that gender, body, and appearance are performative as well as a performance. It is a moment to stop and think of Song's gender. First, Hwang invites the readers to consider how gender is constructed, influenced, and performed within specific cultural and societal contexts. According to Judith Butler (1988), gender is a performance that is "an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a stylised repetition of acts" (p. 519). This moment in the play becomes a pause for reflection on the themes of gender and the body. Second, Hwang hints to the readers to consider gender norms as a symbol of judgment issue, which adeptly guides the audience to contemplate the staunch rigidity of social norms. In the play, although Hwang has not furthered to address all these gender issues, he serves as an opening of a discussion on these topics and encourages audiences to question existing norms. Similarly, Vuong (2019) bombarded with gender boundaries by depicting queering Asian bodies in his novel, deconstructing problematic binary oppositions and interrogating societal norms and power structures, the changing body is shown in the soliloquy of the protagonist,

I turn the shower off and, instead of toweling and dressing before the steam on the door mirror cleared, like I normally would, I waited. It was an accident, my beauty revealed to me. I was day dreaming, thinking about the day before, of Trevor and me behind the Chevy, and had stood in the tub with the water off for so long. (p.107)

The narrator or protagonist, nicknamed Little Dog, stands in front of a mirror, no longer plagued by doubts about his body; instead, he cherishes and loves it. Through a sudden movement, Vuong offers a diversification of queer masculinities. Little Dog who is taught to be "a real boy and be strong" (Vuong, 2019, p. 26) unexpectedly discovers the beauty of his body through the act of self-reflection in the mirror. Vuong directly describes the protagonist tries to break down the rules and stereotypical assumptions of gender and masculinity in Asian- American society through one moment.

Questioning Traditional Gender Assumptions and Renegotiating the Value of Masculinity

By portraying protagonists' fluid sexual identities, Hwang starts a disruption of the fixed notion of masculinity, while Vuong's exploration and embrace of diverse sexual identities and expressions not only challenges societal norms but also offers an individual understanding of masculinity. According to Connell (2005), Hegemonic masculinity is the idea of the dominant and stereotypical concept of masculinity. It is constructed based on two main pillars: the domination of women and a hierarchy of dominance among men. It is also influenced by the stigmatization of homosexuality. This concept affects how young

males are socialised and the expectations placed upon them in society. In *M Butterfly* (1988), Hwang highlights Gallimard's earlier heterosexuality experience with a girl and depicts Gallimard conforming to traditional gender roles expected of a man. He shows that Gallimard attempts to exert control over a woman, seeking satisfaction in his perception of masculinity during their sexual relationship. Throughout the play, Hwang delves into the complexities of Gallimard's sexual identity, constantly exploring the internal struggle he faces. At Act 3, scene 2, Hwang (1988) presents a conversation between Song and Gallimard in the paddy wagon where Gallimard admits falling in love with "a woman [who] created by a man" (p.66). This conversation marks a turning point of the protagonist's sexual identity as well as serves as a resounding alert to Gallimard. Until the end of the play, the struggle of Gallimard's sexual identification is continues to be explored. By setting the prison as the stage for Gallimard's performance and allowing him to become the character of Madam Butterfly. Hwang depicts Gallimard ends with committing suicide in the prison when he realises his desire for Song will forever live in conflict with the pathological disgust for himself that he cannot remove. The journey from a heteronormative perspective to a deep personal exploration of one's sexual identity is a thought-provoking theme in the play. Hwang unpacked the complex dynamics between compulsory heterosexuality and a male role, challenging the normative behaviour and preconceived notions associated with masculinity. Similar connotations attend the presence of another protagonist Song, who is always reminded of the societal expectations placed upon him to conform to traditional masculinity and heterosexuality by his friend, Chin. The term "comrade"(Hwang, 1988, p.39), which always appears in their conversations. Comrade is a term that contains two explanations in Chinese, while it historically represents the communist party in China, which is an imply of a society, it also holds significance within the homosexual community, referred to the pronunciation as "Tongzhi" during the 1980s and 1990s in China. In the conversation, Chin ends the conversation by saying there is no homosexuality in China. Hwang intentionally offers a dual meaning of the term comrade to make the readers reconsider a male role and socially constructed role. When Chin mentions that "Don't forget: there is no homosexuality in China" (Hwang, 1988, p.39). He expects Song to follow this rule. Hwang's portrayal and implantation of both protagonists invite readers to question traditional notions of sexual identities as well as societal expectations of masculinity. Although Hwang raises significant and thought-provoking questions about the construction of sexual identities and a male role, it is important to note that these inquiries are not explicitly addressed within the narrative. Thus, the portrayal in the play serves as a beginning of questioning traditional gender assumptions. Vuong's portrayal in *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* takes a different approach. To explore diverse sexual identities, Vuong demonstrates a character's understanding of one sexual identity through the description of a sexual relationship between two protagonists." Nguyen Hoàng (2014) argues that "bottomhood is an ethical manner of relating to others, not through dominance and mastery (p.2)". He mentioned that "(i)n a patriarchal society, to bottom is akin to being penetrated and dominated like a woman" (p.9). In *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* (2019), Little Dog, an Asia-American boy is forced into a role of bottom by his white boyfriend during their sexual behaviour. Thinking that should accept this position because "the rules" (Vuong, 2019, p.120) were already inside them. Vuong depicts every episode of the relationship between Little Dog and Trevor, as a gay Asian-American man, Little Dog accepts the bottom position as well as an expected femininity in the society. Hwang describes that Little Dog chooses to learn to say "harder" (Vuong, 2019, p. 119) when he is having sex with Trevor. However, he releases that is "a kind of power" (p.118). By Zooming this queer sexual intimacy of the characters, Vuong not only straddles boundaries between Asian-

American bodies and subjects but also allows readers the opportunity to renegotiate the value of Asian masculinity.

The Shift and Impact Between Hwang's *M Butterfly* (1988) and Vuong's *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* (2019) in the Twentieth Century and the Twenty-First Century

Although Hwang and Vuong's works reflect the attitudes surrounding gender identity and Asian-American masculinity in contemporary Asian-American contexts, Hwang covertly queers the Asian-American body, while Vuong overtly embraces the possibilities of hybrid Asian gender identities. In the play, Hwang depicts the hidden gender and sexual melancholy of the protagonist by shedding light on Gallimard's ongoing inner struggles. First, Hwang (1988) portrays Gallimard as someone who has "never been considered witty or clever" (p.8) until Song appears in his life. Therefore, Hwang (1988) highlights that Gallimard is a guy who has lack of confidence during his younger years. When it comes to approaching women, he will "never ask" (p.12) whether the girl likes him or not. Additionally, Hwang clandestinely delves into the concept of masculinity, illustrating how Gallimard's worth as a man is tied to conforming to exaggerated gender roles and traditional expectations of behaviour. Even at the play's conclusion, Hwang sets Gallimard on a path of self-effacement, indicating that the struggle about his sexual confusion never ends. His struggle with his self-image and sexual confusion may continue indefinitely. Dorinne Kondo states (1990) that Hwang demonstrates "the inner space of selfhood" (p. 17) of the protagonist via the play. Gallimard's experience and struggle suggest a hidden link when the Hwang skilfully incorporates the transformation of the Asia American body into the play. Second, Gallimard's case can adopt Butler's "melancholic identification" (Butler, 1995, p.169). The process by which an individual's ego develops into a gendered character. Butler (1995) points out that the social norm, which forbids homosexuality, mirrors the process described in her work. This norm was particularly noticeable during the time of publication, but it still exists. By dragging as Madam Butterflies, Gallimard could identify the "ungrieved loss of the homosexual cathexis" (Butler, 1995, p.169). Third, Hwang describes that Gallimard's sexual relationship and his identity are based on myths. This myth serves as Gallimard's social mechanism that controls the male fantasy of possessing a woman, which in turn shapes and strengthens masculine identity. This reliance on fantasy disconnects Gallimard from reality. As Hwang in his interview admits that the audiences may "prefer the fantasy over the reality (Hwang & DiGaetani, 1989, p. 143) these fantasies subtly transform his perception of his own body throughout the play. This interplay between fantasy and reality highlights the complex dynamics within Gallimard's psyche. Hwang depicts and examines the representation of the Asian American body in a covert manner in the play through these hidden gender and sexual melancholy. On the other hand, in "*On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous*," Vuong paints a vivid portrait of Little Dog's struggles with his identity as a gay son of Vietnamese refugees. Little Dog's experience is marked by a double negation, as he is not only marginalised by society for his ethnicity and sexuality but is also met with shame and rejection from his own family and community. Despite this, Little Dog can openly find beauty and strength in his own body. By sharing a letter between his mother and himself, as well as through his refusal to accept these discourses, Little Dog is able to break free from this and explore his own identity on his own terms. At the beginning of the novel, Little Dog writes "Let me begin again" (Vuong, 2019, p. 3) and "Dear Ma, I am writing to reach you — even if each word I put down is one word further from where you are" (Vuong, 2019, p.3). The beginning of Little Dog's letter reveals a deep longing within the protagonist to share his experiences with his mother. Jennifer Cho (2022) suggests that this letter is a way "to reconcile the narrative gaps between mother and

son" (p.130) and "Vietnamese and English," (p.130) as well as "past and present" (p.130). In the letter, he shares the protagonist's conflict experienced by Vietnamese refugees within the American community. In another part of the letter, Vuong highlights Little Dog coming out as gay to his mother. Through these two exchanges, Vuong emphasises that when the protagonist is in the darkest of times, there is a light within his life. Little Dog sees the body as both beautiful and a reflection of its rich history. Despite encountering struggles, continues to appreciate the beauty of his body, thus embodying a sense of hope in his life. Yet, the letter functions as a vulnerable expression of his own sense of self and the journey towards embracing and loving one's own body. The letter also expresses his deepest thoughts and feelings. By using different narrative styles, Hwang and Vuong's works reflect the shifting attitudes towards gender identity and Asian-American masculinity in the twentieth century and the twenty-first centuries.

Conclusion

By analysing both Hwang and Vuong's works, this research points out that Hwang's play covertly subverts and challenges traditional notions of Asian-American masculinity, while Vuong's work expression overtly embraces and amplifies the potential for hybrid and fluid gender identities within contemporary Asian-American contexts. Hwang opens up gender boundaries and explores queerness across cultures, gender roles, and sexual identities. By showing a dialogue between the characters, Hwang brings attention to the issue of questioning and challenging the concept of traditional gender norms and roles. Furthermore, Hwang's use of a costume transformation scene leaves the issue of gender boundaries open to interpretation by the readers or audience, allowing them to explore and expand their understanding of gender roles and expectations. Through a soliloquy, Vuong creates the dynamic transformation of the protagonist's body throughout the narrative. He offers an exploration of gender, race, and sexuality that prompts readers to reconsider the definition of the Asia-American body and masculinity. Besides, Hwang disrupts the fixed notion of masculinity by portraying characters with fluid sexual identities. He explores Gallimard's internal struggle with his sexual identity, delving into its complexities and intricacies. Through his intricate portrayal of Gallimard's journey from conforming to heteronormative perspectives to exploring his own sexual identity, Hwang explores the complex relationship between compulsory heterosexuality and societal expectations of male roles. In contrast to Vuong's portrayal, which aims to deconstruct heteronormativity and redefine societal norms surrounding sexual identity, Vuong demonstrates an understanding of sexual identity and the character's body by showcasing the sexual relationship between the two protagonists. This sexual relationship is a way to show the challenges of societal norms surrounding masculinity and heteronormativity. By revealing the hidden gender and sexual melancholy of the protagonists, this research contends that although both Hwang and Vuong's works reflect contemporary attitudes toward gender identity and Asian-American masculinity. Hwang utilises myths and internal exploration as a covert means to depict a changing Asian American body in the play. However, Vuong's approach can be described as a blend of openness and vulnerability. Little Dog's letter is a sharing of his life, struggle as well as his history, allowing him to openly share his thoughts, feelings, and experiences with his mother. It is important to note that through the use of a letter-style narrative, Vuong shows that the author overtly embraces and explores the potential for hybrid Asian gender identities. The novel provides a platform for the reader to rethink the complexities of gender, sexual and queer identity within the Asian-American community. These two works of Hwang and Vuong reveal the shifting attitudes towards the body and Asian-American masculinity in contemporary contexts. Hwang and Vuong's works offer

important insights into the fluidity and complexity of hybrid gender identity, and highlight the high potential for queer Asian-American experiences to be explored during the twentieth century and the twenty-first centuries in the future.

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Exploring Motherhood: A Multisensory Portrait of Complexity, Chaos, and Intertwining Experiences in Contemporary Daily Life

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Abstract

The project seeks to explore the complex nature of motherhood by curating and showcasing a range of diverse encounters, connections, and sentiments presented as individual multisensory portrayals. The research intends to establish an anthology of personal encounters by distinct caregivers to uncover motherhood's intricate and interwoven facets in modern daily existence. This project features personal stories of motherhood, incorporating multimedia elements such as audio, photographs, illustrations, and video creations. These distinctive portraits will be harnessed to create interactive data visualizations to illuminate the manifold array of maternal experiences while questioning prevailing norms. The research blends elements of autoethnography and heuristic inquiry with the principles of metamodernism and data feminism. This research journey is deeply personal and rooted in my transition into motherhood. It has uncovered a spectrum of maternal expectations shaped by societal norms and cultural heritage, which I've grappled with and celebrated. Coming from a unique cultural background, my exploration of maternity care in New Zealand has highlighted the clashes between these two worlds – each with its values and perspectives, bridging Western and Eastern traditions. I've engaged in dialogues with peers and women navigating similar journeys to find solace and understanding. These conversations reveal a complex interplay of realities intertwined with factors like culture, race, class, and gender. They challenge conventional roles attributed to maternal and caregiving relationships, even prompting questions about the applicability of motherhood to fathers, guardians, and non-binary individuals. Shifting views on motherhood over time emphasize diverse maternal experiences, urging a deeper understanding.

Keywords: Autoethnography Research, Heuristic Enquiry, Motherhood, Bricolage Identity, Scrolly Storytelling

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Introduction

This project originates from a personal standpoint, aiming to establish a shared understanding for expectant mothers as they navigate the uncharted waters of motherhood. It carries significance in initiating dialogues surrounding this complex and tumultuous lived experience. The Unravelling Mother project embarks on a comprehensive exploration of the intricate facets of motherhood, presenting a diverse array of experiences, connections, and emotions through individual multi-sensory representations. These narrative portrayals serve as retrospective self-narratives, vividly illustrating the profound emotions encountered during pivotal life periods as a caregiver.

This practice-led research asks:

"How can we comprehend the multifaceted journey of motherhood through an auto-ethnographic lens and depict it using non-linear narrative design and interactive scrolly-telling techniques?"

This query fuelled the exploration into the intricate dimensions of the maternal journey, employing innovative narrative techniques to capture the richness and complexity of this transformative experience.

1 Positioning the Researcher

1.1 Creative Tech Down Under

With a background in film, animation, and game design, I bring a diverse skill set spanning photography, CGI, and animation. This journey has honed my expertise in digital storytelling and user experience design. My hands-on experience as a game designer has deepened my understanding of digital narratives and user interactions, laying the foundation for my interest in the convergence of technology and storytelling.

My involvement in mapping stories with warm and cold data aligns with my expertise. Immersed in digital tools and photography, I leverage these mediums for effectively communicating complex data and creative exploration in the digital landscape. With over a decade in digital design and higher education, my proficiency extends to program evaluation, structural planning, and curriculum delivery, showcasing a commitment to educational excellence.



Figure 1: My interactive project in collaboration with TEDxAKL, design awards with my students and panel discussion about 'Design in the Age of AI' on Techweek TV

1.2 Indoor and Outdoor Living

Once a weekend surfer, riding waves with the ocean breeze, and a jiu-jitsu practitioner, I revelled in the empowerment and autonomy of a carefree life. Once a tool for self-discovery, my body unfolded its capabilities and played a role in mental empowerment, a facet I had not fully recognized until then. Approaching motherhood stirred a complex mix of emotions – fear of losing freedom and youth and an overwhelming, incomprehensible responsibility. The transition seemed daunting, contrasting sharply with the autonomy I cherished. Amidst this, a peculiar urge to nurture and a fantastical vision of the idealized motherhood figure emerged, along with a sense of familial tradition, adding weight to the responsibility of preserving the family lineage. The interplay of conflicting emotions has made the motherhood journey challenging and intriguing.



Figure 2: Weekend surfing at my local beach and weekday Brazilian JiuJitsu training at night

1.3 Motherhood After Pandemic

In a distant land, the sense of family and kinship seemed elusive, exacerbated by the untimely death of my father just a month before the first lockdown in New Zealand. Grieving became a complex ordeal, entangled with administrative tasks and family expectations, further complicated by the physical separation of family members across the globe.

During lockdown rounds, discussions about building a new family emerged, inspired by my mother's resilience and swift embrace of life. Witnessing her courage motivated me to seek a renewed purpose, a new love, and the courage to embark on the journey of conception. The process, however, brought conflicting emotions as I simultaneously grieved for my father, and a miscarriage in the first month added emotional strain to our relationship. After nine months, the result we yearned for arrived – a positive confirmation of pregnancy. The overwhelming grief transformed into a celebration of life, marking a journey of growth, maturity, and unexpected joy.



Figure 3: My father accompanying me on my wedding day a year before his passing, and my mother's visit to New Zealand during my third trimester of pregnancy

2. Review of Contextual Knowledge

2.1 Dialogues on Motherhood

It is important to emphasize that this project is not designed to unveil an absolute truth. The exploration of motherhood unfolds through a lens of self-portraits (Borzello, F. 1998) within domestic interiors, delving into the nuanced intersection of beauty and the body as a vessel (Tamar Pollak, 2009). The domestic space, traditionally confined to the private sphere, transforms into a realm for self-discovery and learning, breaking away from conventional norms. This project extends beyond individual narratives, aiming to foster a sense of community among mothers and using metaphorical language to connect and exchange endeavours with others who traverse the challenging terrain of motherhood. Through this collective sharing, the project evolves into a dynamic dialogue, bridging the gaps between diverse maternal realities.

Maternal Fantasies (Sascia Bailer et al., 2021) explored how ancestral figures and inherited expectations shape contemporary maternal experiences through films, images, and performances. This project actively generates new narratives, vocabularies, and connections to traditional figures, aiming to reshape the discourse on motherhood. The resulting publication serves as both a handbook and archive, offering reflections, autobiographical writings, artworks, and a manifesto for a caring economy. They inspired me to seek a nuanced understanding of the maternal experience, fostering visibility and inclusivity in my project.

2.2 Data as Building Blocks

The project aims to celebrate coherence, absurdity, sincerity, and self-reflection, fundamentally grounded in a spirit of hope and optimism. Utilizing a method of collaged imagery and written narratives as data (Weber et al., 2018), a collective memory takes shape – a memoir capturing the diverse facets of the motherhood journey. The intertwining of visuals and words is a powerful tool for self-expression and storytelling, forming a unique biography. This memoir takes on a distinctive form, drawing inspiration from autobiographical memory.

Autobiographical memory becomes a timeline representing a moment, a milestone, or a reflection – offering a glimpse into the diverse facets of the motherhood experience. Linda Tuhiwai (2012) wrote in *Decolonizing Methodologies* that "each individual story is powerful. But the point about the stories is not that they simply tell a story or tell a story simply". In this context, acknowledging self-growth becomes a central theme within this narrative. Each entry becomes a stepping stone in the journey of self-discovery, acknowledging the growth that arises from the intricate dance between joy, struggle, and the everyday moments that define the motherhood experience. The motivation to capture data and document emotions in this way was inspired by a discussion with McMahon (2022), exploring current reproductive care systems concerning maternal health care and experiences of motherhood.

2.3 Collage in the Feminine Arts

The artist, Hannah Höch, employed old postcards, photographs, newspapers, and advertisements to challenge the male-dominated. Hoch's political commentary and feminist narrative emerged distinctly in the predominantly male-dominated sphere. In her most renowned work, "Das schöne Mädchen" (The Beautiful Girl, 1920), Höch depicts the emergence of Germany's new woman. In 1934, In 'A Few Words on Photomontage,' Höch discussed her view that photomontage represents a unique and incredibly fantastic field for creative individuals.

Another artist who used collage to challenge gender norms was the German-Argentine photomontage artist Grete Stern. Her visual deconstructions carefully examine prevailing notions of femininity and the (female) body in a modernizing culture. Stern crafted a series of photomontages titled *Sueños/Dreams* (1949), conveying the anxieties and excitements associated with the transformation of modern femininity.

2.4 Narrative Aesthetic and Scrolly-Telling

Jordan (2019) wrote that 'Post-Digital Storytelling' delves into metamodernism, proposing a groundbreaking creative approach transcending digital and non-digital distinctions. Jordan explores the evolving poetics of this transmedial, post-digital condition, focusing on storytelling techniques like hypertextual and locative mobile methods. Centred on twenty-first-century storytelling, Jordan acknowledges shifts in creative expression across traditional print and non-digital art forms. The work uncovers how metamodernist principles influence this technique by examining scrolly storytelling, breaking down conventional barriers between digital and non-digital storytelling. It contributes valuable insights into the evolving storytelling landscape in the metamodern era.

This project aims to deliver immersive and profound narratives, encouraging audiences to engage critically, playfully, and autonomously using data visualization and creative technologies. Integrating scrolly storytelling as a poetic expression, the project's intended narrative is visually engaging and interactively. Each scroll becomes a poetic revelation, contributing to a richer understanding of the multifaceted nature of motherhood and the diverse stories it encompasses. This approach introduces interactive elements, allowing viewers to engage through actions like dragging and sliding. By embracing non-linearity, the project recognizes that each viewer embarks on a unique journey, encountering diverse emotional and cognitive pathways.

In data representation, the project conceptualizes a story as data, accentuating its potency in conveying complexity, relatability, memorability, and impact (Oesch et al., 2022). The strategic integration of storytelling and data enriches the content and contributes to a more immersive and enduring impact on the viewer.

3. Self Search Methodologies

This project reflects on my experiences by employing autoethnographic inquiries motivated by a desire to navigate self-identity and foster acceptance within my circumstances. Ellis et al. (2011) define autoethnography as a blend of "autobiography and ethnography," offering a lens to examine personal experiences within cultural and social contexts.

Moustakas (2011) outlines that heuristic methodology aims to capture qualitative depictions that delve into the heart and depths of personal experience, encompassing situations, events, conversations, relationships, feelings, thoughts, values, and beliefs. In the heuristic approach, the artist engages in a discovery process, becoming intertwined with the project. Utilizing collage techniques and establishing a connection between the artefact and myself as the designer, intuition played a crucial role in imprinting a "personal mark" onto the work (Binz, 2016). Collage arrangements visually represented the "internal experiences" shaping the project (Sela-Smith, 2002).

In this section, I outline the methods I used to inform the development of the work. These included four stages: (1) photo album and curiosities, (2) autoethnographic journaling, (3) animation and consideration and (4) iterative prototyping.

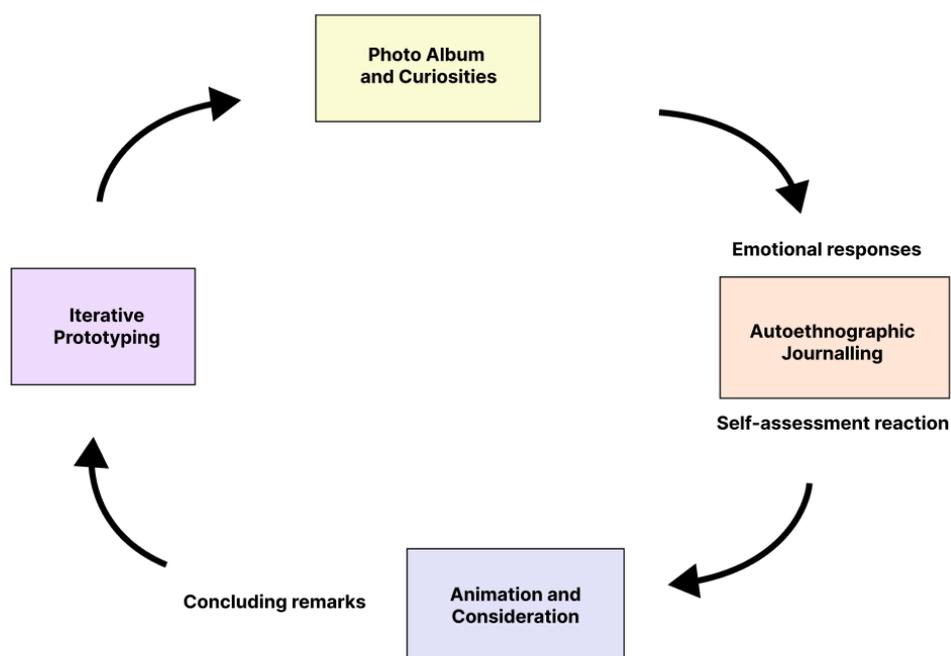


Figure 4: Phases of the Practice Methods

3.1 Photo Album and Curiosity

Heuristics, described as a form of personal problem-solving and an endeavour to understand the essence of life through internal pathways of self (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985), allowed for flexibility, leading the project in various directions (Binz, 2016). Reflective practice, as per Schön (1987), is a "dialogue of thinking and doing through which I become more skilful", centred around problem-solving and "reflective-in-action". Throughout the creative process, I could reflect on my thoughts, respond in the action-present to influence outcomes and connect the unfamiliar with the familiar (Tan, 2020).

Utilizing the medium of the thumbnail with a camera, we engaged in a self-reflective endeavour, crafting a collection of selfies that formed an album chronicling the intricate journey of conceiving a child. This visual documentation effectively draws connections between past and present experiences, encapsulating diverse emotions. The photographs capture poignant "self-reflective instances" of pre-parenthood, offering glimpses into moments marked by happiness, optimism, setbacks, frustration, and anxiety. This self-curated collection serves as a visual narrative, vividly portraying the emotional responses intricately woven into the fabric of our journey toward parenthood.

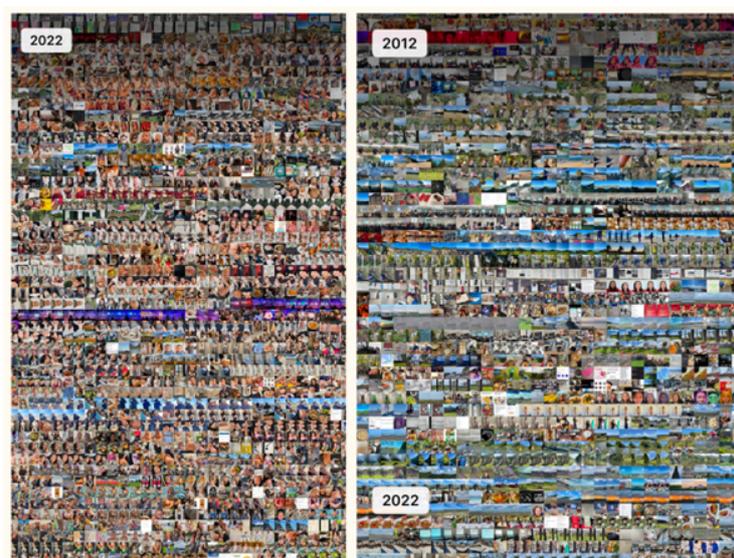


Figure 5: Aggregated mobile galleries capturing moments before, during pregnancy, and postpartum

3.2 Autoethnographic Journaling

Described by Besio and Butz (2009) as a "form of self-narrative," autoethnography, as articulated by Fourie (2021), allows for freedom of style and tone for authentic self-expression. Within the framework of this project, autoethnography serves as a vehicle to articulate my narratives, delving into the complexities of my early womanhood and the transformative journey into motherhood. The exploration extends to reflections on my current experiences and the evolving dynamics of my body and role in the present. Engaging in a practice of crafting love notes directed inward, I delved into web blogging as a means of self-expression. Employing self-assessment reactions, I revisited the web blog, rearranging elements—sometimes in chronological order and other times for design and alignment enhancements, all to enhance the visual experience for the reader.

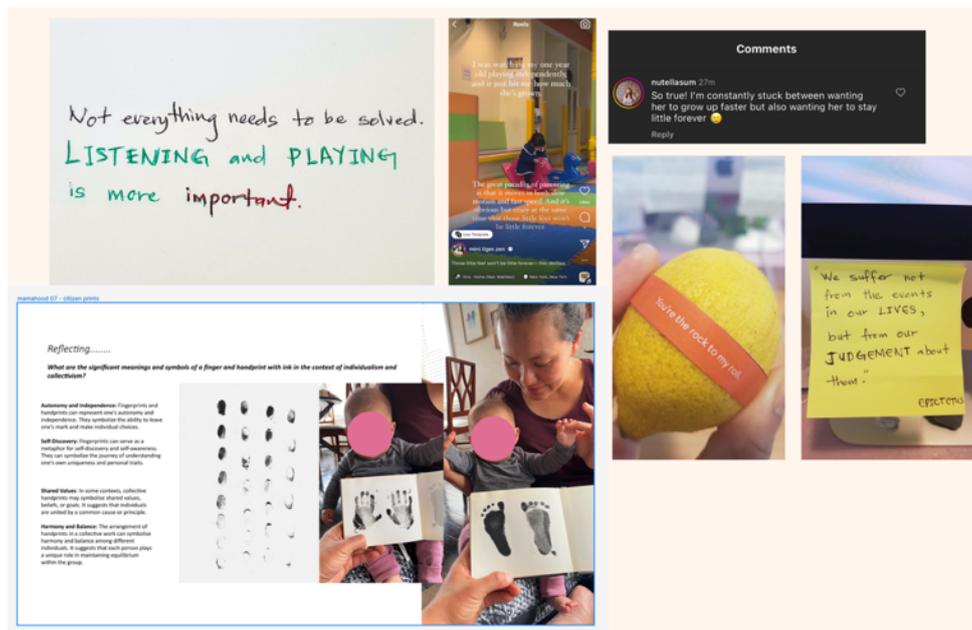


Figure 6: Assembled annotations from physical papers, digital notes, social media reminders on mobile, and photo archives

3.3 Animation and Consideration

The process began with creating ideation boards and mapping out visual concepts that would later evolve into artwork. Transforming these ideas into tangible pieces involved careful consideration, leading to crafting a chronological timeline. In conclusion, it is essential to acknowledge the changes that transpired during this creative journey, accompanied by acquiring knowledge. The visual impact of GIFs, often enhanced by humour, emotion, or cultural references, makes them highly shareable and relatable across diverse audiences. The inherent repetitiveness of the loop can imbue the animation with a timeless quality, reinforcing critical elements of the narrative audiences (Morgan & Scholma-Mason, 2017). Decisions about the strategic placement of GIF animations and the selection of visuals for animation were meticulously made, recognizing the unique narrative potential embedded in their succinct, looped nature and visual richness, extending beyond immediate contexts.

3.4 Iterative Prototyping

Developing each composition and page for scrolling involves a comprehensive process encompassing low-fi and hi-fi prototyping stages. This entails meticulous attention to formatting and typographic placement, ensuring a refined visual structure. Throughout these stages, constructive criticism will be actively sought to guide the direction of my practice, fostering continuous improvement and refinement. The consideration of artistry in practice remains a pivotal aspect, driving the creative decisions and enhancing the overall aesthetic appeal of the work.



Figure 7: An iteration of the prototype crafted for one of the portraits

4. Critical Framework

4.1 Musings of the Past

The initial idea behind the project was centred on the anticipation of building a family. However, this concept swiftly evolved into a singular focus on our child, encompassing considerations of self, body, and roles. Despite this shift, the idea lacked depth and failed to offer another dimension for personal growth. It resembled a highway without stopping to reflect on the past or contemplate the future. This led to a new perspective: "Reflecting on the distant past, the recent past, the immediate past, and the present." Memories transformed into a cherished space, fostering familial closeness and catalyzing tangible connections. The exploration took a non-linear, more spiritual approach to understanding time, acknowledging its ambiguity. The concept further delved into unravelling the notions of 'mother' and 'hood.' The process of unravelling involved iteratively packing and unpacking the timeline, hoping to discover enlightening insights that might not be immediately apparent. This approach aimed to create a space where the timeline is not constrained to a linear order, allowing for a more nuanced exploration of motherhood's complex and evolving concepts.



Figure 8: Collection of photographs, featuring my childhood, wedding day, and the initial night alone at home with my one-month-old baby

4.2 Narrative Features

Embracing the aesthetics of Metamodernism involves navigating the nuanced interplay between modern and postmodern sensibilities. This stylistic approach allows for a dynamic engagement with hope and optimism, capturing the essence of a worldview that acknowledges the complexities of contemporary existence while maintaining an aspirational and positive outlook. Metamodernist aesthetics in the project reflect a commitment to exploring multifaceted narratives and emphasize the transformative potential inherent in

exploring maternal experiences. It is a conscious choice to infuse the work with hopefulness, resonating with the project's broader thematic exploration and contributing to a visually compelling and emotionally resonant storytelling experience.

The project utilizes three perspectives—feminist, personal, and maternal.

Embracing an interconnected narrative style, I distinguish between the "what" (story) and "how" (narrative discourse). In 'Exploring Motherhood,' a continuous narrative unfolds across each scroll, featuring layered narration from feminist, personal, and maternal perspectives. Abbott's (2022) distinction between events and representation underscores this approach. The project introduces a non-linear, fragmented narrative discourse, in line with Wilson's (2008) definition, authentically capturing chaotic experiences and expressing genuine personal narratives. The interplay between the "what" (experiences) and "how" (diverse voices) within the portraits shapes a compelling story.

Distinct voices redefine self-identity and female body representation, weaving intricate stories into visually compelling artefacts enriched by multimedia elements like texts, photos, and animations. These portraits form the foundation for an interactive data visualization endeavour, illuminating maternal experiences and challenging norms. Using data as building blocks aligns with McMahon's work, contributing to collective dialogues envisioning feminist futures. This dynamic platform captures and engages diverse maternal realities, fostering a dialogue for an inclusive and empowered future.



Figure 9: Exemplary arrangement and composition of portraits within the Exploring Motherhood project

4.3 Type and Treatment

The project's interface employed the concept of scrolling and sliding, allowing the user to have the agency to determine the speed and pace of the story. The non-linear narrative design allows viewers to jump into different stages at any given time, offering them flexibility and control over their engagement. Implementing a non-linear narrative aligns with the emerging poetics of an inherently transmedial and hybrid post-digital condition enhanced by animation effects. This choice introduces an interactive element, enabling viewers to navigate the story at their discretion.

The exploration of this narrative varies based on several factors. The viewer's equipment, including screen size and format, plays a role, as does the viewer's savviness in engaging with screen-based publications. Additionally, the viewer's order of engaging with the story depends on their interest and relatability to specific aspects. The storytelling techniques

employed, such as hypertextual, locative mobile, and collaborative storytelling (viewer interaction), contribute to the diverse scope of the story. The interplay of these elements ensures that each viewer's experience is unique, creating a dynamic and engaging narrative tailored to individual preferences and interactions.

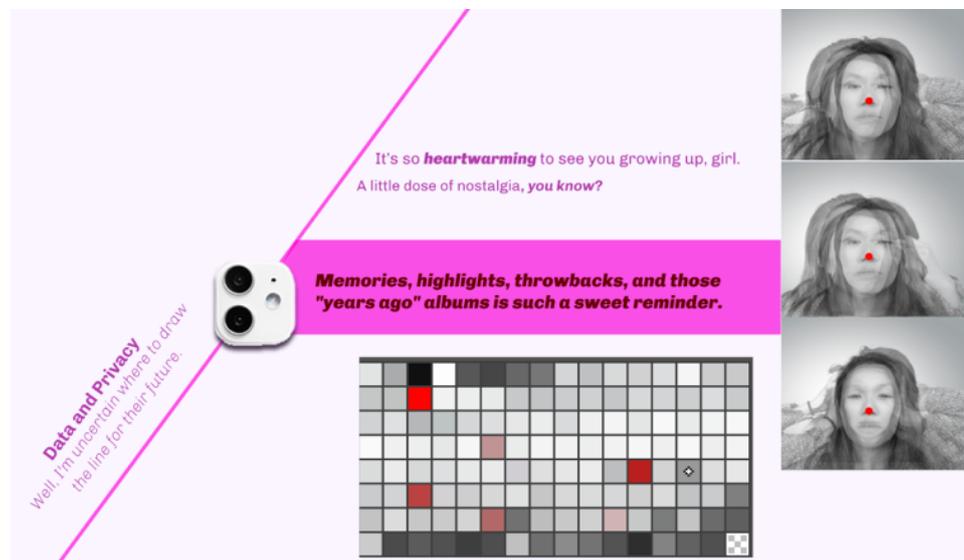


Figure 10: Illustration of diverse treatments and experimental explorations applied to the components for assembling the composition of a single portrait in the project

5. Project Demo

Please view 'Exploring Motherhood' portraits using this link or this address: <https://www.tammieleong.com/exploringmotherhood>.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this project serves as a poignant translation of the multifaceted experience of motherhood, intricately weaving together imagery and publication design. The body of work that underpins this creative endeavour acts as a compendium, capturing the varied contexts of being a mother and the unpredictable nature of life's journey. Throughout this research expedition, the interplay between contexts and the creative process has been instrumental in shaping the project's format, narrative, and visual elements. Employing self-search methodologies has enabled a profound dialogue between lived experiences and intuitive, creative processes. Reflecting on positive and challenging memories facilitated a deeper understanding of the present and anticipation for the future.

Rooted in my voyage into motherhood, this project has unearthed a diverse spectrum of maternal anticipations, navigating societal norms and cultural heritage with moments of wrestling and celebration. The practical work aspires to be more than just 'chewed'; it seeks to be 'digested' by the viewer through a gradual and fragmented multifaceted reading, embracing the personal, feminist, and maternal perspectives. Operating as a data visualization endeavour, the goal is to present a comprehensive and nuanced portrayal of motherhood. Guided by the principles of intersectional feminist thought (D'Ignazio & F. Klein, 2020), this portrayal acknowledges motherhood's intricacies, challenges, and joys while challenging hierarchical and empirically flawed classification systems.

It is crucial to emphasize that this project does not aim to unveil an absolute truth but encapsulates the spirit of metamodernism, as described by Turner (2015). Defined by its simultaneous coherency, preposterousness, earnestness, and self-questioning, it is ultimately rooted in hope and optimism. The evolving attitudes and beliefs surrounding motherhood across time underscore the prevalence of diverse maternal experiences, contributing to a rich tapestry of narratives that defy simplistic categorizations.

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*A Study on the Interaction Between Gender Morality and Free Love in Early 20th Century:
Centered on Du Cheng Shu & Qu Jiang's Love Letter*

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Abstract

This article attempts to answer the question of "love" and why it has been prohibited from entering the public sphere in Chinese history. This article takes the "Love Letter Incident" as a case study and uses the process tracking method to analyze the love letter incident between Du Chengshu and Qu Jiang. In this event, various social groups interacted on this matter, so this article horizontally compared the thinking and self-expression of young men and women in the face of love issues and vertically explored the premature and delayed disclosure of love issues under the trend of gender equality in China since the early 20th century. However, in China at the beginning of the 20th century, the issue of love still faced scrutiny from traditional Chinese gender morality and morality, making it difficult for love issues to be made public. This article finds that in early 20th-century China. The concept of "gender equality" accompanied by China's modernization movement (May Fourth Movement) was valued by society, and the morality of "gender equality" has never been established. However, Chinese society still maintains an unfriendly attitude towards women, and the perception of gender inequality is still considered normal.

Keywords: Early 20th Century China, Gender Morality, "Publicization" of Love, Public Sphere, Feminism in China

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Introduction

In traditional Chinese society, sexual morality between men and women often cannot enter the public sphere, and the issue of love has always been seen as "informal communication". However, in late 19th century China, social changes ushered in a shift in the public-private boundaries of traditional male-female sexual morality. With the modernization of learning from the West, the culture of free love has also prompted men and women to try to "public" the interaction of mutual love. However, "freedom of love" is at odds with the traditional Chinese morality of male and female sexuality. In the definition of traditional Chinese morality of male and female sexuality, the relationship between men and women needs to maintain a certain distance. Especially for men and women who are not in a marital relationship, are not allowed to hand over items to each other, which means that "men and women give and receive without marriage". This idea symbolizes that love between men and women cannot become a formal public issue. In addition, with the entry of Western media into Chinese society since the 19th century, newspapers have become a field for the public to express their opinions. Due to the public nature of the field of newspapers, people tend to believe that their issues refer more to "important issues of the country and society", but overlook that as citizens, their issues such as "public opinion" and "love" are also part of the country and society. Although China was transforming from a "dynastic state" to a "national state" from the late 19th century to the early 20th century, its social transformation was driven by state power, but its moral standards remained stagnant.

Unlike the traditional love between men and women presented in letters and love tokens, the active or passive communication of love between men and women in the field of newspapers and magazines is more public, adding constraints and responsibilities of public issues to love writing. In traditional China, the exchange of love letters between men and women is more about the free expression of emotions in the private field, and there is little discussion on topics other than expressing good feelings. In the correspondence between Qu Jiang (屈疆) and Du Chengshu (杜成淑), the male protagonist links the issue of China's elimination of the traditional system with seeking love from girls, and endows men and women with symbolic significance for achieving free love. In 20th-century China, men who opposed feudal ethics hoped to actively break free from the constraints of old sexual morality on women, and in action, hoped to help women realize their self-worth. This is because men believed that women's liberation was an important link for China to move towards democracy and prosperity.

Qu Jiang's love letter is not a traditional love letter text, but a manifesto mixed with men's imagination and expectations of new sexual morality in the era of new and old changes. The occurrence of Qu Jiang's love letter incident is a representative event of the transformation of new and old ideas in 20th-century China. Based on Xia Xiaohong's(夏晓虹)(Xia,2014) article "New Education and Old Morals - Taking Du Chengshu's Refusal to Qu Jiang's Letter as an Example", this article combs and analyzes the historical materials of the Qu Jiang Love Letter incident, and relies on three letters exchanged between Qu Jiang and Du Chengshu: "Qu Jiang's Original Letter", "Du Chengshu, Secretary of the Chinese Women's Association of Sichuan Female School Students, Answers to Qu Qiang's Secret Letter of the School Student", and "Reply to Du Chengshu's Letter of the Female Student", Exploring the writing and consideration of love issues by young men and women in the late Qing Dynasty, and further exploring the reasons for the alienation and distortion of love issues after entering the public sphere. In February 1907, during the Spring Festival holiday, Qu Jiang, a student of the Beijing Translation School (京师译学堂), saw Du Chengshu, a student of the Sichuan

Female School (四川女子学堂) who was selling books to aid in relief on the street in a tea house. Qu Jiang personally wrote a letter, and the next day, Du Chengshu sent Qu Jiang's original letter to the Beijing Translation School for supervision. Qu Jiang was immediately punished with expulsion.

Later, Qu Jiang wrote a letter to Du Chengshu and exchanged answers with Qu&Du and the two of them about the original letter. Qu Jiang eventually dropped out of school and left Beijing, and Du Chengshu became embroiled in a debate over the clarification of her identity by the Chinese Women's Association (中国妇人会). Therefore, this article focuses on the love letter incident between Du Chengshu and Qu Jiang in 1907, attempting to answer why the issue of "love" between men and women, as Chinese "citizens", was always considered an issue that could not be openly discussed until the early 20th century. Why did the relationship between gender and public-private boundaries in Chinese society at the beginning of the 20th century not modernize?

It should be noted that although many scholars believe there was no "citizen" identity in China during the late imperial period, this article believes that the early 20th century was a period of transformation in China. To become a modern country, China has gradually westernized and is trying to establish its own "Civic Culture". "Civic Culture" encompasses equality before the law and the personal equality of all citizens including gender morality (Almond, 2008). It can be said that in the early 20th century, gender morality in China engaged in a game between tradition and modernity, but the results of practice did not have much impact on traditional Chinese gender morality.

Research Method

This article uses the process tracking method to conduct a causal analysis of the process of publicizing love issues in the public sphere and then reveals the reasons for the failure of publicizing love issues.

1. Track the interaction process of love letters between Du Chengshu and Qu Jiang
2. Analyzing how the love letters between Du Chengshu and Qu Jiang have moved towards the public sphere
3. Tracking how the public sphere provided feedback on the love letter incident between Du Chengshu and Qu Jiang
4. Why did the issue of "love" fail in China's social transformation

Concept Definition

Traditional gender morality: In the private sphere, traditional Chinese women need to obey the three obediences and four virtues(三从四德) and follow the arrangements of their father and husband before and after marriage, and after the husband's death, they need to follow the arrangements of their son(在家从父，出嫁从夫，夫死从子，即三从). Women need to pay attention to the cultivation of four abilities: moral character, language, appearance, and sewing (the four virtues refer to women's moral character, language, demeanor, and Needlework)(妇德、妇言、妇容、女红，即四德). "Male leads outside, female leads inside" (男主外，女主内) refers to the participation of men in social and public affairs, women in household chores, and the need for women to be husband's "virtuous assistants" (贤内助) in the private field. The traditional discipline of "women without talent are virtuous"(女子无才

便是德) deprives women of the right to receive equal education as men. "Women's Virtue" (女德) and "Women's Training" (女训) were textbooks for ancient women, aimed at educating them to become qualified wives and mothers.

Research Hypothesis & Theory

This article attempts to integrate Robert Cox's environmental communication theory with Pan Yaling's (潘亚玲) (Pan,2019) international norm generation theory, and construct a new analytical framework to examine the interaction between social change and the public sphere. Pan Yaling's normative generative model is a construction of the public sphere (Pan,2008). Pan Yaling's specification generation model is based on Barry Buzan's security theory, believing that specification generation is a process of security (Buzan, et. al,2020). The so-called "security" refers to the process of designating and accepting a "threat". For example, when a threat is presented as an "existential threat" that requires taking measures beyond normal political procedures but can be considered legitimate and urgent, securitization occurs. When explaining the generation of international norms, the theory of security needs to identify four types of actors, namely: the security actors of security operations, the referents of security that need to be protected, threat agents, and ordinary listeners. The implementers of security are similar to advocates of norms, and threat agents are similar to normative opponents; The referent and audience sometimes overlap, often in a passive position in the process of security and standardization generation. The generation of international norms often goes through four stages.

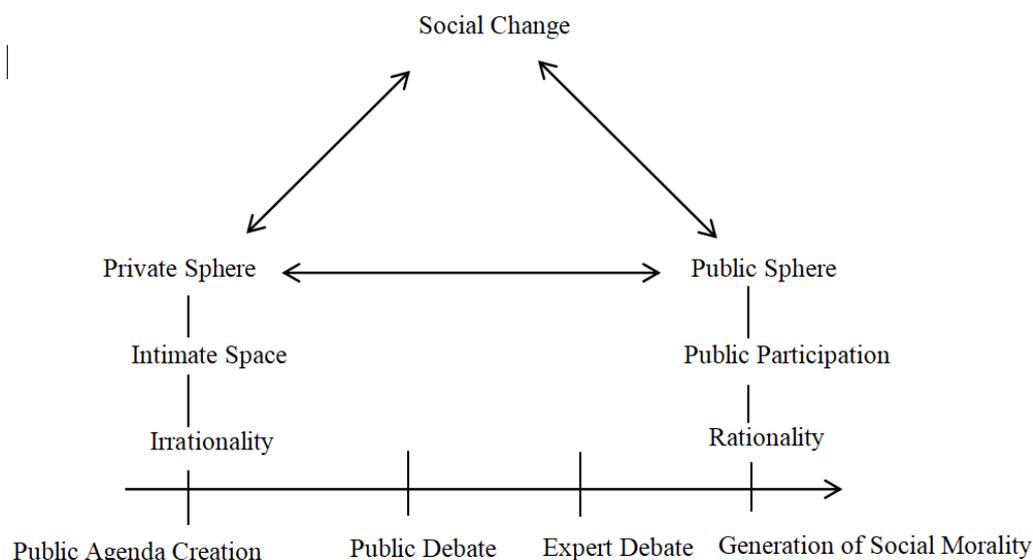
H 1: With the occurrence of social change, issues in the private sector are gradually breaking the gender divide between public and private. After breaking the gender divide between public and private, the original symbolic actions were challenged. The new agenda and social change jointly challenge the old moral norms, and the public sphere targeting this issue is also taking shape at this time.

H 2: As the issue breaks the divide between public and private, issues that originally belonged to the private domain begin to enter the discussion of civic morality. At this stage, public debate determines whether the issue can attract the attention of experts.

H 3: If an issue enters the stage of expert debate, it represents that the issue has received sufficient attention from social and national elites. At the same time, this also indicates an increased opportunity for new issues to become new ethical norms, and during this period, issues of practice and risk will be discussed.

H 4: Entering the stage of social morality generation indicates that this issue has become a new social consensus. This social consensus is recognized by the state and society, and at the same time, the state and society may ensure the legitimacy of new morals in the form of institutions. After establishing legitimacy, feedback will be given to the changing environment (As shown in Figure 1).

Figure 1. Feedback after establishing legitimacy



Source: Created by the author

Result

1. The Integration of New and Old Education in China at the Beginning of the 20th Century

In ancient China, women were confined to the private sphere and unable to enter the public sphere. Women have not obtained legal status equivalent to adult men in the private sphere, and women are excluded from the public sphere. It provides opportunities for women to break the traditional moral norms of the three obediences and four virtues (三从四德) and lays the foundation for women to move from the private sphere to the public sphere.

Du Chengshu is a student at the Sichuan Female School in Beijing. After discussion, Sichuan officials from Beijing decided to establish a women's school through joint efforts and funding from the Sichuan Association (四川同乡会) to adapt to the new situation of women's education development (Ching Hua Jih Pao, 1906). In April 1906, the Sichuan Female School opened. Wang Shanquan (王善荃), Du Deyu (杜德舆), and Sichuan officials residing in Beijing provided financial support to the Sichuan Female School (Ching Hua Jih Pao, 1906). Under the influence of the issue of saving the nation and striving for survival in the late Qing Dynasty, in terms of public morality, the School emphasized the need to cultivate female students into "female citizens" (Nü Kuo Min, 女国民), indicating that the Sichuan Female School was founded with a strong sense of social responsibility. To raise the awareness of female students towards the responsibility of female citizens, the campus of Sichuan Female School is specially located at the site of the Qin Liangyu (秦良玉) Memorial Hall of the Ming Dynasty female general from Sichuan.

But in terms of gender morality, the school brochure continues the ancient Chinese norm that men and women should not engage in private contact. The teaching purpose of the school is to teach women modern general knowledge based on inheriting traditional female virtues. (Da Kung Pao, 1906). All teachers and workers in the school are women, and parents of

students need to dispatch maids to be responsible for the transportation of students to and from school. The school sends patrol police to protect students on their way to and from school. The emphasis placed by Sichuan Female School on the personal safety of female students was aimed at reducing the probability of female students having contact with men during school and between the first and second semesters (Da Kung Pao,1906).

In terms of gender morality, Du Chengshu adheres to the traditional gender morality of gender segregation. Compared to Qu Jiang's way of sending letters on a date, Du's Letter proposed a more reasonable acquaintance plan than sending love letters privately. Du Chengshu and Qu Jiang are very close to the tea stall, and if Qu Jiang has a good impression of Du Chengshu, he can express his feelings in front of her. After obtaining the consent of his elders, they can start a relationship (Shun T'ien Shih Pao,1907). Du's Letter refuted the statements in Qu Jiang's letter that the two had already communicated, and unilaterally declared and self-proved the fact that the two had never had any communication. Du Chengshu emphasized the need to record detailed information about guests when meeting them and informed her elders, but Qu Jiang's name was not included in Du Chengshu's meeting records, so the two had never met before. Qu Jiang mentioned in his letter that he had known Du Chengshu for nearly a year. Du Chengshu denied this point. In terms of public morality, Du Chengshu believes that women should bear social responsibility, and Qu Jiang's practice of sending love letters privately interferes with women's pursuit of social value. Du's letter believed that Qu Jiang's private delivery of a love letter to Du Chengshu was disrespectful to her personality. Du Chengshu believes that during the Spring Festival holiday, selling books to raise funds in the cold wind is a heroic act for women to shoulder social responsibility (Shun T'ien Shih Pao,1907). Qu Jiang's act of sending love letters privately hinders women from realizing their social value.

In Du Chengshu's letter, there is an ideal of being willing to take on social responsibility and participate in the cause of saving the nation like men. Du Chengshu tends to be open in public morality, but conservative in gender morality. Du Chengshu's gender morality lags behind public morality.

The Beijing Translation School where Qu Jiang is located, although a modern school, has not achieved modernization in gender morality. The training program of Beijing Translation School is representative of China's modern schools in the 20th century. The teaching purpose of Beijing Translation School is to cultivate diplomatic talents who are suitable for China's modernization construction. The Beijing Translation School was established after the School of Combined Learning(京师同文馆) and is one of the three affiliated institutions of The Imperial University of Peking(京师大学堂)(Wu,2020). As a student of the Translation School, Qu Jiang tends to have an open attitude towards gender morality.

In terms of gender morality, Qu Jiang tends to break the social norms of gender segregation. In Qu Jiang's love letter writing, he took advantage of the recent trend of open communication between men and women to explain the rationality of delivering love letters. In the beginning, Qu Jiang talked about the current situation of gender segregation in China. Apart from the communication between opposite-sex relatives in the private sector, there are no public and legal opportunities for communication between men and women in the public sector (Chin Pao,1907a).

Qu Jiang also claimed to have made friends with female friends in Suzhou(苏州) and Shanghai(上海), to compare the strict customs of the North. At the same time, he also

expressed his open attitude towards men's and women's communication (Pei Ching Jih Pao,1907). Qu Jiang positioned the letter to Du Chengshu as a normal category of heterosexual communication between men and women and pointed out that there should not be too many restrictions on heterosexual communication. After being repelled by the Beijing Translation School and Du Chengshu publicly disclosing Qu Jiang's original letter, Qu Jiang once again talked about his attitude and principles towards male and female communication in his letter "Reply to Du Chengshu's Letter of the Female Student" (覆女学生杜成淑书). Qu Jiang learned about the etiquette of Western men's and women's communication. As long as men and women feel good about each other after meeting, they can communicate and chat. If they feel suitable, they can continue to socialize. If not, they can separate, this type of communication method is not uncommon (Qu,1907). If we follow the rules of Western male-female communication, Qu Jiang's behavior of writing a letter to Du Chengshu and inviting the park is not considered excessive.

In terms of public morality, Qu Jiang believes that learning Western male-female communication is also an important part of China's modernization. Qu Jiang talked about the current situation of male and female communication in China, where there are no public or legal opportunities for communication between men and women in the public sphere, except for communication between relatives of the opposite sex in the private domain. Qu Jiang believes that since China has already learned advanced Western ideas, the transformation of male-female communication is necessary and should not be prohibited. At the end of Qu Jiang's writing, there was a desire to seek freedom abroad and vent his inner dissatisfaction. In Qu Jiang's love letter writing, he took advantage of the recent trend of open communication between men and women to describe the rationality of sending love letters. Qu Jiang's love letter conveys the hope for the modernization of Chinese male-female communication, which reflects the synchronization of Qu Jiang's public morality and gender morality.

2. The Publicization of the Qu Du Incident and Public Sphere Comments on the Qu Du Incident

After receiving a love letter from Qu Jiang, Du Chengshu handed over Qu Jiang's original letter to the principal of the Beijing Translation School, marking the beginning of the publicity of the Qu&Du incident. On 22 February 1907, Du Chengshu received a handwritten letter from Qu Jiang, a student from the Beijing Translation School, while selling books to raise funds for the disaster area. On 23 February 1907, Du Chengshu submitted Qu Jiang's original letter to Zhang Qin, the supervisor of the Beijing Translation School, and wrote a letter to Zhang Qin outlining the negative impact of Qu Qiang's behavior of seducing girls. Du Chengshu pointed out that Qu Jiang's private delivery of letters not only damaged Du Chengshu's reputation but also related to the reputation of the Beijing Translation School and the Chinese Women's Association (Chin Pao,1907). Qu Jiang's behavior greatly insulted Du Chengshu, who was the secretary of the Chinese Women's Association. On the afternoon of February 24th, Principal Zhang Qin replied that Qu Jiang had violated Article 8 of the Student Code of the Translation School and was punished with dropping out of school. The punishment of Qu Jiang by the Beijing Translation School was publicly posted in the school on the morning of the 24th (Sheng Ching Shih Pao,1907).

Du Chengshu published Qu Jiang's letter in the newspaper, marking the deepening of the publicity of the Qu Du incident. With the support of newspapers, public debates were able to open up. Du Chengshu handed over Qu Jiang's original letter to the principal of the Translation School and also sent the letter to major newspapers and magazines, hoping that

the editor could make it public. It can be seen that Du Chengshu had already made it public before the Translation School punished Qu Jiang. On February 26th, Beijing's Shun T'ien Shih Pao published a secret letter from Qu Qiang, a student at the Sichuan Female School, answered by Du Chengshu, the secretary of the Chinese People's Association. This is one of the earliest newspapers to publish Du Chengshu's original letter, and on the same day, Shun T'ien Shih Pao published news of Qu Jiang's overthrow. After the Shun T'ien Shih Pao made public the private delivery of love letters by Qu Jiang, newspapers such as Pei Ching Jih Pao (北京日报), the Tianjin's Chin Pao(津报), The Chung Kuo Hsin Nü Chieh Tsa Chih (中国新女界杂志), and the Sheng Ching Shih Pao (盛京时报) reported on it. On March 5th, Shun T'ien Shih Pao published Qu Jiang's "Reply to Female Student Du Chengshu". The coverage of love letters in these newspapers has extended personal disputes in the private domain to the public sphere.

The criticism of Qu Jiang's behavior by Sheng Ching Shih Pao is lighter compared to that of Chung Kuo Hsin Nü Chieh Tsa Chih. The annotation of Qu Jiang's love letters by China New Women's Magazine adds personal likes and dislikes of the editor, and the criticism of Qu Jiang goes beyond the principle of dealing with facts and rises to the level of personal attacks. The Chinese New Women's Magazine added annotations after each sentence of Qu Jiang's original text. The editor of the Chinese New Women's Magazine believes that Qu Jiang's so-called study abroad in Shanghai, Suzhou, and other places is not a real study abroad. Qu Jiang mentioned in his love letter that he has several female close friends, and the editor of the Chinese New Women's Magazine believes that people with excellent qualities will not make friends with Qu Jiang (Chung Kuo Hsin Nü Chieh Tsa Chih,1907). The degree of criticism towards Qu Jiang varies among newspapers due to their different positions. This is because under the blending of new and old ideological trends, the definition of new and old sexual morality by the general public is still being explored, and the boundaries between new and old sexual morality are not yet clear.

Zhang Xincheng's (张心澂) recollection of Qu Jiang being expelled differs from what was written in Du Chengshu's letter at that time. Due to the possibility of misplaced memories, Zhang Xincheng's intuitive perception of Qu Jiang dropping out of school also proves the general understanding of the public and private domains of men and women in the late Qing Dynasty, that is, women are not the protagonists who publicly release messages about their love (The Literature and History Materials Committee,2000). Zhang Xincheng was a student at the Beijing Translation School. In Zhang Xincheng's recollection, he believed that after seeing Du Chengshu staring at him, Qu Jiang thought Du was interested in him, so he wrote a letter to Du Chengshu and accused Qu Jiang of being Du Chengshu's father rather than Du Chengshu. It is impossible to verify whether Du Chengshu and Qu Jiang had an intention, as Zhang Xincheng said. However, from Zhang Xincheng's recollection, it can be seen that in the social context of 1907, women generally could not act as fully responsible individuals to defend themselves in the public domain.

Although the reports in the newspapers are mostly criticisms of Qu Jiang, Du Chengshu, as a party involved in the incident, inevitably cannot escape the fate of being criticized. With the increasing criticism of Qu Jiang in the newspapers. The Chinese Women's Association has also published a newspaper to clarify whether Du Chengshu is the Secretary of the Women's Association. On March 18, 1907, the Nanyang Branch of the Chinese Women's Association published an article stating that although Du Deyu and his wife were extremely concerned about fundraising for disaster relief, Du Chengshu, the daughter of Du Deyu, was not a member of the Chinese Women's Association, nor was she the secretary of the Chinese

Women's Association (Shih Pao,1907a). On March 30th, Tianjin's Chin Pao published an original letter from the Nanyang China Women's Association Branch Office to the President of the Beijing Women's Association, Ying Shuzhong (英淑仲). The letter stated that at the fundraising site, due to insufficient staff, Du Chengshu's mother was appointed as a temporary organizer, and Du Chengshu also served as the temporary volunteer secretary. Chinese women believe that if the identity of Du Chengshu is not clearly stated, the spread of rumors about the love letter incident will cause discussions among female officials, thereby affecting the overall reputation of the female official community.

The Chinese Women's Association (中国妇人会) has repeatedly published newspapers claiming that Du Chengshu is not the secretary of the Women's Association. Du Chengshu's father, Du Deyu, immediately published a newspaper claiming that his wife Huang Mingxun (黄铭训) had established The Chinese Female's Association (中国妇女会), leading to the division between the Chinese Women's Association and the Du Huang couple(Shih Pao,1907b). Faced with some rumors and criticisms in the public sphere, the Chinese Women's Association did not side with Du Chengshu, but instead adopted a way to maintain the reputation of the Chinese Women's Association by drawing a clear line with her, thereby strengthening traditional gender morality. From the attitude of the Women's Association mentioned above, we can see that as a relatively authoritative women's group in early 20th century China, the Women's Association still holds a conservative attitude towards women's self-expression in the public sphere. This shows that since the end of the Qing Dynasty and the beginning of the Republic of China, there is not much room for Chinese society to accommodate the issue of love in the public sphere (As shown in Table 1).

Table 1. Chinese society to accommodate the issue of love in the public sphere

	Chinese Women's Association	Beijing Translation School	Chinese New Women's Magazine	Ta Kung Pao and other media
Qu Jiang(Male)	against	against	against	against
Du Chengshu (Female)	against	supported	neutral	supported

Source: Created by the author

During the public debate, after the principal of the Beijing Translation School expelled Qu Jiang, the newspaper's coverage of the Qu Jiang love letter incident inevitably impacted Du Chengshu, who was involved in the incident. The Chinese Women's Association published a newspaper claiming that Du Chengshu was not the secretary of the Women's Association. The Chinese Women's Association's approach to clarifying the relationship with Du Chengshu is in opposition to her open letter, believing that the ambiguous relationship between Du Chengshu and Qu Jiang discussed in the newspaper is damaging to the reputation of The Chinese Women's Association. The public authorities, represented by the Beijing Translation School and The Chinese Women's Association, hold a critical attitude towards the love letter incident, believing that Qu Jiang's love letter appeared in the public domain, damaging their respective reputations. Through punishment of the parties involved in the incident, indirectly reflects the maintenance of traditional sexual morality. As a result, the ambiguous gender morality of the new and old transformation eras becomes clear, new sexual morality is criticized, and traditional gender morality is strengthened.

Conclusion

In the process of transitioning from the private domain to the public domain and achieving publicization, the issue of love and affection needs to go through four stages: public agenda creation, public debate, expert debate, and the formation of new social morality. This article uses the process tracking method to analyze Qu&Du's Love Letter incident in 1907, and compares it with Han&Yang's incident at Peking University in 1924, attempting to explain the reasons for the failure of public realization of the love issue, exploring which stage of publicization the issue of love has been discontinued. Research has found that Qu&Du's Love Letter incident began with the creation of a public agenda on love issues after Du Chengshu made the love letter public. In the public debate, traditional gender morality has always dominated, manifested in the suppression of Du Chengshu, who attempted to use new gender morality, by the public power represented by the Chinese Women's Association, thereby destroying opportunities for the continued development of new gender morality. Traditional gender morality has been strengthened, and the love letter incident ended with Qu Jiang dropping out of school and Du Chengshu's reputation being damaged.

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Determinants of Learning Amongst 21st Century ESL Learners

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Abstract

This study focuses on determinants of learning amongst 21st century English as a second language (ESL) learners at Wenzhou-Kean University. Although it is an undoubted fact that the persistent change in learning experiences has contributed to the changing of learning determinants of 21st century ESL learners, the actual determinants have not been explored and defined. The study is a cross-sectional study that uses both descriptive and inferential statistics. 174 WKU students participated in this study by completing online questionnaires, while another ten students participated through unstructured interviews. The data collected in the questionnaire and the answers acquired from the interviewees were described and analyzed in depth. This study described the personal attributes, preferences, and recourses of 21st century ESL learners. According to the study results, WKU students consider motivation, self-discipline, and study environment as the three main determinants of learning. In addition, the findings revealed that most WKU students believe that the learning resources, study mode, and teaching method have a great impact on their studies. Meanwhile, their pre-university learning experiences have an impact on their studies in university, which is reflected in their better adaptation to paperless study at university. The unstructured interview also found that ESL students' learning pressure are well managed. However, most ESL students need help adapting to the new learning environment and need to make better use of the resources that can support their learning, such as ELC. This paper also identifies suggestions that ESL college students agree with by considering the three main determinants discovered in the questionnaire, such as motivation, self-discipline and study environment, which can help them perform better in their studies.

Keywords: ESL, Learning Determinants, Motivation

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Introduction

Background of the Research

It is an established fact that with the rapid development of technology, society, and the advance of globalization, learning has a persistent change caused by experience. 21st students should develop different skills from those developed by their predecessors. Students in the 21st century must acquire the requisite abilities. A changed social life, a different economic world, and a more demanding and skill-oriented workplace are all things that 21st century schools should help students prepare for (Saleh, 2019). Therefore, determinants of learning amongst 21st century students deserve attention.

There are many external factors that can be determinants of learning, including study environment, instructors, technology, practice opportunities, educational resources, and family background. Some studies have found that ESL college students have great changes in the determinants of learning. However, these studies are only based on the data collected from ESL college students from Malaysia, ignoring the ESL students in China (Tharumaraj et al., 2018). Therefore, this study aims to investigate the determinants of learning amongst 21st century ESL college students in China, focusing on students at Wenzhou-Kean University and providing some suggestions on how to make full use of the study resources.

Research Questions

1. What is the most significant personal attribute for ESL learners in the 21st century?
2. What are the factors related to successful learning for ESL learners in the 21st century?
3. Which of these factors provide the most significant impact to successful learning among 21st century ESL learners?

Literature Review

The following literature review contains different relevant studies on the determinants of learning amongst 21st century ESL learners.

Internal Factors

Motivation to learn a second language has been emphasized by scholars and language teachers. According to Gardner and Lambert (1959), motivation is essential for success in second language learning. He mentioned that individuals can be motivated to learn a second language by integrative motivation as interest in the language culture and instrumental motivation driven by utilitarianism (1985). The study conducted by Ali and Ahmed (2019) shows that instrumental motivation has the most significant role in learning English, as the students' main reasons for learning English are a tool for communication, the necessity for employment and the need for passing exams. Likewise, Torres and Alieto's study (2019) also demonstrates that Filipino ESL learners are more instrumentally motivated to learn English. Apart from Gardner's classification of motivation into instrumental and integrative, some scholars classify it into intrinsic and extrinsic. According to Ryan and Deci (1985), intrinsic motivation refers to doing something driven by inherent interest and pleasure while extrinsic motivation refers to doing something to get the outcome. The results of Hussain, Salam and Farid's study (2020) show that most Pakistani adult learners' motivation for learning English is completely based on pursuing lifelong achievements, categorized as intrinsic motivation. Moreover, the study

focused on Vietnamese ESL students shows that the students can be motivated by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors such as communicative purposes, personal interests and pleasure, academic and career path, and other people such as friends, family and teachers (Nguyen, 2022). However, it reveals that intrinsic motivation is the dominant one for ESL students to learn English (Nguyen & Habók, 2022).

Self-discipline, which is related to the word procrastination, is a significant internal factor. Procrastination, which means the tendency to delay a task, has become a major barrier for students to perform in their thesis process and academic studies. Therefore, the study shows the importance of self-regulated learning, particularly regular study according to the course schedule, the time to complete assigned tasks, frequent access to course materials, and the reading of relevant course information, and fighting procrastination with self-discipline (Almalki et al., 2020). To help students form good habits to better manage their time, a tool called the Pomodoro technique has been developed. This kind of 25-minute studying followed by five 5-minute break has formed an effective mechanism through the exact calculation of the required time of completing a subject or the due time of a task, which can help maximize the utilization of time. Furthermore, if procrastination happens, the Pomodoro technique can sense the possible delay through relevant measures to warn the users to take some actions to quickly make up (Almalki et al., 2020). Therefore, the Pomodoro technique, as a representative of self-disciplined tech helpers informs users of the importance of the consciousness of time management and efficiency in the learning process. In fact, studies have also shown that long working hours lead to insufficient dopamine release, which reduces motivation and productivity, while other external factors, like the unknown fear of the complex task, and the perfectionism of work, can all cause procrastination (Browne et al., 2018). Learning requires timely positive feedback, and learning tasks that do not provide students with dopamine are more likely to lead to procrastination, resulting in a loss of self-discipline and reduced learning efficiency. Based on this similar train of thought, furthermore exploring the relationship between self-discipline and relevant software, researchers focus on the specific setup of the software, by combining gamification and education, blending the visual reward mechanism of the game with the otherwise boring learning task, to improve productivity and motivation. The findings represent that compared with a simplified time-management version of the software, participants from the gamified version show better grade performance and more interactive involvement with the software, and are more easily form self-discipline to take control of their time and study rhythm (Browne et al., 2018).

The pre-university learning experience of ESL students also has a long-lasting impact on their university study when considering the aspects of second language exposure and digital skills level. The research results show a positive correlation between years of pre-university second language study and student's proficiency in the university study, which points to the importance of pre-university encounters with the second language and its culture (Strawbridge et al., 2019). It can thus be concluded that pre-university exposure to the second language makes a great contribution to the students' language proficiency at the university level (Strawbridge et al., 2019). The research statistics also show that when pre-university students receive greater training in knowledge and general use of digital devices, the higher level they have in understanding the advantages and benefits to their academic achievement (García, 2020). Therefore, it reveals that students need to train their digital skills before entering university, which can equip them with adequate knowledge of making good use of digital devices in their learning process at university.

External Factors

Learning environment and resources can greatly impact college students' learning. A typical example is ELC (The English Language Center). ELC is a professional unit that offers 21st century students a variety of English learning opportunities and tailored services to help college students improve their English skills. Most students get language confidence under the guidance of ELC. The learning environment and learning resources indeed change student's attitudes towards study. According to Murphy, Eduljee and Croteau (2021), students' preferences included a mix of teacher-centered and student-centered approaches, some of which include lectures with student interaction, demonstrations and practice, lectures with the use of PowerPoint, free-flowing classroom discussion, guest speakers, and games in the classroom. Besides, Bara and Xhomara (2020), also said there is a medium positive correlation between problem-based learning and academic achievement. A good environment makes students more positive to attend class. While effective resources are good for them to absorb different knowledge.

In addition, technology and software development also make education more effective. According to Xu and Tsai (2021), the teaching method of English has increased its diversity by engaging with the network as a new platform to exchange information, which makes it possible for students to cross both temporal and spatial boundaries. The emergence of interactive applications such as Kahoot! has also aroused students' interest in learning. Lin, Ganapathy, and Kaur's research (2018) revealed that the engagement and fun factors of game-based learning have been found to boost learner motivation and sustain retention. The emergence of these softwares makes communication between professors and students more convenient, and the student can also understand teachers' content more intuitively. At the same time, it is efficient for college students to deepen their impression through the interactive function of the software and strengthen their practice of the learning content.

Family background is also a large determinant of learning. The educational success of children, which contains the formation of knowledge, abilities, and values, is significantly impacted by their parents' education level. In most cases, educated parents are more likely to provide helpful guidance and educational choices for themselves. They have already gone through the educational process and are aware of the learning process as well as the highs and lows of academic decisions. Therefore, compared to those with less education, parents with higher educational levels are more easily to share educational life experiences that are effective and convincing in inspiring their kids to better study, which proved to have a significantly positive relationship with academic achievement (Idris et al., 2020). Furthermore, relevant research also found that parents with better socioeconomic status are more likely to invest in educational expectations in their children, therefore fostering an achievement-supportive environment and helping them succeed in school (Pinquart & Ebeling, 2020). In the meanwhile, a learning-friendly home environment is essential for student's development, the fact is that parents with greater educational achievement are more conscientious and careful about their children's education, and in most cases, they could easily provide help and motivation for, those interactions of parents constitute positive psychological effects on children, decrease kids' hesitancy, and further boost kids' self-assurance and faith in their parents. However, due to the lack of a psychological aspect, illiterate parents are unable to help their children, and as parents, their impact is less powerful than that of educated parents (Idris et al., 2020). Idris (2020) also revealed that the relationship between parental education and the current grooming of children exists and is necessary. Furthermore, Pinquart and Ebeling (2021) also indicated the bi-directional relationship between parental expectations and children's accomplishments. The

expectations of parents are typically higher than those of their children. Part of the influence of parental expectations on child achievement was mediated by children's educational expectations, academic engagement, and academic self-concept, as well as parental achievement-supportive behaviors, and the mediating effect of children's expectations was stronger in older children. Despite whether there is a genetic link between children or merely the parents who raised them, family background still has a major role in how much wealth children accumulate and how they have as investors as adults (Fagereng et al., 2021).

Methods

This study adopts exploratory method, with the understanding of the research problem, this study aimed to explore which learning determinant will affect 21st century students most. There were 180 participants of the study from Wenzhou- Kean University. The researchers used simple but clear random sampling with the method of a random online self-made questionnaire and few groups were selected for detailed interviews. The following are the criteria for this research. First, participants in this questionnaire should be college students batch 2021-2022, second, participants should be ESL learners.

This research utilized self-made questionnaires and supplemented with unstructured interviews. The online questionnaire included a series of relevant questions, which were divided into two types: single-choice and multiple-choice. There were three parts of the online questionnaire: Part I – general information of the respondents, including year level, gender and GPA; Part II – participants' personal attributes of learning; Part III – preferences and resources of the participants. Apart from the questionnaire, the study also adopted the unstructured interview to further explore the learning difficulties of 21st century ESL learners and thus provide reliable suggestions.

Descriptive data were used to conduct a clear and in-depth data analysis. Data processing used Microsoft Excel to form corresponding charts and graphs, and Microsoft Word was used to do systematic data analysis. Meanwhile, the standard ranking was used to calculate students' responses to the scaled questionnaire.

Through frequency counting, this study determines the basic information of the interviewees, identifies the inspiration of the pre-university education for their future study (objective 1), judges the help for them focusing on the shift of the learning center in education (objective 2), and records their preference for learning resources (objective 3). Finally, according to these data, we figure out the factors that affect the interviewees' academic performance (objective 4).

Limitation of the Study

Although the process of this research is well-designed, there still exist several limitations. This study merely focuses on ESL Learners from Wenzhou-Kean University, lacking useful data and valid interviews from other universities in China, which will cause an effect on data integrity and representation. Besides, compared with the total number of Wenzhou-Kean University students, the number of respondents is quite limited, a wider sample comparison is still required for a more rounded analysis. Moreover, this study has selected limited aspects of learning determinants, and there needs to be more investigation of other factors. Therefore, to some extent, it is hard to draw accurate and comprehensive conclusions on the determinants of 21st century ESL learners.

Results and Discussion

Respondents' Gender and Year Level

Categorical Variables		Frequency Counts	Percentage
Gender	Male	52	29.89%
	Female	122	70.11%
Year Level	Freshmen	18	10.34%
	Sophomores	118	67.82%
	Juniors	32	18.39%
	Seniors	6	3.45%

Table 1: Basic Information of Respondents

The distribution of participants is presented in Table 1. In total, there are 176 students who participated in this questionnaire survey, which is approximately 5% of the total population in Wenzhou-Kean University. There were 70.11% females of our total 176 respondents, and 29.89% male participants in our questionnaire survey. The total number of female participants is 122, while the total number of males is 52. It obviously shows that the female students take the dominant proportion here. Of the total 176 participants, 18 or 10.34% of them are freshmen, 118 or 67.82% of them are sophomores, 32 or 18.39% of them are juniors and 6 or 3.45% of them are seniors. Therefore, we can conclude that sophomores are the main participants of the study.

Motivation for Studying English

Item	Frequency Counts	Percentage	Rank
Self-improvement	125	71.84%	1
Expectation of parents	14	8.05%	3
Peer pressure	23	13.22%	2
Others	12	6.9%	4

Table 2: Responders' Motivations for Studying English

Table 2 presents students' responses to their motivation for studying English. 71.84% of the students regard their motivation for learning English as to improve themselves. It should be noticed that over half of the students are determined to learn English for self-improvement, which is driven by utilitarianism. Therefore, according to Gardner's classification of motivation, the motivation of WKU ESL learners is mainly instrumental motivation (1985). And respondents' choice of expectation of parents and peer pressure only adds up to 21.27% of the percentage, which shows that college students in the 21st century are self-motivated, rather

than being pressured by their parents and peers. Therefore, it indicates that the students of WKU ESL learners are more intrinsically motivated rather than extrinsically motivated. It can thus be concluded that instrumental and intrinsic motivations are the dominant motivations for WKU students to learn English as their second language. This result is similar to Lu and Berg's (2008) study which showed that instrumental motivations.

Student-Centered Teaching and Learning Mode

Student's preferred form of instruction	Mean \bar{x}	SD	Scaled Responses	Descriptive Interpretation
Student prefer a seminar-style teaching to a lecture-based teaching	3.3	1.12	Agree	Above Average
Compared with professors teaching according to established content, students prefer professors to flexibly adjust teaching content according to students' classroom feedback	3.9	0.97	Agree	Above Average
Teachers use interactive software to promote student learning	3.7	0.74	Agree	Above Average
Compared with paper books and documents in the library, students prefer to search for electronic books and documents on the Internet	3.7	0.82	Agree	Above Average

Table 3: Responders' Views on Student-centered Teaching and Learning Mode

The study investigates the four directions of teaching form, and averaged 174 interviewees' preferences for teaching style, flexibility of teaching content, use of interactive software and search for information. The results show that the students prefer seminar-style teaching and hope the professor can adjust the teaching content according to the classroom feedback. They are willing to use interactive software for classroom learning and prefer electronic products to access learning materials. Meanwhile, they believe that using interactive software and electronic devices can promote their learning efficiency. The mean value of the four directions is greater than 3, and the standard deviation is 0.91. The grand mean of 3.65 and the small variance reveals that students' preference for the student-centered teaching and learning mode is above average. Students are interested in new teaching methods and diverse teaching resources, while traditional teaching methods, such as paper teaching, are no longer the first choice for college students in the 21st century. This result is consistent with Osman, Jumaludin and Iranmansh's study (2015), which showed that students highly agree with student-centered teaching and learning mode.

GPA and the frequency of Using Self-Regulatory Software

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>GPA</i>
Frequency	1	
GPA	-0.144064218	1

	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>P-value</i>
Intercept	0.158236796	24.38025948	1.07258E-57
Frequency	0.082896744	-1.909301697	0.057887905

Table 4: Responder's GPA and the Frequency of Using Self-regulatory Software

To determine whether the frequency of using self-regulatory software has a relationship with the average GPA, a correlation using Pearson r is calculated. Results show that the frequency of self-regulatory software does not have a significant relationship with the GPA ($r = -.144$, $p > 0.05$).

In contrast to the results of the previous studies showing that the use of self-regulatory software can help students better manage their time and increase their productivity, which can help to improve students' grades, our study results show that the use of these software has no significant contribution to students' learning outcomes (Browne et al., 2018).

The Influence of Pre-university Education on University Studies

Item. No	The influence of pre-university education on university studies	Mean \bar{x}	SD	Scaled Responses	Descriptive Interpretation
1.	Using paperless learning before university make you better adapted to paperless study at university	3.64	1.33	Agree	Above Average
2.	Your parents' education level will affect your learning	3.63	1.25	Agree	Above Average
The influence of pre-university education on university studies		3.635	1.29	Agree	Above Average

Legend: Strongly Disagree (0.1-1.0); Disagree (1.1-2.0); Neutral (2.1-3.0); Agree (3.1-4.0); Strongly agree (4.1-5.0)

Table 5: Responders' Views on the Influence of Pre-university Education on University Studies

To explore whether pre-university education will affect university studies, a few questions were asked. Results show that there does exist a relationship, while more than half of respondents agree that using paperless learning before entering university helps them better adapt to paperless study at university. Furthermore, parents' education level also has an influence on learning, which reflects that pre-university effort not only can help students better transform to university studies but is also a predictor of later academic success (Van et al., 2017). Educated parents are more likely to provide a good home learning atmosphere. Based

on their own educational experiences, helping their children take fewer detours, and providing more professional guidance and suggestions.

Personal Attributes for ESL Learners in the 21st Century

Personal Attributes	Frequency	Rank
Motivation	110	1
Psychological well-being	41	3
Self-discipline	100	2
Personality	32	4
Previous education experience	19	6
Interpersonal relationship	15	7
Learning method	22	5
Other	2	8

Table 6: Personal Attributes For Learners In the 21st Century

Table 6 shows the frequency and rank of the personal attributes of 21st century ESL learners. Motivation ranks the highest among all the personal attributes of 21st century ELS learners. Self-discipline ranks second and psychological well-being ranks third. Therefore, motivation is the most significant personal attribute of ESL learners in the 21st century.

Factors Related to Successful Learning for ESL Learners in the 21st Century

Personal Attributes	Frequency	Rank
Motivation	110	1
Psychological well-being	41	5
Self-discipline	100	2
Personality	32	6
Previous education experience	19	9
Study environment	72	3
Professors and partners	48	4
Technology	7	13
Practice opportunity	14	11
Interpersonal relationship	15	10
Education resources	28	7
Family background	12	12
Education method	22	8
Other	2	14

Table 7.1: Factors Related to Successful Learning for ESL Learners in the 21st Century Based on the Survey

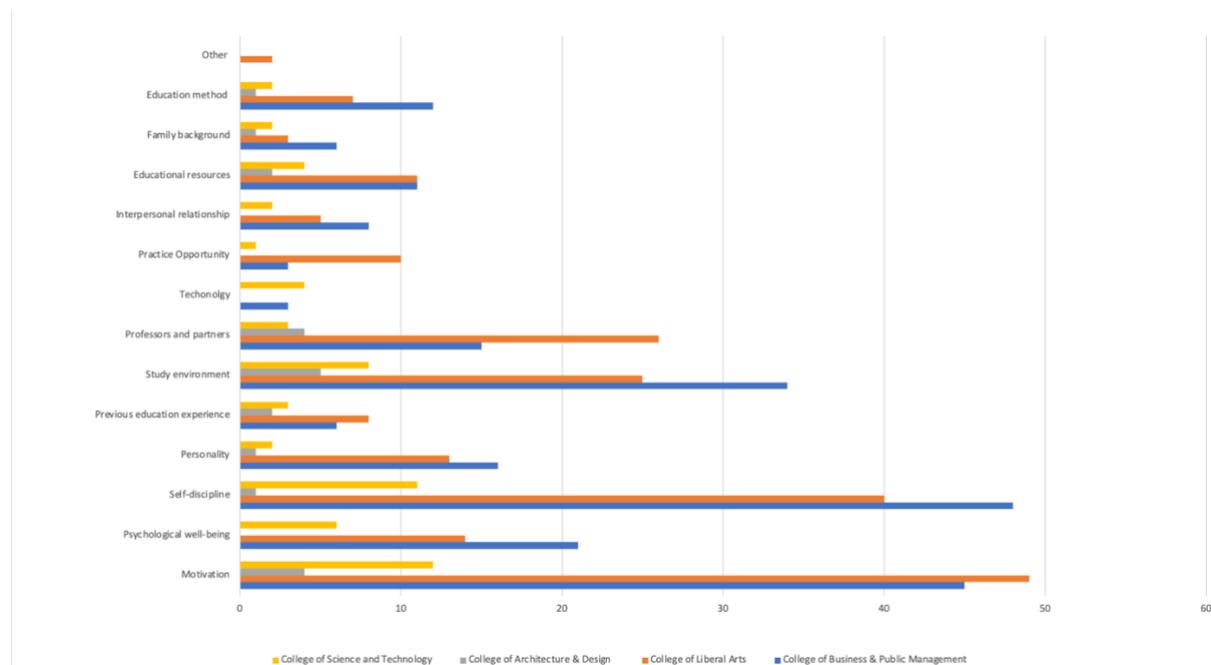


Figure 1: Differences in Learning Determinants amongst Students

Table 7.1 shows three of the learning determinants that have the greatest impact on students, which are motivation, self-discipline and study environment. Figure 1 further compares the three determinants that students from different colleges identified as having the greatest impact on their learning. The results show that for the majority of students from the College of Business and Public Management, self-discipline, motivation, and study environment are three of the greatest learning determinants. For the students from the College of Liberal Arts, motivation, self-discipline and Professors and partners are three of the greatest learning determinants. The students in the College of Architecture and Design believe that family background, motivation and professors and partners are three of the greatest learning determinants, while students in the College of Science and Technology regard their greatest learning determinants as motivation, self-discipline and study environment. It is worth noticing that students from the College of Business and Public Management and College of Science and Technology regard study environment as one of the three determinants in common. It can thus be surmised that the reason for this result is that students from these two colleges have to handle large amounts of data and code in their studies. Therefore, the study environment has a significant influence on their study. Moreover, the students from both the College of Liberal Arts and Architecture and Design view professors and partners as one of their common determinants, while students from the College of Business and Public Management and Science and Technology do not. It can be inferred that the reason for this result is that the assessments for students in the former two colleges are mainly essays and artworks marked by professors based on professors' subjectivity, while the assessments for students in the latter two colleges are mainly examinations with fixed answers. What is quite interesting is that part of the students in the College of Architecture and Design recognize family background as an important effect, but this factor isn't the first choice of students at other colleges. This is because students at this school are required to complete many hands-on projects, most of which require the purchase of expensive materials. A good family background can provide them with enough financial support.

Unstructured Interview Analysis

In order to further understand the 21st century learners' views on the factors that affect learning, we interviewed ten students from different grades offline, the results are presented below. In general, there were three from freshman, five from sophomore, and two from junior.

Academic Pressure - The results for the first interview question show that most interviewees believe their pressure comes from the pursuit of a higher GPA and the competition between peers. However, all of the interviewees developed their own ways of regulating their emotions and pressure. Study pressure can be regarded as one of the learning determinants for 21st century ESL learners as they are studying with a second language they are unfamiliar with. According to Hakim, Fajri and Faizah (2022), academic stress can help individuals maintain their interest in participating in their studies, which may also increase their enthusiasm or motivation. Therefore, the answers of the interviewees suggest that students at WKU have enough study pressure to keep them enthusiastic and motivated to learn. Meanwhile, they have a clear understanding and effective management of their study pressure.

New Language Acquisition - From the answer, almost all the students feel uncomfortable with the new language environment since they have difficulty listening to others' conversations. Students at WKU are required to study in an all-English teaching environment, which is quite different from their previous educational experience. Therefore, they always get confused during the class when professors put forward an important question, but they don't know what it means. So, their learning progress will be very slow at first, and they cannot keep up sometimes, making them very uncomfortable. Nevertheless, a small number of students think they can adapt well to the environment. These students like the second language very much and usually have a high level of English before.

English Language Center (ELC) Support – The results for the question show that seven out of ten interviewees believe ELC support has a significant influence on their studies, which provides practical help, including instructions for academic writing, English listening training and oral English training.

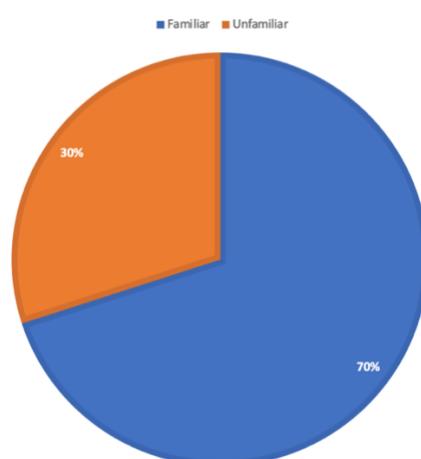


Figure 2: English Language Center Support

Figure 2 further shows that three out of ten interviewees do not use ESL and are unclear of its functions, while the other interviewees believe that ELC has provided them with practical help. It can thus be concluded that ELC does provide a great range of English learning support for

students, which is helpful for students to attain their academic achievement. However, the results also suggest that the university has not fully promoted ELC among students. Therefore, students do not fully understand the support ELC can provide and thus cannot make full use of it.

Themes	Frequency	Rank
Academic Pressure	9	1
New Language Acquisition	8	2
ELC Support	7	3

Table 7.2: Factors Related to Successful Learning Based on ESL Learners' Interview

In Table 7.2, the results of the interview are presented in three themes including academic pressure, new language acquisition and ELC support. The results show that 90% of interviewees believe academic pressure has the most significant impact on their studies and academic pressure ranks the highest amongst the three themes.

The Most Significant Factor for Successful Learning for 21st century ESL Learners

Sources of Academic Pressure	Frequency	Rank
Language Barriers	8	1
Learning Patterns	3	2
Cultural Differences	2	3
Information Gap	1	4

Table 8: The Most Significant Factor for Successful Learning for 21st century ESL Learners Based on the Interview

The following table further explores where the academic pressure comes from. Amongst language barriers, learning patterns, cultural differences and information gap, language barriers ranks the highest. 80% of students feel uncomfortable with the new language environment as they have difficulty following professors in class. Interviewees think the greatest difficulty is the language problem, including the dependence on translation software and English communication. In addition, in addition to the students who refused to answer and did not have difficulties, another student thought that different learning modes were difficult, two students agreed that cultural differences would cause trouble, and one student thought that the collection of learning materials was difficult.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Conclusion

This study was conducted mainly for determining the learning determinants for 21st century ESL learners, describing the determinants that have the most significant impact on them and making further implications of the difference of the learning determinants among different groups of students.

Through the study of these problems, we get the following conclusions. First, the most significant personal attribute of ESL learners in the 21st century is motivation. WKU students' motivation for learning English is dominated by instrumental and intrinsic motivations, which

are similar to the results of Nguyen and Habók's study (2022). Second, there are multiple factors related to successful learning for ESL learners in the 21st century, in which motivation, self-discipline and study environment have the most significant impact. Nevertheless, students can always be affected by the surrounding learning environment. The new language environment often causes trouble for most students, and the learning atmosphere will also affect students' learning enthusiasm. In addition, students prefer interactive and student-centered classes and are more willing to use technology to help them study. Besides, because of different majors, students are also affected by different factors to different degrees. Although both resources and professors are highly valued by students, those who need to do practical work are also concerned about having enough financial support, while those who are more collaborative are highly concerned about having good peers. The study also found that there is a positive correlation between the pre-university learning experience and academic performance in universities. However, the study didn't find any relationship between self-regulation software and students' GPA. Third, the factor that provides the most significant impact on successful learning among 21st century ESL learners based on the survey is motivation and the language barrier based on the interview.

Recommendation

Based on the conclusions, several recommendations are offered as follows:

For most ESL learners, language skills need to be further developed. Therefore, an internationalized language environment is important. To achieve that, in daily study life, students should avoid excessive use and over-reliance on translation tools.

Instructors can develop a more student-centered teaching pattern, which can timely adjust the teaching content and method according to the feedback of students, including adopting more seminar teaching modes and using interactive software to promote students' learning.

For the universities, international universities whose students are ESL learners need to fully promote the English Language Center among students and develop reward mechanisms to promote students' enthusiasm to attend ELC tutoring sessions.

For other researchers, since the sample size of the study is limited and there may exist selection bias, to better explore the determinants of learning amongst 21st century ESL learners, further research is still needed.

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Critique of Francis Fukuyama's Views on State Formation in Africa

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Abstract

This paper is a critique of Francis Fukuyama's views on, essentially, the crisis of development in Africa which he associates with the weakness of state institutions in African countries. In analysing the underlying causes of weak state institutions in Africa, Fukuyama examines institutional development in the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial Africa. But his approach is highly Eurocentric and the facts he presented to back his arguments are selective. Therefore, using historical facts, I criticize Fukuyama's views on the crisis of development in Africa while proposing a framework of 'modernizing without westernizing' as requisite for strengthening state and nation-building as well as economic development in Africa.

Keywords: State, Society, Africa, Institution, Development and Colonialism

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1. Introduction

This paper aims to criticize the arguments of Francis Fukuyama, in his book titled *Political Order and Political Decay*, on why African countries are less developed. The paper is divided into four sections: First the introduction, then the highlights of the arguments of Fukuyama followed by critique of the arguments and then the conclusion.

The main argument of Fukuyama is simple, the failure of sustainable development among African countries is because Africans have weak institutions. In other words, for African countries to achieve development relative to the European countries, they have to build strong institutions or rather, State. The questions he sought to address in the book are, why do States seem so ineffective in Africa? Why are they unable to do what States are supposed to do? Why corruption seem so rampant in African countries?

It is important to note the dialectics between State, Society and Economy. Man is a social animal; he seeks in others what he lacks for himself (Durkheim). Economic relations are therefore inevitable thereby resulting in the formation of society; which is an embodiment of relations among men. The need for order in a society gave birth to State. This means ideally State is a (or supposed to be) product of society.

To answer these ‘why’ questions and drive his argument that what Africa need in order to develop is strong institutions, Fukuyama looked at Africa in a triadic space-time namely: precolonial, colonial and post-colonial Africa. This is where he made numerous flaws in his analysis to the extent that there is hardly a page that he will not write a point that is not correct.

2. Arguments of Fukuyama

In Fukuyama’s view, there was more or less no State institutions in precolonial Africa because of the abundance of land but scarcity of labour.¹ Half of the continent was populated by acephalous tribal societies based on kin ties. Because of the abundance of land, tribal units coming under pressure from centralized authority had the option of simply moving away. This, therefore, prevented circumscription which is important condition for the transition from tribal – to state-level societies.²

Moreover, African was strikingly technologically backwards at precolonial time. He argued that the plow had not been adopted in agriculture and there is no irrigation system of farming. In addition, there were no signs of State formation in the tropical rainforest unless one went all the way down to South Africa where larger political units like the Zulu Kingdom existed in precolonial times.³

Talking about colonialism, Fukuyama argued that there were two waves of colonialism in Africa. The first was driven by extraction of resources from Africa, a kind of duplication of Spanish achievements in Mexico and Peru, which produced economic surpluses for the

¹ Intensive Slave trade between 15th to 19th century have contributed to de-populating Africa, especially West Africa. Recently, it has been conservatively estimated that more than 12 million Africans were transported by the Europeans to America. See <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2021/oct12/africa-slaves-erased-from-history-modern-world>

² Fukuyama (2015:596-597) op cited

³ Ibid pg. 598-599

metropolitan powers in the form of gold, silver, sugar and cotton and other commodities. For example, Congo was colonized as a personal possession of King Leopold II of Belgium who succeeded in personally enriching himself. The second wave of colonialism was driven by rivalry among the European powers and legitimated by novel theories of racism⁴. The second wave of colonialism is more intensified than the first wave. Fukuyama argued that it late start and short duration succeeded in undermining traditional sources of authority while failing to implant anything like modern state.⁵

African politics, according to Fukuyama, is characterized by neopatrimonialism. He defines it in Weberian sense as “government staffed by family and friends of the ruler and run for their benefit.”⁶ He identified two major characteristics of neopatrimonialism as follows: personalism – which is concentrating loyalty and attention to the leader – and massive use of state resources to cultivate political support, which resulted in pervasive clientelism.⁷ Fukuyama argued that even though “a neopatrimonial government has outward form of a modern state, with a constitution, Presidents and Prime Ministers, a legal system and pretensions of impersonality, but the actual operation of the government remains at core a matter of sharing state resources with friends and family.”⁸ And this hinders good governance which is necessary in State-building.

Additionally, Fukuyama argued that “Africa had no long-standing tradition of bureaucratic government, and no trained cadre of state officials who were capable of taking over the administrative systems left behind by the departing colonial government.”⁹ He pointed out that Congo had fewer than a dozen University-educated administrators at the time of independence. This is institutional weakness that affected the development of strong State institution in Africa.

But why was it that there were no institutions in precolonial Africa? Why is it that rule of law, and by extension democracy, ended up being so extraordinarily weak? And if strong political institutions are critical for economic development, where do they come from? The answer, according to Fukuyama, lies in the physical conditions of climate and geography of Africa. He went on to cite Montesquieu’s theories that climate condition affects character of the people making the people of warm countries lazy and the people of cold countries innovative.¹⁰

In summary, Fukuyama’s arguments on the failure of State in Africa are as follows:

- There were more or less no institutions in precolonial Africa because of the abundance of land but scarce labour.
- Africa was strikingly technologically backward: the plow had not been adopted in agriculture; everywhere remained rain fed rather than irrigation based, and sophisticated metalworking was not developed.
- There are no signs of state formation in Tropical forests in south of Savannah belt.
- There were two waves of colonialism in Africa. One is driven by extraction and another by racism.

⁴ Ibid ph. 593-595

⁵ Ibid pg. 591-592

⁶ Ibid pg. 583

⁷ Ibid pg. 583-585

⁸ Ibid pg. 583

⁹ Ibid pg. 589

¹⁰ Ibid Chapter 15

- Neopatrimonial system of governance in post-colonial African States.
- Late start of colonialism and its short duration undermines traditional sources of authority while failing to implant anything like modern state.
- Africa has no qualified bureaucratic cadre for public administration.

3. Critique of Fukuyama's Arguments

3.1. Critique of Fukuyama's Views on Precolonial Africa

First, to state that there were no well-structured governance institutions in precolonial Africa is to deny the existence of Empires in the continent. Because how can there be Empires such as the Songhai Empire that stretched from the Atlantic Ocean in Senegal up to Nigeria; the Dahomey Empire, that was the present-day Benin Republic, and the Sokoto Caliphate that stretched from Niger Republic in West Africa to Cameroon in Central Africa, and each of these Empires lasting for centuries without social, political and economic Institutions? The Abyssinian Empire lasted for millenniums. How could it have lasted this long without an institution?

Contrary to Fukuyama's thesis, there were well structured institutions, especially political institutions in precolonial Africa. It ranges from a centralized system like that of Songhai where the Emperor decides so many things, to a decentralized setting like Sokoto Caliphate where the Emir was fully in-charge in his Emirate and did not need to report or consult with the Caliph over his decisions.

The precolonial African political system was built strongly on justice. This was something Mungo Park, a Scottish explorer, and Ibn Battuta¹¹ all noted. They stated that Africans hate injustice and a King would go to great length to ensure that someone that was victimized got justice. Ibn Battuta observed that:

Among the admirable qualities of these people (Negro), the following are to be noted: (But) for the small number of acts of injustice that one finds here; for the Negroes are of all people those who most abhors injustice. The Sultan (King) pardons no one who is guilty of it.... Blacks do not confiscate the goods of the white man (that is North Africans) who die in their country, not even when these consist of big treasures. They deposit them, on the contrary, with a man of confidence among the whites until those who have the right to the goods present themselves and take possession. (cited in Diop, 1974:162)

According to Diop (1974:111), it is the abundance of vital resources, the sedentary and agricultural character that engender in the Negro (African) a gentle, idealistic, peaceful nature, endowed with a spirit of justice and gaiety. Justice, in African sense is, giving each what he or she deserved. It included protection of life and property, and inclusiveness in governance. This is why rebellion, like such of the French, was very rare in Africa. There were internal fighting among the ruling classes but hardly a rebellion by the masses.

¹¹ His full name is Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Battuta. He was from present day Morocco who has travelled extensively in Afro-Eurasia covering an estimated distance of 117,000km. He studied the behaviour of the peoples he had met and later wrote a book about his journeys titled *A Masterpiece to Those Who Contemplate the Wonders of Cities and the Marvels of Travelling*.

But why has Fukuyama not seen any institution in Africa? It is because he is looking for European kind-of Institutions; a Weberian-bureaucratic administrative system or a feudalist economic system and a penal code judiciary. It seems in his view that such kind of institution and transition are the standard of progress.

Second, Fukuyama stated that “Africa was strikingly technologically backward: the plow had not been adopted in agriculture; everywhere remained rain fed rather than irrigation based and sophisticated metalworking was not developed.” This is as good as saying Africans do not eat food because how can there be agriculture without the land being ploughed? To say that there was no irrigation is to say that there were no rivers in Africa until the explorers discovered them. To say that there was no metalworking in Africa, is to say that the Africans fought the colonials with bones and stones.

There were different instruments of ploughing across Africa that are still being used. It includes hoes of different designs and strength to suit the different types of soil. It also involved use of cow and camel in tilling the soil. They were like the tractors. Moreover, there was irrigation farming even in the desert areas of Africa talk less in the riverine areas.

Chika Ezeanya-Esiobu in her TEDTalk titled *How Africa can use its Traditional Knowledge to Make Progress* cited irrigation research done in the arid region of Niger Republic where the traditional (precolonial) irrigation method proved to be more effective than a modern method. This is a prove to existence of irrigation farming among the desert people.¹²

In addition, all the cities, even villages, in Africa had blacksmiths (see Park, 1857). They were categorized into two: those that specialized in black iron to make farm implements and those that specialized in steel to make utensils, swords, knight among others. It is a testament to the advancement of Africans in the steel industry that the Songhai Empire (in the 15th and 16th century) had a division of Knights in its military (see Diop, 1987:116-117).

Furthermore, there were glass and beads industries (for example in Bida, Nigeria), tailoring guild (Timbuktu, Mali) leather, hyde and skin (for example in Kano, Nigeria), goldsmith, bronze smith (for example in Benin, Nigeria), among others (see Rodney, 1973:52-53; and Fika, 1978:254-255). If Fukuyama had bothered to check the museums in British, Belgium, France and Germany, he would have seen all the bronze, silver and gold artefacts that was stolen from Africa by the colonials because they did not believe that Africans could make such things. In fact, some of the colonials claimed that aliens or some sort of white people must have stayed in Africa. What a denial?!

This kind of denial of African advancement is well exemplified when the Europeans met the Dogon people in present day Mali and found out that they had more knowledge of astrology, in particular, the star Sirius than them, they were aghast and started making some nonsensical theories that aliens may have visited the Dogons at ancient time or that some European might had stayed with them to have done all those thoughts. They just could not believe that Africa could think and have immense knowledge of astrology (see Radalph, 1978).

Third, regarding the argument that there were less Empires and advancement in the tropical rainforest of Africa than in the Savannah and Sahel regions, in 1691 the Portuguese ship

¹² See <https://youtu.be/28sa2zGgmwE>

Captain, Lourenco Pinto wrote this after visiting Benin City (a Kingdom in Tropical forest of Nigeria):

Great Benin, where the King resides, is larger than Lisbon; all the streets run straight and as far as the eye can see. The houses are large, especially that of the King, which is richly decorated and has fine columns. The city is wealthy and industrious. It is so well governed that theft is unknown and the people live in such security that they have no doors to their houses.¹³

Similarly, when the Dutch visited the city of Benin they described it thus:

The town seems to be very great. When you enter into it, you go into a great broad street, not paved, which seems to be seven or eight times broader than the Warmoes street in Amsterdam...

The King's palace is a collection of buildings which occupy as much space as the town of Harlem, and which is enclosed with walls. There are numerous apartments for the Prince's ministers and fine galleries, most of which are as big as those on the Exchange at Amsterdam. They are supported by wooden pillars encased with copper, where their victories are depicted, and which are carefully kept very clean.

The town is composed of thirty main streets, very straight and 120 feet wide, apart from an infinity of small intersecting streets. The houses are close to one another, arranged in good order. These people are in no way inferior to the Dutch as regards cleanliness; they wash and scrub their houses so well that they are polished and shining like a looking glass. (Rodney, 1973:86-87)

This is just one Kingdom not an Empire. This statement alone almost completely rubbish all what Fukuyama has written about precolonial Africa.

3.2 Critique of Fukuyama's Views on Colonialism

In discussing colonialism in Africa, Fukuyama wrote that there were two waves of colonialism: one was driven by extraction and another was driven by racism. He got it wrong there also. Assuming that from the first contact of the Europeans to African people at the hinterland to the independence of African people in the 1960s were all colonialism, then each of wave of colonialism was driven purely by extraction. The first wave was driven by extraction of human resources out of Africa – slave trade, and the second wave was driven by extraction of natural resources out of Africa. What racist ideas did was to give justification for such inhumanity and exploitation.

This is well reflected by one of the arch- British-imperialist philosopher and the architect of 'divide and rule,' Lord Lugard, in his book titled *The Dual Mandate* in which he justified the British colonialism of Africa as responsibility that it had pleased God and history to bequeath the Great Britain to make available to Europeans and the rests of humanity the riches and resources of Africa which:

¹³ <http://revealinghistories.org.uk/colonialism-and-the-expansion-of-empires/articles/the-empire-of-benin-and-its-cultural-heritage.html>

...lay wasted and ungarnered...because the natives did not know their use and value. Millions of tons of oil-nuts, for instance, grew wild without labour of man, and lay rotting in the forests. Who can deny the right of the hungry people of Europe to utilize the wasted bounties of nature, or that the task of developing these resources was, as Mr. Chamberlain expressed it, a 'trust for civilisation' and for the benefit of mankind?

...
As Roman Imperialism laid foundation of modern civilization, and led the wild barbarians of these islands (Britain) along the path of progress, so in Africa today, we are repaying the debt, and bringing to the dark places of the earth, the abode of barbarism and cruelty, the torch of culture and progress, while ministering to the material needs of our own civilization. (cited in Taiwo, 2009:6-7)

It is clear in the words of Lugard that what Fukuyama called 'second wave of colonialism' is driven by extraction of material resources, which the Europeans felt is God-given bounty to them. Consequently, Africans had to suffer decades of inhumane humiliations from their colonisers.

Fukuyama also argued that late start of colonialism and its short duration undermines traditional sources of authority while failing to implant anything like modern state. Fukuyama sounded as if colonialism was a good thing to Africa but unfortunately started late. It was not. Africa is the way it is largely because of the terrible colonialism of the Europeans. Yes, indeed, colonialism undermined traditional authority but it implanted its own institutions; institutions of extraction.

To illustrate, when the British finally subdued the Sokoto Caliphate, the Caliph was renamed Sultan connoting that he was now answerable to an authority (British authority). British introduced all sorts of taxes on persons, cattle, farm produce, glass industries et cetera. Those taxes were to be paid in British pounds and the way to earn British pounds was to either work for the Britons or sell them crops that they wanted such as groundnut. Those crops came to be regarded as cash crops. They took over the mines and forcefully through the traditional authorities conscripted able men to work there. The tax on the people was so heavy that it diverted their attention from farming for subsistence to farming for taxation. Through taxation, conscription and banning of some industrial activities, the colonials destroyed the local economy and instituted an extractive state that is based on supplying to Europe what it needed (Abba, 2017; Nnoli, 1981; and Rodney, 1973).

3.3 Critique of Fukuyama's View on Neopatrimonialism in Post-colonial African State

The exploitative colonial administration gave birth to neopatrimonialism in African politics and governance. It is important to state that, contrary to how Fukuyama depicted, African politics is not purely patrimonial. It is also important to state that the greatest and devastated effect of colonialism in Africa is psychological (Fanon, 1963 & 1986). The question is, how is that so?

What the colonials did in Africa was to invent (new African) traditions and create ideologies that justified and secure their exploitative actions. In so doing, they imposed their European laws and customs on Africans with some modification to change African tradition to suit the colonial rule. And of such invention is the codification of African customs and European-like

coronation rites for Kings and Chiefs. As Terence Ranger has noted that was a profound misunderstanding because:

In comparing European neo-traditions with the customary in Africa the whites were certainly comparing unlike with unlike. European invented traditions were marked by their inflexibility. They involved sets of recorded rules and procedures – like the modern coronation rites. They gave reassurances because they represented what was unchanging in a period of flux. Now when Europeans thought of the customary in Africa, they naturally ascribed to it these same characteristics.

....

The trouble with this approach was that it totally misunderstood the realities of precolonial Africa. These societies had certainly valued custom and continuity but custom was loosely defined and infinitely flexible. Custom helped to maintain a sense of identity but it also allowed for an adaptation so spontaneous and natural that it was often unperceived. Moreover, rarely existed in fact the closed consensual system which came to be accepted as characteristics of ‘traditional’ Africa (this is because there is no single African identity or tradition. Africa is a very diverse continent). (Ranger, 1983:247-248)

Furthermore, when the colonials started involving Africans in governance, they did so based on tribal identities they created, colonial education and loyalty to them as qualifications. Hence, involvement in colonial public administration came with lot of privileges and prestige including living in European Reserve Areas (urban areas) where the government institutions were located. However, Philip Akpen in his study of colonial towns in Northern Nigeria, like Ranger above, observed that the colonial rules (and invented traditions) was more harmful than good to the African people in those areas. He argued that:

The colonial township ordinance virtually destroyed the social values and dislocated the sense of morality that used to govern the principles and dignity of people’s conducts. Laws governing urban administration were enacted and enforced. These laws conflicted with the way Africans had lived in pre-colonial cities. (Akpen, 2019)

According to Immanuel Wallerstein:

(When)someone imposes in a given area a new institution, (for example) – the colonial administration, governed by outsiders who established rules which they enforce with a reasonable degree of success; it means that all those who act in the colony must take some account of these rules, and that indeed, an increasing amount of each individual’s action is oriented to this set of rules rather than to any other set. (Wallerstein, 1961:31)

Hence, the greatest difficulty faced by colonially educated Africans involved in governance was the simultaneous adaptation to two mentally contraposing orders. To solve this problem, they define one order in moral term and another in amoral term. Consequently, in Professor Ekeh’s analysis, this created two publics in Africa – the civic public and the primordial public. The civic public refers to State institutions in the urban areas while the primordial space refers to traditions mostly in the rural areas. The primordial public is moral and operates on the

same moral imperatives as the private realm while the civic space in Africa is amoral and lacks the generalized moral imperatives operative in the private and primordial realm (Ekeh, 1975).

Therefore, all that is not good can be done in the civic space but only good can be done in the primordial space. Since tribal or ethnic identity is the major qualification into state institutions, as initiated by the colonials, this created a view that by virtue of getting government appointment or civil service job, one's ethnic group, religious affiliation, region, state and locality stand to benefit from his/her earnings. Primitive accumulation, such as embezzlement of public fund, therefore, becomes intrinsic to public administration, which, even though it is legally sanctioned, seems to be natively approved. Therefore, power is sought, not for its own sake, but for the material advantages such as location of major government projects, employment opportunities et cetera that comes with it (Alubo cited in Mu'azzam 2009).

Consequently, tribalism emerges as a conflict between segments of African peoples regarding share of the resources of the civic public to differentiated primordial publics. The leaders of the primordial public (they are presently politicians and public servants) want to channel as great share of the resources from the civic public to individuals who are in the same primordial public as they are (Ekeh, 1975).

The above analysis does not mean that there were no efforts at nation-building or Africans have no loyalty to the State. But rather, it is explanation why the existence of neopatrimonialism in African politics, and also arguing that at the heart of the problem of State building is nation-building. This is why African literature are more concerned about nation-building in Africa than State building. Modern State in Africa, due to colonialism, did not emerged out of the African society. It is alien and European. The forceful and sometimes violent implantation of such Euro-centric political and economic institutions which affect the African social institutions such as family system is the reason for persistent disharmony in African society. Moreover, the version of State the Europeans brought to Africa through colonialism and sustain by neo-colonialism is meant to extract wealth (more or less violently). This is why the State in Africa is facing difficulty adjusting to creating wealth; implementing inclusive developmental policies (Nnoli, 1982; and Mu'azzam, 2009).

Therefore, Fukuyama is absolutely wrong to say that the weakness of Institutions in Nigeria and Africa by extension is because of climate and geography which affected the psychology of the people.

In addition, Fukuyama's claim that Africa lacks qualify bureaucrats is only valid at early days of independence of African countries in the 1960s and 70s. The colonialist did not involve Africans in public administration and in places or countries where they did, they did it lately. It was not until in the 1950s (about 10 years before independence) that the British colonials started involving Nigerian in the high level of public service. In Mozambique and Congo, the Portuguese and the Belgium left the countries with less a thousand higher education graduates.

But what Fukuyama seems not to know is that post-colonial African State embarked on aggressive educational policies and invested a lot on education. Thus, Africa now has qualified bureaucrats that are trained in some of the best Universities in the World such as Oxford and Harvard, however, managing the European-like institutions of the State.

One important factor about Africa's problem of weak State which Fukuyama, intentionally or unintentionally, did not mention is that of influence of former colonial masters in African countries. This is otherwise called neocolonialism. The Francophone countries (that is countries colonised by France) are very good example of hitherto neocolonialism bedeviling Africa.

The France, before giving its African colonies independence, made them signed a Pact for the Continuation of Colonisation. One of the items of the pact is that the Francophones have to pay France for 'civilising' them. In addition, the Francophones have to deposit 85%, now 60%, of their reserves with the French Minister of Finance. Moreover, French companies have first-right-of-refusal to any contract in the Francophones. Consequently, France is taking out of Africa over \$500 billion dollars annually. This huge outflow of fund and influence hinders the ability of African States to strengthened their institutions and be developmental.¹⁴

4. Conclusion

In conclusion first, Fukuyama should not have gone to Africa looking for European-like institutions. Second, Fukuyama should have understood that State in Africa is the way it is because it is alien to the society. Third, Fukuyama should have concluded that European-like institutions are not good for African development.

But Fukuyama is right to argue that development requires State or rather institutions. The question is what type of institutions? What is or are required to build and sustain such ideal institutions?

The European institutions in the governance structure of Africa has to be domesticated while also African traditions has to be reformed and integrated into the governance structure. For example, the Gacaca traditional method of conflict resolution that is based on open confession, forgiveness and compensation should be integrated into the court systems. Contrary to the European system, Gacaca should not be made into a penal code because it depends on allowing the judge to be flexible in drawing confession and deciding, collectively with the disputing parties, on the punishment and compensation on the wrong done. This kind of adjudication is in tandem with the ethnic diversity and high sense of allegiance to ethnicity of Africans. Therefore, integrating it into the modern State judiciary (customary court, for example) in African countries, like the way it was done in Rwanda, will go a long way in checking ethnic conflicts that bedevils Africa.

Moreover, to build a new political Institutions in tandem with African nuisances require a new form of education in Africa. Indeed, education is the backbone to institution building and economic development. African education should be focused on extracting the physics from the African metaphysics and science from the pseudo-science. For example, by using scientific methods to study traditional herbs and drugs, better medicines can be developed to address the epidemics bedeviling the continent. Through this approach genuine break-through will be made that will advance humanity in general.

¹⁴ See Speech by Dr. Arikana Chihombori-Quao, Former African Union Representative to the United States of America <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8JpEHDD8dQs&t=118s>

In this regard, Taiwo is right to state that the greatest problem to Africa's socio-economic and political development is that of knowledge.¹⁵ Africans need knowledge on how to exploit the sun to generate electricity, for example; how to exploit the aquifer in the East Africa to mitigate the recurring drought in the region; and most importantly, how to exploit their history and tradition to build institutions that will modernize the continent without necessarily westernizing. Certainly, the past (Africa traditions) offers lot of lessons in governance.

But this exercise of producing a new knowledge and institutions in Africa requires a novel form of leadership and governance style, and approach that appreciates the time conflation dilemma that Africa is currently in. Africa's past is never really the past – it still lingers in the presents (Lardner, undated). In addition, the future is not a tabula rasa but also present in Africa. Thus, time conflation is a fusion of the past, present and future. What this means practically is that Africa is faced with problems of the past (relating to traditions, rural development etc.), the present (relating to modernity such as ethnicity, corruption and other urban crises) and the future (relating digital technology such as digitization of all aspects of life). Managing this tension, which is essential to giving birth to Africa that is modern yet not western, requires careful approach to making public policies. In this regard, the form of visionary leader that Africa needs is not one that is futuristic, but one that sees the past and the future with the and in the present, and try to change the course of history through pursuit of a balance.

¹⁵ Professor Taiwo stated this in a TEDTalk titled *Why Africa must become a Centre of Knowledge Again*: <https://youtu.be/MQrhPhan5Gw>

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The Migration of Lolita From High-Brow Literature to Pop Music: An Overview

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Abstract

Considered nowadays to be one of the best novels of the 20th Century, Lolita has become firmly established in the literary canon. Furthermore, its main character has become an icon in mass culture. However, by making her a teenage temptress with an out-of-control sexuality, mass culture has distorted the point of the novel. Film versions have contributed to this misrepresentation. In this paper the presence of the archetype of Lolita in pop music produced worldwide is surveyed. The depiction of the characters of the young girl and the male adult in song lyrics is considered, together with the aesthetic strategies used by creators to integrate allusions to Lolita into the music videos. Finally, we explore the phenomenon of teenage singers incorporating this aesthetic into their public persona. By doing so, the diverse ways in which the character's influence extends into the realm of pop music will be revealed.

Keywords: Nabokov, Lolita, Pop Music

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1. Introduction

The prevalent pattern of mass culture appropriating literary and cinematic references is out of question. One notable example of this trend is the iconic character of Lolita, crafted by Vladimir Nabokov in his eponymous novel. The provocative teenager, characterized by heart-shaped sunglasses and a lollipop, derived from promotional posters for Kubrick's film adaptation, represents a simplified and decontextualized reinterpretation in the realm of mass culture of Nabokov's literary creation: a 12-year-old girl victim of sexual abuse by her stepfather. From the middle of the 20th century onward, the character has indeed evolved within mass culture, transforming from an abused girl into a provocative young woman (Vickers, 2008; Martínez Sariego 2022, 2023).

This chapter analyzes the way in which the image of Lolita has been adopted and reinterpreted by popular song, moving away from its original literary essence. The two existing film versions –Stanley Kubrick (*Lolita*, 1962) and Adrian Lyne (*Lolita*, 1997)– have contributed to this process. As an essential preliminary step for examining the character within popular songs, the various representations of the character in cinema will be then elaborated upon. Both renditions have had a significant impact in the realm of music videos, while their portrayal of Lolita as a manipulative teenager plays a pivotal role in shaping the Lolita myth in the realm of music.

This transformation, derived from the fallacious image of Lolita as a seductress provided by cunning Humbert Humbert in the novel, persists, with the character's continual and widespread incorporation into pop music further solidifying and perpetuating this stereotype. The ongoing cultural influence has allowed the character to transcend its literary origins, becoming a symbol deeply ingrained in the collective consciousness and continually reshaped by contemporary media and artistic expressions.

2. Beyond Literature: the Creation of a Myth

2.1. The Novel *Lolita* (1955)

The novel *Lolita* (1955), by Vladimir Nabokov (1899-1977), focuses on the abusive relationship established between the book's narrator, Humbert Humbert, and his 12-year-old teenage stepdaughter, Dolores Haze, better known as Lolita. When Lolita's mother is hit by a car, Humbert kidnaps the teenager and begins a long trip through the United States in which he sexually and psychologically abuses her. The abuse persists until the girl finally manages to break free from him years later. The relationship is not just manipulative but also incestuous and inappropriate. It comes as no surprise that the book sparked controversy upon its release, leading to bans in the United Kingdom and France, ultimately fueling its notoriety.

It is important to note that *Lolita* is not a glorification of child abuse. The novel is a complex work of literature that addresses the themes of erotic obsession, manipulation, and moral corruption from the perspective of an unreliable narrator. Nabokov wrote it with the intention of exploring the twisted mind of Humbert Humbert, and not to praise his behavior. The fact that the novel is presented from the perspective of the protagonist adds, in fact, an additional layer of complexity, since Humbert Humbert has a remarkable rhetorical and persuasive capacity. His rhetorical prowess is a fascinating exploration of how language can be wielded to captivate and manipulate. Despite the sordid nature of the narrative, Humbert strategically

employs literary allusions, puns, and consistent linguistic patterns to present his dark passion in an enchanting and confusing manner, effectively seducing his audience. As a professor of Comparative Literature, Humbert also leverages his extensive knowledge in the field to draw fallacious parallels between his unconventional love story with Lolita and the romantic narratives of historical great lovers¹. This literary sophistication serves to both justify and romanticize ethically questionable deeds, creating a narrative that engages readers in a complex dance of moral ambiguity and aesthetic allure. In essence, Humbert's linguistic mastery becomes a tool for *psychagogia*, leading readers into the morally murky waters of Lolita's story while simultaneously enchanting them with the artistry of his language. Humbert Humbert portrays himself as the victim and Lolita as a seductress, distorting the reality that Lolita is actually a vulnerable victim ensnared by him.

In fact, Nabokov consistently viewed his Lolita as a girl corrupted by a monster. In a 1966 interview, he referred to her as “my poor little girl” (Nabokov, 1973, p. 94). Later, in a television appearance on the show *Apostrophes* (1975), he was even clearer regarding the interpretation that should be given to the novel:

Lolita is not a perverse girl. She is a poor girl who is corrupted, and whose senses are never awakened under the caresses of the filthy Mr. Humbert, to whom she once asks: “Will we always live like this, doing all kinds of filth in hotel beds?” (...). And it is very interesting to consider, as you journalists do, the problem of the silly degradation that the character of the nymphet that I invented in 1955 has suffered among the general public. Not only was the poor creature's perversity grotesquely exaggerated, but also its physical appearance and age. Everything was modified by illustrations in foreign publications. Girls of 20 years or older, bimbos, street cats, cheap models or simple criminals with long legs are called nymphets or “Lolitas” in Italian, French, German magazines, etc. And in the covers of the Turkish or Arabic translations –the summum of stupidity– they represent a young woman with opulent contours, as was often said before, and with blonde hair, imagined by idiots who never read the book.

Véra Nabokov, the author's wife and the zero reader of *Lolita*, to whom the novel is dedicated, expressed her dissatisfaction in her diary, noting that critics tended to disparage *Lolita* as a lascivious brat. She contended that they never acknowledged the novel's most terrifying paragraph, describing the child, after being raped, silently crying “every night, every night,”² while Humbert callously ignored her pleas with selfish cruelty.

2.2. *Lolita* (Stanley Kubrick, 1962)

The novel was made into a film by Stanley Kubrick in 1962, with the iconic photo of Sue Lyon as a promotional poster for the film, and again by Adrian Lyne in 1997. In the chain of resemantization or corruption of the character in mass culture, the film of Stanley Kubrick (1928-1999) represents probably the first step and appears, therefore, as ultimately

¹ Humbert uses “sa prodigieuse culture du vieil Européen pour tenter d'inscrire ses relations avec Lolita dans le musée légendaire des amours célèbres” (1998, p. 113). On Nabokov's use of *La vita nuova*, cf. Morgan (1983).

² This reiterated phrase is precisely the one used by López Mondejar in her novel *Cada noche, cada noche* (2016), a Hispanic reimagining of the myth. The novel revisits Nabokov's narrative universe, paying homage to *Lolita* while simultaneously challenging its portrayal of the character as a perverse nymphet in the male erotic imagination. It does so from the indignant perspective of Lolita's daughter, Dolores Schiller, who seeks to rectify the representation of her mother. For insights into the feminist teaching of *Lolita* in the #metoo era, cf. Edelstein (2021).

responsible for the meaning that the noun *lolita* eventually acquired in everyday language as a 'sexually precocious young girl' (*Oxford American Dictionary*), or as a precociously seductive girl (*Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*).

To begin with, the distortion of the human type can be attributed to the casting choice of a 14-year-old actress, who, moreover, did not appear to be of that age, in this film adaptation. Kubrick's 1962 release of the film also incorporates iconic elements of the myth that were absent in the novel. One notable addition is the erotic scene where Humbert paints Lolita's toenails, a moment featured in the credits. For another thing, very distinctive elements of the Lolita character, like the heart-shaped sunglasses and lollipop, do not make an appearance in either the movie or the novel, but have been directly taken from a promotional photo shoot for the film (fig. 1). Apparently, these elements were a contribution by Bert Stern, the photographer responsible for the session, whose reference or inspiration was not a young girl, but the very adult and voluptuous Marilyn Monroe (Vickers, 2008, p. 148).

Hence, Kubrick's portrayal of Humbert does not depict him as a pedophile, monster, or sexual maniac. Instead, the character embodies the erotic desires commonly associated with the average heterosexual male (Iglesias Turrión, 2011).



Figure 1: Photograph from the promotional poster for *Lolita* (Stanley Kubrick, 1962).

2.3. *Lolita* (Adrian Lyne, 1997)

A new adaptation was undertaken in 1997, directed by Adrian Lyne (1941-). While this film incorporated crucial aspects of the novel overlooked by the initial adaptation, it departed from faithfulness to the original material. In contrast to the novel's portrayal of Lolita as the victim, Lyne's rendition presents her as a provocative young woman who delights in teasing Humbert and revels in their encounters, conforming to the predominant distorted version of the character in mass culture. She is no longer a young girl corrupted by a monster, as Nabokov intended to portray her, but rather an inciting young girl. For another thing, Adrian Lyne's subtle manipulation of light, influenced by his training in the English advertising school of the seventies (Etcheverry, 2009, p. 197), appears to conjure, as per Stam, the English poetic prose of Nabokov: "In the Lyne film a love affair with a filtered light and textured style in some ways substitutes for Nabokov's love affair with language" (2007, p.

122) (fig. 2). This effect, associated with the photographic technique of David Hamilton (1933-2016), has significantly influenced subsequent content produced by other creators, including those in the realm of pop music.



Figure 2: *Lolita* (Adrian Lyne, 1997)

3. Pop Music and Videoclips

The claim has been made that the incorporation of the Lolita myth into the realm of popular music originated in France with *Histoire de Melody Nelson* (1971), a groundbreaking concept album by the iconic French musician Serge Gainsbourg (Balestrini, 2018, p. 185). However, as argued in this paper, Joan Manuel Serrat's "Quasi una dona" predates Gainsbourg's work by nearly a year.

Since then, numerous songs have explored the Lolita archetype, emphasizing the allure of a youthful and captivating teenager, but also her conflicted relationship with the male adult. Each song brings its own perspective to these themes, reflecting different genres and artistic expressions across the years, and also different modalities of intertextuality. In what follows the list provided by Balestrini is supplemented with some additional examples, particularly from the Hispanic sphere. The list is not exhaustive but is representative:

- "Quasi una dona" (Joan Manuel Serrat, 1970)
- *Histoire de Melody Nelson* (Serge Gainsbourg, 1971)
- *Lolita Go Home* (Jane Birkin, 1975)
- "Don't Stand so Close to Me" (The Police, 1980)
- "Shame on You" (Aerosmith, 1985)
- "Lolita (trop jeune pour aimer)" (Céline Dion, 1987)
- "No Man's Land" (Billy Joel, 1993)
- "Whose Bed Have Your Boots Been Under?" (Shania Twain, 1995)
- "Tierna y dulce historia de amor" (Ismael Serrano, 1998)
- "Moi...Lolita" (Alizée, 2000)
- "Carolina" (M-Clan, 2001)
- "Ghetto Model" (Master P., 2004)
- "Funny Face" (Red Hot Chili Peppers, 2006)
- "Lolita" (Prince, 2006)

- “Shakey Dog Starring Lolita” (Ghostface Killah, 2006)
- “Scandalous” (Cobra Starship, 2007)
- “One of the Boys” (Katy Perry, 2008)
- “Lolita” (Belinda, 2010)
- “Lolita” (MC Lars, 2011)
- “Permanent December” (Miley Cyrus, 2012)
- “Lolita” (The Veronicas, 2012)
- “Versace Hottie” (Wavy Spice, 2013)
- “Nokia” (Father, 2014)³

Some of these songs describe the young girl, others focus on the male character and the impact Lolita has on him; some develop a narrative, while others present the empowered voice of the teenager. From the most poetic to the crudest, almost all of them exploit the stereotype of the seductive and manipulative teenager⁴. In the following, some of the most significant examples will be discussed. The trailblazers “Quasi una dona” (Joan Manuel Serrat) and *Histoire de Melody Nelson* (Serge Gainsbourg) will be analyzed in the first place. Then, attention will be paid to some of the songs that include direct allusions to the book or even quotations: “Don’t Stand So Close to Me” (The Police), and “Moi...Lolita” (Alizée). For its richness and complexity, the corpus of songs about Lolita developed by Lana del Rey will also deserve special attention.

3.1. “Quasi una dona” (Joan Manuel Serrat)

Released in 1970, shortly after the Kubrick’s movie premiere, “Quasi una dona”, by Joan Manuel Serrat, stands out for its depiction of the romantic entanglements of the lyrical subject with an adolescent. The track encapsulates the legacy of North American folk music, particularly drawing inspiration from Bob Dylan, whom it pays tribute to right from the title⁵. Besides the explicit influence of Bob Dylan (paratextually marked in the title) and of the Catalan poet Joan Salvat Papaseit (mentioned in the song’s body)⁶, there are echoes of other musical and literary texts, notably from the French artist Charles Aznavour and the Catalan poet Gabriel Ferrater (García Gil, 2004, p. 89). The piece even relates to other songs by Serrat himself, such as “Poco antes de que den las diez,” which also revolves around the lyrical subject’s romantic involvement with an adolescent⁷. The rich intertextuality showcased by this song underscores the complexity of the text, which is profoundly lyrical.

³ Lana Del Rey’s songs are deliberately excluded from the corpus due to its abundance and intricate nature, which deserves individualized attention.

⁴ As a counterpart to these representations of Lolita as a miniature *femme fatale* stands the song “Gothic Lolita” (*Opheliac*, 2006), by Emilie Autumn (1979-), unique in its genre for showcasing Lolita as a victim of sexual abuse. Furthermore, as an additional distinctive detail, the clothing aesthetic of the video clip is related to Japanese lolitas fashion (Younker, 2012), specifically to the “Gothic Lolita” modality, a trend related to the modest Victorian aesthetic and, therefore, radically opposite to the provocative nature of the clothes worn by the protagonists of the remaining video clips.

⁵ Bob Dylan has a piece titled “Just like a Woman” (*Blonde on Blonde*, 1966), where he portrays a woman with both captivating and frustrating qualities.

⁶ “M’agrada acariciar-la, perquè em neteja el cor / Vull ser mestre d’amor com en Salvat / I als meus genolls / Dormir el seu coll / Prim i fort / Tant se val si és pecat / Tant se val si és pecat”. More than to the famous “Mester d’amor,” the allusion is to “Ser mestre d’amor,” which says: “Ser mestre d’amor / qui no pagaria. / ara que en sóc jo / l’aprenenta em tira. / De dir la llicó / tota Ella s’afina- / ja sap tant el cor / que no li cal guia; / amb un sol petó / la llicó es sabia. / Qui és mestre d’amor / del guany ja pot viure”. About the literary tradition of the *magister amoris topos*, cf. Socas (2011).

⁷ In this song, exemplifying intratextuality, the teenager must head home before 10 p.m., after engaging in intimate encounters with the lyrical subject, to prevent arousing suspicions from her parents.

At its core, the lyrics revolve around the sensual prosopography of the adolescent, described with hair the color of ripe wheat, the scent of freshly baked white bread, and still wearing socks:

Té els cabells llargs i nets color blat madur
i la olor del pa blanc quan surt del forn.
I té els ulls blaus,
la pell suau
i el pit dur.
Encara du mitjons,
encara du mitjons.

She has long and clean hair, the color of ripe wheat,
And the scent of white bread when it comes out of the oven.
And she has blue eyes,
Soft skin,
And a firm chest.
She still wears socks,
She still wears socks.

The detail of the socks, repeated for emphasis, is presented as indicative of her extreme youth. The joyful and sensual portrayal of their love –“I omple el meu món de flors” (“fills my world with flowers”)- transitions into the depiction of the slightly manipulative nature of this young apprentice:

És quasi una dona.
M'enreda quasi com una dona.
Em busca quasi com una dona.
I juga quasi com una dona,
com una dona que et vol
com a ningú
i al de matí obre els seus ulls amb tu.

She's almost a woman,
Almost deceives me like a woman,
Almost seeks me like a woman,
And plays almost like a woman,
Like a woman who loves you
Like no one else,
And in the morning, she opens her eyes with you.

Hence, the portrayal of the *femme fatale*, the alluring teenager, pervasive in media culture after Kubrick's *Lolita*, is aptly mirrored. This archetype will subsequently emerge in numerous other songs.

3.2. *Histoire de Melody Nelson* (Serge Gainsbourg)

In *Histoire de Melody Nelson* (1971) a narrative unfolds with a dramatic twist. The tragic and poetic tale recounts the chance encounter between Gainsbourg's protagonist, a wealthy and worldly man who drives a Rolls Royce, and Melody Nelson, a young teenage girl he comes

across while she is riding a bicycle. The album's plot evolves across seven tracks, with Gainsbourg narrating the story against a backdrop of lush orchestrations and innovative musical arrangements. Gainsbourg's storytelling explores the intricacies of the unexpected relationship between the man and the teenager, played by Jane Birkin, who oscillates between vulnerability and sensuality. Both the song lyrics and the corresponding series of seven music videos, released the same year as a half-hour telefilm directed by Jean Christophe Averty, objectify Lolita as a "poupée" ('doll'). As per the lyrics, she is 14 and, in the conclusion, meets her demise in a plane crash on her way to Sunderland, lost in a jungle in Papua New Guinea. The album cover features Jane Birkin topless, made up like a doll and covering her chest with an actual doll, but the fact that she was 25 at the time helps dispel the Lolita effect (fig. 3). While the storyline portrays a taboo relationship, Gainsbourg's narrative style avoids outright condemnation or glorification, leaving room for interpretation and reflection.



Figure 3: Cover of the album *Histoire de Melody Nelson* (Serge Gainsbourg, 1971)

3.3. “Don't Stand So Close to Me” (The Police)

The song “Don't Stand So Close to Me” (The Police, 1980) develops a description of an inappropriate relationship between a teacher and his student. The lyrics reflect the tension between attraction and prohibition:

Young teacher, the subject
 Of schoolgirl fantasy.
 She wants him so badly
 Knows what she wants to be.
 Inside him, there's longing.
 This girl's an open page.
 Book marking, she's so close now.
 This girl is half his age.

Don't stand, don't stand so
 Don't stand so close to me.
 Don't stand, don't stand so
 Don't stand so close to me.

The narrative of the lyrics highlights temptation and forbidden desire:

Temptation, frustration
 So bad it makes him cry.
 Wet bus stop, she's waiting.
 His car is warm and dry.

The last stanza of the song includes the intertextuality contract by means of allusion. The final line explicitly mentions indeed the literary work, drawing an explicit parallel between the story told in the song and Nabokov's *Lolita*.

It's no use, he sees her
 He starts to shake and cough
 Just like the old man in
 That book by Nabokov.

While presenting the student girl as seductive and bold ("She wants him so badly", "This girl's an open page"), the teacher hesitates between fulfilment of desire ("Inside him, there's longing", "Temptation") and repression out of moral and legal considerations ("Frustration", "This girl is half his age"). The reference to the main character of Nabokov's novel ("Just like the old man in / That book by Nabokov") serves to characterize his position and feelings through both a positive correlation (the man feels tempted by the seduction of the younger girl, just like Humbert Humbert did) and a negative one (unlike the protagonist of the novel, the lyrical subject of the song strives to repress the temptation and manages to suppress it by demanding that the girl keeps distance from him: "Don't stand so close to me").

3.4. "Moi... Lolita" (Alizée)

Explicit references to the book are also present in "Moi...Lolita" by Alizée (1984-). In the photograph illustrating the cover of her album *Gourmandises* (2000) (fig. 4) Alizée strategically incorporates visual elements reminiscent of *Lolita's* allure, lying on the grass, as portrayed in Lyne's version just three years prior.

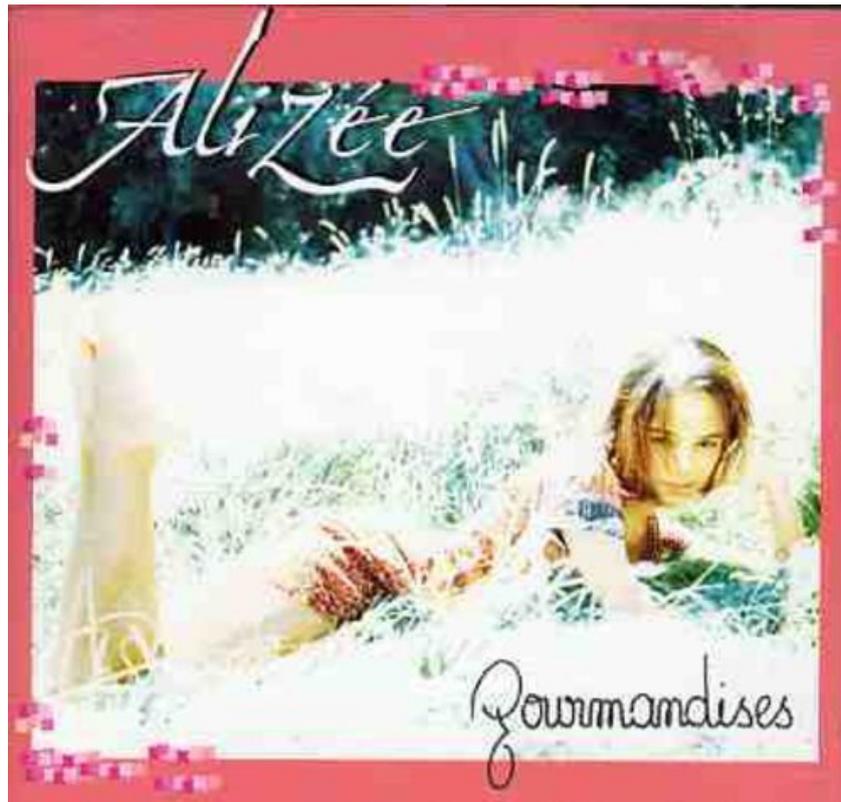


Figure 4: Cover of the album *Gourmandises* (Alizée, 2000)

Moreover, this song arguably stands as one of the most iconic representations of the seductive teenager stereotype embraced by mass culture, with various factors contributing to this consideration. First of all, one of the stanzas includes a rewriting of a very significant excerpt from Nabokov's *Lolita*. Alizée's character declines in the first person all the variations of her name—

Moi je m'appelle Lolita,
 Lo ou bien Lola, du pareil au même.
 Moi je m'appelle Lolita.
 Quand je rêve aux loups,
 c'est Lola qui saigne.

Me, I call myself Lolita
 Lo or even Lola, it's all the same.
 Me, I call myself Lolita
 When I dream of wolves,
 It's Lola who bleeds.

— just as Humbert did with the name Lolita in the first page of the novel: “She was Lo, plain Lo, in the morning, standing four feet ten in one sock. She was Lola in slacks. She was Dolly at school. She was Dolores on the dotted line. But in my arms she was always Lolita” (Nabokov, 1995, p. 9).

The accompanying music video is also noteworthy, displaying a clear influence from Adrian Lyne's cinematic version. The visual representation in the video aligns with the aesthetic choices made in the film, creating a visual homage to the Lolita archetype. There are, for

example, evident examples of intericonicity, as in the scene where the characters do the laundry and then hang up the clothes to dry, together with the consistent use of the soft-focus technique. The deliberate references and echoes from the cinematic adaptation contribute to the song's iconic status, as it actively engages with and builds upon the cultural representations of *Lolita*. The video also inherits the portrayal of the main character from Adrian Lyne's cinematic: a teenage girl with brown hair who exploits the fascination she generates in an adult man to ask him for money (“-Je t’aime” / “-T’as pas 200 francs?”) (fig. 5), so that she can go partying... without him.

3.5. Lana del Rey's Corpus

Finally, Lana del Rey's songs contain a compendium of verbal and iconic references that span from lyrical subjects resembling *Lolita* and sharing personal experiences akin to those of Nabokov's titular character. She includes unmistakable mentions of her name and direct quotations from the novel. Frequently, allusions to the novel are intertwined with evocations of film culture in general or specific references to the two existing cinematic adaptations of *Lolita*.

Direct quotations and references occur in many songs recorded and released between 2008 and 2012, like in the very obvious “*Lolita*”, where a pleasure-seeking teenager asserts her capability to manipulate (fig. 5), but also in other pieces. There are several instances. In “Diet Mountain Dew” and “Every Man Gets his Wish,” Del Rey includes references to iconic elements from Kubrick's version, as in the lines “Baby, put on heart-shaped sunglasses / 'Cause we going to take a ride”, and “He loves my heart-shaped sunglasses,” respectively. In “Put Me in a Movie,” the lines “Come on. You know you like little girls” evoke Clare Quilty's use of child actors in pornographic films, offering also a clear reference to Nabokov's *Lolita*. Recognition of the allusions to Nabokov in “Off to the Races” also requires knowledge of the novel, but the reference becomes even more direct as the lyrics quote from the opening lines of the novel (“Light of my life, fire of my loins”), subsequently altering them into “Light of his life, fire of his loins” and into “Light of your life, fire of your loins.” The song's speaker, depicted as extremely self-deprecating, focuses on sinfulness, hedonism, and alcohol, along with a fascination with the world of Hollywood movies. The lyrics portray the desire for stardom evolving into depicting *Lolita* as Humbert Humbert's prostitute or mistress, as seen in lines like “I'm your little scarlet, starlet, singin' in the garden” and “I'm your little harlot, starlet”⁸. Even the title of her 2014 album, *Ultraviolence*, could hint at Humbert Humbert's description of *Lolita* as his “ultraviolet darling” in his sarcastic apology after subjecting her to violence (Balestrini and Jandl, 2016, p. 8).

These songs not only capitalize on the stereotype of the seductress, but also complicate the character of *Lolita*. Lana Del Rey has indeed been referred to as the *Lolita* of sadcore (Wazzan, 2017). Being labeled as such implies that she evokes the archetypal figure of *Lolita*, but also embodies characteristics associated with the musical genre “sadcore”, characterized by a melancholic and somber tone. Lana Del Rey's music and artistic style possess indeed a gloomy quality, as she emphasizes seduction in controversial contexts. Her songs encapsulate a blend of charm, melancholy, and provocation, akin, in fact, to Nabokov's portrayal of *Lolita* in his literary masterwork.

⁸ Balestrini and Handl (2016) provide an in-depth analysis of these references.

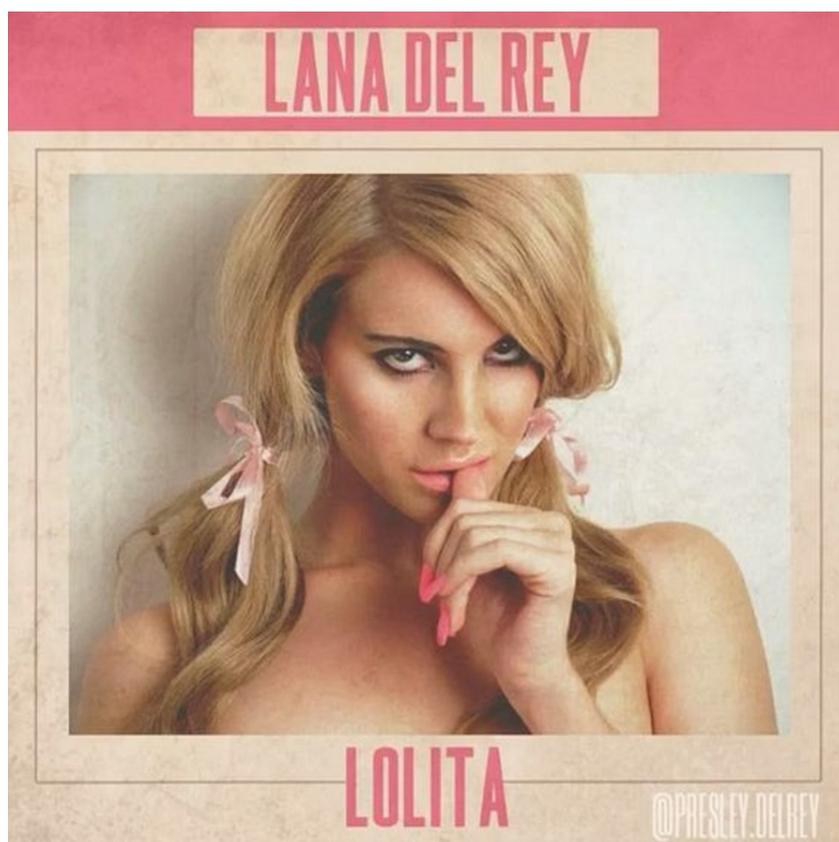


Figure 5: Cover of the demo of “Lolita” (Lana Del Rey, 2010)

4. Lolita as an Aesthetic: the Public Persona of Female Pop Singers

In the realm of pop songs, it’s intriguing to observe the phenomenon of teenage singers who embrace the aesthetics associated with the character of Lolita as popularized in mass culture, portraying a provocative teenager. This trend is evident in notable figures such as Britney Spears (1981-), who, particularly in her early career, embraced a Lolita-inspired image characterized by innocence and sensuality (fig. 6). This inspiration is particularly evident in the period of her life corresponding to the release of “...Baby One More Time” (1998). In the accompanying music video, she was seen dressed as a schoolgirl, a deliberate nod to the Lolita archetype, as she sang about love and performed provocative dance routines. Notably, this occurred before Britney Spears had reached the age of 18, adding an additional layer of controversy to the portrayal. This strategic use of the Lolita aesthetic in her visual presentation contributed to the construction of her public persona as a youthful, yet provocative, pop sensation. She was the prototype of an American sweetheart (Nash, 2006).



Figure 6: Britney Spears' promotional picture

Alizée (1984-) also strategically leveraged the Lolita image in her public appearances beyond the success of "Moi... Lolita." Exploiting a youthful and flirtatious persona, she maintained a consistent aesthetic that resonated with the Lolita archetype. Through her styling, which often featured girlish outfits and playful expressions, Alizée perpetuated her teenage allure, captivating audiences and reinforcing her image as a modern Lolita figure. This is evident, for example, in her performances of "J'en ai marre," which bear no connection to the initial hit. The deliberate alignment with the Lolita persona in songs other than "Moi...Lolita" allowed her to extend the impact of the character beyond the confines of the initial hit song. Lolita became a key element in her public persona.

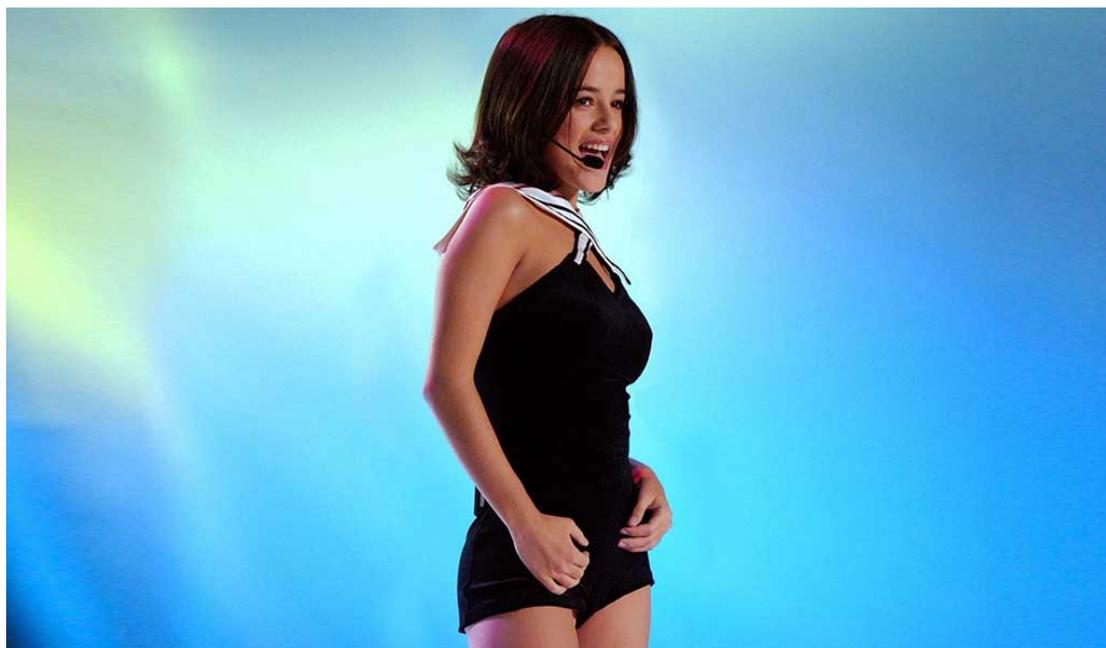


Figure 7: Alizée’s Lolita-like performance of “J’en ai marre”

Finally, Lana del Rey (1985-) has also garnered attention for her stylized music videos and lyrics that evoke a nostalgic and provocative ambiance, aligning with the Lolita aesthetic. Notably, she actively embraces the Lolita persona in posters, social media, and selfies (fig. 8). Del Rey’s case adds complexity compared to Britney Spears or Alizée, as her songs transcend mere exploitation of the vulgar cliché, infusing them with a poignant and dramatic aura. Being the Lolita of sadcore, her musical narratives often delve into tragic themes, weaving intricate stories that evoke a sense of melancholy and yearning. Her unique blend of haunting melodies, soulful vocals, and cinematic aesthetics contributes to an overarching tragic sensibility in her work. This distinctive approach sets her apart, turning her songs into pieces with a deeper emotional and artistic intensity than usual in the genre.

Furthermore, Lana Del Rey has become an influential role model for postmodern teenagers, as underscored by her significant following, particularly in Tumblr and in the realm of sugar culture (Davis, 2017)⁹. Del Rey’s reinterpretation of the Lolita aesthetic, coupled with her cultural impact, amplifies the intrigue and allure surrounding the Lolita phenomenon in contemporary societies. There is indeed a pronounced postmodern fascination with Lolita mediated through Lana Del Rey. Fans engage in creative expressions such as collages and fan art, intricately interweaving references to Lolita, Lana Del Rey, and the coquette aesthetic¹⁰ (fig. 9). This participatory art form reflects a nuanced appreciation for the amalgamation of these influences, emphasizing the complex interplay between pop culture, literature, and music.

⁹ The sugar culture involves consensual relationships between an older, wealthier individual (sugar daddy or mommy), who provides financial support or gifts, and a younger person (sugar baby), who receives such gifts. These arrangements are often built on companionship and mutual benefits, distinct from traditional relationships, with clear expectations and agreements regarding money and sex between the parties involved.

¹⁰ The coquette aesthetic embraces a flirtatious and charming style, characterized by playful and alluring elements. It often involves a mix of innocence and seduction, featuring delicate and feminine fashion choices combined with subtle, suggestive cues. This aesthetic exudes a captivating and enigmatic allure, emphasizing a balance between modesty and allure.



Figure 8: Lana del Rey's promotional picture



Figure 9: Lolita and Lana del Rey's fanart: moodboard

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the Lolita portrayed in pop music shares some parallels with the iconic literary character of Nabokov, now firmly embedded in the 20th-century literary canon. Nonetheless, it is essential to acknowledge that, even with the enduring presence of certain elements of the novel, such as textual echoes, cinematic influences have played a predominant role in shaping the Lolita myth within the realm of song. Mass culture, taking creative liberties, has portrayed Lolita as a teenage temptress exuding unrestrained sensuality, thus distorting the original intent of the novel. Film adaptations by Kubrick and Lyne have particularly contributed to this misrepresentation, reinforcing the image of Lolita as a seductive figure in mainstream consciousness.

This paper has delved into the prevalence of the Lolita archetype in pop music, scrutinizing the portrayal of an adolescent seductress in song lyrics. Additionally, the aesthetic strategies employed by creators to seamlessly integrate allusions to Lolita within music videos have been explored. Visual echoes from the films, incorporating vintage American elements from both versions, and even specific photographic techniques like the soft focus, borrowed from Lyne's photography direction, further enrich the visual landscape.

Lastly, the phenomenon of teenage singers adopting the Lolita aesthetic as an integral part of their public persona has been examined. This trend is evident in notable pop stars such as Britney Spears or Alizée, who, particularly in her early careers, embraced a Lolita-inspired image. Lana del Rey has also garnered attention for her stylized music videos and lyrics that evoke a nostalgic and provocative ambiance, aligning with the Lolita aesthetic, but her case is even more relevant. She has provided indeed a powerful role model for young women in Tumblr and other social media. Anyway, all these instances underscore the enduring influence of Lolita in shaping the public persona of contemporary teenage singers.

Through these explorations, the intricate interplay between literature, popular culture, and music, has been illuminated, and the multifaceted nature of Lolita's presence in the realm of pop music has been underscored.

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Adoptee Ancestry Searches: The Intersubjective Space of Self-Integration

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Abstract

The adoptee's ancestry search can function as a dynamic intersubjective space that is vital to self-integration in the psychoanalytic sense. The guiding theoretical question of this paper is: How can contemporary intersubjective psychoanalytic theories describe this intersubjective space? Intersubjective psychoanalytic theory has its roots in philosophical hermeneutics and phenomenology. A case of adoptee ancestry search is presented with the use of these combined theoretical frameworks, showing how new forms of reconsolidation and self-integration may occur as an effect of the search process of working through the adoptee's states of "not knowing," especially in the context of a closed adoption situation. This dynamic process of self-understanding is described in hermeneutic, phenomenological, and intersubjective terms, with the use of examples taken from her ancestry search. The function of third-party empathic witness and testimony is shown to lead to new gains in the adoptee's reconsolidation of memories and her concurrent self-integration.

Keywords: Adoption, Phenomenology, Hermeneutics, Intersubjective Psychoanalysis, Philosophical Counseling, Ancestry Search, Witness, Testimony

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Introduction

I am a philosopher and a philosophical counselor. Philosophical counseling can help clients to bracket their suffering framed as medicalized mental disorders, in favor of finding alternative self-narratives that are supported by existential, phenomenological, or hermeneutic perspectives (Mehuron 2015).

This paper draws on my client's experiences as an adoptee who commenced and completed her genetic ancestry search. I describe how new forms of self-integration may occur as an effect of an ancestry search process that affords working through adoptees' states of "not knowing," especially in the case of a closed adoption situation, such as experienced by Macy.

I use aspects of her search to develop my account of the intersubjective space that affords interpersonal as well as intrapsychic transformational change for those who search. To develop this account, I provide philosophical perspectives drawn from the phenomenological and hermeneutic tradition, enactivist cognition, and from intersubjective psychoanalytic theories. In the following sections, this paper will give a theoretical account of the intersubjective field as a dialogical space of co-created meanings that affords interpersonal as well as intrapsychic transformational change for those who search. These theoretical perspectives show how new forms of reconsolidation and self-integration may occur as an effect of the search process of working through adoptees' states of "not knowing" especially in the case of a closed adoption situation.

First, I give a brief narrative about my client's search. All personal identifiers have been anonymized, to protect the identify of all persons whose experiences are described in the narrative. Figure 1 is a diagram of the discovered DNA relatives, their genetic relationships, and the years in which discovery and communication occurred. It is notable that the intersubjective field that afforded her ancestry discoveries occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown in the United States (2019-2021). These DNA relatives were all able to devote intensive time and communication to each other, because of this unique historical situation.

Macy's Story

Macy is a professional, middle-aged ciswoman, self-identified lesbian, preferring the personal pronoun "she/her/hers." In 1955, she was adopted during the first month of her birth. She knew, from her earliest memories of her parents' honesty with her, that she was adopted. This was a closed adoption, in which the adoption record is completely sealed, and arranged by the parents' local Catholic Archdiocese. In 2015, after both of her adoptive parents had passed away, Macy began a search for her biological parents. She started with the state agencies responsible for keeping her birth records. Her birth certificate did not name her biological mother or father. Letters and phone calls to the archdiocese and to the state requesting the adoption record and birth parents' names were denied. In 2018, Macy began to use the services of AncestryDNA and 23andMe: two for-profit genealogy companies that provide DNA testing and DNA relatives search tools to consumers.

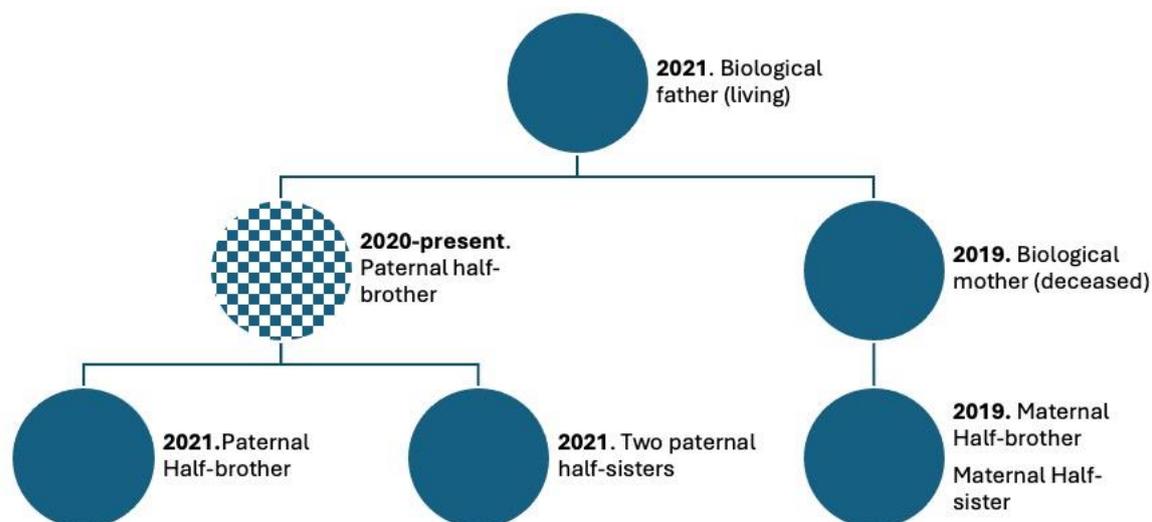


Figure 1. Discovered DNA relatives.

In 2019, Macy's maternal half-sister and her maternal half-brother popped up in AncestryDNA, and they began to correspond. Her maternal half-sister was enthusiastically communicative, sending many photos and stories about their bio-mother. During this time of shared memories and stories, Macy was able to construct meaningful aspects of her bio-mother's life and personality. Eventually, both withdrew from communication.

But Macy had discovered her bio-mother: at the time a college-educated young journalist who was sent by her family out of state to gestate, birth, and to give her up for a closed adoption. No one seemed to know where this had taken place; only that her bio-mother's sternly Roman Catholic family could not accept this birth and had threatened to disown her, sending her away from public view. Next, Macy wanted to discover her bio-father: the man with whom her bio-mother had this stigmatized sexual relationship.

In 2020, a paternal half-brother popped up on AncestryDNA. They began to correspond. He started his search out of his curiosity about the lack of resemblance between himself and his father. Discovering Macy as a paternal relative was the first clue that he might have a bio-father who was not his father of upbringing. Immediately, the communication between Macy and this half-brother was honest and fascinating; his wife included. An intellectual friendship, trust and shared values evolved from their conversations. His wife, an enthusiastic advocate of this search, proved to be a skilled genealogical researcher who was committed to evidence-based conclusions. Macy urged him to submit his saliva sample to 23andMe. He did so, and a paternal half-brother popped up as a DNA relative they both shared.

In 2021, this newly discovered paternal half-brother responded to their inquiries. He was the most enthusiastic communicator of all the half-siblings. He personally introduced Macy and her paternal half-brother (*circa* 2020) to his two sisters (their paternal half-sisters), and to their 92-year-old biological father. After Macy's many time-intensive conversations with all three siblings about this bio-father's life story and their lives with him, all these siblings withdrew from communication. The bio-father, on the other hand, clamored for more attention by Skype and email, but Macy withdrew. She couldn't tolerate his loquacious sexist and racist narcissism. She had found out what she wanted to know: how he and her bio-mother met, under what circumstances, and the nature of the relationship.

Her paternal half-brother (*circa* 2020) and his wife continued communication with this shared bio-father, discovering more genealogical relatives who are distantly related. Her paternal half-brother and his wife (*circa* 2020) affirm her sexuality, respect her professional achievements, and personally relate to her. This remains a meaningful friendship, and occasionally Macy travels to visit them.

Macy articulated the personal significance of these discoveries. She consented to my publication of her statement,

It is as if I am an embodied host to a mysterious jigsaw puzzle that has fallen into place in my soul. Now my soul is gaining depths in new emotional topographies, with many intriguing pathways to explore in a safe and non-threatening, intriguing and beautiful landscape. One could say: I am reconsolidating. (personal communication)

In the following sections I will develop and use the concept of the intersubjective field to interpret Macy's metaphors of the mysterious jigsaw puzzle and emotional topographies as moments of reconsolidation and self-integration.

Phenomenological Contribution to the Intersubjective Field

I contend that an intersubjective field is instituted by a particular dialogical context, couched in a specific time, place, and communicative social dimension. It has phenomenologically synchronic and diachronic dimensions, relative to the context. It is not static; as those dimensions and the context changes, so does the field. This is why I find it notable that Macy's intersubjective field of discovery occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown in the United States. Her discovery happened within a unique context. The lockdown necessitated exclusively virtual exchanges between Macy and others. A phenomenological description of embodied expression is useful to understand how Macy's virtual exchanges were vital and ongoing, despite the absence of literal physical bodies present to one another.

Phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty describes post-Cartesian non-dualistic embodied cognition, emphasizing the physical embodiment of our conscious cognitive experiences and analyzing the ways in which our bodies shape and express our thoughts and how we experience our conscious activities. In *Phenomenology of Perception*, speech is analyzed on the level of bodily behavior. As gesture, it is part of that repertoire of acts by which one lends oneself to the phenomenal world, outlining intentional objects which are apprehended through bodily rather than exclusively cognitive appropriation (Merleau-Ponty 1962, p. 185). In this text, speech and language are analyzed through the complementary domains of individualized gestures and historical, culturally sedimented behaviors. Speech is described as an acoustic use of the body within a field of action culturally and historically inscribed by phonetic and behavioral conventions. It is stylized by emotional and affective values with which it is intrinsically imbued. Through the stylistics of speech, "thought" inhabits the phenomenal world (p. 180-182). The emotional content of speech is its gestural sense taken as style, enacted by the embodied subject.

His parallel discussions about children's processes of language acquisition in *The Primacy of Perception* (Merleau-Ponty 1964a) describes this acquisition in terms of behavioral imitation, but also within a living nexus of affective relations with others. Within this nexus, the instantiation of newly acquired verbal behaviors is instigated along with the child's reciprocal

interactions with others and the child's relation to her own sense of time. Expressiveness is primary in cognitive development; propositional and conceptual meaning is secondary. Generalizing this analysis to adult expressive communication, Merleau-Ponty writes:

In sum, the intellectual elaboration of our experience of the world is constantly supported by the affective elaboration of our inter-human relations. The use of certain linguistic tools is mastered in the play of forces that constitute the subject's relations to his human surroundings. (Merleau-Ponty 1964a, p. 112)

In *Signs* (Merleau-Ponty 1964b) he acknowledges the distinction introduced by linguists of his time, between a given state of a linguistic system (synchronic) and the historical dimension of successive changes which a linguistic system undergoes (diachronic). But he ambiguates the binary abstract distinction implied by linguistic structural analysis. From a phenomenological point of view, the synchronic dimension is ontologically prior as the abstracted present of expressive speech, but this immediacy is existentially dependent on the diachronic dimension of lived experience, which is gesturally expressive, both past and future-directed, and inter-humanly conducted. (Merleau-Ponty 1964b, p. 87). The phenomenological synchronic and diachronic dimensions of the intersubjective field comprise a dynamically reciprocal involvement of oneself and others in the life world. As participants within the intersubjective field, Macy and her DNA relatives *temporized*: catalyzing intersubjective states of recollection, shared meaning, and closure.

This phenomenological account assists us in seeing how virtual dialogue, as part of the intersubjective field, is opened by speech acts that are affective and emotional expressions of speaking subjects. The virtual environment within which Macy's dialogical discoveries occurred is an adequate vehicle, like artistic or musical exchanges, for communicative expression. On Zoom, Macy and her DNA relatives mutually shared affective values such as trust and empathy. These values are reliant on the phenomenological fabric of the intersubjective field. This is exemplified by Macy's reference to new emotional topographies experienced during her search.

In the next section, I offer neurophenomenological and psychoanalytic conceptualizations of how this "not knowing" is a dynamic state that, by intersubjective modulations, can auto-poetically generate self-integration. These conceptualizations of "not knowing" are applied to Macy's experience of such.

Enactivist Cognition Models and Psychoanalytic Contributions to the Intersubjective Field

The enactivist model of cognition is a compatible paradigm to phenomenology, using empirical research to understand the dynamic nature of embodied cognition and to substantiate phenomenological claims about intersubjective communication. Enactivist approaches emphasize the extended, intersubjective, and socially situated nature of cognitive systems. This framework assumes that the mind is embodied, similar to the phenomenological concept of the lived body. Cognitive processes acquire meaning in the lifeworld of embodied action, rather than through a representational mapping or replicated internal model of the world (Gallagher 2017). Cognition is:

. . . not the representation of a pregiven world by a pregiven mind but is rather the enactment of a world and mind on the basis of a history of the variety of actions that being in the world performs. (Varela, Thompson and Rosch 1991, p. 9)

A similar critique is offered by neuroscientist LeDoux, who argues against the static image of the mind/brain entity as organized hierarchically, from simple to complex. In contrast, brain science discoveries of the self-organizing capacities of mind see it as embodied complexity that is dynamic: self-creative or *autopoietic*. Biologically based cognition is orchestrated by self-organizing neurological networks that are foundational to embodied, reflective experience (LeDoux, 1996).

Enactivist approaches draw on the notion of “emergent properties” from systems theory, applying the notion to human cognition. The notion of cognitive emergent properties remains a metaphorical use of concepts that are typically drawn from scientific analysis of dynamic natural systems. Neuroscientists descriptively apply the notion to the case of the self-organizing mind, Properties not found in individuals can emerge in human formations such as economies or politics, so the use of “emergent properties” can be used, at least in a metaphorical sense, to describe new collective human phenomena that are not attributable to individual parts.

Used descriptively, emergent properties of cognition are observable in ordinary situations such as infant language acquisition, free association, and recollection. According to enactivist cognition theory, meanings are more complex than those made by an individual alone. Enactivist philosopher Gallagher states:

On the enactivist view, social cognition is an attunement process that allows me to perceive the other as someone to whom I can respond or with whom I can interact . . . In some cases, a relational understanding is accomplished in the social interaction between two people where some novel shared meaning (or some decision or even some misunderstanding) is instituted in a way that could not be instituted within the single brain of either one of them alone. (Gallagher 2017, p. 15)

Enactivist cognition theory acknowledges that human self-understanding in the life world and the mechanisms adduced by life sciences are circular in hermeneutical and embodied ways (Varela, Thompson and Rosch 1991, p. 11).

The self-organizing capacities that are significant to memory processes are temporal in function. Psychoanalysts LaPlanche and Pontalis (1973), in their interpretation of the Freudian notion of “deferred action,” articulate the psychical temporalizing that occurs between the psychoanalytic patient’s dialogue with her analyst. For example, recollective memory selectively constitutes the sense of its own past, wherein the subject’s sensitivity to specific contextual cues constantly revises the past’s meaning in alignment with current dialogue and projects. This emphasis on belatedly coming to terms with prior experience or early “unknown” memories implies motivational, forward-looking temporizing as well as retrospective modifications of memories previously “unknown” or forgotten. Extrapolating from the psychoanalytic dyad, the subjectively felt “afterwardness” and “belatedness” of remembering are also dependent on intersubjective modes of communication such as the story-telling that happens in a psychologically satisfying ancestry search. The meaningfulness of memory is contingent not only on the physiological causality of the neuromodulatory

system, but also on the intersubjective narrative context within which specific memories unfold and are modified.

Remembrance of the past transforms long-term memory by giving it refreshed, significant meaning and significance. This account is compatible with phenomenology's view of memory as an embodied experience that is dynamically reciprocal in its exchanges with the life world. In this reciprocal involvement, at work are complex pre-reflective, pre-thematic layers of mind as well as reflective, autobiographical, and recollective networks of complexity that are intersubjective as well as intrapsychic. Humans live in an embodied temporal continuum throughout their lifespan that includes all kinds of modes of disruption that will generate, depending on the intersubjective context, different versions of belatedly coming to terms with one's experience.

Trauma and subsequent repression, of central concern to psychoanalysis, can affect one's sense of one's own narrative self and one's own worldly agency. Neuroscience and psychoanalysis agree that in coming to terms with trauma, it is not lived experience in general that undergoes recollective revision, but specifically whatever was impossible, in the traumatic experience, to incorporate into a meaningful experience (Stern 2009). Infantile, preverbal experiences are of central psychoanalytic interest in this regard, especially infantile preverbal traumatic experience.

Relevant to Macy's adoptee predicament, was her inchoate sense of loss of her bio-mother during the first month of her life, leaving a pre-verbal event with meaningless feelings of sadness and anger that remained suppressed throughout her childhood and adult life. Revisions of specific mnemonic traces of partially unassimilated experience are occasioned by later situations that enlist organic or developmental maturation, to allow narrative and emotional reworking of the earlier experience and access to new levels of meaning. On the psychoanalytic view, Macy's early loss requires such narrative reworking, because the trauma is pre-verbal, the result of misrecognition by the relational caregiving situation, in the first place. The infantile need for somatic-symbolic or somatic-linguistic integrations must be fulfilled in later development and through adult intersubjective situations that facilitate post-traumatic integration. Stolorow, a leading intersubjective psychoanalyst, states:

It is in the process of somatic-symbolic integration, the process through which emotional experience comes into language, that the sense of being is born. Linguisticity, somatic affectivity, and attuned relationality are constitutive aspects of the integrative process through which the sense of being takes form. (Stolorow 2010, p. 13)

He argues that there is a temporal dimension to trauma. The latter, he maintains, is incurred by alienation from the fabric of communal being with others in the reciprocities of attunement through dialogue. He describes trauma as a temporal self-state that is frozen into an eternal present, relieved only by the warmth of human dialogical and affective attunement (p. 16). It seems that Macy experienced something like this process of somatic-symbolic integration, by intense dialogue with her DNA family and her deep-level emotional processing of the meaning of these exchanges. She expressed the transformation: "as if I am an embodied host to a mysterious jigsaw puzzle that has fallen into place in my soul."

Given the heavy reliance on story-telling among DNA relatives in an ancestry search, what are the subjective pitfalls in that process? In the next section I discuss the problem of

fabrication that arises in this kind of dialogue which intends to be a truth-telling communal activity.

Problem of Truth-Telling or Fabrication

The distinction between truth and fabrication is relevant to the autopoietic or self-organizing activity at the heart of intersubjective communication, especially as the reconsolidation of old or forgotten memories unfolds. Psychologist Elizabeth Loftus established the mutability of long-term memories, using techniques reliant on narrative methods that succeeded in implanting false memories in healthy-minded human subjects. (Loftus and Pickrell 1995) Her research demonstrates the complexity of confabulation in the context of re-telling memories. Memory reconsolidation is effected both by timely behavioral updates of someone's synaptic signature associated with recall and by narrative updates by re-telling of long-term memories. (Sara 2000; Hall 2013, p. 15) The intersubjective emotional context, whether psychoanalytic, family or community based, is key to the narrative and affective force that instigates the memory reconsolidation. The meaningfulness of memory is contingent not only on the neuromodulatory system, but also on the intersubjective narrative context within which specific memories unfold and are altered. Loftus commented in an interview, "Memory works more like a Wikipedia page: you can go in there and change it, but so can other people" (Specter 2014, p. 44).

On the one hand, Macy's evolving complexity of self-other dialogic exploration with her biological family members illustrates this aspect of intersubjectivity as a dynamic system. Without the responsiveness and co-creation of her bio-family network, Macy would not have had the meaning-making resources to develop a more coherent sense of her past, present and future self. Crucial to this process were the affective states of trust and relational bonding that were co-created by shared interpretive activities. On the other hand, Macy's search contended with her vulnerability to confabulation. The bio-father's son and daughters warned that her bio-father is a notorious confabulist. They testified that they had spent their lives discerning truth from his tall tales. She was fortunate that the wife of her paternal half-brother (*circa* 2020) was skilled at genealogical research, taking no ancestral story at face-value.

Storytelling amongst the field of DNA relatives took Macy into the psychic liminality of imagination versus truth. The intensive affective communication in this intersubjective field shows her intrapsychic vulnerability to confabulation, however unintentional. If her "not knowing" is a dynamic state that, by intersubjective modulations, can auto-poetically generate reconsolidation and self-integration, how would she know whether her emergent sense of self-integration is, or is not based in part or wholly on fabrication?

The notions of the "hermeneutic circle," witness and testimony offer a middle way of interpretation that ameliorates some uncertainty about the recruitment of false memories that might diminish the enrichment of self-identity by means of intersubjective story-telling.

Hermeneutic Interpretation, Witness and Testimony

The term "hermeneutic circle", introduced by Heidegger in the twentieth century to a wider philosophical public (Heidegger 1962), signifies that understanding is achieved by interpretive attention to possible meanings that inform the understanding that we tacitly possess. This tacit dimension is constituted by the historical, interpersonal, and discursive context of the life world. Hermeneutic approaches hold that all knowledge production in any

discipline is possible only on the principle that human beings are interpretive in their being; we are steeped in language, the latter making possible our understanding in all the disciplines. Understanding in any area of social science is an interpretive possibility issuing from the specific discursive and cultural contexts in which humans find themselves.

Philosopher Jürgen Habermas, analyzing the hermeneutic point of view, argues that there is a practical, cognitive interest in communication: consensus among agents in the framework of a self-understanding derived from tradition. He noted that the human sciences, under which he includes psychology and psychoanalysis, pursue the goals of self-reflection and critique of ideology, beyond the empirical-analytic sciences of knowledge-production. (Habermas 1971, p. 310) Scientific methodologies suspend interpretation focused on self and other understanding, to conduct controlled experimentation on human subjects; for example, to discover predictable psychological states. Although there is nothing intrinsically wrong about suspending humanistic interpretation in scientific research, Habermas notes that in doing so, scientific method, when applied by the human sciences, promotes an “objectivist self-understanding of the hermeneutic sciences” that reifies “human value systems and irrational beliefs.” (p. 316) For our purposes, Habermas’ viewpoint cautions us against equating objective interpretations gained by scientific methodologies, with the hermeneutic enterprise of fostering self-understanding that aspires to self-reflection and autonomy.

Loftus’ successful experiments in implanting false memories in healthy-minded human subjects raised our concern about the role of memory fabrication in Macy’s self-identity. But this concern may be misplaced. Her controlled experiments yielded predictable psychological results. But the success of hers, and scientific method in general, may have alienated us from the validity of the truth at issue in interpretive experience. This is the standpoint of hermeneutic philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer, in agreement with Habermas. According to Gadamer, the validity of truth in interpretive experience lies in the claim to the universality of being understood. Being understood is constituted by the actual relationships between people. He states,

Each one is at first a kind of linguistic circle, and these linguistic circles come into contact with each other, merging more and more . . . never without the inner infinity of the dialogue that is in progress between every speaker and his partner. That is the fundamental dimension of hermeneutics. (Gadamer 1976, p. 17)

Gadamer compares hermeneutic interpretation to foreign language translation. Misunderstanding, mistranslation, and nuanced meanings concealed by different linguistic contexts are secondary, but significant factors in translation. The common background of tradition, relational and structural organization, and shared understanding is necessary to the task of translation and provides a veridical basis for it to proceed. Along the way, translation lifts out of the alien content something that upsets readers’ or listeners’ expectations, leading to reorganization and enrichment of our life world (p. 16).

Controlled experiments about memory implantation yield predictive results based on artificial conditions imposed on storytelling and listener reception. In contrast, dialogue within a human community requires a hermeneutic of understanding that takes time, openness to others’ stories and style, and self-disclosure. This way to self and other understanding is not replicable. Hermeneutic understanding is temporal, and resistant to reified uses of language such as propaganda, ideology or well-worn clichés. However, there is no hermeneutic method that can avoid fabrication and bias in the storytelling activity. According to Gadamer,

misunderstanding is built into the hermeneutic circle. But if participants are attentive to understanding self and other, making use of common and alien traditions shared, then fabrication is less a wound to an enriched self-identity, and more a misunderstanding that may be discerned by questioning in a deepening dialogue. Gadamer notes that questioning plays a crucial role in dialogue,

Every assertion is motivated, that is, one can sensibly ask of everything that is said, 'Why do you say that?' And when what is not said is understood along with what is said is an assertion understandable . . . For the motivational background of a question first opens up the realm out of which an answer can be brought and given. (1976, p. 67)

Tradition is not only a source of prejudice and misunderstanding, particularly with respect to self-interpretation, but also a necessary wellspring from which to develop critical and self-reflective judgments. Intersubjective psychoanalysts make use of these hermeneutic insights to critique the psychoanalytic prejudice of the analyst's interpretive superiority to the analysand. Interpretive superiority in psychotherapeutic and psychoanalytic situations is argued to be an obstacle to the meaning-making, reconsolidating process that inheres in open-ended exchanges (Stolorow and Atwood 1996; Orange 2009).

Macy's evolving self-other dialogic exploration with her DNA relatives illustrates this aspect of intersubjectivity as a hermeneutic activity. Without the responsiveness and co-creation of her bio-family network, Macy would not have had the meaning-making resources to develop a more coherent sense of her past, present and future self.

Witnessing and testimony are significant dialogical functions in the case of Macy's adoptee search. These are generative communications, mutually engaged by Macy and her bio-family. By "generative," I mean that without these types of communication in the search, it would atrophy. The search would cease to supply the dynamic interplay that give rise to the affective and cognitive dimensions of Macy's discovery process. These functions also supply another antidote to potential fabrications in the stories told.

Stern's psychoanalytic accounts of the function of witness describes childhood intrapsychic development to rely on the child's capacity to imaginatively listen to herself, through the ears of the other, presumably caregivers. Serving as witness to oneself is from the outset intersubjective. As self-witnessing evolves into the more complex horizons of communication with others, new agentic narrative freedom develops. Stern sees new and refreshed agentic narratives as emergent, co-constructed outcome of the clinical process.

Macy's adoptee predicament acquired a new story, in part clinical, and in part autobiographical. She was able to construct an autobiographical narrative inclusive of the first month of her infancy, with the aid of her maternal half-sister's photos and vivid descriptions of her bio-mother, and her bio-father's testimony to her bio-parents' relationship. Within the psychoanalytic situation, Stern notes, hermeneutics is the art of hearing, eliciting empathy within the situation of mutual understanding (Stern 1991).

I contend that the function of testimony is also significant in the social hermeneutic situation of the adoptee search. Here I take "testimony" as a locution that reports something to an audience. Testimonial locutions among bio-relatives are, in the hermeneutic sense, truth-telling expressions. These may or may not lead to justified true beliefs which are the

lodestone of the sciences and objectivist epistemological ideals. But testimonial locutions are important so far as dialogue between bio-relatives generates a group epistemological endeavor that engages truth-telling in agreements and disagreements over the accuracy of what is reported. Ancestry searches in general seek accurate historical and cultural records that can be the veridical basis of bio-relatives' stories. To accurately understand her bio-father's traumatic history and his relationship with her bio-mother, Macy had to engage his adult children in detailed cross-cutting testimonial conversations to gain multiple perspectives on the veridicality of the bio-father's testimony. Without the rich social epistemological milieu of these bio-relatives, Macy's ancestral narrative would be simplified, and vulnerable to more doubt and speculation. I noted earlier in this paper that Macy's favorite half-brother's wife was a professional researcher whose persistence established verified truths in this bio-family's history.

The function of witnessing and testimony supplied a hermeneutic effect, another emergent property, of expanded story-telling that enlisted Macy's bio-relatives into meaning-making of parts of herself that had gone dark in infancy, inchoately suffering from hermeneutic injustice. This type of injustice, analyzed by philosopher Miranda Fricker, happens when someone has a significant area of their social experience obscured from understanding due to prejudicial flaws in shared resources for social interpretation. (Fricker 2007) Macy's closed adoption wreaked hermeneutic injustice on her self-identity that was remedied in part by the mutual witnessing and testimonies that occurred during her search.

Conclusion: Highly Valued Emergent Properties

I have taken the notion of "emergent property" from the enactivist cognition model and applied it as a metaphor to the notion of intersubjective field in this paper. The affective and cognitive aspects of Macy's discovery are in this sense, emergent properties. Macy and her DNA relatives mutually shared affective values such as trust and empathy. These properties are relational, constituting a collective domain of emotional awareness. As participants within the intersubjective field, Macy and her DNA relatives *temporized*: catalyzing emergent intersubjective states of recollection, shared meaning, and closure. Macy seemed to experience a process of emergent somatic-symbolic integration, by deep-level emotional processing of the meaning of these exchanges with her DNA relatives. The function of witnessing and testimony in expansive story-telling supplied a hermeneutic, emergent property of an enriched shared domain of family meanings. From a normative perspective, moral repair of the agentic self requires the resources of verifiable witness, testimony, as well as other reparative resources such as collective truth-telling and acknowledgment (Walker 2006). In this sense, agentic moral repair emerged as a satisfying part of Macy's self-integration.

I consider reconsolidation and self-integration to be "higher" emergent properties: construed as the most highly valued achievements of her ancestry search. Possibly, these were shared by others who have participated in the process. As a counselor witness to Macy's search, I can testify only to her agentic success, leaving aside the self-states of her bio-relatives.

My application of the dynamic intersubjective field to Macy's adoptee search gives a snapshot of one field pattern that will change over the course of Macy's life. Her field is contextualized by events and possibilities in her ongoing lifespan, and most crucially by how she navigates this open hermeneutic context. The latter will, hopefully, generate her most highly valued agentic ends.

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*Artificial Intelligence-Enabled in Clothing Supply Chains:
Research Context and Motivation Perspectives*

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Abstract

As artificial intelligence (AI) continues to drive technological advancements today, it profoundly influences economic and social development. Publication of research on AI integrated with multiple disciplines, such as creative computing, art, innovation management, finance, etc., reveals the boost of academic attention. In this context, research on AI in the fashion industry provides insights for industrial practitioners, such as stakeholders in clothing supply chains (CSCs). However, limited research has reviewed AI in CSCs, especially from a context perspective. This paper aims to identify the macro context of AI in CSCs using descriptive and coding analysis to address two research questions: 1) What is the publication status of AI in CSCs has been published today? 2) What are the research contexts and motivations? 37 papers on AI in CSCs from 2005 to 2023 were obtained from the Scopus database. First, we analysed the publication status using a descriptive analysis. Second, we coded the research context to reveal their research context by six dimensions: 1) policy support, 2) awareness of sustainability, 3) consumer behaviours, 4) technology capabilities, 5) global market uncertainty, and 6) labour-intensive market shift. Findings suggested that global marketing uncertainty and consumer behaviour shifts are the two main motivations of their studies. On the other hand, the pressure on the labour-intensive market shifts from China to Southeast Asia, driving technological innovation in this uncertain market environment. Although the research sample has been limited so far, this shortage of research on AI in CSCs informed scholars' and policymakers' future research agenda.

Keywords: AI, CSCs, Context Perspectives, Motivation Perspectives

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1. Introduction

The traditional fashion industry has experienced a revolution forced by economic, technological, and environmental factors. This has further influenced all stakeholders or participants in the CSC processes. The SCOR model (vision 12) provides the three vital configurations in the processes of supply chains: customer interactions, physical material transactions, and market interactions (APICS, 2017). Based on this model identified, would technology, such as AI, change these configurations in the future? Unfortunately, CSCs have yet to be applied entirely to be automated; thus, this barrier led to low-cost and labour-intensive manufacturing (Pal & Jayarathne, 2022). Correspondingly, the Asian market, including China, Bangladesh, and Vietnam, is still labour-intensive, with many raw materials and apparel manufacturers.

In this context, enthusiastic debates on AI-driven or AI-enabled CSCs are growing in the age of AI. Can AI enable CSCs to overcome this obstacle and challenge? Our research selected 37 published papers regarding AI in CSCs from Scopus databases from 2005 to 2023 to identify what and how they were debated. Following this aim, two research questions were identified: 1) What is the publication status of AI in CSCs has been published today? 2) What are the research contexts and motivations?

The outline of our research follows the theoretical background in section 2, focusing on two theoretical lenses: first, the life cycle of CSCs based on a framework for presenting the supply chain evolution, and second, AI in human decision-making in supply chain management (SCM). In section 3, we introduced our research methodology. Section 4 analysed the 37 selected papers using descriptive analysis and coding analysis. Section 5 discussed their research context and motivation integrated with the CSCs lifecycle framework.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Lifecycle of CSCs

There is extensive literature on the lifecycle of clothing but little research on the lifecycle of CSCs. The processes of CSCs are established from the product lifecycle. It was first proposed by Levitt (1965) in a Harvard Business Review article, which refers to a period that begins with the launch of a product into the market until it is finally withdrawn. In this definition, the life cycle of clothing ranges from material sourcing, design, sample making, order, production, and logistics (Figure 1). Similar to the general concept of supply chain, CSCs are processes of delivery from suppliers to customers and from upstream to downstream, where tangible and intangible activities are involved (Larson & Rogers, 1998; Mentzer et al., 2001). Previous literature emphasised the roles of collaborations between different stakeholders in the lifecycle of CSCs. For example, Ciccullo et al. (2023) state that collaboration is central in CSCs, forced by joint initiatives with multiple supply chain stakeholders. As we initially presented, managing this complex process covering a whole spectrum of activities requires complex tradeoffs in that different entities in the chain may have conflicting objectives (Kempf et al., 2011). Therefore, the entire system and coordinate decisions should be prioritised (Kempf et al., 2011).

On the other hand, to maximise profit, the strategy of virtual integration has become a vital tool in the lifecycle of CSCs. It refers to using technology to connect participants, including

employees, suppliers, customers, and partners, allowing for better collaboration, more efficient processes, and faster decision-making (Ojha et al., 2023). Based on this definition, it can be seen as a “decentralised” strategy in the lifecycle of CSCs, where several independent enterprises will carry out value-creation activities with each core competence through technology adoptions and knowledge or information sharing.

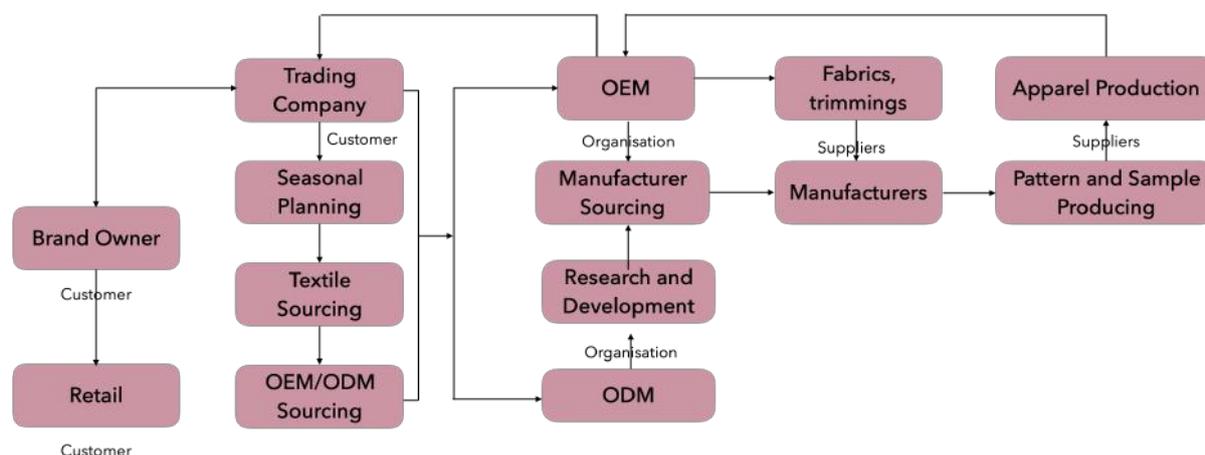


Figure 1. Clothing Supply Chain Process (Source: Author)

2.2 AI in Human Decision-Making in SCM

As section 2.1 provided, virtual integrations highlight that technology can be better used for collaborations and decision-making in CSCs. This section draws on the theoretical lens of AI in human decision-making in SCM. The thinking process has a crucial role in decision-making, where decision-makers make choices by “identifying a decision, gathering information, and assessing alternative resolutions in this process” (Panpatte & Takale, 2019, p. 3). AI technology is today mainly adopted in supporting decision-makers in making appropriate decisions and taking appropriate actions to tackle challenging situations in a chain (Zamani et al., 2023). Literature has highlighted numerous ways to use AI techniques to manage SCM information better. For example, AI with chat robots, such as Chat GPT, can address the inaccuracy and postponements of information and classify potential stakeholders, thereby making optimal decisions and promoting the dynamics of supply chains (Rathor, 2023). Belhadi et al. (2022, p.4488) proposed that “human thinking” is one of the AI technologies in SCM, based on the heterogeneous techniques in the field of AI. However, Efstratiadis (2023) states that although artificial neural networks (ANN) and deep learning (DL) based on patterns and predictions in data trained by AI systems are often used for generating predictions, they are not original. Therefore, AI is not an original thinker but supports idea creation in SCM.

The previous two theoretical lenses have provided an understanding of CSC’s configuration, participants, strategy, and AI support fields of decision-making. While previous studies have provided valuable contributions to AI in SCM, no such highlights exist from research context and motivation perspectives in the CSC field. Two main rationales are employing these perspectives. First, the context perspective emphasises the significance of a social environment in knowledge creation (Nonaka, 1998). Second, the motivation perspective promotes rationality by researchers’ capturing and generating knowledge (Choo et al., 2007). Therefore, to fill this gap, our research offers room for the state quo of current AI research on CSCs, mainly in the research contexts and motivations to synthesise the gaps in knowledge creation, thereby informing a future research agenda.

3. Methodology

3.1 Data Sampling

In the data search process, we conducted two search phases through Scopus index databases (www.scopus.com), which is a significant search engine for searching scholarly sources (Pournader et al., 2021) (see Table 1). Step one is a keyword search, and step two is a search string employing Boolean operators (AND, OR, and NOT), allowing standardised search and free-text terms to be combined (Atkinson & Cipriani, 2018). Each was refined and searched using artificial AND intelligence AND apparel OR fashion OR clothing OR garment AND supply AND chain, and 67 hits were screened. Further, we added AI techniques, such as deep AND learning OR Machine AND learning OR Artificial AND neural AND networks, then obtained seven additional results. We excluded the duplicated samples and excluded book chapters and review papers. Finally, we obtained 37 hits based on the filtering criteria (see Table 2).

Table 1. Keywords-based Retrieval Criteria

Search Phase	Keyword and Search Strings
Step One-Keyword Search	artificial intelligence, clothing supply chain, garment supply chain, fashion supply chain, apparel supply chain
Step Two-Search String	artificial AND intelligence AND apparel OR fashion OR clothing OR garment AND supply AND chain, deep AND learning OR Machine AND learning OR Artificial AND neural AND networks,

Table 2. Final Selected Articles (n=37)

ID. No.	Journal Article (JA)/Conference Article (CA)	Title of Article	Author and Year
01	JA	A Bibliometric Survey of Fashion Analysis using Artificial Intelligence	(Wazarkar et al., 2020)
02	CA	Detailed Review of Artificial Intelligence Applied in the Fashion and Apparel Industry	(Giri et al., 2019b)
03	JA	A fully yarn integrated tag for tracking the international textile supply chain	(Kumar et al., 2016b)
04	CA	A global decision support system for garment manufacturing by using genetic algorithm	(Chen et al., 2005)
05	JA	A hybrid bi-objective optimization approach for joint determination of safety stock and safety time buffers in multi-item single-stage industrial supply chains	(Guo et al., 2015)
06	JA	A novel ensemble learning approach for corporate financial distress forecasting in fashion and textiles supply chains	(Xie et al., 2013b)
07	CA	Advances in AI-Based Garment Returns Prediction and Processing: A Conceptual Approach for an AI-Based Recommender System	(Gry et al., 2023b)
08	CA	AI based forecasting in fast fashion industry: A review	(Laaziz, 2020)
09	CA	An integrated QFD-TOPSIS methodology for supplier selection in SMEs	(Kumaraswamy et al., 2011)
10	JA	An RFID-based intelligent decision support system architecture for production monitoring and scheduling in a distributed manufacturing environment	(Z. X. Guo et al., 2015)

Table 2. Continued.

No.	Journal Article (JA)/Conference Article (CA)	Title of Article	Author and Year
11	CA	Artificial intelligence: Technology and application in apparel manufacturing	(Nayak et al., 2016)
12	JA	Challenges and Opportunities in Deep Learning Driven Fashion Design and Textiles Patterns Development	(Simian & Husac, 2023)
13	JA	Climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction in the garment industry supply chain network	(Bag et al., 2023b)
14	CA	Coordinated optimization of production and delivery operations in apparel supply chains using a hybrid intelligent algorithm	(Guo et al., 2019)
15	JA	Customer models for artificial intelligence-based decision support in fashion online retail supply chains	(Pereira et al., 2022)
16	CA	Data mining dynamic hybrid model for logistic supplying chain: Assortment setting in fast fashion retail	(Fares et al., 2019)
17	CA	Design of Clothing Supply Chain Network Based on Stochastic Simulation	(Dai & Zheng, 2016)
18	CA	Digital intelligence as prerequisite of artificial intelligence's integration in the clothing industry 4.0	(Kampakaki & Papahristou, 2020)
19	JA	Drivers, barriers and social considerations for AI adoption in business and management: A tertiary study	(Cubric, 2020)
20	JA	Evaluating supply chain resilience using supply chain management competencies in the garment industry: a post COVID analysis	(Islam et al., 2023)
21	CA	FBD_Bmodel Digital Platform: A Web-Based Application for Demand Driven Fashion Supply Chain	(Thomassey & Zeng, 2021)
22	CA	How adoption speed affects the evolution of fashion cycle	(Xing, 2018)
23	JA	Implementation of Digitalized Technologies for Fashion Industry 4.0: Opportunities and Challenges	(Akram et al., 2022)
24	CA	Implementation of the newsboy method for the sales forecasting of the apparel industry	(Sébastien & Pierre, 2005)
25	CA	Implementing IoT-adaptive fuzzy neural network model enabling service for supporting fashion retail	(Chan et al., 2020)
26	CA	Information Distortion in a Fast Fashion Supply Network: The Impact of Digitalization	(Turino et al., 2021)
27	JA	Integrating machine learning, modularity and supply chain integration for Branding 4.0	(Yan et al., 2022)
28	CA	Intelligent Enabling Fashion Supply Chain Management Innovation	(Li, 2020)
29	JA	Investments in digital technology advances in textiles	(Špiler et al., 2023)
30	CA	IoT data acquisition in fashion retail application: Fuzzy logic approach	(Chan et al., 2018)
31	CA	Leveraging object tracking infrastructures to manage product carbon footprints	(Dada et al., 2009)
32	JA	Linking marketing and supply chain models for improved business strategic decision support	(Laínez et al., 2010)
33	JA	Planned fashion obsolescence in the light of supply chain uncertainty	(Philip et al., 2020)

Table 2. Continued.

No.	Journal Article (JA)/Conference Article (CA)	Title of Article	Author and Year
34	CA	Redesign of Supply Chain in Fashion Industry based on Strategic Engineering	(Bruzzone et al., 2022)
35	CA	The decision support system applied in Agile Supply Chain	(Dragon, 2008)
36	JA	The role of artificial intelligence in shaping the future of Agile fashion industry	(Mohiuddin Babu et al., 2022b)
37	JA	Transformation of the innovative and sustainable supply chain with upcoming real-time fashion systems	(Lee, 2021)

3.2 Coding Process

We further identify the paper text employing a qualitative coding analysis using NVivo 12. We retrieved 37 articles into 84 nodes, grouping them into six dimensions to further summarise their research context, thereby segmenting their research motivations. Each node was named as a unique ID (see Table 3). For example, in the third article's first piece of policy-support context, we coded them as PS3-1 by parity of reasoning.

Table 3. Coded Nodes (N=84)

Dimension	Nodes of Texts
Policy support	PS 3-1, PS 4-1, PS 4-2, PS 5-1, PS 6-1, PS11-1, PS 29-1, PS32-1
Awareness of sustainability	AOS 2-1, AOS3-1, AOS13-1, AOS13-2, AOS13-3, AOS21-1, AOS23-1 AOS23-2, AOS 31-1, AOS 37-1, AOS 37-2
Consumer behaviors	CB 2-1, CB3-1, CB4-1, CB7-1, CB7-2, CB13-1, CB13-2, CB15-1, CB15-2, CB16-1, CB21-1, CB 22-1, CB 25-1, CB 25-2, CB 25-3, CB 25-4, CB26-1, CB27-1, CB27-2, CB27-3, CB28-1, CB 32-1, CB37-1
Technology capability	TC 1-1, TC6-1, TC8-1, TC9-1, TC10-1, TC 24-1, TC 27-1, TC28-1, TC 29-1, TC 30-1, TC 34-1, TC 35-1, TC 36-1, TC 36-2, TC 37-1
Global market uncertainty	GM3-1, GM3-2, GM3-3, GM3-4, GM4-1, GM4-2, GM7-1, GM10-1, GM12-1, GM12-2, GM15-1, GM17-1, GM18-1, GM19-1, GM20-1, GM21-1, GM23-1, GM 32-1, GM33-1, GM36-1, GM37-1, GM 37-2
Labor-intensive market shift	LMS4-1, LMS10-1, LMS11-1, LMS21-1, LMS 36-1

4. Results and Analysis

4.1 Publication Timeline

As shown in Figure 2, the number of articles reviewing AI in CSCs has increased yearly since 2018 and peaked in 2020. The number of publications significantly reduced after 2020. Among these, 20 studied are conference papers, and 17 studied published journal articles. This indicates that there was little empirical high-quality research on AI in CSCs between 2005 and 2017, and after 2017, journal papers on this field started growing gradually. Therefore, it tricks us into exploring their research motivations behind that. Table 3 suggests a broad range of publication outlets, showing study titles on AI in CSCs.

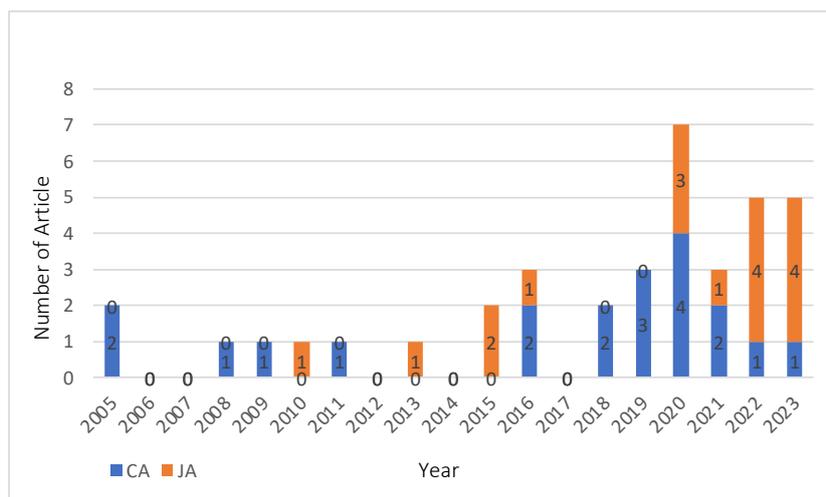


Figure 2. Timeline of Publication in Scopus as of 31/12/2023 (n=37)

4.2 Coding Analysis of Research Context

As seen in Table 4, the frequency of research contexts was depicted. The results show that six dimensions include 15 elements, which are policy regulations (7), AI ethics (1), eco-friendly (1), climate change (2), green production (8), consumer demands shift (4), consumer perception shift (11), consumer’s decision-making shift (8), innovation development (3), lack of AI adoption (4), problem-solving (8), dynamic industry (15), pandemics (7), cheap labours (2), and agile manufacturing (3). For example, Giri et al. (2019) believe that the fashion and textile industry is dynamic, and even the consumers are dissatisfied with products with colours and materials and updating speed. Therefore, AI can be considered a predictor tool to forecast the market in this context (Kumar et al., 2016). These research motivations come from a dynamic scenario of the fashion industry and consumer behaviour. As Table 4 depicts, the most mentioned in their research is the dynamic industry in the global marketing dimension (17.86%), and the subsequent one is the consumer perception shift in the consumer behaviour dimension (13.10%).

Table 4. The Frequency of Research Context Dimensions

Dimensions	Elements of Dimensions	Coded Quantity	Percentage
Policy support	Policy regulations	7	8.33%
	AI ethics	1	1.19%
Awareness of Sustainability	Eco-friendly	1	1.19%
	Climate change	2	2.38%
	Green production	8	9.52%
Consumer behaviour	Consumer demands shift	4	4.76%
	Consumer perception shift	11	13.10%
	Consumers’ decision-making shift	8	9.52%
Technology capability	Innovation development	3	3.57%
	Lack of AI adoption	4	4.76%
	Problem solving	8	9.52%
Global marketing uncertainty	Dynamic industry	15	17.86%
	Pandemics	7	8.33%
Labor-intensive	Cheaper labours	2	2.38%
	Agile manufacturing	3	3.57%

5. Discussions

5.1 The Publication Status of AI in CSCs

The above results and analysis suggested that transdisciplinary articles tend to come out in academia, and the focus on AI technology has attracted the attention of scholars in practical fields, such as CSCs. However, most conference papers have no attempts to publish their novel findings in high-quality journals. This shortage of paper publications reveals that AI's adoption in the processes of CSCs still needs to be explored. More importantly, AI knowledge sharing in organisations should be highlighted because clothing manufacturing has a lower threshold for talent ability. This leads to a low acceptance of technology used by employees, such as sewing makers and pattern cutters. Aware of these research gaps, the research on AI and CSCs could be more extensive.

5.2 Research Contexts and Motivations

The six dimensions and 15 elements provide a context focus. The high-frequency coded contexts indicate the focus on consumer behaviour shift within global market uncertainties. Disruptive technology, such as AI, has changed consumer behaviour, perceptions, and demands (Omoge et al., 2022; Verma et al., 2021). To optimise their satisfaction, scholars attempt to focus on AI's capability to predict consumer requirements that influence all participants in the processes of CSCs, e.g. TC6-1, TC 8-1. However, some authors argue that the current AI methods cannot be adopted individually because the individual forecasting method, such as ANN, has limited capability in describing bias characteristics (e.g. TC 6-1 by Xie et al., 2013). Thus, this inspires us to create hybrid AI capability-enabled CSCs. Some research is motivated by consumer pressure on green product requirements and AI's capability to predict environmental changes, e.g., AOS13-2 by (Bag et al., 2023). However, these studies have not empirically revealed how AI disrupts traditional configurations of CSCs from the stakeholders' feedback. Therefore, future research could be grounded in combinations of AI capabilities to predict customer and suppliers' green behaviours and build green manufacturing ecosystems.

Of the selected studies, some articles focus on global marketing uncertainty, including COVID-19, the post-pandemic global impact, and the dynamic fashion industry. The prevailing circumstances necessitate a heightened emphasis on addressing the dynamic capabilities of the supply chain, with a particular focus on enhancing supply chain resilience within a specified context, e.g., GM07-1, GM12-1, GM15-1, GM20-1, GM36-1, GM37-1, GM 37-2. In addition to the external uncertainty, the internal uncertain environment, such as labour turnover, also drives scholars to design clothing supply chain networks (Dai & Zheng, 2015).

Furthermore, AI has been practically implemented in recent years. Innovation development always needs a national strategy to support technology innovation and development from policies (Lundvall, 2007). Therefore, as AI has been recognised as a national strategy in many nations, such as China, the US, the UK, Japan, and the European Union (Qu & Kim, 2022), it is important to consider how policy context can play an active role in researching and developing AI in innovation for industries. The trend and characteristics of AI policy inclination may prove a country's innovation focus and development clusters. Some references mentioned the policy context, e.g. PS 3-1, PS 4-1, PS 4-2, PS 5-1, PS 6-1, PS11-1, PS 29-1, PS32-1.

Labour-intensive market shifts are often associated with a focus on environmental uncertainty, but among the selected articles, this element was pointed explicitly at a fashion context because clothing manufacturers are located in developing countries, such as China, Bangladesh and Vietnam. However, clothing manufacturing has not adopted AI and robots thoroughly or extensively. Therefore, facing these issues, AI-enabled agile manufacturing could respond quickly to customer needs and market changes (Mohiuddin Babu et al., 2022a).

6. Conclusions

This study includes a review of 37 literature published between 2005 and 2023 on AI adoption in CSCs from the Scopus database. Two research questions have been addressed. First, we excluded the review papers; thus, the quantity of empirical papers on AI in CSCs is limited. Among the selected papers, we identified six critical dimensions (policy support, awareness of sustainability, consumer behaviours, technology capability, global market uncertainty, labour-intensive market shift) of their research context by coding, which addresses our second research question on research motivations. The dimensions are categorised into 15 elements, contributing to a detailed scenario of their research context. However, this individual element is not separate, underscoring that their integration should be informed in a future agenda.

The shortage of research on AI in CSCs provides room for scholars to fill these gaps at large. Nevertheless, there are several limitations and challenges in this field. First, as mentioned, clothing manufacturing has not been automatically operated due to the talent shortage and lack of knowledge sharing. Second, since the global market environment is uncertain and the fashion industry is dynamic (Giri et al., 2019a), government policy for supporting AI development in CSCs should be considered as a focus. This support should be embodied in policies for value co-creation of all stakeholders in each configuration of CSCs. Third, consumer behaviour has changed dramatically during COVID-19, reflected in online purchasing and the high rate of clothing product return if consumers are dissatisfied with products (Gry et al., 2023a; Pang et al., 2022).

In summary, the literature review on AI-enabled CSCs from a context perspective is novel in a systematic literature review study. It grounded the research rationales in a detailed context coding analysis. This study contributes to informing scholars and policymakers on a future agenda.

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A Study of Literary Characters Who Knew How to Dress Up

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Abstract

Fashion and Literature are two primarily different mediums though they do intersect each other and deviate in their own historic and contemporary times. Fashion in fiction is explanatory, illuminating, symbolic and full of visualization. Some of the best scenes in the literature are braced with fashion. It is assumed that fashion is only about clothing and although it can be considered true to some extent, fashion is far more complex and inclusive. Fashion has been intrinsically connected to leisure for centuries – especially through mediums such as the literature and theatre. This paper discusses the classic icons and muses from the world of literature who continue to catalyze as inspiration in the fashion world. This paper is based on review of literature and takes a case study approach. It is observed that fashion and literature both offer shape, structure and guide each other. This study extents to apprise the iconoclasts that were first fashioned with a pen.

Keywords: Fashion, Literature, Icons, Muse

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Introduction

Fashion is a sociocultural phenomenon in which a specific garment or style is embraced by a significant number of individuals within a specific location and timeframe. Throughout history, clothing has held significance due to its association with both safeguarding and embellishment, eventually evolving into a symbol of modesty. Not all clothing items are considered fashionable, hence fashion can be regarded as a dynamic process. Hence, the concept of fashion can be extended to encompass several categories and services beyond the realm of the clothes sector.

The portrayal of clothing in literature is inherently authentic, hence reflecting the existence of fashion in literature. Utilizing clothing signifiers to situate characters within their distinct social and historical milieu is quite effortless. Both fashion and literature captivate the minds of many individuals with a shared fixation on fantasy, and they intertwine to mutually influence one another in various ways. Literature has bestowed upon the realm of fashion a collection of enduring icons, such as Miss Havisham, Holly Golightly, Jane Eyre, Anna Karenina, Orlando, Gigi, and others. These fashion icons were initially conceptualized by an author using a pen, but they still serve as a source of inspiration for several stylists, designers, and readers. Roland Barthes used the term "written clothing" in 1967 in his research, *The Fashion System*, which explores the connection between visual photographs and written descriptions of apparel in fashion magazines. The individual addresses two core concepts: the profound capacity for change inherent in even the minutest aspect of attire, and the conflict that arises from the coexistence of historical and contemporary elements.

Sigmund Freud, the pioneer of psychoanalysis, explicitly acknowledges clothes as a dynamic symbol of social identity due to their intimate connection with the human body. The era of Freud was characterized by the prevalence of cravats and corsets, which were widely worn throughout that period. This indicates that fashion trends may have had a considerable influence on the visual representation of that time. In his work "The Psychoanalyst of Clothes," psychoanalyst J.C. Flugel explores the connection between dress, fashion, and identity, posing the topic of how fashion is associated with one's sense of self. Flugel's focus is on the motives of modesty and decorating. He believes that humans appreciate their bodies and exhibit them to others in order to allow others to partake in their adoration.

In her book "Fashion and Psychoanalysis," Alison Bancroft used Lacanian psychoanalysis to illustrate how fashion may serve as a platform for women to engage in confrontational experiences. She argues that fashion is an invaluable cultural commodity that is consistently associated with the feminine domain. She asserts that fashion photography, specifically the work of photographer Nick Knight, portrays women in an overly simplistic or even malevolent manner. She argues that fashion photography can establish ideological principles and norms for the analysis of fashion imagery.

George Simmel, a theorist of social reason, questions the advocates of traditional disciplines like literature and history. Simmel posited that fashion is marked by a simultaneous interplay of individualism and conformity, and that there exists a robust correlation between fashion and image culture. Veblen's theory of conspicuous consumerism delved into the potential for fashion to progress towards an ideal state. In contrast, Simmel focused on interpersonal relationships rather than quantitative metrics to comprehend how goods acquire worth. Simmel did not explicitly employ the term 'trickle down', but, he has been associated with it. In his 1904 article 'Fashion', he formulated this concept and posited that it was inherent for

the lower social strata to emulate and aspire towards the higher echelons of society. The fashion trends of the top echelons of society are always distinct from those of the lower class. The former promptly discard these trends as soon as the latter begins to embrace them.

Barthes acknowledges the importance of dress descriptions in "literature proper," but he excludes them from his semiotic analysis because he considers them too incomplete and subject to change over time to be valuable. Nevertheless, there is a growing fascination among literary scholars and fashion critics with analyzing the intricate ways in which imaginative writers employ complex systems of clothing symbolism in works of fiction. In his work 'Dandyism and Fashion', Barthes focuses on the technical aspects of male clothes and highlights the significance of details as indicators. He suggests that the dandy would approach his attire like a contemporary artist, skillfully arranging the available materials to create a well-composed ensemble. He asserts that maintaining individuality is unattainable and that the proliferation and dissemination of fashion is a result of the availability of ready-to-wear garments.

Writings from periods with limited mass literacy do not include literary investigations, as they primarily focus on real-life events. Literary works started targeting broader audiences who were acknowledged as engaged and receptive readers of literary materials. Only at that moment did the concept of illiteracy begin to form and public discussions on the topic could start. In England, whereas printing thrived during the Renaissance in the 15th century, literary excursions unexpectedly flourished in the 19th century. In the early 18th century, illiteracy was not yet recognized as a social issue. Ultimately, reading for enjoyment was not a common habit in the society of that era, reading for practical purposes was not obligatory, and reading religious texts did not appeal to a large number of people. At that time, letter writing was a recently developed mode of communication, and there was no official or practical need for people to be literate in order to vote or hold public office. The research conducted by Terry Belanger, Elizabeth Eisenstein, and Carey McIntosh substantiates this claim, demonstrating that "England in the 1790s had achieved a highly advanced print society," while a hundred years previously, in 1695, "print culture was still in its nascent stage."

Research Methodology

An in-depth analysis is conducted on the historical context of certain prominent characters from ancient novels, as well as a comprehensive assessment of literature on the portrayal of clothing in written works of fiction, revealing complex systems of clothing depiction. This text discusses the aspects in the context of fashion that portray these literary characters. In order to comprehend the evolution of characters and the connection between literature and fashion, this study examines six famous literary characters by analyzing their clothing and fashion choices in both written novels and their adaptations. The discourse revolves around the significance of fashion narratives and the deliberate utilization of fashion consciousness by authors to depict characters.

The study encompassed the subsequent novels:

1. The character Anna Karenina from the novel "Anna Karenina" written by Leo Tolstoy.
2. Scarlett O'Hara, a character from the novel "Gone with the Wind" by Margaret Mitchell.

3. Miss Havisham, a character in Charles Dickens' novel *Great Expectations*, is the subject of discussion.
4. Holly Golightly is a character from the novel "*Breakfast at Tiffany's*" written by Truman Capote.
5. Jane is a character in the novel "*Jane Eyre*" written by Charlotte Brontë.
6. The novel "*Orlando*" written by Virginia Woolf is set in the city of Orlando.

Exemplary literary Characters With a Keen Sense Of Fashion

1. Anna Karenina, the protagonist of Leo Tolstoy's renowned novel "*Anna Karenina*" published in 1876, became a fashion symbol as a result of her meticulously designed attire. Anna Karenina's fashion exemplifies the characteristics of the late Victorian age, including the evolution of crinolines, petticoats, and bustles that added significant volume to the posterior of the dresses. The story's setting is in Russia, during a time when the dominant fashion trend was French-inspired, characterized by exaggerated details at the rear. Women also had a strong affinity for fur. Anna Karenina's attire is featured in various film adaptations of the novel, including the "Love" 1927 film with costumes designed by Gilbert Clark, the 1935 film *Anna Karenina* with costumes designed by Adrian, the 1947 film *Anna Karenina* with costumes designed by Cecil Beaton, and the more recent 2012 film *Anna Karenina* with costumes designed by Jacqueline Durran. The phrase "Anna Karenina" finally evolved to represent the design of elegant and romantic figures embellished with fur. Tolstoy employs clothing as a means of concealing his characters' true identities, conveying their self-perception, and influencing our emotional response towards them. He oversees the entire process, from measuring a cuff link to ensuring that a man's coat is prepared, without the need for a tailor.

Tolstoy saw clothing as illuminating in a manner that is distinct from other eminent authors of the 19th century, such as Dickens. In "*David Copperfield*," David briefly mentions the malevolent Mr. Murdstone lounging in his robe, without providing a clear explanation. However, in the initial pages of "*Anna Karenina*," when Oblonsky is promoted, his grey dressing gown with a blue silk lining serves as a critical observer of his actions. Tolstoy had previously informed us that Oblonsky is an adulterous spouse; his opulent gold morocco slippers serve as evidence of his hedonistic nature. Tolstoy's intense preoccupation with dress parallels his preoccupation with ethics. Tolstoy, like numerous other artists, transmuted his anxieties into art. The protagonist in the author's novels consistently endeavors to derive moral coherence from his existence. Tolstoy, a young nobleman, openly displayed the typical associations of his social status, including ladies and gambling. Tolstoy evaluates his characters based on his pursuit of absolute moral excellence. Throughout his lifetime, he developed a philosophy that combined the principles of moral excellence and his unwavering belief in nonviolence, while simultaneously rejecting all forms of artistic expression, including his own. The activities and subjects he focused on during his final years generated much controversy, but many of his ideas were traditional. Within his works of fiction, he advocated for the virtue of sexual abstinence in women and held great admiration for acts of bravery in the military.

"*War and Peace*" exemplifies Tolstoy's overarching theory of history through the inclusion of numerous subordinate theories. One theory pertains to the relationship between dress and Tolstoy's success in persuading people that fashionable warriors are not always skilled fighters. During a particular incident, a sophisticated officer, adorned with a diamond ring on his forefinger, reprimands an artillery captain for removing his boots during a moment of

leisure. This scene highlights the moral disparity between sophisticated dandies of high social status and soldiers serving on the front lines. The artillery captain thereafter emerges as the protagonist of a minor yet pivotal encounter, for which he receives no acknowledgment. During our final encounter, he is situated in a medical facility, having suffered the loss of one of his limbs. However, Tolstoy's well-dressed officers, described in great detail, never get injured.

2. Despite its premiere many years ago, *Gone with the Wind* continues to offer new discoveries. The film features a collection of exquisite garments, designed by Walter Plunkett and John Frederics, among other outfits. The coveted item that we all desire is the crimson gown donned by Scarlett O'Hara, portrayed by the remarkable Vivien Leigh, during the scene depicting Ashley Wilkes' birthday. Vivien Leigh dons a crimson velvet dress adorned with glass beads in the moment where Scarlett O'Hara attends Ashley Wilkes' birthday party unaccompanied. Instead of wearing a corset and large petticoats, she is dressed in a form-fitting garment that contrasts with the attire of the other ladies in the room, exuding sensuality and presenting a stark contrast. Scarlett O'Hara captivates the audience with her low-cut sweetheart neckline and luxurious burgundy ostrich plumes. This scene is set in the 1870s, which corresponds to the Golden Age of America, also referred to as the Gilded Age. During this period, women's fashion transitions from ruffles, big hoop skirts, and airy fabrics to more fitted patterns crafted from luxurious materials such as velvet. In this period, there are stringent regulations dictating the attire for women, which Scarlett defies by appearing at a family gathering in a remarkable yet audacious clothing. Compelled by Rhett Butler, the character portrayed by Clark Gable intentionally selects a provocative attire. Scarlett O'Hara maintains her composure and confidence despite the response of others.

3. Miss Havisham, a character in Charles Dickens' novel *Great Expectations*, is undeniably one of the most remarkable figures in literature. She is a woman who was deserted by her fiancé on their wedding day. Consequently, she remains motionless in a state of temporal suspension and has an overwhelming sense of profound sorrow, prompting her to don her bridal attire on a daily basis, in anticipation of the eventual reunion with her cherished partner. Miss Havisham's character does not thrive. She languishes in her attire and in her own residence, a dwelling that has grown dim with little joy except for the affection she harbors for Estella. The white dress transcends its role as a mere bridal attire. It serves as a perpetual symbol of Miss Havisham's bereavement. It involves a dynamic struggle or contradiction. The demise of romance and the idealized notion of marriage coincides with Miss Havisham embodying the Victorian gothic archetype and being deeply entrenched in domesticity.

The portrayal of Miss Havisham and her bridal attire is revered in gothic literature that focuses on female characters. Miss Havisham's clothing has transformed into her burial garment, yet there is an obvious elegance in the relentless sorrow she experiences every day of her existence. Miss Havisham adamantly refuses to move over her heartbreak. Upon discovering Compeyson's absence, she promptly halts all the clocks throughout Satis House at precisely twenty minutes to nine. She wears a single shoe, as she had not yet placed on the other shoe when she discovered his betrayal. Miss Havisham adopts Estella with a fervent and obsessed malice, raising her as a means to achieve her own vengeance against men.

4. Audrey Hepburn achieved widespread popularity for her portrayal of the character in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, which resulted in the widespread recognition of the little black dress she wore. This, in turn, created one of the most memorable and influential fashion moments

in the history of cinema. Audrey Hepburn is renowned for the opening sequence of the 1961 iconic film, in which the youthful socialite Holly Golightly has a croissant and coffee while positioned in front of a Tiffany & Co. boutique. She is wearing a modest black dress from Givenchy, paired with a pearl necklace around her collar. This design ensemble has become iconic throughout history. One may argue that the accessories elevated the appearance from basic to iconic. In her book *Audrey Style*, Pamela Keogh Clarke explains that the collaboration between Hepburn and Givenchy reached its pinnacle of sophisticated elegance with Holly Golightly's fashionable yet disheveled look, which led to a surge in demand for triple strand faux pearl necklaces, sleeveless dresses, and oversized dark sunglasses that persists even today.

While Givenchy and Audrey Hepburn had successful collaborations in *Sabrina* (1954) and *Funny Face* (1957), it was *Breakfast at Tiffany's* that ultimately became their style masterpiece, revolutionizing the concept of chic in Hollywood. Holly's remarkably refined interpretation of the Greek Toga or Indian Sari, which she ingeniously crafted using an ancient yet splendid curtain, rivals Aphrodite's elegance. The film's most iconic moment occurs within the first 30 seconds, when Holly Golightly is observed stepping out of a taxi in an elegant, floor-length black dress. She is simultaneously holding a Danish pastry in one hand and a cup of coffee in the other. Out of the two black dresses, only one is exclusively crafted by Givenchy for the film. The original design was deemed excessively 'revealing' by Paramount Pictures. Edith Head proposed transitioning to the current iteration of a gown that extends all the way to the floor. The dress was accessorized with Oliver GoldSmith sunglasses, long black gloves, and Robert Scemama pearls, which draw attention to the frock's neckline. Hence, the overall appearance was a collaborative effort between the two designers. The dress exuded exceptional magnificence and significantly contributed to the portrayal of Holly Golightly's persona.

5. The novel "Jane Eyre" was released in 1847, although the exact timeframe of the plot remains somewhat ambiguous. The majority of cinematic adaptations often situate the narrative either in the same decade as the book's publication, specifically the 1840s, or slightly earlier in the 1830s. The movie wonderfully captures the silhouette of the 1830s. Mrs. Reed, Jane's aunt, dons a brown dress adorned with exquisite, voluminous sleeves. The horizontal neckline and ruched detail on the front of her dress are mutually enhancing. This dress bears a striking resemblance to a particular purple dress depicted in a fashion plate found within a magazine from the 1830s. During the 19th century, it was customary for individuals to adorn themselves with jewelry that incorporated or was crafted from the hair of their deceased loved ones. It is presumed that Mrs. Reed is donning a black locket, potentially a mourning locket, due to her widowhood. Young Jane's attire is less trendy. Her cousins wear voluminous skirts that are enhanced with multiple layers of petticoats, accompanied with oversized sleeves. Jane's fashion is not emphasized since Mrs. Reed intentionally avoids providing her least favored niece with the most stylish garments.

6. Virginia Woolf skillfully incorporated her passion for fashion into her body of work, which encompassed novels, short stories, diary entries, and articles for *Vogue*. Fashion enables her to articulate two significant concepts: the female perspective and the progression of time. During the initial decades of the 20th century, fashion was predominantly perceived as a domain exclusively appealing to women, encompassing activities such as clothing selection, garment production, shopping, and engagement with fashion publications. The modernist authors frequently employed fashion's perpetual fluctuations as a compelling

metaphor for the passage of time. Woolf was fascinated by what she referred to as 'frock consciousness,' and the idea that clothing has the ability to influence our emotions.

Orlando is a British poet of noble lineage who lived from the 16th century until 1928, the same year in which Woolf released the book. Orlando's character naively time-travels in their sleep, waking up in a different century each time, and acquiring a new clothing that reflects the fashion of that specific day. Orlando consistently changes his attire, wearing extravagant clothing and fancy shoes to meet Elizabeth I, dressing in cloaks and robes as Charles I's ambassador to Turkey, adjusting the draperies of the skirts on a boat back to Georgian London, purchasing Victorian crinolines, and ultimately switching into whipcord breeches and a leather jacket.

Sasha is depicted as an exceedingly alluring character, with a gender that is quite ambiguous. Orlando characterizes the individual as 'the individual, regardless of their name or gender', attributing the biographer's uncertainty about their gender. The loose tunic trousers concealed the individual's gender, arousing a great deal of curiosity. Examining her attire to ascertain her gender underscores the notion that clothing serves as a representation of underlying aspects. Regardless of Sasha's androgynous appearance, Orlando is deeply infatuated with her, highlighting Woolf's assertion that an individual's worth should be evaluated based on their inherent qualities rather than the gender they choose to present themselves as.

Upon Orlando's return to England, he anticipates meeting the Archduchess Harriet. However, he is instead introduced to a towering person dressed in black, who goes by the name of Archduke Harry. Although both characters experience a transition in gender roles, they energetically and naturally engage in a ten-minute performance as both a man and a woman upon reuniting. This implies that the attire that modifies their gender does not determine their identity. When their garments are placed on the fender, individuals are permitted to express their authentic identities. Woolf asserts that clothing often serves as the sole indicator of gender, while the true essence of an individual's gender lies under the surface, contradicting the outward appearance. This highlights how clothing symbolizes the malleability of gender.

Findings

Just as a designer may engage our senses, a proficient writer can craft characters that strongly resonate with our cognitive faculties, compelling and fascinating us. They metamorphose into characters that we create, dress, and envision in our imaginations, or enduring personalities arise with vibrant excitement within our consciousness and imagination autonomously. These iconic characters have served as a source of inspiration for numerous imaginative individuals and have withstood the test of time to retain their status as true masterpieces. Hence, there exists a profound and intrinsic correlation between literature and fashion. The portrayal of attire in literature can reveal the prevailing styles and designs of the times. The degree of snugness or looseness in clothing silhouettes, the measurement of skirts, the inclusion of pleats, and the utilization of corsets all play a crucial role in comprehending the character under scrutiny. Authors often depict the hues and designs that were fashionable during a specific era. This can offer valuable understanding into the color schemes and design patterns that were considered fashionable throughout that period. Literature typically depicts classic accessories alongside clothing. These items may encompass jewelry, headwear, gloves, shoes, as well as parasols and fans. These accessories are essential for understanding the fashion of a certain era in its whole. Written works often portray not only clothing, but also haircuts and grooming routines. These literary works provide

documentation of changes in hairstyles, including the adoption of wigs and variations in hair length and style. Tracing the evolution of fashion can be accomplished by closely examining literature from different time periods.

Thus the attire of a character provides valuable insights into numerous facets of their existence. Readers can assume several aspects about a character based on their attire:

1. Clothing serves as a reflection of an individual's personality. Readers can understand a character's style and personality based on their choice of attire.
2. Clothing is indicative of a character's affluence. If the protagonist of a novel hails from a lower socioeconomic class, it is highly probable that they will opt for a casual attire such as a t-shirt and jeans, rather than donning extravagant and costly garments. Similar to real life, clothing serves as a visible representation of one's social standing and financial prosperity.
3. Clothing reflects a character's perspective on the world. Apparel can serve as a manifestation of a character's perspectives on the world. Wearing a sleeveless graphic t-shirt suggests a complete disregard for the potential offense it may cause to others. Meanwhile, a character donning a formal button-down shirt paired with a single-breasted plaid blazer appears to have a traditional and classic style.
4. Clothing serves as an indicator of the specific time and location in which a character is situated. During the world building phase, it is crucial to ensure utmost precision on the place and time period of your book. This principle is not limited to historical fiction, but rather it is applicable to all genres of writing. When creating a fight scenario that takes place during the Revolutionary War, it may be necessary to research the specific characteristics and details of britches and pantaloons. Merely by altering the outfit depiction, the author can establish a significant contrast between these two accounts of conflict.

Conclusions and Recommendations

It is significant that dress and fashion serves as a potent instrument in the art of narrative. It has the ability to communicate a character's personality, social standing, convictions, or even their progression over the narrative. The selection of attire, including its fashion, hues, size, and accompanying embellishments, might convey significant information about a persona without necessitating explicit explanations. The presence of a character dressed in a well-fitted suit may indicate professionalism and authority, whilst an individual wearing informal, bohemian clothing could reflect a relaxed and artistic disposition. It is the favored method of conveying the personality traits of characters through their attire.

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*Case Study of the Use of the Interactive Annotation Software Perusall With
Mixed-Proficiency EFL Japanese Students*

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Abstract

This study reports on the use of Perusall in a basic university English course in order to understand how such software facilitates second language acquisition, particularly in mixed-proficiency language groups. This study focuses on the effect of text choice on student performance. The question centers on how the reading difficulty of a particular text affects the type and quantity of responses produced. Sixty students enrolled in a freshman level English course used Perusall over the course of a year to read and annotate English media assignments. The students created questions, comments and responses to other students. The student input was taken and categorized based on the reading level of the assignments cross-referenced with the type and length of annotations produced. The reading content affected the type of student responses; longer articles tended to elicit more questions, while shorter content would elicit more comments. This work shows that varying language prompts can meaningfully influence user interaction.

Keywords: TESOL, Reading, Perusall

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Introduction

This study reports on the use of Perusall, an interactive annotation software, in a basic university English course to understand how such software facilitates second language acquisition, particularly in mixed-proficiency language groups. This study focuses on the effect of text choice on student performance. The question centers on how the reading difficulty of a particular text affects the type and quantity of responses produced. This study contributes to the general understanding of second-language user performance in an online social learning environment. This work shows, as demonstrated in earlier research (Cecchinato et al. 2020, Tian 2020, Mark 2001), that a collaborative interactive environment such as *Perusall* facilitates peer-to-peer language learning support by successfully leveraging the collective language knowledge of students and making it accessible in an engaging way. The reading content did appear to affect the type of student responses; more difficult articles tended to elicit proportionately more questions, while shorter content would elicit more comments. This work shows that the nature of the language prompts can meaningfully influence the user interaction strategies.

Perusall and Student Interaction

Perusall facilitates classroom interaction by allowing students to watch or read media along with making annotations available for response from their peers. Perusall is an online social media annotation platform that incorporates an AI-based evaluation feature that assigns each student a grade based on interaction with the given media and quality of annotations produced in response to the text. Prior work shows that Perusall can effectively facilitate student interaction and feedback that allows them to better understand, analyze and critically evaluate at text (Cui and Wang 2023, Hanc et al. 2023, Porter 2022, Cecchinato and Foschi 2020, Tian 2020). With respect to the AI evaluation component, students have expressed concerns about the ability of AI to adequately evaluate their work and the potential of manipulating the system to inflate grades; however, one survey finds that students' confidence for the system increases when the instructor combines the AI evaluation process with instructor direct evaluation metrics (Cecchinato and Foschi 2020).

Text Difficulty and Student Performance

The current study centers on the use of Perusall by second language learners of English, especially with respect to increasing student interaction in English and collectivizing their efforts to comprehend a text largely independent of direct instructor guidance. The length of annotations created by students can serve as a measure of English interaction. The reading level of the text would be expected to meaningfully affect the length and type of the student responses. For instance, students can ask each other questions about a text, respond to such questions or even make comments about the text. Perhaps a more difficult text may encourage more back and forth student engagement to understand the text, or alternatively, students stymied by a difficult passage may annotate less.

Method and Results

Sixty students enrolled in a freshman level English course used Perusall over the course of a year to read and annotate four English media assignments. The students created questions, comments and responses to other students. The student input was taken and categorized

based on the reading level of the assignments cross-referenced with the type and length of annotations produced.

The four assignments consisted of three articles and one video with English subtitles. Table 1 below lists the material in order from the easiest to read to the most difficult reading, which has the lowest Flesch Reading Ease score as determined by Word.

Title	Author	Source	Flesch Reading Ease	Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level	Word count
I just don't handle stress well (stand-up comedy video/text)	Ron Funches	The Tonight Show w/ Jimmy Fallon (2020)	82.7	5.6	223
A son echoes his father's questions about identity in Japan	Richard Solomon	The Japan Times (2017)	48.6	10.3	1517
The Brilliance and Weirdness of ChatGPT	Kevin Roose	New York Times (2022)	48.5	11.7	1222
On "Exotic" Parenting	Bhakti Shringarpure	Huffington Post (2012)	47.2	11.6	1565

Table 1: Media assignments

The Flesch Reading Ease score was then tested for its correlation to the average number of words written per student and the proportion of questions to comments as shown in Table 2; both metrics serve as proxies for English engagement.

Title	Author	Flesch Reading Ease	Avg # of words	Avg # of annotations per student	Percentage of annotations questions
I just don't handle stress well (stand-up comedy video + text)	Ron Funches	82.7	144.8388	10.0555	26%
A son echoes his father's questions about identity in Japan	Richard Solomon	48.6	128.5234	9.02885	36%
The Brilliance and Weirdness of ChatGPT	Kevin Roose	48.5	119.6357	10.7299	30%
On "Exotic" Parenting	Bhakti Shringarpure	47.2	115.007	9.24815	33%

Table 2: Flesch Reading Ease & Annotation metrics

The results in Figure 1 below show that the average number of words written per student increases as the ease of reading the text increases. However, the average number of annotations produced per student does not correlate with the difficulty of a given text. The proportion of questions asked generally correlates with an increase in the reading difficulty of the texts as shown in Figure 2.

The length of responses increase with reading ease

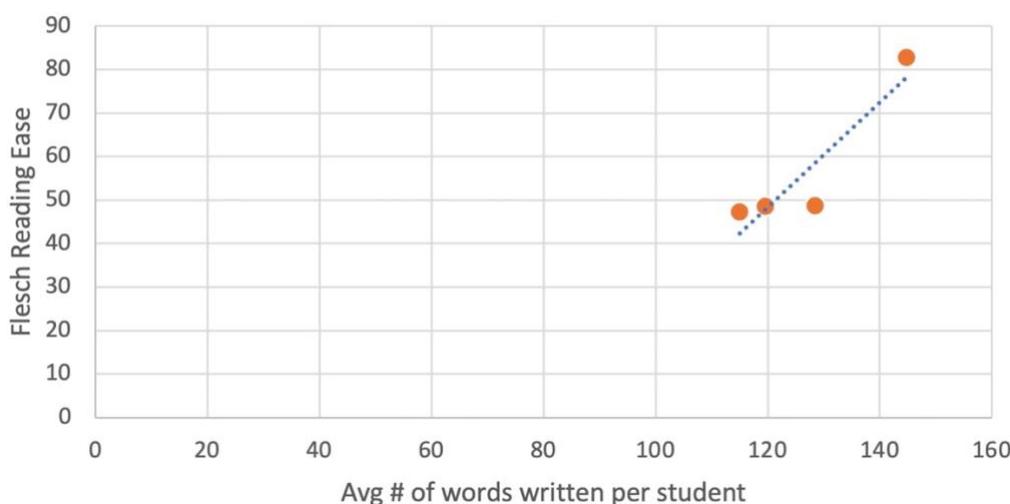


Figure 1: Reading ease correlation to response length

The proportion of questions increases with an increase in reading difficulty

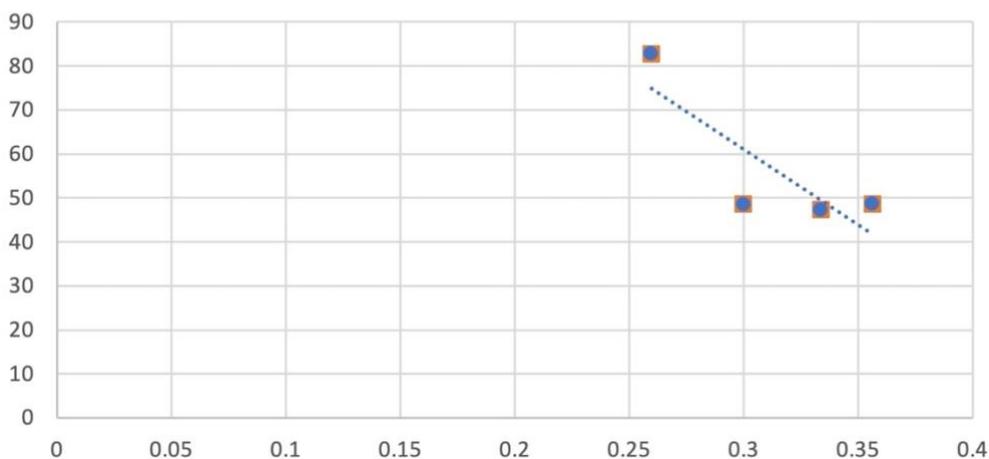


Figure 2: Reading ease correlation to proportion of questions

Conclusions

The effects of text difficulty on reader annotation creation comes as no surprise. The decrease in annotation length with respect to difficulty signals that the students simply tended to have less time to write in response to a difficult assignment. However, the increase in proportion of questions with respect to difficulty reflects the need for students to confer more to work out the meaning of parts of a given text. As pointed out by a conference attendee, the genre of a text served as another factor, as the entertainment-oriented Ron Funches’ stand-up comedy increased student engagement, confounding the influence of ease of text versus genre.

Ultimately, the results are rather inconclusive due to the limited date set. There are few data-points and the distribution of difficulty is very small, with only one real outlier with respect to ease of reading, the Ron Funches’ stand-up. A larger sample of responses and texts would facilitate a more robust result. Preliminarily we can say that the reading ease and

nature of the text will have some type of effect on the student production of annotations. Future research would include other metrics to compare such as student English proficiency and text engagement.

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*Exploring the Synergy Between Digital Illustration and AI:
An Artist's Insight*

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Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

Digital art has revolutionized the creative landscape by merging technology and artistic expression. With advancements in technology, the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in digital art has gained significant attention. This research paper explores the utilization of AI tools, particularly Dall-E (DE) and Midjourney (MJ), in the creative process of digital art. The artworks presented are part of a larger research endeavour focused on the concept of the "sublime void." By embracing AI as a creative tool, artists can push the boundaries of their artistic practice and explore the synergistic relationship between humans and technology. The integration of AI in art has not only enhanced creative expression but also enabled innovative techniques and mediums, fostering a new era of digital art. This paper delves into the impact of AI on the artistic process and highlights the transformative potential of AI-generated art in contemporary art practices. Through this exploration, the author aims to inspire further experimentation and discourse at the intersection of AI and digital art.

Keywords: Digital Art, AI, Creative Process, Dall-E, MidJourney

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Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as a transformative force across various fields, revolutionizing industries and pushing the boundaries of human capabilities. In the realm of digital art, AI tools have gained increasing attention for their potential to augment and challenge traditional artistic practices. By leveraging the power of machine learning algorithms, AI can generate novel and unexpected artistic outputs, prompting artists to explore new creative frontiers.

This research endeavours to investigate the utilization of AI tools in the creative process of digital art, specifically focusing on the integration of two prominent AI models: DE and MJ. The objective is to delve into the impact of these AI tools on the creation of artworks centred around the concept of the "sublime void," a concept that has historically captivated artists with its elicitation of awe and transcendence. Merging AI's capabilities with the concept of the sublime, we are exploring new artistic expressions of the vast and ineffable.

Previously focusing on traditional mediums like drawing and painting, the author's primary mode of expression is now digital art—a shift driven by a fascination with burgeoning technologies, especially those emerging from computer science. Engaging with AI tools is a natural progression, seeking to discern their potential contribution to artistic endeavours. Initially, there was apprehension about losing artistic control, especially regarding the final composition, due to a limited understanding of these tools—believing the process was as simple as inputting text and receiving an image with no further input. This assumption proved to be a narrow preconception.

After some experimentation with different tools – table 1 shows all the tools that were analysed – the potential of AI to assist in the creative process became apparent.

The research design encompasses the creation of a series of artworks, followed by an analysis of the artistic process and outcomes. This methodology allowed the examination of the potential of AI to inspire, guide, and transform artistic practice, shedding light on the evolving relationship between human creativity and machine intelligence.

1. Digital Art and AI

Digital art has opened up new avenues of creativity and artistic expression with the integration of technology and art. With the advancement of technology, digital art has evolved, and the use of technology to create contemporary art is no longer seen as controversial (Jeon et al., 2019). The use of creative autonomous agents also has cultural and social implications for the way we experience art as creators and audiences (Daniele & Song, 2019). Recently, there has been a lot of discussion around art made with AI and specialized online and offline press have published articles about it over the past few years (Daniele & Song, 2019). The narrative around AI and art is changing rapidly, as evidenced by Christie's auction house selling an art piece allegedly made by AI in October 2018 (Christie's 2023, 2018).

AI has been utilized in various forms of computer art, resulting in impressive outcomes and gaining attention from galleries globally (Boden, 2009). Artists have begun to use artificial intelligence as a tool for creative expression, allowing them to narrate the hybrid relationship between humans and technology through new virtual experiences and digital art forms

(Giugliano & Laudante, 2020). The value of AI-generated art has also been recognized, with some considering it the result of a synergy between the human artist and the technology. The benefits of AI in digital art extend beyond creative expression and into the market, where it has facilitated the development of new techniques such as 3D printing, animation, and UX design, resulting in a more efficient and cost-effective creative process (Cherniyavskiy et al., 2022). Furthermore, research methods that utilize AI have allowed for new approaches to conceptualizing the relationship between art and technology (Andrade, 2022). The synergy between AI and art has led to the creation of innovative digital art forms that enrich the artistic landscape and provide opportunities for artists to experiment with new techniques and mediums (Ibrus et al., 2022). Additionally, AI technologies have been employed to assist human efforts, providing several techniques that have direct benefits in various fields including the arts. As a result, developing creative synergy between the arts and informatics has become increasingly significant (Hutton et al., 2023).

Table 1- The AI tools tested by the author.

AI tools	Source	Input
Craiyon	https://www.craiyon.com	Text-to-image
Dall-E	https://labs.openai.com	text-to-image
Deep Dream Generator	https://deepdreamgenerator.com	Text-to-image, image-to-image, choose style
DeepAI	https://deepai.org	text-to-image, choose style
Fotor	https://www.fotor.com/features/ai-art-generator	Text-to-image, image-to-image.
Hotpot	https://hotpot.ai	text-to-image, other useful tools
MidJourney	https://www.midjourney.com	Text-to-image, choose style, add edits
NightCafe	https://nightcafe.studio	text-to-image, choose style and algorithm
RunwayML	https://runwayml.com	Text-to-image, image-to-image, useful tools, video, 3d and more.
Stable Diffusion	https://stablediffusionweb.com	Text-to-image
StarryAI	https://starryai.com	Text-to-image, image-to-image, choose style

2. The Creative Process – Identification of Situations to Interfere With AI Tools

The work presented here is part of a comprehensive investigation into the “sublime void”, the author has been researching the alliance between sublime and void since 2012. In examining the interplay between the sublime and the void, the study compares interpretations from Eastern and Western perspectives, noting that Eastern views often align more closely with the sublime. Insights from this analysis will inform the prompt-writing section later in the paper.

Marcos et al. (2009) outlined a creative process for digital art (see Figure 1), which the author adapts for her use. Inside the creative process is a random process in the Artifact Design. For this random process, the artist needed to implement something that would help save some time. The random process is a way to choose random parts of the Artifact, like colour, shapes, number of colours used, and number of shapes used, all these elements have to be chosen from a list made in a previous phase.

This is a simple task, but it was made by hand, sometimes with little papers inside a bag or with dice, a very archaic process, was easy to do but a little time-consuming. So this was the first thing to change.

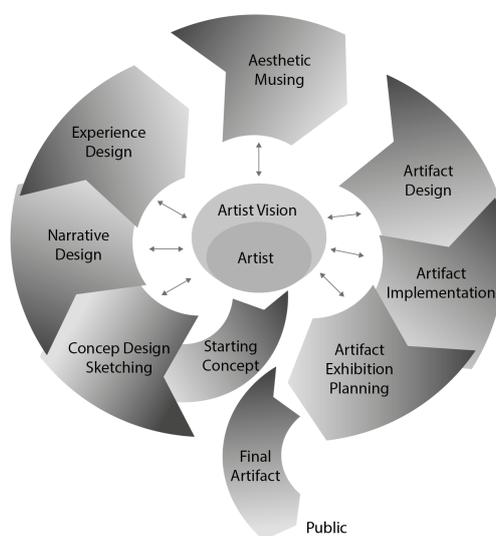


Figure 1- The Creative Process (Marcos et al., 2009)

The other phases the author identified as a possibility to be intervene were the Concept Design and the Artifact Design. In these phases, it could be faster to have a way to preview ideas. When, in search for a faster way, it's not to finish the task faster, it's to not interrupt the ideation process, for example, in the Artifact Design if thinking in a blue square on a yellow background with ten white lines above, the artist needs to make this drawing fast to not lose the chain of ideas; these drawings are, of course, easy and relatively fast, but there are more complex compositions and if the artist spends only one minute, or less, to write a prompt and preview the idea, it's flowing. When the artist is drawing, she spends more than one minute for sure.

After analysing all the phases, a decision was made to not interfere in any other phase because it was very important to not lose the control of final composition.

2.1 The Random Process

In exploring the capacity for AI to make random artistic selections, a trial with ChatGPT 3.5 revealed a tendency to choose the first option presented without additional context. The AI explained that it defaults to the first choice in the absence of more detailed instructions. Realizing the need for a truly random selection process, without the burden of crafting new prompts each time, the author sought a programming solution.

Below is the simple python program presented as the solution:

```
import random
shapes = ['circle', 'square', 'triangle']
colors = ['red', 'green', 'blue']
gradients = ['solid', 'horizontal', 'vertical']
def choose_shape_and_color():
    chosen_shape = random.choice(shapes)
    chosen_color = random.choice(colors)
    chosen_gradient = random.choice(gradients)
    return (chosen_shape, chosen_color, chosen_gradient)
print(choose_shape_and_color())
```

The resulting Python script effectively automated the random selection process, drawing on pre-defined lists of shapes, colors, and gradients. The simplicity of the program allowed for quick changes and rapid generation of new sets of parameters with just a keystroke. Although suggestions to enhance the visual aspect of the program were offered, the priority was a streamlined and swift solution.

2.2 Previewing Process

The previewing phase aimed to preserve the creative flow while maintaining control over the final composition. The selection of tools—Dall-E (DE) and Midjourney (MJ)—was based on accessibility, ease of use, and popularity to ensure longevity and support.

Second: training. Mastery in prompt writing required training, which involved using the "img2prompt" tool to reverse-engineer prompts from existing images. This helped in understanding the type of prompts that could generate desired outcomes.

After this training the next step was to try in booth DE and MJ, Trials with both DE and MJ were conducted to ascertain the best fit for enhancing the artwork without compromising artistic integrity.

3. Testing

The testing occurred on three different days, one for each group at the same time of the day, to mirror the author's normal schedule, avoiding any potential bias from deviations. This is the reason the author decided not to do it all in one day because she typically creates one to two series a day, with each series comprising three to five pieces.

3.1 The Control Group

The control group was made as usual, using the automated process because it kind of became normal, and it's not too intrusive or mandatory, was not expecting to see big differences with it, and can't quantify them. Normally only use the program at the beginning of a series or if the series is not working, the artist would come back for another set of parameters. These parameters are not restrictive, for example, got circle, lines, yellow and no gradient (the code has been changed), as one can see in Figure 4 CGS1#1 a square was also used, and for the

other works of the series the artist is free to add or remove elements and disrespected the no gradient “rule”. For this group, two series have been made with a total of eight works (Figures 2 and 3).



Figure 2- Control group S1#1-5

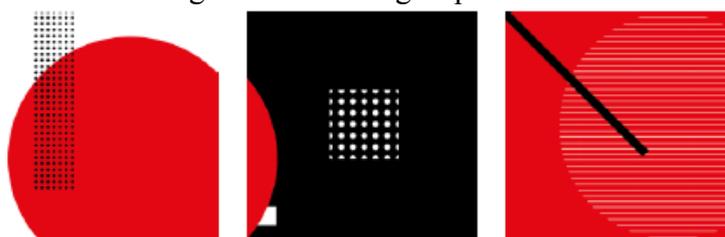


Figure 3- Control group S2#1-3

3.2 Preparations for Dall-E and MidJourney

Prior to using DE and MJ, prompts were fine-tuned using "img2prompt" to align with the artist's style. After analysing the descriptions, there are always, for each description the colour, the shape and the styles/adjectives. Table 2 shows this generated prompt and they're marked with bold for the colours, italics for the shapes and underlined for the styles/adjectives. This was important to understand what the prompts would require. But immediately thought if this would make the search lookalike. Considering this, the prompts must be written carefully, with differences to avoid getting identical results, and no artist's names were used in the prompts. The concepts used in the prompts were sublime, void, bliss, Bindu, transcendent, etc.

Even though, in the work process, the artist never worries about producing a certain number of series/works in one day, it pursued the two series objective, but the number of elements for each series was not defined. So it started with the same set of elements for each series: S1: circle, lines, yellow and no gradient; S2: circle, dots, red, no gradient. Figures 4 and 5 present examples of images generated in DE and MJ.

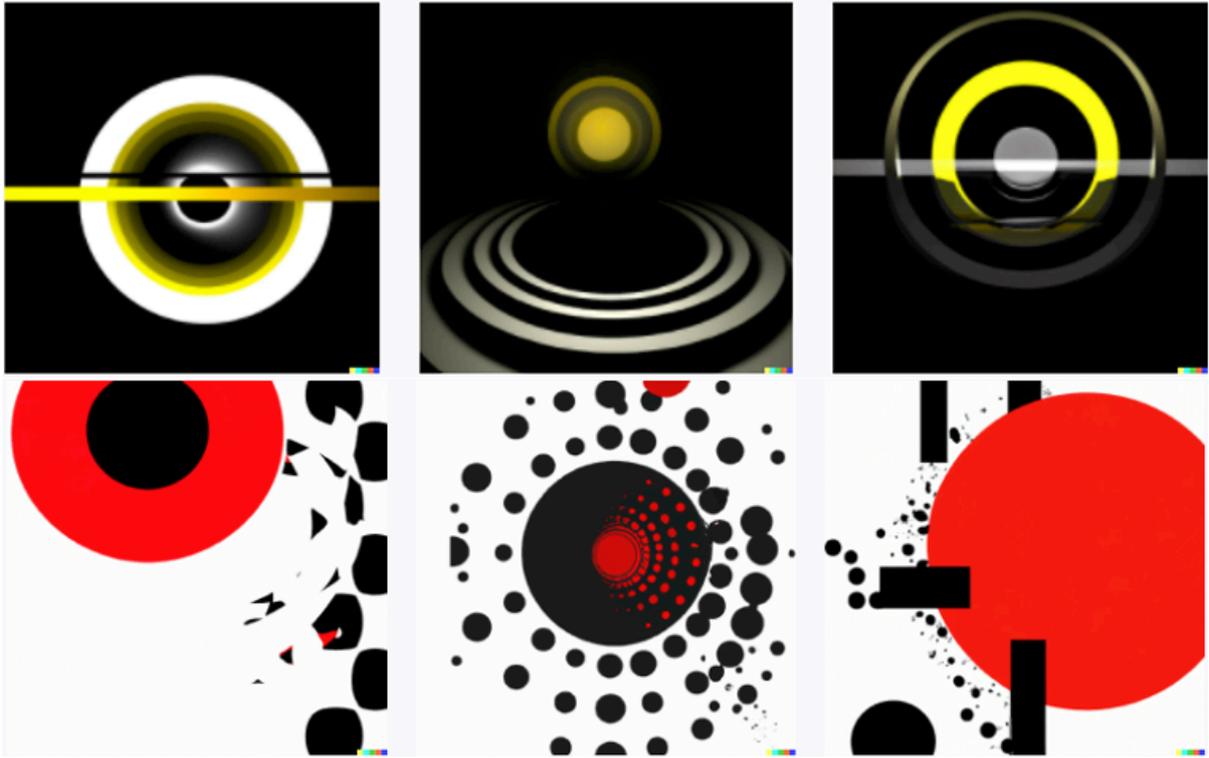


Figure 4- Images generated with Dall-E

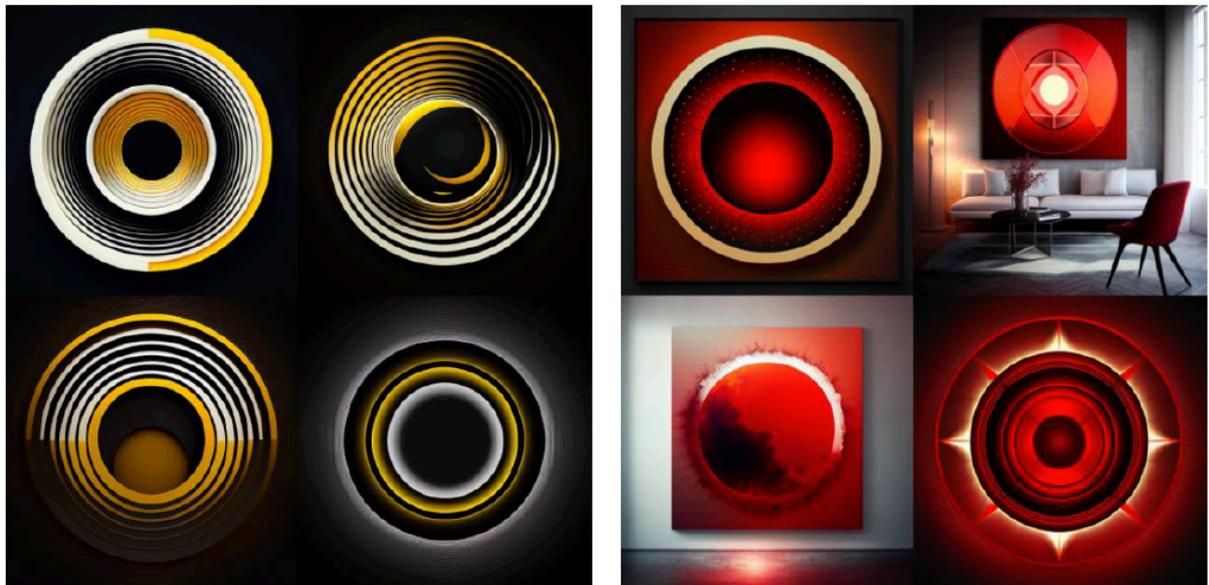


Figure 5- Images generated with MidJourney

Table 2- The descriptions generated from the control group illustrations.

Works	Prompt generated
S1#1	a black and white photo of a white ball , a <u>raytraced</u> image by <u>Ryoji Ikeda</u> , <u>polycount</u> , <u>precisionism</u> , <u>volumetric lighting</u> , <u>ray tracing</u> , <u>global illumination</u> ;
S1#2	a black and white photo with a yellow circle , an ultrafine detailed painting by <u>Sarah Morris</u> , <u>behance</u> , <u>bauhaus</u> , <u>quantum wavetracing</u> , <u>constructivism</u> , <u>chromatic</u> ;
S1#3	a yellow and black background with <i>circles</i> and <i>lines</i> , an ultrafine detailed painting by <u>Sarah Morris</u> , <u>behance</u> , <u>geometric abstract art</u> , <u>behance hd</u> , <u>quantum wavetracing</u> , <u>dynamic composition</u> ;
S1#4	a black and white triangle on a yellow background, a digital rendering by <u>Sarah Morris</u> , <u>behance</u> , <u>geometric abstract art</u> , <u>behance hd</u> , <u>quantum wavetracing</u> , <u>constructivism</u> ;
S1#5	a yellow and black abstract background with <i>circles</i> , a <u>digital rendering</u> by <u>Sarah Morris</u> , <u>behance</u> , <u>generative art</u> , <u>behance hd</u> , <u>dynamic composition</u> , <u>quantum wavetracing</u> ;
S2#1	a red circle with black dots on a white background, a <u>screenprint</u> by <u>Sarah Morris</u> , <u>behance</u> , <u>international typographic style</u> , <u>ultrafine detail</u> , <u>behance hd</u> , <u>constructivism</u> ;
S2#2	a red stop sign with white dots on a black background, a <u>wireframe diagram</u> by <u>Karl Gerstner</u> , <u>behance</u> , <u>international typographic style</u> , <u>logo</u> , <u>behance hd</u> , <u>ultrafine detail</u> ;
S2#3	a red apple with a black pencil in it, a <u>minimalist painting</u> by <u>Ryoji Ikeda</u> , <u>behance</u> , <u>bauhaus</u> , <u>ultrafine detail</u> , <u>angular</u> , <u>dynamic composition</u> ;

In striving for consistency in the experimental conditions, the artist replicated the use of a specific set of elements across all three days—a practice not typically followed. This is something that never happens, the author, can obtain similar sets, but never used, intentionally, the same set three times in a row.

This unusual repetition was intentional to discern any variations in the final artworks attributable to the AI tools.

The artworks resulting from the aid of Dall-E and Midjourney are showcased in Figures 6 to 9.

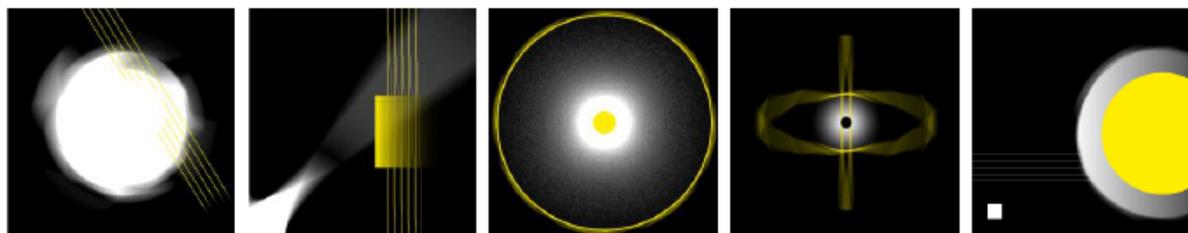


Figure 6- DE_S1#1-5

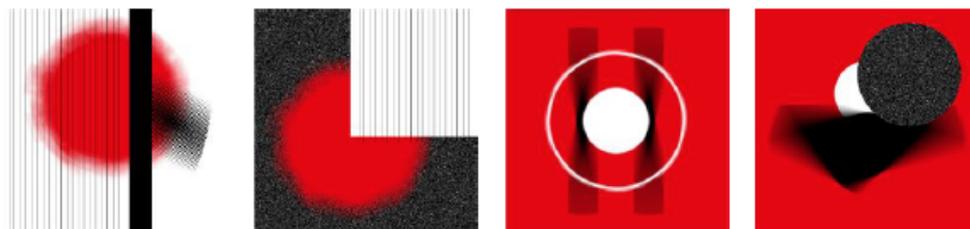


Figure 7- DE_S1#1-4

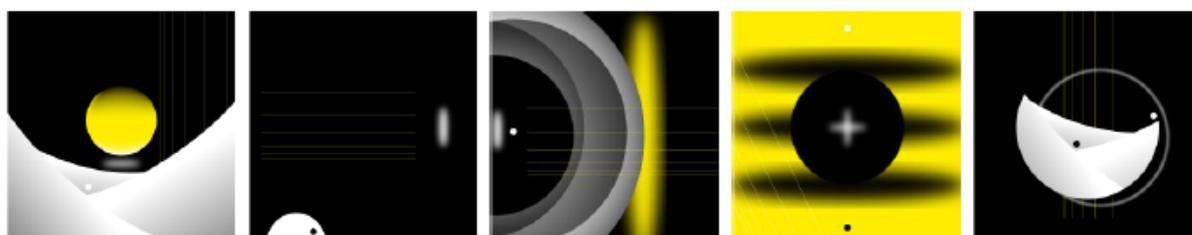


Figure 8- MJ_S1#1-5



Figure 9- MJ_S2#1-4

4. Conclusion

Both DE and MJ are free with some restrictions, DE gives fifteen credits by month, so you can generate only fifteen images by month and since April 2023 DE has stopped providing that for new accounts. MJ limit the number of images to 25 but when it's at almost full capacity it simply doesn't generate images, it warns us and asks for a return at another time and favours the subscribers. So, to not interrupt the process I bought credits to DE and subscribed to a month of MJ.

About the process, DE was better because won't be constantly interrupted by others' work, this is the biggest problem of MJ, understand it is good for collaboration, but should give the possibility of a private room to create alone without having to pay more.

The same happens with the organisation/dashboard in DE the works created are visible when creating new ones, that's very important to understand the evolution and to write better prompts.

In MJ the works are created in an App – Discord – and if you want to see previews works must go to the account on the MJ site.

As for the quality of images and prompt writing difficulties, they're equivalent, but the MJ images are closer to the author's visual preferences.

The big questions are: did this help the author make her work? And how? Is she going to keep using it? There isn't a yes or no answer, the author feels that sometimes, in concept research, she could preview some ideas and in a creative block (during Artifact Design) she could reach for these tools to help, but she will not include this as a regular step. About timesaving, yes, it truly saves time, but the author realised that she needs that time to think, she already was expecting that this wasn't going to be a real improvement, but the author is not exempt, she's used to working without DE/MJ, and might need to try more times this way, to get used to.

As for the quality of the final compositions, the author doesn't feel any differences maybe because they're made the same way as the others and no images or parts of images generated by DE and MJ were used. But without the help of these tools, the author can attest that she couldn't keep working in the same set of elements for three successive days, she would have been blocked.

The three groups – control, DE and MJ – encompassing two series each, appeared divided, as six series, but it's only two. The first one is one big series with fifteen works, and the second series – circle, dots, red, no gradient – has eleven works, the artist has never done series so numerous (Table 3 shows the number of works produced).

The author concludes that both DE and MJ aided series, were made faster, bigger and without creative blocks. No compromises were made in the final compositions, all the works are originals and made by the author.

Table 3- number of works produced

Set of elements	“circle, lines, yellow and no gradient”	“circle, dots, red, no gradient”
Control Group	5	3
Dall-E Group	5	4
MidJourney Group	5	4
Total	15	11

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The Human Traumas in Fazal Sheikh's Photography

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Abstract

Trauma is the physical injury, the human wound, or the emotional shock and pain caused by an extremely upsetting experience. Metaphorically we use the term to speak of natural disasters. Fazal Sheikh is the American photographer who saw these human wounds within the humanity, within the human face of the other while suffering. His unique glance towards otherness and the marginalized people through his documentary photography, gave a new perception both in photography and society. This aspect of trauma concerns Orthodox theology too in a way that pain becomes an opportunity for revelation, transformation, and holiness. Human's everyday wear is the one that awakens man to be creative. The man is invited to transform his pain to creativity, and the best way to be creative is the dynamics of love. Love becomes the only exodus for man to find a new perception of life. Fazal Sheikh's photographs are a revelation of humanity and love for humanity. This aesthetical way can awaken creatively the masses and transform the human consciousness. This paper is a synthesis of the photography and the aesthetical theology. It is an attempt to enlighten new ways to speak of the things that theology would like to say differently in today's contemporary world. It is deemed necessary to find new directions of expression of the theological terms in new grounds such as the photography.

Keywords: Portraits, Theology, Doctrine, Flash, Glance

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1. Introduction

“Supply is the traumas” is the title of the Greek poet Kiki’s Dimoula poem.¹ This short but comprehensive title makes sense of what this paper is going to deal with. We have two dynamic fields that can address this reality of human trauma: the Orthodox theology and aesthetics and, Fazal Sheikh’s documentary photography. Human trauma is connected to the emotional state, to personal experience. It is a universal experience that concerns the face of every person.

Orthodox theology and aesthetics is the field that studies the expression of the doctrine in every aesthetical result, in every form of art that can shape the same reality in different way. The doctrine cannot be limited in the terminology. The doctrine must go further to the everyday life. The aesthetical theology is the way that can reach the beauty of the holiness, the beauty of the incarnated Christ.² But what could we say about the function of the trauma in the Orthodox creed? Does Christ's paradigm reveal a new perception of the suffering? A holy model that can offer a new life attitude and a renewal of the way we see.

Documentary photography is a trace of truth, a piece of reality that can depict moments of life within life. It is not all about recording facts, but it is also about the personal glance of the photographer. It is his glance to the everyday life. Fazal Sheikh dedicated his life work to the human face in suffer. His portraits became symbols and social statement for the people in need, for the children’s voices, for women’s rights, for the marginalized, for the weak. Fazal Sheikh is a photographer with strong humanistic personality that transformed his values to photographic statement and aesthetical result at the same time. A life work that could be the vehicle to express honestly realities we to find theological terms and a common ground to enlighten it, to heal -as possible- the traumas.

2. The Trauma in Theology

All the creation has its traumas during its way to perfection. In this way to the perfection man must face the trauma of creation. The only way for somebody to compensate his trauma is to be close to God, the real source of life and creativity.³ God is the cause of any power and even more, God is the cause of every self-power as the actual cause over every created reality.⁴ The trauma is connected to human’s created nature. The only way for human to reverse this trauma is to be alike to God’s creativity, in the degree that this is possible because of his created nature. The passions that imprison man in slavery become a compass for him to find a new path to true life. Passions help man to seek perfection. Man’s free will is the one that can lead him to God.⁵

We can find the aspect of the human suffering being expressed in the Old Testament’s psalms. A representative example is the psalm number *six* which is an individual prayer:

¹ Kiki Dimoula. (2005) 2006. *Greenhouse grass*. 2nd ed. Athens: Ikaros.

² Chr. A. Stamoulis (2022). *Holy beauty, Prolegomena to an Orthodox Philokalic Aesthetics*. Cambridge: James Clarke & Co. p. 13

³ N. Matsoukas. (2009). *The problem of evil*. 3rd ed. Thessaloniki: Pournaras, pp. 186-187.

⁴ Dionysius the Areopagite, *Chapters, about the ecclesiastical hierarchy* 8, *About power, justice, salvation, redemption, and about inequality*, PG 3, 889-892.

⁵ N. Matsoukas (2014). *World, man, society according to Maximus the Confessor*. Athens: Gregory, p. 126.

¹To the Chief Musician. With stringed instruments. On an eight-stringed harp.

A Psalm of David.

²Lord, do not rebuke me in your anger
or discipline me in your wrath.

³Have mercy on me, Lord, for I am faint;
heal me, Lord, for my bones are in agony.

⁴My soul is in deep anguish.
How long, Lord, how long?

⁵Turn, Lord, and deliver me;
save me because of your unfailing love.

⁶Among the dead no one proclaims your name.
Who praises you from the grave?

⁷I am worn out from my groaning.
All night long I flood my bed with weeping
and drench my couch with tears.

⁸My eyes grow weak with sorrow;
they fail because of all my foes.

⁹Away from me, all you who do evil,
for the Lord has heard my weeping.

¹⁰The Lord has heard my cry for mercy;
the Lord accepts my prayer.

¹¹All my enemies will be overwhelmed with shame and anguish;
they will turn back and suddenly be put to shame.

In this psalm the man asks redemption from God, as result of the God's love. The believer narrates all his suffering that led him to the limit of non-existence and into a deathly situation. Illness, enemies, and the absence of God affects the believer emotionally (2). By suffering and deep pain until his bones, man asks from God for mercy (3). Man is unable to find his balance and feels lost in a chaos (3-5). The ill man feels very close to death and refers to life after death. It is a mention to Sheol, a mysterious, subterranean place where, according to Jewish tradition, all the dead were going after their death. This life was not pleasant for everyone because they were apart from the presence of God. Death is the end of the relationship with God (6). The ill believer is exhausted and weak, and he takes refuge in tears and repentance (7-8). In the next lyrics the believer finds courage and optimism, it seems like he is rebirthed. Maybe his prayers and repentance guided him to healing. He says that the Lord heard his prayers (9-10). The psalm closes with the certainty that God heard and accepted the honest prayer and all the enemies disappeared. The sin faded with the presence of God (11).⁶

In the New Testament the son of God came to the world to heal every wound in humanity. Jesus Christ is the Godman that suffered in real. From the beginning of His life, he was chased from Herod, his eloquent speech provoked the Pharisees and scribes while he objected every close and introverted system and policy of His time. Jesus Christ suffered, blooded, and tortured. His pain was real. His wounds were real. His traumas are real and a proof of his sacrificing love for humanity. Christ's sacrifice is a model love that can awaken the history and the societies. His loud voice was a scream of sacrifice, a scream for awakening, a scream for the great love that crucified Him:

⁶ See D. Kaimakis (2001). *I sing to my God*. Thessaloniki: Simbo, pp. 143-150.

³⁴ And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” (“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”).⁷

According to evangelist John, Jesus completed His mission:

³⁰ When he had received the drink, Jesus said, “It is finished.” With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.⁸

For theology and the believer trauma is an experience that is closely connected with life living.⁹ The open wounds that stop the continuity of the human skin, are filled with the grace of God. The emptiness fulfils with the presence of God, with the resurrected body of Christ that is glorified.¹⁰ This sacrifice of pain can be pedagogical for human, can be the arrow that can show him a new direction where the pain becomes a chance for renewal.¹¹ “The pain is the sensitizer of life” and if we avoid it, we might lose our liveness and the ability to feel.¹² A new meaning of life through difficulties, pain, tears, despair that can be transformed to a new life perception, to a new transformative beginning, to a new life being that is sensed by God’s memory.¹³ If the man does not give positive meaning to his suffer, he will continue to walk to the non-existence, to death, to the absolute nihil.

3. Capturing the Human Traumas

“The photographed body touches me with its own rays and not with a superadded light”¹⁴

The photographed body has its own light, a light that can be revealing without the flash of camera. Trauma can have a close conjunction to the terms chance and trace and photography can be its revealing place. Trauma can create a relationship between opposite terms such as inside-outside, self-other.¹⁵ The camera’s flash of light can reveal the reality behind the humans. The portrait can be the image of suffer, the image of pain, the image of truth, the image of human.

Fazal Sheikh (1965) is a humanist photographer. His photography embraced every unfamiliar face he met during his travels (Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, 1990–1994, Afghanistan, 1995–1998, Somalia, 2000–2002, Latin America (Mexico, Cuba, Brazil), 2001–2003, India, 2003–2013). The photographer of the displaced and marginalized people photographed with honesty and respect their traumas. His black and white portraits are the documentary fingerprints of his artistic and humanistic way. He has worked with human rights

⁷ Mk 15, 34

⁸ Jn 19, 30

⁹ O’Donnell, K. (2023). *Trauma Theology*. In: B. N. Wolfe et al., eds. St Andrews Encyclopaedia of Theology. University of St Andrews. Available at: <https://www.saet.ac.uk/Christianity/TraumaTheology> (Accessed 16 December 2023).

¹⁰ Father Charalampos Libyos Papadopoulos (2021). *Miracles made from traumas*. 8th ed. Athens: Armos, pp. 37-40

¹¹ It is of great interest the collective work about the trauma and theatre as therapy of trauma. See Joseph Vivilakis (2023). *Theatre-Trauma-Therapy*. Athens: Armos: “the personal pain is linked to collective trauma and is effectively transformed by social actors into a driving force for change”, p. 23.

¹² Father Filotheos Faros (2017). *Walk in good health*. Athens: Armos, p.29.

¹³ N. Matsoukas (2005). *Dogmatic and Symbolic Theology C*. Thessaloniki: Pournaras, p. 302.

¹⁴ R. Barthes (1979). *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, p. 81

¹⁵ Margaret Iversen. (2017). *Photography, Trace, and Trauma*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 3-5

organizations, and his work is known worldwide. He has published and exhibited his projects internationally in galleries and museums.

The *Human Archipelago* (2018) is a selection of his photographs that were taken in countries including Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Mexico, the Middle East, and the American Southwest, in dialogue with Teju Cole's texts. This project is a testimony of humanity. The portraits of the unknown faces enliven through these depictions of life while suffering because of political, racial, and religious division. In these pictures, names do not matter. The captions of the portraits are in the end of the book. This choice must not had been random. Every person, every face in suffer, is an ecumenical face the face of the otherness that man has just to simply recognize him by the sense of the common human nature.

Fazal Sheikh has taken pictures of abused children and women, pictures of old people in suffer, pictures of humanity that seeks for a shelter. The photographer focuses on their glances. All of them are real, all of them speak without voice. The photograph becomes evidence of truth and a revelation of the weak, of the people of the margin. If we see these faces changing the one to another fast, the perception that will remain to us is the face of humanity. We will not be able to remember a specific face, but the common photographic result: the black and white that can balance death and life to the resurrection of the photograph.¹⁶ A piece of history that is documented to eternity as a social statement that can awaken the mases. The trauma that can be healed is if man change his perception of life and realize the sense of the common ground, the gift of life that -although bleeding- is remains on the move.¹⁷



Figure 1. Abshiro Aden Mohammed, women's leader, Somali refugee camp, Degahaley, Kenya, 2000

¹⁶ R. Barthes. (1979). *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, p. 82. See also David Levi Strauss. (2020). *Photography and Belief*. New York: David Zwirner Books. p.35: "The essence of photography is the certain belief that its referent had really existed, the "that-has-been"".

¹⁷ Teju Cole, Fazal Sheikh. (2018). *Human Archipelago*, Göttingen: Steidl, p. 64.



Figure 2. Bibi Mah, Afghan refugee village, Khairabad, North Pakistan, 1998

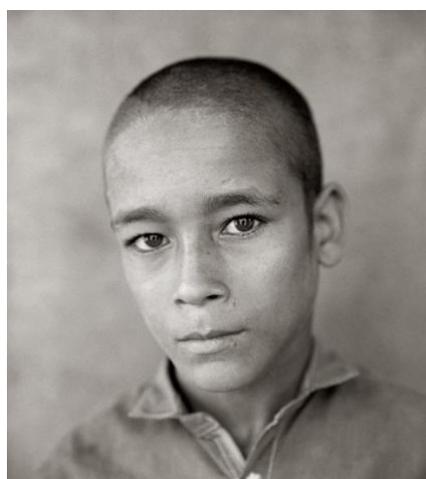


Figure 3. Muradi, Afghan refugee village, Nasir Bagh, North West Frontier Province, Pakistan, 1996



Figure 4. Simran, homeless shelter, Delhi, India 2008



Figure 5. Rekha, Shakti Vahini shelter for trafficked girls, Haryana, India, 2008

4. The Trauma as a Chance for Transformation

The common ground of the two fields, theology and Fazal Sheikh's photography is the transformative, actual, sacrificial love for the other. The trauma becomes a chance for man to fill it with love and grace. According to the holy fathers the human is dressed up with Christ's glory, the holy beauty that embraces all creation thanks to God's mercy and love for human.¹⁸ There is no such perfection of love if it is not wounded. Love transforms man and this love enables him to see the energies of God and experience new realities. The wound cause pain if man only see it by this way, if he only sees the emptiness. But if man fills this emptiness he will delight with life and grace. Every love is sacrificial and carries a cross, a cross that can change the things we know and transform them to new realities.¹⁹

Fazal Sheikh's photos embrace every unfamiliar reality of foreigner people and foreigner lands. The unfamiliar comes closer and the eyes of the xenos can meet every human glance. Teju Cole uses a philosophical reference:

"I perceive something. I feel something. I imagine something. I want something. I sense something. I think something. The life of a human being does not consist merely of all this and its like. All this and its like is the basis of the realm of It. But the realm of You has another basis."²⁰

The other becomes the realm of our reality. A realm that can fit the sense, the imagination, the expectation, the human thoughts. Everything comes back transformed with new life-depictions.

¹⁸ John Chrysostom, *Discourse 25*, PG 60, 198. See also Chr. A. Stamoulis. (2022). *Holy beauty, Prolegomena to an Orthodox Philokalic Aesthetics*. Cambridge: James Clarke & Co. p. 110: "The clothing of the naked human being is Christ himself. When the faithful are clothed not in 'natural' apparel, which is the 'property of irrational beings', nor, of 'preoccupation' and 'concern', but in Christ himself. They are clothed in the beauty that is holy, which in their own flesh has abrogated the consequences of the fall of human nature, which are corruption and death, and has rendered it free of every bond of sin".

¹⁹ Father Charalampos Libyos Papadopoulos. (2021). *Miracles made from traumas*. 8th ed. Athens: Armos, pp. 37-39.

²⁰ Martin Buber. (2002). "I and Thou" in *The Martin Buber Reader: Essential writings*. Basinstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 183. See also *Human Archipelago* (2018). p. 139.

The face of the Other is the face of God, the care of the body of the Other is sacred. At the opposite end of the scale to that is torture, which has everything to do with humiliation and almost nothing to do with collecting information.²¹

In every human face we should recognize God. Every torture reminds to humans the sanctity of the body. The trauma is the human gap that -although it is not obvious- it will be revealed from the photography evidence. Photography can be the social comment for a change and transformation from the documentary depiction to the aesthetical result and -finally- to the transformation. The common transformative ground of love to theology and photography, the love for the other, the love for all wounded humanity that does not exclude nobody.

This transformation is a transformation to the standards of the transformed Christ. It is a personal meeting of the man with Christ. Christ's resurrected body resurrects all the creation, and everything is glorified with His transformative glory of the eschaton.²²

5. Conclusions

During our life journey we fall, and we rise, we get traumatized, we bleed, and sometimes our wounds leave scars. But the scars can be a sign, a sign that can reveal new ways to walk. The theme of human metamorphosis is encountered both in theology and Fazal Sheikh's photography.

In theology the human trauma appears in the Old Testament's psalms as a prayer and as part of human's everyday life. It is about a sad moment in man's life. It is a reality of despair and non-existence, away from the source of life-God. In the New Testament Christ is the great example of suffering and pain that transformed for all the humanity.

In Fazal Sheikh's photography the value of the human face is obvious and clear. The human trauma becomes a photographical, aesthetical, and social statement for a change of glance. The repeat of the portraits underlines the value of the ecumenical human face that suffers in anonymity, on the margins.

Traumas are pieces of our lives that leave space to the uncertainties, leave space to fit the miracle of transformation and love. The flash of light from the camera resembles with the ray of light that every human being can reveal. It is the opportunity for metamorphosis and the hope for new meanings through the traumas. Traumas remind us of what Kiki Dimoula says in her poem:

Uncertainly live.
Honor your origins.

Understand, we come from one
transitory uncertainty of death.²³

Trauma can be the emblem of a new human face that has no certainties and seeks the daily miracle.

²¹ Teju Cole, Fazal Sheikh. (2018). *Human Archipelago*, Göttingen: Steidl, p. 178.

²² Stavros Giagazoglou (2023). *Theology and modernity*. Athens: Armos. pp. 492-493.

²³ Kiki Dimoula. (2005) 2006. *Greenhouse grass*. 2nd ed. Athens: Ikaros.

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***Minors' Engagement in Health-Based Programs:
Insights From UNICEF Lesotho's HIV-Nutrition Intervention***

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Abstract

This paper explores strategies to enhance minors' understanding of program participation, ensuring their active involvement from the program's inception through its completion, emphasizing the crucial role of sustainability for long-term change. Drawing insights from UNICEF Lesotho's three-year HIV-nutrition intervention (2019-2022) that spanned all 10 districts and 69 community councils, the project championed the health and nutrition of women and children, especially those affected by HIV/AIDS. This paper critically analyses minors' engagement, participation, and decision-making, highlighting both challenges and opportunities for active youth involvement in health-based initiatives. Included in the analysis, we will delve into the specifics of applying gender lenses and fostering inclusion, providing an in-depth examination of these crucial elements to ensure complete, transparent, and equitable participation. Results indicate that children often display passive to non-participation in several phases of the project cycle. While they are participants in the intervention, and they were consulted for their experiences and perspectives, their involvement did not include other key components of the program, neither did they have any active role in decision making. Another striking observation is the frequent absence of genuine inclusion, and while gender lenses are sometimes applied, it's predominantly limited to data disaggregation, rather than a comprehensive gender and inclusion analysis. By synthesizing these findings, lessons learned, this paper aims to offer robust recommendations, guiding program designers towards more inclusive, gender-sensitive, and child-centric educational experiences. We call stakeholders to engage and collaboratively pave the way for enhanced program participation and completion by our young learners.

Keywords: Minors' Engagement, Gender Lenses, Health-Based Initiatives, Program Sustainability, Inclusive Participation

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Introduction

Lesotho faces a multitude of systemic challenges that impede its progress across various sectors (Mairos Ferreira & Muthengi, 2023; Mairos Ferreira *et al.*, 2023; Bester, 2022; Kali, 2018). Geographically, the mountainous terrain presents significant logistical hurdles, hampering the delivery of services and goods, which is particularly acute in rural areas. Economically, the country grapples with high levels of poverty and unemployment, which exacerbate social issues such as education and access to healthcare (Stamatakis *et al.*, 2022; IMF, 2022; Leenknecht *et al.*, 2021). Politically, the need for stable governance and effective policy implementation is critical to catalysing development and ensuring equitable resource distribution. Amid these systemic challenges, the women and girls of Lesotho bear a disproportionate burden, with societal and structural inequities further limiting their access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities (The World Bank, 2023a, 2023b; Hemat *et al.*, 2022; Paramaiah *et al.*, 2020). These core challenges create a complex web that requires comprehensive strategies and resilient solutions to navigate toward sustainable growth and stability (UN Women, 2023; UNAIDS, 2023, 2022; UN Lesotho, 2023; Government of Lesotho, 2023a, 2023b).

In the health domain, Lesotho confronts several pressing issues that demand immediate attention. The healthcare system is burdened by a shortage of skilled health professionals, inadequate infrastructure, and limited resources, which are further strained by a high disease burden. Communicable diseases, particularly HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, place a heavy load on health services, while non-communicable diseases are on the rise, creating a double burden. Access to essential medicines and health technologies is inconsistent, often leading to gaps in treatment and preventative care. In addition, there is a critical need for stronger health information systems to guide evidence-based decision-making and improve the delivery of healthcare services across the country (iQvia, 2023; Mairos Ferreira & Muthengi, 2023; Bester, 2022). HIV/AIDS presents a profound challenge for the health sector in Lesotho, with a prevalence rate that is among the highest in the world (Schwitters *et al.*, 2022). This epidemic has far-reaching implications, not only impacting the health of individuals but also exerting a heavy social and economic toll. The most productive members of society are often those most affected, leading to a reduction in the labour force and an increase in the number of children orphaned by the disease. Despite significant efforts to ramp up prevention, testing, and treatment initiatives, the nation still faces hurdles in achieving comprehensive care coverage. Retention in treatment programs and ensuring consistent access to antiretroviral therapy remain critical issues that the healthcare system must address. Lesotho continues to strive toward curbing the spread of HIV and mitigating its impact through enhanced public health strategies and international partnerships (iQvia, 2023; Mairos Ferreira & Muthengi, 2023; Mairos Ferreira *et al.*, 2023; Schwitters *et al.*, 2022).

Nutrition in Lesotho is another critical health issue that intersects with numerous aspects of well-being and disease management, including the effectiveness of HIV treatment (UNICEF USA, 2023; Mairos Ferreira, 2023; Mairos Ferreira *et al.*, 2023). Chronic malnutrition and food insecurity hinder the physical and cognitive development of children, while also compromising the immune systems of adults, making them more susceptible to infections and less responsive to medical treatments (Gaston *et al.*, 2022). The country's highlands, with their harsh climates and difficult farming conditions, exacerbate the challenge of ensuring adequate food supply (ReliefWeb, 2023). The government and non-governmental organizations are working to enhance food security through sustainable agriculture practices, nutritional education, and social support programs (FAO & UNICEF, 2019).

As the country confronts high rates of HIV/AIDS and struggles with malnutrition, the inclusion of youth in health initiatives is essential. By actively participating in such programs, minors become more than just recipients of aid; they transform into agents of change within their families and communities. Empowering the younger generation through education and participatory activities fosters a deeper understanding of health and nutrition, which is critical for creating sustainable habits and interventions. Moreover, when minors are engaged in decision-making processes, programs can be tailored to address their specific needs and circumstances, resulting in more effective and impactful outcomes. Furthermore, the engagement of minors in health and nutrition programs is a strategic investment in Lesotho's long-term resilience. The knowledge and behaviours instilled in youth have the potential to ripple through generations, altering the trajectory of the nation's health landscape. As minors learn to navigate the challenges of HIV/AIDS and malnutrition, they lay the groundwork for a healthier population, capable of contributing to economic stability and development. In addition, involving minors can help break the cycle of poverty and disease by equipping them with the tools to make informed choices about their health and well-being. Lesotho's efforts to involve minors in these critical areas are not only an ethical mandate but a practical approach to ensuring that the next generation is better prepared to lead the country towards prosperity and health.

This study delves into the development and implementation of strategies aimed at bolstering minors' comprehension and active participation in health programs, underpinning the importance of sustainable engagement for enduring impact. It draws from the extensive experience of UNICEF Lesotho's three-year HIV-nutrition intervention (2019-2022), a project that reached across all 10 districts and 69 community councils to advocate for the health and nutrition of women and children, with a particular focus on those impacted by HIV/AIDS (iQvia, 2023). This paper offers a critical analysis of minors' involvement in terms of engagement, participatory dynamics, and their capacity for decision-making within such health-centric initiatives. It scrutinizes the extent to which gender-sensitive approaches are integrated and inclusion is achieved, aiming for a comprehensive understanding of these essential factors in fostering full, transparent, and fair participation. Through this lens, the paper interrogates the current state of minor engagement, setting the stage for an informed discussion on methodological approaches that can amplify their voices in the program lifecycle.

Methods

The methodology of this study is anchored in a meta-analytical approach that dissects program documentation, providing a profound insight into the engagement and influence of minors throughout the program's lifecycle. Central to this methodology is the comprehensive review of 20 key documents, including literature reviews, monitoring reports at various stages, and contributions from implementation partners. This robust document analysis allows for the extraction of nuanced data on the minors' participatory dynamics, the program's adaptive responses to their needs, and the effectiveness of engagement strategies over time. By focusing on existing documentation, the study leverages a rich bedrock of qualitative and quantitative data, facilitating a multi-layered understanding of the minors' roles and the broader operational impact of the program. The study's chronological component is crucial, considering the three-year span of the program to discern patterns and developments in minor participation. This long-term view offers a timeline of engagement, capturing the evolution of their involvement and the maturation of their roles within the program. It allows for an examination of the trajectory of participation, illuminating how and

why changes occur over time. The analysis not only charts progress but also identifies persistent challenges and areas for future improvement. By tracing the arc of engagement across the program's duration, we gain invaluable insights into the endurance and adaptability of the strategies employed, as well as the enduring impact on the minors involved. Moreover, the iterative nature of the evaluation is fundamental to this methodological framework. The iterative process involves a cyclical pattern of data scrutiny, re-evaluation, and refinement, ensuring that the evaluation is not static but dynamic and responsive. Through repeated rounds of analysis, the study adapts to emerging trends and integrates new findings, thus maintaining relevance and accuracy. This approach is particularly adept at capturing the lived experiences of minors, delving into the qualitative dimensions of their participation. It also allows the evaluation to remain flexible and responsive to the evolving contexts and challenges faced by the program, particularly in its efforts to engage minors in meaningful and impactful ways.

Key Findings

While the primary focus was on women and children, UNICEF Lesotho's HIV-nutrition intervention recognized the integral role of entire families, including men and boys, in achieving its objectives (iQvia, 2023). This extensive program was implemented across all ten districts and 69 community councils of Lesotho, signifying a comprehensive approach to public health. By integrating health and nutritional support, addressing socio-economic barriers, and providing tailored interventions, the program aimed to significantly improve the health and well-being of both children, youth, and adults. The program's approach was innovative in its integration of health and nutritional services. This holistic strategy included consistent access to antiretroviral therapy coupled with robust nutritional support, designed to strengthen immune systems, and maximize the efficacy of ART.

Service providers at various levels on implementation were equipped with the skills to promote optimal feeding practices, prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV, support good ART adherence, and provide micronutrient supplements to pregnant women and children under five. Additionally, communities were mobilized to overcome the structural barriers preventing women to optimally feed their children and support women to adhere to ARV treatment. (iQvia, 2023, p. 39)

This was particularly vital for children born to HIV-positive mothers, addressing the heightened risk of vertical transmission with a comprehensive care package that merged medical treatment with crucial nutritional aid. The program's dedication to these intertwined services underscored a profound recognition of the intricate challenges people with HIV face and their specific needs in achieving and maintaining optimal health (Mairós Ferreira *et al.*, 2023).

Part of the target population for the programme is women and adolescent girls living with HIV. Nutrition support was integrated in the Reproductive, Maternal and Child Health programmes, targeting women and adolescents who are on ART. (iQvia, 2023, p. 43)

Understanding the deep impact of socio-economic conditions on minors' health, the program strategically targeted poverty and food insecurity as key areas of intervention, with remarkable results. Efforts were made to enhance access to nutritious food, aiming to reduce malnutrition and stunting prevalent among children. This was achieved through community-

led projects that encouraged sustainable agricultural practices, income generation, and nutrition education, alongside specialized support in the health facilities.

Qualitative data corroborated that beneficiaries have made discernible gains in knowledge, skills, and practices concerning nutritious food preparation and food preservation techniques. Moreover, in alignment with the newly adopted Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT) guidelines, which incorporate IYCF elements, capacity-building initiatives were undertaken for health service providers. Consequently, pre-and post-natal nutritional counselling is now available to HIV-positive mothers across all 216 health facilities. (iQvia, 2023, p. 12)

In parallel, the program boldly addressed gender inequality, working to improve healthcare and nutrition-related knowledge and skills. This initiative empowered them to take charge of their health decisions, recognizing the crucial role gender plays in health outcomes. This multifaceted approach, moving beyond traditional healthcare interventions, acknowledged and tackled the root socio-economic and gender-based factors that shaped the well-being of minors in Lesotho (Mairós Ferreira *et al.*, 2023; iQvia, 2023).

Through the implementation of the Community-led Complementary Feeding and Learning Sessions (CCFLS), women also initiated the savings and lending scheme initiatives. The scheme supported community women to start up vegetable gardens in their homes. The loan fund could be used to buy seedlings and the produce from the home gardens could then be sold, thereby contributing to household income. This initiated scheme laid the ground for sustainability in food production, self-sufficiency, and improved economic outlook for families. It not only laid a foundation for sustainability in food production and self-sufficiency but also contributed to actively promoting women's autonomy and independence. By promoting household income, women are taking a more active role in financial decisions, which is a positive step towards gender equality. Furthermore, the home gardens directly improve nutrition availability, which is synergistically aligned with the program's broader goals of enhancing health and well-being. (iQvia, 2023, p. 14)

The program notably acknowledged minors as one of the key priority beneficiaries and took steps to include their experiences and perspectives from its inception (Mairós Ferreira & Muthengi, 2023; Mairós Ferreira *et al.*, 2023; iQvia, 2023; Mantsopa Institute & UNICEF, 2022; Maveneka, 2021). However, the level of engagement with these young participants was circumscribed to their role as beneficiaries of the program. While their inputs were gathered in diverse moments of the program development (e.g., baseline study, through program implementation feedback was regularly collected), their role in decision-making and planning phases remained largely passive (iQvia, 2023; Mantsopa Institute & UNICEF, 2022; Maveneka, 2021). This approach may have limited the program's ability to fully leverage the unique insights and lived experiences of children and youth. Encouraging a more active role for minors in future programs could significantly enhance the relevance and effectiveness of interventions, ensuring that they are not only designed for them but also shaped by their direct input and perspectives. Additionally, the absence of minors in the Final Evaluation (iQvia, 2023) represented a significant loss, as it deprived the program of the diverse perspectives and valuable insights that could have been gained from their direct participation in the diverse program actions.

The program's methodology, focusing primarily on adult-centric planning and execution (iQvia, 2023), inadvertently overlooked opportunities to engage and empower its younger beneficiaries. Active participation in projects that directly affect their lives is a crucial aspect of empowerment and learning for children and youth. By involving them more dynamically in key areas of the program, such as decision-making and planning, future initiatives could foster a sense of ownership and agency among these young individuals. This engagement would not only enrich the program's development with fresh, youthful insights but would also contribute significantly to the personal growth and self-efficacy of the children involved (Mairós Ferreira & Muthengi, 2023; Mairós Ferreira *et al.*, 2023). Moreover, while the program commendably attempted to incorporate inclusion perspectives, did not fully capture the complex dynamics of inequalities and exclusion and its specific impacts on health outcomes (iQvia, 2023). A more nuanced inclusion analysis is essential for uncovering and addressing the underlying causes of disparities. Future initiatives could benefit from integrating a comprehensive inclusion analysis into their framework from the program design phase and throughout the full program cycle. In sum, while the program made significant strides in improving health outcomes for minors, especially those affected by HIV, there are valuable lessons to be learned. Greater involvement of children and youth in decision-making processes and a more thorough approach to inclusion analysis can serve as key enhancements for future programs aiming at similar goals. These refinements will undoubtedly contribute to more effective, inclusive, and empowering interventions.

Recommendations

Acknowledging the complexities of Lesotho's health and nutrition challenges, and considering UNICEF's capacity for impactful intervention, the following enhanced recommendations are proposed to deepen the involvement of minors in related programs.

- **Establish a Participatory Child Governance Model:** Creating a participatory child governance model within health and nutrition initiatives is a progressive step that acknowledges the agency of minors and respects their right to be heard. This model should facilitate structured forums (e.g., as youth councils or committees) where minors can regularly convene to discuss their views on the programs that affect them. These forums should be empowered with a clear mandate, allowing minors to contribute to program planning, implementation, and evaluation processes. Skilled mentors, versed in child advocacy and development, would guide these young individuals, ensuring that their suggestions are not just heard but are actively incorporated into decision-making processes, both at the operational and policy levels. Furthermore, the governance model must be institutionalized with formal protocols, ensuring its sustainability and efficacy. It should be embedded within the organizational structure of health and nutrition programs, with designated staff responsible for liaising between child participants and senior program officials. Regular reporting and feedback mechanisms should be established, creating a two-way flow of communication that ensures minors' recommendations are acknowledged in program reports, policy briefs, and strategic meetings. This approach not only democratizes the programmatic environment but also instils a sense of ownership and responsibility among the minors, driving more engaged and sustained participation.
- **Integrate Advanced Inclusion Analysis in Program Design:** Integrating advanced inclusion analysis into program design requires a multi-faceted approach that begins with a comprehensive data collection effort, focusing on the differing needs, barriers, and

opportunities for all, including children and youth with disabilities, in accessing health and nutrition services. This data should be leveraged to create targeted interventions that address specific disparities and inequities. Educational materials and communication strategies should be developed to be culturally sensitive and inclusion-responsive, ensuring that they resonate with and are accessible to all minors. Such resources should aim to empower children and youth with knowledge and promote equitable practices within communities. In addition to material development, inclusion analysis should be a continual process that informs program adaptation. This would involve regular review sessions with inclusion specialists and consultations with minors to assess the efficacy of strategies and materials. Programs should be agile, with the capacity to iterate design elements based on ongoing feedback and emerging findings. By incorporating these practices, health and nutrition programs can become more inclusive and effective, fostering an environment where all are equally supported and encouraged to thrive.

- **Professional Development With a Focus on Child Rights and Protection:** Continuous Professional development for facilitators should be rooted in a deep understanding of child rights and protection, ensuring that every interaction with minors is guided by these principles. Capacity-building modules would encompass international child rights legislation, local legal frameworks, effective participation and engagement approaches, and practical approaches to safeguarding minors within program environments. Facilitators would be equipped with skills to create spaces that are not only safe but also conducive to open dialogue, where minors feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and experiences. To further reinforce these protective environments, educators and health workers should receive training in psychological first aid, equipping them to recognize and respond to signs of distress among minors. This is particularly pertinent in areas impacted by HIV/AIDS and malnutrition, where minors may face significant psychosocial stressors. Training would also cover ethical considerations such as informed consent and confidentiality, ensuring that minors' engagement is always respectful and voluntary. By prioritizing child rights and protection in professional development, facilitators will be better prepared to support the holistic well-being of minors, fostering trust, and enhancing the quality of participation.
- **Forge Integrated Community Health Partnerships:** Integrated community health partnerships would serve as a tapestry of support, woven through the collaboration of various stakeholders, including local NGOs, community health workers, youth groups, and minors themselves. These partnerships would focus on creating a seamless network of care, where minors can access health and nutrition services, receive mentorship, and find platforms for advocacy. Such a network would not only respond to the immediate health needs of minors but also engage with the broader social factors that influence their well-being. The operational model for these partnerships should be built on the principles of shared knowledge and shared responsibility. Regular community meetings, joint training sessions, and shared resources would ensure a cohesive approach to minors' health and nutrition. Through these collaborations, community health workers would be trained to act as liaisons between minors and health services, identifying needs and facilitating access. Youth organizations could offer peer-led initiatives, creating relatable and engaging platforms for health education and empowerment. By forging these partnerships, UNICEF and other stakeholders can ensure that minors receive comprehensive support that is responsive to their diverse needs.

- **Implement a Dynamic Inclusion Audit System:** A dynamic inclusion audit system would harness the latest in data analytics and technology to monitor minors' participation in real time. Such a system would track engagement levels, collect feedback, and measure the effectiveness of inclusion strategies. This would enable program managers to quickly identify issues and make informed adjustments. The system would also provide a platform for minors to submit anonymous feedback, ensuring that their voices are heard without fear of retribution or bias.
- **Guarantee Full Compliance With Legal and Ethical Guidance:** The need to adapt program approaches to ensure the ethical, safe, and adequate participation of minors in health and nutrition initiatives cannot be overstated. It is paramount that we create environments where minors can engage without exposure to harm and where their contributions are not only valued but also safeguarded with the utmost care. This necessitates the development of dynamic, child-friendly methodologies that are sensitive to the unique vulnerabilities and ethical considerations surrounding minors' involvement. Adaptation involves tailoring programs to the developmental stages and cognitive capacities of minors, ensuring that activities are age-appropriate, and that information is presented in a manner that is accessible and understandable to young participants. Flexibility is equally critical, as it allows programs to be responsive to the evolving needs and circumstances of minors, accommodating varying levels of maturity and personal experience within the program design. This might include but is not limited to, adjustable participation levels, varied communication strategies, and diverse role assignments that empower minors as active contributors to their health outcomes. Moreover, ensuring safe participation extends beyond physical well-being to include psychological safety and protection from exploitation. This involves establishing clear guidelines and protocols for consent, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw, alongside a robust framework for support and follow-up. Adequate participation is not merely about having minors present; it is about listening to them, integrating their insights into program development, and acknowledging their potential to influence change. In conclusion, programs must be developed with the recognition that minors are not merely passive subjects but rather active participants with rights, capacities, and the potential to offer valuable perspectives. Ethical engagement, therefore, requires a commitment to continuous adaptation, flexibility, and a robust safeguarding infrastructure that places the well-being and dignity of minors at the forefront of the interventions.

Conclusion

This study underscores the multifaceted opportunities, as well as existing challenges, that Lesotho must navigate to secure a healthier future for all its citizens (UN Women, 2023; Stamatakis *et al.*, 2022; IMF, 2022). The geographic, economic, and political landscapes of the country pose substantial barriers to healthcare delivery, particularly in the realms of HIV/AIDS and nutrition, where the needs are urgent (iQvia, 2023; Mairos Ferreira & Muthengi, 2023; Mairos Ferreira *et al.*, 2023;). The health system, grappling with resource constraints and high disease burden, requires a concerted effort to bolster its capacities, enhance access to essential medicines and services, and strengthen health information systems for informed policymaking. Representing a significant segment of the Basotho population, minors are not only the beneficiaries of health interventions but also key participants whose insights and experiences can drive programmatic success. Their active involvement can lead to more nuanced, effective, and sustainable health solutions that are responsive to the unique challenges faced by the youth, especially in the context of

HIV/AIDS and malnutrition. As demonstrated by UNICEF Lesotho's HIV-nutrition intervention, programs that prioritize minors' understanding, participation, and decision-making not only empower them but also have the potential to instil behavioural changes that can transcend generations. The lessons learned from this initiative highlight the necessity of adopting gender-sensitive and inclusive practices to ensure equitable participation.

Moving forward, it is crucial that stakeholders across the board, government bodies, international partners, and community organizations, recognize the value of involving children and youth in every stage of the programming cycle. By doing so, Lesotho can lay a robust foundation for a resilient health system that is equipped to confront and overcome its present challenges. The engagement of the younger generation is not a mere supplement to Lesotho's health strategy; it is a cornerstone upon which the nation's future well-being rests. This study calls for a redoubling of efforts to embed minors' perspectives in health initiatives, thereby paving the way for a generation that is healthier, more informed, and fully prepared to contribute to the nation's prosperity. In synthesizing the findings and lessons learned from this inquiry, this paper serves as a clarion call to action for program designers and stakeholders to forge a more inclusive, gender-sensitive, and child-centric approach to educational experiences. The robust recommendations presented herein are not just theoretical constructs, but actionable strategies designed to revolutionize how we engage young learners in Lesotho's health and nutrition programs. Together, we must lay down the steppingstones that will lead to enriched participation and successful program completion by our children and youth, ensuring that every child, with no exception, is given the tools to thrive and contribute to a more equitable and healthy future.

Acknowledgments

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*Assessing the OIC Member States' Engagement in China's Belt and Road Initiative:
Opportunities, Challenges, and Implications*

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Abstract

The remarkable demonstration of substantial collaboration between fifty-seven member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and China's Belt and Road Initiative exemplifies a significant milestone in contemporary international cooperation. This article assesses the involvement of member states of the OIC in China's BRI since 2013. The BRI is a large infrastructure development project aimed at connecting China with other parts of Asia, Europe, and Africa via a network of roads, railroads, ports, and other mega projects. This study examines the geopolitical implications of the BRI on member states of the OIC, China, and other significant global powers. Additionally, it explores the potential consequences of the BRI on regional and global governance. This study's data collection and analysis were based on firsthand accounts from specialists, senior officials of OIC member states, and Muslim World diplomats. The use of the in-depth interview approach and newspaper content analysis method would provide researcher with access to the primary data pertaining to this significant collaboration in the OIC countries. This study offers a thorough and nuanced explanation of the OIC member states' position in the BRI and its broader complications for international affairs in the Muslim World. There are numerous concerns regarding the involvement of OIC member states in a substantial undertaking spearheaded by a communist nation such as China, especially in light of the fact that the majority of Muslim countries uphold capitalist principles.

Keywords: Muslim World, Islam, Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Belt and Road initiative (BRI), China and Muslim World Economic Corridor (CMWEC)

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Introduction

The establishment of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in recent decades has been widely recognized as a project with revolutionary potential. Its primary objectives include the promotion of regional cooperation, infrastructural development, and economic integration across several continents. Due to its strategic importance, several nations have tried to capitalize on the benefits it offers. Included in this group are the member nations of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which comprises a heterogeneous assortment of countries characterized by distinct economic, political, and cultural contexts. Nevertheless, despite the seeming prospects for these governments to participate in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), there are also intrinsic obstacles and enduring consequences that need comprehensive understanding. The present research aims to investigate the level of involvement of member nations of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in China's Belt and Road Initiative. What possibilities are being used by the parties involved, what obstacles are they encountering, and what are the wider consequences of their participation for both their respective nations and the overall membership of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in the domains of geopolitics and economics?

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) implemented by China is a substantial and far-reaching endeavor in infrastructure development, with the objective of establishing connectivity between China and other areas throughout Asia, Europe, and Africa. This initiative includes the construction of an extensive network of roads, railways, ports, and other infrastructure projects. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has garnered significant attention from individuals worldwide, particularly those affiliated with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), because to its status as a monumental international development endeavor. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is a diverse entity consisting of 57 states with Muslim-majority populations. These nations exhibit significant disparities in terms of economic development rates, geopolitical ambitions, and foreign policies. Due to the strategic positioning of some nations along the anticipated routes of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), China has shown heightened interest in certain countries and has made substantial investments in them (Cai, 2017).

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) was introduced by China in 2013, representing a significant turning point in the nation's diplomatic engagements. The comprehensive agenda has had a significant effect on the foreign policies of several governments, particularly those in the Muslim world that are affiliated with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). As a consequence of this, a total of 48 members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) entered into memorandums of understanding with China. The initiative, including the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-century Maritime Silk Road, has garnered support from more than 142 states worldwide. The construction of the Sino-Muslim World Economic Corridor (SMWEC) was undertaken as a means to showcase China's expanding diplomatic and economic ties with the Muslim world. China has been a reliable partner for many low-income countries under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), establishing notable alliances such as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and engaging in cooperative efforts with ASEAN nations like Malaysia and Indonesia (HUSSAIN, 2021).

China's engagement with the Muslim world extends over several continents, including Arab nations via the China-Arab nations Cooperation Forum, as well as members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in South Asia, South East Asia, Central Asia, South America, and Europe. The presence of a notable connection is underscored by

substantial endeavors in South Asia, exemplified by the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Moreover, Iran, Bangladesh, and Afghanistan serve as exemplars of China's significant impact and unwavering commitment. Indonesia and Malaysia are major actors within the ASEAN region, contributing substantially to the overall population of the ASEAN community. The growing collaboration between China and the Muslim world has led to the creation of the Sino-Muslim World Economic Corridor, which has proven advantageous for China's economic ascendance. In order to establish a genuinely symbiotic alliance, it is essential for states within the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to optimize their export capabilities while concurrently avoiding any parasitic economic inclinations.¹

This Research plays a crucial role in facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the geopolitical and economic landscape's dynamic shifts. Through the establishment of ties between China's expansive Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the Organization for Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which represents a significant portion of the Muslim world, this study provides insightful perspectives on forthcoming shifts in global alliances, trade routes, and investment dynamics. Moreover, this active participation has the potential to profoundly transform the process of infrastructure construction, to influence the stability of the region, and to promote cultural exchanges between the involved governments. The research endeavor has the potential to provide valuable guidance for policy decision-making, thereby facilitating the member states' attainment of optimal benefits and mitigation of risks. In addition, it provides unique interdisciplinary perspectives that can contribute to the academic community's understanding of the area of study (Ali & Khan, 2023).

The primary objective of this study is to assess and classify the various degrees and types of engagement shown by Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) member states in China's Belt and Road Initiative. In addition, the primary objective of this study is to provide a comprehensive conception of the economic, geopolitical, and sociocultural benefits that Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) member states hope to achieve through their participation in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). It also examines and assess the numerous economic, political, cultural, and strategic obstacles and challenges encountered by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) member states while participating in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

Research Methodology

The present study used a qualitative research methodology. A comprehensive series of in-depth interviews were conducted with experts and authorities from the Muslim world in order to get primary information pertaining to the subject matter. It was imperative to establish communication and conduct research on the official archives of the Belt and Road project authorities, which are operational in several countries, including Pakistan. Relevant data was obtained via reaching out to the foreign ministry of Pakistan, the China Pakistan Economic Corridor in Pakistan, and the office of the Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTEC) in Pakistan. Furthermore, the study used a selection of esteemed scholarly articles as primary sources, while also conducting an extensive analysis of prominent authors within the area to get a full understanding of the current state of research. The trade statistics and other statistical data of globally recognized and esteemed organizations were obtained from authoritative sources such as the CIA fact book and World

¹ Links, Stacey. "Ascertaining Agency: Africa and the Belt and Road Initiative." In *Global Perspectives on China's Belt and Road Initiative: Asserting Agency through Regional Connectivity*, edited by Florian Schneider, 113–40. Amsterdam University Press, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1dc9k7j.8>.

Bank records. The primary sources used in this study included the electronic and print media statements made by politicians involved in the Belt and Road Initiative, experts hailing from the Muslim world, and officials affiliated with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

Understanding BRI in the Context of Sino-Muslim World Relations

The establishment of the Belt and Road Initiative is China's most significant economic and diplomatic innovation in the 21st century. The BRI results from President Xi Jinping's foreign policy initiatives in China (Zhao, 2020). The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) of the People's Republic of China (PRC) consists of two major elements, namely the Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB) and the twenty-first-century Maritime Silk Road Initiative (MSRI). The Southern Rail and Economic Belt (SREB) encompasses a collection of terrestrial initiatives including as trains, pipelines, highways, and economic zones. In contrast, the Maritime Silk Road (MSR) primarily focuses on the establishment of ports and coastal improvements.² The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) implemented by China has garnered significant interest from contemporary political experts. The phenomenon encompasses a vast expanse of more than eighty countries, representing a demographic majority of almost two-thirds of the global population. The potential outcome of this megaproject might include a Chinese expenditure above \$1 trillion, a figure that is sevenfold more than the amount spent by the United States for the Marshall Plan in the first stages of the Cold War. China has expressed its intention to enhance its infrastructure by constructing new roads, railways, and soft infrastructure, which encompasses trade and transit agreements, cultural ties, university scholarships, and people-to-people contacts.³

President Xi Jinping proposed a Silk Road Economic Belt in September 2013 in Kazakhstan, which should link China and the Central Asian republics, the Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan, to Iran, Turkey, Russia, and Europe.⁴ Chinese President Xi proposed a 21st-century maritime silk road linking ASEAN and China at the ASEAN forum in Indonesia. The Belt and Road Initiative of China⁵ is no doubt a mega project of the 21st century. Still, it is not a surprise from the Chinese Side because It had initiated Shanghai Cooperation Organization and BRICS, which are also the biggest regional blocs.⁶

During the advisory council meeting of the Belt and Road forum in 2021, Mr. Wang Yi expressed his observation that the Belt and Road Cooperation has transitioned into a new phase characterized by high-quality growth. Our approach will include aggressively conforming to internationally recognized laws and standards, executing a greater number of projects of superior quality, establishing further exemplary methods, and guaranteeing the

² Xinhua. 2017. 'Full Text: Vision for Maritime Cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative', 20 June, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2017-06/20/c_136380414.htm (accessed on 14 December 2019).

³ Jonathan Hillman, 'How Big is China's Belt and Road?'. *CSIS Commentary*, April 3, 2018, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/how-big-chinas-belt-and-road> and Enda Curran, 'China's Marshall Plan'. *Bloomberg*, August 7, 2016, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-08-07/china-s-marshall-plan> (accessed 20 April 2021).

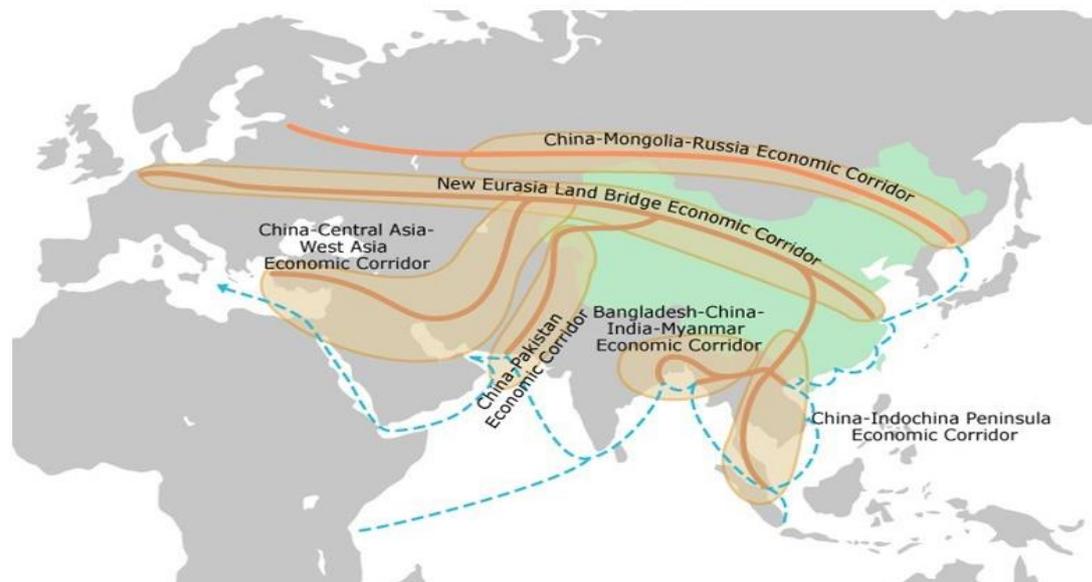
⁴ Xinhua. (2013, September 7). Xi suggests China, C. Asia build Silk Road economic belt. Retrieved from http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-09/07/c_132700695.htm

⁵ Wu, J., & Zhang, Y. (2013, October 4). Xi in call for building of "maritime Silk Road". *China Daily USA*. Retrieved from http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2013-10/04/content_17008940.htm

⁶ Michael Kugelmann *GREAT POTENTIAL, MANY PITFALLS: UNDERSTANDING CHINA'S BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE*, *Asian Affairs*, (2019) 50:2, 180-186, DOI: 10.1080/03068374.2019.1602383

economic, fiscal, financial, and environmental sustainability of these initiatives” (Kugelman, 2019). Figure 1. shows the Belt and Road Initiative program of China.

Figure 1. The Belt and Road Initiative: Six Economic Corridors Spanning Asia, Europe and Africa



Source: Council of Foreign Affairs

The Muslim world became united under the Umbrella of OIC in 1969 and became the second-largest organization after the UNO. The Muslim world and OIC are interconnected in the current era; fifty-seven OIC members view world politics through the prism of Muslim Ummah. The OIC stresses their member countries to have good relations with the PRC. China’s Peaceful development policy and non-interference appeal to the Muslim states.⁷ Islam is the second most prominent and geographically widespread religion worldwide. In 2010, the Pew Research Centre reported that there were over 1.6 billion individuals adhering to the Islamic faith residing across 190 different countries. There are a total of seventy-two states in Asia, located near the People’s Republic of China, where the population of Muslims exceeds one million individuals.⁸

As of December 2021, nearly 142 nations had signed memoranda of understanding with PRC to become part of its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).⁹ The number of countries that are part of BRI has been shown in table 1 according to the division of different continents. This table also shows the number of OIC countries participating in China’s Belt and Road initiative.

⁷ Official Contact Memorabilia of China and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (1974 to 2014) Gathered from the website of the Chinese Foreign Ministry and other relevant information.

⁸ The Pew Research Center, *The Future Global Muslim Population: Projections for 2010–2030* (Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, January 2011), p. 11, p. 67, available at:

http://pewforum.org/uploadedFiles/Topics/Religious_

⁹ <https://eng.yidaiyilu.gov.cn/dsjym.htm>

Table 1. No of all participating Countries and the OIC States in different continents			
	Continents	Number of Participating Countries	Number of OIC Countries
1	Sub-Sahara Africa	42	18 Countries
2	Europe& Central Asia	34 Countries	8 Countries
3	East Asia & Pacific	24	2 Countries
4	Middle East & North Africa	17 Countries	15 Countries
5	Latin America and Caribbean	19 Countries	1 Country
6	South East Asia & South Asia	12 Countries	4 Countries
	Total Countries	142	48 OIC states

Source: Green Finance and Development Center

BRI has six major economic corridors, and these corridors refer to the New Eurasian Land Bridge (NELB), the China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor (CMREC), The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), The China and Central and Western Asia Economic Corridor (CCWAEC), the China Indo-China Peninsula Economic Corridor, (CIPEC), the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor (BCIMEC).¹⁰ There are total of 23 countries that are participating in these six major projects. Out of 23 participating countries ten Muslim OIC countries and these countries are directly participating in six major projects. Table 2 shows the participation of 23 OIC states in the BRI's six major projects.

China is doing CPEC project with Pakistan, a leading Muslim country and a pioneer of OIC (Tajwar Ali, 2023). In Bangladesh -China-India Myanmar Corridor Bangladesh is a Muslim country. In the China and Central and Western Asia Economic Corridor (CCWAEC), seven OIC members, like, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Turkey, cooperate with the PRC. Malaysia is a founding member of OIC, which participates in the China-Indochina Peninsula Economic Corridor (CIPEC) and the New Eurasian Land Bridge (NELB). In almost all the mega projects of BRI, OIC countries are participating, which

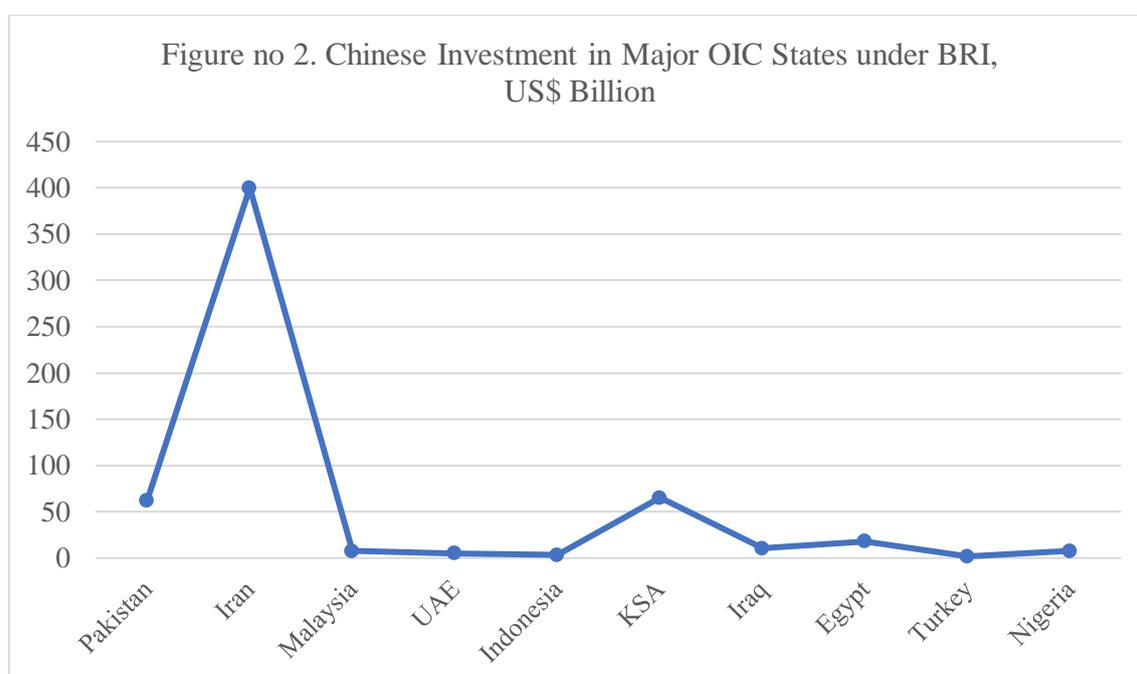
¹⁰ Xinhua Silk Road Database, Explain China's Silk Road Economic Belt, March 18, 2021, <https://en.imsilkroad.com/p/312941.html>

depicts the indispensable role of the Muslim World in the Belt and Road Initiative.¹¹ The fact that China is concentrating its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) efforts on the Muslim world provides more evidence that China intends to establish a Sino-Muslim World Economic Corridor.

Table 2. Six major Projects under BRI and 23 participating states					
CPEC	BCIMEC	CCWAEC	CIPEC	CMREC	NELB
PAKISTAN	BANGLADESH	IRAN	COMBODIA	MANGILIA	BELARUS
	INDIA	KAZAKHSTAN	LAOS	RUSSIA	CZECH REPUBLIC
	MYANMAR	KYRGZYSTAN	MALAYSIA		KAZAKHSTAN
		TAJIKISTAN	MYANMAR		POLAND
		TURKEY	THAILAND		RUSSIA
		TURKMENISTAN	VIETNAM		GERMANY
		UZBEKISTAN			

Source: Council of the Foreign Affairs

It shows the investment of China in the significant OIC countries under BRI, which clearly indicates that China is preparing something big in these countries.



Source: Authors' calculation from China's Global Investment Tracker

¹¹ Interview with a Senior official at the Standing Committee of OIC for Science and Technology (COMSTECH) Islamabad Pakistan on May 12, 2022.

Similarly, OIC countries play an essential role in the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. The 21st Century Maritime Silk Road passes through 23 states and regions. These states include the Republic of Korea (ROK), Japan, Singapore, Thailand, Philippines, Malaysia, Myanmar, Vietnam, Brunei, Cambodia, India, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Kuwait, Pakistan, UAE, Egypt, Italy, Greece, Tanzania, Kenya, and Turkey.¹² The 21st-century Maritime Silk Road is actively participated in by eight member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). China has implemented several port development efforts along the Maritime Silk Road with the aim of augmenting the economic feasibility of this trade route for its export activities. China has committed a significant sum over US\$400 billion to finance more than 600 projects across the Islamic World, as an integral component of its Belt and Road Initiative.¹³ During the Belt and Road Initiative event, President Xi reiterated the establishment of Silk Road scholarships by local governments in the People's Republic of China, with the aim of enhancing cultural and educational interactions. The initiatives promoting people-to-people cooperation, such as the Silk Road cultural year, art festival, tourist year, TV project, film, seminar, and think tank discourse, are seeing significant growth. These interactions have fostered a greater sense of unity among their respective populations.¹⁴

Political Factors That Have Influenced the Oic Member States' Participation in the Bri

The potential economic advantages of the project are a significant driving force behind the involvement of member nations of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in the Belt and Road project (BRI) (Sultan, 2023). A significant number of nations have economies that rely extensively on natural resources and are actively pursuing new avenues for expansion and progress. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) encompasses a diverse array of infrastructure projects that have the potential to facilitate the establishment of novel trade routes, attract investments, and provide these nations entry into Chinese markets. Certain member nations of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) see their involvement in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) as a means to enhance their bilateral ties with China and align themselves with the expanding global power of Beijing. China has shown a growing level of assertiveness in the global sphere, prompting some nations to see the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) as a means to counterbalance the influence wielded by the United States and other Western powers (Currier, 2009).

China's Rising Economic Ties with the OIC States Under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)

A total of 142 states have formally expressed their commitment to participate in the Belt and Road Initiative, with 48 of these nations being active members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. Muslim countries actively contribute to the development of the Belt and Road

¹² Xinhua Silk Rout Database, Explain the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road, March 22, 2021, https://en.imsilkroad.com/p/312466.html?gclid=Cj0KCQiAoY-PBhCNARIsABcz773-GVTzzqswgbIOi-ocRkZ1RIRCz5yhs8MSTi4IVCtvp-WSapHQdNYaAtVzEALw_wcB

¹³ The Free Press journal, China Foreign Minister Wang Yi makes surprise visit to meet Taliban in Afghanistan, March 24, 2022, <https://www.freepressjournal.in/world/china-foreign-minister-wang-yi-makes-surprise-visit-to-meet-taliban-in-afghanistan>

¹⁴ Full text of President Xi's speech at opening of Belt and Road forum2017-05-15 14:10, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/201705/t20170527_678618.html

Initiative. Pakistan, Indonesia, and Iran are among the Muslim countries that own strategically significant locations in relation to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).¹⁵

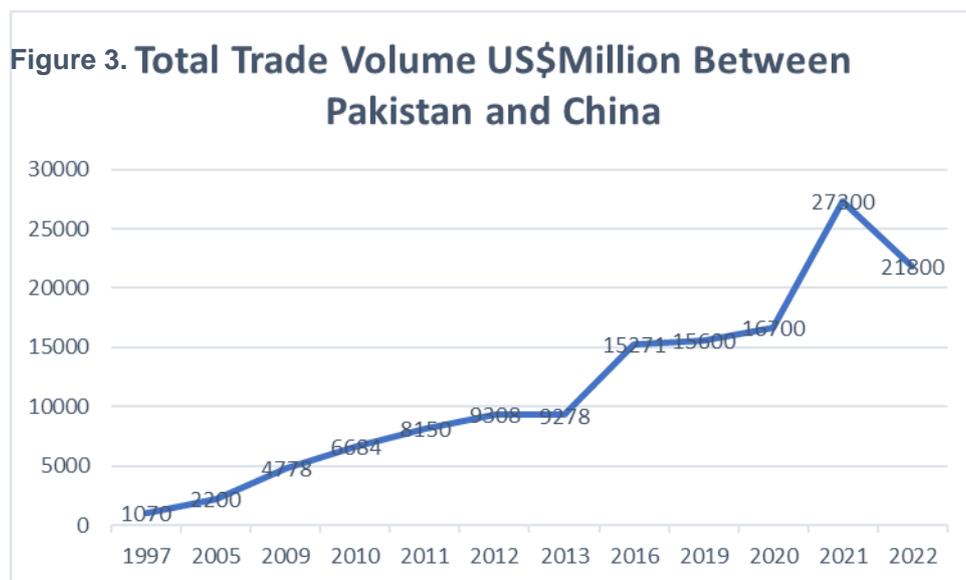


Table 4 shows the trade Cooperation of China with the Major Muslim countries of the Middle Eastern Region.

	OIC States	AIIB membership	Trade Volume with PRC (US\$ Billion 2019)	Major BRI Project
1	IRAN	YES	23.02	Oil Refinery and railway project
2	KSA	YES	72.3	Energy Sector, trade Cooperation
3	QATAR	YES	13.2	Financial and Commercial
4	BAHRAIN	YES	1.48b+170m	Trade and investment
5	KUWAIT	YES	1.86	Silk City
6	JORDON	YES	3.79b+ 453m	Sino-Jordanian University
7	UAE	YES	50.2	Financial and Commercial

¹⁵ Interview with a Senior official at China Pakistan Economic Corridor Center for Excellence, Islamabad, May 2022.

8	DJIBOUTI	YES	2.21b+19.2m	Free trade Zone
9	IRAQ	YES	30.57	Trade and Infrastructure
10	OMAN	YES	20.32	Industrial zone
11	Egypt	YES	12.5b+733m	Sino-Egypt Suez Economic & trade Zone

Source: National Bureau of Statistics of China (NBSC)

Table 5. Shows China's import of oil from different countries in the world. This table clearly shows that China imports oil from many OIC countries in the Middle East.

Table 5. Percentage of China's Oil Imports from Major Oil-Producing OIC States and Others									
KSA	Iraq	Oman	Iran	Kuwait	UAE	Brazil	Angola	Russia	Others
13%	9%	8%	7%	4%	3%	6%	14%	15%	21%

Sources: Wood Mackenzie

Table 6 shows the trade volume of China and Central Asian Muslim states after the commencement of CPEC.

Table 6. Sino-Central Asian trade volume from 2015 to 2019 in US\$ millions and Growth Rate							
OIC Countries CARs	Trade volume 2015 in US\$M	Trade volume 2016 US\$M	Trade volume 2017 US\$M	Trade volume 2018 US\$M	Trade volume 2019 US\$M	The growth rate of Import from PRC in 5 years	The growth rate of Export from PRC in 5 year
Kazakhstan	14290	13097	17934	19857	22066	52%	58%
Kyrgyzstan	4341	5676	5424	5601	6378	47%	13%
Tajikistan	1847	1751	1348	1501	1696	-10%	62%
Turkmenistan	8643	5901	6943	8436	9117	-47%	11%
Uzbekistan	3496	3614	4220	6266	7226	126%	72%

Source: UN Com trade Database (<http://comtrade.un.org/data/>)

Table 7. Shows the infrastructural work in African countries under BRI.

Table 7. Selected Infrastructure through BRI in the OIC Countries of Africa			
Nation of OIC State	Major Project	Explanation	Investment
Chad	China Sudan Railway	1344 km railway is made in 3phases which connect Cameroon and other two countries.	\$5.6 billion
Mozambique	Mphanda Nkuwa Dam and Hydroelectric station project	Offer 1500 MW of power to national electric city grid and construction of Moamba Dam	\$3.1 Billion
Nigeria	Coastal Railways	1402 km railway to connect Lagos with Calabar through 10 states connecting	\$12 billion
Sudan	Port Sudan Khartoum Railway	Project completed in 2012, it connects port Sudan to Khartoum in 762km of railways	\$1.38 billion

Source: Guardian and Mail 2015

Analyzing the Geopolitical Implications of the BRI for the OIC Member States

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has considerable geopolitical ramifications for the member nations of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). The primary objective of this program is to enhance connectivity and foster economic integration among China and other nations throughout Asia, Europe, and Africa. Its implementation has the capacity to have a substantial influence on the geopolitical dynamics of the area (Cau, 2020).

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has significant geopolitical implications for member nations of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), particularly in terms of the possible escalation of economic reliance on China. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) encompasses substantial Chinese investment and money, potentially rendering member nations of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) more susceptible to Chinese influence and control. This phenomenon has the potential to induce a significant alteration in

the distribution of power within the area, possibly diminishing the influence of conventional Western powers (Rana, 2021).

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) may potentially have significant ramifications for the security and stability of the area. Certain member nations of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) have expressed apprehensions over the potential of the initiative to intensify regional disputes and instability. This issue is especially relevant in countries where the projects can be seen as provocative or have the potential to worsen pre-existing tensions. Moreover, the possibility of heightened economic rivalry and the exploitation of resources may result in escalated geopolitical conflicts among nations within the area (Faisal, 2018).

Potential Benefits and Risks Associated with the Sino-Muslim World Economic Corridor

The Sino-Muslim World Economic Corridor (SMWEC) denotes the increased economic collaboration between China and the member nations of the Organization for Islamic Cooperation subsequent to the year 2013. The China-Muslim World Economic Corridor, functioning within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), stands out as a prominent economic corridor within the Muslim world that engages in collaboration with China. The bulk of member nations of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) are situated in developing regions, sometimes referred to as the third world. These countries exhibit economic systems that are not notably evolved. Several economies within the Organization of Islamic Cooperation have little potential for achieving significant economic development despite their overall strength. The member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) exhibit some of the most challenging economic conditions globally, and are situated among the nations with the lowest levels of development¹⁶ (Selmier, 2018).

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) offers a prominent advantage to members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in the form of much-needed infrastructural development. This requirement is prevalent throughout a majority of OIC nations. Chinese investment is expected to have a transformative impact on several aspects of infrastructure, including road infrastructure, port infrastructure, and other related projects. Enhanced and expanded infrastructure throughout the Muslim world is expected to provide accelerated economic development. The rapid expansion of the economy after the initiation of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has been seen in several Muslim nations (Lindley, 2022).

The potential adverse impact on the economic development of OIC nations due to the prevalence of Chinese exports in their markets may be attributed to China's technical advancement. The OIC nations with less economic resources would rely heavily on China's exports, so jeopardizing their own manufacturing capabilities. Several nations that are members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) located in South Africa have challenges in manufacturing basic everyday commodities. If these nations rely on China for every little commodity, they will assume a parasitic relationship with China, and their industrial development will remain nothing more than an illusory aspiration (M., 2021).

China has developed a notable expertise in the construction of roads and other forms of infrastructure on a global scale. China is engaged in the construction of transport

¹⁶ W. Travis Selmier II (2018) The Belt and Road Initiative and the influence of Islamic economies, *Economic and Political Studies*, 6:3, 257277, DOI:10.1080/20954816.2018.1498989

infrastructure, including roads, bridges, and ports, throughout the member nations of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Chinese corporations use their workforce in many endeavors. If the OIC nations only rely on Chinese forums for the building of roads and bridges, they may become dependent on China for their construction needs, thereby limiting their ability to undertake independent contracting projects. The lack of education in building work among the population of China may hinder the development of excellent work habits. The training of local labor by China in the context of infrastructure development would have advantageous outcomes for the host nation (Pradhan, 2017).

Conclusion

The collaboration between China and the Muslim member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) effectively demonstrates the establishment of a Sino-Muslim World Economic Corridor via the Belt and Road Initiative. The China-Arab Nations Cooperation Forum facilitated a strengthened relationship between China and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) member nations in the Arab world. China engaged in a collaborative partnership with the African Union inside the African continent, while states affiliated with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) shown a favorable disposition towards China. Muslim regimes in South Asia and other regions have forged amicable relations with the People's Republic of China (PRC). The Belt and Road Initiative was initiated by the People's Republic of China in 2013, under the guidance of President Xi Jinping. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) received widespread acclaim from Muslim countries, with almost all of them entering into memorandums of understanding with China as a crucial component of this substantial undertaking. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), being one of the most expansive megaprojects in human history, has the potential to foster comprehensive development throughout the Muslim world. China aims to enhance infrastructure and other vital areas in order to equip developing countries for forthcoming economic endeavors, as part of its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) (Ali T. &., 2020).

The nations of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) serve as intrinsic collaborators in the Belt and Road Initiative, assuming a substantial position within this enormous endeavor. Inside the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), there are two member states that are part of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Additionally, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) places significance on five OIC countries inside Central Asia. The Middle East region has 22 OIC nations, while the African Union consists of 18 member states that are affiliated with the OIC. Muslim-majority nations in Europe and South America maintain favorable diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China. The countries in the Arab world that are members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) engage in substantial cooperation with the People's Republic of China (PRC). The People's Republic of China has the distinction of being the biggest importer of oil from Arab nations and Iran. Several South Asian countries are actively involved in several Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) megaprojects, including the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which entails a partnership between China and Pakistan.¹⁷ Central Asia was the hub of the Old Silk Road, and this region has five OIC countries with solid cooperation with China under BRI. The trade volume of these five OIC countries with the PRC after the

¹⁷ PRADHAN, RAMAKRUSHNA. "China's Rise In Central Asia: THE NEW SILK ROAD ECONOMIC BELT." *World Affairs: The Journal of International Issues* 21, no. 3 (2017): 50–61. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48531352>.

Initiation of BRI has grown rapidly¹⁸. OIC countries from ASEAN, such as Malaysia and Indonesia, are active players in BRI and the Maritime Silk Road of the 21st century. Malaysia is one of the original members of China's Belt and Road Initiative. These two nations are crucial for China in the ASEAN (Tagotra, 2016).

¹⁸ PRADHAN, RAMAKRUSHNA. "China's Rise In Central Asia: THE NEW SILK ROAD ECONOMIC BELT." *World Affairs: The Journal of International Issues* 21, no. 3 (2017): 50–61. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48531352>.

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Designing Inclusive Play Experience

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Abstract

Play is essential to everyone, while it is often misperceived as a waste of time. Maria Montessori, who started the Montessori school in 1907, believed that play could be used for children to learn naturally and play was the work of the child. Play is unarguably vital to children's development. However, play is a necessity for all people of all ages. Well-designed play experiences can bring different benefits to the players physically, cognitively, emotionally, and socially, regardless of the players' ages and abilities. Studies show that those who continue to play even in adult life most likely live healthier, while those who ignore playing or are deprived of playing may negatively impact their lives. Inclusive playground is not a new subject, but more often than not, it is focused on providing play experiences with adjustments to play equipment to include children with disabilities. Through applied research and the development of a systematic design approach, this paper attempts to expand the inclusiveness so that the majority of people can enjoy equitable play experience regardless of their condition and age. Through research, exploration, and development of play experiences with playground equipment and site amenities, we hope that would bring benefits of play to the users. The importance of play for all will first be discussed. Then, the design approach evolved from several design classes in developing an inclusive play experience for a broader range of users through collaborating with the industry for the play and recreation market will be introduced.

Keywords: Benefit of Play, Inclusive Playground, Playground Equipment, Design Approach

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1. Introduction

It is a known fact that play is essential for all children. Maria Montessori believed that play is the work of the child. (Maria Montessori, n.d.) So, there is no doubt that children need to play. In recent years, there have been more concerns about the need for play for children with disabilities, and inclusive playgrounds recently become a great interest in the playground industry. However, different studies show that play is not just for children but for all people of various stages in life. Therefore, inclusive playgrounds should not be only focused on children with physical disabilities but instead on a broader spectrum of users. Having worked with the playground industry for almost two decades, we witnessed how the industry has improved to provide equipment for children with disabilities to play in the same playground with those children who have no physical hindrance. For the past two years, collaborating with PlayCore in a design studio class, we have studied and developed inclusive play experiences for playground users. We have learned that there is a much larger scoop of inclusiveness that needs to be addressed. Through applied research and the development of a systematic design approach, this paper attempts to expand the inclusiveness of playgrounds so that most people can enjoy equitable play experiences regardless of their condition and age. Through research, exploration, and development of play experiences with playground equipment and site amenities, we hope that would bring benefits of play to the users. This paper will first discuss the importance of play for all. Then, the design approach evolved from several design classes, developing an inclusive play experience for a broader range of users through collaborating with the industry for the play and recreation market.

2. Importance of Play

2.1 Importance of Play for Children

Play is crucial for children's development. It helps improve their cognitive, physical, social, and emotional well-being. Through play, children learn about the world and themselves. They also learn skills they need for study, work, and relationships, such as confidence, self-esteem, resilience, interaction, social skills, independence, curiosity, and coping with challenging situations. Physical play helps children develop good physical fitness, agility, stamina, coordination, and balance, such as running, skipping, and riding a bicycle. Playing in a group can help children develop their social skills with others by listening, paying attention, and sharing play experiences. This allows a child to explore their feelings, develop self-discipline, learn how to express themselves and work out emotional aspects of life. ("How Play Helps Children's Development," n.d.) Just from a simple play of tree climbing, children learn about gravity, material strength, strategizing the path to get higher and faster, helping one another, and the willingness to take risks. Doris Bergen, a professor at Miami University, once said, "Play is one of the main ways that children really consolidate their learning. The way we really make our skills permanent and enriched and highly developed is often through our play experiences" (Mader, 2022).

2.2 Importance of Play for All Ages

Play is vital for grown-up children. Deprivation of play may affect one's character while interacting with others and their view of the outside world. Dr. Stuart Brown, a pioneer and the founder of the National Institute for Play, believes that we humans are built to play and built by play (Our Founder - National Institute for Play, n.d.).

In 1966, when psychiatrist Dr. Stuart Brown was assigned to a commission to investigate what led University of Texas student Charles Whitman to kill 12 people in one of the country's first mass shootings ... Brown was struck by one other factor that came up in the commission's discussions: Whitman had experienced play deprivation, or an "almost complete suppression of normal play behavior," as the commission put it while growing up. In the years after the shooting, he (Brown) and a team of researchers interviewed men who were incarcerated in the Texas Huntsville Prison for homicide. When the researchers compared information about the inmates' childhoods with a population outside the prison, they found that the comparison group could provide abundant examples of free play in childhood, while the group inside prison largely could not. "The parallelism between their play deficiencies and the objective problems in forming trusting social bonds with others seems very significant," concluded Brown in a 2018 article.

"The adaptive tolerance and empathy toward others that is learned in early preschool through rough and tumble play is really a fundamental part of our having tolerance for people who are different than we are," Brown said.

"The presence or absence of play, particularly in child development, has a great deal to do with competency, resiliency, emotional health [and] brain size," Brown said. Play is "not frivolous and not just for kids, but something that is an inherent part of human nature." (Mader, 2022)

Although it cannot be proven that there is a definite correlation between play deficiency and how a person behaves in social settings, it does shed some light on the importance of play, even in the adolescent stage. Humans need to play because it is part of our nature.

2.3 Importance of Play for the Elderly

There are studies to show that play is beneficial for older adults and can keep them physically, mentally, and socially healthy. Even older adults need to play.

In addition to the hormones released when there is a playful and pleasurable activity, games can be useful to cause mental stimulation, improve well-being, and increase self-esteem whenever a gamer defeats an opponent or wins an obstacle. Games can also improve the motor coordination of old people. (Cota et al., 2015)

Many older adults develop cognitive problems as they age, especially when living alone. It has been found that integrated play therapy for older adults is effective in increasing cognitive functions and decreasing depression levels of older adults who live alone. (Kil et al., 2019) Sound cognitive functions and mental health are essential to lead a quality elderly life, and play can be part of the remedy for enjoyable aging.

3. Inclusive Play Experience

Inclusive playground is not a new subject. In recent years, more parks have been labeled as inclusive parks that try to expand the park for children with disabilities, especially children using wheelchairs. However, most inclusive play playgrounds are mainly focused on children. Some equipment provides play experiences for children with disabilities but isolates

the users from other non-physically challenged children. It is like an invisible label to emphasize that the users have disabilities.

Moreover, almost all the inclusive playgrounds are designed for children. If all people in every stage of life need to play, the current inclusive playground is not inclusive enough, first equity in terms of play experience, and second in terms of different stages of life. Would it be better to have play equipment that most people can play with and have an equitable play experience without being singled out and labeled for disabilities or older adults?

3.1 Inclusive Play Design Principles

On the National Recreation and Park Association website, we can find some inclusive play principles to help designers and manufacturers consider inclusiveness, which include equitable use, flexibility in use, simple and intuitive use, perceptible information, tolerance for error, low physical effort, and size and space for approach and use. (Ruane, n.d.) From the Gametime website, we can also find another set of 7 principles of inclusive playground design that playground equipment needs to be fair, included, smart, independent, safe, active, and comfortable. (The 7 Principles of Inclusive Playground Design, n.d.) These principles are good indexes for designers, but there is no tangible guideline to base on or evaluate if the principles have been reached.

3.2 Facts Relevant to Designing Inclusive Play

We found some facts relevant to inclusiveness to help see the need for design consideration:

- 25% of the world population is under 15 years of age. - World Health Organization, 2022
- There are 6.7 Millions of school-age children with disabilities - U.S. Department of Education, 2019
- There are over one billion people with disabilities in the world, which is nearly 15% of the world's population. - World Health Organization, 2018
- There are over 56 million adults ages 65 and older live in the United States, accounting for about 16.9% of the nation's population -U.S. Census Bureau, 2022
- 10% of the world population is over 65 years of age. -World Health Organization, 2022
- Nearly 40% of grandparents provide childcare for their grandchildren. -Grandparents: A Critical Child Care Safety Net

From Billings Parks and Recreation's website, we found a diagram reviewing the statistics of different disabilities among 1000 children. Out of the 1000 children between 3 to 21, about 85 children have disabilities. (Figure 1) According to the diagram, only one has a physical disability. In contrast, the rest, 84 children, have cognitive disabilities, communication disabilities, social and emotional disabilities, chronic health conditions, multiple disabilities, and sensory disabilities. If inclusive play design addresses only physical needs, many who have disabilities would still not be able to enjoy the play experience.

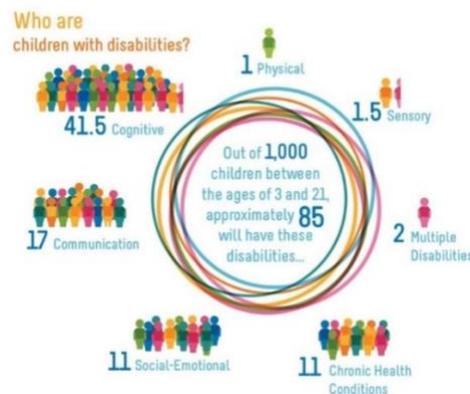


Figure 1: Different disabilities among 1000 children.
(<https://www.billingsparks.org/parks-trails/playgrounds/>)

3.3 Needs From Different Special-Need User Groups

The needs of different user groups can be identified and summarized through research. The following are some groups we studied, and their characteristics related to design are highlighted. This paper will not discuss the design consideration of each highlighted issue because of the limited space (Figures 2, 3, 4, 5).

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Autism Spectrum Disorder</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social interaction and communication skills are challenging. • OCD is a very common behavioral characteristic. • Extremely sensitive to sensory experiences. • Muted color tones and straight forward activities help to alleviate stress. • Red and yellow are colors that should be avoided and are known to elicit negative reactions • Physical activity reduces maladaptive behaviors, and has positive effects on social skills and behavior | <p>ADHD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trouble sitting still, • Take unnecessary risks • Accident and injury prone • Trouble taking turns • Issues staying focused • Forgetful tendencies • Difficulty organizing or finishing tasks <p>Positive Stimuli:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music and playing instruments, • Outdoor activities reduces the severity of ADHD symptoms | <p>Down Syndrome</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can affect communication, social, and motor skills. • Personal safety is of upmost importance. • They do not like to stand out from everyone else. • Simple environments are ideal to reduce stress and improve concentration. • Decreased muscle tone, Delayed physical progression, fine motor skills • Poor Mobility • Late speech development • Pronunciation issues • Hearing issues • Language and reading |
|--|--|--|

Figure 2: Characteristics and needs of ASD, ADHD, and DS.

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Depression Disorders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About 9% of Americans adults 18-65 and 4.4% of children 6-17 have been diagnosed with depression symptoms. • Self care including physical activity and outdoor environments are proven to help relieve symptoms. • Exposure to sunshine and relaxing environments promote healing. | <p>Sight Impairment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ranges from color blind, partial impairment, to fully blind. • Color and light intensity is important for the entire spectrum. • Navigate environments with hands and assistive devices. • Visually impaired children develop through sensory experiences with their hands. | <p>Hearing Impairment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The loss of hearing means people rely on sight to navigate environments. • People with hearing impairment prefer to situate themselves to view who and what is always taking place in the environment. • They feel safer in open environments. • Balance comes from the inner ear and thus important for developing kids. |
|---|---|---|

Figure 3: Characteristics and needs of depression, sight, and hearing impairment.

- Mobility Limitations**
 - Electric and conventional wheel chairs, walkers, and assistive scooters.
 - Wheeled devices severely limit mobility in outdoor recreational spaces.
 - **Hard surfaces such as sidewalks and walkways** provide ample space for movement.
 - **Handrails and ramp features** should be considered in all designs.
- Seniors**
 - One third of seniors live with severe **muscle loss**, which can lead to hormone problems, a decrease in the ability to metabolize protein, and other problems.
 - Common age-related conditions:
 - Heart Disease
 - Stroke
 - High Blood Pressure
 - Cancer
 - Diabetes
 - Parkinson's
 - Dementia
 - COPD
 - Arthritis
 - Osteoporosis
- Seniors (cont.)**
 - About **36 million seniors** fall each year
 - Falling is the leading cause of death in older Americans
 - **Regular exercise reduces:**
 - The risk of developing Alzheimer's disease or dementia by nearly **50%**.
 - The likelihood of falling by **23%**.

Figure 4: Characteristics and needs of mobility limitations and older adults.

- Seniors (cont.)**
 - According to a new study of 2,000 adults conducted by One Poll and commissioned by Cineworld, more than **50%** of the respondents queried believe that it becomes harder and harder to find enthusiasm in everyday life after you become an adult. More directly estimating that life is **the least fun after the age of 45.**
- Seniors (cont.)**
 - Nostalgia, is defined by Merriam Webster as a noun referring to a feeling: "a wistful or excessively sentimental **yearning for return** to or of **some past period** or irrecoverable condition."
 - One method that has received much attention in the treatment of Alzheimer's behaviors in recent years is the **utilization of nostalgic environments using sounds, scenes, props and music from the person's past, to evoke a feeling of nostalgia.** These environments have been shown to soothe some of the dementia behaviors.
- Seniors (cont.)**
 - It's just not disease that affects old age; there are various other issues that govern the **downfall of the health** of the old people. One of the main issues is the **negligence from the younger generation.** Old people need supervision, the laxity to understand the needs and worries of elders make them appear strangers to the younger generation, who later regard them as a burden.

Figure 5: More characteristics and needs of older adults.

4. An Approach for Designing Inclusive Experience

Our design approach to developing inclusive play experiences has evolved through several design studio classes and has become an integral part of the design process. (Figure 6) The design process will be demonstrated in the following with some examples. The final design solutions will not be shown in this paper owing to the commercial constraints of the collaboration agreement.

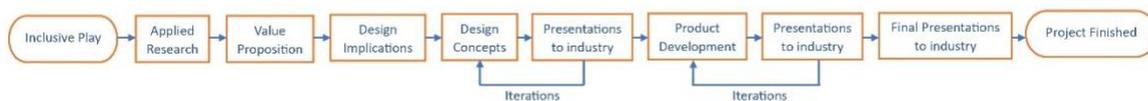


Figure 6: A flow chart of the design process.

4.1 Applied Research

In brief, the process begins with identifying research topics we must focus on. The class gets together using Post-it notes to brainstorm all relevant issues we think are essential. (Figure 7) The issues were divided among groups to conduct some applied research on the needs of different user groups and purposes.

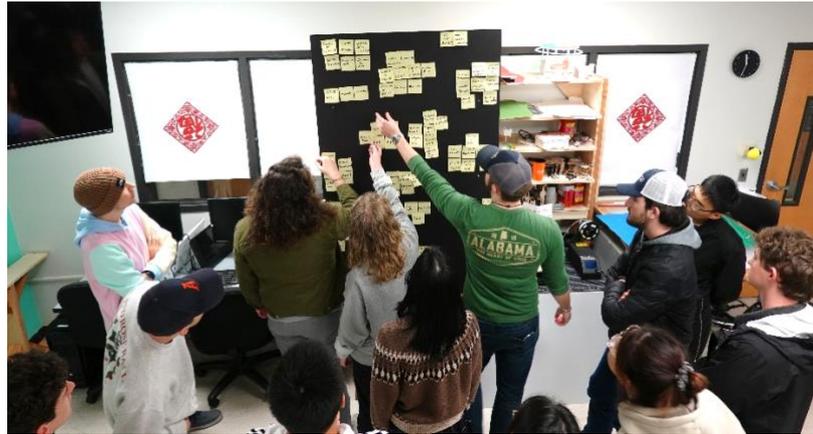


Figure 7: Identifying research issues.

4.2 Value Proposition

From the research, keywords, and phrases that are agreeable for the class to focus on during the design phase were listed on the board. Using the selected keywords, the class developed a Value Proposition statement to set the team's design criteria to follow (Figure 8).

Value Proposition

“We are designing inclusive and intergenerational play experiences, promoting diversity, and providing social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development through an environment that fosters community.”




Figure 8: Value Proposition.

4.3 Design Implications

Design implications from each research issue were created and visualized in a poster format for designers to reference as they develop concepts for inclusive play experiences. Throughout the concept development stage, each design concept must fulfill the needs of multiple user groups by implementing some of the design implication boards (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Some design implication boards

4.4 Design Criteria

From the research, a list of design criteria was developed for each design concept to follow. Each design concept will be judged on how much it has accomplished the requirements in the criteria. The goal is to meet all criteria, but for some design concepts, it may be impossible to do so. Below is the list of criteria:

- Must allow multiple user groups to play according to research findings
- No labeling play for a specific disability
- Equitable play experience – to include but not to lower the level of fun
- Equitable sensation and challenge of play – the feel and thrill
- Encourage social interaction and cooperation
- Encourage intergenerational play
- Create cozy spots when possible
- Encourage sensory play

4.5 Concept Presentation

Concept presentations were made to the industry and compliance experts to ensure that design concepts are feasible, viable, and usable. Iterations of new ideas and refinements continue for several weeks, with weekly presentations to the industry in person and virtually (Figure 10).



Figure 10: Design sketches and presentation.

4.6 Product Development

Once collaborative efforts select design concepts, product development begins, focusing on the usability, feasibility, and viability of each product we develop. At the end of the semester, design solutions were presented to the industry representatives simultaneously, both in person and online (Figure 11).



Figure 11: Final presentation.

5. Conclusion

Play is essential and is for everyone. The lack of play is unhealthy physically, cognitively, emotionally, socially, and mentally. Inclusive play design must continue to be studied and defined for a broader audience/users. Actual inclusive play should not be focused only on physical needs but should be considered more for other disabilities. A well-designed inclusive playground brings everyone to play, thus building a community. Further study needs to concentrate on inclusive play for young and mature adults. Finally, intergenerational play should be more developed because it may help older adults stay active again.

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Music and the Culture Wars in the 1970s and 1980s U.S.

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Abstract

This paper examines how evangelical Christians viewed music as a potential means to enact social change as they were becoming a basis for the Religious Right during the decades that led up to the 1990s, when “culture wars” became prominent in the U.S. It focuses on the periodical, *Christianity Today*, initiated by the politically influential evangelical leader, Billy Graham, to assess the ways in which music was part of the culture wars. The writers for the Christian magazine demonstrated more inclusive attitudes toward rock music than the anti-rock Christian leaders of contemporary and earlier decades that have been documented and analyzed in previous research. Instead of denouncing rock music, the magazine writers utilized the popularity of the musical form to justify their beliefs and activities. At the same time, they also extended some of the ideas earlier critics put forward, such as valorizing classical music and focusing on the youth.

Keywords: Culture Wars, Music, Evangelicals

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Introduction

This paper examines the role music played in the “culture wars” waged by evangelical Christians during the 1970s and 1980s in the U.S., when they increased their political power. In particular, it focuses on the evangelical publication *Christianity Today*, a magazine started by an influential evangelical minister Billy Graham, to examine how evangelical Christians debated music. I argue that while the prominent culture war warriors debated the issues in dualistic terms, as shown by previous research, there was more nuance to the debates over the incorporation of increasingly popular rock music into their ministry and activism.

Culture Wars

The term “culture war” became prominent in the 1990s with the publication of *Culture Wars: The Struggle to Define America* (1991), by sociologist James Davison Hunter. He showed that seemingly unrelated issues such as public funding of the arts, women’s rights, and court-packing, reflect a deeper debate between the “orthodox” and the “progressives” over national identity. Cultures became battlegrounds for political and religious fights. While Hunter spent only a few pages on music in his book, music was a major site of contestation in culture wars. For example, “In 1985, a group of parents formed an organization called Parents’ Music Resource Center (PMRC) and lobbied Congress for a record-rating system to warn parents about the sexual and violent imagery in the lyrics of many rock albums” (Romanowski, 1996, p. 14).

While the term “culture war” became prominent in the early 1990s, the actual wars had been waged in the earlier decades (Kondo, 2005, p.6; Nekola, 2013, pp. 407-408). Historian Andrew Hartman concurred with Hunter and argued that culture wars were a battle for the soul of America, a struggle over defining the national identity, which had repeatedly been waged in American history during times of rapid change. He identified the sixties as one of those historical moments when the nation went through turbulence, which led to the culture wars of the following decades (Hartman, 2016).

The dichotomous nature of the “culture wars,” in which their warriors saw themselves as fighting against the existential threat to the foundation of the country, is evident in the “Culture War” speech by Pat Buchanan at the Republican National Convention in 1992. Buchanan, who had unsuccessfully run against President George H.W. Bush in the primary, called for unity using the language of the war between us and them:

George Bush is a defender of right-to-life, and a champion of the Judeo-Christian values and beliefs upon which America was founded.

The agenda that Clinton & Clinton would impose on America—abortion on demand, a litmus test for the Supreme Court, homosexual rights, discrimination against religious schools, women in combat units [...] it is not the kind of change we can abide in a nation that we still call God’s country.

My friends, this election is about more than who gets what. It is about who we are. It is about what we believe, and what we stand for as Americans. It is a cultural war, as critical to the kind of nation we shall be as was the Cold War itself, for this war is for the soul of America. And in that struggle for the soul of America, Clinton & Clinton are on the other side, and George Bush is on our side.

As Buchanan's emphasis on "Judeo-Christian values and beliefs" and his definition of the U.S. as "God's country" shows, central to the conservatives' idea of national identity was religiosity; they felt that the country was being secularized by their enemy.

The Religious Right (or the Christian Right) was a major proponent of the culture wars. They focused on moral issues to galvanize voters and engaged in culture wars on issues of "abortion, affirmative action, art, censorship, evolution, family values, feminism, homosexuality, intelligence testing, media, multiculturalism, national history standards, pornography, school prayer, sex education, [and] the Western canon" (Hartman, 2016). The Religious Right was a group centered around evangelical Christians who asserted political power through the advancement of religiously based policies. They became visible in the late 1970s and 1980s and emphasized cultural and social issues in advancing their policies. They included banning abortion, opposing gay rights and feminism, promoting prayers in public schools, and eliminating pornography and other corrupt content in the media, which were unified with the theme of "family values." Televangelist Jerry Falwell established the Moral Majority in 1979, which mobilized conservative religious voters to the polls, and helped Ronald Reagan win the presidential election. By the end of the Reagan presidency, the Moral Majority had waned, but the Christian Coalition, founded in 1989 by another televangelist, Pat Robertson, who ran for the presidency himself in 1988, continued the political mobilization of evangelical and other conservative religious voters (Shires, 2007). While these organizations eventually declined, the Religious Right's grip on conservative politics, particularly the Republican Party, remains to this day.

CCM and Moral Debates

The ascendancy of the Religious Right coincided with the rise of the popularity of Contemporary Christian Music (CCM), which combined religious messages with rock and popular music formerly deemed immoral by conservative Christians. The Jesus Movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s, in which former hippies converted to evangelical Christianity and brought along their countercultural cultures to the Christian community, led to Jesus Rock, which paved the way for CCM, which became popular with some crossover success in the 1980s (Baker, 1985; Howard & Streck, 1999; Stowe, 2011; Thornbury, 2018). The title of Larry Norman's song, "Why Should the Devil Have All the Good Music" (1972), summarized the sentiment behind the new genre. In my earlier work, I have shown that CCM coopted not only the musical forms of rock and folk music but also the whitened image of both types of music. Additionally, it incorporated the authentic and inclusive qualities associated with folk music, which had become apparent during the folk revival of the 1950s and 1960s. I also showed that despite the change in rhetoric over time, anti-CCM criticism was centered on race, and it continued well into the 2000s. An analysis of *Explo '72*, an outdoor Christian rock concert hyped as the "Christian Woodstock," revealed that the event propagated conservative political positions (Tachi, 2022).

Christian rock thrived at the same time as it was attacked. Anna Nekola argued that the anti-rock discourse of the 1960s and 1970s by conservative Christians became the basis of the culture wars that followed. Critics of the music argued that not only the lyrics and cultural association of rock but also the sound itself would corrupt the youth, making them rebellious to authority, which would lead to the disintegration of society and the nation. In particular, three prominent conservative Christian leaders, David A. Noebel, Bob Larson, and Frank Garlock, made the claim that rock music was inherently evil, barbaric, and had the power to corrupt the listeners, and since young people, like other "inferior" people like women and

non-whites, were more susceptible to evil influences, they would become degenerate and rebellious, which would then destroy the foundation of society such as family and church and ultimately the nation; in order to prevent that, one must wage a full-scale war against this music. They also tied this war to anti-secularism and anti-Communism. According to Nekola, the dualism inherent in their arguments—good/evil, civilization/barbarism, religiosity/secularism, and the concept of war itself—persisted in the later decades when social conservatives engaged in the culture wars, arguing for the need to combat the negative influence of popular culture on the youth (Nekola, 2013).

Billy Graham and *Christianity Today*

Billy Graham was an influential evangelical leader with political clout who not only reached out to millions of people worldwide both in person and through media but also “personally knew all twelve presidents from Harry S. Truman to Barack Obama,” ten of whom ranked as his “friends”; four of them, Johnson, Nixon, Reagan, and Bush I, and their wives, were his “close friends” (Wacker, 2017). As Edith L. Blumhofer wrote in her book, *Songs I Love to Sing: The Billy Graham Crusades and the Shaping of Modern Worship*, Graham utilized music in his ministry from the 1940s by teaming up with classically trained singer George Beverly Shea and music director Cliff Barrows. They regularly held large-scale preaching events called the Crusade, to which music was central. Shea would sing a hymn at the beginning of the rally to set the tone, followed by Graham’s preaching. Barrow would arrange the music program to suit the audience and the place where the crusade took place. They had mixed opinions about rock music. Shea continued to hold the view that “neither rock ‘n’ roll nor ‘Christian rock’ had a place in Christian contexts.” Barrows stated that “his parents [...] considered rock ‘n’ roll ‘the devil’s music’ and would have forbidden him to listen to it” and worried about the music his own children listened to. Graham regularly wrote about his “concerns about the role of music and musical styles” in his “My Answer” columns. According to his biographer, Graham studied rock in the 1960s by listening to records and surreptitiously attending concerts to better understand the young generation, whom he valued. Eventually, in the late 1960s, the trio incorporated CCM into their programs. When Graham endorsed *Explo ’72*, he admitted that rock was not his favorite music, but he regarded the Christian rock concert as a youth revival and praised it “as a work of God that revered the Bible, promoted the new birth, and prioritized evangelism.” The trio altered the musical style of their crusade again in the 1980s to further accommodate their ministry to the younger generation (Blumhofer, 2023). Graham’s gradual acceptance of rock music differed from the Christian leaders’ denouncement of the music that Nekola demonstrated, but it also showed a commonality in the sense that his primary concern was the young generation.

Graham established *Christianity Today* in 1956, which “soon won recognition as the normative voice of mainstream evangelicalism” (Wacker, 2017). During the 1980s, the bimonthly magazine included articles that referenced political issues, such as calling for the need for a Christian think tank (Henry, 1985, pp. 14-15) and the prospect of televangelist Pat Robertson’s likely run for the presidency (Spring, 1985, pp. 48-49, 51). During the 1984 presidential election, the magazine published extensive articles explaining each party’s policies on issues pertinent to Christians (October 5 and October 19 issues). Alongside these political pieces, the magazine published articles on the role of music in evangelism and what music was appropriate for their causes. For example, C. Nolan Huizenga wrote an article entitled “A Biblical ‘Tune-up’ for Hymn Singing” in the June 27, 1980, issue, which showed his interpretation of what the Bible said about hymns. He concluded that the Bible did not specify the types of music to be used. “Stated simply, the Bible gives us the spiritual ‘why’

and ‘how’ of music in worship; it does not give us the musical or stylistic ‘what’” (p. 21). He further noted, “Paul discusses the attitude and motivation of the singers and the spiritual content of their hymns, but he says nothing about musical styles forms, or accompaniment. It is important, especially for professional musicians, to remember that we have no inspired scriptural revelation regarding the music itself, which is largely affected by changing culture and history” (p.21). Using the same logic, rock music could be an appropriate medium for hymns. The author thus laid out a case that would justify CCM.

The magazine published positive reviews of Bob Dylan’s *Slow Train Coming*, an album considered to show the former 60’s folk singer’s turn to evangelical Christianity. In the January 4, 1980, issue, Noel Paul Stookey (of the folk trio Peter, Paul, and Mary) contended that Dylan’s new release was obviously a “Christian album” and that his credential of having made songs that questioned authority when he was a folk singer made the album convincing. In the same issue, the magazine’s art director at the time, David Singer, wrote an article entitled “Not Buying into the Subculture,” in which he asserted that *Slow Train Coming* showed that Dylan’s “quest [had] been satisfied” (p. 33). According to Singer, Dylan was appreciated for his “sage-like message” in his lyrics, which showed his keen observation of human nature, but he had not found the meaning or the roots of the truth he had revealed until he converted to Christianity. Singer also praised Dylan’s album for not having “bought into the Christian subculture’s status quo.” He wrote: “His gift to us remains his once-removed prophetic insight” (p.33). By praising Dylan’s prophetic and critical abilities while at the same time determining that Dylan’s ultimate answer was found in evangelical Christianity, Singer justified his faith.

The magazine continued to follow Dylan. In an article entitled “Has Born-again Bob Dylan Returned to Judaism?” (January 13, 1984), the author reported on the speculation concerning Dylan’s possible return to Judaism after his conversion to evangelical Christianity which became evident with the release of *Slow Train Coming* in 1979. The author cited Dylan’s friend and a former pastor who had guided him to Christianity to make a case that he was still a Christian. His basis was that Dylan had not refused the invitation to participate in an Olympic evangelistic outreach. The author noted the significance of Dylan’s turn to Christianity because he was an influential countercultural figure in the 1960s who had “a reputation as a musical prophet to the sixties generation” (p. 46). Instead of denouncing rock music, these articles used Dylan’s credentials and fame as a folk and rock star of the previous decades to justify their beliefs. If the former countercultural superstar had come to their side, they must have been right.

The magazine also addressed the crossover success of Amy Grant, who debuted in 1978 and whose 1985 album *Unguarded* “achieved gold status (500,000 units sold) and a #35 ranking (out of 200) on *Billboard* magazine’s ‘Top Pop Albums’ list” (p. 62). In his article in the November 8, 1985, issue, Steve Rabey reported that some Christians criticized Grant for using “hard-edged rock” and for appearing on the 1985 Grammy broadcast wearing a leopard-print jacket and being barefoot. She was also accused of having a beer company sponsor her concerts. The article defended her by clarifying that it was the concert promotor and not her who had a contract with a beer company and that Grant did not regard her sexy appearance as “signs of sexual sin” but her efforts to “present a strong but modern female Christian role model to young people who confuse lust with love” (p. 62). Don Butler, executive director of the Gospel Music Association, was quoted as stating that people like him and Grant “should go where people are,” which was what Grant was doing (p. 62). The

writer justified her popular and secular outlook by regarding it as a means to reach out to the secular world.

Rabey's other piece in the same year, "A Christian 'Heavy-Metal' Band Makes Its Mark on the Secular Music Industry," reported on the rising popularity of "Christian heavy metal" music and how it was met with criticism within the evangelical community. Rabey took up the Christian metal band Stryper, who were "shattering the stereotypes" of heavy metal bands. Unlike their secular counterparts, who had taken "the themes of generalized rage, sexual abandon, drug abuse, violence, and despair into the homes of millions of young record buyers" and whose music videos "graphically depict[ed] violence and rebellion," Stryper incorporated Christian themes into heavy metal sound while maintaining the same type of make-up and attire (p. 45). The band's drummer and spokesperson, Michael Sweet, stated that his band's purpose was to tell "God's side of the story" in the secular popular music world, particularly to the "young kids—in a way they can understand" (p.45). Rabey explained that since gospel music companies had "promoted sanitized hard-rock bands for 15 years," the combination of rock music with Christian lyrics was "nothing new" (p.45). It is interesting to note that while the author viewed this band favorably, he employed the same language as earlier critics to describe secular heavy metal, such as violence and rebellion. He saw the band as an exception to the otherwise evil heavy metal music. Both the musician and the author focused on the influence the music had on young people, a concern shared by the earlier critics of rock music.

The article reported that the band received mixed reviews from the evangelical community. The pastor of Calvary Chapel, California, which was central to the Jesus Movement, praised the band for "pulling people out of hell" and "bring[ing] people [...] to fellowship" (p. 47). Other pastors accepted the band by viewing its approach as the end justifying the means. Still others denounced the use of rock music in evangelism. Bob Larson "strongly object[ed] to the whole heavy-metal frame of reference, their stage presence, and the chains, leather, and studs" and "question[ed] the wisdom of using this kind of imagery" while appreciating the band members' sincerity and the message that they tried to send (p.47). David Noebel categorically denied the music, along with the televangelist Jimmy Swaggart, who would later famously disgrace himself and the evangelical community with his scandal. Sweet responded by saying that he respected Swaggart and hoped they could talk to each other someday with the hope that Swaggart would understand that "God can use whatever he wants to use" (p. 47). The band took a conciliatory attitude toward the detractor of their music and justified their choice of music by expressing their desire to reach out to the youth. Furthermore, there was a difference in tone between Larson and Noebel in their criticism of Christian rock.

As Nekola showed, the earlier Christian critics who denounced rock 'n' roll as "bad music" contrasted it to "good music." Noebel, in particular, provided a chart that listed the specific characteristics of each type of music. The qualities ascribed to "good music" are those associated with Western classical music, such as having a "variety of pitches" and "melodies" and "us[ing] many chords (harmonies)" and modulation, while "bad music" was less melodious, had limited numbers of chords and based on "beats" instead of rhythm, with "unnatural" accents on off beats (p. 412). According to William D. Romanowski, in the first half of the twentieth century, critics also pointed to musical characteristics associated with classical music as Godly while denouncing popular music, which allegedly lacked such musical elements, as "inspired...by demons" (p. 212). One author suggested in the 1940s that, as Romanowski paraphrased, "Bach, Beethoven, and Mendelssohn were appropriate for

Christian participation, but the popular music of the day threatened moral and spiritual purity” (p. 212).

While the articles that appeared in the magazine during the 1980s affirmed Christian rock, classical music was also given reverence. In the March 15, 1985, issue, musicologist Richard Dinwiddie, in his article entitled “J.S. Bach: God’s Master Musician,” wrote extensively on Johann Sebastian Bach, whom he saw as not only a composer but also a “competent theologian.” “He expressed a profound theology in music better than anyone has ever done” (p. 17). Dinwiddie stressed the fact that Bach was a man of faith who studied Luther’s translation of the Bible diligently and believed God had called him to be “a minister of music” (p. 17). Bach also edited the text to reflect his theology, a fact that was required to truly appreciate his music. Dinwiddie bemoaned the fact that “often, with disturbing frequency, the people who make decisions concerning sacred music in church, school, and on religious radio seem to seek primarily the popular paths of mediocrity” and avoid Bach, thinking that he made “too many demands upon the listener” (p. 16). Dinwiddie insisted on the supremacy of Bach’s music and portrayed Bach as an evangelical role model who devoted himself to expressing his worship of God in his music.

Conclusion

This paper showed how Christian rock music was debated in the decades following the tumultuous 1960s. The counterculture of the 1960s gave rise to the reactionary politics of cultural and social conservatism which led to the culture wars. As the culture wars were waged and the Religious Right amassed power, rock music was incorporated into evangelical Christianity, becoming the subject of debate. While fierce criticism of rock music by prominent Christian leaders left a mark on the ensuing culture wars, more nuanced discussions about the music took place in the ministry and publications of an influential evangelical leader. An examination of his periodical demonstrated that writers for the magazine held a more tolerant attitude toward rock music, justifying and utilizing its popularity while, at the same time, sharing with earlier divisive critics implicit valorization of classical music and concern for music’s influence on the youth.

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***Black Kewpie and Little Black Sambo:
Reading Juvenile Food Culture in American-Occupied Japan***

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Official Conference Proceedings

Abstract

This paper aims to explore the hitherto underexamined topic of juvenile food culture in American-occupied Japan (1945–1952) by analyzing *Kuronbo Sambo* (1949), a Japanese translation of Helen Bannerman’s *The Story of Little Black Sambo*. Just like other Japanese translations of Bannerman’s tale, the story of *Kuronbo Sambo* also starts with Sambo, the protagonist, facing the danger of getting eaten by tigers, but the tigers turn into butter; Sambo’s mother uses it to make a feast, and Sambo and his family consume them as dinner. Using the dialogue translation in the 1953 Japanese version of Bannerman’s tale as a thread, Erica Kanesaka Kalnay highlights the relation between the racial imaginary of *Little Black Sambo* and the *kawaii*, or “cute,” aesthetic of postwar Japan. Yet I want to highlight a different dimension that is found in the Japanese translation, that is, a figure of Sambo drawn into the text: a black Kewpie. He appears as a black-colored version of Kewpie—the logo mascot of the first Japanese brand of mayonnaise, not butter, with the same name. While the work reproduces the prewar concept of Little Black Sambo, *Kuronbo Sambo*, I contend, situates the narrative at the intersection between race and food through the black Kewpie, creating a new subtext. By analyzing the visual representation of Sambo, in addition to materials related to Kewpie at the Celluloid House Yokohamakan and Daicel-Ijinkan, this paper argues that *Kuronbo Sambo* points to a shift in children’s food culture in postwar Japan.

Keywords: Little Black Sambo, Blackness, Kewpie, Food, American-Occupied Japan

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Introduction

This paper explores the hitherto underexamined topic of juvenile food culture in American-occupied Japan by analyzing *Kuronbo Sambo* (Shima, 1949), a Japanese translation of Helen Bannerman's *The Story of Little Black Sambo* (Bannerman, 1899). Similar to other Japanese translations of Bannerman's story, *Kuronbo Sambo* starts with Sambo, the eponymous character, facing the danger of being eaten by tigers, but the tigers turn into butter. Sambo's mother uses it to make a feast, and Sambo and his family consume it as dinner. Using the dialogue translation in the 1953 Japanese version of Bannerman's story as a thread, one scholar highlights how "the Victorian racial imaginary of *Little Black Sambo* lives on in the *kawaii* (可愛い), or 'cute,' aesthetic of postwar Japan" (Kalnay, 2020, p. 566). Yet here, I want to highlight a different dimension found in the illustrations in the Japanese translation; the figure of Sambo is drawn into the text as a black version of Kewpie—the logo mascot of the Japanese brand of mayonnaise, not butter, with the same name.

The Kewpie Corporation was the first company to produce mayonnaise products in Japan, starting in 1925. Discontinued in 1943 because of World War II, the Kewpie Corporation began to manufacture mayonnaise again during the American occupation period in 1948, one year before the release of *Kuronbo Sambo*. Although *Kuronbo Sambo* reproduces the prewar anti-black racist concept of Little Black Sambo observed in subsequent U.S. editions¹ of the book, I contend that *Kuronbo Sambo* can be read as a narrative negotiating race and food through the black Kewpie, thereby producing a new postwar Japanese subtext. By analyzing the visual representation of Sambo, in addition to materials related to Kewpie at the Celluloid House Yokohamakan and Daicel-Ijinkan, this paper argues that *Kuronbo Sambo* points to a shift in children's food culture in early postwar Japan which was informed by food shortages and domestic hunger.²

Kuronbo Sambo

Despite being the earliest Japanese translation of Bannerman's story, *Kuronbo Sambo*³ has received little or no scholarly attention, though there are a number of studies exploring the Japanese reception and translation of *The Story of Little Black Sambo*. Previous studies erroneously identify the first complete translation of the story in Japan as *Chibikuro Sambo*, published in 1953 by Iwanami Shoten, one of the most reputable publishers in the country. However, a Japanese translation of the story had already been made available in American-occupied Japan by the publisher Sekaisha in 1949 in an anthology titled *Ten ga Okkochite kuru: Amerika Douwa shuu (The Sky Is Falling: A Collection of American Fairy Tales)* (Shima, 1949), which contains *Kuronbo Sambo*.

Curiously, the collection—edited by Teruo Shima—misleadingly presents well-known European stories, such as *Henny Penny*, *The Rooster*, *The Mouse and the Little Red Hen*, *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, *The Three Little Pigs*, and *Little Red Hen and the Grains of Wheat*, as

¹ For example, the 1908 edition illustrated by John R. Neill, best known for his illustrations of the Oz books by L. Frank Baum, featured images of Sambo that were even more caricatured and dehumanized.

² The school lunch program was initiated in 1946 to improve children's nutrition. The program provided powdered skim milk imported from the United States as an essential source of protein and minerals. By 1949, however, due to the continuing food shortage, most children were receiving only 105 to 180 calories per day, well below the target of 600 calories per child. See Chris Aldous (2010), pp. 252–255, for a more detailed writing on the school lunch program.

³ *Kuronbo* is a Japanese racial slur for black people.

American fairy tales without mentioning the names of their original authors. The preface to *The Sky Is Falling: A Collection of American Fairy Tales* further suggests that these works, including *Kuronbo Sambo*, were imported to American-occupied Japan because of their popularity in the United States, stating, “日本の、小さい子供たちが、浦島太郎や、かちかち山の、お話が、大好きなように、アメリカの小さい子供たちは、この童話を、お父さんや、お母さんから、きいたり、ご本で、よんだりして、大きくなっていくのです (Just as little Japanese children love the stories of Urashima Taro and Kachikachiyama, little American children grow up hearing these fairy tales from their mothers and fathers or reading them in books).”⁴ The entanglement of *Kuronbo Sambo*'s anthology format and its misplacement in American literature has obscured its origin within Japanese culture.⁵

The influence of the American literary milieu on the 1949 Japanese rendition of *The Story of Little Black Sambo* is evident in its visual elements. The context of American literature facilitated a visual shift in the depiction of a pickaninny as a black Kewpie, highlighting the complex ways in which stories and images travel across borders and are transformed and reinterpreted in different contexts. While Bannerman's storyline was simple enough for small children to read (it is well known that she wrote and illustrated the book for her young daughter), the illustrations that accompany the narrative garnered much criticism (mainly in the United States) for the portrayal of Sambo as a pickaninny, a derogatory caricature of a dark-skinned child of African descent and a racial slur for African American children. A pickaninny, according to Robin Bernstein, is “an imagined, subhuman black juvenile who was typically depicted outdoors, merrily accepting (or even inviting) violence [...] Characteristics of the pickaninny include dark or sometimes jet-black skin, exaggerated eyes and mouth, the action of gorging (especially on watermelon), and the state of being threatened or attacked by animals (especially alligators, geese, dogs, pigs, or tigers). Pickaninnies often wear ragged clothes (which suggest parental neglect) and are sometimes partially or fully naked [...] the figure is always juvenile, always of color, and always resistant if not immune to pain” (Bernstein, 2011, pp. 34–35).

The 1949 edition showcases three visual versions of Sambo, all illustrated by Fumio Matsuda. Sambo's first appearance is among a collection of animal sketches at the beginning of the anthology (including Peter Rabbit, the Three Little Pigs, etc.), where he sits calmly facing a tiger with his hands behind his back. Sambo's clothing is minimal, and he wears hoop earrings and ankle bracelets that carry the connotations of slavery. The purplish-blue background obscures his skin tone. The second portrayal, a profile view of Sambo's face with earrings, a necklace, and a hair bow, is the most similar to that of a pickaninny—the original, imported image of Sambo from the United States—emphasizing his jet-black skin and full lips. The third version, which appears in the main text, however, takes an aesthetic turn as it reimagines Sambo as a black Kewpie.

⁴ The collection was published in 1949 by Sekaisha during the American occupation of Japan. At that time, there was an active incorporation of American and Western lifestyles and culture among the Japanese masses. *Ichinen no Sekai Meisaku Dokuon: Tesuto tsuki [First Year's World Masterpiece Readers: With Test]*, published by Jitsugyo no Nihon Sha in 1950, also featured *Kuronbo Sambo* as an American fairy tale.

⁵ *The Story of Little Black Sambo*'s Japanese origin is unclear, as many publishers in Japan produced pirated versions.

Kewpie and American-Occupied Japan

Kewpie, originally a comic-strip character created by Rose O’Neill in the United States in 1909, is most famously recognized in Japan as the mascot of Kewpie mayonnaise rather than as O’Neill’s comic character. In 1925, the Kewpie Corporation was the first company to produce mayonnaise in Japan. Because of the immense popularity of Kewpie dolls, O’Neill initially sold them as paper dolls in the United States. However, the first Kewpie doll was produced as a bisque doll in Germany in 1912. Kewpie dolls arrived in Japan at about the same time as in Germany, approximately between 1913 and 1915, when the first Japanese bisque Kewpie doll was produced. From 1913 to 1923, Japan was the world’s largest producer of celluloid toys, and Japanese-made celluloid Kewpie dolls were exported worldwide. During this pre-World War II Kewpie doll boom, Toichiro Nakashima, the founder of the Kewpie Corporation, designated Kewpie as the company emblem, creating a symbolic association between Kewpie and the distinctively Western food category, mayonnaise.

Although production was halted in 1943 because of wartime raw-material shortages of eggs, vegetable oil, and vinegar, the Kewpie Corporation resumed manufacturing mayonnaise during the American occupation period in 1948, a year before *Kuronbo Sambo*’s debut. The production of prewar-style Japanese Kewpie dolls also continued throughout the postwar occupation era, encompassing the creation of black Kewpie dolls alongside conventional nude-colored, cherubic figures. Various manufacturers of Kewpie dolls catered to overseas markets, and during the occupation, American servicemen found the Japanese Kewpie dolls rare and valuable and often kept them as souvenirs. From 1947 on, the General Headquarters of the Allied Forces (GHQ) mandated that all export products from Japan must carry the inscription “Made in Occupied Japan.” Thus, celluloid Kewpie dolls produced during that period have that inscription. The details of the production of black Kewpie dolls in Japan remain obscure and subject to speculation. One plausible explanation for their genesis, however, is that blackness was a marker of robust health,⁶ a notion that is also underlined in the narrative of *Kuronbo Sambo*.

The Black Kewpie

Although *The Story of Little Black Sambo* explores themes of vulnerability and consumption, *Kuronbo Sambo* delves into those themes even more deeply by emphasizing the story’s association with food (mayonnaise), thereby bringing to the fore the *edibility* of the black Kewpie. The physical appearance of the black Kewpie (with its rounded face, tummy, and tufted hairstyle that resembles an infant, complete with an impish smile) in *Kuronbo Sambo* adds another layer of complexity to the story’s underlying message through the fusion of Sambo with Kewpie, a culinary icon; the black Kewpie’s innocent silhouette assumes or plays the role of Sambo. This creates a unique perspective on the story’s subtext, suggesting that the black Kewpie is not simply a mirror image of a pickaninny, a racial caricature, but is a distinct character that shifts the narrative’s focus to the consumption of an edible black Kewpie as opposed to an edible pickaninny. As such, later in the story, the black Kewpie faces depredation by tigers. The accompanying illustration vividly captures the sense of danger as Sambo frantically climbs a palm tree to escape the beasts. This image—in which

⁶ A known example is the former Calpis logo, which shows a black man with full red lips drinking Calpis while grinning.

the black child figure appears unusually strong and almost wild—was created by the editorial staff and illustrator and is not in the original text.

Sambo's vigor is emphasized further in the portrayal of food toward the end of the story, another significant revision of the consumption theme in *Kuronbo Sambo*. The original dinner sequence showcasing Sambo and his parents, Black Mumbo and Black Jumbo, indulging in pancakes prepared with melted tiger butter is memorable but controversial because it portrays the characters as gluttonous. For example, Black Mumbo eats twenty-seven pancakes, Black Jumbo eats fifty-five, and Little Black Sambo eats 169, but the dinner that appears in *Kuronbo Sambo* is a feast (ごちそう, content and amount not specified), not pancakes. The story concludes with a sudden shift in focus to Sambo's physical transformation after having eaten the tiger butter, saying, “とらの、ばたーを、たべた、くろんぼ・さんぼーは、とらのように、大へん、つよいこどもになりましたとさ (Upon eating the tiger butter, Sambo became a strong child, just like a tiger).”

During the postwar occupation of Japan, a dire domestic hunger crisis struck, leading to widespread malnutrition. With food in short supply, daily calorie intakes plummeted, and a new form of commercial black market emerged nationwide. Although the food situation started to improve in 1948, basic staples such as butter and mayonnaise remained beyond the means of many people. Even as hunger persisted, paradoxically, children's literature of the immediate postwar era presented the fantasy of fatty and delicious foods. *Kuronbo Sambo* illustrates this shift in Japan's dream food landscape, ultimately linking good health with the black hero character Sambo. By shedding light on Sambo's attachment to robustness, the story elevates the significance of food and blackness as a symbol of strength and vitality.

Conclusion

The American occupation of Japan significantly impacted the experience of blacks in Japan. The postwar period saw the emergence of a generation of mixed-race children, known as GI babies, born to American servicemen and Japanese women. *Kuronbo Sambo*'s story underlines the theme of food and its connection to the postwar Japanese perception of the black child figure. By transforming into a black Kewpie, Sambo's body emerges as a transnational space where robustness and blackness blend seamlessly. In American-occupied Japan, the image of the black Kewpie turned Sambo, which accommodates the long-standing concept of the pickaninny, was uniquely consumed through its association with food in a way that differs from other versions of the work.

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Collective Gender Fictions and the Takarazuka Revue

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Abstract

As a unique all-female musical company founded in 1914, the Takarazuka Revue provides significant insights into Japanese fan culture. In the Revue, *otokoyaku* (i.e., the women who perform male roles) perform heterosexual love stories on the stage. However, little attention has been paid to the fact that the *otokoyaku* also wear men's clothing in their off-stage life and behave like men—at least visually—as if there is no performative distinction between their on- and off-stage lives. Leonie Strickland observes that *otokoyaku* can usefully be understood by looking at the three spheres in which they perform, that is, in their on-stage, off-stage, and private spheres, and that only in the private sphere do the *otokoyaku* return to who they are. However, I argue that the relationship between these three spheres is more complex because the gender fictions are not authored by the performers alone. In this paper, I want to propose the concept of “collective gender fictions,” by which I refer to the (pseudo-heterosexual) gender narratives created over time within an imaginary female community that contains predominantly female fans. These collective gender fictions are often invisible and even illegible to those outside the community but have more subversive potential than generally assumed.

Keywords: Cross-Dressing, Fan Culture, Collective Gender Fictions

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Introduction

As a unique all-female musical company founded in 1914, the Takarazuka Revue provides important insights into Japanese fan culture. The most popular performers are *otokoyaku* (i.e., the women who perform male roles) who perform gender fictions on the stage to enact heterosexual love stories. These actresses wear male costumes and play male roles in a wide variety of theatrical plays, including Romeo Montague in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and Jay Gatsby in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. However, little attention has been paid to the fact that *otokoyaku* also wear men's clothing in their off-stage life and behave like men—at least visually—in their daily life as if there is no performative distinction between their on- and off-stage lives.

Historian Leonie Strickland (2008) observes that *otokoyaku* can usefully be understood by looking at the three spheres in which they perform: namely, the on-stage, off-stage, and private spheres (p.112). Strickland asserts that *otokoyaku* perform male gender roles in the theater as well as in public. Only in the private sphere do the *otokoyaku* return to who they are in terms of their biological sex (Strickland, 2008, p. 112). However, I argue that the relationship between these three spheres is more complex because the fiction of masculine gender, for which the Takarazuka Revue is famed, is not authored by the performers alone. Hence, I propose the concept of “collective gender fictions,” by which I refer to the (pseudo-heterosexual) gender narratives created over time within an imaginary female community that contains predominantly female fans. These collective gender fictions are often invisible and even illegible to those outside the community but have subversive potential to undermine traditional male-centered values.

I suggest that the collective gender fictions performed by the Takarazuka Revue are more pervasive and deep-rooted in history than they may seem initially, although they are certainly a cultural work of the (predominantly) female imagination. This paper traces the “origin” and development of collective gender fictions through an analysis of fan letters and photographs from the 1920s to the 1940s in the Takarazuka archives.

Fans and the Takarazuka Revue in the 1920s

When the Takarazuka Revue was founded in 1914, all its actresses were approximately 15 years old and there were virtually no adult actresses. Hence, the Takarazuka Revue in the early days resembled girls' school plays. As it was an all-female theater company, the actresses played the on-stage roles of both men and boys. However, this does not mean that there were two distinct roles for what we now call *otokoyaku* and *musumeyaku* (i.e., female roles) from the outset. Each Takarazuka actress was expected to play both male and female stage roles.

A 1919 photograph of Takarazuka actresses shows that there was no distinction created between *otokoyaku* and *musumeyaku* in the off-stage sphere (Figure 1). All Takarazuka actresses wore kimonos and had long hair in traditional Japanese hairstyles.



Figure 1. Takarazuka actresses in 1919 (Kobayashi, 1923, p. 13)

Likewise, fan letters suggest that the fans did not differentiate between their favorite actresses based on whether they performed male or female roles, although their reaction toward the performances by Takarazuka actresses reveals that some fans projected their ideal male gender onto their favorite actresses, which can be seen in the earliest female fan letters to Takarazuka actresses, which were most likely written in the 1920s.

Everyone who has seen the Takarazuka Revue admires your voice and technique. And they look up to you. Ms. Taeko, you are not the queen of Takarazuka, but the king (Kawahara, 1922, p.24; my translation).

This fan letter is particularly noteworthy because the writer describes her favorite Takarazuka actress as a king, not a queen, which shows that she imagines the female performer, Takamine Taeko, as being a male sovereign prince. While this fan letter may or may not be a sporadic example, it is important to note that some fans had already begun to view some Takarazuka actresses as specifically masculine-gendered actors, which is a gender fiction created not only by the performing female body but also endorsed by her fans.

The number of male fans of the Takarazuka Revue, especially young male fans, was by far larger than the number of female fans before the 1937 Sino-Japanese War (Kawasaki, 2005, p.119). When read within this context, the fan letters from women in the 1920s—especially the one quoted above—may be unique during that time. These female fan letters give us an insight into the personal gaze of female fans who did not passively consume the play but actively inscribed the fiction of masculine gender onto their favorite female performers. I suggest that this perception contributed to paving the way for the emergence of collective gender fictions in which *otokoyaku* are no longer male stage roles that Takarazuka actresses adopt solely during the stage performance. Instead, the collective gender fictions are produced, sustained, and reproduced through the agency of female fans.

Off-stage *Otokoyaku* Performances in the 1930s

According to Sonoko Azuma (2006), a distinct demarcation between *otokoyaku* (i.e., male roles) and *musumeyaku* (i.e., female roles) emerged in the Takarazuka Revue during the 1930s. Like men, *otokoyaku* cut their hair short. Until the 1920s, *otokoyaku* played male roles with hats to hide their long feminine hair (p.75). In the 1930s, however, the *otokoyaku* attempted to appear more masculine by approximating the physical appearance of men, that is, by cutting their hair short, which until the 1920s was taboo for Japanese women. This means that the 1930s was not only a time of on-stage gender-role differentiation but heralded the emergence

of a continuum between on- and off-stage lives, as the female performers of male roles chose to assume a masculine gender identity in their daily life—if only in appearance—as expressed by their short hair.

The legendary *otokoyaku*, Kasugano Yachiyo, is a good example. My grandmother Mineko Miyamoto was a fan of the Takarazuka Revue. As a little 6-year-old girl, she had the rare opportunity to meet Kasugano Yachiyo in person, when she visited my great-grandfather's atelier in Tokyo. My grandmother remembered that Kasugano Yachiyo wore a tailored man's suit with tie, jacket, and trousers when she was being photographed.

My grandmother reminisced that, in the 1930s, *otokoyaku* wore men's suits exclusively and had their hair cut short. This suggests that *otokoyaku* and *musumeyaku* were no longer roles that Takarazuka actresses could take on and off to perform at will. My grandmother's photograph of Kasugano Yachiyo tells a similar story (Figure 2).



Figure 2. A 1936 photograph from Kasugano Yachiyo's visit to my great-grandfather's atelier in Okusawa, Tokyo. Left to right: Kasugano Yachiyo (*otokoyaku*), Nijo Miyako (*musumeyaku*), a playwright, my grandmother (Mineko Miyamoto), and my great-grandfather (Saburo Miyamoto).

In Figure 2, Kasugano Yachiyo is shown wearing a tailored jacket and a tie, and her hair is cut short like a man, just like my great-grandfather and the playwright. In contrast, Nijo Miyako wears a kimono and has a traditional Japanese female hairstyle, while the little girl, my grandmother, wears a dress and has an *okappa* (bob) hairstyle and both women are seated. By contrast, Kasugano Yachiyo stands with the other men in the photograph. In the 1930s, *otokoyaku* no longer literally meant male roles that could be taken on and off but became an intricate aspect of the performative self.

Conclusion

Through an analysis of archival materials regarding the Takarazuka Revue and an interview with my maternal grandmother, this paper has illustrated Takarazuka actresses' gender fictions, particularly *otokoyaku*, as a collective and historical construct. These collective gender fictions have evolved over the 110 years of the history of the Takarazuka Revue between the actresses'

on- and off-stage lives, between the actresses and their fans, and between the theater and print media.

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Romance Scam and Legal Interpreting/Translation

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Abstract

Due to COVID-19 starting in 2020, the flow of people or goods was restricted. Along with that, the mobility of criminals, migration, or smuggling of criminal items such as drugs were also stopped. On the other hand, romance scams have skyrocketed through the internet or SNS so that criminal groups or violent groups could raise their fund or earn money on behalf of smuggling. Romance scams have been popular now; however, the interrogation procedure of criminals' selves has not accumulated so much and the method of fraud has changed and varied in many ways. The author has been involved in interrogation as a legal interpreter and translator at police, prosecutors' office, or the court in Japan, however, the knowledge about romance scams or fraud related to the relationship or romance affairs has not been recorded as "romance scams" but described just as "fraud" in Japan, thereby leading to the lack of dissemination of proper information or proper interrogation focusing on romance or affairs. This may also have contributed to the expansion of damages and a number of victims who did not understand the foreign languages or schemes in Japan. This presentation elaborates on the current situation of interrogation at various types of investigation institutions through foreign language interpreters or translators as legal interpreters and discusses how they need to work without proper information or proper conditions without accumulated knowledge or information.

Keywords: Romance Scam, Legal Interpreters, Interrogation, Organized Crimes, SNS

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1. Introduction

Due to COVID-19 starting in 2020, the flow of people or goods was suddenly restricted. Along with that, the mobility of criminals, migration, smuggling or trafficking of criminal/illegal items were also stopped.

On the other hand, a new type of crime, i.e. romance scams, has skyrocketed through the internet or SNS. Some people who scattered depended on SNS, such as Facebook, X (ex-Twitter), Instagram in Japan. Because of this, organized criminal groups or violent groups could earn money even though they could not fly. Romance scams, likewise, have been popular all over the world now.

Due to lack of real communication, meeting or talking, some started enjoying communication through the internet or SNS in a virtual atmosphere, however, not all the people were real or honest in communication. This kind of tendency caught the attention of criminal groups, who thought this might be a chance for fraud. Then, they decided to pretend to be “executive businessperson of blue-chip companies”, “medical doctor”, “military working in Syria, Iraq, or Afghanistan”. If it were real, it would be obvious that any military working in such conflict areas could not use the internet and communicate with others without any permission by the military or defense department. Some women, however, easily believed their stories and fell in love with those fake people. In Japan, some 941 cases were reported as romance scams in 2022: this was more than 10 times compared to 2019 (72 cases reported).

2. The Details of Cases

This chapter describes the details of three real romance scam cases in Japan. Those cases depict the method about how they use SNS and make casualties believe their stories.

2.1 Organized Groups Located in African Countries

Nigeria and Ghana have been centers of fraud (romance scam) groups. In particular, several Ghanaian and Japanese organized groups of romance scam, and some of them were finally arrested and deported from Ghana to Japan, then being indicted.

2.2 Yahoo Boy

Cybercrimes including romance scam have been serious social issues and those criminals were called Yahoo Boy. They have been pretending to be government officials or royal family members and asked to rend bank accounts for their secret capitals. In the past, they sent letters or fax message, but recently they started using yahoo mails, then they were called Yahoo Boy.

2.3 Mark Alan Ruffalo & Japanese Comic (Manga) Artist

A Japanese female as known as “a queen of lady’s comic artist” was also in trouble of romance scam.

She received the first message from a person named “Mark Alan Ruffalo” through Facebook around February 2018.

She has been an ardent fan of Mark Alan Ruffalo and watched most of his films. First, she didn't pay attention to his message. She thought that Mark might be a fan of her comics, since her works were translated all over the world.

After that, he continued sending message describing the backside stories of shootings or conventional conversation. She replied to his message and finally had a video chat with him, as he asked whether she believed he was a real Mark or not. Finally, the video chat screen showed "real Mark Alan Ruffalo", a Hollywood film actor and he had "A Tale of Genji" (one of her comic works). It should have been a deep fake with AI, but she believed "him".

Later, they often contacted and he told her that he was under the process of divorce agreement and his asset was confiscated by the court. She had sympathy with him and they finally promised to get married through the video chart around end of 2018.

Soon after that, he started asking money to her. He said to her, "I missed my flight. I need \$1,100 to buy a new ticket. Could you lend money because my asset is frozen?" He continued asking money for his hospitalization, medical treatment or litigation cost. She sold her autograph comic drawings or some high-brand items. She even borrowed money from her friends or children. People around her gradually found and noticed that she was cheated. She could not acknowledge, though.

One of her friends, who was really confused, eventually contacted with an attorney. This attorney found that all documents including a passport or receipts of items were fake and the guy pretending Mark spoke English with African accent.

When she understood the fact, she finally realized that she didn't need to pay any money. She was as if she woke up from a nightmare, but already transmitted 75 million yen (equivalent to about \$580,000) in 3 years and 5 months.

3. Interrogation and Interpreting

It is quite difficult to collect information and data on romance scams, since people pretend to be someone else and most communication are through virtual SNS. They don't show their own and just send message, or they use AI to make themselves on screen.

In addition, the Japanese government (National Police Agency) still accumulates the number of frauds including romance scam and investment scam, then it is impossible to pick up exact numbers and report of romance scams. It means the government has not accumulated the real number of romance scams and has not taken any specific countermeasures and has not eradicated the root causes.

Next, most of message exchange or contact through SNS and they actually don't talk face-to-face, which makes situations more complicated. Even though they talk online, the scam groups use AI or fake images. Then, some (most) casualties don't report their damages since they feel ashamed by cheating or got fraud just through message exchange.

Furthermore, most of cases are by non-native speakers (in English). They speak with strong accent (African) and wrong usage of grammar; however, some cannot distinguish the difference of accent or grammar usage. Moreover, the English conversation or message

exchange with weird foreign accent or a kind of “foreigner’s talk” seem to be a “Cinderella Dream” for those who have not travelled abroad.

The situation is quite hard for legal interpreters as well. The circumstances of crimes are usually vague and no information is usually disclosed to interpreters before interrogation. The National Policy Agency include every single case of romance scams to “fraud”, which makes it impossible to pick up specific characteristics of crimes and consequences.

Conclusion

Along with the Covid-19, new types of crimes have emerged and it is necessary to accumulate knowledge in order to make the current situation and criminal condition with consequences clear for better and quicker interrogation and to make better working condition for legal interpreters.

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