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*Awit-Tuksuhan at Tsismisan: Filipino Children's Folksongs in the Context of  
Modern Day Hugot at AOS Lounge*

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**Abstract**

All-Out Sundays, more known as AOS, is a weekly musical variety show in GMA Network. While it shares most of the elements present in rival ABS-CBN's All-Star Afternoon Party (ASAP), humor is one of the show's distinct features through the AOS Lounge segment. The AOS Lounge segment is known for situational and observational comedy through hugot statements and gossips. While hugot is often associated with melodrama, it is presented humorously by using the melodies of Filipino children's folksongs, such as "Ako Ay May Lobo" (I Have A Balloon) and "Leron, Leron Sinta" (Leron, Leron, My Dear). To expound this discourse, I intend to apply Apte's (1985) approach on institutionalized humor. As this segment deals with satires of children's folksongs, I also explore through Titon's definition how the segment creators produce affect through the use of children's folksongs in an adult context.

Keywords: Humor, Parody, Children's Folksongs, AOS Lounge, Hugot

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## Introduction

In everyday life, folksongs are part of a child's development, particularly in learning his/her own culture. While most of these folksongs like "Bahay Kubo" are reflective of one's Filipino roots, some speak of a child's despair, dealing even with the most trivial things, such as the losing a balloon.

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, National Artist Ramon Santos composed "Tuksuhan" (Teasing), which combined the following folksongs: "Sampung Mga Daliri" (Ten Fingers) and "Isa, Dalawa Tatlo." (One, Two, Three). Santos changed the text of the latter in the context of children teasing each other. Another folksong that was recontextualized in 2018 was "Pakitong-kitong" (Here and There). Recorded by Lea Salonga for the "Awit at Laro" (Song and Game) anthology, "Pakitong-kitong" put into the context of "crab mentality," which dealt with people ruining one's reputation to attain their own successes.

Given the amusing nature of these children's folksongs, this led me to my curiosity on how the producers, writers, and the music team of AOS Lounge, a segment in GMA Network's "All Out Sundays" that dealt with humorous discourses on *hugot*, a Filipino concept which dealt with love-related issues, such as breakups, falling out, and being cheated on. Using Apte's theory on institutionalized humor, this paper will explore how these folksongs were taken into an adult context like *hugot*, in connection with the presenters' banter. I also explore how these folksong melodies create humor in discussing this melodramatic concept. Through interviews with the presenters and a few members of the creative team, I explore how they put up the segment's concept without the use of pop songs. Now I discuss genres of comedy that are currently used on television.

Apte explained two more genres of comedy: puns and parodies. While puns involve playing with words, parodies are humorous recontextualizations of TV shows, movies, and songs. Oftentimes, song parodies often involve both puns and bastardizations of the original text. Furthermore, the song's context is changed when parodies are created. This also applies to TV shows and movies.

Presenting another humorous genre on television, Ancheta (2015) also expounded the concept of observational comedy. It is recurring in Philippine variety shows, such as Eat! Bulaga and It's Showtime. Popularized by standup comedian-turned-TV personality Vice Ganda, it involves on-the-spot jokes, which may be rooted from the people or elements existent in the studio. Since the return of Tawag ng Tanghalan (Call of the Stage), a singing competition that became one of the segments in It's Showtime, Vice has been making humorous banter that are heavily based on the contestants' profiles and even the judges' respective professional backgrounds (Reyes 2019; interview). Sometimes, pop songs that were originally recorded by one of the segments' judges were put into the humorous context of advising contestants on showcasing a polished musical performance. However, contrary to parodies, observational comedies do not necessarily involve singing, as these are more humorous discussions of everyday life situations.

While humor is typically associated with things that make people laugh, it is not always the case for Gordon (2012). It brings people together and reduces tension. As far as my discourse on AOS Lounge is concerned, I surmise that the creatives and the presenters attempted to present situations involving melodrama like *hugot* to make the atmosphere lighter, not only

for the audiences, but also for the people involved in the show. Furthermore, the audiences may be able to relate with the situations being presented without the feeling of melancholy.

### **Historical Context**

During the 1970s, comedians Tito Sotto, Vic Sotto, and Joey de Leon, known as the comic trio Tito, Vic, and Joey, released “Tough Hits,” an anthology of pop song parodies, taken in the context of domestic issues (e.g., married life), toilet humor, gay man’s struggles, body shaming, and objectification of women. In the second volume of “Tough Hits,” the OPM Department was a medley of OPM song parodies, which included a parody of the Tagalog folksong “Paru-parong Bukid” (Farm Butterfly), in the context of stereotypes towards gay men, particularly cross-dressing and binge-drinking liquor to entice men. Due to flourishing discourses on feminism and gender equality, jokes focusing on the aforementioned themes became taboo, four decades after.

In 1995, Bubble Gang was launched by GMA as its flagship gag show. While it initially featured humorous translations of pop songs, comedian Michael V did a humorous take on the hit songs of the 2000s, which were mostly part of the “Bubble G Anthology” released by GMA Records in 2006. While these song parodies were well-received by the show’s audiences, they often focused on derogatory ideals like homophobia and racism. However, Michael V’s parody of Up Dharma Down’s “Oo” (Yes) dealt with the struggle of not having a stove that helped with the preparation of cooked meals for selling. Although Bubble Gang adapted the themes used in “Tough Hits,” Michael V also wrote song parodies that are more relevant to the present society, particularly “Gusto Ko Nang Bumigay” (I Want To Break Free; parody of Morissette’s “Gusto Ko Nang Bumitaw” [“I Want To Give Up”]), which talks about a closeted gay man’s struggle to fully declare his true gender.

In an attempt to surpass the “concert-TV” legacy of ABS-CBN’s “All-Star Afternoon Party” or ASAP, GMA Network also produced another musical comedy segment in “Sobrang Okey, Pare” (So Okay, My Friend). As a regular segment from 2007 to 2008, “Sobrang OJ Pare” (So OJ, My Friend) focused on song parodies in the context of the latest news that mostly dealt with showbiz issues, with the opening line, “Ito ang OJ n’yo” (This is your OJ), presented by singer-comedians Ogie Alcasid and Janno Gibbs. This partly became the prototype of “AOS Lounge,” one of the comedy segments of “All-Out Sundays,” GMA Network’s Sunday musical variety show at the present.

### **Welcome to the AOS Lounge!**

In 2020, GMA Network launched All-Out Sundays, more known as “AOS,” as its flagship Sunday musical variety show, which aimed to compete against ABS-CBN’s All-Star Afternoon Party or ASAP. Although AOS adopted ASAP’s “concert TV” format that included song performances and dance numbers, comedy segments were a distinct feature of the show, which were derived from its predecessor, “Sunday Pinasaya” (Sundays Made Happy), a comedy-oriented variety show. Some of the elements present in Sobrang OJ Pare were also existent, particularly the presentation of gossips in the musical sense.

While most of the comedy segments in AOS were humorous skits, AOS Lounge focused on parodies of Filipino children’s folksongs, which were written and rearranged by theater composer Vincent de Jesus. Presented by singers Aicelle Santos, Maricris Garcia, Christian Bautista, Garrett Bolden, Muriel Lomadilla, and singer-comedienne Tuesday Vargas, the

banter made among themselves were heavy on issues related to love and relationships, such as breakups, falling out, being cheated on, among others. Mediating the practice of gossiping with friends, the presenters were wearing formal attire, specifically suits and evening gowns, which created an elegant mood. Adding sophistication to the scene were De Jesus's musical arrangement style present in musical theater and the sleek sofas onstage where the other mainstays are seated. This is contrary to the typical Filipino "Marites" meme (derived from the Filipino question, "*Mare, anong latest?*") which meant "What's the latest, buddy?") where a group of people exchanging gossips in the neighborhood were mostly wearing house dresses, known as the duster.

### **The Presenters: More Singers Than Comedians**

Although the AOS Lounge is categorized by the producers as a comedy segment, the presenters are all singers based primarily in the recording industry. Vargas may be more known in the entertainment industry as a comedienne, but her song "Babae Po Ako" (I Am A Woman) became one of the most popular novelty songs in the mid-2000s.

Bautista may be known in Southeast Asia for his hit love ballad, "The Way You Look at Me," but he was also able to establish his acting career in Filipino television dramas and romantic comedies, such as "Kampanerang Kuba" (The Hunchback Bellringer), "With A Smile," and "My Mother's Secret." Playing the role of Lorenzo in "Kampanerang Kuba," Bautista has occasionally exchanged humorous banter with actors Luis Manzano, Edgar "Bobot" Mortiz, and comedienne Eugene Domingo in some of the fantasy drama's episodes. In 2018, he has also appeared in an episode of Bubble Gang, GMA Network's longest-running comedy show (Bubble Gang 2018).

Apart from doing TV shows, Bautista has also starred in musical theater plays, such as "West Side Story" and "Rama Hari," both alongside singer-actress Karylle. Outside of the Philippine entertainment scene, Bautista was one of the lead actors in the Singaporean TV series "The Kitchen Musical," as well as in the Indonesian film "Simfoni Luar Biasa," which were both musical dramas.

Both Aicelle Santos and Garcia became grand finalists in Pinoy Pop Superstar, a singing competition produced by GMA Network in the 2000s. Alongside fellow singer and Pinoy Pop Superstar Season 1 Grand Champion Jona (then known as Jonalyn Viray), they performed in SOP as a trio called La Diva. While Garcia won the third season of Pinoy Pop Superstar, Santos placed second to Gerald Santos during the second season. Despite not winning the competition, Aicelle Santos got her biggest break in the music scene when she became part of musical theater productions here and abroad, such as PETA's "Rak of Aegis" and the UK production of "Miss Saigon."

Completing the roster of presenters are Bolden and Lomadilla, who have previously joined GMA Network's The Clash. Although both did not win in the first season, they were able to establish their respective singing careers. While Bolden became part of the "Miss Saigon" cast in Guam, Lomadilla is currently a member of XOXO, an all-female singing group based in GMA Music.

## The Happier Ending of “Leron Leron Sinta” – A Strong Relationship

Proceeding to the discussion on AOS Lounge’s folksong parodies, “Leron Leron Sinta” has a tragic theme that dealt with a person’s failure to pick the papaya fruit. However, during the first episode of AOS Lounge last June 14, 2022, the text focused on two of the show’s mainstays that are allegedly going strong as a romantic couple. This is shown on the next page.

*Table 1. Original text and English translation of “Laro Laro Sinta,” a parody of Tagalog folksong Leron Leron Sinta, as performed in AOS Lounge.*

ORIGINAL TEXT	ENGLISH TRANSLATION
<p>CHRISTIAN Laro, laro, sinta Kaibigan nung una. Co-host sa isang show (The Clash!) May concert pa sila.</p> <p>Pagdating sa dulo, Na-fall ang dalawa. Sadyang kapalaran, Pinagtagpo sila!</p> <p>AICELLE Ang blooming nga ni girl! Laging nakangiti (hehe) Bitbit lagi ang phone. Si boy laging ka-text (Hi, Babe!)</p> <p>Kasi itong si boy, Minsan absent dito. Kaya pag magkasama, Ayaw maghiwalay!</p>	<p>CHRISTIAN Let’s play and play, my dear. Started out as friends. With a co-host in one show (The Clash!). They are also having a concert.</p> <p>In the end, The two fell in love with each other. They have been fated, To see each other!</p> <p>AICELLE Girl is so blooming! Always smiling. Always brings her phone. Texting with the boy (Hi, babe!).</p> <p>Because sometimes, the boy, Is sometimes absent here. That’s why when they’re together, They don’t want to part!</p>

Looking at Bautista and Aicelle Santos’s musical banter, “Leron Leron Sinta” was contextualized in a more positive light, also given the song’s cheerful melody. Not to mention, the two singers’ side comments pertinent to the mainstays involved spoke of a couple’s favorable romantic relationship status.

As remarked by Bautista, the two mainstays that he and Aicelle Santos were referring in their musical banter are singer Julie Anne San Jose and actor Rayver Cruz. While Bautista is currently one of the judges for GMA Network’s singing competition called “The Clash,” San Jose and Cruz are the show’s hosts since the second season in 2019 where the two may have had established a bond that led to the two being in a relationship, despite Aicelle Santos’s comment towards Cruz’s occasional absences in All Out Sundays. This tells us that “Leron Leron Sinta” was brought in a more positive perspective, as far as Bautista and Aicelle

Santos's musical banter is concerned. The next section will explore how "Isa Dalawa Tatlo", which was originally a game song, was put into the context of ghosting.

### 1-2-3, Gone!

During the episode aired last July 17, 2022, Bautista, Aicelle Santos, Garcia, and Bolden opened the segment with "Isa, Dalawa, Tatlo," in the context of ghosting. The original text of the said folksong is shown below, as well as the English translation.

*Table 2. Original text and English translation of "Isa Dalawa Tatlo," a parody of Tagalog folksong Isa, Dalawa, Tatlo, as performed in AOS Lounge.*

ORIGINAL TEXT	ENGLISH TRANSLATION
Isa, dalawa, tatlo, Una-unahan tayo! Apat, lima, anim, Sa balong malalim.	One, two, three, Let's race for first place! Four, Five, six, To the deep well.
Pito, walo, siyam, Lakad parang langgam, Pagdating ng sampu, Ang lahat ay umupo!	Seven, eight, nine, Walk like ants. At the count of ten, Everybody, sit down!

Looking at the text above, "Isa, Dalawa, Tatlo," is initially a game song where everyone's goal is to finish first in a race, later slowing down from the count of seven until ten. However, the version performed in the AOS Lounge focused on the concept of ghosting where a person ends his/her relationship with another person without his/her prior knowledge.

Going back to the AOS Lounge, De Jesus played a few bars of triplets where the first note for every triplet is accented. Contrary to Bautista's crooning style used in most of his sung performances within and outside GMA Network, he opened "Isa Dalawa Tatlo," with a mix of vibratos and accents, especially on the first line. Such extended techniques gave the audiences a hint on how Bautista and his co-singers recontextualized the game song, focusing on the stages of how a couple falls out of love. Now I present how Aicelle Santos and Garcia interpreted musically the principle of "ghosting."

Figure 1. Excerpt from "Isa Dalawa, Tatlo" in the context of ghosting as performed by Maricris Garcia and Aicelle Santos.

14

Maricris

I - sa, da - la - wa, tat - lo, in - un - fol - low niya - a - ko  
(One, two, three, he unfollowed me.)

Aicelle

A - pat,  
(Four,

21

Maricris

Pi - to - wa - lo, siyam I - ba na ka -  
(Seven, eight, nine, he has been kissing

Aicelle

li - ma, a - nim lu - ma - mig ang dam - da - min  
five, six, feelings have gone cold.)

2

27

Maricris

- ha - li - kan. Pag - da - ting ng sam - pu, nag - change sta - tus na - a - ko. Pag - da - ting ng sam - pu, nag -  
someone else.) (At the count of ten, I've changed my relationship status.) (At the count of ten, I've

Aicelle

Pag - da - ting ng sam - pu, nag - change sta - tus na - a - ko. Pag - da - ting ng sam - pu, nag -  
(At the count of ten, I've changed my relationship status.) (At the count of ten, I've

Usually, when composers deal with melodramatic themes like ghosting, they utilize the common elements existent in sentimental ballads, such as slow tempos, smoothly flowing instrumental passages, and even belting. However, this was not the case for De Jesus's interpretation, as well as the vocal performances of Bautista, Bolden, Aicelle Santos, and Garcia. In presenting this *hugot* concept, De Jesus used a children's game song melody as a mockery of the situation. This tells us that the five of them used musical comedy, not only to criticize ghosters, but to also present the discourse in a lighter perspective.

Moving on to another children's folksong, "Ako Ay May Lobo" talks about a child who regretted buying a balloon that ended up popping. Below is the original text of "Ako Ay May Lobo" with English translation.



Table 3. Original text and English translation of Tagalog children’s folksong “Ako Ay May Lobo.”

ORIGINAL TEXT	ENGLISH TRANSLATION
Ako ay may lobo. Lumipad sa langit. Di ko na nakita. Pumutok na pala.	I have a balloon that flew to the sky. I haven’t seen it anymore. It already popped.
Sayang ang pera ko, pambili ng lobo. Sa pagkain sana, nabusog pa ako.	I wasted my money in buying the balloon. I could’ve spent it for food and made me full.

During the episode aired last July 17, 2022, Aicelle Santos, Garcia, Bautista, and Bolden talked about the different ways on how a person is fooled by his/her lover. “*Tingin ko, mas masakit kung harap-harapan ka nang sinaktan, eh hindi mo pa rin alam,*” Garcia explained (I think, it is more painful when someone hurts you directly but you still don’t know.). She pointed out that there are some people who are already fooled by their boyfriend/girlfriend, yet they lacked awareness. In connection with Garcia’s statement, below is the notated visualization of Bautista’s interpretation of “Ako Ay May Lobo” (I Have A Balloon), with the text focusing on how a person is fooled by his/her ex-boyfriend/girlfriend.

Figure 2. Notation of “Ako Ay May Jowa,” as performed by Christian Bautista.

A - ko ay may jo - wa, la - ging ka - text ang ex niya. Di ko na - ma - la - yan, nag - ka - ba -  
 ( I have a lover who always texted her ex - boyfriend.) (I wasn't aware that they are

8  
 li - kan na pa - la! Sa - yang ang ef - fort kong i - bi - nu - hos sa kan - ya. A - ka - la - in - mo  
 together again! (I wasted my efforts dealing with her.) (Can you imagine?)

15 (semitone flat; whimper-like)  
 iyon, nag - mu - kha a - kong shu - nga.  
 (I looked stupid.)

Upon reaching the line “*Nagkabalikan na pala,*” Bautista started singing this phrase with a slight growl while the syllable “la” on “pala” was half-spoken in a shout-like manner, giving emphasis on the persona’s shock towards his supposed girlfriend. While he started singing “Ako Ay May Jowa” smoothly the line “*Sayang ang effort kong ibinuhos sa kanya*” (I have wasted my efforts on her.) was more accented and vibrato-heavy, stressing how the persona’s time was wasted in dealing with the girl romantically. Bautista ended his part in a whimper-like manner, expressing his disappointment towards the situation he has just presented.

Aicelle Santos jokingly mentioned that the situation Bautista has just presented was a case of bad karma, as it was a failed attempt of winning back the love of an ex-flame. Garcia’s

interpretation of “Ako Ay May Lobo” had a text that focused on single ladies who fell in love with men who pretend that they are single, even if they are already married. Furthermore, the concept of “ghosting” or breaking up with somebody without any explanation was presented in a lighter perspective, not only because of how De Jesus played with the cheery melody of “Ako Ay May Lobo,” as well as its original text. While the *birit* technique is normally associated with this discourse, Aicelle Santos, Garcia, Bolden, and Bautista purely used extended singing techniques that gave emphasis to the melodramatic *hugot* situations while evoking humor at the same time.

Apart from heartbreaks, the segment also criticized women who are extremely picky towards men, causing them to be single for a long time. During the episode aired last July 24, 2022, Vargas’s version of “Pen Pen De Sarapen” made fun of women who give men a hard time in making their romantic relationships official.

*Table 4. Original text and English translation of the parody of “Pen Pen de Sarapen,” as performed in AOS Lounge.*

ORIGINAL TEXT	ENGLISH TRANSLATION
Pen pen de sarapen, itong si girl single pa rin How, how, de carabao, no comment. Itong si girl, sobrang pakipot, Kaya si boy biglang napagod, Ayan kasi... dasurb!	Pen pen de sarapen, this girl is still single. How, how, de carabao, no comment. This girl is too fickle, That’s why the guy got tired of her. That’s why... she deserves it!

In modern-day Filipino slang, “dasurb” is a corruption of the English word “deserve.” Garcia sang in jest that women who are fickle towards men trying to court them deserve to stay single for life. However, Bautista told the audiences that happiness does not always deal with having romantic relationships. “You don’t have to be a relationship to be happy,” he said.

Affirming Bautista’s statement, Vargas mentioned in jest that there is nothing wrong with being single, referencing further Céline Dion’s “All By Myself,” a power ballad that talks about the sadder side of living alone. Later on, Garcia advised the younger audiences in the studio that they should not rush in having the ideal romantic partner. She also said that the right one will come.

## Conclusion

Having said these, the producers of the AOS Lounge were able to present melodramatic situations like *hugot*, both in terms of melody usage and manner of presentation. As musical theater actors, both Bautista and Aicelle Santos were able to utilize the expressive vocal techniques that gave emphasis to both the humorous and melodramatic side of *hugot*. On the other hand, Vargas and Lomadilla, being comedienne, brought the discourse on breakups and “ghosting” in a humorous matter. Furthermore, this performance affirmed Gordon’s theory that the producers and presenters of the AOS Lounge segment were able to reduce tension in explaining sensational topics pertinent to love and relationships.

The melodies of Filipino children’s folksongs, particularly “Leron Leron Sinta,” “Pen Pen De Sarapen,” and “Ako Ay May Lobo,” all have jovial melodies, which added jest to the

situations being presented. At the same time these songs also partly served as puns to these scenarios that were explored in the segment.

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***Combating Labor Trafficking With Design:  
Utilizing Storytelling, Collaboration, and Cultural Relevance to Raise Awareness***

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**Abstract**

This paper discusses a collaboration among a non-profit organization, designers, and artists to create a labor trafficking awareness campaign. The project's purpose was to explore a new and effective approach to human trafficking awareness campaigns. By prioritizing empathy and information over stereotyping, sensationalism, and over-simplification—the campaign aimed to convey the complexity of labor trafficking, provide practical information on identifying signs, and educate the public on victim rights. The campaign presented real-life survivor stories in the form of graphic novels supplemented with key points and summary text. The involvement of culturally relevant artists helped to ensure that the survivor stories were authentically and empathetically represented. This paper shares the project's purpose, process, challenges, and outcomes, as well as insights into the effectiveness of the methodology.

Keywords: Labor Trafficking, Graphic Novel, Awareness Campaigns, Visual Storytelling, Collaboration

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## **Introduction**

### **Combating Labor Trafficking With Design: Utilizing Storytelling, Collaboration, and Cultural Relevance to Raise Awareness**

Human trafficking is a grave violation of human rights on a global scale; however, the public's lack of understanding and misconceptions about human trafficking often obscure the true nature of this issue, potentially resulting in victims unknowingly falling into trafficking situations and the public failing to identify trafficking when they see it. Therefore, there is a real need to raise awareness and understanding about this issue. In the past, human trafficking awareness campaigns in both print and digital forms have played a vital role in such efforts because they present narratives that shape public perception and inspire action. On the other hand, survivors, aid professionals, and scholars have expressed concerns or dissatisfactions about how some campaigns depict human trafficking and those who suffer from it. They pointed to instances where those campaigns have misrepresented the issue which potentially harmed victims by perpetuating stereotypes, sensationalizing stories, and oversimplifying events (Hoyle et al., 2011; O'Brien 2013).

In 2022, one of the authors of this article, Stephen Zhang, and Mosaic Family Services initiated a collaboration to explore an alternative approach to human trafficking awareness campaigns that would present realistic and nuanced information. They also invited three graphic novel artists to collaborate with. The campaign focused on labor trafficking because it is a form of human trafficking that has received far less attention from both the media and awareness campaigns than sex trafficking. Adopting methodologies such as narrative inquiry, phenomenology, and visual storytelling, the team created a campaign that featured stories of real survivors. Utilizing the format of the graphic novel, this campaign presented information in a way that was realistic, relatable, and educational.

### **Misconceptions About Human Trafficking**

The US Department of State (DOS) (n.d.) defines human trafficking, also called trafficking in persons, as the use of force, fraud, or coercion to obtain forms of labor or commercial sex acts. DOS identifies three elements of human trafficking: (a) "Acts," which means the trafficker recruits, harbors, transports, provides, obtains, or patronizes a person for labor or sex services; (b) "Means," which indicates a trafficker's use of force, fraud, or coercion, which may include threats of force, debt manipulation, withholding of pay, confiscation of identification documents, psychological coercion, reputational harm, manipulation of addictive substances, or threats to other people; and (3) "Purpose," which is about the perpetrator's goal to exploit a person's labor or services.

Human traffickers take advantage of vulnerable people, such as those facing psychological or emotional issues, economic hardships, natural disasters, or political instability. Traffickers use various tactics such as violence, manipulation, or false promises of well-paying jobs or romantic relationships to lure and control victims. Many industries across the globe engage in human trafficking, and traffickers commit their crimes in a variety of sectors. Some of the most common places to find humans being trafficked are agricultural fields, factories, restaurants, hotels, massage parlors, retail stores, fishing vessels, mines, private homes, and drug trafficking operations (DOS, n.d.).



According to Rister (2020), the public has many misconceptions about human trafficking. For instance, people often equate human trafficking with sex trafficking and neglect the fact that human trafficking also includes labor trafficking. This confusion is largely due to the media and awareness campaigns, which persistently focus on sex trafficking. The stories that garner attention often involve forced sexual exploitation, which captures public interest and sympathy; however, the reality is much more complex than this perception. Human trafficking is widely considered a hidden global crime, and the number of cases varies drastically among surveys (McDonald, 2014). Nevertheless, research has indicated that labor trafficking is at least as serious a crime as sex trafficking, occurring behind the closed doors of industries and workplaces worldwide (Al-Tammemi et al., 2023). A report by International Labour Organization (ILO), Walk Free, and International Organization for Migration (IOM) states that there are 17.3 million privately imposed forced labors worldwide and 6.3 million forced commercial sexual exploitations (ILO et al., 2022).

In addition, people often confuse human trafficking with human smuggling: two distinctively different concepts. Smuggling involves the illegal transportation of individuals across national borders with their consent; whereas, trafficking doesn't necessarily require the physical movement of a person and can occur where victims live. Additionally, while victims of human trafficking may have initially had an agreement with their traffickers, exploitation and coercion nullify any idea of the victim giving and maintaining consent (Hoyle et al., 2011).

The public holds many misconceptions about the key elements of human trafficking. The three primary misconceptions are (a) who can be a victim, (b) who can be a perpetrator, and (c) the how challenging it can be to escape. First, people tend to believe that only undocumented people from impoverished countries are trafficked into affluent nations, such as the US. In reality, citizens from both wealthy and poor countries, regardless of their legal status, can fall victim to trafficking. Similarly, people assume that only women and girls are victims of human trafficking, partly due to the greater awareness of sex trafficking; however, the reality is that both men and women can be trafficked into both labor and sex trafficking. LGBTQ+ boys and young men are particularly vulnerable to human trafficking (Hoyle et al., 2011).

Second, many in the public assume that human traffickers are strangers to their victims; however, the reality is that traffickers can be strangers, acquaintances, family members, relatives, business recruiters, or romantic partners.

Finally, people assume that victims can easily escape their situations and seek help. Since many human trafficking victims work in environments without barricades such as farms, construction sites, or their own homes, the public assumes escape should be easy; however, the reality is far more complicated. Many victims are trafficked to unfamiliar geographic and cultural environments, which leaves them with no means of travel. Moreover, human trafficking is about not only physical constraints but also psychological coercion. Traffickers manipulate victims into believing they are dependent on them, using fears related to things such as deportation, financial obligations, lack of support networks, not being believed by others, and more severe punishments to prevent victims from breaking free (Hoyle et al., 2011).

## Problems With Past Awareness Campaigns

Because of the widespread misconceptions about human trafficking, there has always been a pressing need to raise awareness. One effective tool for achieving this goal has been awareness campaigns. Over the past decades, numerous human trafficking awareness campaigns have been launched. These campaigns have played a crucial role as the front door of the anti-trafficking movement, drawing the public's attention and inspiring them to care and act. Additionally, the campaigns serve as vital sources of narrative that help the public and decision-makers define the problem of trafficking (O'Brien, 2015). Despite the important role these campaigns serve, however, human trafficking victims and their advocates, such as non-profit organizations and scholars, have voiced their concerns with some awareness campaigns. (O'Brien, 2015; Savoia et al., 2023). They have pointed out that they have contained mistakes, provided unrealistic information, and some may have even harmed victims. These mistakes include:

- **Perpetuating Stereotypes**—One of the frequent complaints about human trafficking campaigns is victim stereotyping, where campaigns depict “ideal victims” as impoverished, weak, mostly women or girls, and helpless. The frequency of these depictions results in the exclusion of other victims from the narrative and forms hierarchies among victims in people's minds. As a result, these campaigns can create obstacles for fair treatment of victims who are not what the criminal justice system, non-government organizations (NGOs), and the healthcare system see as “ideal” (O'Brien, 2013; Rister, 2020, Savoia et al., 2023).
- **Sensationalism**—Another common mistake awareness campaigns make is sensationalizing the victim's miseries through images of imprisonment, pain, and fear. This approach fails to convey the complexity of human trafficking and misrepresents the true nature of the issue. While physical abuse and captivity are part of human trafficking, other forms of exploitation—including psychological coercion, debt bondage, and manipulation—are also broadly used by traffickers. These subtler, yet equally damaging, aspects of human trafficking are often unrepresented when campaigns focus on solely dramatic images. By sensationalizing the victims' physical suffering, the campaigns make it difficult for the audience to recognize the emotional and psychological traumas that are not visible (O'Brien, 2013; Savoia et al., 2023).
- **Over-simplification**—Another concern raised about awareness campaigns is their tendency to oversimplify. Such oversimplification could be due to space limitations—such as occur with posters, ad banners, and billboards—or the desire to cut through noise. These campaigns condense human trafficking situations into taglines, short videos, or one image, which potentially perpetuates stereotypes, racial bias, or sexism (O'Brien, 2013; Savoia et al., 2023).

## Our Solution - The Be Aware Campaign

To address the issues with human trafficking campaigns, one of the authors of this article, Stephen Zhang, collaborated with Mosaic Family Services to initiate a project aimed at exploring an alternative and more effective approach. Additionally, they invited three artists to join the collaboration. Mosaic Family Services is a nonprofit organization based in Dallas, Texas, dedicated to assisting survivors of human rights abuses. Their clients include trafficking survivors, family violence survivors, refugees, and unaccompanied minors.

Mosaic Family Services provides a comprehensive range of services, and they intended to utilize the campaign's results—brochures and web pages—in their outreach activities.

This team decided to create a human trafficking awareness campaign with a specific focus on labor trafficking because historically, labor trafficking has received far less attention than sex trafficking from the government, law enforcement, news media, anti-trafficking NGOs, and awareness campaigns—despite being an equally grave violation of human rights (ILO et al., 2022). Several factors contribute to the lack of attention paid to labor trafficking. Not only is labor trafficking challenging to detect, but also it lacks the sensationalism that captures the public's attention. Additionally, labor trafficking often involves businesses and industries that hold significant economic and political influence (Nagle, 2019).

The objectives of our project were to innovate a new and more effective approach to awareness campaigns, to provide realistic and nuanced information about labor trafficking, and to portray survivors with respect. The target audiences were defined as follows:

- Potential Victims—In some cases, victims of labor trafficking may not be aware that they are in a trafficking situation and that they have rights.
- Coworkers of Victims—Individuals working in industries such as the service sector and worksites may encounter trafficking situations within their workplaces. It is vital that these coworkers are informed and vigilant.
- Support Personnel—Individuals involved in helping survivors (such as law enforcement personnel or employees of NGOs, like Mosaic Family Services) may have misconceptions about labor trafficking that need to be dispelled.

The team adopted three methodologies aimed at generating a new approach to human trafficking awareness campaigns.

- Visual storytelling—The campaign chose to employ visual storytelling because storytelling is an effective communication method that is tangible, emotionally rich, and memorable. Stories promote empathy by enabling individuals to “walk in someone else's shoes.” Moreover, humans learn, retain, and comprehend information more effectively when it is presented in a multimedia format, incorporating sound and visuals, rather than solely in textual form (Mirkovski et al., 2019).
- Narrative inquiry—The campaign chose to employ narrative inquiry because it involves the study of stories and narratives and determines what information to share with people to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning of human experiences. According to Kim (2015), “Narrative inquiry utilizes an interdisciplinary interpretive lens with theoretically and philosophically diverse approaches and methods, all centered around the narratives and stories of research participants” (p. 6). Instead of relying on oversimplified one-liners and stereotypical images, we opted to delve into the lived experiences of survivors and share their stories.
- Phenomenology—On a more epistemological level, the fundamental methodology in this study is phenomenology. Phenomenology is a philosophical and research methodology that explores the lived experience of human beings. According to Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012), “Phenomenology is also a philosophy that places

essences back within existence and thinks that the only way to understand man and the world is by beginning from their ‘facticity’” (p. lxx). The phenomenological method is employed to help researchers understand people’s lived experiences and gain insight into the true nature of their lives. Phenomenology is widely applied in many fields, and it overlaps with qualitative methods to explore human experiences and perspectives. By focusing on individual experiences, phenomenology allows researchers to uncover rich and nuanced insights into the human condition. It is particularly useful when studying complex and subjective phenomena such as emotions, perceptions, consciousnesses, and cultural practices that are hard to capture in quantitative studies. We employed the phenomenological method to help us understand the lived experiences of people and gain insight into what their lives truly entail.

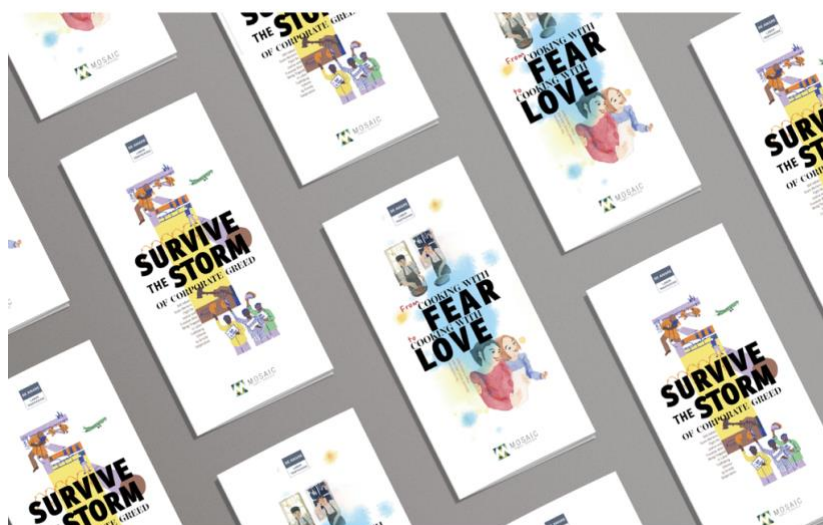
Guided by a phenomenological methodology, our goal was to create a narrative that was complex, realistic, and relatable. Through visual storytelling in graphic novels, we aimed to depict the living conditions of these individuals and help the public understand the concerns related to labor trafficking. Using these methodologies, the team adopted the following creative tactics in the campaign development process.

- Telling stories of actual survivors—Since every victim’s experience is different (Savoia et al., 2023), the team rejected the idea of fictionalizing the stories to avoid unintentional bias or stereotyping. Instead, we identified three real-life stories, each representing a different type of labor trafficking situation. All the stories were from people who received assistance from Mosaic Family Services. As such, the stories were already verified; however, we changed the survivor’s names or made them anonymous to protect their identities. In these stories, we presented the important stages of human trafficking, including how victims were recruited through coercion or deception; how they were manipulated through fraud, violence, or abuse; how they escaped the trafficking situation; and how they ultimately settled in the US or returned to their home countries. Through these descriptions, we aimed to educate the target audiences about alarming signs and available options at every stage of human trafficking. We particularly believed that discussing the escape and settlement stages was as crucial as the recruitment and abuse stages because many victims are often unaware of their rights and their options for escaping such situations. (Nagle, 2019). The stories we told were:
  - “From Cooking With Fear to Cooking With Love”—This is the story of two women from Thailand who were enticed to come to the US and work in a restaurant. The situation quickly became exploitative, and their passports were confiscated by the restaurant owner.
  - “Survive the Storm of Corporate Greed”—This is a story that spotlights the situation of 500 welders and pipe fitters from India who were recruited by a US corporation and illegally forced to pay exorbitant fees to the recruiter in India. Soon after arriving in the United States with legal work visas, the workers were confronted with a grim reality of exploitation and abuse. The situation grew so dire that one worker attempted suicide. With the help of a coalition led by the Southern Poverty Law Center, the workers fought the company, which resulted in its bankruptcy.
  - “12 Years and Two Countries”—This story revolves around four sisters in Mexico, 6-11 years old, in a helpless family situation, who were taken under the wing of a seemingly sympathetic family friend. Soon after, the girls were

coerced into working for this individual in Mexico and the US for 14 years, enduring inhumane physical and psychological abuses.

- Adopting graphic novels to tell stories—Graphic novels are a popular and highly-effective medium for conveying stories with rich content that emotionally resonate with people. A study conducted by Cohen et al. (2020) found that reading graphic novels, as opposed to text-only stories, led to an increase in both imagery fluency (the ease with which readers could visualize story events) and narrative engagement. Due to a broad range of visual and narrative styles, contemporary graphic novels can appeal to a broad range of audiences from children to adults.
- Utilizing legends to educate—In addition to using graphic novels to depict the survivors' lived experiences and connect emotionally with the target audiences, the team decided to incorporate legends in the brochures and on the webpages. These legends highlight key elements in the stories, with each point in the legend corresponding to a specific panel in the graphic novel. These legends provide essential information about the signs of labor trafficking, legal infringements, or victims' rights depicted in a particular panel. By offering concrete information, the legends complement the visual storytelling in the graphic novels, facilitating a deeper understanding of the issue.

**Figure 1:** *The Be Aware Campaign brochure covers*



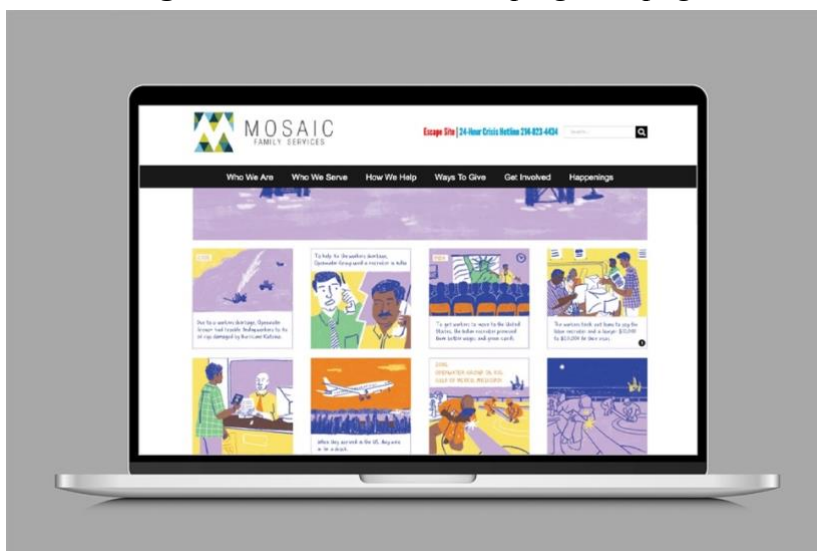
*Note: The brochure covers were designed by Stephen Zhang and illustrated by Shreyas R. Krishnan and Kaori Tsuchimoto.*

**Figure 2:** *The Be Aware Campaign brochure covers and inside panels*



*Note: The brochures were designed by Stephen Zhang and illustrated by Shreyas R. Krishnan and Kaori Tsuchimoto.*

**Figure 3:** *The Be Aware Campaign webpage*



*Note: The website was designed by Mosaic Family Services and illustrated by Shreyas R Krishnan and Kaori Tsuchimoto.*

Once the brochures and webpages were completed, the Be Aware Campaign was launched to support Mosaic Family Services' messaging during Human Trafficking Prevention Month in 2023. The final campaign comprised two brochures, each featuring one story; dedicated webpages on Mosaic's website; and a series of social media posts. One of the three original stories was excluded because the survivors chose a different plan to tell their story. Beyond its goal of supporting Mosaic's programming, this campaign served as an experimental project, exploring alternative approaches to human trafficking awareness campaigns through visual storytelling, narrative inquiry, and phenomenology.

## Conclusion

Throughout this process, our team learned that narratives based on survivors' lived experiences provide a tangible and reliable foundation for human trafficking awareness campaigns because they offer credible context and depth, which makes the storytelling convincing. We also discovered that the graphic novel is a promising format in social design because it can effectively convey complex facts, contextual information, and emotional depth.

Having incorporated the campaign materials into their daily operations, Mosaic Family Services provided valuable feedback. The most noteworthy observation was that the graphic novel format was particularly effective for communicating in multilingual settings or situations with varying literacy levels. This feedback indicates the effectiveness of the methodologies adopted in this project, especially narrative inquiry and visual storytelling.

In this collaboration, team members brought expertise in various fields, including human trafficking, survivor services, creative strategy, graphic novels illustration, and design to create a well-rounded and balanced team. It became evident that the team's collective efforts exceeded the sum of its individual contributions. Collaborating with like-minded and culturally relevant artists is particularly important and effective for social design. Such collaborations bring diverse knowledge, cultural backgrounds, and empathy to the project.

The Be Aware Campaign not only supports Mosaic Family Services' operations but also was an innovative experiment aimed at establishing alternative approaches to human trafficking awareness campaigns. The collaboration sought to present a narrative that is both realistic and nuanced, making it more relatable to the audiences. It demonstrated the effectiveness of innovative methodologies and the importance of an inclusive and culturally sensitive approach.

The results of the project demonstrated the value of using visual storytelling, narrative inquiry, and phenomenology in human trafficking awareness campaigns. The stories of survivors, rooted in their lived experiences, provided the campaign with authenticity and depth. The graphic novel format presented a promising model for visual storytelling to convey complex information and evoke emotional depth in social design.

Through shared experiences, insights, and creative efforts from diverse professionals, this campaign has not only broadened our understanding of the issue but also paved the way toward a more empathetic and impactful advocacy. The Be Aware Campaign has introduced an alternative approach to reimagining awareness campaigns and can serve as a blueprint for continued exploration to better communicate the multifaceted nature of human trafficking.

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## *Imagination Versus Materiality – The Bond of Image and Text in Conflict*

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### **Abstract**

A seminal figure in the history of the poetry and visual art of Romanticism, William Blake, considered imagination as an instrument of knowledge superior to reason. In his works he sympathized with the victims of society degraded by industrialization and praised imagination against materiality. The paper focuses in two groups of works of the artist, bound together in a single volume, “Songs of Innocence and of Experience”. Blake asserted on the general title-page an addition to the title: “Shewing the Two Contrary States of the Human Soul”. In the introduction of “William Blake: Songs of Innocence and of Experience” (Oxford, 1970) Keynes G. mentions, “The character of the designs for Experience is noticeably more severe than it is in those of Innocence [...]”. This paper investigates the way Blake expresses his ideology – imagination in contradiction to materiality – in the form of songs of innocence in contradiction to experience songs and focuses where text and image are bound in one, “[...] due to his cast of mind, whereby the life of the imagination was more real to him than the material world [...] word and symbol each reinforcing the other” (ibid).

Keywords: William Blake, Text & Image, Contradiction, Illustration

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## Introduction

This paper presents a sub-chapter, part of my PhD thesis which is called “Imagination versus materiality: the bond of image and text in conflict”. Main aim of my studies is to investigate the way we read stories and the way illustrators create their parallel worlds of images for various texts. In this sub-chapter of my dissertation I am presenting the parameter of contrast which, I believe constitutes one of the crucial aspects in the illustrated works of excellence and I focus specifically in works that the author is also the illustrator.

A perfect example of an author illustrating his own text is the romantic artist, William Blake and his book “Songs of Innocence and of Experience”.



Image 1: William Blake

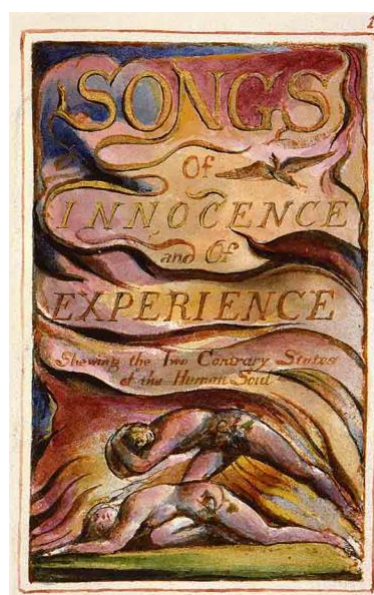


Image 2: “Songs of Innocence and of Experience”, William Blake, book cover

*William Blake (1757-1827) was a renowned artist, poet, and printmaker of the Romantic Age who used his creative power in order to produce a very important interplay between images and words. (Saree Makdisi, 2015)*

*The Songs of Innocence and of Experience occupy a vital place in the corpus of Blake's poetical writings. This is so because these Songs are as much the product of Blake's earlier writings as the pointer to his future writings. The kind of philosophical tone that we encounter in The Songs of Innocence and of Experience is indeed astounding. (Suprita Jha, 2020)*

## The Bond of Image and Text in Conflict

In terms of social commentary, Blake's illustrations in Songs of Innocence and of Experience (1789) provide insights into the social changes occurring in England during the late 18th century. Blake's poems capture the experiences of English society during the transition between the 18th and 19th centuries, marked by industrialization, political upheaval, and the displacement of reason. Through his work, Blake offers a unique interpretation of the formation of modern industrial society, intertwining politics, religion, and art (Duarte, 2014).



Images 3 & 4: Title pages from “Songs of Innocence and of Experience”

Blake’s works in Songs of Innocence depict a universal view of the world and the purity of human souls, while the ones in Songs of Experience present a darker and more cynical view, criticizing societal and religious oppression.

Main focus here is the above, strong contradiction which stands for these two groups of works and Blake’s religious outlook and his revolt against institutionalized Christianity which is also visible overall.

*He consistently stresses the importance of freedom, as opposed to the tyranny that he feels to be characteristic of the government of his day, and attacks negative moralizing, which he associates with the church, as opposed to a true sense of religion. (Suprita Jha, 2020)*

While investigating Blake’s work ‘Songs of Innocence and of Experience’ and the parameter of contrast a suggestion occurs: when illustrations are high in contrast, either in their content or form, they assist viewer’s understanding and pleasure. And this is also why contrast constitutes one of the crucial aspects when someone is looking for the perfect example of an author illustrating his own work, or equivalently of an illustrator creating text for his images.

William Blake’s work in general is a unique marriage of text and image and this bind combination is more than obvious in “Songs of Innocence and of Experience”. Blake used his artistic skills to create intricate and symbolic illustrations that enhanced the reader’s understanding of the poems. The illustrations were not mere decorations but were integral to



the overall meaning and interpretation of the poems. They provided visual cues and imagery that deepened the emotional impact of the text.

Moreover, in the text of Jha (2020) “Representation of two Contrary States of Human Soul: Songs of Innocence and Experience by William Blake” there is the claim that Blake's illustrations in "Songs of Innocence and of Experience" contribute to the overall thematic coherence of the work. It becomes obvious that the visual motifs and recurring symbols throughout the illustrations create a sense of unity and interconnectedness between the poems. They establish a cohesive narrative and reinforce the overarching themes of innocence, experience, and the human condition (Jha, 2020).

Taking into account Jha's suggestions about Blake's illustrations it becomes possible that he is one of the first great examples of the combo-model: author-illustrator within the realms of art history.

Although we experience a certain unity between these two groups of poems their existence in contradiction is even more intense. Dr. Norah Hadi Qassim Alsaeed in “The Divine Image and A Divine Image: William Blake's Religious Gnostic Perspective” (Alsaeed, 2023) claims that the stark contrast between the images of innocence and the images of experience is a well-known aspect of the artist. His poems in Songs of Innocence present a universal view of the world, depicting the purity and goodness of human souls. In contrast, the poems in Songs of Experience present a darker and more cynical view of the world. They highlight the negative aspects of human nature and society, such as oppression, corruption, and hypocrisy. The Songs of Innocence often have titles that are similar to those of Experience, but they convey contrary images. Alsaeed presents an example here:



Images 5 & 6: “The Divine Image” and “A Divine Image” from “Songs of Innocence and of Experience”



"The Divine Image" in Songs of Innocence and "A Divine Image" in Songs of Experience both explore the existence of God in humans and condemn the tyranny of religion and the Church. The use of identical or similar titles in these poems suggests Blake's intention to provide a direct shift from innocence to experience, from a universal perspective to a limited, self-centered one.

Furthermore, Blake's Songs of Innocence and of Experience carry another type of contrast as George Ewane Ngide states in his paper "Romantic Individuation and Individualism: Re-reading William Blake's Vision of Romantic Thingliness" (Ngide 2019) - the images of innocence and experience in Blake's poetry can be seen as a journey of life from individuation to individualism and back to individuation. The Songs of Innocence define who we are and the process of fulfilling our potential (individuation), while the Songs of Experience define what we have become and the process of returning to our original state (thingliness). This progression reflects a movement from harmony to disharmony and ultimately a journey back to harmony.

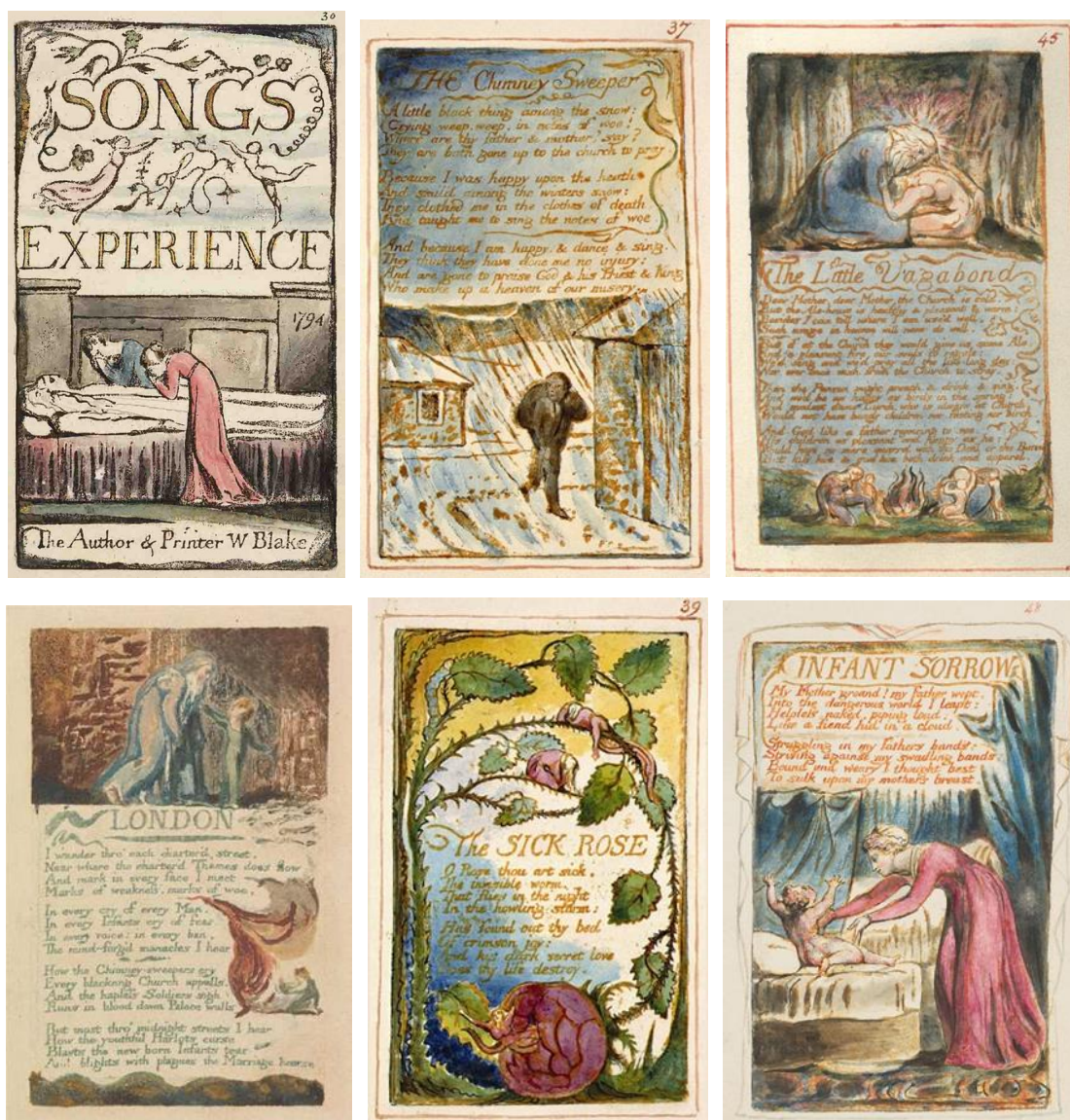
Comparing these two types of songs based on Jose Chiramel Paul's paper "Blake's Songs, Their Introductions and the Bible" (Chiramel, 2017):



Images 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 & 12: from "Songs of Innocence"



The illustrations of Songs of Innocence depict idyllic scenes of nature, children, and animals, symbolizing purity, joy, and harmony and are characterized by vibrant colors, delicate lines, and a sense of innocence and simplicity. And Nujhat Afrin in “Discourse of Children in William Blake’s Chimney Sweeper” claims that they convey a sense of childlike wonder and a belief in the inherent goodness of humanity (Afrin, 2012). The images of innocence in these illustrations reflect Blake's belief in the divinity of the human soul and the potential for spiritual growth and enlightenment as Alsaeed mentions (Alsaeed, 2023).



Images 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18: from “Songs of Experience”

On the other hand, Blake's illustrations of Songs of Experience present a darker and more complex vision of the world. The colors are often darker and more muted, and the lines are more jagged and chaotic, reflecting the disillusionment and cynicism associated with the experience (Chiramel, 2017). The images often depict scenes of oppression, suffering, and moral corruption (Afrin, 2012). These illustrations challenge traditional notions of morality and religion, criticizing the negative effects of societal and institutional structures (Alsaeed, 2023). They convey a sense of the harsh realities of life and the loss of innocence (Afrin, 2012).



Blake visualized a blend of lamblike meekness and mildness with the ferocity of tigers of wrath for having the human form divine perfect....” (Chiramel, 2017).



Image 19: “The Lab” and “The Tyger” from “Songs of Innocence and of Experience”

In addition to their artistic value, Blake's illustrations also serve a didactic purpose. They provide visual cues and symbols that help to convey the deeper meanings and messages of the poems. For example, the image of the lamb in "The Lamb" from "Songs of Innocence" represents innocence and purity, while the image of the tiger in "The Tyger" from "Songs of Experience" symbolizes the darker aspects of human nature. These visual symbols enhance the reader's engagement with the text and aid in their interpretation of the poems (Chiramel, 2017).

Blake's illustrations in "Songs of Innocence and of Experience" also contribute to the overall aesthetic and artistic value of the work. His intricate and detailed designs showcase his skill as an engraver and artist. The combination of poetry and visual art creates a unique and immersive reading experience for the audience (Chiramel, 2017).

## Conclusion

One aspect of Blake's role as an illustrator in his work “Songs of Innocence and of Experience” is his ability to visually depict the contrasting states of innocence and experience. The visual representations help to reinforce the dichotomy between these two states and enhance the reader's understanding of the poems (Jha, 2020).

Yokota & Tale in “Picture books and the digital world: Educators making informed choices” mention that in the field of art literature, it is not uncommon for illustrators to also serve as authors. This dual role allows them to have complete creative control over their work and

ensures that the illustrations and text are seamlessly integrated (Yokota & Teale, 2014). This practice is particularly prevalent in children's books, where the visual narrative plays a crucial role in engaging young readers (Sazonenko, 2019). However, it is worth noting that this phenomenon is not limited to books for children. Illustrators who are also authors can be found in various genres of art literature.

In illustrated books for adults, where the illustrations are not merely decorative but serve as an integral part of the storytelling, illustrations can provide additional layers of meaning, symbolism, and visual cues that enrich the reader's understanding and engagement with the text. The illustrator's creative choices in composition, style, and visual elements contribute to the overall interpretation and impact of the work. And this is more or less how a parallel world to the text is born.

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## ***The Framing of the Semiotic Codes in Five Filipino Movie Posters***

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Official Conference Proceedings

### **Abstract**

A movie poster, as an adjunct to a film, is not only a powerful instrument of mass visual advertisement, but also a mode of communication and a tool of persuasion. This article examines and analyzes, through the conceptual lenses of semiotic and framing theories, how movie posters communicate social and cultural transformations brought about by Western influence. The themes that emerged from the texts and images in the five Filipino movie posters of Star Cinema media company are the following: 1) Dominant Ideology with subthemes patriarchy or gender inequality, hierarchy in society, capitalism, colonialism or Western influence, and religion; and 2) Social Norms with subthemes sexual behavior/public display of affection, tradition, marriage rites, and family norms. The use of particular colors, text and image size, positioning of images and text, choice of symbolic objects, characters' poses and facial expressions all add to the meaning and interpretation of the framed semiotic codes. Since the audiences perceive the world through their frames, it is in this perception that their frames construct their social reality.

Keywords: Semiotic Code, Framing, Dominant Ideology, Western Influence, Gender Inequality, Social Norms

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## Introduction

A movie poster, as an adjunct to the film, usually displays attractive images representative of the film. A movie poster is undoubtedly a potent visual element which promotes a film's themes and narratives (Errington, 2015). However, a movie poster is not just an instrument for promoting the film. It is also a mode of communication, and a tool of persuasion.

It is important to note that a movie poster is some kind of advertisement for a particular film. That is why a movie poster is created and mass produced to "sell" the film. Movie posters are one of the tools of persuasion the movie producers employ to lure us into the movie houses.

Although this study is not part of artistic research, it deals with the elements of composition that are used to communicate and interpret meaning. Scholars believe that media messages are essentially intriguing from a semiotic perspective because they usually consist of an invigorating blend of symbols that are organized spatially and chronologically to create an impression, transmit an idea, or elicit a meaning in an audience (Fry, D. & Fry, H., 1986).

This study focuses on the analysis of the framing of the semiotic codes of five Filipino movie posters of Star Cinema media company. By analyzing movie posters, we can gain a better understanding of the visual elements and semiotic codes that effectively capture the attention of movie-goers. Analyzing movie posters can also help us learn how to sell the film's storyline even before the audiences see it for themselves.

Semiotics, according to Robert T. Craig, explains and cultivates the use of signs and language to mediate between different perspectives. It is the study of the social production of meaning from sign systems. Filmmakers employ obvious symbolic signs in their films, e.g. sign of the cross, scales of justice in court dramas, musical score to signify impending danger, etc. Similarly, movie posters present symbolic signs that are associated with the films' themes and narratives.

Framing theory, on the other hand, suggests that how something, i.e. frame, is presented to the audience influences the choices people make about how to process that information or message. Frames allow the movie goers or audiences to identify and understand otherwise meaningless events, giving meaning to the ongoing activities of life (Goffman, 1974).

Drawing from Roland Barthes' Semiotic Theory and Erving Goffman's Framing Theory, I would like to find the answer to the following research problem: How are the semiotic codes framed to reflect the narratives and themes of the five Filipino movie posters produced by Star Cinema media company?

In consonance with this research problem, this study specifically aims to: 1) identify and explain the denotative and connotative meanings of the semiotic codes framed in the images and texts of the five Filipino movie posters; 2) describe and interpret the framing of the different semiotic codes that reflect the plots and themes of the five Filipino movie posters; and 3) analyze the discourse created by the aesthetic and ideological factors framed in the semiotic interpretation of the social and cultural contexts reflected in the five Filipino movie posters.

Movie posters play an important role in attracting audiences, so the results of this study could help add insights to the fields of advertising (how to sell the movie), publicity, visual

communication and popular art/culture, business (how to increase movie outfit's revenues), media/communication studies (impact to the audiences). This study also offers theoretical and practical significance in increasing awareness of the semiotic codes framed in the movie posters.

Finally, the results of this study can help other designers, artists, researchers, and communication and media students to understand how to analyze the content of the framed semiotic codes in the images and texts of movie posters by genre, by time period, by director, by actor or actress, or by movie outfit, and learn how to interpret the denotative and connotative meanings of these images and texts.

### **Framework of the Study**

Ferdinand de Saussure defined semiology as “a science that studies the life of signs within society” (1959, p. 16). French semiologist Roland Barthes (1972) explained that the goal of semiotics is interpreting the verbal and nonverbal signs. He argued that signs subtly communicate ideological or connotative meaning and perpetuate the dominant values of society; thus, they are deceptive (Griffin, 1996).

A sign has a denotation and a connotation (Griffin, 1996). Denotation is the literal meaning of a word while connotation represents the various overtones, cultural implications, or emotional meanings associated with a sign. Connotation describes the subjective interpretation of the sign that evokes feelings or emotions from the audiences, and are associated with the values of their culture (Fiske & Hartley, 1978).

Barthes (1968) considered texts to be open to many possible interpretations. He considered the meaning of the finished text (i.e., movie poster) is to be created by the audience, so a text always remains open. We can understand characters, genre, storyline, theme, etc. through the signs and symbols in a text. These aspects are found through media language such as colors, images, text, balance, and positioning of the figures in the movie posters.

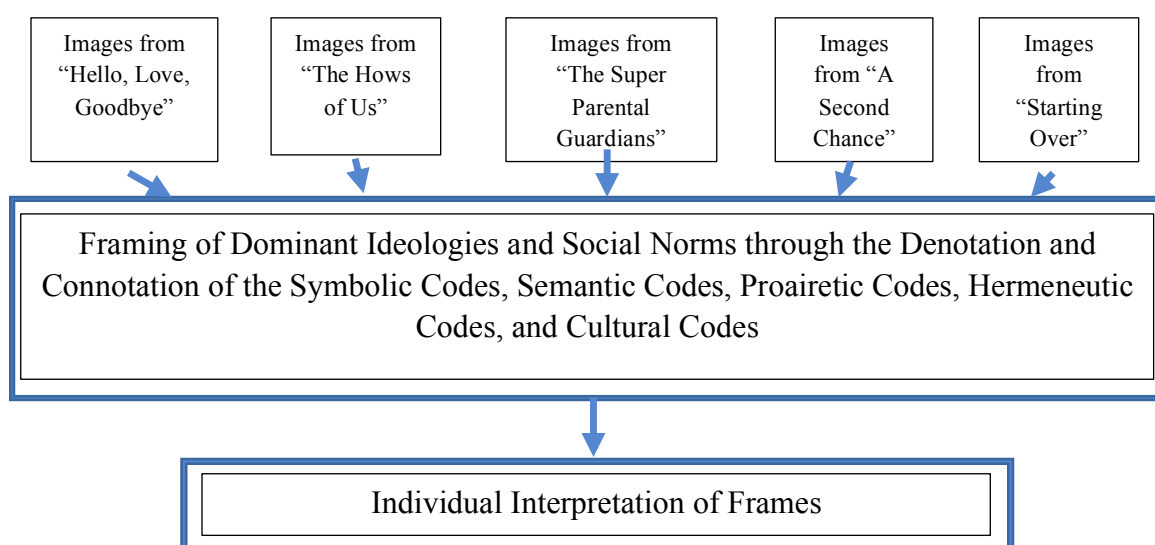
In his theory, Barthes (1968) presented five semiotic codes: 1) the symbolic code which is similar to connotation but deeper in meaning; 2) the semantic code which refers to the hidden meaning of the image or text; 3) the proairetic or action code which refers to any other action or event that indicates something else is going to happen; 4) the hermeneutic or enigma code which refers to any element of the story that is not fully explained and becomes a mystery to the audience; 5) the fifth is the cultural or referential code which is a part of media product that we can only understand if we are a part of that particular culture.

On the other hand, Erving Goffman believes that the goal of framing is to focus the audience's attention on a particular part of a message in order to achieve a specific reaction (Hallahan, 2008). According to the framing theory, the media highlights certain events and then places them within a particular context or a field of meaning to encourage or discourage certain interpretations. In this way, the media exercises a selective influence over how people view reality. Framing, therefore, is what constructs social reality. According to Goffman (1974), frames are mostly cultural in origin.

## Conceptual Framework

In *The German Ideology*, Karl Marx associated ideology with the ideas of the dominant class (Giddens, 1983). Giddens argued that dominant ideologies may be defined as shared ideas or beliefs which serve to justify the interests of dominant groups. In my study, the dominant ideologies, e.g. patriarchy or gender inequality, hegemony (power) or hierarchy in society, colonialism or Western influence, capitalism, and religion, affect and influence the framing of the text and images in the five Filipino movie posters.

Social norms are rules of behavior that exert social influence on group members by prescribing which behaviors are appropriate in certain situations (Panopio & Raymundo, 2004). Social norms such as sexual behaviors (e.g. public display of affection), etiquette, family norms, marriage rites, and traditions influence one's behavior because, through a process of socialization from infancy till death, they become part of one's motives for action. Therefore, it could be presumed that social norms are reflected in the framing of the text and images in the five Filipino movie posters (See Figure 1).



**Figure 1. Conceptual Model Integrating Semiotic Theory and Framing Theory**

In my conceptual framework (Figure 1), the dominant ideologies and social norms are reflected in the denotation and connotation of the signs, which are framed in the texts and images found in the five Filipino movie posters. The connotation contains the framed semiotic codes, namely symbolic, semantic, hermeneutic/ enigma, proairetic/ narrative/action, and cultural/referential. The framed semiotic codes found in the texts and images of the five Filipino movie posters influence and affect the individual interpretation of the frames.

## Methods

The research method I used in this study was qualitative content analysis in identifying, analyzing, and interpreting the denotative and connotative meanings of the framed semiotic codes. I downloaded five Filipino movie posters that I chose from the list of top 10 highest-grossing movies of Star Cinema media company in the last ten years. I chose the movies that I have watched so that I can analyze the verbal and visual elements of the movie posters in reference to the themes, narratives, and characters of the selected movies.



The units of analysis were the visual elements in the five Filipino movie posters produced by Star Cinema media company: 1) “Hello, Love, Goodbye” (2019); 2) “The Hows of Us” (2018); 3) “The Super Parental Guardians” (2016); 4) “A Second Chance” (2015); and 5) “Starting Over Again” (2014).

## Results and Discussion

### Denotative and Connotative Meanings

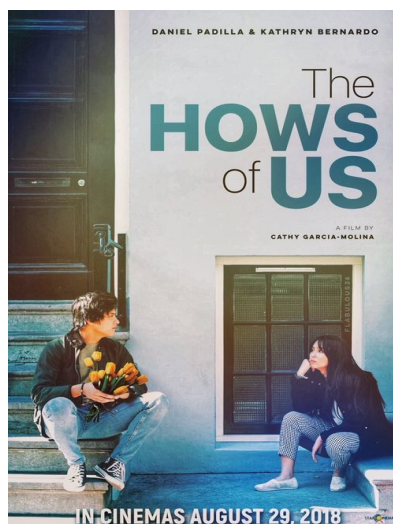
In the movie poster “Hello, Love, Goodbye,” the title signifies that a couple will meet, fall in love, and part ways. The most prominent image in the poster is the two lead characters with the man’s arm positioned over the woman’s shoulder while both of them are looking and smiling at each other. This pose indicates that they are in a romantic relationship.

The next image is the Hong Kong street with tall buildings and various advertisements with Chinese characters indicating that many businesses are promoting and selling different products. Another element is the blurred image of Chinese people walking and rushing down the street. This signifies that people are always busy and in a hurry in highly urbanized Hong Kong (See Figure 2).



Figure 2. “Hello, Love, Goodbye” Movie Poster

In the movie poster “The Hows of Us,” the man’s position which is one step higher than the woman’s position which signifies that the man has more power and authority than the woman. The next element is the woman’s pose--her right cheek is resting on her right hand--which signifies that she is sad and disappointed. Another image is the man’s pose, i.e., he is holding a bunch of flowers, which signifies that he is wooing the woman. The last relevant image in the poster is the house which implies that the house plays a significant role in their lives (See Figure 3).



**Figure 3. “The Hows of Us” Movie Poster**

In the movie poster “The Super Parental Guardians,” the title itself implies that at least two people have taken the role of parental guardians to at least one child. The word “super” signifies either having superpower or the tasks they are assuming in the absence of the real parents are overwhelming but they are able to accomplish them effectively. The next image is the male character trying to run which signifies that he wants to escape something, perhaps family responsibility.

Another image is the shanties which signifies that the main characters are poor and lived in a slum area. The next element is the image of the two boys, i.e., a young boy beside the man wearing a woman’s gown and a younger boy holding on to the left leg of a man. This image signifies that the two young boys are the wards of the two guardians. The last relevant image is the six people in the background which implies that they are either close friends or relatives of the main characters who help the guardians take care of the two wards. (See Figure 4).



**Figure 4. “The Super Parental Guardians Movie Poster**

In the movie poster “A Second Chance,” the title implies that a couple in a relationship broke up and then got back together again. Another element is the blurred image of the altar in the background which signifies that the couple is either married or getting married. The last relevant element is the image of a couple in a forehead-to-forehead position and smiling at

each other, with the woman's hands touching the neck and jawline of the man. This signifies that the couple is totally in love (See Figure 5).



Figure 5. “A Second Chance” Movie Poster

In the movie poster “Starting Over Again,” the title indicates that a couple broke up; then, they got back together again. The next element is the image of a man cuddling a woman which signifies that the couple is in a romantic relationship. The last relevant element is the letter or email in the background which implies that the couple could have been writing love letters to each other (See Figure 6).

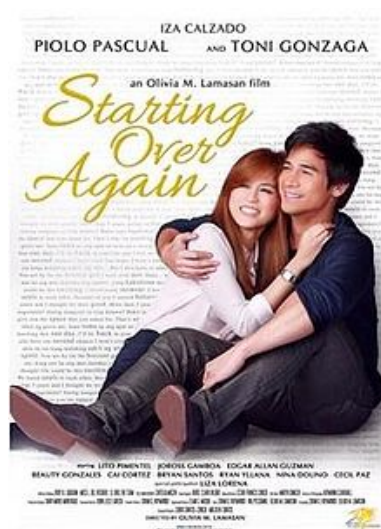


Figure 6. “Starting Over Again” Movie Poster

## The Framed Semiotic Codes

### Symbolic Codes

In the movie poster “Hello, Love, Goodbye,” the tall buildings symbolize city life and business establishments while the image of advertisements in Chinese characters symbolize products (local and foreign) being sold by different businesses. In the movie poster “The Super Parental Guardians,” the image of the shanties beside the train tracks symbolize

poverty while the red gown and headdress worn by the gay character symbolize Chinese culture.

In the movie poster “The Hows of Us,” the house in the background symbolizes conjugal abode or family, and the bunch of tulips (flowers) that the male character is holding symbolizes love, romance, or apology. Tulips symbolize Amsterdam, the dream destination of the female character.

In the movie poster “A Second Chance,” the blurred image of the church altar in the background symbolizes wedding/marriage and faith. In the movie poster “Starting Over Again,” the image of the letter/email in the background signifies communication.

### **Semantic Codes**

In the movie poster “Hello, Love, Goodbye,” the bold pink letters signify love and romance. By looking at the image of the boy’s arm over the girl’s shoulder, we can infer that the couple is in a romantic relationship. The image also shows the couple is looking at each other and smiling which signifies their happy romantic relationship.

In the movie poster “The Hows of Us,” the bluish letters, clothes, and shadows signify melancholy, sadness and depression. The image of the steps outside the house signifies the steps in a love relationship--from courtship to marriage. The male character is seated one step higher than the female character which signifies male superiority. The title of the movie has a semantic double meaning: 1) “how” the man can make the woman fall in love with him again; and 2) the “house” which refers to the couple’s conjugal abode.

In the movie poster “The Super Parental Guardians,” the prominent red (gown and letters) signifies joy, sexuality, passion, love, anger, courage, vigor, and will power. The word “super” signifies extraordinary ability.

In the movie poster “A Second Chance,” the red letters signify joy, sexuality, passion, love, anger, courage, vigor, and will power. The image of a couple who is in forehead-to-forehead pose, smiling at each other with the woman’s hands touching the neck and jawline of the man signifies that the couple is totally in love.

In the movie poster “Starting Over Again,” the prominent yellow letters signify caution, decay, sickness and jealousy. The image of the man cuddling the woman signifies that they were in a romantic relationship.

### **Hermeneutic Codes**

In the movie poster “Hello, Love, Goodbye,” the framed hermeneutic code is the image of the two lead characters in Hong Kong. The reason why they are in Hong Kong is a mystery that the movie aims to unravel. Meanwhile the framed hermeneutic code in the movie poster “The Hows of Us” is the image of the two lead characters distant from each other with the man holding a bunch of tulips.

In the movie poster “the Super Parental Guardians,” the presence of the moving train in the background signifies a mystery as to what might happen in the story. In the movie poster

“Starting Over Again,” the content of the letter/email in the background is a mystery to the audience.

### **Proairetic Codes**

In the movie poster “The Super Parental Guardians,” the image of the lead characters trying to run signifies they are trying to escape from something while the image of the ward holding on to his guardian’s left leg signifies his desire to stop his guardian from running away and leaving him. In the movie poster “A Second Chance,” the image of the woman touching the man’s neck and jawline indicates her desire to kiss the man.

### **Cultural Codes**

In the movie poster “The Hows of Us,” the image of the man holding flowers signifies his intent to woo the woman. The act of giving flowers to a woman is part of the Western culture which has been adopted by the Filipinos. Since many Filipinos have assimilated the Western culture, the images of the lead characters wearing Western clothes and displaying romantic gesture in public in the movie posters “Hello, Love, Goodbye,” “Starting Over Again” and “A Second Chance” can be classified as a framed cultural code. Although not a Filipino culture, the Chinese characters in the movie poster “Hello, Love, Goodbye” signify that the Filipino lead characters are in a foreign country trying to adjust to a different culture.

In the movie poster “The Super Parental Guardians,” the image of shanties signifies that the lead characters in the movie lived in a poor community and have different culture compared to people in rich communities.

### **The Social and Cultural Contexts**

#### **Dominant Ideology**

Capitalism has always been a dominant ideology and a prominent Western ideal. Capitalism gave rise to the economic and social divide and the establishment of the social class system or hierarchy in society which distinguishes the rich from the poor. Capitalism is evident in the images of tall buildings and Chinese advertisements in Hong Kong and the blurred image of the people walking in the background in the movie poster of “Hello, Love, Goodbye.” Although the movie poster didn’t show the struggles of the two Filipino main characters in this movie, the real reason why the main characters went to Hong Kong is to work. The female character has to work two jobs to save enough money to support her family in the Philippines. The image of the smiling couple in the poster is deceptive because it presents an illusion that they are happy, and they are in Hong Kong for a pleasure trip.

The hierarchical structure of society not only reflects the social reality that some groups of people are more dominant (rich) than the others (poor), but also demonstrates power relations. Because of these differences in social position, the dominant and the subordinate groups are afforded different experiences; therefore, they perceive the world differently. The social class distinction (hierarchy in society) is evident in the movie poster “The Super Parental Guardians” which presents the image of the shanties signifying poverty. In the Philippines, many slum communities are built beside the train tracks, so the image of the train in the movie poster presents this social reality. The framed cultural code portrayed through the rugged, plain-looking clothes worn by the characters in the movie also reflects social

position. It is interesting to note that the striking red gown worn by the gay character indicated that aside from his intense desire to assume a different role (i.e., mother), the red gown also signifies his ardent desire to assume a different identity—one that exudes class and affluence.

One commonality in all five movie posters is the use of English in the title which reflects our adherence and submission to Western influence. Filipinos haven't really gotten rid of colonialism even up to this day. We have learned through socialization and miseducation that anything foreign is better and worth emulating. That is why even in movie titles, audiences are made to think that the movie is better, classier, more appealing and more interesting if it has a Western touch. The Western influence/colonialism is evident in the framed semantic codes of all five movie titles, as well as in the framed cultural code of the costumes.

In pre-colonial Philippines, there was equality between the sexes (Titgemeyer, 1998). The women occupied a highly respected position in our egalitarian society (Aguja, 2013). However, in modern Philippines, patriarchy has led to a male-dominated society and culture. Deep-rooted patriarchy is one of the causes of the gender power gap in today's world perpetuating the male superiority over the female's physiological vulnerability. Social inequality that results from beliefs in stereotypical roles is due to the fact that social institutions have historically been developed by men (Kramarae, 1981). Patriarchy and gender inequality are reflected in the movie poster "The Hows of Us." Padilla is seated one step higher than Bernardo which signifies male superiority."

Religion, another dominant ideology, is reflected in the image of the church altar in the movie poster "A Second Chance." The image suggests that the lead characters in the movie might get married or are already married. The church altar also signifies faith, which is the main issue or theme in this movie.

### **Social Norms**

Film is a fictional sphere (Jordan, 2014) wherein romantic scenes depicting public display of affection is rendered invulnerable for audiences to observe; thus, allowing the escape from the conventions of society. Sexual behavior or the public display of affection, as seen in the framed semantic code in the movie poster "Hello, Love, Goodbye" through the image of the boy's arm over the girl's shoulder, and in the movie poster "Starting Over Again" through the image of the man cuddling a woman, reflects a rebellious behavior against the conservative values and tradition of old. Just like in the movie poster "Hello, Love, Goodbye," the image of the lovers embracing each other in the movie poster "Starting Over Again" is also deceptive because it presents an illusion that the couple has a happy romantic relationship, but in the movie, the two main characters fail to get back together as a couple.

In some countries like Hong Kong, some conservative people still frown upon this behavior and find it disrespectful. The public display of affection is definitely a Western influence coming from the influx of Hollywood movies and American/European television shows that we watch where they show liberated romantic or sexual life in very awkward situations. Chinese culture, and to some extent Filipino culture, do not encourage public display of emotions, and believe that physical intimacy should be done only in the comforts of one's home or inside the bedroom.

The Filipino family as the basic unit of society has a social structure guided by the norms, expectations, and values of the family members (Panopio & Raymundo, 2004). In the movie poster “The Hows of Us,” the house in the background demonstrates the framed symbolic code of conjugal abode indicating the characters’ life together as a family. The distance or space between the couple signifies a rift in the relationship. The overall feeling I got from perusing this movie poster is that the mood is cold and stiff which reflects the sadness of the film’s narrative.

The Filipino society and culture tend to be collectivist, which means that the interest of the group (e.g., family) prevails over the interest of the individual (Panopio & Raymundo, 2004). Collectivist cultures are tightly integrated or closely knit, stressing interdependent activities and common concerns, and acting for the common good. In the movie “The Super Parental Guardians,” the gay lead character is a very close friend of the deceased mother of the two children, so he assumes the responsibility of taking care of his friend’s children. The other male lead character is the uncle of the two orphans. In the movie poster, the framed proairetic code is reflected in the image of the characters trying to run which implies that in some part of the movie the characters would try to escape from something, e.g. responsibilities of being a father or mother to the two wards. It is part of our culture and tradition as Filipinos to help and take care of our extended family. Although the movie poster does not give any hint as to the relationships of the characters in the poster, the audience can infer that the characters in the foreground have close relationships.

The image of the bunch of flowers that the leading man is holding in the movie poster “The Hows of Us” reflects the traditional way of courting girls although this practice can be considered a Western influence. The image of the house as conjugal abode represented marriage and family norm while in the movie poster “A Second Chance,” the blurred image of the church altar in the background represents marriage, indicating too that the couple is Catholic.

## **Conclusion**

The aim of this qualitative study was to analyze the content and framing of the semiotic codes in the five Filipino movie posters of Star Cinema media company. I used content analysis in analyzing the framed semiotic codes based on the concepts of Roland Barthes’ Semiotic Theory and Erving Goffman’s Framing Theory. I chose the movies that I have already watched because I wanted to determine if the movie posters reflected the narratives, characters, and themes of the movies. Roland Barthes’ Semiotic Theory stated that texts as well as visual elements are open to many possible interpretations from many different perspectives. This study focused on my own interpretation anchored in the concepts of the semiotic theory and framing theory. In analyzing the five Filipino movie posters, I identified and described the denotation and connotation of the framed semiotic codes and categorized these codes into themes.

The concept themes were Dominant Ideology with subthemes patriarchy (gender inequality), hierarchy in society, Western influence (colonialism), capitalism, and religion; and Social Norms with subthemes sexual behavior (public display of affection), family norms, tradition, and marriage. The use of colors and symbolic objects played a vital role in the presentation of the themes and narratives. In my analysis of the framed semiotic codes, the concept themes were reflected in the visual and verbal elements of the movie posters. However, in at least

two movie posters, the essence of the films' narratives were not evident, and the images were actually deceptive.

The use of particular colors, text and image size, positioning of images and text, choice of symbolic objects, characters' poses and facial expressions all add to the meaning and interpretation of the framed semiotic codes.

Future researchers might want to analyze framed semiotic codes in print advertisements or movie posters with the same genre, same lead character, same director, or comparative studies of Filipino movie posters and Hollywood movie posters.

No one can deny that a film is a compelling means of communication, a tool of persuasion and a catalyst of social change. As an adjunct to a film, a movie poster should also be just as potent in order to entice the audiences to watch the upcoming film. Therefore, the content of a movie poster must be framed with values as it influences and controls the audience. We, as audiences, perceive the world through our frames and it is in this perception that our frames construct social reality.

Roland Barthes once said that signs perpetuate the dominant values of society, and that semiotic theory lies somewhere between art and science (Barthes, 1979). I say, our interpretation of the semiotic codes lies somewhere between reality and illusion.



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## *Lyricism and Voiced Spaces in Tennyson's 'Maud'*

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### **Abstract**

Tennyson's 'monodrama' has often been approached by critics as a choral text: one which is usually seen as a synergistic challenge to the Victorian singular self. What is less explored are its other conversations with the ideas of place, and its use of setting and location for its fractured conceptualization of selfhood. It is an unsettling poem about an unsettled individual, and part of its strangeness comes from its localizations of the tribulations of its narrator. Like *In Memoriam*, which in great part shaped the expectations of Tennyson's audience toward the tenor and scope of the lyricism for which he became so famous, *Maud* explores the psychological and the geographical components of anguish, but unlike that great work of mourning for Hallam, resolution and catharsis are not available, or accessible, through the act of mourning alone. Part of the reason for this is the jarring – for some contemporary readers, confounding – use of place and setting in the poem. One approach to reading Tennyson's engagement with the settings of his monodramatic voices is to consider them in the light of Foucauldian heterotopias, and to ask whether the narrator of the poem is in fact being placed and unplaced by the forces which underlie the text and its great challenges both to our conceptions of what resolution and catharsis are supposed to be, and to the Victorian post-Romantic lyric.

Keywords: Landscape, Heterotopia, Voice

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## Introduction

Perhaps no other poetic examination of despair could quite equal Tennyson's *Maud* (1855)<sup>1</sup> in problematizing J. S. Mill's now famous distinction between *poetry* and *eloquence*:

... We should say that eloquence is heard, poetry is overheard. Eloquence supposes an audience; the peculiarity of poetry appears to us to lie in the poet's utter unconsciousness of a listener. Poetry is feeling, confessing itself to itself in moments of solitude, and embodying itself in symbols, which are the nearest possible representations of the feeling in the exact shape in which it exists in the poet's mind. Eloquence is feeling pouring itself out to other minds, courting their sympathy, or endeavouring to influence their belief, or move them to passion or to action. (1897, pp. 208-209)

While the illustrator E. J. Sullivan thought that the poem is “nothing more nor less than a novel, where the narrative is indicated in a series of lyrical outbursts” (1921, p 158), *Maud* is more accurately seen as an invitation to observe the deterioration of a personality from an intimate, but distinct proximity, to feel its coming apart, and at its dramatic heights, to experience the process as barely vicarious. The mechanism by which Tennyson creates the thin boundary between reader and narrator is also that which troubles and confounds it: the use of space and place. However, this is further complicated by the use of voices of the narrator and others—“voices singing out of empty cisterns and exhausted wells” (Eliot, 2001, p. 375)—to evoke an instability in the personalities on show, and to indicate the root of this instability in the landscape underneath. Ricks (2006, p. 212) notes that at an earlier point Tennyson thought to call the poem “*Maud* or the Madness”, but later sub-titled his poem a ‘monodrama’: a term of art with origins in performance pieces for the stage. Moving the focus in this way from an interior chorus of (“overheard”) voices to adopt the *receptive* (audience) position of a performative text is in some sense shifting the ‘madness’ from one location to another. Iser (1989) noted that the “fundamental asymmetry between text and reader... [derives from] the lack of common situation and a common frame of reference ... [thus creates] an indeterminate, constitutive blank” (p. 33), but in *Maud* this is importantly not the case. Tennyson's framing suggests that there be an audience and an organisation of witnessing for the poem: a stationing of the listener at an ‘ideal’ distance, yet the circumstances surrounding the poem have always appeared to counteract this formality. Over the course of his long, successful career, Tennyson famously made this poem his own performance piece, imposing on his friends and putting his readers uncomfortably close to his narrator (Alfano, 2022, p. 193). The manipulation of place, spaces and voicing is seen in *Maud* to suggest a blurring of their boundaries, a Foucauldian loosening of the strictures against travelling across the categories of place and consciousness (1986): a move from the scenery *behind* a poem, to locations *in* the poem. Further still, this is to see the poem as landscape into which all else is placed, a landscape which is so essential to the expression in the poem that we are unsure whether the “objective correlative” (Eliot, 1921, p. 92) is quite so objective at all. Ultimately, this blended form of space is responsible for producing, in *Maud*, a poem which refutes the expectations of Tennyson's audience, even to the extent that the story being delivered is provided a sense of completeness.

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<sup>1</sup> References to the poem use the Ricks (2006) edition.

## Displacement

Mill, in his early essays, admired Tennyson greatly; one reason was the poet's singular capacity for his "power of creating scenery, in keeping with some state of human feeling; so fitted to it as to be the embodied symbol of it and to summon up the state of feeling itself, with a force not to be surpassed by anything but reality". In one essay, he quotes Mariana (1830) in full (but excerpted here) to show this "scene-painting, in the higher sense of the term" (1897, p. 242):

With blackest moss the flower-plots  
Were thickly crusted, one and all,  
The rusted nails fell from the knots  
That held the peach to the garden-wall.  
The broken sheds looked sad and strange,  
Unlifted was the clinking latch,  
Weeded and worn the ancient thatch  
Upon the lonely moated grange. (1830, p. 14)

Indeed, his stage-setting here as elsewhere is painterly; with a few lucid details, the "lonely moated grange" becomes Mariana's rustic prison, and suggests—exactly what she believes—that time has slowed to halting in that place. The character of the immediate locale then comes to extend everywhere in its (really, *her*) lethargy, and this permits a generalization of the torpor. Tennyson included this poem in his *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical* of 1830, but when he published *Maud*, in 1855, this same technique is employed to link narrative, place, and character in a way that suggests that something like a gothic visitation might have initially been on Tennyson's mind:

I hate the dreadful hollow behind the little wood,  
Its lips in the field above are dabbled with blood-red heath,  
The red-ribb'd ledges drip with a silent horror of blood,  
And Echo there, whatever is ask'd her, answers 'Death'. (p. 517)

This eerie scene of a disaster is placed squarely inside the family property lines, and inside the landscape which the narrator as a child has come to know, and subsequently as an adult must occupy as a disinherited outsider, cut off from the consolation and safety of his bloodline. It is utterly at odds with the poetic tradition of seeing woods as protected places, outside of the world, "Blissfully haven'd both from joy and pain" (Keats, 1931, p. 223), and interferes with the conventional depiction of homeliness. The idea that the Victorian world was bisected by a line which separated (for men) the family space from that of work is one which receives much rehearsal. While this has been complicated in recent years by criticism from Cohen (1998), Armstrong (1987), and others interested in the spaces of domestic ideology, Tennyson seems to make it clear from the outset that the story of *Maud* will unfold beyond the enclosure of the *domestic*, in any of the many inflections that this term has come to adopt. But what is also clear is that the scene-painting so characteristic of his earlier work will evolve to become something more than stage-dressing, or the working-in of a hospitable valency on the part of the landscape. Instead, the endowment of a sympathetic mind to the landscape—a conceit so often entertained by landowners over the centuries, through the Enclosures and well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century—will be turned against the protagonist, and will at the same time become something other: a thing with which to negotiate and struggle.

At the start of the poem, we, as the narrator's unbidden *confidant*, are already watching the consequences of the narrator's initial displacement: in an age where, in the words of Arthur Young, "[t]he magic of property turns sand into gold" (words which so captured John Stuart Mill, that they appear in most of his arguments concerning the merits of land ownership) (Maurer, p. 215, n7). The "imagined proprietor, ... is cultivated by the relationship with property much in the same way he is supposed to be cultivating his plot of land" (p. 67), and this mutual development is magnified and extended the larger the number of workers living on that land. The greater the land, the greater the virtues of home, which even in modest settings supplied a security which, according to Ruskin, approached sanctity:

This is the true nature of home—it is the place of Peace; the shelter, not only from all injury, but from all terror, doubt, and division. In so far as it is not this, it is not home: so far as the anxieties of the outer life penetrate into it, and the inconsistently minded, unknown, unloved, or hostile society of the outer world is allowed by either husband or wife to cross the threshold, it ceases to be home; it is then only a part of that outer world which you have roofed over, and lighted fire in. But so far as it is a sacred place, a vestal temple, a temple of the hearth watched over by Household Gods, before whose faces none may come but those whom they can receive with love,—so far as it is this, and roof and fire are types only of a nobler shade and light,—shade as of the rock in a weary land, and light as of the Pharos in the stormy sea; so far it vindicates the name and fulfils the praise of Home. (1907, p. 59)

Ethical and moral selves (as well as their fortunes) therefore, are made by home and land ownership; thus, to be made landless is truly to be sent *away*, displaced into moral abjection. *Maud* is then a demonstration of a soul without secure ground under his feet or a moral roof over his head, and perhaps this explains why so much of the poem is interested in traversing (often bounded) spaces, pacing, waiting on 'borrowed land' upon which he may not trust his or *Maud*'s security; Tennyson is recognising that the ethics of English law and social propriety depend for their foundation on stabilizing oneself with relation to land. Indeed, *placelessness* is one of the obsessions of the text: how often the narrator longs to *be* somewhere, or be somewhere *else*, but is frustrated in his efforts. The social metaphors of space combine to thwart his every effort: those who are higher, lower, or too close, or too distant are the antagonistic forces against which he must push. The end of the poem is an enlargement of this interest in civic station and its intersection with ownership, land, and nation, and sees the narrator venture to "hail once more to the banner of battle unrolled" (p. 581) in order to volunteer the human price of territorial avarice at the national scale by enlisting, presumably never to return, from the "doom assigned" (p. 582). The roots of this fate, however, have been easily traceable underground via the real and hallucinated subterranean motifs throughout: beginning with the narrator's anguish at the start of the poem.

The "dreadful hollow" to which we are introduced in the first stanza is shown to have lips and a voice: it is an inhumed face which calls up "Death" to those who call down to it (p. 517). This is nature mortified and become *genus loci*: but not as a sweet expression of man's engagement with nature, as Pope had seen:

That tells the waters to rise, or fall,  
Or helps th' ambitious hill the heav'ns to scale,  
Or scoops in circling theatres the vales;  
Calls in the country, catches opening glades,  
Joins willing woods, and varies shades from shades; ... (2006, p. 245)



Instead, the narrator's rights by inheritance and his expectations of family and security are half-hidden and ruined, entombed somewhere—or everywhere—around him. Evicted from his family home, he lives in a degraded version of the circumstances which ought to be his:

Living alone in an empty house,  
Here half-hid in the gleaming wood,  
Where I hear the dead at midday moan,  
And the shrieking rush of the wainscot mouse,  
And my own sad name in corners cried,  
When the shiver of dancing leaves is thrown  
About its echoing chambers wide ... (p. 534)

The land from which he was torn speaks to him in and through its physical reminders of the injuries to his moral self. These voices which he hears calling out to him are the dead past: the spaces of thwarted history and lost family which threaten to build upon themselves until their animosity is unsurmountable. Foucault (1984/1986, p. 22)<sup>2</sup> noted that the “ever-accumulating past, with its great preponderance of dead men and the menacing glaciation of the world” was a preoccupation of the Victorian century. He drew attention to the ways that place and space are made to both serve and oppress the wishes of the individual suffering through the mischances of historical and cultural forces, and suggests that “space itself has a history in Western experience ... Our epoch is one in which space takes for us the form of relations among sites” (pp. 22-23). Of particular interest to readers of *Maud*, is the idea of spaces within ordinary society which become *loci* of crises.

### Heterotopias of Crisis

Tucker (1993) looked at Tennyson's intention to include novel formulations of place and space in the early stages of (re)writing the poem. In the famous section beginning “Oh! that 'twere possible”, he sees that the poet works to:

Play conventional images of a rural past against something quite new in the canon of English poetry: hypnotically surreal imagery of a desolate urban present. Tennyson was aware of the novelty of this imagery... the bereaved lover is stealing “Through the hubbub of the market”, “Through all that crowd, confused and loud”; and decades before his successor J. Alfred Prufrock, he loathes “the squares and streets, / And the faces that one meets”. These stray early images of the modern city Tennyson systematically expands ..., inserting new stanzas on “the leagues of lights, / And the roaring of the wheels”, “the yellow-vapours” and “drifts of lurid smoke / On the misty river-tide”. These revisions show the poet installing a traditional expression of erotic grief within a markedly modern context, and generalizing that grief into a malaise whose cultural specificity, at the level of imagery, widens its appeal beyond the power of narrative explanation. (p. 175)

A Foucauldian reformulation of that final remark would speculate on the ‘widening’ going on, and might insist that the “cultural specificity” be sought in the kinds of relations between the places which the characters are described as being. The trope of comparing psychological deviance to stumbling through inhospitable terrain is certainly not new: the Bible is replete

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<sup>2</sup> All references to “Of Other Spaces” are to the Miskowiec (1986) translation.

with lost spiritual ‘wanderings’, or in verse one could consider an example from Rochester in the 17<sup>th</sup> century:

... *Reason*, which Fifty times for one does err.  
*Reason*, an *Ignis fatuus*, in the *Mind*,  
 Which leaving light of *Nature*, sense behind;  
 Pathless and dang’rous wandring ways it takes,  
 Through errors Fenny – *Boggs*, and *Thorny Brakes*;  
 Whilst the misguided follower, climbs with pain,  
*Mountains* of *Whimseys*, heap’d in his own *Brain*:  
 Stumbling from thought to thought, falls headlong down, ... (1984, p. 92)

Any number of others would also suffice, but conceptualizing the constituent elements of such a landscape as potentially being a circumscribed space, and offering a theory of such spaces resulting from their psycho-social function, Foucault reimagines them (and in doing so extends their significance) as “space[s] thoroughly imbued with quantities and perhaps thoroughly fantasmatic as well” (p. 23).

Tennyson deliberately invoked the apparatus of the (space of) theatre performance when he presented Maud—even on paper—while simultaneously employing the literary-poetic “scene-painting” descriptive technique he had developed in his earlier writing. This dual existence as both *play* and *lyric* suggests the opportunity to see the unsettled place-shifting in the poem as connected to voicing, too. Indeed, both explicitly, as in the reminders of death, and implicitly as in Maud’s voicelessness (her speech is almost always reported), we are given so many occasions to imagine the presence of interlocutors that we ought to be surprised at the narrator’s lack of voiced response to them: it is mostly his *displaced* wanderings and absconsions which are the most fully verbalized and narrativized experiences in the poem, rather than the instances of speech. When a place does seem to have both voice and heterotopic significance, it seems to take on a role for itself in the monodrama; invariably this kind of place-as-consciousness instantiates fatality in some way.

The narrator presents two such places of doom to his audience which bear some examination: the first, we have already seen, is the “hollow behind the little wood” (p. 516) which is introduced as being a despised place, a “ghastly pit” (p. 517) wherein his father’s wrecked body was found. It is a site of death and failure: Sisyphus defeated, the “rock that fell with him when he fell” suggests both the weight of the world and its shifting and unreliable support for the foundations of a dynasty. The rock exercises no less than four verbs (and one collocate) to wreck the narrator’s father: “Mangled, and flattened, and crushed, and dented into the ground”, their aggregation increasingly suggests a sadistic “fantasmatic” agency and not chance (which is associated with love in the poem). The hollow is the one location of the poem presented as coming into existence *as* place of horror and crisis, and it remains so: it exists to be experienced as a reminder of the intention of Fate to exercise its will against the narrator’s family; the refuge denied him here becomes mirrored in the interior entombment he later experiences.

Part two of the poem ends with “the mad scene”—one of the most perplexing sections of the poem—in which the narrator himself becomes a voice of a place, in an ironic gesture toward the Hollow, and the origin of his pain:

Dead, long dead,  
 Long dead!  
 And my heart is a handful of dust,  
 And the wheels go over my head,  
 And my bones are shaken with pain,  
 For into a shallow grave they are thrust,  
 Only a yard beneath the street,  
 And the hoofs of the horses beat, beat,  
 The hoofs of the horses beat,  
 Beat into my scalp and my brain,  
 With never an end to the stream of passing feet,  
 Driving, hurrying, marrying, burying,  
 Clamour and rumble, and ringing and clatter,  
 And here beneath it is all as bad,  
 For I thought the dead had peace, but it is not so;  
 To have no peace in the grave, is that not sad?  
 But up and down and to and fro,  
 Ever about me the dead men go;  
 And then to hear a dead man chatter  
 Is enough to drive one mad. (pp. 574-575)

Tennyson reported that it took him 20 minutes to write (Ricks, 2006, p. 574, n. ii 239 ff); perhaps this contributed to the jagged edges of the lines: they are hurried and the end-rhymes are simple, repetitive; the stanza is mostly about movement and noise. Reading this naively, one is confronted with a *dead* man's voice: what has become of the narrator? The confusion suggests movement enough to allow the ragged lines to carry us through to discover that this afterlife is taking place in an imagined location: the non-place of insanity. This "mad scene" is conducted by a crazed imagination from the grave: a shift to a private heterotopia of crisis, but still a temporary one: his curse is to never rest. First the victim of the voices from the heterotopia, he is now absorbed into, and becoming one himself.

## Conclusion

Tennyson's final theme, with all its spatiality is ultimately reducible to the problem of the inescapable nature of the subjective experience which so blazed in the words of Milton's angel:

The mind is its own place, and in itself  
 Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n. (1910, p. 17)

With *Maud*, he strained the public understanding of the lyricism which he helped to create, and passages such as the one above illustrate his willingness to depart from his, by then, tremendously popular style. Dransfield (2008) notes that although both contemporary and later audiences attributed the instabilities of the text to the poet's dramatic rendering of madness, it is likely that they were necessitated by the opposing forces of "lyric subjectivity and dramatic objectivity" (pp. 279-280).

Shelley also gave a famous account of existential wandering: he recognises the power of loss and its connection to place. However, unlike *Maud*, it delivers its protagonist into a transcendent catharsis:

It is a woe too 'deep for tears,' when all  
Is left at once, when some surpassing Spirit,  
Whose light adorned the world around it, leaves  
Those who remain behind, not sobs or groans,  
The passionate tumult of a clinging hope;  
But pale despair and cold tranquillity,  
Nature's vast frame, the web of human things,  
Birth and the grave, that are not as they were. (1816, p. 49)

In Part I of *Maud*, as something of an augury, the narrator looks about himself and his lost inheritance, and seems to see only ruin, and after recounting the horrors brought about by poverty and social corruption, added to his own debasement, he laments, "Were it not wise if I fled from the place and the pit and the fear?" (p. 522). As we have seen, these three will follow him forever, acting out and acting in their roles as wilful tormentors. He mistakes the source of the danger to himself when he decides that he and Maud must leave the place wherein he was subject to the "fear", when in fact he is being placed and unplaced by the forces which undermine the separability of mind and place. In order, then, to find proper resolution for himself and Maud, the narrator simply decides to go to another place. However, we see that he will always be thwarted, and that the only cathartic opportunity which Tennyson has afforded him is death in the Crimea, or perhaps in Foucauldian terminology, this is the "heterotopia of crisis" *in extremis*. Not of his own making, it was created by Great Britain's exerting (or failure to exert) both its political and spatial influence: its own "Hollow", into which it sent its young men to war, not to see their futures reach their resolution and potential, but to have them end.

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## *Hindu Worldview Through Folk Etymology in Vāyupurāṇa*

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### **Abstract**

It is noteworthy that some of the interesting characteristics in Indian texts are the way to see the world through folk-etymological analyses especially in Hinduism, which leads to the objective of this article: to study Hindu worldview in the text named *Vāyupurāṇa* (VP), one of the significantly early *Śaiva* Hindu texts. The research methodology is the folk etymological concept. The findings are as follows: VP reflects some natural perceptions by considering that each word in Sanskrit language has its root, which is the tiniest element. To consider the grammatical roots in each word is to understand the background of the world. In some cases, one word may be designated by many roots, contributed to the plausibility to understand the meaning of the same word in many ways and the text also does not claim which one is correct. The mentioned backgrounds are to be understood variously. Despite the sensible limits of human nature in ancient times and lack of reasonable linguistic consideration in the way that is acceptable in modern linguistic concept, it undeniably displays attempt to explain the world as understood. VP therefore is one of the texts to be regarded as Indian historical proofs of human imagination.

Keywords: Hindu, Folk Etymology, Sanskrit Literature

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## Introduction

The folk etymology, or popular etymology, is a change resulting from the replacement of the unfamiliar with the familiar (Sirley, 2000). We can see many samples of folk etymology when it comes to some loanwords or terminology that is partly new to Thai society, for example, in Thai the word สัมมนา (sammanna ‘seminar’) has been invented for the word seminar. The สัมมนา sounds Sanskrit and easily accepted in Thai society whereas you cannot find this word in any Sanskrit dictionary, although it can be analyzed to be ‘sam’ (‘together’) + mana ‘mind.’ Etymologically speaking, the word seminar has the same root as semen, which is relevant to seed and regarded as lost in translation. Mostly Thai people do not know this is the unfamiliar word less than 100 years, invented by the royal scholar team. They are willing to believe that สัมมนา means having mind together because this invention sounds familiar to Thai language especially in some extent influenced with Sanskrit long time ago, though this.

To Indian people, the folk etymology is ancient. It can be found in many classical texts as the way to understand and imagine the world as it is. For example, in Hindu mythology *gandharva* is a kind of heavenly musician. They are the servant of Indra, king of gods. Their couple are apsaras or the nymph. There is a belief that the *gandharva* is fragrant because of the word *gandha* in the word *gandharva* itself. Actually no one knows the real *gandharva*. But Indian people in ancient time link the word *gandharva* to the word *gandha* that is familiar to them and means the fragrance, as can be seen in the Hindu and Buddhist texts. Although the folk etymology is an approach that is less scientific than nowadays linguistic, its significance in the intellectual history of humankind is undeniable.

When it comes to the *Vāyupurāṇa*, undoubtedly it is one of the oldest texts in Śaiva Hinduism, composed around the 5<sup>th</sup> century. One thing that can prove its oldness is the use of the word Rudra more than Śiva. The word Rudra is to be found often in *Ṛgveda*, the oldest text in Hinduism, before the popularity of the word Śiva later. It is known that Śiva’s characteristics are from Paśupati and Rudra which are ancient in Indian society. Besides, there is no God Ganeśa in this text. Only Skanda is remembered as the son of Śiva and Pārvatī.

When considering the folk etymology throughout the text, it is interesting that there are many examples of attempt to understand the world as much as human in ancient time can do, leading to my objective; i.e., to investigate and study Hindu worldview through folk etymological analysis in *Vāyupurāṇa*. At least the study would illustrate that before the westernized linguistic scientific point of view, how we ever see the world.

## Hindu Worldview in Vāyupurāṇa

Many Sanskritists believe that every word in Sanskrit has its root, which is the tiniest of the words and gives us the original meaning. Some are reasonable and some are hard to say if it is reasonable. For example, the word *śraddhā* could be divided into *śrad* ‘heart’ and *dhā* ‘to put’ so literally *śraddhā* means ‘to put something in the heart,’ which means faith or belief. However, *go* ‘cow’ is believed that it is derived from the root *gam* ‘to go,’ which I am not sure about it because many things can go like cow. This belief could be turned back to the time of *Pāṇini* the famous Sanskrit grammarian who lived around 450 B.C. There is a textbook dealing with this hypothesis named *Nirukta* composed by *Yāska*. It can be said this device to see the world is ancient and appears in Indian culture for a long time.



It is found many times that in *Vāyupurāṇa* there are a lot of folk etymological analyses as the important way to see the world. Although it seems like the composers find a root to the word later, it is undoubtedly the way to link the words to nature or the text to the context, or this is the text in the text again because it is the way to understand the meaning of the word itself. Let me give some examples in the *Vāyupurāṇa* about this:

The root *bhā* means to expand, to shine. Since it expands and shines, the water that goes everywhere is known in the name *ambhas*. //2.7.50

The root *tan* means to extend. Since it extends all over the earth, the water is well-known in the name *tanu*. //2.7.51

Since the sun while orbiting protects the three worlds. It is called *ravi* from the root *av* ‘to protect, to shine.’ //2.50.60

One who is expert in etymology said the world named *bhuvar* is from the root *bhū* ‘to be.’ *Bhuvar* is the name of the world in the second level; that is the sky. //2.64.14

The word *dvīpa* ‘continent’ is derived from having water surrounded two ways (*dvi* ‘two’). Also, the word *udadhi* meaning the ocean is derived from carrying water (*ud* ‘upward’ + *dhā* > *dhi* ‘to carry’). //2.49.131 (*because the water in river or ocean could be high tide*)

Since then, kings who have the right to punish were born. Because of delighting people, they got the name *rājā* (*rañj* ‘to be delighted’). //2.57.58

The planets, constellations, and all the stars that we know, as well as the whole universe have evolved from the sun. Since being imperishable of constellation, it is called *Nakshatra* (*na* ‘not’ *kṣi* ‘to perish’). //2.53.50

...and so on.

Sanskrit is the language rich in lexicon. We cannot conclude which one is correct or which explanation comes first or later, or maybe it comes spontaneously when composing the text. But we can see some attempts to understand the world by finding the root of the word. Although it is a matter of speculation, it nevertheless displays an attempt to understand the world.

In some cases, it can be found in *Vāyupurāṇa* the suggestion about the origin of the word more than one meaning. This might be doubtful when it comes to the linguistic knowledge in the present time that is familiar to us, that is, we try to find one conclusion that is clear and provable. The origin of any word, therefore, should not be diverse or hard to find conclusion. Folk-etymologically speaking, we can see that some words could be analyzed more than one origin. This leads us to understand the concept of Indian folk etymology that has human imagination as background of thought. For example:

Because of taking the sacrifice at first, the thing is called *āditya* ‘the sun.’ //2.12.35

*Āditya* ‘the sun’ is a constellation because the sun revives the downfallen land with its ray. //2.53.51

Because of removing darkness in the night in heaven and the world, it is called the sun.  
//2.53.53

It can be seen one word ‘*āditya*’ that means the sun could traced back to the various origin. In 2.12.35 this links to the myth that Manu the first king of the world who is the son of the sun is one who makes sacrifice. That is why the sun takes the sacrifice at first. 2.53.51 and 53 refers to the Sanskrit root *dā* ‘to give’ when combined with prefix *ā*, the word means ‘to take something back, to remove’ and becomes the meaning of the sun folk-etymologically.

In addition, we can see the role and significance of the folk etymology in explaining the myth in *Vāyupurāṇa*, as can be seen from the story as follows:

In the darkness Lord Brahma is dominated by hunger. He creates another body. Therefore, the creature that is created at that time usually is hungry and tries to take water. //2.9.26

They said, ‘we are going to save this water.’ So, they are well-known in the world as *rākṣasa* the night-wanderer who are angry by nature. //2.9.27

The other group said to one another that ‘we are going to destroy the water’ and enjoy. They become *yakṣa* and the evil *guhya*. //2.9.28

The root *rakṣ* means to save, protect and root *kṣi* means to destroy. //2.9.29

Recently we have heard the international news that India might change the name of the country to be *Bhārata*, which is regarded long time ago as the original name of India. We found in *Vāyupurāṇa* one chapter dealing with *Bhārata* land or *Bhāratavarṣa* – the holy land in the South of *Meru* the central mountain, that is chapter 45 describing the circumstance landscape of *Bhārata* land. Folk-etymologically speaking the name *Bhārata* is from the word *Bharata* as follows:

Since the land is named *Bhārata*, the people here are called *Bhāratī* and *Manu* (the first king who rules the world) is called *Bharata* because he saves the people. //2.45.76

The composer links the name *Bhārata* to *Bharata* because the root *bhr* means to carry, to save, to take care of, though the name *Bharata* in *Vāyupurāṇa* is different from *Bharata* in the Lunar race, that is prevailingly believed in the present. *Bharata* here is the son of *Ṛṣabha* in the lineage of *Manu*, son of *Brahma*.

*Ṛṣabha* gave birth to the brave *Bharata* who was the elder brother of the other hundred sons. Having the son *Bharata* succeeded to the throne, *Ṛṣabha* ordained as a monk. //2.33.51

*Ṛṣabha* gave the southern land *Himāhava* (*Himālaya*) to *Bharata*. Thus, the learned person knows his land by the name *Bhārata*. //2.33.52

I do not want to decide absolutely whether we should go back to the name *Bhārata* or not because it is beyond my scope of study. We might need to reconsider the exact boundary of the *Bhārata* before, which is different from the present geography. Anyway, we can see that this

is the old name that has been appeared long time ago in the ancient text and already folk-etymologically explained.

### **Conclusion**

To conclude, the folk etymology can shed the light to our understanding to Hindu concept in many ways, especially in terms of the origin of the meaning of the world and the Hindu myth, or we can say, although we are not sure whether this is the world as it is or not, this is the world that we want to be; that is the world full of imagination and respect to the nature.

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***Homosexuality and Bara Manga in Japan – Representation of the Psychological State of Mind of the Contemporary LGBT+ Plus Size Men in Japan***

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**Abstract**

This article discusses various aspects of LGBT representation and history in Japan, including the history of homosexuality in Japanese culture, the challenges faced by the LGBT community in contemporary Japan, and the representation of LGBT people in Japanese popular culture, particularly in the genre of bara manga. This article seeks to promote awareness of the rich popular LGBT culture in Japan that can inspire other readers to follow and inform about the contemporary societal issues in Japan and worldwide. Sources cited in this article included academic texts, personal narratives, as well as Japanese-language sources. This overview study analyzes 7 bara manga artists and their representation of plus-size men and their experience with heteronormative prejudice in Japan. The study gives case study examples from several manga sources as testimonies and reflections of real-life Japanese LGBT+ experiences.

Keywords: LGBT, Japan, Homosexuality, History, Representation, Popular Culture, Manga, Bara, Challenges, Personal Narratives, Overview Study

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## Introduction

Homosexuality is generally still a taboo topic in Japan, and there is significant social stigma and discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community. According to (Nakayama & Koyama, 2021) this stigma is rooted in cultural, religious, and historical factors that have contributed to the belief that heterosexuality is the norm and that any deviation from this norm is unacceptable. In Japan, there is a strong emphasis on conformity and a desire to avoid standing out or drawing attention to oneself. This pressure to conform can make it difficult for LGBTQ+ individuals to come out and express their true selves, as they may fear rejection from family, friends, and society at large.

Additionally, while same-sex marriage is not illegal in Japan, it is not legally recognized, and there are no anti-discrimination laws protecting LGBTQ+ individuals in the workplace or in public accommodations. This lack of legal protection can make it difficult for LGBTQ+ individuals to feel safe and secure in their daily lives. Moreover, LGBTQ+ representation in Japanese media is often stereotypical or non-existent, perpetuating harmful myths and misconceptions about the community. Thus more underground and non-mainstream popular culture is the main source of art and outlet for many members of the Japanese (and of course worldwide) LGBT youth.

All of these factors combined can make it challenging for LGBTQ+ individuals to be open about their sexuality in Japan and to live their lives freely and authentically. However, there are increasing efforts by activists and advocates to raise awareness and promote acceptance of the LGBTQ+ community in Japan.

The author does not have access to real-time information or data on how many Japanese gay people sought psychological help in 2022 or any other year since there are no statistics related to psychological help and plus-size men among the LGBTQ+. Additionally, it is important to note that seeking psychological help is a personal decision and not all LGBTQ+ individuals may choose to seek help for their sexual orientation or gender identity. Homosexuality, or same-sex relationships, has existed in Japan throughout its history, and there is evidence of same-sex relationships in various forms of Japanese literature, art, and historical records dating back to ancient times. In traditional Japanese culture, sexual expression was not restricted to heterosexuality, and there was a more fluid view of gender and sexuality. Same-sex relationships were not necessarily stigmatized or seen as immoral, as long as they did not conflict with the social norms and roles that governed relationships between men and women.

## Historical Background

As historians as (Suganuma, 2018) or Pflugfelder (1999) state, during the Edo period (1603-1868), male-male sexual relationships, particularly between samurai warriors, were documented in literature and art, such as male-male love stories in "yaoi" novels and shunga (erotic art). However, it's important to note that these relationships were often depicted in an idealized and romanticized manner as stated by e.g. Kolbeins, (2019) or (Leupp, 1995) and did not necessarily reflect the realities of LGBTQ+ individuals at the time. With the arrival of Western influence in the late 19th century, Japan adopted a more conservative and heteronormative view of sexuality, and same-sex relationships were increasingly stigmatized and criminalized, as stated by Welker (2018). Homosexuality was officially outlawed in

Japan in 1872, and it wasn't until 1999 that the law was revised to decriminalize consensual same-sex sexual activity between adults (Hatano & Tanaka, 2020).

Today, while attitudes towards homosexuality are slowly changing in Japan, there is still significant social stigma and discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community, and the country lags behind other developed nations in terms of LGBTQ+ rights and acceptance.

Contemporary bara manga<sup>1</sup> 薔薇漫画, which is a genre of Japanese manga (comic books) that features gay male characters and themes, can offer a unique and varied representation of the LGBTQ+ community in Japan. However, it's important to note that the genre is primarily geared towards a male audience and may not always accurately or fully represent the experiences and identities of LGBTQ+ individuals.

In contemporary bara manga, LGBTQ+ characters are often portrayed in a positive and sympathetic light, with stories that explore issues related to sexuality, identity, and relationships. However, the representation of LGBTQ+ characters can also be limited and stereotypical, with certain tropes and archetypes appearing frequently, such as the 攻め "seme" (dominant partner) and "uke" 受け (submissive partner) dichotomy. One of the unique aspects of bara manga is that it is created and consumed primarily by gay men in Japan, and therefore reflects their experiences and perspectives. While there may be some overlap between bara manga and yaoi (a genre of manga featuring homoerotic relationships between male characters, primarily aimed at a female audience), the two genres are distinct and have different audiences and themes.

Overall, contemporary bara manga can offer a diverse and nuanced representation of the LGBTQ+ community in Japan, but like any media, it is important to approach it critically and with an awareness of its limitations and potential biases.

### **Status Quo and Themes in Bara Manga**

There are currently no comprehensive statistics on the publication of bara manga in Japan, as it is regarded as a niche genre and is often self-published or published by smaller independent publishers. Additionally, there is no centralized database or organization that tracks the publication of manga in Japan, making it difficult to gather data on specific genres like bara. However, there are some sources that can provide information on the popularity and circulation of bara manga in Japan. For example, the Japanese bookstore chain Animate has a section dedicated to bara manga, and their website lists top-selling titles in the genre. In addition, there are online communities and forums dedicated to discussing and sharing bara manga, which can provide some insight into the popularity of specific titles and creators.

Common themes in bara manga include stories of romantic and sexual relationships between men, often with a focus on masculine and muscular characters. These stories may be set in a variety of genres, including romance, drama, and erotica, and may feature themes of power dynamics, domination and submission, and exploration of sexuality and identity. Some bara manga may also explore social issues related to the experiences of LGBT individuals in

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<sup>1</sup> Bara manga (薔薇漫画) is primarily targeted towards a gay male audience and often features hyper-masculine and muscular men, while yaoi and BL are primarily targeted towards a female audience and often feature more androgynous and romanticized male characters. While there may be some overlap in terms of themes and content, the two genres are generally considered distinct.

Japan, such as discrimination, isolation, and coming out. In bara manga, the relationships between male characters are often depicted with a focus on emotional and physical intimacy. These relationships may explore themes of love, desire, and attraction, and may depict a range of emotional and sexual experiences between the characters. Bara manga stories may feature characters who are exploring their own sexuality, coming to terms with their desires and preferences, or engaging in relationships that challenge societal norms and expectations.

One common theme in bara manga is the dynamic between dominant and submissive partners. Many stories may feature characters who enjoy exploring power dynamics in their relationships, with one partner taking on a more dominant role and the other a more submissive role. These relationships may explore themes of control, trust, and consent, and may also depict physical acts such as bondage or spanking.

Overall, the relationships depicted in bara manga tend to be complex and nuanced, with a focus on emotional and physical intimacy between male characters. These stories may challenge societal norms and expectations around masculinity and sexuality, and offer a space for the exploration and expression of diverse experiences and desires.

There are several reasons why bara manga has become popular in Japan and beyond. One key factor is that it offers a form of representation for LGBT individuals, particularly gay men, in a society where such representation is often lacking or stigmatized, as stated by several studies in the field (Nakayama & Koyama, 2021). Bara manga provides a space where readers can explore and identify with characters and storylines that reflect their own experiences and desires and offers a way to challenge societal norms and expectations around gender and sexuality. Another factor that may contribute to the popularity of bara manga is its focus on male beauty and physicality. The muscular and masculine characters that are often featured in bara manga may appeal to readers who appreciate the aesthetics of the male form, and offer a way to explore and celebrate male desire and attraction. Finally, the stories and themes depicted in bara manga may simply be engaging and entertaining to readers, offering a mix of drama, romance, and erotica that is compelling and immersive. Like any genre of popular culture, bara manga has developed a dedicated following of fans who appreciate its unique style and storytelling.

Bara manga can provide an outlet for the representation and exploration of gay men of all body types, including those who identify as chubby or have a larger body size. While muscular and athletic characters are often featured in bara manga, there is also a growing trend toward the representation of characters with diverse body types and appearances.

## **Discussion**

Some bara manga artists intentionally include characters with different body types as a way to challenge stereotypes and broaden the representation of gay men in popular culture. These characters may still be depicted in a sexual or erotic context, but their larger body size is not portrayed as a negative attribute or a barrier to desire or romance. Ultimately, the appeal of bara manga lies in its ability to offer a space for the representation and exploration of diverse experiences and desires, including those of gay men who may not fit traditional societal norms (McLelland, 2005) or expectations around body size or appearance. See the following examples as a case study of how bara manga artists try to depict the reality within Japanese culture:





Figure 1. Example of LGBT youth and adults facing heteronormative stereotypes in 榛名 Seto no Shima (2020)

"Seto no Shima" is a manga series (3 volumes so far with another coming in 2023/24) by Haruna (榛名, 2019), a well-known author of bara manga. The story is set on a remote island in Japan and follows the relationships between the island's inhabitants, who are primarily not gay men. The series explores themes of love, friendship, and personal growth, and often features explicit sexual content. The characters in the series are typically plus-size men, which is a somewhat not very common characteristic of the bara manga genre. Even though bara manga contains explicit content, embedded within are also societal, psychological and cultural topics that many readers across the globe find interesting and relatable. See the following examples from Figures 2 and 3 as examples of the changing paradigm in the bara manga genre which previously depicted mostly muscular men, now turning its focus on average build or plus size men as well. This trend is followed by many bara manga authors today to promote body positivity among LGBT+ youth and adults. "Ototo no Otto" by Gengoroh Tagame 田亀源五郎, (2018) is a Japanese graphic novel series and TV drama that depicts the relationship between two men who get married after the Japanese government's legalisation of same-sex marriage. The novel and drama were considered revolutionary because they were one of the first mainstream media works in Japan to feature a same-sex marriage storyline in a positive light. The portrayal of a same-sex couple as loving and committed was seen as a groundbreaking step towards greater acceptance and representation of the LGBT community in Japan. The novel and drama were also praised for their realistic depiction of the struggles faced by the LGBT community, such as discrimination and societal pressure.



Figure 2. Civil unions/marriage acceptance in 榛名 Kimi no Omokage (2019)



Figure 3. A movie adaptation of 弟の夫 by 田亀源五郎 directed by Yoshida Teruyuki (2018)

Overall, while there is no definitive data on the publication and circulation of bara manga in Japan, it is clear that the genre has a dedicated following and is an important part of the LGBTQ+ media landscape in the country.

Here are some of the popular bara manga authors in Japan:

1. **Gengoroh Tagame** 田亀源五郎: Considered one of the pioneers of bara manga, Tagame has been active since the 1980s and is known for his explicit and often BDSM-themed works. Some of his most popular titles include "The Fisherman and the Seal," "Endless Game," and 弟の夫 "My Brother's Husband."
2. **Jiraiya** じらいや: Known for his hyper-masculine and muscular character designs, Jiraiya's work often focuses on themes of sports and manly pursuits. Some of his most popular titles include "In the Bar," "Muscle Paradise," and "Bears in Heat."
3. **Takeshi Matsu** 松武: Matsu's work often explores themes of romance and sexuality, and he is known for his skilful depiction of intimacy and emotion. Some of his most

popular titles include "Bokura no Hentai," "Kimi to Parade," and "Ai no Kotoba mo Shiranaide."

4. **Fumi Miyab** 深緋ふみ: Miyabi's work often deals with complex relationships and the challenges of coming out and living as a gay man in Japan. Some of his most popular titles include "In These Words," "Pure Love's Sexy Time," and "Honey Comb."
5. **Gai Mizuk** 水木凱: Mizuki's work often focuses on the eroticism of male-male relationships, with an emphasis on sensuality and intimacy. Some of his most popular titles include "Love Pistol," "Blue Sheep Reverie," and "Ai to Makoto."
6. **Haruna** (榛名) and **Suwwave** (サブウェイブ)<sup>2</sup>. Focusing on younger male audiences, mainly young chubby or more masculine men and their dating strategies and societal stigma in everyday situations in contemporary Japan.
7. **Seizoh Ebisubashi** 胡桃ちの is a well-known author in the bara manga genre. He is particularly known for his works featuring muscular and masculine men, and his art style has influenced many other bara manga artists. Some of his popular works include "G-Men," "Kuso Miso Technique," and "Bi no Isu."

The representation of LGBTQ+ people in Japanese popular culture is complex and varied, and there is no single conclusion that can be drawn. However, there are some general observations that can be made based on the available evidence:

1. LGBTQ+ representation in Japanese popular culture is increasing: In recent years, there has been a greater presence of LGBTQ+ characters and themes in Japanese media, including anime, manga, and television dramas. While representation is still limited, there are signs of progress, with more nuanced and diverse portrayals of LGBTQ+ people.
2. Representation can be stereotypical and limited: Despite the increase in representation, LGBTQ+ characters in Japanese popular culture are often portrayed in a stereotypical and limited manner, conforming to certain tropes and archetypes. There is also a lack of representation for transgender and non-binary individuals.
3. Stigma and discrimination persist: Despite some positive representations, there is still significant social stigma and discrimination against LGBTQ+ people in Japan, and this can be reflected in popular culture. LGBTQ+ characters may be subject to ridicule or negative stereotypes, and there is a lack of legal protection for the community.
4. LGBTQ+ representation can be intersectional: While the representation of LGBTQ+ people in Japanese popular culture is often limited, there are examples of media that explore the intersectionality of identity, including representations of LGBTQ+ people of color, people with disabilities, and people from different socio-economic backgrounds.

Overall, while there are limitations to the representation of LGBTQ+ people in Japanese popular culture, there are also signs of progress and a growing awareness of the need for more diverse and nuanced portrayals. Coming out can be difficult in Japan for a number of reasons, including cultural norms and expectations around family and social relationships, as well as legal and social barriers to LGBT equality and visibility.

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<sup>2</sup> Haruna (榛名) and Suwwave (サブウェイブ) are not considered bara manga authors in Japan. They are known for their work in the yaoi and BL (boys' love) genres, which are distinct from bara manga in terms of their target audience, themes, and stylistic conventions. However, the author decided to include them in the list due to the majority of overlapping themes with the contemporary bara manga artists in Japan.

According to a report by the Research Institute for Publications (まんが白書, 2021), the market size of the boys love genre in Japan was approximately 35.5 billion yen/¥ (about 320 million USD) in 2019, and it has been steadily growing in recent years. Additionally, according to a survey conducted by the Association of Japanese Manga Publishers, the boys love genre accounted for 10.9% of all manga sales in Japan in 2020.

In Japanese culture, there is often a strong emphasis on family and community relationships, and there can be pressure to conform to traditional expectations around gender and sexuality. This can make it difficult for individuals who identify as LGBT to come out to their families or social networks, particularly if they fear rejection or discrimination.

Additionally, Japan has been slower than some other countries to enact legal protections for LGBT individuals, and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity is still legal in many areas. This lack of legal protection and social recognition can create additional barriers to coming out, particularly in more conservative or traditional areas of the country.

Overall, the combination of cultural norms and legal and social barriers can make coming out a difficult and potentially risky process for LGBT individuals in Japan. However, there are also increasing efforts to promote greater acceptance and visibility of LGBT individuals and issues in Japan, including through activism, media representation, and legal reform.

## **Conclusion**

This explored the topic of bara manga and its representation of the LGBT community in Japan. It also touched upon the historical and cultural context of homosexuality in Japan, as well as the challenges that LGBT individuals face in Japanese society today.

Some of the key themes and takeaways from this overview study include the diversity of representation in bara manga, the importance of exploring diverse experiences and desires in popular culture, and the challenges faced by LGBT individuals in Japan.

For educators and psychologists, it is important to recognize the social and cultural context in which LGBT individuals in Japan are living and to provide support and resources that are sensitive to their unique needs and experiences. This may include providing safe spaces for LGBT individuals to explore their identities and connect with others, as well as working to promote greater awareness and acceptance of LGBT issues in Japanese society.

It is also important to recognize the potential positive impact that media and popular culture can have on shaping attitudes and perceptions around LGBT individuals and issues. Educators and psychologists can help promote diverse representation in media and popular culture, and encourage critical thinking and analysis of the messages and values conveyed in these representations.

Overall, by promoting greater awareness, acceptance, and representation of LGBT individuals and issues, educators and psychologists can help create a more inclusive and supportive society for all individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

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***Roasting Online Towards the 2024 Elections:  
Frame Analysis in Indonesia's Political Activism of Komika on Instagram and Twitter***

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**Abstract**

Political fanfare has gotten louder in advance of the 2024 general elections in Indonesia, including social media. Political memes are one criticism that has attracted a lot of responses from social media users. This study focuses on how *Komika* on social media construct and launch critical discourse that is both specifically related to the election and other relevant political discourse. This study investigates how memes are used to disseminate information about political figures and discourses surrounding the 2024 election at the grassroots level using discourse framing analysis. We use a deep memetic frame, combining Ervin Goffman's framing analysis with recent analysis of internet culture, and linking Arlie Russell Hochschild's deep story concept. This research use the term in Stand-up Comedy, *Roasting*, to describe the meme-activism toward the 2024 election. The object of this study was the viral upload of four *Komika*, Bintang Emon, Adjis Do'a Ibu, Karim Sudjatmiko, and Abdur Arsyad on Twitter and Instagram platforms. This study focused on context of the meme and central theme to understand the issues raised, explain the views of the creator to his audience, and how memes can build a deeper understanding of the issues framed. As a result, the four *Komika* have different approaches to building framing. Bintang Emon are more focused on "riding the waves" related to issues that have gone viral, while Adjis Do'a Ibu criticizes certain figures who have been pinned on the label of oligarchs and dynastic politics. The same tone appeared on Karim Sudjatmiko that attack a certain political figure, and Abdur Arsyad also 'humiliated' political figures for political strategies that accentuate identity.

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## Introduction: Research Background

Throughout the welcoming 2024 general election in Indonesia, political figures and internet citizens (*netizens*) shared tons of content on social media platforms to influence the voters' decisions. Social media brought a direct and interactive environment in communicating ideas, publicly showcase, and promoting the user's political view, also engaging every *netizen* in the political conversation. Several pertinent topics of discussion related to the political party, the candidates, and social issues are thrown to the platforms and develop as a boisterous conversation.

Twitter and Instagram have become two of the most social popular platforms that accommodate conversation in the 2014 and 2019 general elections (Fadillah, D. et.al., 2019; Kholid, A., et.al., 2015; Beta, A. R., & Neyazi, T. A., 2022). Although that those two social media are not the most popular platforms in Indonesia (We Are Social, 2023), but Instagram and Twitter still become the destination for Indonesian *netizen* to access the digital platform, based on the same research by We Are Social Media: to finding information (1<sup>st</sup> main reasons), keeping up-to-date with news and event (5<sup>th</sup>), also sharing opinions (14<sup>th</sup>).

Since 2022, the conversation related to the 2024 General Election in social media is increasing. The one thing that is also common during the situation is the use of memes as the tools of political activism. Richard Dawkins in his book (1976, 192) coined meme as a tool for forwarding culture for inter-generation, expressing mannerism or ideas that comes in the form of videos, GIFs, edited pictures, or texts. Memes are influenced by one another, establishing the meme culture that uses script or *keying* to give meaning to the social interaction. Erving Goffman (1967, 11) sees the meme performance on the key point of actors that shows the anonymity but could spread the story into viral.

The actors behind the memes' activism in the period of 2024 General Election in Indonesia are coming from various figures, one of them is the Stand-up Comedian (*Komika*). The *Komika* shared their political intent and the tendency to challenge norms, established themselves not just as an entertainer, but also provocateur, eye-opener, or questioner. This meme 'questioning' or audits the political power and challenges the groupthink, 'provocate' the idea, and inspiring the netizens to see things differently as a 'eye opener'. The use of memes by *Komika* also reflected the form of "roasting" for the 2024 Election in Indonesia. Roasting is a form of 'insulting' comedy about certain people (Toplyn, 2016). In this case, the roast that is conducted by Indonesian *Komika* is conveying criticism or suggestion to whom has power: government, political party, and also political figures. But all of these criticisms are not always delivered in an offensive way. Roasting could be an agenda to attract the attention or interest of the mass audience to be more 'literate'.

Stand-up comedy scene also introduces every *Komika* 'persona', or a representation that *Komika* want to be recognized on the stage (Raditya Dika, 2018). The persona of *Komika* could have appeared in various forms, ethnic, economic status, educational background, and also political perspective. and this persona will support the jokes that are delivered by every *comic*. In Indonesia, there are several *Komika* that are close to political issues and have a criticism persona, of which three of them are Bintang Emon, Adjis Doa Ibu, and Abdur Arsyad. Beside their famous name on the stage, those three *Komika* are also well-known on social media platforms for their political perspective, especially in Instagram and Twitter. They are also part of the most popular *Komika* that trigger or follow the discussion of 2024 General Election and bring the satire memes on social media as their political activism tools.

This research article aims to contribute to understanding how *Komika* on social media construct and launch critical discourse that is both specifically related to the election and other relevant political discourse, by analyzing their content in social media. It highlights the representation of messages in every memes content that is delivered by the *Komika*. This article analyzes contents of the three *Komika*, using the perspective of Kozinet's (2010) netnography with recent analysis of internet culture. The novelty of the research lies in its analysis of how *Komika* use memes content as their 'languages and tones' to express their political view, balancing the entertainment side and their criticism in comedy roasting. This research contributes to enriching the literature of complex social phenomena in comedy culture in the middle of society, the role of stand-up comedy in behalf of the controversial side of comedy roasting that blurred the line between jokes (and delivering funny) with offensive point of view. This study also investigates how memes are used to disseminate information about political figures and discourses surrounding the 2024 election at the grassroots level using discourse framing analysis.

The existing research related to meme and political movement were far focused on American-European phenomena and online forum. The occurrence of social media activity in Southeast Asia are become an highlight to develop the media studies related on meme and activism, especially in Indonesia. Existing academic literature highlighted several meme factories, using the social media platform such as Twitter (Faliha & Putri, 2022; Pusanti & Haryanto, 2015; Dewi et.al, 2017), Instagram (Rahma et al., 2022; Pratiwi, 2022), Facebook Group (Suswandari et.al., 2022; Septiawan, 2022), also independent web media such as 1cak (Muftitama, 2023; Sofian & Gaddafi, 2022). Still, this study sheds an important light on the use of memes on Twitter and Instagram as the favorite platform for Stand-up comedians in Indonesia to spread their political ideas (Meydiawati & Alamiyah, 2023; Wibowo & Mirawati, 2013; Septian et al., 2019).

## **Methodology**

This research uses a construction paradigm using the framing analysis method. The object of this study was the viral upload of three *Komika*, Bintang Emon, Adjis du'a Ibu, and Abdur Arsyad on Twitter and Instagram platforms. The sample developed from *Komika* that actively posted memes related to the 2024 General Election and translated that as a basis of this project. Our initial collection size focused on three figures of *Komika* from Twitter and Instagram. The collection started with what we knew, documented and recorded memes from every *comic's* personal account. To collect the sample, researchers focused on scrolling back through the post, tracking the *Komika* engaged with the material and what themes were prevalent in the memes and other content being shared.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### ***Deep Memetic Frame, Political Activism in the Comedy Stages***

Meme might appear as a cheap, shallow, or insignificant thing on the surface. But, internet meme nowadays are distinctive product of digital culture that assigned for specific meme. The meme become a tool for social and political activism (Milner, 2013; Burroughs, 2013; Bennett and Sergeberg, 2013). It takes a part on the participatory culture that established in internet platform, bring the ideology of cultural-collectivism. The memes-activism serve a wide variety of social, cultural, and political purpose, but still a lack of significant strand of research has looked into the use of memes. As meme are close to political discourse lately,

this research aimed to focus on the roles ascribed to meme in the political situation in Indonesia.

The use of humor in political context has traced since the times of Aristophanes, Plato, and Socrates (Corbeill, 1996). Political humor appeared as a part of social movement, because the humorous behavior itself is a form of warrant attention. In a superiority theories perspective, humor activism are seen as a tool for social correction (Duncan, 1962: 187). Humor arises out of desire to feel superior from another, to discipline the situation by laughter by mocking the action of other and openly ridiculing them. The memes appear as one of cultural jamming. It has been seen as noise in the system. Memes are developed to sabotage the conversation, “interpret” an existing text. The interpretation here just not translate the text, but try to bring another ideas to ‘correct’ the discourse. Meme brings the true logic using the rhetorical appropriation. Meme popped up to offer alternative interpretation that represent another voice in political discourse, using parodies, satire, hoaxes, and other form of comedy. The aim is to attack the fundamental mechanism in a society. Memes challenge the communication using entertainment way.

Memes are contagious patterns of cultural information that circulate rapidly and spread broadly. It becomes effective in a particular sociocultural context. Political meme brought any political ideas that easily understood and imitated. Messaging the humor, the reinterpretation of memes can become meaningful and rational political critique and activism (Lasn, 1999: 107). Liesbet van Zoonen (2005: 63) also argued that memes and other parodic-satirical comedy that exist are equivalence the fan practice and political practice. In democratic system perspective, the appears of meme-activism are representing the exchange between the domains of entertainment and politics, two sides that commonly thought to be impossibly equal.

### ***Ervin Goffman's Frame Analysis and Deep Story Concept in Internet Culture***

Ervin Goffman define the frame as something that can define and redefine a context. Goffman’s version of frame analysis rely on more sociological and cultural approach, examines the three aspects: the cognitive, the interactive, and the situational aspects. The analysis of these three aspects intends to describe the social dynamics of the roasting online situation by Indonesian *Komika*. The Goffman’s frame analysis is described in the question of ‘What is it that’s going on here?’ (Persson, 2018: 198). The actor of communication in social interaction try to answer when she or he enters a situation by reading the chain of events, who the other people are, and their actions.

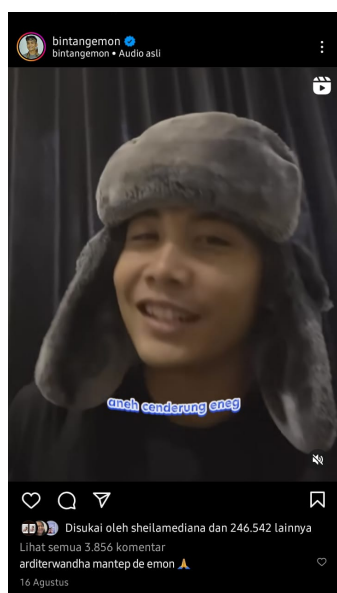
Ervin Goffman assumed that individual most of the time reads and interprets the situation. Goffman’s build the concept of frame analysis in social construction, and it relates that situation is seen as the ‘social facts’ that influenced by norms, laws, habits, and other different forms of durable collective association or institution. The data reflected the understanding about something in a specific way and how the communicators base the behaviour and thinking on such knowledge. In terms of online roasting for 2024 election, the meme content describes how the *Komika* as a hub user in social media platform (a.k.a. influencer) spread their political stance in online social networks.

This study also adopts the concept of deep stories (Hochschild, 2016), because the political idea behind the roasting content reflect collective worldviews through making and sharing memes as one of the everyday acts of communication. The deep memetic frames concept

become the base to understand the worldview of *netizen* as online community, and this approach built the interpretation of content frames. The interpretation sees the frame analysis as a inter-memetic discourse of interpretation, identification, and ideological orientation, answering how political views of *Komika* framed the 2024 election through memes.

### Result and Discussion

Several standup comedy artists consistently create content on digital platforms. They produce a variety of content in the form of photos, videos, or text. The content is also varied. There are several comics who actively create comedy content with political themes on social media. This research focuses on four comics, namely Bintang Emon, Karim Sujadmiko, Abdurrahim Arsyad, and Adjis Doa Ibu. The four comics use different platforms and package content.



Picture 1: A screenshot of Bintang Emon



Picture 2: A screenshot of Karim Sujadmiko's video



Picture 3: A screenshot of Abdurrahim Arsyad's upload



Picture 4: An upload by Adjis Doa Ibu

**Picture 1** is a screenshot of Bintang Emon. The video in image 1 was uploaded on August 16 2023 via the Instagram platform with the video reels post type. This post received 246,788 likes, 3,860 comments, and has been shared 7,573 times<sup>1</sup>. This video is approximately one minute long, showing Bintang Emon wearing a ushanka hat. This video is also accompanied by close captions in Indonesian.

Bintang Emon starts the video by expressing his feelings about the existence of billboards for legislative candidates (candidates). Bintang felt strange and also nervous about legislative candidates who said that "*I am ready to serve the country, I am ready to fight corruption, I am honest and trustworthy*". Bintang questioned why these legislative candidates are self-claiming, narcissistic. Then he said that he did not know who the fathers of these legislative candidates were. Then, he made an analogy with a friend who borrowed money, who was initially sweet when borrowing the money and then became unfamiliar when the debt had to be paid. Bintang Emon said what about the candidates he didn't know who he was, then said he was honest and trustworthy. Will this legislative candidate also disappear when he is elected?

Approaching the 2024 General Election, legislative candidates from various political parties in Indonesia have started campaigning by making various billboards. Usually, on campaign billboards, a political member will include the slogans of his political promises. Through this video, in the context of the general election period, Bintang Emon conveys his aspirations as a people regarding the phenomenon of many billboards for legislative candidates which contain political promises. Conveying his aspirations and also political participation was carried out by means of stand-up comedy by presenting various jokes. Bintang Emon brings the analogy of a friend who borrows a debt and initially acts sweetly and then forgets about the debt he has. An analogy might occur with the promises made by legislative candidates with their various political promises.

**Picture 2** is a screenshot of Karim Sujatmiko's video uploaded on May 24 2023 via the Instagram platform with the video reels post type. This post received 63,469 likes, 1,557 comments, and has been shared 16,500 times.<sup>2</sup>

Karim Sujatmiko starts the video by showing himself reading information in the Bintang garden. Then he said, "Bull, this animal is vaccinated because it is above the law", then several people appeared and they danced together. In this post, Karim Sujatmiko wrote the caption "Is the Javan bull an animal whose strength comes from Java? (confused emoticon)".

This short video is full of political satire. Starting from the choice of animal descriptions read by Karim. The bull is the logo of one of the major political parties in Indonesia. This political party is also currently proposing a candidate for president of Indonesia. Impunity is a condition that often occurs in Indonesia, where many cases occur, but because of their position and power a person can easily escape legal prosecution.

**Picture 3** is a screenshot of Abdurrahim Arsyad's upload. This poster was uploaded on the Twitter platform on August 2 2021. This upload received 56 likes, 1,734 comments, and was shared 321 times.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Dilihat pada 5 Oktober 2023, 09.11 WIB

<sup>2</sup> Dilihat pada 5 Oktober 2023, 09.32 WIB

<sup>3</sup> Dilihat pada 4 September 2023

Abdurrahim Arsyad uploaded a poster containing a picture of two Indonesian athletes who won gold medals at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics in badminton. This poster also features flag ornaments, medals and pictures of two athletes in expressions of victory. This poster also contains a photo of Abdur who starts off carrying two toy guns. At the bottom of the photo, he wrote his full name Abdur Arsyad and the description Sie Kekinan XII IPA 4 Class of 2008 SMAN 1 Kupang. In this upload, Abdur wrote the caption "Once again, thank you Miss Greysia and Miss Apriyani. Thank you very much! (thank you emoticon)".

This post was a form of satire against officials in Indonesia regarding the victory of Indonesian badminton athletes at the 2022 Tokyo Olympics. Many officials made posters congratulating the two Indonesian athletes and also included photos of themselves which even though they had nothing to do with the victory of the two athletes.

**Figure 4** is an upload by Adjis Doa Ibu. The Twitter post in image 1 was uploaded on December 19 2022. Adjis posted a meme depicting himself and several world soccer players. In the meme, Adjis wrote "Campeon del mundo Argentina!", "Adjisdoaibu is a candidate for electoral district 2 Buenos Aires, Balvanera subdistrict, Chacarita, Palermo, Puerto Madero, Villa del Parque". Then, Adjis also wrote that "this is a rival poster for politicians in a country".

### **Negative Partisan and Nonpartisan Category**

Based on framing, these four comics can be segmented into two types of partisans, namely negative partisans and nonpartisans.

1. Negative partisans are those who openly criticize certain parties or individuals without having special support or relationships with political parties (DeJong et al., 2022). The comedy content created by Karim Sujatmiko and Adjis Doa Ibu is classified as negative partisan. In the content created by Karim Sujatmiko, he openly criticizes certain parties, with the symbols and labels used for humor having similarities with the instruments of certain political parties and figures. Adjis Do'a Ibu criticizes certain figures who are labeled oligarchs and dynastic politics.
2. Nonpartisan, nonpartisan individuals who are not part of the "political establishment" (Jankowski et al., 2023). Bintang Emon and Abdurrahim Arsyad are non-partisan. Bintang Emon is more focused on 'riding the wave' regarding issues that are currently viral. Meanwhile, Abdur Arsyad participated in 'embarrassing' political figures because of political strategies that emphasize identity.

Although these four comics have different ways of attacking which are packaged in their jokes. All these comics have something in common, namely that they position themselves as people. They frame themselves as conveying the aspirations of the people. All the jokes they produce convey the people's anxiety about government politics with various ongoing issues. They bring many people's points of view about social facts, such as there is no trustworthy and honest legislature, there are parties that have immunity from the law and so on. The actions carried out by these four comics are a form of political participation and also a political movement among the community. Where humor activism is seen as a functional tool for social correction (Duncan, 1962: 187).

Comics take advantage of viral and trending issues to increase public tension. Disseminating their ideas on social media is done by maximizing social media features and functions that can reach the widest audience. The form of content they create is generally easy to digest even though the issues they bring up are not completely light. This comedy with a political theme is packaged according to content trends that can be easily accepted by the online community.

### ***Countering the Narrative of Satrio Piningit***

The concept of deep memetic framing pointed out the narrative in organizing citizen understanding of the political system, their place in it, and the interest of their actor. In this study, the narrative of *Satrio Piningit* as ideal image of leader has its cultural and political power to transform emotion and it is intrinsic to political performance (Darmawan, 2007: 20). As the political culture in Indonesia still in dominance of Java-centric, the image of *Satrio Piningit* or *Ratu Adil* (The Fairest Leader) will always appeared in every political election.

The narrative of *Satrio Piningit* always related with seven images (Darmawan, 2008: 41-42), related on *Satrio Kinunjuro Murwo Kuncoro* (pious), *Mukti Wibowo Kesandung Kesampar* (resilient), *Jinumput Sumelo Atur* (a devout Moslem), *Lelono Topo Ngrame* (helpful), *Hamong Tuwuh* (charismatic), *Pambukaning Gapuro* (leaders to follow), *Pinandhito Sinisihan Wahyu* (reflect the god's verse). All of these images are commodified as the attributes of every politician in political campaign.

The roasting content from the four *Komika* are countering the narrative of *Satrio Piningit* that always be attributed with political figure. The message to 'fight corruption', 'honesty', and 'bring back the Indonesia's glory' are shouted by the political figures to evokes emotion that mobilize followers. But, *Komika* bring counter-argument with cultural idioms that laughing on tevery *Satrio Piningit's* image, that there is no political figure that 'really fight the corrupt culture', 'totally honest', or 'could bring back the golden age of Indonesia'. This counter-narrative amplified on the supporter that have a same framework to see the politician, trolling the elites and carrer politician. The *Komika* solidified their status as an non-partisan and negative partisan, or generally speaking as an outsider of political bonds. *Komika* represents the civil society to air their resentments by laughing at the elites.

### **Conclusion**

As a result, the three *Komika* have different approaches to framing. Bintang Emon focuses more on 'riding the wave' regarding issues that have gone viral, while Adjis Do'a Ibu criticizes certain figures who have been labeled as oligarchy as well as dynastic politics. Meanwhile, Abdur Arsyad participated in 'shaming' political figures for political strategies that accentuate identity. Karim Sujatmiko openly criticizes certain parties, with symbols and labels used to be funny. However, these four comics have something in common, namely that they position themselves as people. They frame themselves as conveying the aspirations of the people. All the jokes they produce convey the people's anxiety about government politics with various ongoing issues. They bring many people's points of view about social facts.



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***Beyond CAVEs and Domes:  
Creating Accessible Multi-User Virtual Installations for Immersive Learning***

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**Abstract**

New opportunities for immersive learning on campuses with high fidelity installations like CAVEs and domes have been made possible by the development of various technologies like virtual reality, motion capture, projection mapping, and more. These high fidelity installations have been created by commercial companies, primarily for marketing, exhibitions, and events. However, there is still a demand for accessible and reasonably priced immersive installations in educational settings. By planning, building, and implementing a low-cost, substantial multi-user virtual installation for cooperative immersive learning and presentation of student VR/AR media, this project intends to close this gap. Key design elements have been identified and integrated into an immersive exhibit using more readily available technologies like projection mapping and VR by comparing current immersive educational environments such as CAVEs and domes. The design and development techniques used to build this immersive learning environment while preserving cost effectiveness will be covered in this article. Some early implementations of educational programs are introduced that employ the big multi-user immersive installation's early learning that includes use in giving student created virtual tours connected to tourism education and immersive storytelling. Through this study, we show the learning potential of immersive installations in learning environments while making them more accessible to more institutions, allowing students to collaborate and learn while utilizing the most recent immersive technologies.

**Keywords:** Immersive Learning, Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality, Virtual Tour Installations

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## Introduction

In the aim of supporting immersive learning activities and programs, ones that employ technologies like virtual and augmented realities, there is a growing variety of specialized technologies that are deployed in learning spaces. These can include computing hardware and software, virtual reality head-mounted displays, augmented reality glasses, depth/3D cameras, holographic displays, CAVEs, and other equipment. There is a growing combination of these technologies that are combined to create installations to facilitate immersive learning, in schools, museums, universities, and other informal learning environments (Dede, 2009; Mikropoulos & Natsis, 2011). These installations have tended to have been experimental, highly calibrated, and/or highly specialized to the learning task. One example of this is the CAVE. The CAVE is a cube with display-screen faces surrounding the viewer; as the viewer moves within the bounds of the CAVE, the correct perspective and stereo projections of the environment are displayed. A CAVE is a space that submerges one or more people into a projected virtual environment. There are many types of CAVEs but a popular one uses small see-through spectacles akin to those used in a movie theater, the virtual environment is often viewed in stereoscopic 3D. A 3D mouse and these glasses are used to monitor objects in space. Users are now able to move their hands and heads naturally to explore and engage with the virtual environment (Cruz-Neira et al., 1992; Manjrekar et al., 2014). This can make the learning benefit in relation to the cost, time, and expertise high, creating a barrier to more widespread use.

As these technologies become more accessible, and simultaneously immersive learning practices become more practical, it would be beneficial research to seek more standardized, low-cost, and approachable multi-user installations. The widespread adoption of immersive visualization systems in educational settings has been hindered by several factors. First and foremost, the high initial system cost has been a significant barrier. Both the hardware and software required for these systems have traditionally been expensive, making it difficult for many institutions to afford them. Secondly, the high cost of operation has been a deterrent. These systems require specialist support staff and ongoing maintenance, adding to the overall cost of ownership. Thirdly, accessibility has been a challenge. Only a few systems are available, and they are typically accessible to a relatively small number of users. Fourthly, the software complexity associated with these systems has been a hurdle. There are only a few 'off-the-shelf' applications available, and custom application software development is often required for most new applications. Fifthly, ease of use issues have been a concern. Special effort is needed to use these systems, and they are not well integrated into workflows except for a few specialized problem domains. Lastly, human factors issues have been a hindrance. User fatigue, 'simulator sickness,' and the need to wear special viewing apparatus are just a few of the issues that have made it challenging to use these systems. In summary, the high costs, limited accessibility, software complexity, ease of use issues, and human factors challenges have all contributed to the slow adoption of immersive visualization systems in educational settings (Manjrekar et al., 2014; Parke, 2005).

The U Theatre project is an innovative initiative that seeks to make immersive learning environments more accessible to a broader audience. Recognizing the challenges and limitations of traditional immersive installations, the U Theatre project aims to provide a cost-effective and user-friendly alternative. The centerpiece of the project is a 180-degree immersive screen, designed to create a multi-user virtual installation for cooperative immersive learning and presentation of student VR/AR media. With a length of approximately five meters, the screen can accommodate between five and ten people, making

it ideal for group activities and collaborative learning experiences. The U Theatre project utilizes readily available technologies such as projection mapping and virtual reality to create an immersive learning environment. The project also involves the careful calibration and blending of multiple projectors to cover the entire screen and create a seamless and immersive visual experience. One of the key goals of the U Theatre project is to make immersive learning environments more accessible to educational institutions. By using affordable and readily available technologies, the project aims to lower the barriers to entry and make it easier for schools and universities to incorporate immersive learning into their curricula. The U Theatre project represents a significant step forward in making immersive learning a reality for more students and educators.

This study will also explore the integration of practical learning tools, applications, and implementations to enhance the utility and flexibility of installations like the U Theatre in educational contexts. By incorporating augmented reality, virtual tours, and immersive storytelling, the U Theatre can be transformed into a dynamic and interactive learning environment. Students can engage in experiential design projects, creating augmented reality experiences that can be showcased within the U Theatre. Virtual tours, connected to tourism education, can be developed and presented, allowing students to explore and learn about different locations and cultures in an immersive setting. Immersive storytelling can be employed to create engaging narratives that captivate the audience and enhance the learning experience. These practical tools and applications not only enrich the educational value of the U Theatre but also provide students with hands-on experience in using immersive technologies for various purposes. By connecting these practical learning tools to the U Theatre, this study aims to demonstrate the potential of immersive installations as versatile and adaptable learning environments that can cater to a wide range of educational needs and objectives.

## **Background**

The construction of immersive installations for learning, training, and other educational contexts has a long and researched history. From the use of flight trainers for military pilots to surgical models for medical simulations, to VR virtual field trips (Cheng, 2022; Hawkinson, 2022; Hemman, 2005; Valverde, 1968). Many of these systems were very expensive, the cost being justified as the alternative to live training was even more expensive and very dangerous. Later researchers and developers identified these justifications for deploying more costly virtual simulations for training as DICE. DICE is an acronym to define some times when virtual reality is most appropriate to use for learning and stands for Dangerous, Impossible, Counterproductive, and Expensive (Bailenson, 2018). The examples of flight trainers and medical simulators fall into these DICE criteria very well. But as the installations become more affordable and accessible, a larger variety of simulations and learning activities becomes cost effective to deliver. This could allow for further research into new implementations of immersive learning and expand/renew as the rationale evolves from DICE as the costs get less expensive.

There are many approaches to mixing digital and real content, simulation and practical scenarios for learning, and thus a variety of approaches to designing spaces to facilitate a mixed, virtual, and augmented reality for educational contexts. The following are examples of three fields which have research to show how such learning spaces have been deployed, a simple compare and contrast helped to form much of the approach to the design of the immersive space featured in this study.

### ***Design Study: Medical Simulations***

Virtual reality (VR) is being used in medical education to enhance the training and acquisition of procedural skills, particularly in emergency medicine. VR provides a realistic and interactive environment for medical students and practitioners to practice and refine their technical expertise in medical procedures. It allows learners to practice procedures that are infrequently encountered in clinical practice or have a potential risk to patients when performed by less skilled practitioners. VR technology has been successful in training for procedures that are already screen-based, such as endoscopic surgical techniques. Instructional theories and skill acquisition play a crucial role in medical procedure training. Strategies such as deliberate practice and spaced repetition have been shown to enhance learning and skill retention. VR offers a safe and controlled environment for learners to practice procedures without the risk of harming real patients. It allows learners to make mistakes, learn from them, and improve their skills in a realistic and immersive setting. Ongoing research and advancements in VR technology will continue to shape the future of medical education (Hemman, 2005; Schild et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2008). Although VR has been a focus of medical training research and development, the uses of VR have largely been ‘task training’ where learning focuses on one skill, procedure, or scenario. This points to using VR as a step in the training process, and spaces designed to deploy a mixture of digital and real interactions have been designed to provide more dynamic and flexible simulations. These environments look like emergency or surgical rooms and deploy a mix of digital display, human actors, and live scenarios to give learners an environment that benefits from both simulated and real-life components, the Mayo Clinic, Multidisciplinary Simulation Center is an example of this (Eagle et al., 2010; Levine et al., 2013). The design of these learning spaces fit the learning content as doctors will be expected to cope with a variety of patients and situations.

### ***Design Study: Flight Simulators***

Simulators are also used in flight training to improve pilot skills, decision-making abilities, and overall safety. Simulators provide a realistic and immersive training environment that allows pilots to gain valuable experience and practice critical flight scenarios without the risks associated with real-world flying. In contrast to medical training and the role of ‘task training’, where specific skills and procedures are vital but secondary to the dynamic human interactions in emergency rooms, tasks are many times the primary focus of training pilots. Simulators focus on equipment, procedures, resource management, and instrument flight training (Cross et al., 2022; Valverde, 1968). Instrument flight training in particular is interesting to design simulations for as the simulator can be very close to the real thing, as you are trained to fly solely based on information given from cockpit instruments. So the design of immersive simulators can focus more on the replication of physical cockpits and how they would display information in different situations, much easier to digitally and physically replicate than dynamic human/biological interactions as in medical training (Aldrich, 2005).

### ***Design Study: Tourism Studies***

Another design approach in immersive learning is an ultra-low cost and highly accessible one. Virtual field trips became popular for schools and classrooms as low cost 360 viewers were deployed using Google Cardboard and applications like Expeditions and Google Street View. This allowed for learners to use smartphones or tablets to simulate standing in other



locations around the world. With the help of software like Google Expeditions, entire classrooms could simulate a trip to historical and cultural locations together. This allowed for connecting more traditional classroom activities with short immersive elements (Alizadeh & Hawkinson, 2021; Parsons et al., 2019). Other related low-cost solutions for virtual travel have used popular software platforms like Minecraft and Roblox (Meier et al., 2020), and student virtual tour creation platforms like the ‘My Hometown Project’ (Alizadeh & Hawkinson, 2021; Hawkinson, 2022). Digital Twins have also allowed for virtual visits to locations in the past like ancient Rome or impossible to reach places like Mars (Hancher et al., 2009).

The spectrum of learning designs above suggest, as does research specific to learning space design, that alignment to learning goals and curriculum is a key pedagogical issue in effective deployment (Parsons et al., 2019).

### **Design and Development of the U Theatre**

As past research suggested, a learning needs analysis was undertaken and curriculum support opportunities were explored to base the design of an immersive installation in a university laboratory. The installation was named the ‘U Theatre’ for both its shape and focus on interactivity.

#### ***Planning and Conceptualization***

The planning and conceptualization of the U Theatre at the Kyoto University of Foreign Studies were driven by the university's curriculum, emphasizing global studies, tourism studies, digital literacy, and language education. Recognizing that students had low to moderate technology skills, primarily using smartphones with little to no programming experience, the design aimed to create an immersive learning environment that was both supportive of the curriculum and accessible to students with varying technological expertise.

Drawing inspiration from medical simulations, flight simulators, and tourism studies, the U Theatre was designed as a flexible and adaptable space for both individual exploration and group collaboration. Unlike traditional VR setups, the U Theatre intentionally avoids the use of VR headsets, which can hinder in-person collaboration. Instead, it employs cutting-edge immersive tools that allow students to engage with digital content in a more humanistic and empathetic way. The design process considered the need for a mix of digital and real interactions, incorporating elements from low-cost virtual field trips. Overall, the U Theatre was designed to provide a versatile immersive learning space that supports the university's curriculum and accommodates students with varying levels of technological expertise.

The physical space itself was a major design factor, looking to maximize the space to the number of simultaneous participants but also allow for flexibility and immersive content. The space allocated by the university was previously a computer lab and learning commons. It was mainly used for individual study and housed banks of desktop computers. The maximum space was about 100 square meters with some small rooms and storage areas for network servers and other equipment. The space could be comfortably occupied by about 30 students or more in its previous design.

The design space suggested that one large virtual immersive installation could facilitate more simultaneous participants, more so than allocating more space for VR headsets, which needed more allocated space per headset than the previous computer desks.

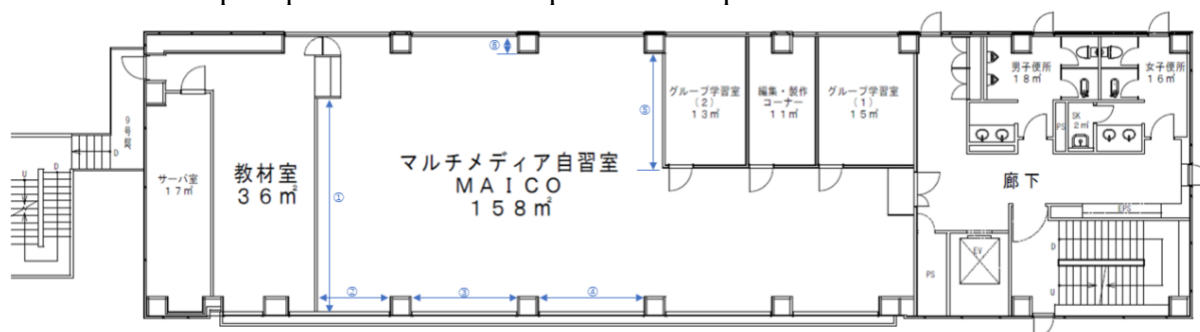


Figure 1: Space Allocated for the U Theatre

### *Design and Installation*

The space allocated to the laboratory helped determine the overall size of the U Theatre. A U shape pointing in from a corner. Giving an angle of the U shape from a corner would allow for maxim viewing from the participants while having the smallest footprint in the room, also allowing for the largest viewing screen possible. With the position, angle, and allocated space decided. It was determined that a half circle screen with a 5 meter diameter could be placed at an angle in a corner of the space. With the basic shape decided, the next key factor was determining an optimal array of projectors that would cover most of the shape, which from initial simulations suggested 3 short throw projectors mounted near the top center of the half-cylinder shape. Next, further design elements were considered, such as height, curve, extension of sides into a U shape, supporting structure like overhead mounting for the projectors, stands, and lighting attachments.

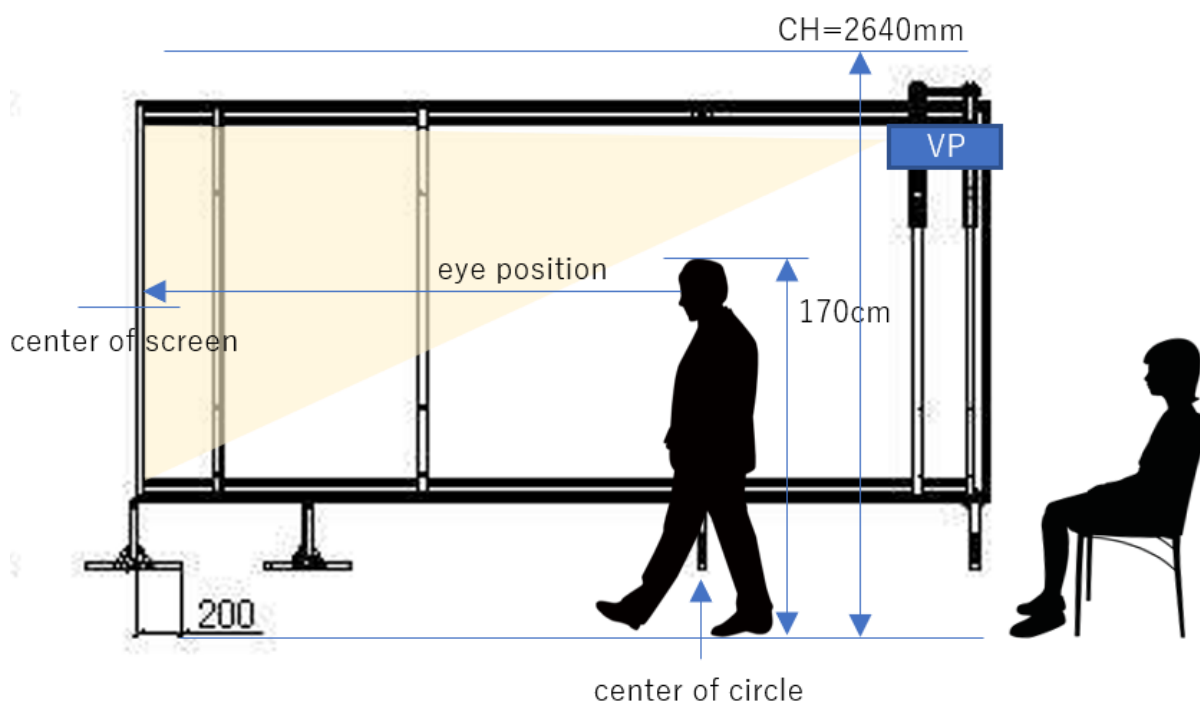


Figure 2: Viewing and projection angles of preliminary design of U Theatre

Using design tools like StetchUp and projection mapping simulators, an initial design to have a 1.5 meter projection area centered for eye level was created. Viewers of the installation could not block the light from the projectors, but also be as far inside the installation to have some of the screen in peripheral vision. Also, considering seated and standing viewers, or both for maxim occupancy or simultaneous viewers was considered. It was estimated that 10 to 15 could view the space at the same time while being inside the radius of the cylinder.

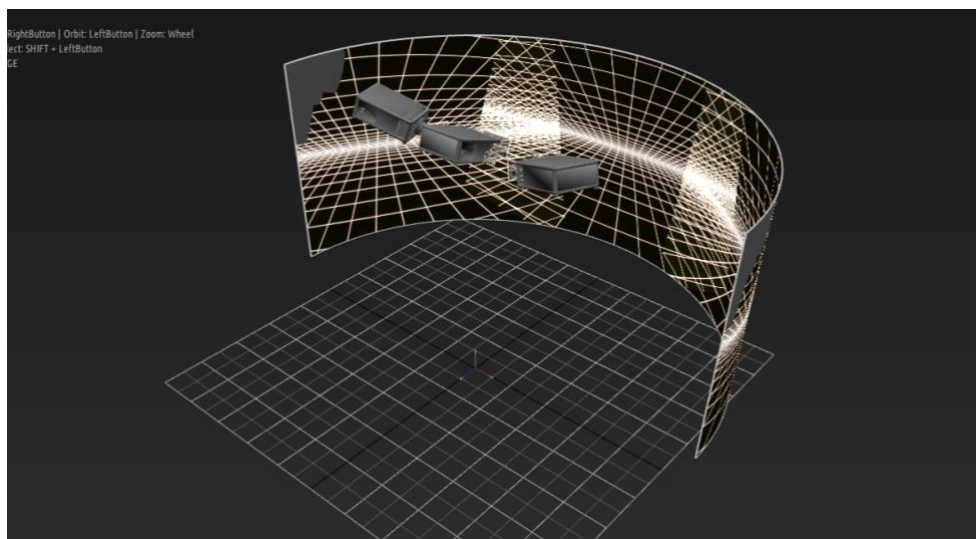


Figure 3: Projection Mapping Simulation of Screen

The design decisions that perhaps had the most variables to consider are the projectors, angles, distance, resolution, brightness, and coverage of the viewing angle. Each of these variables seemingly could be improved only at the cost of scaling back on the others. Further distance from the screen would improve coverage but reduce brightness and resolution. Moving the angles of the projectors so they wouldn't be blocked as much by viewers meant more distortion and lower resolutions. Other considerations like the resolution of each projector, the ability for a server to render and map all of the projectors, and the size of each pixel as it is represented on the screen all were affected by even slight changes to the design. Even after installing the screen these angles and positions needed to be re-simulated and adjusted as the build specifications of the screen were not exact to original designs and thus fine tuning needed to be done.

In the end, a balance was found between brightness, resolution, and projection size. The projection size was lowered so as to not cover the entire U shape to favor brightness and resolution after initial testing. Black borders were installed on each end of the U shape to mask the additional screen space that was not being projected onto.

### **Educational Implementations**

During the design stages of the installation, considerations were made to the kinds of immersive learning that was both already taking place in coursework and student projects, and possible future integrations. Curriculum alignment was seen as a key factor in the implementation and use of the installation. There were already several learning activities in mind before designing the installation, such as a student project in virtual tour making by tourism studies programs and Model United Nations simulations that were experimenting with virtual reality (Hawkinson, 2022; Mcgregor & Hawkinson, 2022). These programs were

planned to utilize the U Theatre in future iterations. Other ideas and events were also introduced, as the university is looking to possibly start studies and activities into eSports and data science.

Course	Learning Activities
Game, Interaction, and Experience Design	AR Location Based Game Design
Immersive Technology Workshop	Virtual Reality Tour Design and Presentation
Global Engagement	Model United Nations Simulations
eSports Fundamentals	Gaming Design and Events
MICE Tourism	Travel Simulations / Tour Design
Introduction to Data Science	Data Visualization

Table 1: U Theatre and Curriculum Alignment

### *Using the U Theatre in Tourism Studies*

The "My Hometown Project," initiated in 2016 as a vocational training program at the School of Global Tourism at Kyoto University of Foreign Studies, aimed to enable students to design and share virtual reality tours of their hometowns. Adapted for online learning during the global pandemic, the project expanded to include an online course, website, app, and platform, allowing participants worldwide to create and explore curated personal stories and tours of small places and rural areas. Virtual travel, while not a replacement for real travel, offers unique benefits such as reducing overcrowding at popular tourist destinations and promoting sustainable tourism. It also fosters empathy by allowing individuals to experience different cultures and perspectives. The U Theatre has already been used by teachers and students to show, share, and experience student created tours as a part of this project. I have allowed small groups of students to present virtual reality tours with each other.

### *eSports and Game Design Studies*

An immersive eSports event honoring the early days of competitive electronic gaming was organized at Kyoto University of Foreign Studies. The event focused on "Spacewar!", one of the first video games in terms of design and competitive play. Spacewar! was first conceived of as a simulator for prospective astronauts rather than a game, during the space race of the early 1960s. Students were given the chance to interact with the game, experiencing its straightforward controls and brief gameplay sessions that usually lasted between thirty and sixty seconds, in addition to short lectures about the history of the game. Due to its simplicity of use, it was perfect for novice competitions. The historical importance of Spacewar! was emphasized, emphasizing its function as a conduit for the spread of eSports and its ultimate development into the competitive gaming sector that exists today. Along with honoring the past, the occasion also made references to upcoming events. The next significant event was the launch of "Space Invaders" on the Atari 2600, which led to the first-ever worldwide video game competition. The use of the U Theatre in this way showed promise in deploying it for eSports events and eSport event remote viewing.

## ***Open Campus***

The university was also interested in using the space as a piece for promotion and display of student projects and to give visitors of open campus a chance to experience immersive technology in an easy as accessible way. The U Theatre was made a point of interest in a campus tour and visitors were given short lectures, shown student virtual tours, and allowed to try student created video and games. During this event individuals were given the opportunity to try VR headsets as well, and this showcased the differences in using VR headsets and a group immersive installation like the U Theatre. It was observed that managing multiple VR headsets can be challenging. The event showcased the novelty effect of VR and AR technology, attracting a diverse audience with varying opinions on its potential applications. It was noted that the perception of the technology's usefulness varied widely among attendees, including high school students, junior high students, younger students, and parents.

## **Conclusion**

The U Theatre offers a unique platform for collaborative learning, allowing multiple users to interact with each other and the virtual environment simultaneously. This feature is particularly advantageous for group-based learning activities and simulations that require teamwork and communication. The potential impact of the U Theatre on immersive learning and education is immense. By providing a more accessible and cost-effective alternative to traditional CAVEs and domes, the U Theatre can help bridge the gap between institutions with varying resources. This democratization of immersive technologies can lead to more widespread adoption of virtual installations in educational settings, ultimately benefiting a larger number of students. Furthermore, the U Theatre's versatility in accommodating different types of simulations and studies makes it a valuable tool for institutions looking to diversify their educational offerings. By making immersive technologies more accessible to institutions, the U Theatre project has the potential to revolutionize the way we approach immersive learning and education.

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### ***Digital Preservation and Data Integrity: A Case Study***

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#### **Abstract**

This study investigated the data integrity affected by digital preservation in archival institutions. Digital preservation is a broad term that includes everything that needs to be done to keep digital materials accessible even if the media fails or technology changes. The objectives of this study are to identify the factors that influence digital preservation, to examine the benefits of digital preservation in archival institutions, to measure the extent of digital preservation among members of archival institutions and to assess the data integrity of digital preservation. The advent of digital storage has profoundly altered our surroundings. Data is growing in size, usage and demand. Analysis was done using Atlas ti. Based on the findings, it was found that, in terms of skills, the respondents highlighted that it is associated with knowledge about cloud storage, experiences, and training that would enhance their digital preservation knowledge. In terms of the benefits of digital preservation, it can help in permanent digital preservation, and it is associated with complete data security. Thus, both will make the documents easy to retrieve. Besides, the important aspect is the types of data associated with the measurement of data integrity. Both are important elements in the preservation process in underpinning data integrity. Other findings include the types of data, that are associated with the measurement of data integrity and both are vital elements in the preservation process. The interview was conducted by semi-structured interviews and guided by a conceptual framework.

Keywords: Data Integrity, Digital Preservation, Archival Institutions, Cloud Storage, Data Authenticity

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## Introduction

Digital preservation is a broad term that includes everything that needs to be done to keep digital materials accessible, even if the media fails or technology changes. These could be records made as part of an organization's day-to-day work, things made to be digital from the start, or the results of digitization projects. Possibly more than ever before, the digital world has necessitated that archivists develop new solutions briefly, borrow theories and methods from other fields, and interact with disciplines that have not been archivists' traditional professionals. This has resulted in a nearly existential conversation about what archives do and the development of new methodologies, funding options, methods of organizational cooperation, and ways of thinking. It has always been a struggle for libraries, archives, museums, and research organizations across the world to maintain access to vast and ever-expanding digital archives and collections (Corrado & Moulaison 2014). Because of their fragility, digital materials require extra attention to remain usable. Sadly, at many institutions, a large amount of data that was born digital is stored in an insecure digital environment.

Historically, there has been a shifting relationship between the repository and the person who created the materials. According to Duranti (2007), records that have been separated from their initial place can be preserved in archives because they meet three fundamental criteria: transparency in preserving records, confidentiality and consistency. Archives are impartial and even-handed experts who seem to be a person or organisation to the people who will use records to do their job or request for their task to be completed. Security means that the records can't be deliberately or inadvertently changed, and stability means that the contextual factors of the documents are recognized and defined in the archive.

Currently, archivists recognize that to "sell" their needs and objectives for records operations, they must establish persuasive theoretical solutions and learn how to implement them in practice (International Council on Archive, 2008). Two main variables contribute to digitalization in the archive institution: application and human factor characteristics. For the sake of archival preservation, the data must be kept in immaculate condition so that it may be accessed by the public when needed. To guarantee that digital preservation is accessible, trustworthy, and used for future generations, archival institutions must ensure that the integrity of preservation is maintained. This study, concerns data loss, manipulation, and data breaches. A record's authenticity is enhanced as it moves from the site of origin to the preservation location.

The methodology used in this research is a target population is a group of individuals from the same sample group. The target population for this study is mainly focused on the individuals involved directly with the archival institution and the digitization of the archival materials. The only group of individuals are chosen since the individuals have knowledge and experience in relating to the archival materials that have been digitized and stored in the cloud storage. So, they would most like to give the most accurate response and feedback regarding the cloud storage for the archival materials. Semi-structured interview questions were constructed to answer the following research objectives and questions.

## Research Objectives

- To identify the factors that influence digital preservation
- To examine the benefits of digital preservation in archival institutions
- To measure the extent of digital preservation among members of archival institutions

- To assess the data integrity of digital preservation in archival institutions

## Research Questions

- What are the factors that influence digital preservation?
- What are the benefits of digital preservation in an archival institution?
- To what extent of knowledge of archivists in digital preservation?
- What is the data integrity of archival institutions?

## Conceptual Framework

The DPCM model was utilized to help diagnose the essential elements of long-term digital preservation initiatives. This model is used to assist in identifying long-term and permanent digital assets as well as to help organizations analyze the software development maturity and suggest essential practices necessary to increase that process's capabilities (Carnegie Mellon University 1990). TRAC's audit criteria and ISO 16363's approved best practices for functional digital preservation repositories form the basis of this standard. It is based on the ISO 14721 (2003) applicable standards. Each of the ISO-mentioned standards' digital preservation criteria is broken down into fifteen distinct components, each with its maturity measurements.

The DPCM model identifies additional elements of digital preservation as three interrelated contexts, namely: digital preservation infrastructure (policies and strategies; governance; collaboration; technical expertise and designated community; and trustworthy digital preservation repositories; and digital preservation systems (electronic records survey, ingest, archival storage; media or device renewal; integrity, security; preservation metadata and access) (Carnegie Mellon University 1990). Understanding the variables contributing to successful digital resource preservation in academic libraries requires all these components.

### Tools factor

- The hardware and software

### Individual factor

- Behaviour
- Skills
- Knowledge

### Digital Preservation

- Data Migration
- Cloud Storage

### Data Integrity

- Data storage
- Data loss
- Data corruption

*Figure 1: The DCPM Model*

The framework structure shows that factors affecting the reliability of data integrity are the tools and individual factors. The tools factor consists of the application software related to the computer used in the archival institution and other places. There may be many applications available that can be used to communicate and to go through the operations of the archival institutions in preserving the digital archives that have practical value to the community used. Unfortunately, threats to preserving the digital archives have been found, including errors (K.

Hashizume, 2013). This will affect the integrity of the information and hence affect the integrity of its values.

## **Literature Review**

### **Tools Factor**

Many phases of technological advancement can occur during attempts to access digital materials in an archive; this means faulty files might go overlooked till it is too late, resulting in the loss of valuable data. Aside from operational failures, there is still the potential for natural disasters, including fires and flooding, that could damage the archives collection. We also have to deal with the risk of tampering with the software system. Several of these issues may go undetected for an extended period before they can be finally discovered. The "2011 Data Breach Investigations Report" reported that hacking and malware are the common causes of data breaches, with 50% hacking and 49% malware (Sultan Aldossary, 2016).

### ***Malware/Malicious***

This malware comes from the user who used it before (W. A. Jansen, 2011). If the image is returned without properly cleaning it, sensitive data could be leaked (K. Hashizume, 2013). Malicious insiders are those authorized to manage the data, such as those authorized to manage the data. For example, database administrators or employees of the company offering cloud services (CSA, 2013). Malicious insiders are the people who are authorized to manage the data, such as database administrators or employees of the company offering cloud services (Sultan Aldossary, 2016). Obsolete computer hardware and software threaten the integrity of digital records unless careful measures are taken to ensure their usage over time.

To maintain the dependability and safety of digital records, clear and consistent mechanisms must be utilised to monitor the integrity of the content, context, and structure of every digital item. As a result of hardware and software upgrades, digital preservation typically necessitates the transfer of data from one format or configuration to the next. Because of this, the cost of transferring data (refreshing) or building and maintaining data (emulation) to accommodate outmoded data, can be prohibitive for some organizations (ICST, 2002; Lavoie & Dempsey, 2004; Navarrette, 2009). On the other hand, research on long-term digital preservation costs is littered with studies that fail to provide reliable and comprehensive data. Researchers imply that digital records are vulnerable to loss and destruction due to the fragility of the magnetic and optical media on which they are stored and the unexpected failure of the reading and writing equipment on which they are used (Sambo, Urhefe, and Ejitagha, 2017).

### **Individual Factor**

Individual users often have limited knowledge about appropriate archival tools or necessary techniques for management and preservation (Debra A. Bowen, 2018). The staff needs to know a lot about how to use ICT tools. As stated by Jain and Mnjama 2016, most archivists and records managers lack technical knowledge when dealing with the challenges of ensuring digital records are kept for a long time. This means that archivists are unable to decide whether to keep digital records and ways to do it. These (theoretical) recommendations by archives are implemented in two ways: on the level of policies and strategies and on the level of practical solutions where time for planning is limited. Insufficient financing is frequently

stated as the primary reason for the lack of coordination between the two, as evidenced by the following report. Electronic documents in archive institutions have not received the attention they need because of a lack of funding. Policy and strategy are excellent, but unless they are implemented, they have little value (O'Shea, 1997). It necessitates substantial resources, compliant organisations, committed management and suitably trained people, implementation is likely the most challenging aspect of digital preservation to complete.

Sometimes, archivists feel that they are expected to provide answers and solutions to situations beyond their ability. The most challenging part of implementation is that it necessitates a significant investment of time and money, as well as the involvement of a large number of people, all of whom must be trained to the highest standards (O'Shea, 1997). According to Farelo and Morris (2006), African countries are plagued by a shortage of skilled workers, which is made worse by the "brain drain" phenomenon, in which experts leave the continent for the developed world in quest of better opportunities. ICT infrastructure is critical to the success of electronic government efforts, according to IRMT (2009). Government and agency IT departments must employ qualified employees and apply the best network and system management practices. This platform will serve as the foundation for future electronic government and records initiatives to prevent electronic records from being lost or corrupted.

It is correct to say that government agencies must adhere to digital record standards and functional requirements to ensure that ICT systems consistently create digital records and secure their integrity and trustworthiness by adhering to digital records standards (IRMT, 2009).

#### *I. The behaviour*

Individual users often have limited knowledge about appropriate archival tools or necessary techniques for management and preservation (Donghee Sinn, 2016).

#### *II. The skills*

Hosting data in the cloud introduces new security challenges. Firstly, data owners would worry their data could be misused or accessed by unauthorized users. Extensive research has been done on this security issue of data hosting (Sneha T., 2018).

#### *III. The extended knowledge*

The organizational preservation of digital records is like the "Tower of Babel" due to the multitude of choices, lack of knowledge about what to preserve, or what is the new business processes in digital societies.

#### *IV. How skilled staff can be obtained?*

When it comes to serving the public, archive institutions must comprehend and manage changes in their environments to adapt service delivery in the future while still meeting the mission of their organizations (O'Shea, 1997).

## **Digital Preservation**

Preserving valuable data for future generations is a primary goal of digital preservation. Digital preservation, according to Hedstrom (1997: 190), is the "planning, resource allocation, and deployment of preservation systems and approaches essential to guarantee that digital information of permanent preservation is accessible and useable." In contrast, the

American Library Association (ALA) (2007) describes digital preservation as a mix of preservation techniques. This study defines digital preservation as a set of techniques and activities that attempt to preserve and access digital assets for as long as necessary. It is by preserving them either in their original state or a more persistent one while ensuring their authenticity and integrity. Digital preservation of personal information studies and argues that personal digital preservation should be addressed with personal, social, and technological factors (Copeland, A.J., 2011). Archives successfully protect the authenticity of records removed from their original context because they fulfil three essential criteria: transparency of records preservation, security and stability. In today's digital age, organizations are increasingly vulnerable to a variety of security risks, including those posed by the use of information systems such as viruses and hacking tools.

Those who participated in the survey were asked to state whether or not they have adopted any security measures at their respective places of employment (Kofi Koranteng, 2018). Digital reservation is a broad term that includes everything that must be done to keep digital materials accessible even if the media fails or technology changes. These could be records made as part of an organization's day-to-day work, things made to be digital from the start, or the results of digitization projects. Possibly more than ever before, the digital world has necessitated that archivists develop new solutions briefly, borrow theories and methods from other fields, and interact with disciplines that have not been archivists' traditional friends.

### ***Data Migration***

Cloud computing is facing a lot of issues. Those issues are listed as the following: data loss, data breaches, malicious insiders, insecure interfaces and APIs, account or Service hijacking, data location, and denial of Service (William Allen, 2016). It is possible to migrate data every two to three years, but it will demand a sizeable financial commitment, continual human attention, and employee training. The ability to analyze and recommend the best new formats, the time to design and evaluate migrating pilot projects and the ability to form and refine migration processes are all necessary for a successful digital migration project. In addition, the file is vulnerable to corruption as it is being re-converted. Over time, formatting can change, and data can be lost. A weird depiction of a document with no way to recover the actual data might be caused by a machine, software, or human mistake. Ensuring the long-term preservation of electronic records requires the development of best practices and methods (Siew Lin et al., 2003). The transmission of digital information inside the OAIS intends to preserve it. This type of transfer is distinct from others in that it emphasises the preservation of a comprehensive information substance that needs to be preserved. It views the new archived execution of the information as a substitute for the old and understands that sole control over all transfer elements inhabits the OAIS (CCDS, 2012).

### **Data Integrity**

Integrity means that any unauthorized entities cannot change actual data. Also, users storing data over cloud storage have no longer extended physical possession of data; it makes data integrity protection a challenging task. It is necessary to develop a system that should protect user privacy and data integrity. Overall, the system preserves user privacy and integrity while sharing data in a cloud environment and facilitates a secure way of sharing data on the cloud server (Manoj Shantaram Tore & S.K.Sonkar, 2015). In the field of information systems and information technology (IS/IT), input (data) – process – output (information) are well-acknowledged concepts (O'Brien 2000; Oz 2002). The English word data represents the Latin

term datum's singular and plural variants. O'Brien (2000) defines data as 'raw facts or observations, often regarding physical events or commercial operations. Information has integrity if it is secured in terms of its accuracy, completeness, timeliness, validity, and manner of processing (ITGI 2004; Carlson 2001; NIST 800-12 Handbook 1995). An original state is what the IT Governance Institute (ITGI 2004:22) defines as "integrity." According to this definition, information integrity refers to how accurately a representation of the condition or subject matter is portrayed. Bovee et al. (2003) explain the four parts of integrity, which is a part of how information is made, in terms of accuracy, completeness, consistency and existence.

### ***Data Storage***

It happens when hardware, software, storage media or file formats do not last long enough to provide long-term access to digital information. Organizations can now afford to store unlimited amounts of data (Debra A. Bowen, 2018).

### ***Data Loss***

However, due to improper long-term preservation techniques, most cannot afford data loss. There are many possibilities of losing data due to a malicious attack and sometimes to server crashes or unintentional deletion by the provider without backups. Catastrophic events like an earthquake and fires could be the causes of loss (William Allen, 2016).

### ***Data Breach***

Cloud computing is facing a lot of issues. Those issues are listed as the following: data loss, data breaches, malicious insiders, insecure interfaces and APIs, account or Service hijacking, data location, and denial of Service. Any breach of this cloud environment would expose all users' and organizations' data to be unclosed. It was reported "2011 Data Breach Investigations Report" that hacking and malware are the common causes of data breaches, with 50% hacking and 49% malware (William Allen, 2016).

### ***Data Manipulation***

Data integrity could help get lost data or notify if there is data manipulation. In many cases, data could be altered intentionally or accidentally. Also, many administrative errors could cause loss of data, such as getting or restoring incorrect backups (IJACSA, 2023).

### ***Reliability of Records***

A record's reliability and usability must be evaluated in addition to its legitimacy and integrity. These characteristics are critical when archivists decide how to preserve and appraise a collection. Usability refers to the extent to which future end users can view and interact with saved material in terms of accessing, displaying, and accurately interpreting the data in the long-term preservation of digital records (Mason, 2007). While the reliability of a record as a factual statement is reflected by its trustworthiness, the opposite is true. To determine the validity of a record, it is necessary to examine its form, and the degree of control exercised over its development (Roeder et al., 2008).

Thus, the digital record must be accurate, factual, and reliable in any administrative or corporate context. (ISO 15489-1, 2001). For a record to be considered usable, it must be easy to locate, retrieve, and use. Preserving an electronic record necessitates knowing its specific qualities, which can be found by identifying, authenticating, and extracting its essential metadata, according to the IRMT (2009). As they put it, "In what format was a digital product created and stored?" would be answered by the identification procedure. Is this a digital picture? Documents created with Microsoft Word 2000 must be checked to see if a copy exists in an MS Word 2007 or an MS Word 2000 document, for example. The vulnerabilities that digital information faces and possible solutions face are well documented in the academic and professional literature (Zsuzsanna, 2014).

## **Research Methods**

This type of research is a quantitative approach. It uses data collection techniques through interviews and semi-structured questionnaires. The presentation of the results of the data analysis using Atlas. ti. version 22.1.0. Interviews were conducted with the staff at the digital department on the issues related to data integrity and digital preservation. The interview was conducted using phenomenological analysis. Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) explores how participants make clear sense of their personal and social world. The main currency for an IPA study is the meanings particular experiences, events, and states hold for participants (Smith & Osborn, 1997). According to Smith et al. (2009), it is advised to choose between 3 and 10 for studies based on interpretative phenomenological analysis, but indicate that the appropriate sample size depends on some factors specific to the study concerned, including the level of study for student work (undergraduate, postgraduate). Three staff from the ten Archives Management Divisions in the Digital Archives section have been chosen. Interviews are one way to learn more about a person's experiences or feelings about a thing, organization, culture, or space (Nixon 2018). Interviews are a great way to find out more about what happened to a participant.

## **Findings**

There were three participants involved in the interview. They were from the Digital Archives section. The first respondent was knowledgeable from different backgrounds in IT, archives and management. The Second respondent was an IT expert, and the third was an IT assistant. The questions were answered accordingly based on their knowledge and experiences.

## **Extend Knowledge of Digital Preservation**

These skills are one of the factors the data integrity in archival institutions based on the previous research. Hence, the respondents were participants to explain how the knowledge took place in executing the digital preservation process in archival institutions. I asked for their experiences and skills from their job scope. From this, I can identify the extent of their knowledge of digital preservation.



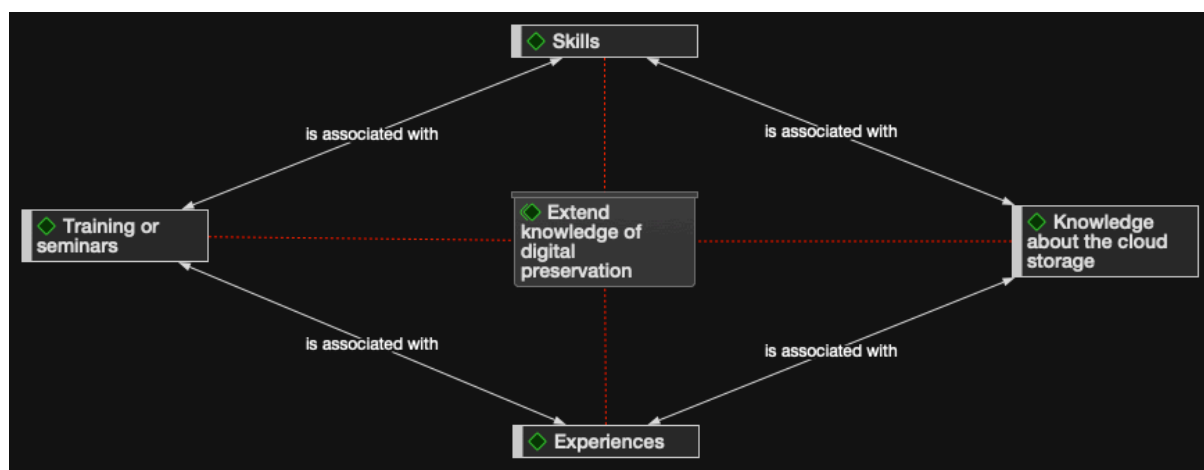


Figure 2: The extent of knowledge from the experts in archival institutions

In terms of skills, the respondents highlighted that skills are associated with knowledge about cloud storage, experiences, training and seminar that would enhance digital preservation knowledge.

### Benefits of Digital Preservation

The benefits of digital preservation in archival institutions are being identified as if it influences the data integrity of digital materials transferred. The experts participated in answering the questions.

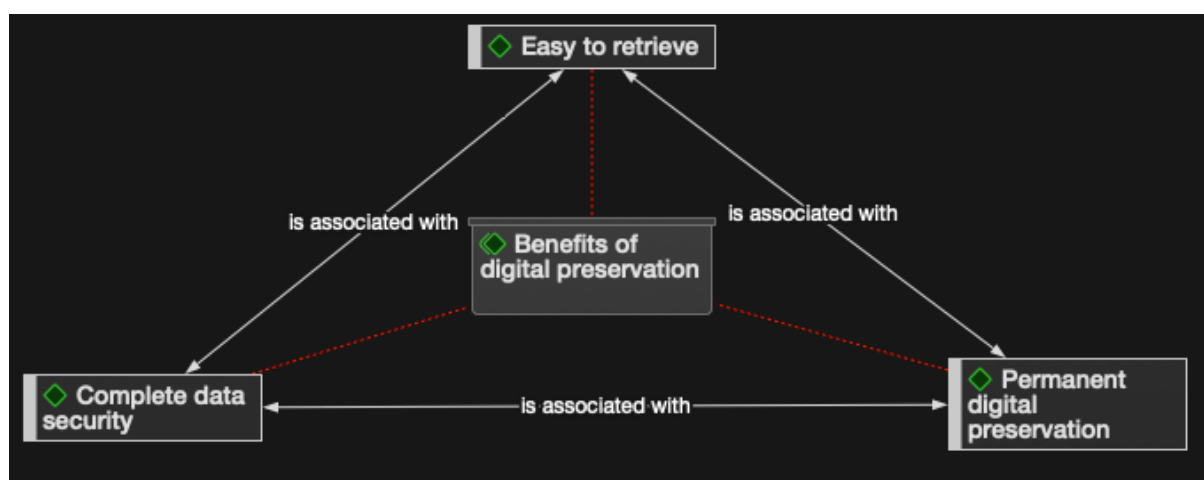


Figure 3: Data preservation benefits digital materials' data integrity

In terms of the benefits of digital preservation, it can help in permanent digital preservation, and it is associated with complete data security thus both make the documents easy to retrieve.

### Identifying Data Integrity

The questions were asked about the data integrity in the archival institutions. It is one of the critical points in this research since I wanted to discover how to determine data integrity for digital preservation. The respondents answered based on their experiences handling the data before the materials were transferred into the repository. The important aspect is the types of data, that are associated with the measurement of data integrity and both are important

elements in the preservation process in underpinning data integrity. The preservation process is associated with the types of data and the measurement of data integrity.

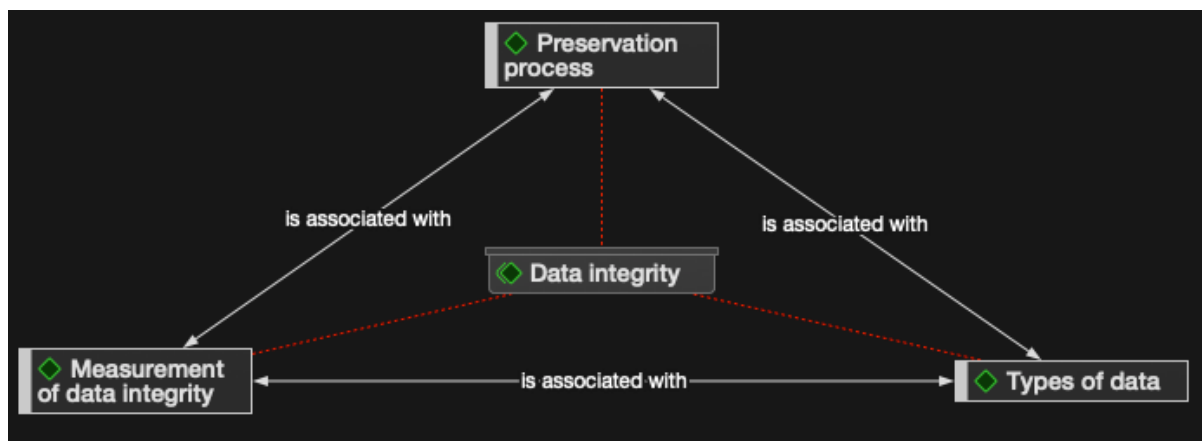


Figure 4: The data integrity in archival institutions

### Factors of Digital Preservation

The respondents were asked about the factors that digital preservation influenced the data integrity of archival materials. The elements associated with the factors are adequate storage with a proper allocation, and adequate storage that are associated with the systems and tools for digital preservation. These elements are associated with collaboration and partnership. There are also constraints of digital preservation that are associated with storage equipment. All the elements are factors of digital preservation that are retrieved from the interviews.

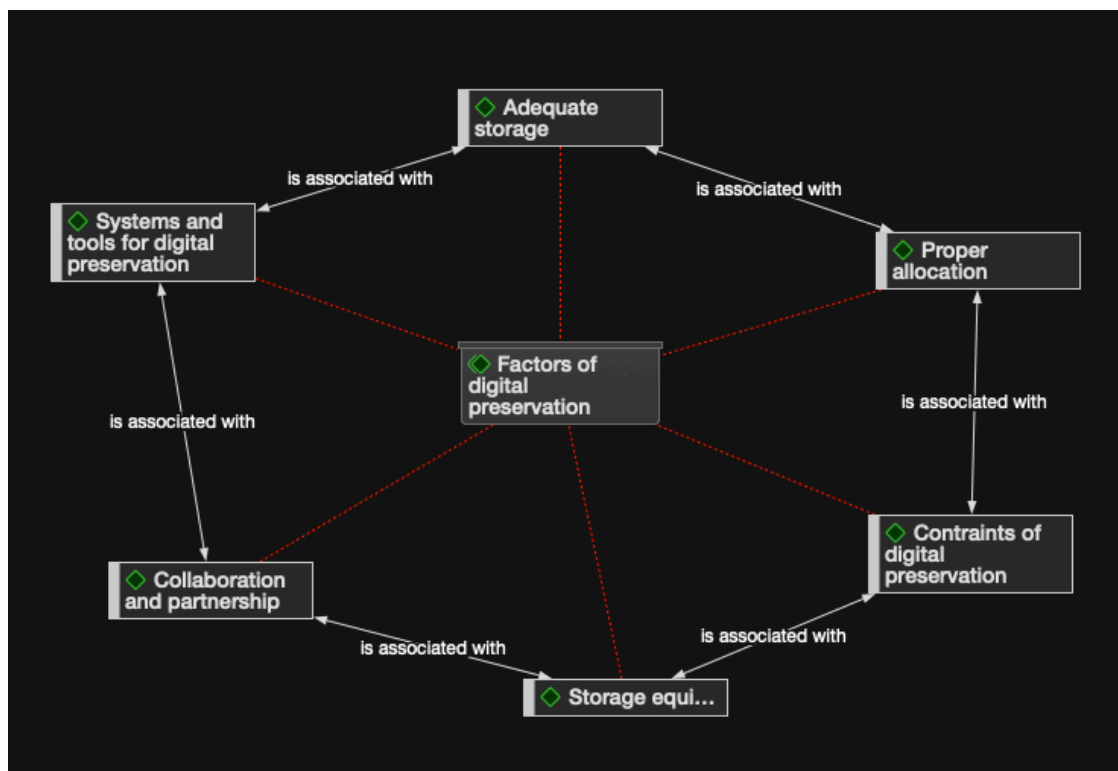


Figure 5: Factors that influenced the data integrity by digital preservation

## **Discussion and Recommendation**

The archive system is indeed for long-term storage. So, even if they want to create their system, they can't. If they use government funding, they have to use the existing system. But still using the same system, it will be obsolete as well. So, it has to be balanced with the available funding. It supports the literature review from the proper allocation by Hedstrom (1997) where sustainable digital preservation necessitates wise use of available resources. People tend to start organizing their digital content when something important happens, like when their inbox is full, they run out of storage space, they buy a new computer, or they plan to do a spring clean-up (Williams et al., 2008). But as digital storage gets cheaper and bigger, it happens less often that a disk is full, so people don't have to get rid of their digital files as often or as often as they used to (Jones, 2007). The finding supports the literature review since the National Archives will be provided with adequate storage by request from IT. They also have a cloud repository internally. The literature review stated that it has been found that the threats to preserving digital archives include malware such as viruses and errors (K. Hashizume, 2013). This will affect the integrity of the information and hence affect the integrity of its values. However, the National Archives of Malaysia never faced any issues regarding the virus only the error issues. The corruption happens before the materials are transferred to the archive, not within the preservation state. Simply stated, data is only as permanent as the hardware or software that gives it life. It seems that technological obsolescence represents a far greater threat to the preservation of digital archives than does media longevity Betts (1999). This is associated with the findings that the software and hardware influence the data integrity of archives.

### **The Benefits of Digital Preservation in Archival Institutions**

For a record to be considered usable, it must be easy to locate, retrieve, and use. Preserving an electronic record necessitates knowing its specific qualities, which can be found by identifying, authenticating, and extracting its essential metadata. This literature review supports this finding that the AMS can read everything in the formats that have been migrated. Meaning that there is no problem for us to open the format that has been migrated later. So, no issues back to PDF. It is easy to retrieve by digital preservation. From the literature review, Stephens (2010) suggests that archivists, record managers, and other information management specialists need to reinvent their professional practices to ensure the permanent or long-term preservation of electronic records. From the finding, this supports the benefits stated by the respondent that AMS application, the duty part is the active preservation, which is permanent preservation.

### **The Data Integrity by Digital Preservation in Archival Institutions**

Ensuring the long-term preservation of electronic records requires the development of best practices and methods (Siew Lin et al., 2003). The transmission of digital information inside the to preserve it. This reflects the finding that AMS is developed using a framework that we have recognized and have the recognition from the International that we use the Open Archival Information System (OAIS). For integrity, the National Archives cannot identify that the document is authentic. What AMS can do here, we can identify the records or content of materials transferred from agencies that are public offices, not composed or not corrupt, and how the data authenticity is a forensic part. What AMS can do here, it able to identify the records or content of materials transferred from agencies that are public offices.

## Conclusion

This paper identified several factors that contribute to successful digital preservation and concludes that these factors may affect the long-term viability of data integrity through digital preservation efforts in the archives. These include the benefits of digital preservation, the factors of digital preservation that influence data integrity, the data integrity and the extended knowledge of archivists in archival institutions. Archivists use cloud computing to store their digital documents. As each archive stated, creating copies of their documents was adequate for maintaining long-term access and preservation of those records. Ensuring that documents and archives can be accessed and used in the future, will go a long way toward the goal of achievement. Management in these institutions needs also to benchmark with other institutions in terms of good governance, implementation of policies, and building proper infrastructures through collaborative and partnership efforts. This study, therefore, recommends a multi-pronged approach to digital preservation including the enactment of preservation policies, proper allocation of resources, more collaboration, and improved technology infrastructure to address software and hardware obsolescence. Archives or archivists do not have ultimate control over the authenticity of a document. An item-by-item inspection is impossible given the volume of documents produced each year and the widespread occurrence of inadequate archives. Authenticity, on the other hand, remains unverifiable.

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***Journalists' Arrest in Morocco:  
Censorship or Criminalization of Violence Against Women?***

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**Abstract**

In recent years, Morocco has witnessed trials that dangerously intertwine sex and politics. Notably, several journalists have been sentenced to prison for charges including human trafficking, abuse of power for sexual purposes, rape, adultery, or prostitution. Consequently, these trials have plunged a segment of the Moroccan population into a moral conflict: whether to support the freedom of expression of bold journalists or to denounce the sexual violence perpetrated against women. In this conference paper, I aim to demonstrate that the criminalization of journalists, among others, for sexual violations is part of the patriarchal continuum that involves the appropriation of women's bodies. To achieve this, I conducted interviews with detainees' family members, ex-detainees, and activists. I also consulted their writings and supplemented these testimonies with publications from human rights associations. Applying discourse analysis, I examined the rhetoric and practices of the Moroccan state regarding sexual violence. I adopt feminist approaches to the state, which view state practices as grounded in specific concepts of masculinity and femininity. The outcome is the institutionalization of hierarchy in both private and public spheres, the verticality of social and political relations, and the repression of voices critical of the state's regime. Furthermore, this presentation emphasizes that the study of all forms of power must necessarily include theories of sexuality and gender hierarchy. In other words, sexuality and gender relations are fully integrated into the realms of politics.

Keywords: Morocco, Journalism, Freedom of the Press, Sexual Violence

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## Introduction

In October 2018, a trial led the Moroccan public to call into question the integrity of Taoufik Bouachrine, who was then the editor-in-chief of the renowned Arabic-language daily newspaper *Akhbar al-Yaoum*. The Casablanca Court of Appeal sentenced Bouachrine to fifteen years in prison and a fine of €255,000 (Euros) for human trafficking, abuse of power for sexual purposes, rape, and attempted rape (Reporters without Borders, 2018). Admittedly, the charge of human trafficking seemed implausible to most of the public. Bouachrine was one of the few editorialists in the country who dared to be outspoken in his criticism of the public politics pursued by the ruling elite. However, the accusation that he used his professional status to obtain sexual favors, especially from junior journalists, seemed credible. After all, patriarchal structures, with their logic of male sexual predation and victimization of women, are deeply anchored in Moroccan society. According to statistics from the World Economic Forum, Morocco ranks 136<sup>th</sup> among 146 nations in terms of gender equality (World Economic Forum, 2023: 11). The consequences of patriarchal constructs include the feminization of unemployment (Ivan, 2008: 64; Rajaa, 2006: 288), discrimination against women in the job market (World Economic Forum, 2023: 267-268), and the normalization of violence against women, including sexual violence (Higher Planning Commission/Kingdom of Morocco, 2012). As a result, Bouachrine's trial threw part of the Moroccan population into a moral conflict, namely, whether to support the freedom of expression of a daring journalist or denounce the violence he allegedly perpetrated against women.

While public opinion was trying to position itself in the face of this moral conflict, another arrest, which occurred less than a year later, changed the game. In September 2019, Hajar Raissouni, a female journalist for *Akhbar al-Yaoum*, the same paper Bouachrine had managed before his incarceration, was sentenced to one year in prison (L'Humanité, 2020). She was accused of having had an illegal abortion and sex outside of marriage. Indeed, in Morocco, sexual intercourse outside of marriage is criminalized (Article 490 of the Penal Code); likewise, abortion is prohibited, except if the mother's life is in danger (Article 453 of the Penal Code). It should be noted that during her time as a journalist, Hajar Raissouni covered social protest movements, including the Hiraq Rif in 2017,<sup>1</sup> the Hiraq of Thirst in Zagora in 2017,<sup>2</sup> and the Hiraq Jerada in 2018.<sup>3</sup> She also denounced the violence committed by police against peaceful demonstrators at these protests, as well as the abusive arrests of some of them. Thus, the question arose as to whether her sentence was being used to silence her. After major national and international rallying in support of Hajar Raissouni, she was pardoned by King Mohammed VI in October 2019.

In 2020, the issue of the instrumentalization of vice cases by the judicial system – with the deliberate aim of silencing voices critical of the regime – became a matter of public concern.

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<sup>1</sup> The Hiraq Rif (“popular movement of the Rif”) arose following the death of Mohcine Fikri on 28 October 2016, in the city of Al-Hoceima. This fishmonger had been crushed in a dumpster while trying to recover his goods, which had been confiscated by the authorities. Since then, the inhabitants of the city have mobilized in peaceful demonstrations to demand socio-economic justice.

<sup>2</sup> The Hiraq of Thirst (“thirst protests”) in Zagora began in early summer 2017 to protest the fact that households in this locality, situated at the edge of the desert, are often deprived of tap water for several days, while others have access to it for only a few hours a day. Outraged, the population has organized several peaceful protests demanding access to drinking water.

<sup>3</sup> The Hiraq of Jerada (“Jerada movement”) came about following the death of two miners on 22 December 2017, during the collapse of a clandestine coal mining well in Jerada. Since then, the population has organized sit-ins and peaceful demonstrations to demand, among other things, the economic development of the region.

In May 2020, Soulaïmane Raïssouni, Hajar's uncle, and a journalist and editor-in-chief, was arrested. Accused of sexually assaulting a young LGBTQ activist, he was sentenced to five years in prison and fined €9,500.<sup>4</sup> It is important to note that after Bouachrine's incarceration, Soulaïmane Raïssouni took over the management of *Akhbar al-Yaoum*, which was targeted by the authorities because of its critical editorial line. A few months later, in July, investigative journalist, Omar Radi, was arrested and sentenced to six years in prison and a fine of €19,000 for espionage and rape (Human Rights Watch, 2021). Strikingly, Radi was particularly interested in the control of the country's economy by political elites. In a famous investigation, he documented, with supporting figures, the appropriation of the land of ordinary citizens by these elites.

In this article, I will demonstrate that the criminalization of journalists and activists, among others, for sexual violations is part of the historical and patriarchal continuum of appropriation of women's bodies. Without question, all complaints of rape and other sexual violence must be taken seriously, and therefore investigated meticulously and thoroughly by the courts. That said, the trials that have dangerously linked sex and politics and taken place in Morocco in recent years indicate that the state aims to kill two birds with one stone, namely, to silence voices critical of the regime, on the one hand, and to project the image of a state that protects women, on the other. However, by doing so, the state is holding back the democratization process in the nation while discrediting the causes of women and rape victims.

First, some methodological remarks are in order. I conducted interviews with detainees' family members, ex-detainees, and activists. I also consulted their writings and supplemented these testimonies with publications from human rights associations. Applying discourse analysis, I examined the rhetoric and practices of the Moroccan state regarding sexual violence. It must be added that I adhere to feminist approaches of the state (Enloe, 2019; Enloe, 2016; MacKinnon, 1989), which consider state institutions and practices to be based on specific concepts of masculinity, and conversely, of femininity. The result is the institutionalization of hierarchy in the private and public spheres, the verticality of social and political relations, and the violence against and repression of voices critical of the state's regime. Moreover, this text is in line with feminist historiographies that argue that the study of all forms of power must imperatively include theories of sexuality and gender hierarchy (McClintock, 1995). In other words, sexuality and gender relations are fully inscribed in the fields of politics and political history. Indeed, as I propose to show in two parts in this chapter, rape and threats of rape both play a central role in the recent history of power struggles in Morocco.

### **The Criminalization of Rape: A Double Standard**

Historical studies show that women are more vulnerable to sexual violence during wars and periods of political instability (Cerretti, 2016: 794–812; Branche, 2002: 123-132; Nahoum-Grappe, 1996: 273-323). Indeed, by perpetrating mass rape, soldiers strip women of their humanity; the ways soldiers treat them aim to humiliate and, consequently, defeat the enemy. Unfortunately, the Moroccan state acts in a similar fashion as part of its politics to maintain the social status quo. More explicitly, women are seen as a means to silence men who are critical of the regime. Thus, the state uses a variety of tactics, in particular, the law that criminalizes sexual relations outside of marriage. For example, human rights activist, Fouad

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<sup>4</sup> From a phone interview with Khoulood Mokhtari, spouse of the editorialist, on 1 April 2022.

Abdelmoumni, was targeted in this way. In 2020, he discovered that he and his partner had been filmed having sex without their knowledge, and videos were sent to dozens of their loved ones.<sup>5</sup> He realized that because of the close surveillance he was under, police officers had broken into his home, placed cameras in both rooms of his apartment, and had later retrieved them. In the context of Moroccan society, the revelation of a sex tape is devastating for a public (male) figure, but it is even more so for the woman involved. Moreover, because the couple was not married, they were in violation of the law prohibiting sex outside of marriage and, therefore, risked jail time and possible porn-shaming if police officers had circulated the incriminating videos on defamation media, which are known for their close ties to the security services.

Similarly, investigative journalist Hicham Mansouri and a female friend were brutally arrested in 2015 (Mansouri, 2022: 19-20). After receiving information through close surveillance that a woman was visiting him, armed agents broke down the door of his apartment and deliberately surprised them. They then stripped them naked, forced them to be photographed on the bed, and proceeded to arrest them. The journalist was sentenced to ten months in prison and a fine of €3,700 for complicity in adultery and preparation of a place for prostitution. His companion, in turn, was sentenced for complicity in adultery.

Yet, as researchers note, Moroccan society is changing, and transgressive sexual behavior is more the norm rather than the exception (Slimani, 2017; Glacier, 2017; Cheikh, 2011: 36-37). In other words, enforcement of the law prohibiting consensual sex outside of marriage is arbitrary and selective. Specifically, it targets journalists and activists who are critical of the regime. Ultimately, in the war waged by political elites against dissenting voices, men are targeted, but their partners or friends – women – are a kind of collateral damage.

It should also be noted that as part of the politics of the state elites to maintain the social status quo, sexual abusers are granted leniency, while critics of the regime are charged with rape in defiance of the principle of the presumption of innocence. We return to our first case of the editorialist Bouachrine (Committee To Protect Journalists, 2022). During his trial, the prosecutor presented several plaintiffs who accused him of rape. However, half of them ended up retracting their statements. In addition, Afaf Bernani, a journalist for *Akhbar al-Yaoum*, testified that Bouachrine had never touched her, and, at the same time, she regretted that officers of the judicial police had falsified her words. She was immediately moved from the witness stand to the defendant's dock. In June 2018, she was sentenced to six months in prison for perjury and defamation. She has since fled to Tunisia. Similarly, the trial of journalist Soulaïmane Raïssouni shows serious irregularities (Libération, 2022). He was arrested following a simple Facebook post in which an LGBTQ activist stated that two years earlier he had been raped by an unnamed public figure in their home.<sup>6</sup> Finally, there is the case of the journalist Radi. After being viciously harassed by the judicial police for alleged espionage, he was arrested for a complaint of rape (Committee To Protect Journalists, 2021). At his trial, he claimed that it was a consensual relationship. In that regard, his colleague, Imad Stitou, a journalist who had spent the night in the same living room with him and the complainant, corroborated his claims (Democracy for the Arab World Now, 2021). As a result, Stitou went from being treated as a witness to being viewed as a guilty party. Even though the complainant affirmed that Stitou was asleep at the time of the alleged rape by Radi, Stitou was charged with participation in rape and sentenced to six months in prison (Human Rights Watch, 2021). This case contrasts with the usual practice in the judicial

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<sup>5</sup> From a phone interview with Fouad Abdelmoumni on 12 April 2022.

<sup>6</sup> From a phone interview with Khoulood Mokhtari on 1 April 2022.

system, which generally shows a deplorable indifference to women victims of gender-based violence (Convention de l'élimination de toutes les formes de discriminations à l'égard des femmes, 2020).

Even more troubling is the leniency shown by state elites to some rapists. This was the case for Daniel Galvan Viña, who was released following a royal pardon in 2013 (Le monde, 2013). This Spanish pedophile was originally sentenced by Moroccan justice to thirty years in prison for raping eleven minors in 2011. However, it must be noted that after the strong protests caused by his release, he was arrested again. Similarly, the singer Saad Lamjarred was defended by King Mohamed VI in a trial for "aggravated rape" in France in 2016 (Lamlili, 2016). Yet, he was a repeat offender, having been incarcerated for similar offenses, assault, and rape, in the United States in 2010, before being granted bail, which he used as an opportunity to leave the country (Doubidji, 2018). Other complaints of aggravated rape have also been filed against him: one related to events in Casablanca in 2015, and the other in France in 2018. He was finally sentenced to six years in prison by a Paris criminal court in February 2023.

Thus, in the recent history of power struggles in Morocco, the connections between sex and politics indicate that it is not rape *per se* that is criminalized but, rather, the position of citizens *vis-à-vis* the regime in power. Inevitably, the movement or cause to support women and rape victims is, therefore, sometimes scorned and sometimes instrumentalized by the powers that be.

### **Rape as a Tool to Manage Political Opposition**

In parallel with the double standard around the criminalization of rape, political elites use rape to manage political opposition. In this regard, Nasser Zefzafi, leader of the Hirak Rif, a socioeconomic protest movement that rocked northern Morocco in 2017, reported being raped with a stick during his arrest (Jeune Afrique, 2019). Khoulood Mokhtari, the spouse of editorialist Soulaïmane Raïssouni, attests that several rape threats were posted on her Twitter page.<sup>7</sup> In other words, within the politics of maintaining the social status quo pursued by state elites, rape is an integral part of the arsenal deployed by law enforcement officials to silence voices critical of the regime, on the one hand, and to produce a docile population, on the other.

Not surprisingly, those who speak out against sexual assault by police officers and law enforcement are criminalized. This was the case for activist and teacher Nezha Majdi (Sadiqui, 2021). In March 2021, she participated in a demonstration organized by the National Coordination of Contractual Teachers in Rabat to protest their precarious employment conditions. In a video that went viral, she denounced the brutality with which police officers and security forces dispersed the peaceful demonstrators. In addition, she reported that female demonstrators were subjected to sexual violence, such as sexual insults and the touching of their breasts and buttocks with batons and clubs. Later, while she was reporting on the events in a Facebook Live stream, she was arrested in a very degrading way. Police officers dragged her to the ground and molested her for everyone to see. Moreover, while the forty-five contract teachers arrested were given two months of suspended prison sentences, she was the only one sentenced to three months of imprisonment (Nabbad, 2022). She was also charged with contempt of court. In other words, she moved from the plaintiffs'

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<sup>7</sup> From a phone interview with Khoulood Mokhtari on 1 April 2022.

camp to the guilty camp because she dared to denounce the fact that rape plays a role in the policies of maintaining the social status quo pursued by the political elites. Thus, far from being the protector of women and defender of the rights of rape victims, the state, instead, reinforces rape culture.

This also explains the treatment that the state reserves for women who dare to destabilize the regime in place. For example, the journalist Hajar Raissouni, mentioned earlier, was forced to undergo a gynaecological examination by the authorities when she was arrested; in this sense, the state violated her (Moussaoui & Azzouzi, 2020). More explicitly, the authorities told her, and are, in effect, telling other women like her, that no matter what critical voice she adopts, as a woman, she is still defined by her body. In a similar vein, young people were arrested in a café in Casablanca for not fasting during Ramadan (Ibriz, 2022). Unlike their male counterparts, the women were taken to the police station's toilets where they were subjected to a search that was as singular as it was degrading in order to check whether they were menstruating. The state's intrusion into these women's bodies indicates that they are reduced to an object to be appropriated.

One might point out, of course, that Zefzafi was a man, not a woman. In this regard, it should be remembered that historical and sociological research shows that patriarchal sexuality is imbued with relations of power and domination (Bourdieu, 1998: 24-28). Moreover, sex is a game of superiority and inferiority (Foucault, 1984: 43). In particular, penetration places both partners in a relation of domination and submission. For some, sexuality corresponds to a social status and is therefore exercised as a privilege. For others, it is an imposed condition. In this patriarchal context, the rape of Zefzafi appears to be a political attempt to feminize him, that is, to take away his masculinity by appropriating his body. In the dangerous liaisons between sex and politics, it is power that legitimizes access to women's bodies, not their consent. The practices of the state are thus situated in the historical and patriarchal continuum of the appropriation of women's bodies.

## **Conclusion**

If the Moroccan state truly cared about women's rights, it would, first, stop its attack against women's peaceful activism. Indeed, in recent years, the country's political scene has been punctuated by the arrests of women. For example, activist Simane Tagrawlit, better known as Fatima Zahra, was arrested in November 2021 for, among other things, allegedly illegal demonstrations at the University of Tangier (ATTAC Maroc, 2021). Nevertheless, beyond this political trial, Fatima Zahra has distinguished herself through her leadership in activism on multiple fronts, including within the February 20 Movement, the Association for the Taxation of Financial Transactions and Citizen Action (ATTAC), and the Coordination of Unemployed University Students. Similarly, in April 2022, the activist Saïda el Alami was sentenced to two years in prison and a fine of €475 for, among other things, insulting a body regulated by law (Amnesty International, 2022). In fact, she dared to openly denounce on social media the state's drift in security policies.

Second, if the state truly cared about the welfare of women, it would abolish the provisions that expose them to all forms of abuse. In this regard, let us cite the example of a chief of police in Agadir who was aware of the gendered face of the law, particularly the article that criminalizes sexual relations outside marriage and the article that removes custody of the children from "promiscuous" mothers. Thus, he chose his victim accordingly. He seduced a young bank manager who had custody of her daughter, filmed their sexual encounter without

her knowledge, and blackmailed her for a long time until she was caught with her hand in the bank till (Rachad, 2022). In the same vein, let us consider the article that criminalizes abortion. Nearly 800 clandestine abortions are said to be performed in Morocco every day. These have serious consequences, including risks to the lives of mothers, suicides, honor killings, expulsions from the family home, infanticides, child abandonment, and the criminalization of doctors and nurses. Unfortunately, as long as these provisions are used to criminalize journalists, activists, and political opponents, the law will not change. Indeed, the study of the recent history of power struggles in Morocco indicates that “sex and politics,” as a duo, has no regard for women, or for children, or for men; the only thing that matters is maintaining the social status quo by holding back the march of citizens toward democracy, human rights, and gender equality.

This paper raises the issue of the close links between patriarchy and authoritarianism. It is true that patriarchal theories of the state equate the head of state with the head of a patriarchal family. However, while patriarchy is one of the pillars of authoritarianism, the role played by women’s domination in this regime still eludes its classical definitions. As a result, women’s subordination to male power tends to be seen as a specific issue at best, which obscures the broader historical and socio-political issues at stake.

This paper also demonstrates the impact of reductive constructs of femininity and masculinity on the citizens’ road towards democracy, human rights, and gender equality. Specifically, it highlights the interdependence between public and individual freedoms, the cornerstone of which is sexuality. Yet, critical thinking about sexuality is taboo or, at best, considered futile. As a result, there is a dissonance between sexual practices and the legal, political, and social norms governing the sexuality of a portion of citizens who are forced to live in secrecy. Mentalities in Morocco are currently the product of politics aimed at religious and cultural immobility. In this regard, it is important to note that in tandem with an educational deficit (UNESCO, 2015), teaching methods – especially in public schools – are outdated. Based on rote learning, these methods are conducive to indoctrination and standardization, and the annihilation of analytical and critical thinking. The recent history of power struggles in the country indicates that the taboo about sexuality contributes to maintaining the social status quo. Therefore, like some feminist historiographies, this paper suggests that no analysis of the ruling power will be adequate if it excludes from its scope the existing relations of domination in sexuality and gender hierarchy.

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*Plus-Size Gay Men in Japan, Czech Republic and Abroad*  
– *The Effect of Social Media on the Psychological Well-Being of Young Gay Men*

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**Abstract**

This article explores the experiences of plus-size gay men in the Czech Republic and their potential struggles with weight-based discrimination and mental health. We also discussed the role of societal attitudes and subcultural influences, such as media and popular culture, in shaping the body image and identity of plus-size individuals in the LGBT community. The current conversation and practice in the field touched on research in Japan and the United States, highlighting the influence of cultural norms and societal attitudes on the experiences of LGBT individuals. While more research is needed to fully understand these complex issues, this article's contribution focuses on shedding light on important factors that may impact the well-being of plus-size gay men both in the Czech Republic and globally.

Keywords: Plus-Size, Gay Men, Czech Republic, Weight-Based Discrimination, Mental Health, Societal Attitudes, Subcultural Influences, Body Image, Identity, LGBT Community, Japan, Cultural Norms, Well-Being

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## Introduction

Like many other countries, discrimination against plus-size individuals in the Czech Republic is a problem that affects not only the LGBTQ+ community but society at large. Discrimination can take many forms, including physical, verbal, and emotional abuse, as well as social exclusion and stigmatization. While it's difficult to determine the extent to which gay plus-size men face discrimination in the Czech Republic, studies have shown that discrimination against plus-size individuals is pervasive in the country. According to a study (Čevelíček & Burešová, 2019) conducted by the Czech Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, over 40% of respondents reported experiencing discrimination based on their weight or appearance. Similar findings can be found abroad in the EU and both the US and Japan.

In terms of mechanisms to address discrimination, the Czech Republic has made progress in promoting diversity and equality in recent years. In 2019, the country introduced a new law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, which provides legal recourse for individuals who have experienced discrimination. In addition, the Czech LGBTQ+ community has been actively advocating for greater awareness and acceptance of diversity, including body diversity.

Organisations such as the Prague Pride Association and LGBTQ+ rights group Proud work to promote awareness and understanding of LGBTQ+ issues, including those affecting plus-size individuals. These organizations provide a platform for members of the community to connect, share their experiences, and advocate for greater inclusion and acceptance. It's important to note that tackling discrimination against plus-size individuals, including gay plus-size men, is a complex and ongoing process that requires the involvement and support of individuals, organizations, and policymakers at all levels. Creating a more accepting and inclusive society requires ongoing education, advocacy, and activism to change attitudes and promote equality for all.

Young plus-size gay men in the Czech Republic may face discrimination from both the general population and the LGBT community. Discrimination can take many forms, including verbal and emotional abuse, social exclusion, and stigma. Research suggests that weight-based discrimination is particularly prevalent among young people. A study conducted by the Czech Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (2018) found that over 50% of young people reported experiencing discrimination based on their weight or appearance. This can lead to negative consequences, such as low self-esteem, depression, and anxiety.

In the LGBT community, discrimination against plus-size individuals can also occur. The community often places a premium on thinness and muscularity, which can create pressure on individuals to conform to certain body ideals. This pressure can lead to feelings of shame and exclusion for plus-size individuals, particularly younger individuals who may be more vulnerable to peer pressure. However, it's important to note that not all members of the LGBT community discriminate against plus-size individuals. There are organizations and groups within the community that promote body positivity and inclusivity, and many individuals within the community are accepting and supportive of individuals of all sizes.

To address discrimination against young plus-size gay men, it's important to promote education and awareness about the harmful effects of weight-based discrimination and to work towards creating a more accepting and inclusive society. Organisations such as the Prague Pride Association and Proud can play a key role in promoting awareness and

understanding of LGBTQ+ issues, including those affecting plus-size individuals, and creating safe spaces for young people to connect and support each other. This can be saturated by either local support groups within the national and international communities within the LGBT+ realm that have social gatherings, meetings, support groups, etc. This is true also for plus-size gay men within the gay bear community in the Western world as well as within the GMPD community in Southeast Asia.

### **Historical Basis (Difference Between the Western Gay Bear and Eastern GMPD Subcultures)**

The gay bear subculture emerged in the 1980s in the United States as a response to the hypermasculine and lean ideal prevalent in the mainstream gay community. The term "bear" was coined in the late 1980s and early 1990s to describe a community of gay men who embrace their body hair, size, and masculinity as reported in studies e.g. Matsuyama, Koyama & Ohashi (2020) The bear subculture promotes inclusivity, body positivity, and a rejection of the traditional gay male aesthetic. Over the years, the bear subculture has grown in popularity and has spread globally, with various events and social clubs dedicated to the community.

The GMPD (がち gachi, もち mochi, ポチャリ pochari, デブ debu) culture emerged in Japan in the late 1990s as a response to the strict societal expectations of gender and sexuality. This subculture centres around muscular and masculine men, often depicted in homoerotic art and media, such as bara manga and anime. Unlike the bear subculture, which promotes inclusivity and body positivity, the GMPD culture in Japan can perpetuate traditional gender roles and lean body ideals. Additionally, the GMPD culture has been criticized for its emphasis on objectifying and fetishizing muscular and masculine bodies. These are particularly divided into specific categories such as:

1. Gachimuchi (がちムチ): This term combines "gachi" (muscular) and "muchi" (chubby) to describe a muscular and chubby body type.
2. Mochimochi taikai (もちもち体型): This term refers to a soft and plump body type, often characterized by a bit of extra weight and a cuddly appearance.
3. Pocchhari taikai (ポチャリ体型): This term is used to describe a slightly overweight body type, often with a rounder belly and softer curves.
4. Debu taikai (デブ体型): This term describes a larger body type, often with a significant amount of excess weight and a more rounded appearance.



Figure 1. Japanese GMPD/gay bear club event in Ni-Chome, Shinjuku, Tokyo (2019)

In summary, the bear subculture emerged as a response to the exclusionary beauty standards prevalent in the mainstream gay community, promoting body positivity and inclusivity. The GMPD culture in Japan emerged as a response to societal expectations around gender and sexuality, promoting muscular and masculine bodies but also perpetuating traditional gender roles and lean body ideals.

The gay bear culture in the Czech Republic has a relatively short history compared to other countries. It emerged in the early 2000s when the first bear-related events and parties were organized in Prague. The local bear community quickly developed its own subculture, with the establishment of various bear clubs and social groups.

One of the earliest events was the Prague Bear Summer Festival, which has been held annually since 2003. The festival includes various activities, such as parties, cultural events, and outdoor activities, and attracts many visitors from around Europe. The first Mr Bear Czech Republic elections took place during the first Prague Pride festival in 2011.<sup>1</sup>

The bear culture in the Czech Republic has also been influenced by the broader European bear community, with many Czech bears participating in international bear events and competitions. Overall, the Czech Bear community has become an important part of the local LGBT community and a symbol of inclusivity and diversity.

### Status Quo

Young plus-size gay men may face a range of psychological struggles, including low self-esteem, body image issues, anxiety, and depression. Studies have shown that discrimination based on weight and appearance can lead to negative psychological outcomes, including increased risk for mental health disorders and decreased quality of life.

<sup>1</sup> According to the news report by the Czech news server Aktuálně.cz. (2014, March 14). *Prague Pride 2011: Aktuálně.cz*. Aktuálně.cz - Víte, co se právě děje. Retrieval at <https://www.aktualne.cz/wiki/domaci/prague-gay-pride-2011/r-i:wiki:1571/>



However, it's difficult to make direct comparisons between the experiences of young plus-size gay men in different regions of the world, as cultural norms, attitudes towards body size, and social support systems can vary widely. Here are some general trends:

- **Europe:** Studies have shown that weight-based discrimination is a significant problem in Europe, with many individuals reporting experiencing discrimination based on their weight or appearance. The European Association for the Study of Obesity estimates that around 30% of adults in Europe are affected by obesity. In terms of the LGBT community, body positivity and inclusivity movements have gained momentum in recent years, but discrimination against plus-size individuals remains a problem in some circles.
- **Czech Republic:** As mentioned earlier, a study conducted by the Czech Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs found that over 50% of young people in the Czech Republic reported experiencing discrimination based on their weight or appearance. Discrimination against plus-size individuals is also a problem within the LGBT community in the country, although organizations and groups promoting body positivity and inclusivity are also present.
- **Japan:** In Japan, cultural norms around body size are different than in many other parts of the world, with thinner body types often considered the ideal. This can lead to stigma and discrimination against individuals who are perceived as overweight or obese, including young plus-size gay men. However, research on this specific population is limited.
- **Rest of the world:** Discrimination against plus-size individuals is a problem in many parts of the world, although cultural norms and attitudes towards body size can vary widely. In some parts of the world, including certain parts of Africa, larger body types are traditionally viewed as attractive, while in other parts of the world, such as the United States, thinness is often prioritized. In countries in the East Asian region, the popularity of plus-sized men is visible mainly in the body-positivity movement as C and K-pop stars and boybands gain popularity thus changing the status quo of the perceived body type.



Figure 2. Chinese body-positive boyband Produce Pandas

In general, more research is needed to fully understand the experiences of young plus-size gay men in different regions of the world and to develop effective strategies for addressing discrimination and promoting body positivity and inclusivity.

## **Discussion**

The author is not aware of any current specific studies that have focused specifically on the psychological well-being of young gay plus-size men in the Czech Republic. However, as mentioned earlier, a study conducted by the Czech Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs found that over 50% of young people in the country reported experiencing discrimination based on their weight or appearance. This study suggests that young plus-size individuals in the Czech Republic may face unique challenges in terms of their mental health and well-being.

More generally, there has been research conducted on the psychological well-being of individuals who identify as LGBT in the Czech Republic. For example, a study published in the *Journal of Homosexuality* in 2016 found that LGBT individuals in the country experienced higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression compared to their heterosexual counterparts. Other research has found that LGBT individuals in the Czech Republic may face discrimination and stigma from both the general population and within the LGBT community itself.

While these studies do not specifically focus on the experiences of young gay plus-size men, they do highlight the importance of understanding and addressing the unique challenges that individuals who identify as LGBT may face in terms of their mental health and well-being in the Czech Republic.

Social media and popular culture can have a significant impact on the experiences of plus-size gay men, including their interests, hobbies, and sense of identity. For example, social media platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok have allowed individuals to connect with others who share similar interests and identities, including within the furry community, which often embraces body positivity and inclusivity.

One of the more comprehensive studies has been conducted by Dr Nick McGlynn (2022) whose "Bearspace" research project was done under the Community-University Partnership Programme at the University of Brighton. The project aims to explore the experiences of gay men who identify as "bears" or who are part of the "bear" community, which is a subculture within the LGBT community that celebrates larger, hairier, and more masculine bodies. The project involved a series of focus groups and interviews with members of the bear community, as well as a survey of over 1,000 self-identified bears. The Bearspace project report highlights the experiences of the bear community with regard to body image, masculinity, sexuality, and health, among other topics. The report highlights the importance of community support and acceptance, as well as the challenges faced by individuals who do not fit the traditional norms of the LGBT community. The report also discusses the potential implications of the study for health promotion and intervention programs aimed at supporting the well-being of the bear community. Overall, the Bearspace project provides a valuable contribution to the understanding of the experiences of individuals within the bear subculture and may help to inform future research and interventions aimed at improving the well-being of this community.



## **Factors Influencing the Well-Being of Plus-Size Gay Men in the Czech Republic and Abroad**

Popular culture, including manga, anime, comic books, and geek culture more broadly, can also play a role in shaping the experiences of plus-size gay men. For example, the "bara" genre of manga and anime often features muscular, larger-bodied male characters who are depicted as attractive and desirable. This representation can provide a sense of validation and acceptance for individuals who may feel marginalized or stigmatized due to their body size or sexual orientation.

Similarly, geek culture often celebrates niche interests and subcultures, providing a sense of belonging and community for individuals who may feel excluded or misunderstood in mainstream society. This can be especially important for plus-size gay men, who may face unique challenges in terms of their self-esteem and sense of identity.

There is a significant presence of gay bear culture on social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. Many popular accounts and groups are dedicated to showcasing and celebrating the bear subculture, with a particular focus on body positivity and inclusivity. For example, on Instagram, popular hashtags such as #gaybear, #bearpride, and #bearsofinstagram have thousands of posts from individuals around the world sharing images and stories related to the bear community. Additionally, there are various Facebook groups and Twitter accounts dedicated to bear-related topics, including events, news, and discussions.

In terms of dating apps, some popular options for gay bear men include Bearwww, GROWLr, and Scruff. These apps often have features tailored to the bear community, such as the ability to filter by body type and preference for body hair. There are also specific bear dating sites such as Bear411 and BearForest.

It's worth noting that while social media and dating apps can provide a sense of community and connection for bear men, they can also perpetuate certain body ideals and stereotypes within the subculture. Some individuals may feel pressure to conform to a certain body type or look in order to be accepted within the bear community, which can contribute to issues of body image and self-esteem.

Some plus-size gay men find solace in anonymisation of themselves and creating an alter ego based on a character from a video game, comic book or even a furry character they design themselves. While there is no definitive answer to why some plus-size gay men are drawn to furry or geek culture, it is likely that these subcultures offer a sense of acceptance and belonging that may be harder to find in other areas of society. These subcultures often prioritize individuality and self-expression over mainstream norms and conventions, allowing individuals to embrace and celebrate their unique identities and interests.

The relationship between body dysmorphia and the experiences of plus-size gay men can be complex and multifaceted. As shown by studies conducted by Hennen (2005), or Mizuno, & Fassinger, (2015) while some individuals may experience body dysmorphia as a result of feeling stigmatized or marginalized due to their body size or appearance, others may find empowerment and validation through alternative subcultures like furry or geek culture. That being said, it is possible that some plus-size gay men may feel fetishized or objectified based on their body size or appearance. This can contribute to feelings of insecurity or inadequacy,

and may also contribute to the development of body dysmorphia or other mental health concerns.

Furthermore, there may be pressure within certain subcultures like the bear community to conform to specific standards of body size or appearance. This can be challenging for individuals who may feel excluded or marginalized due to their size, or who may feel pressure to conform to specific norms or expectations within these communities. Overall, it is important to recognize the unique challenges and experiences of plus-size gay men and to work towards creating more inclusive and accepting communities that celebrate diversity and promote positive body image and mental health.

Of course, there exists a number of social events for young plus-size men to attend conducted by NGOs and social clubs and LGBTQ+ organisations alike such as:

By cross-referencing data from studies such as Weisskopf & Čápková (2017), we can summarise some local Czech events and organizations that a plus-size gay man can attend in the Czech Republic:

1. Prague Pride: Prague Pride is a week-long festival that takes place every August in the Czech Republic. It includes a parade, concerts, and various cultural events. The festival is open to everyone, regardless of body type, and aims to promote the visibility and rights of the LGBTQ+ community in the country.
2. Chubby Nights at Jampa Dampa: Jampa Dampa is a popular gay club in Prague that hosts a monthly Chubby Night event, which is specifically targeted towards plus-size men and their admirers. The night features music, drinks, and a welcoming atmosphere for people of all sizes.
3. XXL Prague: XXL Prague is a social club for gay men of all sizes, including those who identify as chubby or bearish. The group organizes regular events, such as dinners, picnics, and pub crawls, that provide opportunities for members to meet and socialize.
4. Gay Men Over 40: This is a Facebook group that is open to gay men over the age of 40 who live in the Czech Republic. While the group is not specifically for plus-size men, it provides a platform for members to connect with each other and organize events.
5. Queer & Plus: Queer & Plus is an Instagram account that showcases body-positive and diverse representations of queer individuals, including those who identify as plus-size. While it is not a physical event or organization, it can serve as a source of inspiration and connection for plus-size gay men in the Czech Republic.
6. Prague Bears events in specific locations such as gay bars such as Kotelna, Heaven clubs etc. The primary programme is focused on EMD, techno and music production and social gatherings for plus-size gay men. Some events include also field trips around Czech Republic or yearly events abroad (e.g. Bear Stigges weekends etc.).



Figure 3. Prague Bears Social Group Event (2022) retrieved with consent by the Prague Bears Facebook page

These events and organizations provide opportunities for plus-size gay men to connect with others in the community and find a sense of belonging in the Czech Republic. However, even interventions, seminars and many social events do not have the capacity nor the competence to prevent socially corrosive and psychologically damaging aspects (as previously verified in studies e.g. Döring et al, 2019, Griffiths & Murray, 2020) of self-image and well-being from being pervasive among young plus-size men (not only in the Czech Republic but also in most of the Western world). The question then is what social pressures or pressure to conformity do plus-size gay men experience?

Based on studies conducted in recent years e.g. Puhl et al (2009), Kimmel (2010), Foster (2014) and Singh (2013), we are able to cross reference some common factors contributing to social pressure and stigma. Plus-size gay men may experience a variety of social pressures and challenges when dating, which can impact their self-esteem, confidence, and overall well-being. Some of the social pressures that plus-size gay men may face while dating include:

1. Stigma and discrimination: Plus-size individuals, including gay men, may experience weight-based stigma and discrimination in many areas of their lives, including dating. This stigma can lead to a negative self-image and feelings of rejection.
2. Body image concerns: Plus-size gay men may struggle with negative body image and feel pressure to conform to cultural norms of attractiveness. This can lead to anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem.
3. Limited dating options: Plus-size gay men may face challenges finding partners who are attracted to their body type, particularly within mainstream gay culture. This can lead to feelings of loneliness and isolation.
4. Sexual objectification: Plus-size gay men may be fetishized for their body type and viewed solely as sexual objects rather than as full human beings. This can lead to feelings of objectification and dehumanization.
5. Stereotypes and expectations: Plus-size gay men may be subject to negative stereotypes and expectations, such as being seen as lazy, unhealthy, or lacking self-

control. These stereotypes can be damaging to self-esteem and make it difficult to form meaningful connections with others.

These can be correlated with the use of dating apps and websites. Not a lot of data specifically on the dating app preferences of plus-size gay men. However, some studies have examined the general dating app preferences of LGBTQ+ individuals. For example, a 2019 survey of 1,000 LGBTQ+ adults in the United States found that Grindr was the most commonly used dating app among gay men, with 78% of respondents reporting that they had used the app in the past. Scruff was the second most commonly used app, with 33% of respondents reporting use. Other apps that were frequently used by gay men included Tinder (29%), Jack'd (16%), and Hornet (14%) (Cision PR Newswire, 2019). The most commonly used dating apps and websites for plus-size gay men include not only the abovementioned Growlr, Scruff, Grommr, Grindr, Chasable, Bearwww, Hornet, Chappy and Tinder. It's worth noting that these statistics may not reflect the dating app preferences of plus-size gay men specifically, as there is limited research on this subpopulation.

It is important to recognize that these social pressures are complex and may vary depending on cultural and societal factors. It is also important to acknowledge that individuals within the plus-size gay community may have different experiences and perspectives and that these experiences are valid and deserving of respect.

a 2006 survey (Ferguson et al, 2006) of 2,360 self-identified bears in the United States found that 85% identified as gay or bisexual, and 15% as heterosexual or other; 78% were single, and 22% were in a relationship; and average age was 42.3 years old. A 2018 survey of 607 self-identified bears in Australia found that 78% identified as gay, 19% as bisexual, and 3% as other; the average age was 43 years old, and the average body mass index (BMI) was 31.6, which is considered obese. However, these findings should be interpreted with caution as they may not be representative of all bear-identified individuals or communities, and they may be influenced by various cultural and contextual factors.

## **Conclusion**

In summary, research suggests that plus-size gay men in the Czech Republic may face weight-based discrimination, which can impact their mental health and well-being. Additionally, LGBT individuals in the Czech Republic may experience stigmatization and marginalization, which may further compound these issues. The experiences of LGBT individuals in Japan may also be influenced by cultural norms and societal attitudes. Subcultural influences, including those in media and popular culture, may play a role in the development of body image and identity for plus-size individuals, including those in the LGBT community. The plus-size and body positivity movements aim to promote acceptance and celebration of diverse body types, countering the long-standing idealization of thinness in many societies. While the movement has many positive attributes, there are potential negative effects when considering young people's perceptions and overall well-being. While many people are naturally larger due to genetics, metabolism, or other factors beyond their control, there's a concern that promoting acceptance of all body types may inadvertently normalize unhealthy habits. Overconsumption of unhealthy foods and a sedentary lifestyle can lead to a range of health issues, including heart disease, diabetes, and joint problems. The fetishization of any body type, including the plus-size body, can be problematic. When individuals are seen primarily for their body size or shape, it can lead to objectification, where they are valued more for their physical appearance than their other attributes or skills. Just as there's

pressure in some circles to be thin, there can also be pressure within the body positivity community to maintain a certain 'plus size' image. This can be especially true for public figures or influencers who might feel they need to maintain a certain size to stay relevant or authentic to their followers. While the body positivity movement seeks to redirect the focus from a singular beauty standard, it still centres the conversation on physical appearance. This can reinforce the notion that self-worth and value are closely tied to how one looks. As body positivity becomes more mainstream, there's a risk that brands and companies co-opt the movement for profit without genuinely supporting the underlying message. This can lead to scepticism and cynicism among young people. The body positivity movement initially emerged as a counter-response to the media's fixation on a very specific thin ideal. As the movement gained traction, plus-sized bodies were given a platform (as well as an increase in visibility of popular media, manga, anime, TV series, etc.), which was undoubtedly necessary. However, in certain spaces, there's a risk that 'average-sized' bodies or naturally thin bodies are sidelined or perceived as having no struggles with body image. In summary, while body positivity and plus-size movements have brought much-needed attention to the acceptance of diverse body types, it's essential to approach the topic with nuance. Young people should be educated on the broader aspects of health, self-worth, and individuality beyond physical appearance. However, more research is needed to fully understand the complex intersections of these factors and their effects on individuals' mental health and well-being. Future projects focused on marginalised groups of plus-size gay men could bring better oversight in both positive and negative aspects of the GMPD/Bear culture.

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*Art, Data and Climate Change: Investigations Between Image, Science, and Ecology*

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Official Conference Proceedings**Abstract**

In recent years, artistic expressions exploring the interactions between technology and nature have gained increasing prominence as they incorporate the political and social transformations associated with Anthropocene theory. Within what has been referred to as the 'Information Age' (Castells, 1996), artistic experiments have been unfolding with an increasingly heightened awareness of environmental crises and their connection to the capitalist economic agenda. Notably, collaborations at the intersection of art, science, and technology (ACT) with ecology have strategically employed creating artworks that explore multispecies relationships and incorporate non-hegemonic world perspectives. In this study, we aim to investigate the activities that connect art, science, and data visualization analyzed by artworks that include climate change in their discourse with the awareness of environmental crises and their connection with information systems and the capitalist economic program. The activities of artist-scientists will be explored. Also, an investigation that endorses the concern with the low entropy of Earth systems and recognizes in art the role of enabling new hybridizations with informational systems (data) and power systems analyzed through the activities of Florencia Levy (Argentina), Dillon Marsh (South Africa), and Claudio Filho (Brazil).

Keywords: Art, Data Visualization, Climate Change

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## Introduction

The Global South experiences the most significant consequences of climate change, where activities like extraction, deforestation, and the disposal of toxic substances create an uninhabitable landscape. Consequently, socially vulnerable communities, including immigrant and peripheral populations in countries with widespread economic, political, and cultural marginalization, are increasingly exposed to more frequent and severe climate events (Dunlap & Brulle, 2015). The preliminary sections of this study will present three illustrations to substantiate the abovementioned claims: (i) Jagersfontein Mine activity, (ii) The ecological damages of large Data Centers, and (iii) extraction of rare earth minerals commonly used to produce technological devices.

In the center of South Africa, on a vast plain with rich soil and a mild climate, you'll find the Free State region. This area was one of the world's largest open-pit mining complexes for gemstones, including gold and diamonds. Mines like Kimberly, Koffiefontein, and Jagersfontein have achieved some of the highest levels of productivity ever recorded (Philip, 2016). Jagersfontein is historically significant for being the site where two of the ten biggest diamonds ever discovered. The mining activities back in 1870, although it wasn't until 1878 that the potential for productive extraction was fully recognized (Philip, 2016). Following this realization, Jagersfontein became the epicenter of the 20th-century "diamond rush," attracting a large number of people and yielding diamonds of exceptional quality, including the Excelsior and Jubilee diamonds:

In June 1893, one of the largest diamonds in the world, the "Excelsior," was discovered in Jagersfontein. It weighed 971 $\frac{3}{4}$  carats (uncut), and until the discovery of the Cullinan Diamond in 1905, it remained the world's largest diamond discovered. (...) Two years later, in 1895, another large diamond weighing 634 carats (uncut) was discovered and initially named "Reitz" in honor of the then President of the Free State, FW Reitz. However, it was later renamed "Jubilee" in honor of Queen Victoria's 60th birthday. (Phillip, 2016 p.92-93)

The underground mining operations in Jagersfontein were initiated in 1910, and they ran almost continuously until 1971, except for two brief interruptions during the 1930s Depression and World War II (Phillip, 2016). The decision to close the mine was primarily attributed to diminishing diamond content at greater depths and the escalating mining costs. Throughout its history of exploitation, Jagersfontein has left behind a legacy of social and environmental destruction, which is emblematic of the broader region. Unfortunately, environmental impacts were frequently overlooked due to policies prioritizing extraction, driven by the high commercial value of gemstones.

Dillon Marsh, a photographer from Cape Town, is directly interested in examining the landscape transformations resulting from human activities. In his series *For What's It's Worth* (2014-2016), Marsh employs graphic manipulation to virtually integrate the quantities of materials extracted and the visible environmental consequences into the landscape. The South African open-pit mining complex was one of his artistic research. Especially Jagersfontein Mine, where 9.5 million carats of diamonds were extracted. Marsh's photography technique reveals the environmental damages left behind by human activities on the Earth's surface (Figs. 01 and 02). Marsh's photography manipulation serves as a direct indictment of the environmental impacts, which have long been acknowledged by scientists dedicated to studying contemporary activities of this nature. In Marsh's photographs, we can readily

observe a small amount of extracted material contrasted with the extensive devastation inflicted on the environment.<sup>1</sup>



Figures 01 and 02 (detail) - Jagersfontein mine, where 9.5 million carats of diamonds were extracted. Courtesy: Dillon Marsh Studio, *For What It's Worth* (2014-2016). Available: <http://dillonmarsh.com/fwiw.html>

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<sup>1</sup>Dillon Marsh *For What It's Worth* series includes the extraction of Cooper, Diamonds, Gold, and Platinum Group Metals. See: <https://dillonmarsh.com/fwiw.html>



In 2022, Jagersfontein reached global attention again, though this time not in the context of a diamond rush but due to a catastrophic event that caught international media headlines. On September 11, a series of technical incidents led to the crack of the mining company's tailings dam, resulting in a trail of devastation extending over 8.5 kilometers. The calamity entailed ruining homes, river and pasture flooding, injuries to considerable people, and harm to water systems used for humans and agriculture. The press reported that the flood had devastated over 160 houses, claimed at least one human life and the lives of hundreds of animals, and inflicted damage on more than 26 square kilometers of pastures (figs. 03 and 04).



Figures 03 and 04 - NASA Earth Observatory images by Lauren Dauphin, using Landsat data from the U.S. Geological Survey. Free access.

Emerging technologies driven by the availability of the World Wide Web in the early 1990s and globalization principles were celebrated as the forerunners of a 'new era' with great expectations of fostering democracy, connectivity, and opportunity (Crary, 2023, p. 91). Over time, technological media have gradually come to be seen as 'naturally established' (Crary, 2023), growing more distant from their underlying structural foundations. Technical objects are symbolic tools that 'emphasize diversity and promote the sharing of ideals with ease of assimilation' (Crary, 2023, p. 27). According to Baio:

As even the simplest technical object becomes a symbolic machine, the ideas of media and technology clash, and these terms can sometimes become almost synonymous. A profound change then occurs that makes critics rethink their conceptual bases, and it requires the artist to reinvent his place and his action strategies. (Baio, 2015, p.40)

The internet complex<sup>2</sup> cultivated a broad imagination regarding the immaterial nature of digital technologies. However, contemporary literature is progressively focusing on another dimension of technology. The prevailing perspective on contemporary technologies as detached from material reality needs increased consideration of the consequences of the processes sustaining their development. As Crary notes, material and environmental realities are 'conveniently veiled by miniaturization, the apparent intangibility of wireless setups, the placelessness of data, and terms like virtual or cloud (Crary, 2022, p. 31).

James Glanz<sup>3</sup> uncovered the ecological consequences of energy consumption by large North American data centers. The report 'Power, Pollution and the Internet' (2012) elucidated that the problem was not only the energy required to sustain the system — around 6 to 12% —, but also the energy spent on server maintenance, cooling, and accident prevention. Given the exponential data growth, the demand for energy and water to support the global digital infrastructure is rapidly becoming unsustainable. Glanz stressed the remarkable complexity of the physical infrastructures of data centers, which demand alarming amounts of energy to control the high heat levels. These levels damage the system's proper functioning, in addition to consuming millions of liters of water daily for cooling:

Most data centers, by design, consume vast amounts of energy in an incongruously wasteful manner, interviews and documents show. Online companies typically run their facilities at maximum capacity around the clock, whatever the demand. As a result, data centers can waste 90 percent or more of the electricity they pull off the grid, The Times found. To guard against a power failure, they further rely on banks of generators that emit diesel exhaust. The pollution from data centers has increasingly been cited by the authorities for violating clean air regulations, documents show. In Silicon Valley, many data centers appear on the state government's Toxic Air Contaminant Inventory, a roster of the area's top stationary diesel polluters. Worldwide, the digital warehouses use about 30 billion watts of electricity, roughly equivalent to the output of 30 nuclear power plants, according to estimates industry experts compiled for The Times. The estimates show that data centers in the United States account for one-quarter to one-third of that load. (Glanz, *Power, Pollution and Internet*, 2012)

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<sup>2</sup> Jonathan Crary introduced the term 'internet complex' to encapsulate the result of evolving arrangements that had been developing for several years, reaching a critical turning point with the internet (Crary, 2022)

<sup>3</sup> A New York Times journalist.

In 2016, the Argentinian artist Florencia Levy researched the extraction of minerals commonly used to produce batteries and screens, common in technological devices like smartphones, computers, and tablets. These minerals are also used in sustainable manufacturing technologies such as solar panels and wind turbines.<sup>4</sup> *Tierra de Ciervos* (2017) exposes the ambiguity of the immaterial narrative surrounding technology and its tangible consequences for ecosystems. The piece's title is the translation of *Baotou* (包头), which corresponds to the Chinese region of Inner Mongolia. A hyper-complex mining station located in 包头 is used mainly to extract the so-called 'rare earth.'<sup>5</sup> These rare earth elements are found in approximately 85% of smartphones manufactured worldwide (Landgraf, 2012). The region is responsible for approximately 44% of global rare earth extractions, and it was formerly known for its overgrown, cultivable prairies and resident deer population. At the center of 包头, as Levy observed, lies a 36 km<sup>2</sup> lake formed by 'radioactive sludge, nourished by toxic waste generated by a significant portion of the world's technological production' (Levy, 2023). 包头, often called the 'land of deer,' was once considered one of the most contaminated places in the world.<sup>6</sup>

*Tierra de Ciervos* (Figure 05) is also the artwork title of a photograph of the radioactive lake made by Levy. This photograph records an instance of censorship the artist faced while documenting rare earth mining. The photo is complemented by a QR code, providing documentation of the censorship incident.<sup>7</sup> Levy makes a compelling point when she states: 'We all carry a piece of China in our pocket.' The statement emphasizes that access to the internet through cell phones, computers, and other devices is only possible due to the extraction of these minerals.



Figure 05 - Photography by *Tierra de Ciervos* (2017), Florencia Levy. Open Access.

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<sup>4</sup><https://stopthesethings.com/2021/01/31/out-of-sight-out-of-mind-counting-the-colossal-cost-of-wind-solar-toxic-legacy/>

<sup>5</sup> Rare earths constitute a group of 17 chemical elements essential to producing electronic devices. These elements are part of the *lanthanide* family. Despite their misleading name, 'rare earth,' they are relatively abundant in nature, with known reserves. These mineral resources are primarily found in bastnaesite and monazite but can also be found in xenotime apatite, and other minerals.

<sup>6</sup><https://www.news.com.au/travel/destinations/asia/baotou-is-the-worlds-biggest-supplier-of-rare-earth-minerals-and-its-hell-on-earth/news-story/371376b9893492cfc77d23744ca12bc5>

<sup>7</sup> [vimeo.com/172744571](https://vimeo.com/172744571)

Levy presented her research in the exhibition 'The Last Architecture' (2023), hosted at ARTHAUS in Buenos Aires. The artist explores how particular ecosystems are reshaped in the name of technological development, often leading to devastated environments. The exhibition includes documentary footage, photographs, sculptures, and documents, collectively exploring the expansion of extractive activities on land and ocean soils. The exhibition's title conveys 'architecture as a project and design that constructs the human habitat' (Levy, 2023), acting as an analogy for creating spaces that stand in contrast to the natural environment. Architecture performs as a mediator between the human and the non-human, embodying a system and structure of power (Levy, 2023). In the exhibition, *Lugar Fósil* stands out as an immersive large-format installation video on three channels, presenting a dystopian narrative founded on testimonials regarding environmental and economic phenomena. *Lugar Fósil* received the Trabucco Award and has been added to the National Museum of Fine Arts collection in Buenos Aires.<sup>8</sup>

The mining activity in 包头 exemplifies numerous social and environmental implications, bringing attention to its extensive devastation of ecosystems. It is especially concerning the impact of the use of technological devices on the lives of Global South communities. As Levy states, 'it is a system that encourages the extraction of resources regardless of the consequences' (Levy, 2023). However, as Crary (2023) points out, 'and yet most smartphone owners, social media users and Netflix addicts in the US have no idea of where Papua or Peru<sup>9</sup> are and have no interest in the lives of their peoples'. Most of us remain unaware that we carry traces of unprecedented destruction in our homes and pockets.

The examples above illustrate different aspects of a common issue: climate change and technological development are intrinsically connected to mechanisms of exploitation and the capitalist agenda. Nonetheless, there is a demand for broader awareness regarding technology's impact on ecosystems. Technological advancement relies on exploiting anything that benefits the capital, including 'demolition, clear-cutting, mountain-top leveling, mining, hydraulic fracturing, and the murder of civilian populations to secure resource-rich territory' (Crary, 2022, p. 43). Even though public discourse may have emphasized the advantages of technology, it is clear that environmental issues surround global production, power, and technology (Moore, 2015; Tsing, 2019; Haraway, 2016).

In the 21st century, addressing issues related to social, political, cultural, technological, and economic change without considering environmental factors has become increasingly challenging. Alliances between sciences, like climatology and biology, together with the

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eM9dxyABXeA>

<sup>9</sup> Crary stresses the capitalist extraction agenda through the example of open-pit mining: "Nothing better epitomizes the grim persistence of those ideals than the worldwide expansion of open-pit mining, mining on a scale of magnitude and savagery that dwarfs comparable activity during the so-called Industrial Revolution or during the twentieth century." In Crary's analysis, Papua and Peru are examples of Global South communities directly influenced by digital-capitalistic agendas. Quoting Crary: "(...) The Grasberg mine in the Indonesian province of Papua, The owner of the Grasberg mine, Freeport-McMoRan, manages dozens of comparably destructive mines all over the planet, including in Peru, Chile, Bolivia, Mauritania, South Africa, Zambia, and New Mexico. The operations of hundreds of other companies looting lithium for electric vehicle batteries, neodymium for wind turbines, coltan for Predator drones, nickel, molybdenum, and other elements for digital devices and networks, multiply this immeasurable scale of sociocidal extraction, especially in the Global South. In Peru, a Chinese company is in a decades-long process of literally leveling 15,000 ft Mt. Toromocho to recover several billion tons of minerals—another small instance of the capitalist cannibalization of the planet in the service of prolonging the imploding "digital age." The toxic methods of removing rare metals from mined ore cause irremediable harm to land, water, and human lives" (Crary, 2022, p.33)

humanities and technology, can strategically foster multidisciplinary collaboration to explore Earth's vulnerabilities while considering the well-being of populations and the economic systems. Addressing common to these issues is the challenge of handling the risks posed by our highly industrialized, globalized society (Ferreira, 2018).

Jason Moore introduces a world-ecology framework to address the gaps in the research of historical changes and interconnections between systems of domination, exploitation, and environmental history. World-ecology considers the role of ideology and cultural domination in describing history, emphasizing that history is inseparable from capitalism's impact on the environment. Embracing a world-ecology perspective is the 'claim that modern modes of thought and culture, power and accumulation constitute an evolving totality' (Moore, 2019, p.10). The objective of world-ecology is not to establish a fixed ideology to defend; instead, it seeks to foster conversations that generate emancipatory knowledge for planetary justice.

That means, among other things, that we have given up the certainties of past knowledges. Those past knowledges are important and indispensable. At the same time, the modes of thought that have created today's planetary crisis will not lead us towards planetary justice. (Moore, 2019, p.10)

The world-ecology perspective places humans as an integral part of nature, and capitalism does not act upon nature but instead develops within its intricate web of life. Nevertheless, the perception of the relationship between humans and nature has continuously evolved in recent years, urged by technological progress and climate change. The initial decade of the 21st century saw the solidification and proliferation of technology's daily use, coinciding with the increasing prominence of the Anthropocene concept in discussions regarding the interaction between life sciences, society, economy, art, and ecology. Such movements, paradigms, and cultural practices have roots in modernity and, as in the most recent artistic production, collaboration between artists, biologists, and scientists has allowed creative speculation on new approaches to deal with this problem comprehensively.

### **Uncertainty as a Starting Point: The Anthropocene**

The Anthropocene is the key concept surrounding this area. But more than just a term, I think of the Anthropocene as an operative way to explore the complexity of emergencies involved in the global systems. The term 'Anthropocene' was initially introduced into the geological community through an analysis conducted by the Stratigraphy Commission of the Geological Society of London (Zalasiewicz et al., 2008). A group of geologists presented to the International Stratigraphic Commission the suggestion that, due to evidence of contamination present on rock sediments, the Earth was entering a new era: the Anthropocene. This period is characterized by its strong interdependence with human activity, particularly the excessive accumulation of toxins resulting from capital expansion, which would be preserved in geological records for millions of years, even in the event of the potential extinction of the human species.

The issues surrounding the Anthropocene are not limited to contemporary academic research. The discussion of the limits and hazards of the post-industrial production model became a significant area of study in the mid-1970s, with many authors devoted to examining environmental and social challenges resulting from the fast growth in production (e.g., Illich, 1979; Dupuy, 1980; Hannigan, 1995; among others). In a subsequent but equally reflective context, the German sociologist Ulrich Beck explores the intricate interactions between the



environment and society. Beck introduces conceptual terms such as 'risk', 'uncertainties', 'changes,' 'territory,' and 'reflexibility' to the academic lexicon of that period. Beck (1998) posits that climate change can be comprehended as one of the several risks from technological and scientific progress. He points out that these risks possess distinct characteristics compared to those from pre-industrial and industrial societies. Similarly, in 'The Sociology of Environmental Issues: Theoretical and Empirical Investigations' (2018), Leila Ferreira emphasizes:

These new post-industrial risks are characterized by their global reach, the incomplete knowledge of their causes and consequences, and by the fact that they are incalculable and impossible to be compensated and invisible most of the time (that is, phenomena that require specialized knowledge for both their recognition and their measurement). Therefore, these risks are uncontrollable and difficult to assign responsibility, in addition to being often irreversible. (Ferreira, 2018, pg.10)

The environmental crisis is one of our era's most pressing global emergencies. It is a planetary issue with profound social, political, and economic consequences. Hence, it is pertinent and logical to contemplate our environment through the lens of the technologies and socioeconomic frameworks that envelop us. Our motivation lies in creating endeavors that interlace art, ecology, and technology, aiming to harness their combined potential as a catalyst for collective engagement. This aims to broaden the dialogue surrounding the challenges the climate regime poses.

### **Visualizing the Climate Change**

Artists' exploitations are crucial in elucidating the intricacies of the Anthropocene and its connections to climate change. In the swarm of working with the Anthropocene, data visualization is a tool to enhance actions to address climate change. Data visualization is the presentation portion of large-scale data, characterized by its volume, variety, velocity, and value (Mayer-Schönberger & Cukier, 2013). It involves transforming numerical data into a model, which is then visually rendered, facilitating the statistical analysis of the information. Data visualization is perceived as a dynamic intermediary that incorporates the rationality and objectivity of science with the creativity of the arts. This intersection refers to a longstanding tradition of visual representations encompassing perspective drawing, photography, cinema, television, and computer graphics (Kominsky et al., 2019).

The challenge of working with Art, Science, and Data Visualization lies in absorbing and translating data into other perceptions beyond its graphical representation. Doris Kominsky (2019) underscores the necessity for critical engagement with data visualization. Kominsky argues that visualizations are not mere reflections of reality but are interpretations akin to other forms of media or representational tools (Kominsky et al., 2019, p. 43). Acknowledging that data are filtered through the perspectives of those who collect and present them—whether scientists, researchers, politicians, journalists, or artists—reveals an inherent subjectivity and potential for bias.

A significant barrier to climate change awareness is scientific denialism. Déborah Danowski characterizes this movement as 'a complex and grave phenomenon, widespread in contemporary society, essential in the cognitive, emotional, and political stagnation confronting global warming' (Danowski, 2018, p. 4). Danowski identifies political denialism of environmental data, influenced by economic powers granted in continual growth, as a

contributor to the problem. This stance often leads to disregarding the impact of climate change and focusing on insular preservation rather than engaging in global mitigation efforts (Danowski, 2020).

For these reasons, a discussion between art, science, data visualization, and climate change emerges, making it necessary to structure different pathways of projects to make visible and more approachable information and public policies. There is an urgent need to raise awareness around environmental measures and alternative modes of actively contributing to the discussion. With climate change consciousness, we believe that multidisciplinary research can create accessible ways for the general population to take part in decisions around the severity of the current climate scenario. Therefore, it also becomes the role of artists to deal with data mapping, decode, and translate them for better recurrent communication.

Art has always been related to the materials and technologies of its time and its social and political moment. But how can information be converted into art? For some time, visible forms no longer represent the world. A new perception is offered today based on data visualizations, capable to make the invisible visible. If data comprises the texture of our routine, perhaps its visualization can lead us to new stances and attitudes. It is time to listen to the voice of the numbers to trace the strategies needed for navigation amidst this tsunami of data in contemporaneity. It is time to transcend the utilitarian aspect of this representation to find poetics in the data. (KOSMINSKY et al., 2018, p. 25)

### **Visualizing the Lichens: What Do They Say About Climate Issues?**

Data visualization can be an intersection point between Art and Science. However, what is the capacity of data to describe climate change or even if data can create new world perspectives? What can non-human organisms teach us about inhabiting the Earth? What narratives do world-making data hold? Additionally, in collaboration with artists and scientists, how can data contribute to speculations about intricate systems beyond the human-centric logic? These questions may sound unconventional, but they aim to foster human-nature relationships where "man" no longer occupies the central role in every interaction, whether with nature, technology, science, or the arts.

Data visualization in bio-hybrid experiments can challenge human exceptionalism, recognizing the complexity of shifting away from human-centered logic in every form of analysis, knowledge creation, and social engagement. Based on multispecies studies, many descriptive scientific narratives of nature depart from emphasizing the intricate and sometimes contradictory ways of understanding, valuing, and coexisting with diverse life forms. The most distinct life forms demonstrate diverse modes of existence in various collaborative contexts.

Non-human organisms, including fungi, bacteria, lichens, and mosses, in unconventional collaborations, showcase remarkable synergy. Illustrating the microbial richness beneath our feet, even in small spaces like gardens. A tiny tropical forest plot reveals a staggering abundance—approximately 1 trillion bacteria, 10 thousand protozoa, 10 thousand nematodes, 100 million actinomycetes, and 25 kilometers of fungal hyphae. Notably, these numbers exclude macro and microarthropods, surpassing the total human population that has ever inhabited our planet (Young & Crawford, 2004).

Nonetheless, understanding the agencies of organisms like lichens and mosses can be complex. It requires speculation, as stated by Stephen Shaviro: "The world doesn't fit in our own cognitive paradigms and narratives modes of explanation, and this is why speculation is necessary" (Shaviro, 2016, p.11). With a specific focus on these organisms, I conducted the *Lichens* (2021). This initiative is committed to addressing issues related to ecology, and climate change with lichen investigation through poetic data visualization methods.

The methodology developed from capturing, cultivating in vitro, cataloging, and composing descriptions of lichens and mosses in a specific landscape. This approach draws inspiration from the work of anthropologist Anna L. Tsing, who uses the spores of a mushroom as a methodological tool. Tsing's work with spores acts as a reflection on the ideas of Marilyn Strathern. The spore launches on a journey "beyond the life worlds imagined by her, even as it engages in a Strathernian mode of analysis: reification for the work of comparison" (Tsing, 2019, p.65). By guiding us through the life of a spore, Strathern disrupts the "somnambulistic lull" of conventional analytical methods. It's important to note that this creative approach to reifying an object does not compromise scientific rigor; instead, it unlocks boundaries.

Lichens are organisms assembled through symbiotic mutualism between an alga (or cyanobacteria) and fungi. This association, which has been in existence for approximately 2.5 billion to 543 million years, typically involves a single-celled green alga like *Trebouxia*, *Pseudotrebouxia*, *Myrmecia*, or cyanobacteria such as *Nostoc* or *Scytonema*. The fungal partner may belong to the Ascomycete (about 98%) or Basidiomycete (about 2%) groups. However, the appearance of the fungi within the lichen differs significantly from its morphology when growing independently. Each lichen species corresponds to a specific fungi species, which forms the basis of lichen classification. There are 15,000 to 20,000 described lichen species in various classification systems. Lichens can be found in mixed habitats, ranging from glaciers, rocks, trees, and leaves to deserts. Lichens often colonize harsh environments with limited nutritional resources, such as rocks. Lichens exist as organisms only through mutual association; the alga provides sustenance, while the fungi offer protection that enables the alga to survive even in terrestrial environments. The study of lichens reflects fostering a collective survival marked by mutualism, symbiosis, and interdependence among systems. It beckons us to delve into the narratives woven by these organisms, shaping our world. Collaborating with artist speculation lichens provides fresh approximations about intricate systems beyond conventional objectivity and human-centric perspectives. In doing so, they invite us to reimagine our relationship with the Earth and its diverse inhabitants.

*Lichens* (2021) (Fig.06) is rooted in artistic exploration while upholding a commitment to scientific rigor. The artwork incorporates images of degraded environments—specifically, the Atlantic and Cerrado forests—with carefully crafted texts and poems. The objective was to stimulate reflection on the integration of lichens with photographs and texts about damaged environments, nurturing alternative forms of symbiosis.

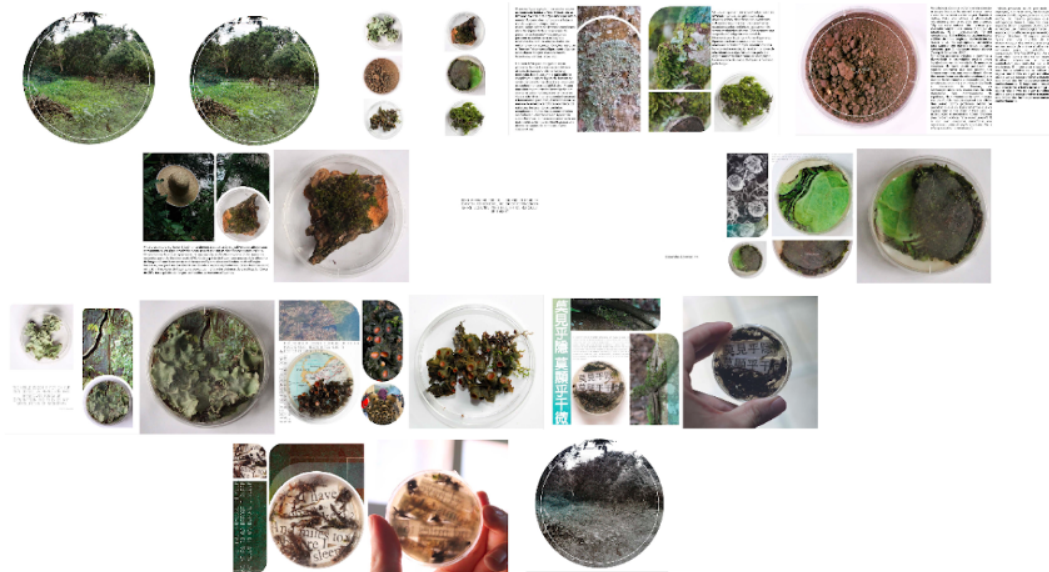


Figure 06 - Visualization of Lichens research and artistic experimentation.

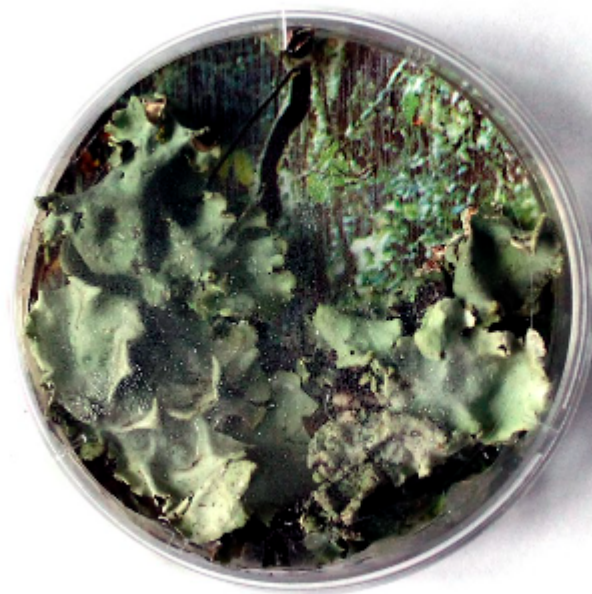


Figure 07 - Lunches with Atlantic environment photo association (detail).

## Conclusion

Susana Dias, a professor at Labjor-IEL (University of Campinas, Brazil), offers a crucial insight into climate issues and the Anthropocene. She emphasizes our role as creative agents in shaping new models of the world. Referring to the differentiation between Humans and Terrans by Latour in *Onde aterrar?* (2020), Dias perceives our presence on Earth as that of

refugees. Dias suggests that we should recognize that Terrans inhabit a damaged planet with limited refuges, fully aware of the imminent climate catastrophe. They work towards an effective Earth policy, which is how they navigate the Anthropocene. As Latour puts it, "What could have been good for Humans, it lost all meaning for Terrans" (Latour, 2014, p.7). Occupying the Earth as a refuge adds another layer to the Anthropocene debate: Who among us will be the exiles seeking refuge on Earth? It is essential to acknowledge the vast cultural differences on Earth, including among Amerindians, aborigines, Orientals, and Indians, each of whom possesses unique conceptions of nature and distinct relationships with organisms and non-human entities. But the climate issues of this century are a common factor.

Given the intricate relationships within organizational systems involving humans and non-humans, leveraging both technological and natural data structures, this article explored the possibilities of Art, Science, and Data Visualization. Drawing on data from reports like the IPCC, the increasingly complex nature of these interactions necessitates multidisciplinary and collaborative efforts. Artists and scientists, as strategic mediators, contribute to creating knowledge challenging the Anthropocene project. This collaborative fusion operates under a new perspective, actively engaging with the environment and problematizing the Anthropocene through traditional interfaces or technological systems. The resulting art forms act as powerful agents of contestation, reshaping our understanding of organisms and technologies capable of transforming the global landscape structure.

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***The Interpretation of Wayang Characters in Cyberpunk-Styled Digital Art:  
A Case Study of Mr. Lakon's Artworks***

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**Abstract**

*Wayang*, an Indonesian traditional puppet performance, represents a centuries-old tradition that has been passed down for generations. The extensive journey of *wayang* has resulted in the continuous transformation of *wayang* in its artistic aspects, form, and function. In recent years, digital art has emerged as a new form of artistic expression, and artists like Mr. Lakon have reinterpreted *wayang* characters in a cyberpunk aesthetic to create unique digital art pieces. This paper aims to examine Mr. Lakon's artworks and explore how he uses *wayang* characters and narratives to create new interpretations of *wayang*. The research methods used in this study include historical and content analysis. The findings of this research are expected to contribute to the discourse on *wayang* preservation by demonstrating how traditional cultural elements can be interpreted in the digital era, as well as provide insights for artists who are interested in exploring traditional cultural elements in a contemporary context.

Keywords: *Wayang*, Digital Art, Cyberpunk, Interpretation

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## Introduction

*Wayang* is an Indonesian traditional performance that mostly uses puppetry as its medium. *Wayang* spread across Indonesia and even overseas with various variations, such as *wayang purwa*, *wayang bali*, *wayang siam*, and *wayang gedog* which are made of cow leather. There are also some *wayang* puppets made of wood, such as *wayang golek* and *wayang klithik*.

The spread of *wayang* in Indonesia is linked to the influence of Hinduism, which entered the island of Java, Indonesia, around the fifth century. Consequently, the majority of stories used in *wayang* performances are derived from Hindu epics, the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* with adaptation to align with the socio-cultural values of the society. In a wider context, *wayang* is not only about the performance but also a narrative that is coming from the stories.

Until today, *wayang* still performed and adapted to changing times. Various interpretations and creative processes by puppeteers have resulted in various new types of *wayang* that differ from the traditional version.

Furthermore, in the modern era, some visual artists have an interest in interpreting and incorporating *wayang* elements into their artworks. *Wayang* is not only presented in performing arts, but also showcased in other visual art forms such as drawing, painting, digital art, and many more. For example, an Indonesian painter Hendra Gunawan interpreted a male *wayang* character from *Mahabharata* named Arjuna as a female figure who gave breastfeeding and incorporated that interpretation into his painting. A duo of visual artists called Indieguerillas also showcased *wayang* characters in their digital artwork “Jalan Gembira” with pop culture nuance.

Following the phenomenon of the interest in showcasing *wayang* elements in visual art forms, this study discusses an interpretation of *wayang* characters into cyberpunk digital art created by Mr. Lakon. This study aims to explain the interconnectedness between *wayang* as a traditional element and cyberpunk as a contemporary one by identifying Mr. Lakon's approach to utilizing *wayang* characters, narratives, and symbolism to generate interpretations of *wayang* in the contemporary context. Moreover, this paper underscores the significance of digital art as a novel medium in presenting *wayang*, providing valuable insights for visual artists seeking to engage with traditional cultural elements within a contemporary context.

## Methodologies

Data analysis methods used in this research are historical and content analysis. The historical analysis aims to trace the transformation of *wayang* in every period, encompassing significant cultural shifts and evolving trends. This analysis involves a comprehensive examination of existing literature related to *wayang*. Meanwhile, the content analysis focuses on identifying characters, symbols, narratives, and connections between *wayang* and cyberpunk in Mr. Lakon's digital artworks. This method facilitates an in-depth examination of how traditional *wayang* characters undergo reinterpretation within the cyberpunk context.

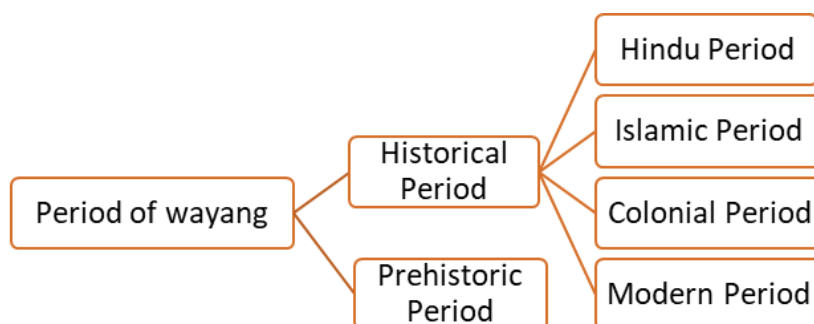
The data collection procedures in this study involve selecting three representative samples of Mr. Lakon's digital artworks, each portraying distinct *wayang* characters. These samples are carefully chosen to provide a comprehensive analysis and diverse representation of the interconnectedness of *wayang* and cyberpunk. Additionally, an interview phase with Mr.

Lakon is conducted to garner valuable insights about his creative process that support the comprehensive analysis in this study.

## Results and Discussion

### I. The Transformation of *Wayang*

The journey of *wayang* is dynamic and constantly adapts to the changing culture and conditions. This results in transformations occurring in various aspects, including form, performance, and function. According to Mulyono (1989), the period of *wayang* is divided into two periods: prehistoric and historical period. In this paper, the historical periods is further divided into the Hindu period, Islamic period, colonial period, and modern period.



**Figure 1.** Period of *Wayang*

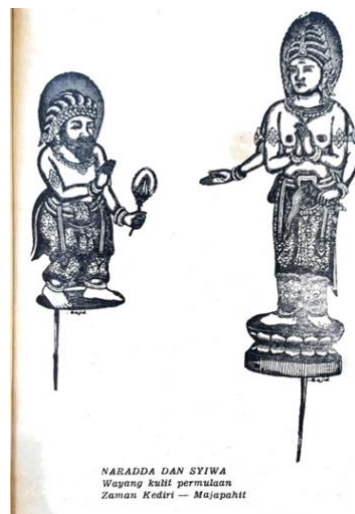
In the prehistoric period, *wayang* performance was part of the religious ritual of the ancient Javanese people who still adhered to animistic beliefs. According to Awaln (2018), based on historical traces of *wayang*, there are indications that *wayang* has existed since 1500 BCE. *Wayang*, in its original form with simple equipment, is confirmed to have originated in Indonesia and was created by the Indonesian people in Java (Mulyono, 1989). During that time, *wayang* was used as a medium to communicate with ancestral spirits or *hyang*. Some researchers like Dr. Hazeu agreed that the word “*wayang*” is derived from “*hyang*” which means ancestral spirits.

*Wayang* performance in ancient times was a shadow play. People carved pictures of their ancestors on animal skin and used light to create shadows of those. The belief in ancestral spirits inspired people to create *wayang* as shadow representations of their deceased ancestors. This is what constructs Prof. Kern’s thought that the word “*wayang*” derived from “*wadyong*” (ancient Javanese) or “*bayang*” (Indonesian) which means shadow. However, the meaning of *wayang* as a shadow has changed the cultural shift in society. Guritno (1988) stated that *wayang* is no longer interpreted solely as a shadow, but rather as a stage performance or theater.

From 898 to 910, The Hindu epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* were translated into some old Javanese literature with adaptations to align with the socio-cultural values of the society at that time. These works became a source of stories for *wayang* performance. One of the famous literary works that is used as a *wayang* story is *Kakawin Bharatayudha* written by Mpu Sedah and Mpu Panuluh. *Wayang* which originally drew from ancestral myths shifted to the adaptation of Hindu epics.

In the Hindu period, the function of *wayang* also changed to become a medium for Hinduism teachings. Then, *wayang* began to be interpreted as a stage performance or theater around the 10<sup>th</sup> century. As cited by Awalina (2018) *wayang* performances were shown and became an attraction for the audience. However, the essence of *wayang* performances still had a magical-religious nature.

In the 12<sup>th</sup> century, it is recorded that the first *wayang kulit* made of animal leather was created by Prabu Jayabaya, the King of Kediri Kingdom. Prabu Jayabaya created the leather puppet based on the reliefs of Panataran Temple, which depicted the journey of Rama in the *Ramayana* epic. The reliefs from the temple were then carved onto cow skin to create the *wayang kulit* puppet. The figures of the *wayang* based on the reliefs of Candi Panataran were in realistic form, the dimensions of humans are described according to their structure.



**Figure 2.** Panataran Temple Relief **Figure 3.** “Naradda and Syiwa”

As the Islamic period began in Indonesia in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, *wayang* experienced a period of substantial transformation. Its function shifted from Hindu religious rituals to a medium to spread Islamic values, education, and communication (Suhardjono, 2016). Due to this shift, the story of *wayang* that is coming from the Hindu epic also adapted and modified to align with Islamic values. In addition, some *wayang* stories are also sourced from babad, an ancient Javanese literature based on historical events after the arrival of Islam in Indonesia.

The form of *wayang* which was originally shown as proportionally realistic depicted in the reliefs of Hindu temples, was changed to be more surreal, disproportionate, and imaginative. The puppet's neck and hands change to be longer, the body shaped is slender, and the face is sharper and smaller. The change in the form of *wayang* perhaps occurred because based on Islamic values, Muslims are prohibited from creating something that resembles the form of a human being (Sayid, 1981).



**Figure 4.** “King Rama”. Flat leather *wayang* in Islamic Period

Moving to the colonial period, *wayang* performance still became a form of assertion of cultural identity amidst resistance to colonial domination. Despite the challenging social and political conditions, *wayang* performance also offered a space for social commentary and critique. The kings and regents used *wayang* as a symbolic tool to ignite the spirit of the people’s struggle (Rianto, 2009). The repertoire of *wayang* stories expanded to include themes and narratives relevant to the social and political issues faced by local communities. *Wayang* performances also shifted from the royal courts to more public venues, such as open-air stages and village squares.

At the end of the colonial era, social and political changes gave rise to contemporary *wayang* that became known to the public in 1920 through the creation of *wayang wahana* by R.M. Sutanto Harjowahono (“*Wayang Medium Seni Propaganda*”, 2019). The figures of early contemporary *wayang* often resemble realistically drawn human figures. The story no longer solely showcases stories involving gods, kings, or knights, but instead often depicted stories of common people in society.



**Figure 5.** *Wayang Suluh*, one of the early contemporary *wayang*

In the modern period, traditional *wayang* is still performed while contemporary *wayang* is increasingly evolving. Furthermore, puppeteers demonstrate their creativity by integrating traditional *wayang* elements with contemporary themes, thus establishing a meaningful connection between the preservation of *wayang* and its relevance in the present context. For example, in the performance of “The Theft of Sita”, a collaboration between puppeteer I Made Sidia and director Nigel Jamieson, the performance fused elements of traditional *wayang* with the urban context. The characters were from the epic *Ramayana*, but the story revolves around city conflicts as the performance presented cityscape silhouettes.



**Figure 6.** “The Theft of Sita” performance

A highlight in the modern era is also the interest in integrating *wayang* elements into visual art among the artists. This often involves blending *wayang* aesthetics with other artistic styles. Hendra Gunawan, Indiguerillas, and other notable artists have proved that presenting *wayang* elements in contemporary works provides new interpretations and nuances to *wayang*.

The transformation of *wayang* that occurs in each period is also influenced by what its creators have seen, heard, and experienced. As stated by Awalin (2018) drawing on Herbert Read’s theory, the unique form of *wayang* is a result of the creators’ desire to capture nature in its most complete form.

## II. Wayang Cyberpunk

The rise of digital technology has had a significant impact on the art world by offering new mediums for creative expression. In the visual art context, digital art has emerged as a new medium of creative expression using digital tools to draw, paint, and even make a model in 3D creation. It is a new kind of space where art is available to everyone and allows everyone to be an artist in their own right to express their preferences and feelings. In a broader view, digital art is a term applied to contemporary art, which uses the methods of mass production or digital media (Jevtić & Tomc, 2018).

Mr. Lakon, a digital artist from Indonesia, has harnessed the power of digital technology to create unique digital artworks that fuse the tradition of *wayang* with the futuristic aesthetics of the cyberpunk genre. Through his digital art pieces, Mr. Lakon takes the characters, stories, and symbols of *wayang* and presents them in visually striking artworks.

Mr. Lakon specifically interpreted *wayang* characters from *Kakawin Bharatayudha* stories, an old Javanese literature adapted from the Hindu epic *Mahabharata* which focuses on telling



stories about a war scene namely the Bharatayudha war. Bharatayudha is a great war between two families descended from Bharata, the Pandawa and Kurawa. The war that was triggered by a power struggle, lasted for eighteen days.

Cyberpunk in this study is viewed as a visual culture phenomenon and genre that appears in every format, such as comics, movies, TV series, video games, and many more. It was started in the 1980s when notable movies were produced, such as *Blade Runner* (1982) and *Akira* (1988) which the manga version was published in 1982.

Cyberpunk is characterized by a distinct visual style that reflects a high-tech and dystopian future. Cyberpunk visuals often depict futuristic cityscapes filled with neon lights, towering skyscrapers, and other elements to create a bustling-vibrant which is a representation of late capitalism where almost every aspect of human life has become commercialized (Jørgensen et al, 2019). At the same time, cyberpunk visuals also convey the dark and gritty atmosphere of a dystopian society because of moral degradation, social decay, and an oppressive system as a potential consequence of late capitalism and transhumanism amid technological advancement. A high-tech future is also reflected by the concept that mind and body can be replaced by cyborgs, androids, virtual bodies, artificial intelligence, or something entirely different.

The correlation between *wayang* and cyberpunk might not be immediately evident due to their distinct cultural origins and historical contexts. However, a comprehensive examination of Mr. Lakon's artworks reveals an interconnection of *wayang*'s traditional elements and cyberpunk's futuristic context.

During an interview, Mr. Lakon revealed his early familiarity with *wayang* since childhood. As he grew older, he developed an interest in robots and the cyberpunk genre, which represents a contemporary artistic movement. Being part of the transitional generation, he considered himself fortunate to have experienced both traditional and contemporary contexts. Mr. Lakon observed how various ancient mythologies and folktales have been adapted and modernized in mediums such as comics and movies, citing Marvel characters like Hercules, Odysseus, Thor, and Amatsu-Mikaboshi as examples. This realization served as a source of inspiration for him to reinterpret *wayang* characters through the lens of cyberpunk.

Mr. Lakon also mentioned that the *wayang* stories are very ancient, and their original depictions remain unknown, along with the experiences of the writers at that time. Given the passage of centuries and the vastly different contemporary context, artists possess the freedom to interpret *wayang* stories in various forms and styles. This freedom of interpretation allows Mr. Lakon to create a novel art expression that represents *wayang* in cyberpunk digital art.

The first Mr. Lakon's artwork analyzed in this study is "End of Bharatayudha" which portrayed a battle scene of Bima and Duryudana. Bima was a member of the Pandawa family with extraordinary physical strength, while Duryudana was a skilled warrior from the Kurawa family. Mr. Lakon portrayed Bima as a giant human mutant holding a giant mace to represent that Bima has extraordinary physical strength. Duryudana is portrayed as a cyborg army armed with a deadly weapon that looks like a bazooka. The scene of Bima and Duryudana in Mr. Lakon's artwork is set against a background of a dark and gritty modern urban landscape so that the visual atmosphere of cyberpunk is significantly amplified.

In the Bharatayudha war, it is narrated that the characters have their divine weapons and mystical powers for combating each other. In relation to cyberpunk, divine weapons can be interpreted as hi-tech advanced weapons and mystical powers as the advancement of technology in genetic engineering, artificial intelligence, and many more. Mr. Lakon himself said that when he created his artworks, he imagined the Bharatayudha war as a futuristic war involving advanced technology.



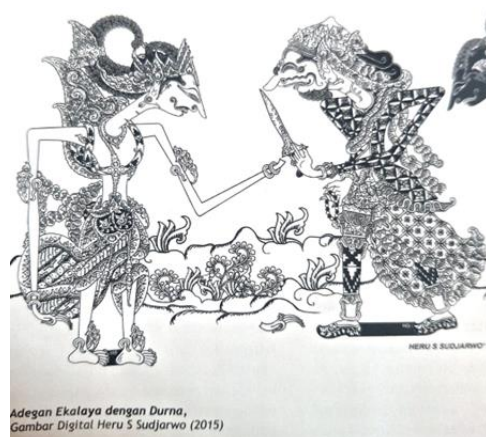
**Figure 7.** “End of Bharatayudha” (Mr. Lakon, 2021)



**Figure 8.** Bima and Duryudana in Bharatayudha war, a *wayang* performance by puppeteer Ki Manteb Soedharsono (2013)

Another of Mr. Lakon’s artwork analyzed in this study is “Ekalaya”. Ekalaya is a talented archer who sought to learn from teacher Durna. Despite being rejected due to his low status, Ekalaya still has respect for Durna. He built a statue of Durna and practiced archery diligently, mastering the art on his own. Impressed by his skills and dedication, Durna eventually acknowledged Ekalaya’s talent and praised him as a great archer. However, Durna asked Ekalaya to give his right thumb as a token of respect that is traditionally offered by students to their teachers (Solichin, et al, 2017). Ekalaya decided to cut his thumb off and give it to Durna. Since then, he could no longer shoot arrows with precision. As time went by, Ekalaya realized that he had been deceived by Durna who intentionally did not want him to become a skilled archer. When Ekalaya faced Arjuna, he was defeated and killed. Before his death, he swore that his spirit would never die until he took revenge on Durna. This oath proved to be true. During the Bharatayudha war, Ekalaya’s spirit entered a warrior’s body named Drestajumena, and through Drestajumena’s body, Ekalaya killed Durna.





**Figure 9.** Ekalaya and Durna Scene (Heru S Sudjarwo, 2015)

Mr. Lakon depicted Ekalaya from a different perspective, diverging from the conventional depiction of the skilled archer with a severed right thumb. Instead, he reimagines Ekalaya as a cyborg equipped with four hands, a transformation that augments his archery proficiency. That interpretation is related to a manifestation of the scene when Ekalaya's spirit persevered after his body was dead, and his spirit entered Drestajumena's body. Mr. Lakon interpreted the occurrence of Ekalaya's metamorphosis into a cyborg as a strategic evolution to seek revenge against Durna in the Bharatayudha war.

That interpretation is related to the concept of techno-mediated embodiment in cyberpunk. For cyberpunk, embodiment deals with the question of whether mind and body can be separated from each other (Jørgensen et al, 2019). This embodiment resonance in science fiction movies such as "Transcendence" and the "Westworld: Riddle of the Sphinx" series, where the character's consciousness is digitally transferred into a computer matrix. Subsequently, the cloning of the character has been made and the character's consciousness was transplanted into the clone. This complex process represents the core ideas of embodiment which include disembodiment (disconnecting from the body) and re embodiment (reconnecting with the body). Ekalaya's story shares similarities with this concept. His spirit persists, transitioning into a new form, echoing the fundamental notions of detachment and reconnection.



**Figure 10.** "Ekalaya" (Mr. Lakon, 2021)

The last piece of Mr. Lakon's artwork discussed in this study is "Shivanataraja". In the *Kakawin Bharatayudha* story, Shivanataraja is Batara Guru, a manifestation of the Hindu god Shiva who is also known as the Lord of Dance. Batara Guru's cosmic dance symbolizes the perpetual cycle of creation, preservation, and destruction in the universe. In Hinduism, Batara Guru (Shiva) is part of the triad of major deities (*trimurti*). However, the Indonesian *wayang* narratives diverge from the original Hindu concept of *trimurti*. In Indonesian *wayang* stories, Batara Guru is the youngest son of the Supreme God (Sang Hyang Tunggal) along with his brothers Togog and Semar. Despite being the youngest, Batara Guru was the only one who inherited the throne of Sang Hyang Tunggal, governing three realms: the divine realm, the genie realm, and the human realm.

Mr. Lakon explained that he reinterpreted Batara Guru as a modern carefree teenager with celestial power. He portrayed Batara Guru as a modern and vibrant character wearing a cool mask, a stylish jacket, and baggy cargo pants. Cyberpunk fashion often features bold, eclectic, and unique styles, blending traditional punk elements with futuristic touch in the outfit. With that fashion style, as a Lord of Dance, Batara Guru looks even more like a modern hip-hop dancer.

Amidst the modern look, Mr. Lakon added a traditional element that is related to Batara Guru's character: a *siracaraka* background. In Hinduism, *siracaraka* is a symbol in the worship of primordial energy, symbolizing the cosmic processes of creation, preservation, and destruction.



**Figure 11.** "Shivanataraja" (Mr. Lakon, 2021)

Mr. Lakon's digital artworks create a captivating bridge between tradition and innovation. By reinterpreting iconic *wayang* characters through the lens of cyberpunk, he encapsulates the essence of these ancient tales within a modern context. His artistic creations have evoked diverse reactions among viewers. People who are not familiar with *wayang* for the first time often focus their commentary on the visual allure of his pieces. Then, that aesthetic engagement catalyzes curiosity to know more about *wayang*. Furthermore, those who understand *wayang* tradition perceive Mr. Lakon's artworks as an innovative contribution that offer a novel interpretation of *wayang* in a cyberpunk context.

## Conclusion

The journey of *wayang* throughout history has been marked by dynamic transformations and continuous adaptation to the changing cultural and social conditions. Artists in each generation have different experiences in responding to their surrounding life. This ultimately influences how they interpret *wayang* which differs from the previous generation. In the modern era, it has been marked that many visual artists have an interest in integrating wayang elements into their artworks. This means wayang is timeless because it is not only relevant in ancient times, but also can be appreciated and reinterpreted in the future like what Mr. Lakon did through his artworks.

Mr. Lakon's artworks stand as an artistic expression that bridges the gap between tradition and modernity by using digital art as a medium. Through his three representative artworks, it can be seen that he tried to bring ancient narratives in *wayang* stories to the cyberpunk context. The concept of techno-mediated embodiment in cyberpunk turns out to be an interpretation of *wayang* when he depicted Ekalaya in his artwork.

Jevtič and Tomc mentioned that artists delving into digital art often make homages to classical art, celebrating its heritage and saving it from irrelevance. Mr. Lakon's artworks can be seen as an effort to appreciate and preserve *wayang* in the digital age. However, the extent of digital technologies in preserving *wayang* requires further research, as well as how to apply it not only in the form of digital art but also in performing art.

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## *Interrelationship Between Fandom Activities and Depression of Teenagers*

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### **Abstract**

Fandom activities are a hobby and part of life for many people around the world. In particular, for teenagers with great interest in pop culture and celebrities, celebrities are factors that affect various aspects of their overall lives. In this study, we would like to examine not only the effect of fandom activities, which are major components of youth's lives, on depression but also the effect of depression on fandom activities. The subjects of this study were 933 first-year Korean high school students who responded to the fourth survey of the KCYPS 2018 panel survey, saying, "I have a favorite celebrity or athlete". As a result of the study, first, depression and fandom activities were found to be mutually influential. Second, Gender, dependence on smartphones, parents' parenting attitude, peer relationships, self-esteem, and grades were found to be factors affecting fandom activities and depression in teenagers. Based on the results, this study would like to propose implications for youth fandom culture and mental health.

Keywords: Teenagers, Fandom Activities, Depression, Interrelationship, South Korea and Japan

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## Introduction

In recent years, various aspects of fandom activities have been smoothly promoted are various age groups. It can be said that Korea's fandom culture was started by the 'Brother Unit' toward "Cho Yong Pil" etc., and our society experienced forming a fandom with overwhelming influence through "Fire Truck" and "Seo Taiji and Children" in the early 1990s. Then, in the late 1990s, fandom and fandom culture with commercial and systematic systems were formed by first generation idol such as "H.O.T.", "Sechskies" and "GOD". During this period, as the internet began to spread and support, the size and influence of fandom began to grow in earnest (Lim, 2003). Nowadays, K-POP's influence and popularity have been proven around the world, and as a result, the size of the fandom is also on a global scale. As such, the group called fandom has become one of the common and popular social and cultural phenomena not only in Korea but also around the world (Oh & Kang, 2018).

In Particular, since late 2019, the pandemic of COVID-19 has greatly reduced opportunities and areas for outside activities, making people relatively more likely to relieve stress and release life energy indoors (Ju et al., 2021). Therefore, as social relationship activities using online increased, and opportunities to access broadcasting media increased, the public's eyes naturally turned to entertainment and programs (Park et al., 2020). In particular, it was found that interest and concentration in popular culture increased significantly. As a result, popular culture and celebrities have become the core of important social phenomena, especially with the teuroteu and BTS since 2020, and the size of fandom targeting popular celebrities has increased and the social influence of fandom has been strengthened. For example, looking at the increase in subscribers to the BTS's official YouTube account, <BangtanTV>, the number of subscribers increased by 100% as of the time when the COVID-19 pandemic was declared. In other words, the number of subscribers, which was about 25 million before the pandemic, has more than doubled in about a year and a half since the pandemic, now exceeding 50 million. As such, fandom activities aimed at a specific object can no longer be dismissed as a mania culture of only a few.

These fandom activities, especially for teenagers, have a strong judgment on popular culture and celebrities, and affect various aspects of their overall lives. Celebrities are an important factor in the process of forming their friendship and self-identity, and they also provide space and opportunities to satisfy various needs for recognition and belonging (Ahn et al., 2013; Baek, 2015; Kim & Kim, 2018). Korean society lacks the aspects of actively encouraging youth's play culture or broadly allowing opportunities for social participation. Adolescents who need common activities to relieve various stresses from life and strengthen their sense of belonging and solidarity within peer relationships feel catharsis and sense of fellowship through the formation of relationships with peers and peers in the process of admiring the same stars (Na, 2017). Teenagers experience a strong bond and belonging through belonging to the same fandom, experience strong recognition and attachment from others who have close relationships, form self-identity, and give meaning to their existence (Ahn et al., 2013). In addition, in recent years, it has been shown to have an effect on the formation of job views and external values and beliefs (Oh & Kang, 2018). As such, it can be seen that fandom activities are acting as an important component of life activities for teenagers. In other words, it can be seen that fandom activities have a large impact on the process of youth's friendship, self-identity formation, and various cognitive needs, and various psychological factors are intertwined with youth's fandom activities.

In particular, negative psychological states are affecting teenagers' concentration on fandom activities. It can be seen that fandom activities and depression act as factors that exchange mutual influence through research that examines the motivation to start fandom activities (Oh & Kang, 2018). Given that low self-esteem and low life satisfaction lead to fandom activities, it can be assumed that the element of depression can serve as an opportunity to start fandom activities. Therefore, in this study, we would like to examine not only the effect of fandom activities, which are major components of youth's lives, on depression but also the effect of depression on fandom activities.

The research question is:

1. Is there a mutual relationship between youth fandom activities and depression?
2. What is the effect of youth's fandom activities on depression, and what is the effect of youth's depression on fandom activities?

## **Theoretical Background**

### ***1) Fandom Activities***

#### ***(1) Definition of Fandom***

The word fandom is a combination of the word "Fan", which means a person who follows, supports, and supports a specific object or field based on affection, and the word "dom", refers to excessive immersion in a specific object (Jeong, 2010; Kim, 2013). In other words, fandom refers to people who passionately like and dig into a specific person or genre, or the culture surrounding them. Research on fandom culture and fandom activities in Korean society has generally focused on youth fan club activities, and in fact, most of the members who make up the fan club are teenagers. In particular, it appears that female teenagers are active as major members of large-scale fandom.

#### ***(2) Contents of Fandom Activities***

Fandom activities can be largely classified into offline activities and online activities. Offline fandom activities include purchasing related goods, including albums, public broadcasting, participating in concerts and fan meeting events, and visiting theme cafes. Online fandom activities include fan community participation, artist promotion and fan voting through SNS and blog activities, online brand reputation management, related news translation support, blog and article commenting, music purchase and streaming, online concert and live video display.

Offline fandom activities can be said to be activities that meet any object, such as a favorite celebrity or cheering athlete, on the internet or on the network, or run to receive related goods (a variety of items related to the object of affection; Ahn et al., 2012). Offline fandom activities, which allow you to feel a vivid sense of realism through face-to-face, provide an opportunity to feel solidarity and belonging among fandom members. Offline activities are often conducted for a limited number of people in a closed and limited space, acting as an experience of narrowing the actual distance from the object of affection (Kang, 2012). In addition, a large part of offline fandom activities is the activity of running around to purchase various goods. It includes all offline purchasing albums of favorite singers, visiting theme cafes, and purchasing and collecting unofficial goods produced by fans.

Online fandom activities include various activities to improve the awareness, popularity, and image of the target on the internet and network, as well as activities to expand the size of the fandom and personal fandom activities through participation in the fan community. It also includes activities to support the activities of favorite singers through music purchase, streaming, and video streaming. Online fandom activities in Korean society have been greatly strengthened since the early 2000s. As computers and the internet became more common, online communication increased and even if they did not interact offline, they had the opportunity to narrow the distance between fandom members or their favorite through online media, making it easy to participate in their activities as a fan (Baym, 1998).

In particular, after 2020, concerts, fan meeting events, and good sales and purchases were conducted online. As the scope of online fandom activities expanded to the area of offline fandom activities, enthusiastic fans as well as the public who had only liked them easily participated in fandom activities, increasing the size and popularity of fandom (Kang, 2011).

### ***(3) Motivation of Fandom Activities***

If so, why do teenagers become focused and immersed in fandom activities. Teenagers spend a lot of time in the space of school. It is true that it is difficult for teenagers to create new cultures within schools with time and space restrictions, so it is not easy to participate in activities other than popular culture (Yoon & Chae, 2009). According to Lim (2002), Korean teenagers who lack leisure culture crave for passion, concentration, and immersion, finally find out outlet to relieve stress by voluntarily expressing their passion, and settle down. In particular, it appears that teenagers have no choice but to focus more on popular culture at a time when external activities are limited due to the recent pandemic.

Adolescents admire celebrities or athletes by encountering popular music and various popular media, and tend to naturally form fandom and find their own value and identity by becoming members of the group (Ahn et al., 2012), and try to relieve various stresses in life including academic stress frames (Jeon, 2005). In addition, when experiencing the absence of an appropriate role model, it was found that they focused on fandom activities as they pursued their own call model (Im, 2002; Yoon & Chae, 2009).

On the other hand, a sense of belonging is an important value factor for teenagers. Teenagers discover commonalities within the group by liking same people or objects as others, and this experience strengthening ties with them (Kim, 2012). In this way, fandom develops into a group with the same behavior and thinking patterns among members, and the more teenagers belong to the fandom, gaining satisfaction according to the group's power and affiliation. In other words, fandom is used as a space for group experiences that satisfy teenagers' desire to belong to (Kim, 2011; Park, 2012; Seo & Yang, 2014). It is said that adolescents form their own unique style through fandom activities and introduce themselves to others based on this consider themselves as special beings (Fiske, 1989).

Furthermore, youth fandom activities are not a simple type of youth-only culture. Fandom activities are a channel for expressing their desire to produce and fill various socio-cultural, economic, and psychological capital.



#### ***(4) Influence of Fandom Activities***

Through previous studies, it can be seen that adolescents' fandom activities have various effects on their daily lives. Fandom activities have also been shown to motivate teenagers to communicate smoothly within their peer group and have a positive effect on school life and adaptation (Yoon et al., 2016; Cho et al., 2016; Lee et al., 2018). It is true that there are aspects that have a positive effect on the development process of adolescents, such as relieving unmet needs in reality or effectively solving stress from relationship. According to Lee & Jung (2018), teenagers tried to solve the stress caused by parental oppression, control, and interference through fandom activities and alleviate conflicts with parents, thereby improving their adaptability to school life. In other words, teenagers whose parents grew up with negative parenting attitude tried to adapt more flexibly to school life by escaping from their suppressed situations by experiencing interactions within their fandom. In addition, Jeon (2005) said that participation in fandom activities can provide emotional comfort and stress relief opportunities, and Cho et al. (2016) said that sharing common experiences and emotions with others and learning interactions within the same group can make positive effect to make school life better.

On the other hand, teenagers' fandom activities are also a factor that positively affects their self-resilience and self-esteem formation. Ahn et al. (2013) emphasized that for teenagers, fandom activities are not just leisure or play activities. In order to participate in the group, they must go through the process of identifying their own tastes, finding partners to hang out with, and finding and acting with them in common activities. Therefore, fandom activities can have a positive effect on strengthening youth's capabilities, and they not only feel intimacy, belonging, and self-esteem through interactions with stars and others engaged in fandom activities, but also naturally improved self-resilience while increasing problem-solving skills (Ahn et al., 2013).

However, another previous study also suggested the negative influence of fandom activities. It has also proved that adolescents can experience addiction, anxiety, and social atrophy during their fandom activities, and life satisfaction may decrease through experiences such as school maladjustment, academic ability decline, and psychological instability (Na, 2017). In addition, Ahn et al. (2012) emphasized that excessive fandom activities negatively affect teenagers' life satisfaction, and argued that the more active teenagers participate in fandom activities, the less they tend to adapt to school life. According to Yoon et al. (2018), online fandom activities are becoming active as popular celebrities or athletes have recently focused on communicating with fans through personal fan pages, social media, and video productions. As such, fandom activities are strongly spread and carried out online, online-based fandom activities can lead to mobile phone dependence, and serious dependence and addiction can negatively affect school life. As mentioned earlier, fandom activities can start with various psychological difficulties, stress, anxiety, and depression problems. Ironically, however, teenagers with low life satisfaction choose fandom activities and participate more in fandom activities as a way to solve them, but in some cases, the more active they participate in fandom activities, their life satisfaction go lower and their psychological status turns negatively (Baek, 2015).

Fandom activities are an important subculture for teenagers who have rapidly grown in Korea's pop culture industry, are currently experiencing a Korean Wave around the world, and can easily access their favorite objects online due to media support. We should not force society to impose sanctions, control, and access to it. Therefore, it can be said that the

immediate task is to view fandom activities as a youth culture, and view them from a cultural relativism perspective, and support them to pursue healthy fandom activities.

## **2) Depression**

### **(1) Definition of Depression**

For people living in modern society, depression is not only a general emotion, but also emotion caused by psychological and physical burnout and daily boredom. In particular, it was mentioned in the introduction, the feeling of depression is eroding whole world more broadly than ever due to the outbreak of COVID-19, which has caused a global pandemic. Depression does not mean a temporary mood status, but a phenomenon in which negative emotional status such as sadness, loneliness, and emptiness appear continuously and for a long time(Shim, 2017).

### **(2) Depression of Adolescents**

The factors of depression in adolescents classified in three, personal factors, family and school factors, and social factors. Personal tendencies, individual self-esteem, the degree of self-identity and self-resilience formation, and individual satisfaction with life were found to have an important influence on youth depression (Kim & Lee, 2021). In terms of development, adolescence is an intermediate stage from children to adults, and it is time to make effort to establish one's identity and improve self-esteem in various ways. During this period, performing development tasks may occurs high stress, and as their physical and psychological instability increase, psychological vulnerability can be weak (Kim & Kim, 2016). It shows that these individual psychological factors can lead to depression.

Adolescents' depression problems appear to be affected by relational factors as much as personal factors. According to the results of various studies, in particular, it was found that family and parents had a significant impact in the growth of adolescents. Many studies have shown that parents' participation, which means that parents who are interested in their children's daily lives and education and influence them to solve problems properly, parents' affection and interest in their children, and open-minded, receptive parenting attitudes are factors that protect teenagers from depression (Jeong, 2020; Kim, 2021; Lee et al., 2021). In other words, the characteristics of the relationship with parents at home is strongly related with the occurrence of depression in adolescents.

Also, teenagers of Korean society spend most of their days at school. Schools are an important place to provide teenagers with opportunities to have various experiences on their daily lives, but life and activities at school can cause emotional conflicts in various relationships with excessive academic stress, which often lead to depression, a major emotional problem in adolescence (Jeon & Lee, 2000). In particular, peer relationships at school are important social relationships that provide individual identity and experience of intimacy and belonging (Choi, 2010), and teenagers who have not experienced smooth peer relationships at school have low psychological and emotional well-being and life satisfaction (Lee et al., 2021). As such, family and school factors are closely related to the individual psychological factors, and family and school factors can further accelerate youth depression by strengthening individual psychological factors.

Adolescent depression also affected by the social atmosphere. Factor such as the social atmosphere is unique in Korean society that encourage and justify achievement-focused competition, examination-only education and entrance system, and pressure on success are acting as factors that cause emotional and psychological difficulties in adolescents (Yoon & Chae, 2016).

## Method

In order to confirm the growth and development of children and adolescents, the Korean Children and Youth Panel Survey (KCYPs 2018) of the Korea Youth Policy Institute, which has been conducted every year since 2018, was used as analysis data. Sampling was allocated in proportion to the numbers of students by 17 cities and provinces, and sample schools were selected by dividing coeducational schools, and sample classes were randomly selected. In this study, 933 teenagers who answered “YES” to the question “Do you have a favorite celebrity or athlete” in the first year of high school who responded to the 2021(4<sup>th</sup> survey).

The main used variables are depression and fandom activities. As control variables, seven variables that were found to affect depression and fandom activities in previous studies were put in, and specifically, household income, gender, smart phone dependence, parents' parenting attitude, peer relationship, self-esteem, and subjective evaluation of academic achievement.

First, we analyzed about demographic background of participated adolescents and their parents. Secondly, we conducted a descriptive statistical analysis and calculated the correlation coefficient to understand major variables, depression and fandom activities. Third, We conducted a regression analysis to analyze the effect of depression on fandom activities and, conversely, the effect of fandom activities on depression. At this time, seven variables known to affect fandom activities and depression in previous studies were used as control variables. We used SPSS 22.0 program for data analysis of this study.

## Results of Analysis

### *1) General Characteristics of Participants*

The demographic-sociological characteristics of participated adolescents are close to <Table 1>. When asked if they have a favorite celebrity or athlete, 47.5% (443 people) of male teenagers and 52.5% (490 people) of female teenagers said yes. The proportion of female adolescents was about 5.0% higher than that of male adolescents. According to a survey of where they live, 53.7% (501 people) lived in the Seoul metropolitan area and 46.3% (432 people) lived outside of Seoul metropolitan area. When asked about the subjective evaluation of last semester's grades, 28.9% (270 people) of adolescents said they did well, 20.2% (188 people) said they did not, more adolescents said they did well.

The education level of fathers and mothers was 66.8% (623 people) and 68.1% (635 people) for those who graduated from college or higher, respectively. According to a survey of the average monthly household income, 55.4% (517 people) of families are earning more than 3 million won and less than 6 million won, 33.9% (316 people) of families are earning more than 6 million won and 10.7% (100 people) of families are earning less than 3 million won. It was found that the respondents' household income level was generally high.

&lt;Table 1&gt; General characteristics of participants

Characteristics		People (%)		Characteristics		People (%)	
Gender	Male	443	47.5	Educational level (Father)	Lower than High school	264	28.3
	Female	490	52.5		Higher than Collage	623	66.8
					Other etc	46	4.9
Living Area	Seoul metropolitan area	501	53.7	Educational level (Mother)	Lower than High school	278	29.8
	Outside of Seoul metropolitan area	432	46.3		Higher than Collage	635	68.1
					Other etc	20	2.1
Grade	Did not well	188	20.2	Economical level of family	Less than 3 million won	100	10.7
	Usual	475	50.9		3 million won ~6 million won	517	55.4
	Did well	270	28.9		More than 6 million won	316	33.9

n=933

Conducted a basic analysis and correlation between depression and fandom activities, which are major variables. As a result, it was confirmed that depression and fandom activities had a positive (+) significant correlation ( $p < .001$ ), and that the absolute values of skewness and kurtosis were normally distributed between 3 and 10.

&lt;Table 2&gt; General characteristics of participants

Variables	Correlation		Basic analysis		
	Depression	Fandom Activities	M(SD)	Skewness	Kurtosis
Depression	1	.120***	1.84(.54)	.338	-.206
Fandom Activities	.120***	1	2.34(2.04)	1.038	.878

n=933. \* $p < 0.05$ . \*\* $p < 0.01$ . \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ 

## 2) Relationship Between Fandom Activities and Depression in Adolescents

In order to confirm the influence relationship between youth fandom activities and depression, the impact of youth depression on fandom activities was compared with the conversely, the impact of youth fandom activities on depression. <Table 3> shows the results of a regression analysis conducted on 933 adolescents who answered yes to the question 'Do you have a favorite celebrity or athlete?' Seven variables that have been shown to affect youth depression and fandom activities in previous studies were input as control variables, specifically household income, gender, smart phone dependence, parents' parenting attitude, peer relationship, self-esteem, and subjective evaluation of academic achievement.

Depression in adolescents was found to have a positive (+) effect on fandom activities. This means that the higher the depression of teenagers, the greater the fandom activity, which is also consistent with the results of Oh & Kang (2018). Among the control variables, gender,

smart phone dependence, parents' parenting attitude, peer relationship showed significant effects on fandom activities. Conversely, teenager's fandom activities also had a positive (+) effect on depression. This means that the higher the fandom activity of teenagers, the higher their depression. Among the control variables, all variables except households with 'less than 3 million won' showed a significant effect on depression. In summary, it was found that the higher a teenager's depression, the higher their fandom activity, and conversely, the higher the fandom activity, the higher their depression.

<Table 3> Relationship between Fandom Activities and Depression

Depression -> Fandom Activities					Fandom Activities -> Depression				
		B	$\beta$	t			B	$\beta$	t
		2.64 6		-2.467*			4.394		24.948***
dependent variable	fandom activities	.491	.130	3.178**	dependent variable	fandom activities	.022	.083	3.178**
	gender (girl=1)	1.06 7	.262	8.275** *		gender (girl=1)	.062	.057	2.184*
	smart phone dependence	.415	.093	2.798**		smart phone dependence	.094	.080	2.978**
	parents' parenting attitude	.401	.076	2.032*		parents' parenting attitude	-.119	-.086	-2.866**
	peer relationship	.453	.086	2.346*		peer relationship	-.229	-.165	-5.683***
control variables	self-esteem	-.042	-.009	-.213	control variables	self-esteem	-.558	-.449	-14.762***
	subjective evaluation of academic achievement	.046	.016	.487		subjective evaluation of academic achievement	-.065	-.084	-3.266**
	less than 3 million won	-.267	-.041	-1.191		less than 3 million won	.025	.015	.537
	3 million won ~ 6 million won	.088	.022	.639		3 million won ~ 6 million won	-.062	-.057	-2.116*
	R2		.114			R2		.431	
	adjR2		.105			adjR2		.425	
	F		13.172***			F		77.617***	

n=933, \*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01, \*\*\*p<0.001

## Conclusion

In order to examine the mutual influence relationship between depression and fandom activities, this study analyzed the impact of depression on fandom activities and, conversely, the impact of fandom activities on depression. The subjects of this study were 933 first-year

high school students who responded to the 4th year of the Korean Children and Youth Panel Survey (KCYPs, 2018), including 443 male adolescents and 490 female adolescents.

Research results show that depression in adolescents increases the frequency of participation in fandom activities. This is a study by Oh and Kang (2018), who looked at the mediating effect of fandom activities in the impact of depression on career identity in adolescents, and Kim and Kim (2018), who looked at the differences in school life and psychological factors depending on the type of fandom activity in middle school students. This is consistent with the results of Additionally, this study found that, conversely, the more youth participate in fandom activities, the more depression they experience. In other words, depression and fandom activity have a mutual influence, and as depression increases, fandom activity increases, and increased fandom activity goes through a cycle of increasing depression again. Fandom is already a culture, and with the development of media, it is a social phenomenon that teenagers can easily access through the Internet and smartphones. Rather than controlling it, we will look at the psychological and emotional aspects of youth engaging in fandom activities so that it can be an activity to relieve various stresses in life and strengthen a sense of belonging and solidarity through peer relationships (Na, 2017), and provide various ways to relieve stress. Support should be provided to expand the channel.

Based on these research results, it is suggested that research on fandom activities should be conducted more actively and in a multifaceted manner in order to approach adolescent depression. Previous studies have shown that youth fandom activities have a positive effect on resolving conflicts and psychological difficulties caused by academic stress, escaping reality, vicarious satisfaction, seeking role models, providing a place for group experiences, satisfying the need for recognition, and improving school adaptability. It was found to have an effect. In this study, it was confirmed that fandom activities can increase depression, so continuous observation is needed to see if the negative tendency in the psychological and emotional state of teenagers who actively engage in fandom activities does not become stronger. Fandom activities are a subculture that plays an important part in the daily life and lives of teenagers, and through participation in fandom activities, the tasks and developmental tasks of adolescence are achieved. Therefore, it is necessary to specifically consider what fandom activities mean to teenagers and what experiences they have within the fandom as members of the fandom. Second, since gender, smart phone dependence, parents' parenting attitude, peer relationship, self-esteem, grades etc, have been shown to be factors affecting fandom activities and depression in teenagers, positive participation in fandom activities increases and negative tendencies toward depression decrease. Therefore, these factors should be considered important in order to increase positive participation in fandom activities and reduce negative depressive tendencies. This study has the limitation of not considering a wider range of variables due to the use of panel data. In the future, there will be a need to examine the influence of fandom activities through various research methods, and it will be necessary to confirm whether there are differences in fandom activities depending on gender and age. In addition, it will be necessary to study changes in the content of fandom activities and changes in immersion in fandom activities as teenagers grow through longitudinal research, and to study changes in society's views and perceptions of fandom activities according to changes in the times.

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*Exploring the Influences of Colour Scheme on User Response Time in  
Virtual Reality Games*

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**Abstract**

In recent years, with the rapid development of the virtual reality (VR) industry, the number of VR game- users is increasing. Colour is an integral part of visual presentation in VR games. Research on the influence of colour schemes on user response time was conducted on LCD screens, websites, and smartphones. There are differences between VR and the platforms in terms of equipment, immersion, field of view and dimension, and user response time is one of the critical factors in user experience. This article will study how colour schemes influence user response time on user experience. Additionally, research on the influence of colour on user response times is limited to specific colour combinations, such as a yellow background, white foreground, or comparisons of the same colour and multiple colours. This research, using an experimental method, explores the influence of colour on user response time on the Oculus Quest 2 virtual device platform. It can be provided to VR game developers to make the design more solid. Understanding the effectiveness of interactions can provide adequate data for future research on improving user experience.

Keywords: Colour Scheme, User Response Time, Virtual Reality Games, User Experience

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## 1. Introduction

Virtual Reality (VR) is an immersive computer modelling and simulation technology that allows users to immerse themselves in a computer-generated environment and attempt things that are difficult to do in real life (Kwok et al., 2019). In the beginning, the design of colour schemes was mainly focused on printed materials. However, with the continuous advancement of technology, colour scheme design has gradually transitioned to traditional display platforms (LCD, computers, smartphones). For this reason, some researchers have investigated the relationship between traditional screen colours (Siek, et. al, 2023) and user response times. Notable examples include LCDs(Huang & Chiu, 2007), computers (Kimmons, 2020), and smartphone displays (Liu et al., 2021). VR colours are more immersive and easier to focus on than traditional displays. This can increase enthusiasm and motivation for learning and reduce user response time. A study by Shu et al. compared the effects of VR and computer screen immersion using an earthquake educational VR system.

This study found that VR users had a stronger sense of spatial presence and immersion than their desktop displays (Shu et al., 2019). Consequently, participants may pay more attention to the colour scheme, which affects the users' response times. On the other hand, colours in VR can also be uncomfortable for users due to Variance Adjustment Conflict (VAC), VAC occurs when the brain recognises a discrepancy between the perceived distance of a 3D virtual object and the required focusing distance of the eyes (Kramida, 2016), and this unpleasant effect also affects the user's response time. In recent years, with the rapid development of the VR industry, the number of VR game users has also increased. The VR industry has evolved over the past few decades based on the integration of previous research into interactive 3D graphics and user interfaces. Currently, the expansion of games to VR has begun. Similar to other computer games, VR gaming applications typically include colour information and commands in the interface that users must accept and respond to. VR games have the potential to influence a wider audience (Zyda, 2005). Colour schemes are an integral element of all VR applications, so their impact on user experience is interesting. Surprisingly, knowledge about the effects of colour in virtual environments is limited (Coursaris & van Osch, 2016). Meanwhile, researchers have shown a growing interest in understanding user experience in VR games (Radianti et al., 2020). Among the key aspects of user experience, user response time is particularly prominent (J. Ahn et al., 2017). Given that VR is a relatively new technology, it inherently has the novelty and interesting to engage users. As a result, users tend to exhibit a higher intrinsic motivation to explore and understand VR (Jing et al., 2023), which positively impacts the understanding of user response time.

Previous studies on colour schemes and user response time have focused on specific colour combinations and different platforms. For example, in LCD screens, Huang et al. conducted a study to evaluate the effect of two specific colour combinations on user response time. However, user interfaces usually consist of essential components: interactive objects (button colours), structured graphical objects (background and geometry colours), and structured text objects (font colours) (Linton et al., 1989). The analysis of the effect of icons and background colours on user response time alone cannot cover all the essential components of the user interface, which leads to its insufficient application in the actual VR colour scheme design process. Similarly, on smartphones, Liu's study compared the effects of same-coloured and multi-coloured icons on user response times but only examined icon colour and ignoring the background and font colour. The omission of other essential user interface components again limits the applicability of the study to VR colour scheme design.

Differences between traditional screens and VR environments can impact the colour scheme of user response times. In addition, the impact of colour scheme on user response time in traditional displays cannot cover all basic user interface components. Therefore, further research is needed to investigate the effect of colour scheme on user response time in VR. Before research study the impact of colour schemes on user response time, researchers need to discover the colour scheme of the latest VR applications to do better research. Based on user-centred design principles, the colour schemes of virtual applications will be discovered from the user's perspective. Research on the impact of colour schemes on user response times is limited, so a specific colour scheme alone is not sufficient to cover all components of a VR user interface. Furthermore, relying solely on existing research and data proved insufficient to convince product managers to adopt a specific colour scheme during the design phase. This deficiency hinders the development of software products with colour schemes that encompass all components of the user interface as consideration of colour schemes and user response times in critical components of the user interface is currently incomplete. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the impact of VR colour schemes on user response times. Oculus Quest is a phenomenal VR device with many VR games for studying the effect of colour schemes on user response times, providing researchers with plenty of suitable applications. Therefore, this study uses a VR game on the Oculus Quest platform to study the impact of colour schemes on users' response times.

Based on the above, the research objectives of this study are to examine the colour schemes used in contemporary VR games from the user's perspective and to analyse the impact of colour schemes on user response times in VR games.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Virtual Reality Games**

VR game is a game played in a VR environment. Unlike traditional video games that are played on a screen, VR games are experienced through a headset or glasses, allowing the player to see and interact with his three-dimensional virtual world. VR games are video games played on VR hardware (Pallavicini et al., 2019). Most VR games rely on the player immersion, usually via a head-mounted display unit or a device with a stereoscopic display and one or more controllers (Liszio & Masuch, 2016). In other words, VR games allow you to experience and interact with the three-dimensional environment while playing the game. VR games work by utilising a combination of specialised hardware and software. The hardware usually consists of a VR headset worn by the player, which includes a screen that displays the game world in 3D and motion tracking controllers that allow the player to interact with the virtual world (Kim et al., 2020). VR gaming software is designed to utilise specialised hardware to create a highly immersive experience, which includes realistic 3D environments, advanced interactions, and audio that responds to the player's movements and actions (Pallavicini et al., 2019).

#### **2.1.1 User Interface in Virtual Reality**

Yue's research focuses on user interface design in VR. It is proposed that one of his strategies for constructing 3D interfaces is to create a natural and harmonious interaction between humans and machines. Yue also discusses the importance of his 3D user interface when interacting in virtual space. This includes designing intuitive and user-friendly interfaces that allow users to interact with virtual objects, environments, or information in a natural and

seamless manner. This can be achieved through well-designed input modes, sensory feedback, and careful consideration of the user experience (Yue, 2021).

In a study conducted by Coomans and Timmermans, they categorised various types of VR User Interfaces (VRUI). Specifically, VRUIs are categorised into two main types based on the underlying physical media. One category consists of output media types that include graphic, acoustic, and haptic components, and the other category includes kinematic, acoustic, and graphic components. This study systematically categorises VR user interfaces by thoroughly examining their unique features, functionality, and potential applications. However, it is worth noting that there is no mention of an in-depth study of the classification of VR user interfaces in terms of the visual composition of the interface (Coomans & Timmermans, 1997).

## **2.2 User Interface Components**

From the perspective of designing user interfaces, Linton et al. describe a user interface toolkit called InterViews developed at Stanford University. The toolkit provides rich combination mechanisms and a variety of predefined objects that can be combined to create software user interfaces. InterViews supports a combination of his three object classes: interactive objects, structured graphic objects, and structured text objects. Interactive objects are user interface components that allow users to interact with the application, such as scroll bars and menus. Structured graphic objects are graphic elements such as circles, polygons, and patterns. Structured text pairs are text elements such as words and whitespace, that can be combined to create complex layouts (Linton et al., 1989).

## **2.3 Virtual Reality Menus**

Menus are part of the VR user interface. Research has shown that using virtual menus is an effective way to interact with virtual environments and is commonly used in many scenarios (Jacoby & Ellis, 1992). Wall's research examines research methods for developing VR visualisations and discusses the challenges of menu design for VR interfaces. The study found that users prefer menus that are easy to navigate and have clear visual cues. Wall also emphasised the importance of clear visual cues to the menu user experience (Wall, 2021).

## **2.4 Virtual Reality Game Users**

Data shows that global VR gaming revenues have reached US\$22.9 billion, with over 171 million VR users worldwide (Christo, 2021). The age distribution of VR game players is relatively wide, but male users tend to be younger (18-34 years old), while female users are more evenly distributed. According to the data provided by Mainland China Data Network, by the end of 2020, the gender ratio of VR game players in China will be 67.7% male and 32.3% female. According to the "China VR User Behaviour Research Report," China's VR users are mainly aged 18-34, accounting for 62.5%. The 25-29-year-old group has the highest utilisation rate, accounting for 28.6%. The next largest group was 30-34 years old, accounting for 22.6%. Among the young people, the utilisation rate for those aged 18-24 was also high at 11.3%.

## 2.5 HSB

Alternative names for HSB include HSV (value), HSI (intensity), and HSL (light). In digital design, Khairunniza-Bejo and Kamarudin's research focuses on the main factors of human colour perception, HSB, i.e., namely: Hue, Saturation, and Brightness. Hue is a property of a colour that describes its pure colour, while saturation measures the amount of white in a pure colour. The intensity of a colour image corresponds to the grey level (Khairunniza-Bejo & Kamarudin, 2011).

A study by Lyu et al. investigated the impacts of colour design of user interfaces on all age groups. The study compared the saturation and tonal intensity of child and adult user interfaces, respectively. This study found that different types of application interfaces use different colour frequencies in terms of hue. Educational application interfaces use cool colours, such as blue, while gaming application interfaces use warm colours such as red and orange. When it comes to saturation, the adult user interface is more saturated. In terms of brightness, adult application interfaces typically use desaturated colours (Lyu et al., 2022).

## 2.6 User Response Time

Miller's study discussed the definition of response time. According to Miller, different human goals and behaviours require different acceptable or actual response times (Miller, 1968). In Huang and Chiu's study, the relationship between specific colour schemes on LCD screens and users' visual search time was investigated (Huang & Chiu, 2007). Hoxmeier and DiCesare discussed the effect of system response time on user satisfaction, showing that satisfaction decreased with increasing system response time (Hoxmeier & DiCesare, 2000). Stagers and Kobus compared two text-based and prototype graphical interfaces to understand the differences in response time (RT), errors, and satisfaction when nurses perform computational tasks (Stagers & Kobus, 2000). The response time in their study indicates that two elements, visual search time and system response time, are the user response time.

## 3. Research Methods

### 3.1 Introduction

This study aims to explore the colour schemes used in contemporary casual VR games from the user's perspective, understand the impact of colour schemes on user response times, and to provide a basic facility to create adaptable colour schemes. The research uses a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods. The debate between quantitative and qualitative methods is not antagonistic and there is complementarity between them (Pedone, 2000). The researcher first conducted a pilot study (In, 2017) to assess the feasibility of the research method, process, participants, and the need for research instruments. The card sorting method was used in a pilot study (Courage & Baxter, 2005; Grant & Berg, 1948) to explore the colour scheme of virtual games from the user's perspective. Next, an experimental study (Hulin & Katz, 1935; Tröndle et al., 2014) was used to explore the impact of colour schemes on user response times.

## 3.2 Research Sample

### 3.2.1 Pilot Study Participants

According to statistics, people aged 18 to 35 years are the main users of VR games. Three participants aged between 18- 35 were recruited for this study. The participants were two females and one male. All participants in the pilot study were from China, had experience in playing mobile games but not VR games, were right-handed, and were not colour-blind. Considering the influence of the environment on participants' performance, the researchers chose to experiment indoors.

### 3.2.2 Casual Game Menus

Casual games are easy to use and learn with simple mechanics and intuitive controls. In general, they have a low learning curve and can be appreciated quickly (Weizman, 2014). The participants in this study were gamers who had never been exposed to VR games before, and choosing casual games helped the participants to complete the task in an easy-to-manipulate state without consuming too much energy. Due to the wide variety of colours, the colour range for studying the entire game is too wide, so the colour range in this study is limited to the menu of virtual games.

## 3.3 Process Steps

**Step 1:** The researcher applied the purposive sampling method (Tongco, 2007). The 87VR Assistant application (87VR, n.d.) in mainland China is the main platform for downloading games on Oculus Quest 2 devices. This study used the 87VR Assistant ratings and the number of raters to filter the game. Ratings are compiled across five areas: Game Graphics, Game Sound, Game fun, Game Comfort, and Game Immersion, with a maximum score of 10 and a minimum is 0. A higher rating means the game has game graphics that are approved by players. Reviews and ratings above nine were screened as games for participants to experience.

**Step 2:** Find three participants for the pilot study through convenience sampling.

**Step 3:** Conduct the pilot study by inviting 3 participants to experience the game.

**Step 4:** All testing was conducted indoors. Participants signed a consent form, and the facilitator informed them of their right to abandon the test at any time.

**Step 5:** Before starting the game, the researchers asked the participants to take a colour-blindness test to eliminate colour-blind and weak people. Farnsworth Munsell 100 Hue Test was conducted on a Redmi laptop.

**Step 6:** Ten minutes before testing the game experiment, the facilitator introduced the participants to the study objectives and informed them of the estimated duration of the game experience. The Oculus Quest 2 pupil distance was adjusted for each participant, and the researchers adjusted the size of the headband to fit the user's head circumference. The researchers provided daily disposable contact lenses for nearsighted individuals to ensure participant comfort.



**Step 7:** A step-by-step presentation diagram of the click task was sent to the participant's smartphone WeChat 5 minutes before the start of the experiment. Considering the differences in button size and font colour, button selection and button fonts were specified with a maximum of four selection tasks per game design.

**Step 8:** The facilitator wears the Oculus Quest 2 device and installs the games, opens the Beat Saber game menu interface, debugs the game buttons, and then turns on the gaming device for players. Participants enter and observe the game menu for 1 minute to become familiar with it and how the joystick operates. At the same time, the host opens the Redmi computer to connect the Oculus Quest 2 with a 1.5-meter USB cable and projects the image of the VR device to the computer screen through the 87VR Assistant software, opening the Microsoft Xbox recording software and clicking record.

**Step 9:** Participants start to click on the task after the facilitator announces its start. During this time, no sound was emitted except that of the facilitator to prevent the participant from completing the experiment.

**Step 10:** After the participants have finished testing all the games, the facilitator uses an iPhone X to show the location of the colour cards in the screenshot of the game and explains to the participants that the location corresponds to the colour of the sorting card. Participants complete card sorting: 1. Participants begin card sorting by clicking on the link to the website (Uxtweak). 2. Participants access check the home page and the instructions page. 3. Participants drag and drop coloured cards onto the backgrounds or geometric shapes, buttons, and font sorting boxes. If they think that the colour cards are not in the game's colour scheme, they can choose not to drag and drop the colour cards. 4. Participants close the page and repeat other game card sorting.

**Step 11:** The researcher used the Popular placements matrix with the Uxtweak website to obtain the colour schemes of the four games.

**Step 12:** The researcher collected the data on user response times through the participants' test recording screen set up by Adobe Premiere software.

## 4. Results and Analysis

### 4.1 VR Casual Game Selection

87VR Assistant is a game downloader application for Oculus Quest 2 devices. There are 921 VR games, including 364 leisure games. The game selection is ranked according to the rating, and the statistical date is June 15, 2023. The game selection meets the following requirements. The selected games have the following conditions:

1. Casual games are available for download in the 87VR Assistant app.
2. Casual games have a score greater than nine and a rating count greater than 100.
3. Casual games have menus.
4. The researcher collected the number of ratings and scores of 364 casual games in 87VR Assistant and ranked them according to the high scores and low scores. Four games satisfy conditions 1 to 3, and the games boxed marked in red in the figure below are the selected games (Table 1).

Game Name	Rating	Number of Rating	Remarks
Beat Saber	9.3	434	
All-In-One Sports VR	9.1	404	
Angry Birds	9.1	196	
LES MILLS BODYCOMBAT	9.1	101	
Pierhead Arcade 2 VR	9	121	Without Menu
BoomBox	8.7	104	
Silhouette	8.6	115	
Party On	8.5	148	
Crow: The Legend quest	8.5	111	
Colombia in 360: Mompox - Timeless Magical Realism	8.4	101	
Three-quarters space station	8.3	123	
Dance Collider	8.3	113	
VR Ballcade	8.3	106	
Dayunlong VR	8.1	104	

Illustrated by author

Table 1: Ranking of Virtual Reality Leisure Games

### 4.2 Task Click Order

The task flow of each game design is shown below, where the numbers represent the order of participants' clicks, and the border around the numbers represents the location of the participants' clicks. Figures 1 through 4 show the click sequence of Beat Saber, All-In-One Sports VR, Angry Birds, and Les Mills Bodycombat, in that order.



Figure 1: Beat Saber Task Click Order



Figure 2: All In One Sports VR Task Click Order



Figure 3: All-In-One-Sports VR Task Click Order

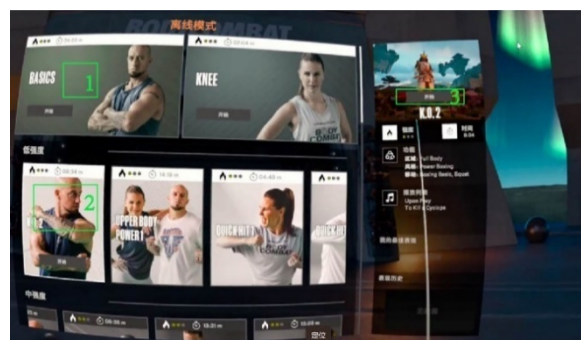


Figure 4: Les Mills Bodycombat Task Click Order

### 4.3 Participants' Colour Blindness Test Results

The Farnsworth Munsell 100 Hue test results for all three participants were 0, with 0 being the highest score indicating no colour weakness or colour blindness, and the results for all three participants are shown ( see Figure 5).

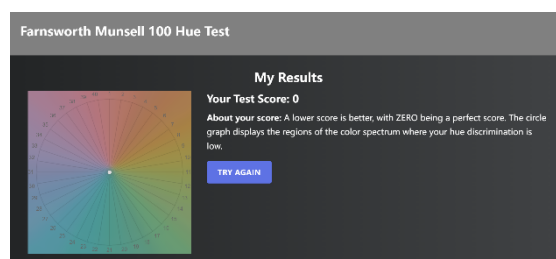


Figure 5: Farnsworth Munsell 100 Hue Test Results

### 4.4 Colour Scheme

The third column in the top half of Table 2-5 shows the results of the popular placement matrix for the colours of the four-games, where the numbers on the second column correspond to the colour numbers in the third column. The percentages in the four right columns of the popular placement matrix indicate the percentage of participants who sorted cards of that colour into the corresponding sorting boxes. For example, in this pilot study, there were 3 participants and 67% background colour meaning that there were two participants who sorted the cards into the background colour sorting box. The percentage box cell is coloured blue, which means this sorting box is the most popular with participants. Participants putting the colour into the sorting box means that the participant considers this colour one of the colour schemes for this game.

The colour schemes were identified from the user's perspective using a card sorting method and a popular placement matrix. The colour schemes of four popular VR games are shown in the bottom half of Tables 2-5: Beat Saber (Table 2), All-In-One Sports VR (Table 3), Angry Birds (Table 4), and Les Mills Bodycombat (Table 5).


Game name	Color position in screenshot	Color cards result of popular placements matrix																																																												
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Table 2: Colour Scheme Result of Beat Saber


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Table 3: Colour Scheme Result of All-In-One Sports VR

Game name	Color position in screenshot	Color cards result of popular placements matrix																																																																																																		
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Table 4: Colour Scheme Result of Angry Birds

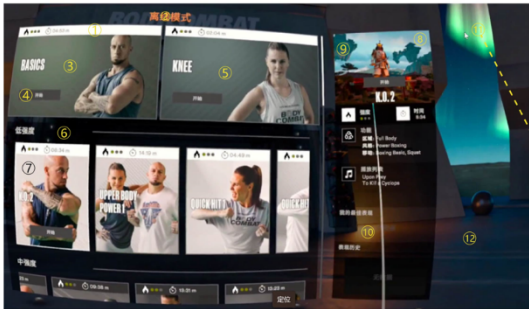
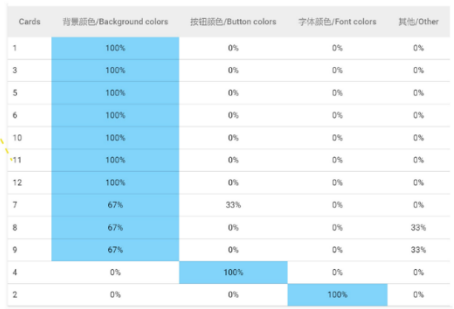
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Table 5: Colour Scheme Result of Les Mills Bodycombat

### 4.5 User Response Time

Table 6 shows the results of user response time.



Game Name	Participants	Step1	Step2	Step3	Step4
		User reponse time (In Second)			
Beat saber	A	1.24	Missed	2.48 Misoperation time:3.20	2.28
	B	8.22 Recognition error time: 2.50	1.20 Misoperation time: 3.10	1.28 Misoperation time:1.02	1.06
	C	5.24	Missed	2.34 Misoperation time: 3.58	6
All-in-on sports	A	2.26 Misoperation time:3.36	Holding time:2.28 Animation time:1.34	2.02 Animation:0.44	1.48 (Less movement distance)
	B	4.28 Misoperation time: 2.30	Holding time: 5.20 Animation time: 1.34	2.54 Animation time: 0.44	1.18 (Less movement distance)
	C	No records	Holding time: 2.30	5.30 Seconds Animation time: 0.44	1.36 (Less movement distance)
	C Second time	6.30 Misoperation time: 1.18	Holding time: 1.24 Animation time: 1.34	2.48 Animation time: 0.44	0.34 (Less movement distance)
Angry birds	A	4.46 Animation time: 0.34	1.06 (Less movement distance) Animation time: 1.14	1 (Less movement distance) Animation time: 0.40	0.58 (Less movement distance)
	B	3.42 Animation time: 0.34	2.34 (Less movement distance) Animation time: 1.14	3.34 (Less movement distance) Animation time: 0.40	1 (Less movement distance)
	C	Missed	6.14 (Less movement distance) Animation time: 1.14	1.38 (Less movement distance) Animation time: 0.40	1.24 (Less movement distance)
Les mills bodycombat	A	4.34	Missed	Missed	-
	B	No records	No records	No records	No records
	C	2.18	1	5.10	-

Table 6: User Response Time Results

## 5. Conclusion and Discussion

### 5.1 Conclusion

All VR user interfaces involve colour. Users must quickly and accurately recognise the information generated by colours to properly use the VR application. The present study investigated the colour schemes and response times of users of four VR games. Three local residents in Shanghai were recruited to conduct the pilot study of the games with different colour schemes and then participate in the card sorting. Based on the results of the pilot study, the colour schemes of the four VR games are summarised from the user perspective (Tables 2 to 5). The pilot study also investigated the impact of colour schemes on user response times. 2. During the All-In-One Sports VR gaming experience, participant C (Table 5) was unable to click the button for the third step, causing Participant C to repeat the experiment a second time. In the second experiment, user response times in the first and second stages of the experiment were significantly shorter for participant C (Table 5). There is a relationship between response time and user interface familiarity; The more familiar the user is with the interface, the shorter the response time, which is no longer affected by the colour scheme. In addition to the colour schemes, tests have shown that the size, shape, and position of the user interface buttons may also affect the user response time. The response time of the entire game's colour scheme must include the impacts of these factors.

### 5.2 Discussion

With the development of VR technology, VR applications have also been used in other industries. Although this study is based on the game's colour scheme, it can also be used as a reference for other colour designs in VR.

In the Les Mills Bodycombat game play experiment, according to the task, participants had to click on the background colour, but two out of three participants clicked on the background button colour. This phenomenon may be related to curiosity and habit.

It can also be associated with strong and easily recognizable colour contrast, due to its contrasting background colour and recognisable colour. There is also a difference in

interactive functionality between the buttons and backgrounds, as buttons are interactive while backgrounds are not. Colour attracts participants to the interactive buttons and creates a desire to click on them.

According to Linton et al., the components of a user interface are background, geometric shapes, buttons, and fonts. In this study, users categorised about 15% of the colour cards into other columns and had other user interface components from the user's perspective. Additionally, the researcher did not find any review literature on the classification of user interfaces from a graphical standpoint. Knowing the research in this area will help better understand the interface design in VR better to meet user needs and deliver a great user experience.

This study shows the impact of different colour schemes in a game on user response time. However, the researchers also noted that the size and position of buttons in the task as well as various user interface factors also affected user response times. The presence of these factors may influence our results. Therefore, in future studies, it is anticipated that these variables will be controlled to accurately assess the impact of colour scheme with fixed user interface to user response time. This study provides a new perspective and theoretical basis for understanding how a game's colour scheme affects user experience. The researchers expect to be able to obtain more accurate and in-depth results in future studies by further controlling the experimental conditions.

### 5.3 Research Implications

**Theoretical Implication:** In this study, researchers explored how colour affects human interaction with virtual worlds. From a semiotic perspective, one refers to Peirce's theory, which defines "semiotics" as the process by which humans perceive and interact with the world, creating meaning for their environment based on their perceptions and experiences (Peirce, 1991). However, despite the numerous applications of colourism in many fields, little research has been done to determine whether colourism as a theory affects the interaction of people with virtual worlds or not. This is a question that deserves further investigation. Colour is not just a part of visual perception; it is also an essential tool for understanding and explaining our world. Colour can influence psychological state and even modify behaviour. By studying into the role of colour in the interaction between humans and virtual worlds, designers can better understand the impact of colour on user experience and optimise design strategies, providing valuable reference information for designers.

**Practical Implications:** In this study, the researchers used the card sorting method to study colours, which has not been covered in previous studies. Card sorting is a standard user research method that helps researchers understand how users understand and organise information. In this study, researchers applied this method to the study of colour scheme research to understand how users perceive and understand colour by observing how they classify cards based on colour. This study provides a new research tool and method for other researchers. Other scholars can use our approach to explore the application of colour schemes and further advance the field of colour science and design.

**Research Implications:** Researchers initially analysed the relationship between colour schemes and user response times. The colour scheme can affect user response time to some extent. Additionally, we found that users' familiarity with the game also affects their response time. After collecting data on user response times, we found that the more familiar the game,

the shorter the user response time typically is. This may be because the more familiar users are with the game, the better they understand the game's colours and graphics in the game and are, therefore, able to respond more quickly. In addition, we also provide raw data for other researchers to refer to. This data includes the game's colour scheme and user response times. This data can not only help other researchers to deeply understand the relationship between colour schemes and user response times but also provide valuable reference materials for our future research. By deeply analysing the relationship between colour scheme and user response time, this study provides a new perspective and theoretical basis for game design and user experience research.



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*Communication of Atmosphere in Folk Dance Performance  
– Take “Roulianxiang” as an Example*

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**Abstract**

Reproducible folk performances are a treasure trove of historical and cultural achievements. This type of folk performance serves as more than just artistic expressions of past ways of life; instead, they transform these traditions into something that modern audiences can appreciate. The transformation turns the original productive meaning of these performances into a ritualistic and evocative experience. By utilizing Gernot Böhme's concept of atmosphere as a medium in the communication process, the atmosphere allows folk dance performances to retain their authenticity in modern communication. In this paper, there are two major processes during communication: reproduction and perception, using the traditional folk dance “Roulianxiang” from Lichuan City, Hubei Province as an example. Firstly, by expressing the experiences of the participants and designing the stage space, the atmosphere is reproduced during the performance. Additionally, the crucial role of the audience in the communication of atmosphere should be highlighted. Through their physical perception and aesthetic experience, the audience actively engages with the performance, further reinforcing the bond with traditional folk culture. These two aspects enhance the authenticity from people’s experiences. The communication of atmosphere allows people to approach the past in a meaningful way. By considering atmosphere as a medium, people will immerse themselves in the atmosphere, both participants and audience will gain a deeper understanding of folk performances while preserving the essence of the culture.

Keywords: Communication of Atmosphere, Folk Dance Performance, Authenticity, Traditional Folk Culture

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## Introduction

“Atmosphere” as a concept in aesthetics should link up with people’s daily life. Böhme (2016) argued that atmosphere is “the peculiar intermediary status of atmospheres between subject and object.” Atmospheres are experienced as an emotional effect, which means that people stay in a specific space, perceive and be experienced by their emotions. So aesthetics of atmosphere deals with atmosphere not only from the perspectives of both subject and object, but also from the perspectives of aesthetics of reception and aesthetics of production. During the process of communication, as long as there are individuals or groups of people who feel emotions in a certain space, it enters the realm of the aesthetics of atmosphere. Böhme (1993) prefers to analyze the aesthetics of atmosphere in city buildings and stage sets. This is why the aesthetics of atmosphere is now widely used in architecture in western countries, especially in Europe. The most representative research is Swiss architect Peter Zumthor, in his book *Atmospheres: Architectural Environments, Surrounding Objects* (2006), examines the relationship between light, sound, and temperature, among other factors, and the creation of architectural atmospheres, arguing that architectural atmosphere is our “first impression” of a building based on intuition and spontaneous emotion. While in eastern countries, Aesthetics of atmosphere was translated into Japanese in 2005 and developed quickly, and Japanese scholar Takao Aoki(2020) used the theory of aesthetics of atmosphere analyzed the nature, which means that he believes this concept belongs to environmental aesthetics. In China, there are many scholars who have compared this theory with Chinese aesthetics “Qiyun” (Liu, 2022). Recently, this theory is applied to interdisciplinary studies. Wang (2021) used this concept in research of museum and considered the relation between object and audience.

In this paper, atmosphere is applied to the field of communication, and the communication of atmosphere in folk dance performance can be separated into the creation and perception of atmosphere. Folk culture is a collection of intangible cultural heritages fostered by local communities, integrating distinctive resources, traditions, and customs handed down from generation to generation. With rapid societal evolution and the impact of modernization, the sanctuaries of traditional culture dwindle, causing folk activities that have thrived through oral traditions to lose their domains. Herein, folk dance performances become a new way for the public to get in touch with these traditions, which gives people more opportunities to immerse themselves in diverse folk customs. In this way, the atmosphere is generated during folk dance performances and helps the communication between performers and audience. This kind of communication augments the authenticity of people’s encounters with the national culture. This helps to build people’s awareness of and appreciation for the folk dance and helps it flourish, fostering the vitality of traditional culture.

“Roulianxiang” is a form of folk dance in Enshi Tujia and Miao Autonomous Prefecture, Hubei province. It is characterized by a unique physical performance in which the hand-palms pat the forehead, shoulders, face, arms, elbows, waist, legs and other parts of the body, making rhythmic sounds. Due to its limited geographic distribution, the captivating history and development of “Roulianxiang” written history has no longer been preserved despite several popular stories in folklore. It is clear that “Roulianxiang” held practical significance from its inception. According to legend, to commemorate the city god’s birthday, people wipe their cheeks with mud, pat their chests, clap their hands, and revel on the street as they imitate the small ghosts to celebrate (Editorial Committee of Traditional Sports of China’s Minority Groups, 2017). In accordance with the memories of the elderly Pan Zhaocheng, Mou Laixiang, who lived in the townships of Lichuan County, it was common to

see beggars on the street with their faces, hands, and heads covered in mud. These beggars would perform on the onlookers by using their hand palms to pat every part of their body to make rhythmic, energizing sounds (Wang, 2006). Zuo (2007) believes that “Roulianxiang” differs from other Tujia traditional dances and has roots in the Tujia military dance of the past. Wu Xiufu, a Tujia elder, played a crucial role in finalizing the current dance form in the 1980s (Wu, 2015). He revolutionized “Roulianxiang” by combining performance with fitness and entertainment. This innovative approach gave a new meaning to the dance, introducing diverse body positions to relax and activate muscles, and ultimately turning it into a dance similar to aerobics. Through inheritance, the dance form retains its most primitive characteristics of patting the body, and with the rhythmic movement and melodious singing, Despite various interpretations, the traditional dance's straightforward expression of emotion provides an invigorating and pleasurable experience for participants and spectators alike. Wu Xiufu's apprentice, Liu Shouhong, then actively promoted the traditional dance into a fitness dance in schools, the police, communities, villages, professional teams, and so on. His performances have been played on many digital platforms to introduce "Roulianxiang" and spread the culture of the Tujia minority group widely.

Through an interview with Liu Shouhong, the author explores the creation of atmosphere during performances based on the master's personal experience and inheritance. Simultaneously, combining the author's own experiences of observing the performance, using the the perception in the aesthetics of atmosphere to analyzed authenticity from practical experience, and proposed the point of view that atmosphere as a medium can communicate the core of culture.

### **Communication of Atmosphere**

The German philosopher Gernot Böhme (2016), starting from phenomenology and using the philosophy of the body as a basis, defined “atmosphere” as an aesthetic concept and an object of cognition, which he considered to be a space of mood between subject and object, co-constructed by various attributes and characteristics. The atmosphere studied by Böhme is based on Schmidt's definition of “atmosphere” (2019), which stresses its spatial properties and sees it as being affixed to the object like a halo, while Böhme(2016) argues that atmosphere is instead produced by people, objects, or a combination of the two rather than being either subjective or objective. When objects convey their presence, the atmosphere belongs to those objects, and when people's presence is what causes an atmosphere to be felt, the atmosphere belongs to the subject. Böhme proposes the possibility of making atmosphere and emphasizes the embodiment of atmosphere in various types of practical knowledge in his theories, which address both the subject and the object of perception. Applying this concept to the field of communication, aesthetic products are not only the makers of atmosphere, but also the disseminators of information in the process of cultural communication. Through different materials and based on different practical knowledge, it is possible to create a specific atmosphere for the corresponding content and disseminate the cultural connotation.

According to McLuhan (1994), everything in the world can be a medium or has the potential to be a medium. This means that the content carried by any medium always refers to other types of mediums and that the medium itself is the message. He argues that the medium itself is the message, independent of the content it conveys. McLuhan also suggests that media are extensions of ourselves, enhancing human capabilities and broadening our field of perception. Media are an externalization of the organs that enable people to broaden their field of perception and provide the motivation for the development of human society. By

considering the atmosphere as an extension of our senses, we can understand its potential role in communication. McLuhan's theory of media offers the possibility of applying atmosphere in communication. Communication of atmosphere considers the things or the activities in which human beings are involved as communicators, and the atmosphere emanating from the activities and products is the medium through which the cultural content is communicated. The audience actively perceives people, things and environment, which means that the audience participates spontaneously in the cultural activity, thus completing the process of transmission of information.

In this study, the folk dance "Roulianxiang" serves as the subject of analysis. Communication of atmosphere is related to the authenticity that is experienced by people, which can be separated into the making of atmosphere and the perception of the audience. The author aims to understand the process of creating an atmosphere for participants and the relationship between the perceived atmosphere and the authenticity experienced by the audience.

### **The Making of Atmospheres**

The ability of participants' expression is a key component of making atmospheres for folk dance, which entails performers progressing from studying to practicing and from understanding to producing. Through a performance, the performer communicates to the audience the connotations of traditional culture and emotions. With the help of Böhme's theory, this content is divided into facial expressions, costumes, and stage design.

In traditional physiognomy, an internal and external dichotomy is often reflected, as Hegel (2018) defines physiognomy: "The body is an outer sign of an individual's inner life. Indeed, since we cannot literally peer inside the mind of a person, we rely on the body and its activity (facial expressions, speech, and so on)." Liu Shouhong himself is a native of Lichuan, so he is full of love for this land, for the Tujia people living here, and for the traditional Tujia culture. This is also reflected in his performance, where Liu Shouhong carried out the dance performance with big smiles and exaggerated facial expressions, using energetic movement and delivering a cheerful atmosphere throughout. The new physiognomy proposed by Böhme(2018) argues that physiognomy is not only an interpretation of a person's inner nature, but also the relationship between external features and effects from the atmosphere. Physiognomy enables the audience to perceive the presence of a particular character, through the person's external facial features, facial expressions, and even postures. "In the performing arts, knowledge of physiognomy is intentionally set in. Features are presented to the stage through 'character masks', and emotions and moods become clearly understood through behavior and gestures." It's hard to say that all of Liu's apprentices have the same affection as their master, however, they are just to be grasped as something generated, and they allow a certain character to be felt in the phenomenon. In the process of the performance, the performer's purpose is to show traditional Tujia culture and convey a mood of joy, so that audiences can feel the performers' characters and can still learn some authentic information.

In the aesthetics of atmosphere, the thing and its ecstasies mean "In this way the thing is not thought of in terms of its difference from other things, its separation and unity, but in the ways in which it goes forth from itself." (Böhme, 1993) At this time, the object refers to the unique atmosphere formed by its divergence and penetration. The traditional costumes which are dressed by the body of performers with their dance movements show a certain state of objects to the surrounding environment, which belongs to the thing itself, and affect the surrounding environment in a specific way, and then is perceived by the audience.



Goethe's theory of colors deals with the "sinnlich-sittliche effect of color" which is interpreted by Böhme(2016) as the material has a certain atmosphere belonging to a certain way of life, which means that the material has social characteristics. The traditional minority costumes worn by the dancers are made up of bright colors such as red and yellow, using plain and rough materials and unique patterns from the Tujia people. The colors of red and yellow, especially in Chinese society, symbolize warmth and passion, which help to enrich people's feelings through the communication of emotions. The costumes play a significant roles not only due to the color, but also because of the performers' movements. The sounds made by patting the body, snapping fingers, or wearing hand or foot bells are used instead of beats to inspire people and cheer up their emotions. The participant's dance movements take the material, clothing, out of its innate properties and make its presence palpable, This trait is perceived by people through the atmosphere, contributing to their experience and feeling. "Aesthetic work consists of giving things, environments or also the human being such properties from which something can proceed. That is, a question of 'making' atmospheres through work on an object." (Böhme, 1993) Folk dance is the expression of the characteristics and traditions through the unique costumes, accessories and props worn by the body. Although these performers sometimes need to complete more than one performance a day, as long as they mobilize their emotions and actively participate in this process, mechanical repetition can also spread their emotions. On the one hand, the atmosphere is generated based on materials, including the color of the costume and the sound made by accessories. On the other hand, dance movements bring out the thing's ecstasies, and communicate an atmosphere that carries the performer's emotion.

In the aesthetics of production, the atmosphere is made through stage design. Böhme (2016) suggests that the work of aesthetics lies in the making of atmosphere and argues that there is a knowledge of atmosphere in the practical knowledge that scholars cannot explained by traditional aesthetic theory. The essence of folk performance is actually to stage people's daily lives and make them more dramatic, in which the role played by stage design is not only to shape the stage space, but also the appreciation of daily life. So that the events occurring on the stage in a special light are revealed, along with the rendering of the sound effect. The art of stage design is not only limited to the stage itself, but also spread to the audience and the entire space. The space of sound and light created puts everyone in it, and this type of shaped mood space is exactly what the atmosphere is.

In the performance of "Roulianxiang", Liu Shouhong mainly mentions three design spaces: a kindergarten, tourist attractions and well-prepared stages. Most of the performance is aimed at daily life, including communities, villages, campuses and so on. Regardless of where as long as the music and participants are in place, then the place becomes the stage, and these different scenes also make their own space to generate atmosphere.

These three stages have different designs and equipment, but light and music both play an important role in making atmosphere. In the kindergarten managed by Liu Shouhong, through the combination of light and sound, the playground is transformed into a stage, where the light and sound create a scene for the performance. The light for the outdoor playground does not only illuminate, it gives the place a lively atmosphere for all the people in the space. Children will understand that light and music illustrate the atmosphere in which the performance is about to begin, representing their awareness of the changing use of the space they are in. Tenglong Cave is an important tourist attraction in Lichuan City, reflecting the characteristics of the Tujia people's living area. Inside the cave, there is the largest original cave theater in China, where songs and dances are performed every day, showing the

hardships and difficulties experienced by the Tujia ancestors during their migration, and “Roulianxiang” is one of the parts. The space and facilities in the cave are covered by light and sound, which creates a deep, ancient and mysterious atmosphere, mobilizing the audience's emotions. The combination of song, dance and light makes the stage space extend from the scene itself to the audience and expand to the cave, which will also make more visitors hear the sound and see the light from afar, and be attracted by the atmosphere. “Roulianxiang” on well-prepared stages is always a complete set of choreographed programs, with dialogue or drum beats or music, and some requiring the performers to shout loudly. The sound and light effects are far superior than the previous stage designs, it is not just the actual space, but has various forms of extension into the audience. Stage design not only allows the audience to see the program, but also creates a suitable atmosphere for the program through the co-maker of various elements on the stage. The elements that make up a stage do not act as symbols referring to that scene, but directly create it (Böhme, 2018). The atmosphere created on stage is even more inseparable from the role of sound and light, which is simpler and more direct in the process of communicating cultural content, and more superficial to the audience.

As Böhme (2018) puts it, “A public circle that is supposed to experience this stage in almost the same way must have a certain homogeneity, must be culturally socialized into certain definite ways of perceiving.” The significance of these stages is to help the stage construct a cultural image belonging to the Tujia people, which tells the origin of the Tujia people's suffering and proves the hardship of the environment in which the Tujia ancestors lived and how this culture developed, so that the audience can get more empathy. This atmosphere is mutually understood by the audience, which means, each audience can get similar feelings in this scene. People can enjoy the charm of Tujia songs and dances, the atmosphere is sometimes warm and strong, sometimes cold and sad, which shows that the atmosphere is transformed through the joint effect of sound and light in the stage design practice. “Roulianxiang” in the real scene is particularly different from other performances, due to the special mood obtained in this atmosphere from other performers, the performer's mood is also more impassioned and excited. In the background of Tujia culture, the atmosphere conveyed by the cultural content has been further deepened.

Through the comparison of these three stages, it is easy to realize that the essence of “Roulianxiang” lies in the fact that each stage is constructed through the sound made by the performers' patting their bodies, the physical presence of the performers in the space creates a rough, strong, courageous and joyful atmosphere. Performances in kindergarten are the closest to the original meaning of dance. The atmosphere reproduced is the most reductive; The performances in the real scene, together with other folk performances, shape the cultural meaning behind them, creating and restoring the scenes of the primitive life of the Tujia ancestors; The well-prepared performances are out of the original environment, and face a variety of different cultural backgrounds, as well as those who have no knowledge of “Roulianxiang”, or even the Tujia culture, the use of sounds and lighting attract people and make them feel the mood in the atmosphere. Therefore, the making of atmosphere in folk dance performance is not only to restore the scene of folk events, but also to re-understand and re-interpretation of folk culture. The atmosphere as a kind of media made by performance and transmits to the audience is a dispensable part of the communication.

## The Perception of the Audience

In aesthetics of reception, atmosphere is seen as a phenomenon, that is given to the subject as an invasive force, and which has the tendency to bring the subject into a certain characteristic mood (Böhme, 2018). There are two ways for the audience to perceive the atmosphere: the first is the awareness of the presence of oneself, that is, people and things are experienced in the same space; The second is synesthesia. In the perception of atmosphere, synesthesia is not individual sensory characteristics, but due to the perception of the whole space formed in the place, and depends on people's own cultural environment and social common cognition. In the folk dance performance, the social common cognition of folk culture lies in the affirmation of the traditional cultural values and the enhancement of emotional identity.

Atmosphere is the common reality of the perceiver and the perceived. It is the reality of the perceived as the sphere of its presence and the reality of the perceiver, insofar as in sensing the atmosphere he/she is bodily present in a certain way. (Böhme, 1993)

As mentioned above, “the thing and its ecstasies” makes the object not to be confined to the object itself, and the atmosphere it produces can be dispersed and permeated outwards, forming a field of presence, which also emphasizes the presence of the body in the aesthetic activity. On the one hand, it shows the importance of the body as a whole, and on the other hand, it means the change of the body's position in the environment. The perception of aesthetic experience not only refers to the use of the five senses to experience, but also the use of people's whole body as perception. The presence of the body means that the relationship between the body and the environment is constructed, and it is a multi-dimensional perception that is formed by people who obtain emotion through the touching from the performance so as to realize their existence in the space, and realize the holistic grasp of the environment. This perception transcends physiology and emotion, and is integrated and unified.

In performances of “Roulianxiang”, there are two types of audience, traditional audience and passing audience. Traditional audiences usually have a prepared participation. Before the performance, the space depicts the life of the Tujia ancestors, psychologically and emotionally constructs the audience's understanding of and identification with the folk culture, which makes it possible to complete the presence of the body in the process of the performance. While the presence of the passing audience is involved, the audience as the subject of perception can be involved in it selectively, including the encounter with “the thing and its ecstasies”. People may be attracted by the atmosphere, stop to watch or get closer to appreciate, which is a kind of autonomous behavior of presence, which means that people themselves choose to stay in the atmosphere for aesthetic perception. For example, in the community or various activities of flashmob, community residents or passersby will change their original behavioral activities due to the perception of the atmosphere. The perception of the atmosphere requires the presence of the subject, and presence does not only refer to auditory and visual perception, but also to the changes made by the body in the environment, which embodies the relational construction formed by the complete process of perception.

The multi-sensory participation in the perception of atmosphere is known as “synesthesia”. In this way, the synesthesia of the atmosphere is a condition for the presence of the subject. This means that the atmosphere itself is a holistic phenomenon, not just a superimposition of elements, but shaped by the concrete things in the space (Wu, 2019). The same is happening with the perception of man as a subject, while different senses act simultaneously: hearing

sounds, seeing colors, smelling, but not only limited to this, it is a total immersion experience while receiving a variety of information. Just as Liu Shouhong connects folk beliefs with “Roulianxiang” in the interview, he believes that a certain sense of mystery needs to be maintained in the presentation of the performance, but the audience should not be deprived of the ability to decipher it. The sense of mystery comes from a space which is a co-construction of objects, space, sound and light, where the audiences are. The audiences use sight and sound in the ontological sense, as well as utilize synesthesia and the subject's emotional involvement to gain presence. So the making of atmosphere in this performance involves spirits and emotions. Synesthesia makes the audiences emotionally moved when they see the light and hear the sound, and only at this time can the atmosphere extend to the space where the subject is located and gain awareness of the body. In short, synesthesia makes the physical presence of the subject be detected, which invites the audiences stay in the space where the atmosphere is generated by sound and light, and obtains the spatial presence through physical awareness and emotional resonance.

### **Authenticity and Atmosphere**

MacCannell (1973) first introduces the concept of authenticity to sociological studies. Ning (1999) based on previous research then classified authenticity into three different types: objective authenticity, constructive authenticity and existential authenticity. Objective authenticity is museum-orientated authenticity which is determined by true value of objects by experts (Zhu, 2012). Constructive authenticity illustrates the meanings that are an interpretation of a social construct that can observe the authenticity of things (Reisinger & Steiner, 2006). Existential authenticity as activity-related authenticity, refers to judgment by tourists themselves according to their experiences. People can feel that they are involved in the heritages or attractions which is their own world instead of being confirmed by others. This means that tourists or visitors can gain their own entertainment, relaxation, and recreation during tourism. It also links the authenticity for people to share their experience with others and get cultural exchange in order to build an emotional interaction between others. Communication makes it easier for tourists to make new friends when sharing experiences in the same place (Bruner, 1994). Authenticity not only relies on those toured objects that are judged by experts or have their meanings by people's expectations, but also reflects on the experience both from people's bodies and minds to get pleasure during the process of sharing and communicating. Adams (1996) concluded that both culture and authenticity are constructed by people through their experiences. This authenticity mainly depends on the beliefs, power, preferences, and expectations towards the objects recognized by people. So, the concept of authenticity should be used in cultural discussions, where it is certainly associated with the participants in the culture. Folk dance performances are often questioned: whether the performers actually understand the folk culture, whether this type of mechanical repetition loses its own meaning, and whether the meaning gained by the audience changes, when such performances are no longer a part of their lives but are performed. And atmosphere seems to answer these questions. When the atmosphere is perceived by both the participants and the audience in the process, existential authenticity emerges, and the meaning emerges as well.

During the interview with Liu Shouhong, he talked about whether children could understand the cultural content of this folk dance. Liu believes that in kindergarten, initially children only follow the teacher to imitate the movement, and will not involve more cultural connotations, but the emotions are able to be perceived, and as the child grows up will slowly understand the cultural content of the Tujia minority group. Just as the aesthetics of atmosphere

considers the knowledge of aesthetic practice to be a kind of “knowledge without words” (Böhme, 2018). The communication of such knowledge relies on the transmission between master and apprentice by their bodies, and the lack of explicit knowledge does not prevent the atmosphere from being made in practice. Liu Shouhong mentioned an impressive example, he saw parents sharing a video of their children performing “Roulianxiang” on a social medium, and the words mentioned that the children shared their happy feelings with their parents during the performance. In the comments, many parents have shared similar experiences. It shows that even though there may be a lack of understanding of the culture, the communication between masters and apprentices at the practical level can still complete the expression of their own emotions, and at the same time complete the making and perceive the atmosphere. They have already touched the core of this primitive art form, the expression of an emotion. This kind of knowledge about the atmosphere will not be passed on directly through the master's description, but is a kind of “knowledge without words” (Böhme, 2018). The process of inheriting folk dance involves the communication of atmosphere, without a detailed explanation in words, students can obtain the emotions and feelings through the atmosphere created by the master. This also shows that the inheritance and performance of “Roulianxiang” can form an atmosphere for learners, performers and audiences, and build a kind of existential authenticity, which answers the questions above and becomes the new way to preserve folk culture.

## **Conclusion**

The process of communication of atmosphere in folk dance “Roulianxiang” refers to the atmosphere made by the performers together with the space constructed by sound and light, through which the emotion of the dance is conveyed to further the understanding of the cultural content, and people become the authentic audiences of the information when they obtain the emotional resonance through the presence and synesthesia. Through atmosphere, people share and gain existential authenticity, providing a whole new way of understanding folk dance performance and folk culture. People can comprehend value through the atmosphere without words, which provides support for today's folk performances.

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***Promoting Whistle-Blower Engagement:  
Fostering a Culture of Fearless Reporting for Staff to Uncover Irregularities***

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**Abstract**

This research focuses on the concept of whistle-blower activity and proposes methods to encourage staff members of companies to report irregularities without fear of facing negative consequences. Whistleblowing plays a crucial role in preventing and exposing wrongdoing, safeguarding the public interest, and upholding accountability and integrity across sectors. However, whistle-blowers often face significant personal and professional risks when speaking up. The findings highlight several strategies that boards can employ to promote whistle-blower engagement. Firstly, implementing robust hotline regulations can provide a structured and confidential reporting channel for employees. Additionally, boards must ensure effective management of the whistleblowing process, adhering to established guidelines and protocols. Establishing an independent internal team to handle whistle-blower reports, in collaboration with the hotline committee, can enhance transparency and impartiality. Moreover, organizations should adopt a comprehensive whistleblowing approach by establishing a secure safety hotline. This enables employees and others within the organization to confidentially report any suspected wrongdoing through various communication channels while ensuring the protection of their personal information and allegations. The collected data can then be shared with relevant individuals within the firm for appropriate follow-up actions. By implementing these measures, organizations can foster a culture that encourages staff members to report irregularities they are aware of, thereby mitigating the fear of repercussions and promoting a proactive approach to addressing wrongdoing. Ultimately, this research underscores the importance of creating an environment that values and protects whistle-blowers, reinforcing the principles of accountability and integrity in both the public and private sectors.

Keywords: Whistleblowing, Wrongdoing, Protection, Accountability, Integrity, Reporting Mechanisms, Safety Hotline, Regulatory Guidelines, International Regulations, Awareness Campaigns, Transparency

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## Introduction

In facts, the whistle-blowers uncover data to their environment administrators work, to the relevant authorities, or to the public that can shed light on corruption, fraud, mismanagement, oppression, discrimination, and other wrongdoing that concerns or threatens the public interest in areas as assorted as guaranteeing rule of law, respect for human rights, financial integrity, proper use of public funds, accountability of public governance and services, or promoting clean business environment (Department for Business Innovation & Skills, 2015).

Whistleblowing is one of the foremost compelling ways of stopping and avoiding the wrongdoing from happening or revealing it, if already took place. Indeed, generally, whistle-blowers who talk up frequently do so at high individual hazard, and they ordinarily endure an awesome proficient and individual fetched as a result. Even, whistleblowing is significant for protecting the public interest, and for maintaining accountability and integrity in both the public and private sectors.

Although, the whistle-blower might need to confront are multifaceted, they nearly continuously begin at workplace, and connected with to the employees' who working on several conditions (European Free Alliance in the European Parliament, 2016): without secure channels of detailing, while labourer isn't engaged to guarantee justice and impact changed for their workplace. The assurance of working conditions could be identified as a key of administrative area, where US and EU activity is both essential and conceivable to successfully guarantee security for whistle-blowers. Therefore, without whistle-blowers, the Panama Papers would not have been conceived.

### The Meaning of “Whistle-Blower Activity”

Whistleblowing is most effective with the reliability of the company; besides, it comes from the company where wrongdoing activities have been occurred at that time which is reason for corruption that will happen with public and private sectors. Also, some of the countries, they were considered about the rate of corruption in those country, where it can be impacted with economic growth, social and reliability of the country. For example, the government was established anti-corruption organization and formulation of anti-corruption policies, therefore, it created the awareness to people and law enforcement (Omotoye, A. M., 2017).

Whistleblowing is early cautioning framework to turn away conceivable risk to the company. A positive whistleblowing is basic component in the achievement of any hazard framework. (Corruption Watch Organization, 2015) The exactly meaning of Whistleblowing might be the disclosure of information about perceived wrongdoing in an organization, or the risk thereof, to individuals or entities believed to be able to effect action (Anja Osterhaus, 2009).

The enactment of US Whistle-blowing Act is the one of elements solving of problem from the corruption in country. According to the Afro barometer (2015), who demonstrated the impact of corruption which have several ways for influencing the supply and demand of product and services, so it can be directly affected the price and quality of living. Moreover, the absence of company transparency and accountability can affect with straight with the investors then it will make economic slump and hinders effective with management for the organization. In the result, whistleblowing strategy can help to protect the investors also adjust the corruption problem (James Gerard Caillier, 2016).

Reputed the whistle blowing article which they have given the definition as immoral or illegitimate practices activities of the organization that exposure from the employee. Likewise, the act of

disclosure on various articles said the misconduct allegation of organization activity meanwhile prevent the person who was the “whistleblowing” forasmuch against sanctions from stakeholders of the organization (David Banisar, 2011).

The ‘Strong whistleblowing’ focused on the process of disclosure exact information of organization report which affects the decision of investors who would like to invest the organization business. Consequently, the laws or policies of whistleblowing activity can be explained as follows.

- (1) Cause of wrongdoings action?
- (2) Disclosures information demonstrated initial and subsequent
- (3) Investigated person and process of wrongdoings action
- (4) Protection person who is the whistle-blower
- (5) Procedure of consultation whistleblowing activity and report to organization profile (Marit Skivenes, 2010)

Additionally, whistleblowing comes from person who is identified as employee, contractor, stakeholders, or supplier, which includes the person from outside that receives the information about the misconduct of the organization. From my perspective, this organization is very large scale when they are facing with the problem of rumours situation, which will make the organization lose some business opportunity. While it will directly affect the shareholders and employees. In this case, the problem irregular of contracts is significant with the organization reliability in both the US and EU respectively.

According to the US Whistle-blower Protection Act, also protected disclosures person who is a whistle-blower, so whistle-blower activity can define as the disclosure such as gross mismanagement, the violation of law, rule, or regulation. For example, the violation cases of Michigan-based United States Financial Services LLC (USFS) that failed to comply with the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) of US where assent to settle \$48 million to the U.S. government also the whistle-blowers who disclose the information will get the reward between 15% and 30% of the total (Whistleblower News Review, 2017).

For my advice, in this situation, the committees of the organization should solve the problem immediately by cooperate internal auditor to find the right document from financial and accounting departments when they cannot solve the problem for summarizing into the Internal Control Report.

### **International Regulation of Whistleblowing**

The whistleblowing programs for the US was an applicable law for instance Sarbanes Oxley Act of 2002 (“SOX”), Securities and Exchange Commission (“SEC”) and stock exchange regulations. Therefore, the US has required audit committees that listed on the stock exchange. The US will get a confidentiality agreement to protect the employees by anonymous submission. Moreover, the US has considerable of whistle-blower protection laws on both of sections included in federal and state level which covering the diversity sections. Besides, for whistleblowing programs at the federal level was encouraging employees to disclose mismanagement of organization by providing monetary awards to the person who claims successfully. In contrast, some of the laws have consisted of the sanctions to against the person who frivolous the benefit from the whistleblowing (World Law Group, 2016).

Explanation to the Legal Protections for Whistle-Blowers of US as followings:

- False Claims Act was known as fraudulent, which is the false that have an association with government contracts or programs thus the company must pay compensation to the

government. Likewise, this act was including a reward for the person who is a whistle-blower, generally between 15 and 25 percent.

- Sarbanes-Oxley Act or Corporate and Criminal Fraud Accountability Act of 2002, which assists employees who suffered from whistleblowing, for example, the employer cancelled contract by without any reason. Thereby, this act will protect the quality of life of whistle-blower under this statute have 180 days of complaint handling with Department of Labour.
- Dodd Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act included the regulation of financial institutions in the US also the objective of restoring public confidence in terms of improving the performance of the financial system. Thus, under the regulation of this act also included the reward for the person who is whistle-blowers 10 to 30 percent.
- Defend Trade Secrets Act of 2016, which is primarily provided federal jurisdiction for the judge of trade secrets case. Therefore, for the disclosure whistleblowing will follow the regulation under the federal trade secret law.

For the establishment, a whistle-blower program in the organization has not asked the permission from government agency under the statute of SOX. In contrast, US has the agencies to support and advice about the program, for instance, Federal Trade Commission (FTC), the SEC, the state lawyers have the authority to regulate the national securities exchanges to protect the investors forasmuch the US did not have the Data Protection Authority (OECD, 2014).

We can summarize that the requirements of operating a whistle-blower programme in the US by whistle-blower must prepare the evident for example document, financial report, photography, etc. to inform disclose about mismanagement of the organization. Under the US Exchange Act Rule 21F-9, the whistle-blowers can use the online portal to submit evidence to the system called Tips, Complaints or Referrals (TCR) System or they can send the email directly to the Office of the Whistle-blower (OWB), which is helping to support people who cannot access an online platform.

### **Conclusion: Results and Finding**

As the main point of whistle-blower play role is uncovering corruption, fraud, fumble, and other wrongdoing that debilitate public interest, financial integrity, human rights, and the rule of law, etc. The nonattendance of compelling protection can posture a dilemma for whistle-blowers: they are regularly anticipated to report corruption and other wrongdoings but doing so can expose them to striking back.

Most of the international whistle-blower laws were protected the disclosure in other to encourage people brave to disclosure about corruption and mismanagement of the company. Some of the whistle-blower laws will protect only the person who is an employee of the company, in contrast, some of the law was expanded to outsiders' person for example temporary staff or external consultants. In addition, to avoid 'loopholes' of whistle-blower laws also promote the stakeholders to disclosure information (Marcia P Miceli, 2012).

The EU whistle-blower laws have the section on Art. 4(2)(b) supplementary with Art. 151 and 153(2)(b), the sentence was encouraged to protect the whistleblowing also included protecting them while working at the organization. Meanwhile, under the European Commission to stimulate the strongest protections procedure which can protect the whistleblowing from a fundamental right. Besides, from the Art. 151 and 153(2)(b), TFEU have the significant whistleblowing protection on the section of other for increasing the reliability of legal protection and improve the performance of the organization and reduce the percentage of corruption issues.

Furthermore, if the whistle-blower wants to disclosure the person who takes high position, for instance, chief executive, director, politician, and auditor-general thus, they can disclosure within clandestine process at jurisdictions of organization area, which can assist to protect against the deleterious situation that will happen with the whistle-blower (Leslie Berger, 2017).

The US have the regulation that protects whistle-blowers such as Employee Protections Under the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, New Employee Protections Under Dodd-Frank Act and Extraterritorial Application of Whistle-blower Protections etc. which can assist to increase the confident of whistle-blowers for disclosure. Moreover, the whistle-blower wants to claim the award of whistleblowing procedure which they must contact the SEC within 90 days. Under the regulation of the SEC when the process was finished then the whistle-blower must fill the form name WB-APP to claim the reward if, claimant's explanation more than 90 days they cannot claim the reward with SEC except under the Rule 21F-8(a) there are reasonably accepted from SEC (Marshall, D. J, 2017).

In my perspective, the board can encourage the members to report the irregularities by follow the hotline regulation. Then the board must ensure to manage of whistleblowing was follow all the instruction. After that, establish an independent internal team to do the reports with the committee from the hotline, if the situation of irregularities and carrying serious the report will be transmitted outside the EU on the other hand the working party found less serious situation then will handle in the EU.

Furthermore, the organizations successfully must have a whistle-blowing approach by setting up a safety hotline, whereby in case there are employees or others within the organization who think there's a few wrongdoings, that be able make by various communication in safety to protect their information personal and charges which data is at that point communicated to people inside the firm that take after up on this.

Regarding to the good practice of whistle-blower for making employees to do without fear, the company might be encouraged by following the whistle-blower step of OECD guidelines, its global practice. By providing information and must training to employees includes, how to protection their information, among of remedies to punishment, provides of incentives to encourage reporting, and most important, whistle-blower protection cannot be effectively implemented without raising awareness, strengthening communication and training.

Besides, huge point to work whistleblowing hotlines in US and EU workforce. This ought to be of little solace to organization working different sorts of hotline. For their consistence frameworks to acclimate of EU and US information assurance standards, associations ought to do and regard following (Thomson Reuters Practical Law, 2015):

Processing is important for consistence legitimate commitment to information controller is liable to consent to the arrangements of SOX or other enactment requiring the foundation of whistleblowing hotlines.

- Use of information quality and proportionality standards, to restrain both the quantity of people qualified for report claimed indecencies and the number who may be implicated through their utilization.
- Reporting by a named basic, not urge workers to submit unknown reports.
- Confinement of data gave through the whistleblowing plan, and provision of data about the whistleblowing plan.

- Provided Rights of implicated people. Adjusting individual privileges of the individual implicated, the Whistle-blower and organization's honest to goodness investigative requirements. Especially, Security of handling activities.
- Processing of personal data protection must apply appropriate technical and organisational measures to keep any personal data that has been gathered through whistleblowing hotline secure. (Robbie Downing, 2017) For blowing to whistle on hotline, the company shall be providing.
  - I. Provide all staffs with information regarding: the scope of the hotline, how it should be used, and the handling complaints, including any rights that they may have in, and to, the data.
  - II. Remind employees those other complaints mechanisms may exist, which they may prefer uses.
  - III. Implement stringent data-processing contracts whenever any third-party service provider helps to operate the hotline.
  - IV. Require strict confidentiality agreement with all employees who handle complaint data on regular basis, or who assist in operation of whistleblowing scheme.

Even organisations that adopt all these measures may still be subject to the scrutiny of EU data protection regulators. Following recent developments, risks associated with operating compliance hotlines in the EU remain difficult to quantify.

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## *A Computer Aided Generative System for Polish Traditional Tilings Design*

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### **Abstract**

Decorative tilework, known also as tile art, dates back thousands of years. Different types of tiles decorate the world's oldest temples and mausoleums with precise details and eye-catching colors. They are clearly distinctive from mosaic art, which is based on the use of a huge amount of, usually small, irregular elements. In the case of tiling, the elements used are usually larger and much more regular, they can consist of a certain number of tiles or just one. While popular in many cultures, specific tiling patterns with distinctive features developed separately in different parts of the world. During the interwar period in Poland (1918-1939) a distinctive type of tiles called “corset” became very popular. Corsets arranged in intricate patterns form elegant tileworks. The aim of our research is using modern technology to help preserving this unique cultural heritage as many original tileworks disappeared as the result of war, postwar rebuilding and modern urban development. In this paper rules of a visual language that can describe specific tiling patterns characteristic for corset tiling are defined. Then, a system for automatic generation of tile pattern designs, which is based on these rules, is proposed. Using this system the user can design corset patterns taking into account historical context, architectural harmony or artistic imagination. We not only want to preserve the living patterns of heritage, but also to propose them as an element of modern interiors, where they can perform a decorative function and beautifully separate functional spaces in modern open-plan apartments.

Keywords: Generative Design, Rule Systems, Polish Heritage

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## Introduction

Decorative tilework, known also as tile art, dates back thousands of years. Tiles decorate the world's oldest temples and mausoleums with precise details and eye-catching colors. Tilework should be clearly distinguished from mosaic art, which is based on the use of a huge amount of, usually small, irregular elements. In the case of tiling, the elements used are usually larger and much more regular, they can consist of a certain number of tiles or just one.

During the interwar period in Poland (1918-1939) a distinctive type of tiles called “corset” (Polish “gorsecik”) became very popular. A corset has a shape of a curvilinear quadrangle with two convex and two concave edges (Fig 1a). Despite this simple form corsets allow for the generation of a large number of patterns (Strug et al. 2018). Two, three or multi-coloured arrangements of corsets, which form stripes, chessboards, crosses, slices, and more complicated designs, frequently occurred on the floors of kitchens, bathrooms, verandas, staircases, in cafes and craft workshops. In Fig1b an example of a possible tilework design is depicted, while in Fig.1c a photograph of a part of tiling of the staircase in a building at Okrag 3 Street in Warsaw is shown.

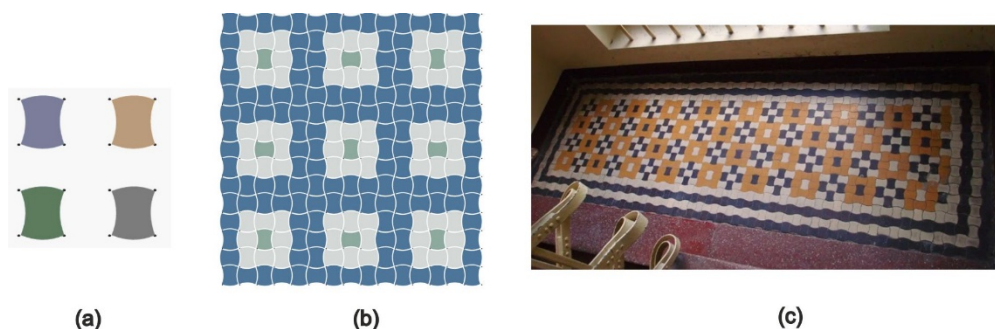
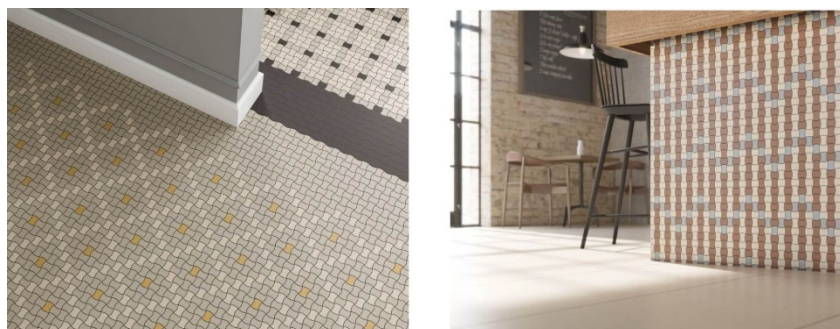


Figure 1: (a) “Corset” tiles in different colours, (b) a tilework pattern, (c) Okrag 3, Warsaw (photo copyright Warszawskie Posadzki)

As the result of war and post-war neglect, and the renovation of old houses, large part of these designs has been either lost or damaged. In recent years there has been a growing interest in saving this part of national culture as well as in adapting it to modern times (Faryna-Paszkiwicz et al., 2013). Inspirations with the aesthetics of the 1920s and 1930s return again in contemporary design of buildings, furniture, and ceramic tiled floors. By adding a bit of modern design to the iconic mosaic shape, we get patterns that can be successfully used in vintage, modernist and modern interiors. Old, renovated tenement houses require interior designers to treat them with sensitivity and respect for the past.

Elegant tileworks arranged in intricate patterns of small "corsets", not only invite interwar design spirit to modern interiors but also can beautifully separate functional spaces. Effective carpet patterns can be conjured up from colorful ceramic "corsets", which originally decorate places with traditions. Corsets in subdued, complementary colors allow for creative interior arrangement experiments. Original tilings will successfully decorate the space of stylish tenement houses as well as common pubs, bars and city restaurant gardens. The universality of tileworks, their technical qualities, durability and excellent quality make them suitable for use in a lot of places where the designer wants to achieve a spectacular aesthetic effect.



Collection „Modernizm” (Fot. Ceramika Paradyż, Materiały prasowe)  
<https://paradyz.pl>

Figure 2: Patterns composed of corsets on a floor of a renovated tenement house and in a pub in Warsaw

The paper presents the process of automatic generation of tile layout patterns design. In the proposed generative system the user can design corset patterns taking into account historical context, architectural harmony or artistic imagination. The analysis of the still existing traditional tilings indicates that they are usually composed of one or two patterns arranged alternatively or repeating in every second row. The most commonly used motifs are of the size 2x2, 3x3, 4x4, or 5x5 and are composed of tiles in various colours. The described system enables the designer to create a motif/ motifs of the chosen size and select the number of rows and columns in which these motifs are to be arranged. After creating motifs the system uses rules that depend on the type of motifs to arrange them on the plane. Designing of motifs which are not rectangular but have rotating symmetry is also possible. For such motifs the designer selects places on the grid composed of corsets, where they should be located. The spaces between the motifs are filled with corsets in the selected color. In this way a great number of different tiling layouts can be obtained, yet preserving the traditional style of Warsaw's flooring designs.

### A Generative System for Tiling Design

A generative system consists of basic shapes, a set of structural schemes for representing potential solutions, and a set of rules for selecting and fitting shapes to schemes. By setting the rules for the arrangement of motifs, the generation system determines a variety of potential solutions for a given design task. In our system there is one basic shape in the form of a corset, which can take various colours. Using this shape different motifs can be created. The structural schemes are specified by determining the number of rows and columns in which motifs should be arranged or by pointing the points on a grid in which motifs are to be located. Rules of fitting shapes are defined by combinations of translations and rotations which allow matching motifs to the schemes.

The process of designing a tilework starts by selecting the size of tile motifs by the user. It can be 2x2, 3x3, 4x4, or 5x5. In the next step the user defines the colour of tiles for one or two motifs of the chosen size and specifies the number of rows and columns in which these motifs are to be arranged. In Fig.3 motifs of different sizes are shown.

Then, the fitting rules for arranging motifs in required way are selected. The rules for fitting motifs are different for motifs with odd and even number of elements. The next motif in the row can be matched to the previous one without rotation or using rotation by 90, 180, 270

degrees for motifs of the size 2x2 and 4x4. For motifs of the size 3x3 or 5x5, the next motif in the row have to be rotated by 90 or 270 degrees. Analogous rules apply when motifs are adjusted in columns. Therefore, when the defined motif with even number of elements is not a symmetrical one, sixteen different patterns composed of this motif can be obtained. In case of motifs with odd number of elements only four different patterns can be generated using the same motif. When rotating motifs, rotation can be applied to the entire motif at once, or all the corsets that the motif consists of can be rotated separately.

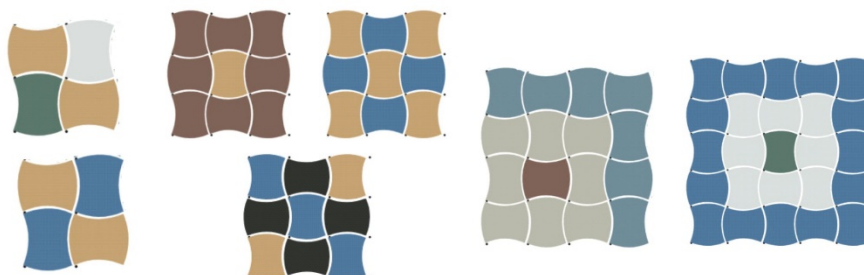


Figure 3: Motifs of sizes 2x2, 3x3, 4x4 and 5x5

Four rules for matching the same motif in a row and in a column are shown in Fig.4. In the rules which add the motif in a row the fitted motif is not rotated or rotated through 90 degrees. In the rules matching motifs in a column the added motif is not rotated or rotated through 270 degrees. Three patterns composed of the same motifs of sizes 5x5, 3x3 and 4x4 and obtained using these rules are presented in Fig.5. In the pattern in Fig. 5a every second motif in a row and in a column is rotated through 90 degrees, in the pattern Fig. 5b only motifs in columns are rotated through 90 degrees, while in the pattern in Fig. 5c the matched motifs are not rotated.

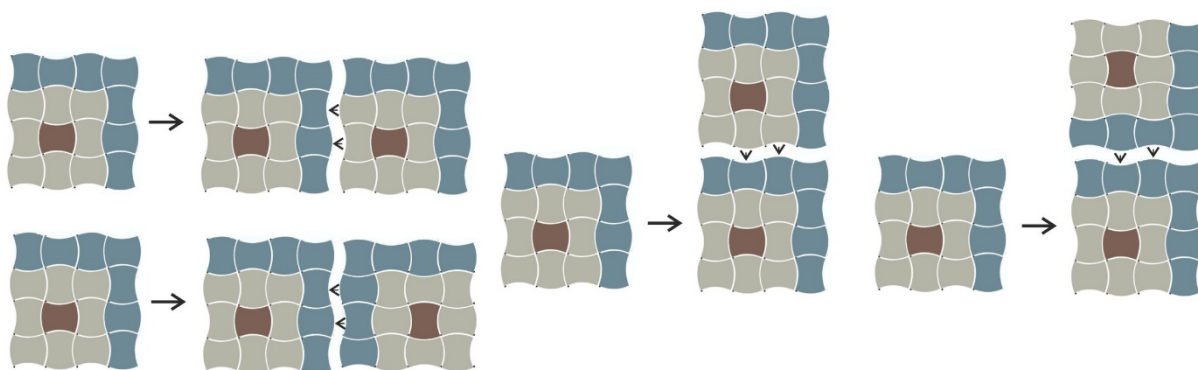


Figure 4: Selected rules for matching motifs in rows and columns

If the patterns composed of two motifs are considered, then motifs in rows are added alternately, and in columns the same motifs can be fitted together or they can be added alternately. The rules for the required angle of rotation for motif matching are the same as for single motif patterns.

Selected rules for matching two motifs of the same size are presented in Fig.6. These rules describe the process of alternately fitting motifs in rows and fitting the same motifs in columns. The motifs in rows and columns can be rotated according to the principles defined above. In Fig.7 four rules of fitting the motifs in columns in the alternate way are shown without rotation or rotated through 90 degrees.



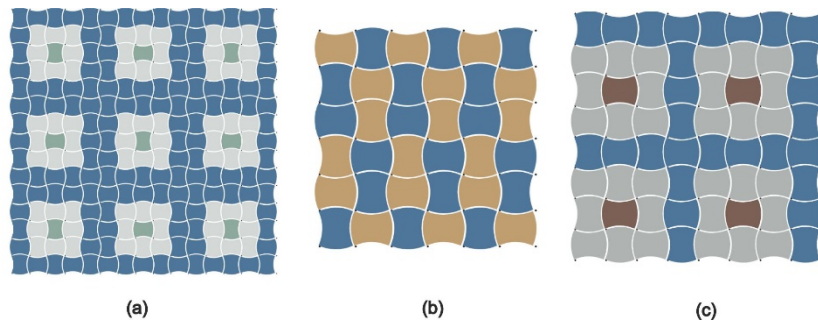


Figure 5: Three patterns composed of the same motifs of sizes 5x5, 3x3 and 4x4

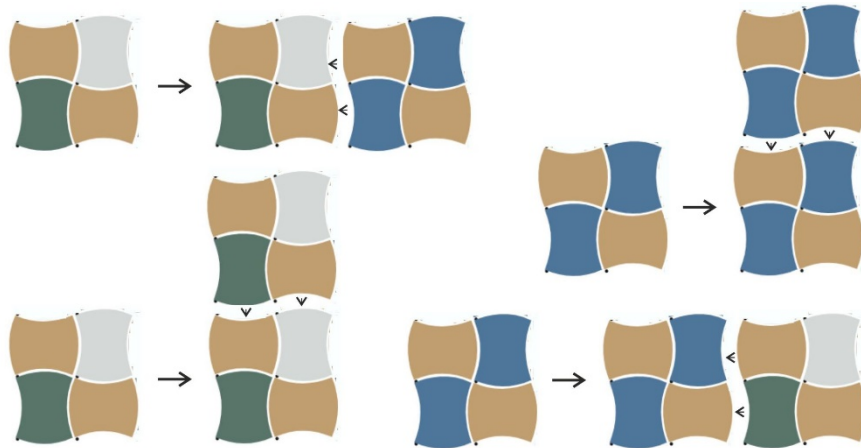


Figure 6: Selected rules for matching two motifs in rows and columns

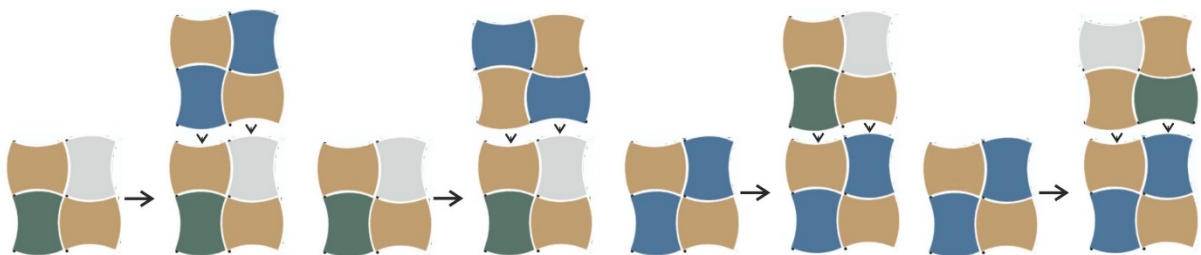


Figure 7: Selected rules for fitting two motifs alternately in columns without rotation or rotated through 90 degrees

Four patterns composed of two tile motifs of sizes 2x2 and 3x3 are shown in Fig. 8. In all these patterns motifs are arranged alternately in rows and columns. In the first and third pattern every second motif up the column is rotated through 90°. In the second pattern motifs are not rotated, while in the fourth one, every second motif up the column is rotated by 270°.

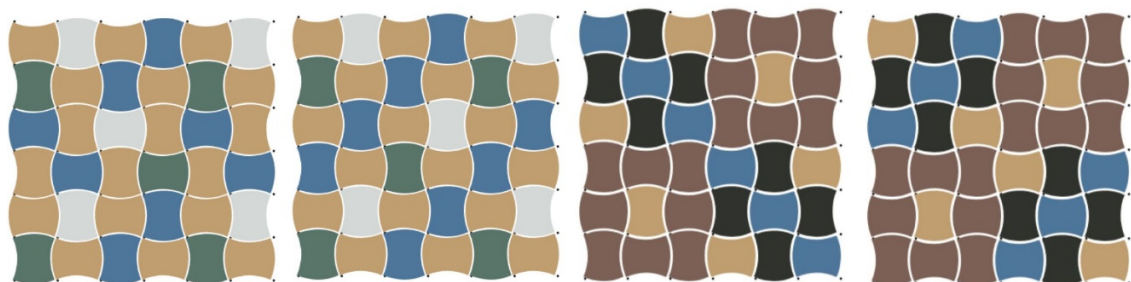


Figure 8: Four patterns composed of two motifs of sizes 2x2 and 3x3, arranged alternately in rows and columns

Another option for creating tileworks is that the designer generates a motif and indicates the places on the grid composed of corsets, where this motif should be located. The spaces between the motifs are filled with corsets in the selected color. In this case the corset grid can be treated as a plane division that becomes a source of inspiration for creating new motifs. An example of a corset grid, a motif and patterns obtained by arranging this motif in marked places is presented in Fig.9. In Fig.9a a corset grid with selected points, where the center of the motif should be placed is shown. In Fig.9a and b a designed motif and pattern obtained by locating it on the grid are depicted. The same pattern after completing it to a square shape and after filling empty places with yellow corsets are illustrated in Figs. 9d and e. The similar pattern obtained as a result of specifying four places for the motif on the grid is shown in Fig. 9f. It should be noted that in this case, as the centres of motifs are located closer in the Fig.9a, the motifs in the second column are rotated through  $90^\circ$ .

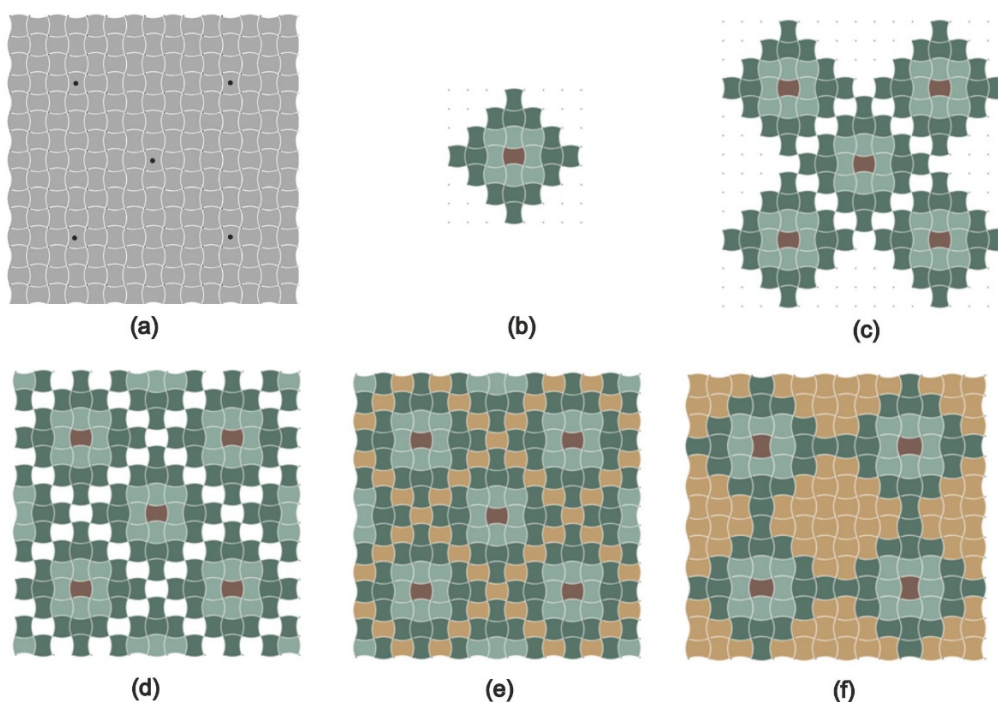


Figure 9: (a) a corset grid with selected locations for motifs, (b) a created motif, (c), (d), (e), (f) patterns obtained by locating a motif in chosen places on the grid

Moreover, the designer can create several motifs with the same shape and combine them to create larger tiles that can be used to fill the plane. Three different motifs and a larger tile composed of them are presented in Fig.10.

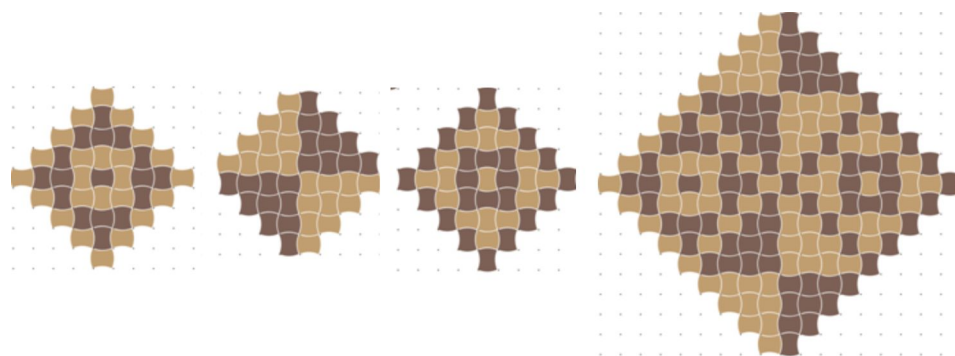


Figure 10: Three corset motif and a tile composed of them

Although traditional Warsaw tilings were created in subdued colors, they can be modernized by introducing corsets in lively colors. An example of a tilework with lively corsets is shown in Fig.11b. Moreover, plane tilings filled by corsets can be based not only on quadrilateral grids but also on triangular grids (Grabska et al. 2001). The example of filling such a grid by two-coloured corsets is shown in Fig.11a. It can be seen that in this case the defined tiles do not fill the whole plane leaving black empty spaces. The emergent black shapes can constitute an inspiration for the designer, who can not only reconstruct the former existing layouts but also create new ones on the basis of the previously existing ones.

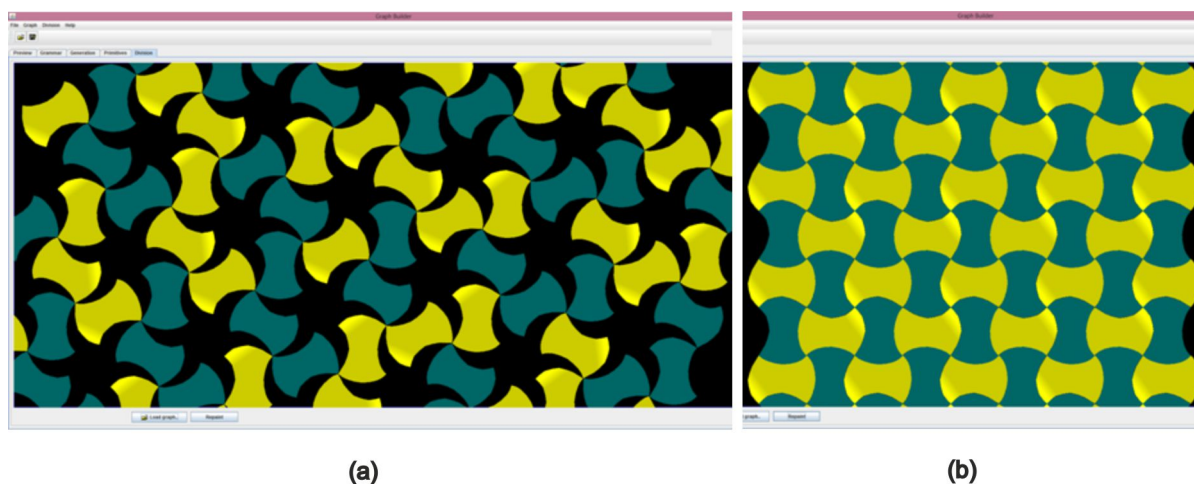


Figure 11: (a) a pattern with emergent stars, (b) a pattern composed of colourful corsets

## Conclusions

In this paper a rule-based approach has been proposed to recreate tile patterns. The system not only allows for reproducing traditional designs but also for producing new designs on the basis on the old ones. Moreover, such a system can assist a designer in the conceptual phase of the design process. The automatic design system can also make designing new patterns much easier and help to maintain their use in different situations, not only for floor tilings but for wall decoration, spaces separation or even patchwork design.

In future we plan to extend the proposed system in two ways. The most obvious direction is to add more rules to allow for different ways of combining shapes. While our research is based on the „corset” shape it is also possible to extend the system by modifying the underlying shape thus obtaining even more variations of tiling patterns.

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***The Influence of Culture in Pattern Wisdom Development Between Praewa Pattern of Phu Tai Ethnic and the Javanese Batik Methods***

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**Abstract**

The traditional textile patterns embody the significant influence of conservative values within local communities, particularly in the context of rural ethnic groups in Southeast Asia. This research aims to study the application of cross-cultural approaches in design, specifically focusing on the contrasting textile cultures of Thailand and Indonesia within the Phu Tai Ethnic group. The research examines the Praewa Queen silk pattern, representing Thai identity, and the methods of Javanese Batik style, representing Indonesian identity, in the development of new pattern designs that align with ethnic wisdom. The research methodology involves experimenting with pattern transformation, combination, and separation between the two targeted objects, both of which share a similar transformation process with different intentions and methods influenced by the local environment and cultural factors. These factors encompass not only ways of life but also the textile culture inherited from ancestors. The research aims to explore the new positioning of pattern art as a prominent aspect of sustainability and heritage preservation within the creative sector. The study's significance lies in maintaining the availability of different design methods applied in diverse ethnic environments. These methods serve as a basis for implementing culture-based design and act as literary sources for cross-cultural research in fabric-related interests. Additionally, the study examines the influence of each wisdom in defining the ways of life of the Phu Tai ethnicity and the Javanese community, particularly in relation to the function, decoration, and new identity of textile design.

Keywords: Pattern, Cross-Culture, Textile, Home Décor

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## Introduction

The development of local wisdom status in the creative industry sector serves as a reference for economic reform, not only in terms of product industrialization but also in preserving the historical heritage inherent in a country. This historical identity and the standards attached to it become an important part of local wisdom (Crilly, 2010). Applying local wisdom in the concept of home décor textiles is a crucial component for embracing architectural imperfections in the interior section (Parmar & Malik, 2007), especially when combining the vast conceptual design of home products with the cultural influences of Thailand and Indonesia. Developing a sustainable design method based on intellectual property and skill development is crucial in facing the challenges posed by multicultural productivity, particularly in the Southeast Asian cultural approach to interior applications like textiles for home decoration products, which play a significant role in interior trends (Tarafder, 2019). Countries that seize the opportunity of historical flexibility in their creative industry development exemplify the concept of empowering traditional concepts, which have had a significant impact (Inglehart and Baker, 2000). The combination of the concept of creative industry development with a focus on sustainability and the integration of national identity, heritage, and locality, such as the practices of the Phu Tai community (Sattaphon, 2007), can be seen as a method that embraces the diversity of historical conflicts and methods applied within the scope of a country's identity (Adrianti & Zainsjah, 2020).

The "Phu Tai" tribe primarily resides in Sakon Nakhon, Nakhon Phanom, Kalasin, Mukdahan, Amnat Charoen, and Yasothon provinces in Northeastern Thailand (Ethnic Group in Thailand Database, 2022). These areas showcase the modernized aspects of Phu Tai culture, particularly in Mukdahan, Mahasarakham, and Nakhon Phanom. In modern applications, the concept combines various patterns and utilizes traditional coloring methods using natural sources. Phu Tai from Kalasin province is renowned for its silk products (Khuenkhaew, 2017), which have distinct styles compared to other ethnic groups. The identity of the queen silk, known as Praewa, is embraced by Phu Tai women as a shoulder cover with a color scheme consisting of red and brown (Upphapong et al., 2013). The intricate patterns are achieved through manual weaving techniques. In contrast, Indonesia is well-known for its batik art, recognized by UNESCO in 2009 as an important intangible cultural heritage. Batik involves a distinct fabric painting process that sets it apart from other forms of textile production. This differs from the method used in creating Praewa patterns. Batik has become a national identity in Indonesia and is chosen as a collaborative pattern design element (Saddhono et al., 2017). The combination of these two textile traditions, Praewa from the Phu Tai tribe and the batik style from Indonesia, brings together unique techniques and cultural elements to create new and innovative designs.

The study aims to explore the influence of local community preferences on the preservation of their way of life, particularly in relation to the preferences of ethnic groups in Thailand and Indonesia. The research focuses on combining different pattern methods to express the significant influence of local community character between Batik as intellectual properties (Burhanuddin et al., 2020) and Praewa as a historical track of wisdom (McIntosh, 2009). These patterns serve as national branding for Praewa and Batik cultures, renowned in Thailand and Indonesia respectively. The research methodology involves conducting experimental methods and analyzing community approaches. A comparison is made between two different methods of pattern combinations. The analysis includes categorizing and comparing natural color sources, drawing from the practical aspects of Batik history, art, and application. This data is then applied to the Praewa combination, utilizing the natural color

sources that outline the element of nature (The Color of Asia, 2013) using materials available in Thailand. The comparison also incorporates synthetic colors, collaboration in design, and considers multicultural influences to explore new possibilities in pattern design methods. The study seeks to position the development of the creative sector by maintaining the ability to approach local wisdom in the application of decoration products. It aims to create new methods and concepts in design that represent cultural identity and legacy, providing a reference for the study of multicultural approaches and their combinations. Overall, the research aims to contribute to the understanding and development of the creative sector, emphasizing the importance of cultural heritage and its role in shaping new identities and possibilities in design.

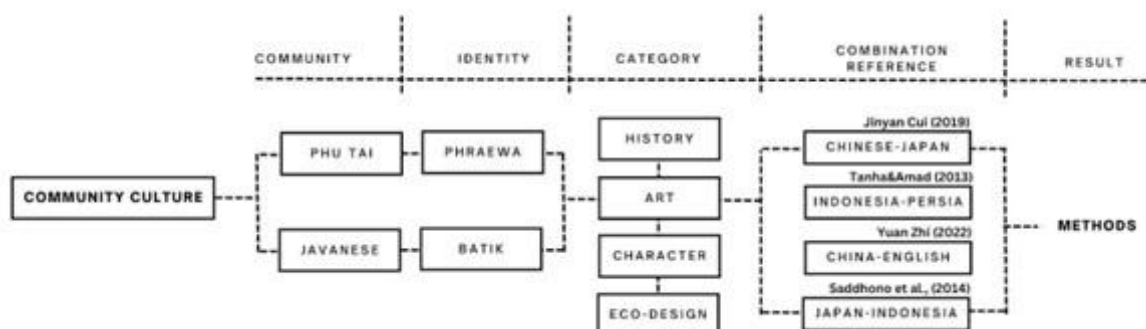


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework (Personal Modification, 2023)

## Discussion and Conclusion

The application of batik in Javanese culture, particularly in the Yogyakarta region, holds significant cultural and social meanings in the methods of tie-dyeing (Sugiyem, 2008). Different patterns are associated with specific philosophical and symbolic representations that resonate with the community's social standards. Some patterns are considered auspicious, symbolizing fortune and prosperity, and hold ceremonial significance for specific occasions. For instance, within the Yogyakarta sultanate, classical batik patterns are divided into sacred modules, which are traditionally restricted for use within the palace (Steelyana, 2012). One such pattern is the Parang Batik Motif, representing the ever-moving sea waves. It signifies the continuous improvement of one's relationship with God, nature, and others. Another significant motif is the Kawung Batik Motif, which carries profound philosophical meanings related to universal energy and the sanctity of human life. This motif was historically associated with the kingdom's power and wisdom, particularly linked to the king's leadership.

In Indonesia as a whole, batik is widely embraced across different age groups and is not limited by age or status. It serves as a representation of cultural wisdom and identity (Nimas Ayu et al., 2019). As part of the government's efforts to preserve culture, there is a charter that mandates all Indonesian citizens, including students and workers, to wear batik every Friday. This practice aims to promote and preserve the cultural heritage of batik throughout the nation. Contrarily, the patterns used in Thai batik do not have specific meanings in general. They follow the ordinary cultural interest within the community. The patterns often derive from flowers, relating to the community's beliefs, historical significance in local wisdom, architectural facades, pattern combinations, and the art of decorative plates in heritage pattern design. Traditional Thai home patterns are influenced by traditional wisdom accents that are typically applied to the facades and interior details in decoration. The meaning of Thai batik patterns depends on the artist, and there are no specific patterns for batik, except for special occasions. Unlike Indonesian batik, which provides specific pattern

meanings for ceremonial occasions, Thai batik accepts all patterns for such occasions. However, silk material is restricted in the Islamic community for use in prayer sections. In Thailand, batik can be applied to various pattern meanings and ceremonial contexts. It can be used in all aspects of batik making and can be combined with other pattern identities. For example, the patterned silk of 'Khor Chao Fah Siriyannavari' was created for the princess of Thailand but can be applied to any textile design across Thailand, including Thai batik art.

In Mukdahan, there is a tourism village that offers visitors insights into the daily lives and traditions of the Phu Tai ethnic group. The village serves as an educational and cultural branding platform (Nambutr, 2005), allowing visitors to experience the customs and practices of the Phu Tai people. For example, the Bai Sri ceremony uses banana leaves to welcome visitors, and offerings are made to Buddha as a prayer for protection. Another example is the Ban Dong Noi community in Mahasarakham, which adopts a different approach to cultural development. They utilize more flexible materials and focus on enhancing the advantages of their local habitat (Phakdeesuwan, 2010). Collaboration plays a significant role in community development as they leverage their resources and creativity based on daily life experiences. This approach helps improve the branding of their ethnic identity within the limited boundaries of the village. Nakhon Phanom is another important location for the Phu Tai tribe, known for its conservation areas dedicated to bamboo weaving. The region is renowned for its bamboo plant sources, with the Nakhon Phanom Forest conservation area being particularly significant. The products created in this region are influenced by the different species of bamboo, which impact their shape, quality, and quantity (Chotiwtutideacha et al., 2019). Additionally, studying the impact of location on the culture and products of communities outside the Phu Tai ethnic group provides valuable insights into how local wisdom is influenced by various materials and environmental factors.

In the concept of cross-culture, as mentioned by Cui (2019), one important step in combining designs is to describe the legacies and associated stories of each culture to understand the similarities in symbols. In the main design of Praewa and Batik, a foundational module is used with specific areas designated for separation, and a bunch pattern is included in the footage area of the design. On the other hand, the Batik pattern fills each section, contributing assertive patterns in geometric shapes to create a strong and intricate design. After identifying the motifs, the process of classification is carried out to elaborate on them and create new design elements. The combination of Praewa and Batik brings together two distinct identities in terms of shape, meaning, and messages conveyed by each pattern. This combination aims to create a new cultural character by selecting keywords related to the main identity. The combination pattern is divided into three complementary sections. Firstly, the Praewa pattern serves as the basic design, incorporating geometric patterns into a unified design. This adds depth and complexity to the overall composition. As Zhi (2020) illustrated, the literature incorporates the latest design concepts into the aesthetic concept using innovative fabric and trend literature.



Figure 2. Pattern Possibility (Personal Modification, 2023)

The application of the pattern design concept of Batik style combined with the pattern identity of Praewa illustrates a similarity between two identities. It can be seen as a form of mimicry or re-creation of two different cultures in the pattern identity, without directly quoting or referencing specific patterns. This approach allows for the transformation of suitable design patterns and the creation of a new aspect of style design. By combining the visual elements of both Batik and Praewa, without focusing on specific symbolic meanings, the idea of blending the two pattern characters emerges. Batik patterns are known for their flexibility in lining and intricate detailing, while Praewa patterns consist of repeated pixels. The repetition of significant modules in both textile cultures plays an important role in shaping the overall pattern and creating a harmonious textile design that relates to existing designs. This combination of patterns allows for the creation of a unique and cohesive design that incorporates elements from both cultures without explicitly conveying specific meanings or symbolism. The focus is on the aesthetic appeal and visual harmony of the pattern design.



Figure 3. Pattern Possibility (Personal Modification, 2023)

The combination of color and pattern details illustrates the different styles of color implementation. In the Praewa identity, colors are related to ceremonial occasions, with specific colors serving special functions and representing the pride of weaving skills, particularly in the female role. On the other hand, in batik culture, the focus is more on the pattern style rather than specific color application. Classical batik often features dark-toned colors that are associated with nature, conveying an elegant and classy style. The design methods of batik allow for a freestyle approach to drawing without rigid limitations. In contrast, when applying natural colors in Praewa, there is a risk of color contamination in the intricate design due to environmental influences during the making process. This highlights the importance of careful color selection and control to maintain the integrity and clarity of the pattern in Praewa textiles.

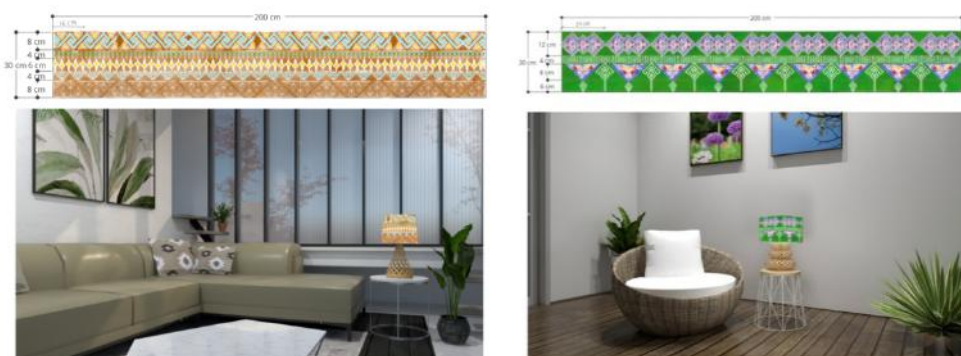


Figure 4. Pattern Application Possibility (Personal Modification, 2023)

In the relationship between textiles and interior trends, patterns play a significant role in creating suitable decorations for home textiles that can transform the ambiance of a room into a classical and elegant design. The value of patterns in design and concept is evident in how



they can influence the overall vibe of a space. Illustrations can showcase the differences in ambiance that each pattern can create in a living room. Whether it's through the choice of pattern, color, or the shaping of home decoration products, patterns have the power to evoke different effects. Traditional patterns, for example, can provide a visual balance that combines both functional and aesthetic value. They serve as practical elements that enhance the experience of the room, acting as focal points and accents that synchronize harmoniously with the overall visual theme and composition. By carefully selecting and incorporating patterns into home textiles, one can create a dynamic and visually appealing environment that reflects personal style and adds depth to the overall design. Patterns have the ability to bring life and character to a space, transforming it into a unique and captivating setting.

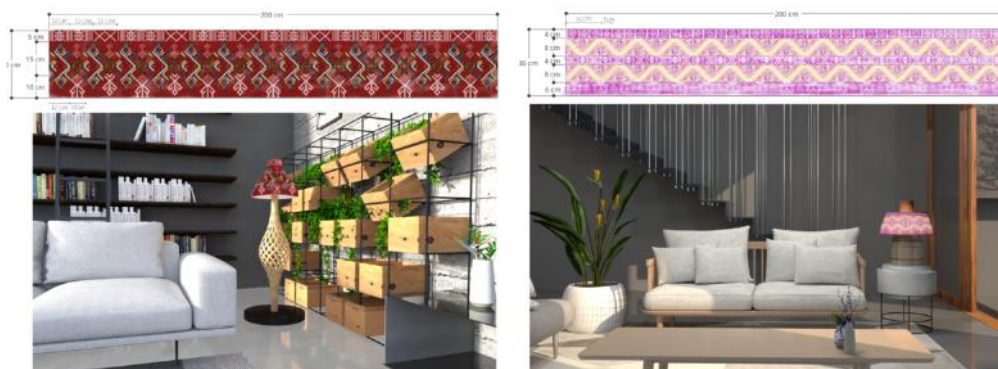


Figure 5. Pattern Application Possibility (Personal Modification, 2023)

The creative application of technical elements in interior design brings vibrance and luxury to the room concept, particularly using lavish textiles. The natural approach and connection between color and ambiance are essential in developing patterns that enhance the overall aesthetic. By incorporating nature-inspired elements, the design creates a sense of serenity and promotes relaxation for the users. The connection to nature is impactful, especially in specific areas of the room, as it provides a collaborative sense of serenity. By bringing in elements from the natural world, such as colors, textures, and patterns reminiscent of nature, the design fosters a sense of connectivity with the outdoors. This connection helps reduce stress and promotes a calming atmosphere within the indoor space. The integration of nature-inspired elements in interior design not only adds visual interest but also creates a harmonious and soothing environment. Whether using botanical patterns, earthy color palettes, or natural materials, these design choices contribute to a holistic and rejuvenating experience for the occupants.

### Methods and Materials in Batik Experiment

In the handmade process of Indonesian Batik, the act of drawing patterns onto the fabric is crucial for achieving the desired design. Skilled Batik artisans pay close attention to this step to ensure the balance and integrity of the overall pattern. By carefully managing this process, they maintain stability and avoid any distortion during the patterning phase. The application of wax plays a significant role in Batik. Different areas of the design and the desired color outcomes require varying amounts and types of wax. Each detail in the pattern necessitates a specific combination of wax to achieve the intended effect. For instance, if a cracked effect is desired, only paraffin wax may be used. On the other hand, when working with basic colors that should not mix, a combination of paraffin, beeswax, and Damar oil is employed. To prevent the wax from cracking during the repeated dyeing process, artisans apply wax multiple times. This is particularly important when working with natural colors. Typically,

after five or six repetitions, the wax may start to show signs of cracking, requiring re-application to maintain the desired color outcome. The use of natural colors in Batik allows for various color variations and the application of multiple colors on a single fabric. This is made possible because the wax materials fully cover the designated areas, ensuring that there is no contamination during subsequent coloring steps. Overall, the precise application of wax in Batik is essential for achieving intricate patterns and vibrant color outcomes. The meticulous attention to detail during the drawing and waxing process ensures the integrity and beauty of Indonesian Batik textiles.



Figure 6. Thailand Batik Natural Color (Umasin, 2023)

In the batik process, the application of natural colors often requires more repetitions compared to synthetic colors. This is because natural dyes typically produce softer and more subtle shades, and multiple dye baths are needed to achieve the desired color intensity. After each dyeing step, the fabric is boiled to help set the color and ensure its permanence. On the other hand, synthetic colors are generally dyed only once, and the final color result is determined by the combination of color powder and water. Synthetic dyes provide a wide range of vibrant and intense colors that can be achieved in a single dyeing process. In batik design, it is possible to combine both natural and synthetic colors in one fabric. Artisans may choose to use synthetic colors for the initial dyeing stages to create a base color, and then incorporate natural colors in subsequent steps to add depth and variation to the design. When using natural colors, artisans often rely on plant sources that contain sap or pigments to ensure the color adheres to the fabric. These plants are boiled or simmered to extract the color, and the fabric is immersed in the dye bath to absorb the natural dye. In cases where natural colors do not have sufficient natural sap, a reducing agent may be added to extract and fix the color onto the fabric. Fixation is a critical step in the batik process as it helps ensure that the colors remain intact and do not fade or wash out easily. Fixation methods can vary depending on the specific dye used, but they generally involve heat or chemical treatments to permanently set the colors onto the fabric. By combining the unique qualities of natural and synthetic colors, batik artisans have the flexibility to create a wide range of color variations and effects, resulting in visually stunning and captivating textile designs.



Figure 7. Indonesia Batik process (Personal Modification, 2023)

The synthetic color results from a direct dye process without repetition to achieve dark colors. The thickness of the color substance in the soaking process sets the standard for pigmentation in the fabrics, ensuring a steady color fixation without any harmful environmental effects during the final coloring process. The fabrics used in batik, especially in Indonesia, are made of cotton materials, which provide stable absorption of color pigments.



Figure 8. Indonesia Batik process (Personal Modification, 2023)

In Thailand, fabrics used for batik textiles typically consist of 100% cotton and silk. Cotton is the more commonly used material, while silk is reserved for more expensive fabrics. Natural colors are often used in eco-design batik in Thailand, creating unique products for special requests. In the finishing process of natural color batik in Thailand, the fabric is soaked in sea water after the fixation process to preserve the color. In contrast, the synthetic process of batik in Thailand does not involve the use of sea salt. The wax used in Thai batik differs from that used in Indonesian batik. Thai batik wax typically contains paraffin and either pine oil or coconut oil. One distinguishing feature of Thai batik is the cracking effect, which does not allow for the combination of multiple colors on a single fabric. This characteristic sets Thai batik apart from Indonesian batik and adds to its artistic appeal.

In the detailing pattern of Praewa, synthetic color methods are often preferred over natural color approaches. This is because using natural colors can risk color contamination, which may affect the original pattern. Synthetic color methods allow for more control and consistency in achieving the desired color results. However, for long-term production processes, it is possible to incorporate natural color approaches and create combinations in various parts of the Praewa identity. One unique aspect of Praewa is the unintentional color contamination that occurs during the wax cracking process. This unintended color contamination can result in new pattern combinations, adding an element of unpredictability and creativity to the design. The cracking of the wax creates distinct patterns that follow a natural and organic process, but it cannot be controlled manually. These cracking patterns become an integral part of the detailing patterns in Praewa, adding to its artistic appeal and uniqueness.



## The Process of Natural Color



Figure 9. Natural Color Equipment (Umasin, 2023)

The natural color process in batik production is indeed more complex and time-consuming compared to the synthetic process. It involves several steps and can take 4-6 weeks to achieve the desired darker tone color. To begin the natural color application, the fabric goes through a process called scouring, which involves cleaning the surface to ensure better absorption of the natural color. The raw materials are soaked in water for 24 hours and then boiled for several hours until the volume is reduced. During the color extraction process, areas of the fabric that are not intended to be colored are covered with batik wax to prevent color contamination. Once the color is ready, the fabric is dyed for a specific duration, typically ranging from 10 to 30 minutes, and then dried. The dyeing process is repeated a minimum of 10 times to achieve the desired dark red color. Finally, mineral substances such as Alum, Limestone, and ferrous sulfate are used to create color gradations. Alum is used to show the raw color, Limestone for lighter shades, and ferrous sulfate to darken the color. Different combinations of these minerals can be used to achieve specific color effects. Overall, the natural color process in batik production requires careful attention to detail and a longer production timeline, but it offers unique and rich color results that are highly valued in traditional and eco-design batik.



Figure 10. Red Color Natural Source (Personal Modification, 2023)

In the extraction process of green color using mango leaves, typically 1 kilogram of mango leaves is boiled with 2 liters of water. The leaves are first collected and blended into small pieces before being added to the boiling water. The mixture is then boiled for approximately 3 hours. To achieve a dark and vibrant green color, the percentage of mango leaves used in the extraction is around 20% of the total weight. This ensures a higher concentration of pigmentation that can be absorbed by the fabric during the dyeing process. During the dyeing process, the fabric is repeatedly soaked in the extracted mango leaf solution. This repetition is done a minimum of 10 times to ensure that the color is fully absorbed, and the desired shade of green is achieved. Each repetition contributes to the overall depth and intensity of the color on the fabric. Fixation is an important step in the finalization of the color. It helps ensure that the color remains stable and does not fade or wash out easily. The fixation process may involve various techniques and substances depending on the specific requirements and desired outcomes of the design process. Overall, the extraction and application of color from

mango leaves require meticulous attention to detail, including the right ratio of leaves to water, proper boiling time, and repetition in the dyeing process. This helps to create a rich and vibrant green color that can be incorporated into batik fabrics.



Figure 11. Green Color Natural Source (Personal Modification, 2023)

The extraction of turmeric for batik involves boiling it twice, which is different from other natural color sources. This process helps extract the pigments and create a concentrated liquid that is suitable for the painting style of batik. The turmeric liquid has a thick texture, which ensures that when it is applied to the fabric, it remains confined to the intended areas and does not contaminate other parts of the design. During experimentation, the fixation process for natural color using turmeric, as well as the subsequent mineral fixation, did not result in significant changes. The yellow color obtained from turmeric remained steady and did not show preferences for lighter or darker shades. The yellow gradation achieved through turmeric extraction remained consistent without significant variations in hue or intensity.



Figure 12. Indigo Color Natural Source (Personal Modification, 2023)

Not all natural color sources from plants can be effectively applied in the batik process. For natural colors to work well, they should contain plant sap, which helps create vibrant colors on the fabric. Some natural sources can be used in batik, but they may not have a strong impact on the color outcome. The OTOP (One Tambon One Product) list includes different styles of natural color application. While some natural colors can be used in silk strains, they may not be suitable for the steps involved in batik making. In Thailand's batik tradition, the application of natural colors is dependent on various factors such as weather, air quality, humidity, and other environmental conditions. These factors can influence the color outcome on the fabric. Exploring different plant sources and testing their sap for batik application is necessary to achieve desired color results. Natural colors can be applied in multiple shades, but it requires careful management of the cracking effect and color combination that contaminate a single fabric. The complexity of using multiple colors in batik and managing the contamination requires additional effort, resulting in higher production costs compared to using a single color. Typically, two different colors are used, and they undergo separate steps to manage the contamination through wax stamping and dyeing processes. The first step involves applying wax and dyeing the fabric with the dark color, followed by boiling the fabric. In the second process, the fabric is dyed with the light color, ensuring the wax is used to prevent the unwanted color from seeping into specific areas.



Figure 13. Pattern Cracking Possibility (Personal Modification, 2023)

The cracking detail of the pattern in the experimental design showcases the unique effect of the natural color approach. The contamination that occurs during the cracking process can be incorporated into the design, resulting in a new pattern identity for Praewa with pixelated and rigid patterns that can be applied in various textile applications, including façade or interior design. The use of natural colors offers a broader range of possibilities in textile design. Incorporating natural color extraction with the three traditional minerals commonly used in Indonesian batik allows for a significant exploration of design results. This combination adds depth and complexity to the colors and patterns, resulting in visually captivating textile designs. By embracing the natural color extraction process and combining it with traditional mineral fixation techniques, designers can create unique and culturally rich patterns that reflect the heritage and artistry of batik.



Figure 14. Natural Color Gradation (Personal Modification, 2023)

Due to the complexity of the natural color process and the limited availability of extraction sources, the production of batik in natural colors is not done on a mass scale. Instead, it is typically produced upon request or targeted towards upper-class customers as limited edition products. Each handmade piece of natural color batik can result in a unique color and artistic identity, further enhancing its exclusivity. According to Umasin (2023), the pricing for synthetic cotton textiles in batik starts at around 300 THB per pattern fabric, with varying dimensions typically around one meter or one module. In contrast, the pricing for natural color batik, which involves a minimum of ten dyeing repetitions, starts at around 1,500 THB per fabric. For silk materials used in the batik process, synthetic color application on silk starts at a price of 3,000 THB, while natural color application on silk begins at a higher price of 10,000 THB. Batik in Thailand can be applied to various sections of fabrics in textile design. It is not limited to clothing but can also be used in interior applications, particularly in fabric design for upholstery such as pillows and curtains. Silk materials are often preferred for such applications, while cotton fabrics are recommended for furniture combinations, providing a range of options for incorporating batik patterns into interior design.

In conclusion, the application of pattern design in the batik making process, incorporating the detailed approach of Praewa identity as a cultural pattern, offers an opportunity to explore the connectivity between different pattern identities. The process of production plays a crucial role in preserving the intricate details and techniques involved in natural color batik. The incorporation of cracking methods in the Praewa detailing creates a unique identity, characterized by flexible lining layers. Meanwhile, the batik process brings a rigid line

pattern to the Praewa design, resulting in a combination of abstract patterns that showcase similarities and harmonious visual elements.

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## ***Biography as Cinema Verité? Writing Steve Job's Life***

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### **Abstract**

This paper reviews the biographical film within the genre of documentary and proposes a contemporary approach to a subgenre. Neither completely fiction nor fact, it attests not just to the conceptual hybridity between *historie* and *discours*; it also permits both a creative approach to the inscription of life and a critical analysis of the temporal treatment by the biographical film creators, arguing for the genealogical approach as exemplified by Danny Boyle's filmic biography. While analytical attention is given to media specificity, this paper will broach filmic biography not merely as the media representation of an icon but also the illuminating acme bringing to life the key figure of representation with an elaboration on how the biographical film is aesthetically a visual interpellation of the individual whose life is on display. I engage with Bill Nichols's and Noel Carroll's concepts on documentary to address the hybrid characteristic found within these biographical films, Joshua Michael Stern's 2013 film release, entitled *Jobs*, and Danny Boyle's critically acclaimed 2015 *Steve Jobs* with the following research questions. First, how can one conceptually accommodate death (here Jobs's demise in 2011 arguably prompts two biographical films) within the term "life-writing"? In addition to the genealogical approach mentioned above, how do both films treat the significant notion of history upon which life-writing is itself based? Last but the most important, how does filmic interpellation work in order to bring to life the individual on which the film is based? An address of the puissance of iconography of which Jobs is arguably a symbol, this gives this writer opportunity to write on the visual writing of his life.

Keywords: Biography, Documentary, Steve Jobs, Transmediation, Gilbert Simondon, Transindividuality

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## Introduction

This paper reviews the concept of life-writing within the genre of documentary, a concept that resonates with the root of “biography”: *bios* in Greek denotes “life” and *graphia* signifies writing, and proposes a contemporary approach to what has been traditionally considered a subgenre. This word prodigiously indicates the historical aspect of writing, one which coincides with this academic decision to work in and through a *genealogical investigation* of a filmic subgenre to which not much academic attention has been given. Neither completely fiction nor fact, the biographical film attests not just to a certain conceptual hybridity between *historie* and *discours*; it also gestures to a third space that permits not only a creative approach to the inscription of life but also a critical analysis of the temporal treatment by the biographical auteurs, arguing for the genealogical approach as exemplified by Danny Boyle’s filmic biography. This paper also asserts that transmediation, rethought in and through the Simondonian transduction for a more in-depth study, is perhaps the best approach to life-writing because the media transition from print to screen inheres dynamic modulations and enlargements already encapsulated in the word “biographia”. While analytic attention is given to media specificity, this paper will broach filmic biography not merely as the media representation of an icon but also the illuminating acme bringing to life the key figure of representation with an elaboration on how the biographical film is aesthetically a visual interpellation of an individual whose life is on display. This paper too engages with ongoing conceptualisations on documentary to address the hybrid characteristics found within these biographical films, Joshua Michael Stern’s 2013 film release, entitled *Jobs*, and Danny Boyle’s critically acclaimed 2015 *Steve Jobs* (its temporal structure instantiates my aforementioned thesis on *genealogy*, the premise of which are the following research questions. First, how can one conceptually accommodate death (here Job’s demise in 2011 arguably prompts these two biographical films) in the term “life-writing”? In addition to the genealogical approach mentioned above, how do both films treat the significant notion of *historie* upon which life-writing is itself based? Last but the most important, how does filmic interpellation work in order to bring to life the individual on which the film is based? With responses to these inquiries, this paper places emphasis on the filmic auteur with a wordplay on Dennis Bingham’s 2010 *Whose Lives are They Anyway?* and insists on “Whose Truths are They Anyway?” and interweaves transmediation in and through the Simondonian transduction to heighten the idea of invention, both in cultural productions and life itself, in line with Tim Ingold’s preface to Roy Wagner’s *The Invention of Culture*. In addition to the assertion above, this paper also argues that Steve Job, as a cultural *icon*, is not just an *index* to the innovative crux of the new millennium (in addition to the indexicality of Michael Fassbender as the actor roleplaying Jobs); he is also a *symbol* of the visionary thrust that propelled the advancement of communication technologies. Thus, this is an address of the *puissance* of iconography, arguably an intermixing of Bill Nichol’s poetic and performative modes of documentary, of which Jobs is arguably a symbol, gifting this writer an opportunity to write on the visual writing of his life.

Both Stern’s and Boyle’s versions can be considered biographical films compared to the more documentary style of “History of Steve Jobs”, aptly entitled and created by Greg Wyatt Jr. and available on YouTube. The differences can be detected in not just the expository tone of the documentary, one approximating objectivity and neutrality, but also the manner of the visual treatment used in Stern’s and Boyle’s biographical films. Turning this paper’s attention to Boyle’s 2015 biographical film first (Mark Kermode from *The Guardian* gives the film a four-star rating because of its creative treatment of Job’s life), this temporal examination, which has impacts on the narrative strategies, refers to John Grierson’s short but significant



definition of documentary: “a creative treatment of reality” to approach Job’s existence as lived experience, a life given to us with tight focuses on the backstage occurrences of three *momentous* events of the Apple co-founder’s life, a visual style not reliant on the Hollywood intensified continuity to present a linearised account of the subject’s life, unlike Stern’s version, which is more akin to the aforementioned filmmaking. Why the use of such a famous icon whose life has been documented again and again? As an addendum, I am more inclined toward Steve Wozniak’s contribution to computation, known for his technological inventiveness, rather than Job’s who is known more for his leadership and vision but this has to do with the conceptual premise of my paper: the transductive merging of the Peircean semiotics and Nichol’s notion of iconography and the alignment (I am in agreement with Nichol, Noel Carroll, and Carl Plantinga who enthusiastically insist this in their writings) of the argumentative or the assertive to the documentary so as to yield the cultural innovation mentioned in Ingold’s preface to *The Invention of Culture*. What follows is not merely a comparative espousal of Wyatt’s, Stern’s and Boyle’s films in terms of temporality; it is an elaboration of how communicative innovations are not merely technological but also cultural in their societal impacts, a thesis supported by Terry Flew in his introduction to his book on new media. According to Flew, notwithstanding the progressive impacts that computing and communication has on the creation of content, the various convergences afforded by technological advancements prompt cultural changes, most of them dynamic and beneficial to the contemporary emphasis on content creation. This emphasis on the cultural significance of a protean subgenre etymologically adheres to the *writing of life* (and the authorship implied in the term itself) the signifying impact of which inspires change. In short, the perceptual ebullience that follows such Eureka moments, the Simondonian resonances, has affirmative psychological influence culminating in cultural transmutation, a process that Simondon would recognise as imaginative transduction resulting in transindividuality, a concept that has as its premise “creative contribution” in cultural terms rather than consumption. In fact, if there is any cultural focus on media consumption, it is aligned with media production, made evident by Nichol’s (2001) espousal of the experimental and *avant garde* aspects found within the poetic and the performative modes of documentary, modes which also raise inquires “about what is knowledge. What counts as understanding or comprehension?” (130). These characteristics teased out from Nichol’s take on the various modes of documentary do not merely address cinematic realism but *the authenticity inherent to the writing of someone’s life*.

### **Creatively Moving Beyond the Expository With Time**

While most would start a paper on documentary films with the divide between fiction and nonfiction films, I shall examine instead Wyatt’s and Stern’s versions in relation to the Hollywood intensified continuity style. Wyatt’s linearised account of Job’s life is quite contrary to Stern’s version which emphasises Job’s achievements, a filmic style catering to his fans. The latter’s is a Hollywood tribute to Jobs, aptly described by Brian Moylan for *The Guardian* as “fan service”. The temporal charting of Job’s life from his days at Reeds College to the 2001 introduction of the iPod (mostly in the Hollywood intensified continuous style with the exception of the introductory scene) reworks time in favour of the empirical, an emphatically materialised aspect of filmmaking in order to present a biopic with technological details, biographical content and interesting visuals in a manner that would make it firstly a commercial success with the Apple fans and, secondly, but more importantly to this paper, an exemplar of Nichol’s discussion of the iconic in “History, Myth and Narrative” (1987), which builds our messianic expectations in line with the myth-making propensity that inheres with documentary filmmaking. *RogerEbert.com*’s reviewer gives this

film two stars rating. I watched Boyle's and Stern's versions years back and thought very highly of Boyle's version because of its clever treatment of time. Stern's *Jobs* turns out to be a regular biopic, not as disappointing as RogerEbert.com would have it but I was watching the biographical film for different reasons. Its style is similar to Matt Johnson's 2023 *Blackberry* which turns out to be more substantially engaging in narrative terms, as the filmic *historie* of Blackberry is given to us with the visual finesse of sophisticated camera work. By comparison, Wyatt's "History of Steve Jobs" is a straightforward account of the subject's life, merely providing the significant details of the subject's life as facts. It is nonfictional in its manner of approach to life-writing whereas Stern's and Boyle's versions could be considered straddling between fiction and fact, neither completely fictional nor totally nonfictional. If we are looking for veracity in the presumed neutral or objective tones of life writing (here gesturing to Carroll's term for nonfiction films, "presumptive assertion" (1997), we must heed how Kermode (15/11/2015) astutely concludes his review of the 2015 biographical film: "if we find truth in the drama [and he does], then that truth belongs to Sorkin [the scriptwriter]" (*The Guardian*). This truth, (un)fortunately, is not the truth of *cinema verité* nor direct cinema. It is a truth at which Aaron Sorkin arrives after spending a lot of time with Lisa Brennon-Jobs, Job's daughter, a truth in line with the post-truth inclinations of the contemporary milieu, neither non-truth nor the truth with a capitalised T. This is further reinforced by Nichol's (1991) discussion on representing reality in the chapter "Telling Stories with Evidence and Arguments": "Their respective orientations, toward a world and toward *the* world, sharply distinguish fiction and documentary. But the effect of providing, as if for the first time, a memorable form for experiences and concepts that the text purports only to reveal and reflect is a common bond between them... We are offered a world but a world different from any other by dint of its basis in history itself... In representing it we introduce the subjectivities and vicissitudes, the issues of style and form that govern discussion of any text" (113, author's emphasis). This, in effect, simply renders clear what follows later in this paper on realist approximations, whether one is alluding to cinematic realism or documentary or filmic biography: the knowledge one gains of someone's life will always be "a particular way of seeing" this life, which is based on a truth claim or a fact.

Boyle's 2015 *Steve Jobs* cinematically debunks the neutral, objective and factual facets detected in Wyatt's recount, a felicitous instance of the expository category of Nichol's six modes of documentary. And it definitely reveals the inadequacies of the documentary as either an indexical record or the documentary as assertion, elaborated by Carl Plantinga (2003) in "What a Documentary is, After All". Biographical films cannot be tagged with the features of conventional documentary because of the functional autonomy of this subgenre, again indicating the auteur's creativity. They are both an indexical record as well as an *assertion* (this phrase is italicized here because Boyle's biographical film can be considered as *arguing for* invention, cinematographically reflected in the transitions made from 16 mm filming to 35 mm and then to digital filmmaking to represent the three major Apple events that occurred during the 1980s and 90s). *Steve Jobs* carries within it a thesis for the innovative vision that the subject embodies and it is obviously a filmic representation of an individual's life. Temporally, it also arguably attests to the genealogical style that accompanies good biographical films, brilliantly reworked to permit visual glimpses of the subject's character that we may not have intuited if provided a straightforward, continuous recount of Job's life. In fact, one can assert that Boyle's biographical film affirms life-writing as an intuitive and subjective meditation of the objective and factual occurrences of the depicted individual's existence. This correlates with Nichol's "asymptote congruence" which he expounds in "Representing Reality", a mathematical conceptualisation on the spacetime curvature that has empirical import to the contrary terms, *discours* and *historie*, which in

accordance to Emile Benevise's (1966) aesthetics, signals respectively "subjective" and "objective" approaches. His term, when read in line with the biographical, draws out and renders clear *the juxtaposition between the assertive and the suggestive dimensions of this subgenre*. The intricacies of the biographical become evident when one sees both the assertive and suggestive encapsulated in this imagistic and dexterous centrifuge. Noting that the biographical film is an inscriptive approximation does not mean that it is all experiential, the conceptual can be teased out, which is rendered obvious by this conceptual attempt. On the empirical, one must separate that from the material aspects of filmmaking, biographical or otherwise. In fact, Jean Luc Godard's essayistic contribution, *Historie(s) du cinema*, is considered by many as the pinnacle of experimental filmmaking during his time; one has to connect his filmic content to the structural composition of images, which, akin to the Eisensteinian montage, reworks visual simultaneity in order to instil deliberation.

While comparably contrasting the Bazinian brand of realism, which is touted to be more the premise of biographical filmmaking, Godard's essayistic films do not sacrifice the material dimensions of his cinematographic method for the increased intellectual attention required in assessing or evaluating his imagistic manipulation. I often thought that the material aspects of Godard's films become more starkly presented with the use of imagistic juxtapositions, an altered appropriation of Vivian Sobchack's view of filmic materiality. Sobchack's approach is prompted by "the problematics of the professional gaze" also cited in Nichol's (1987) take on documentary, the introduction of which refers to the necessity for a body as evidence, appositely suggested by the Latin term, *habeas corpus*, to which Nichols refer that not only informs the necessity of the corpse in any legal proceeding of homicidal implications but also its legitimate requirement as the iconic embodiment in film. To Sobchack, "the concern for getting a clear and unobstructed image, and the belief that it is possible to strip that image, that representation, of human bias and perspective and ethicality so that it is 'objective,' indelibly marks the inscriptions of the professional gaze with their own problematic ethical perspective in the fact of human mortality and visual taboo" (14). This citation on the clinical gaze, in a way, directs our attention to how biography, as part of the umbrella term 'documentary', is not completely subjective despite its creative approaches to the subject's life. This film materiality bears testimony to Gregory Currie's (1999) "traces" (another term for the indexicality of the photographic) rather than his version of "testimony" and more, given that, while it correspondingly strives to indicate filmic denotation rather than connotation, it also casts light on the material composition of the medium used. In fact, this mediation is only taken to a different level in the viewer's interpretative approach to the filmic biography. Plantinga's (2003) comprehensive attempt at defining "documentary" aids my endeavour to address contemporarily "biography" with the former's examination of its underdetermined premise by arguing for a "new ethos of authenticity" and its subsequent overdetermination evident in the director's "creative manipulations and staging". It is, again, this desire for authenticity that I embarked on this research, investigating the possibility for an approach to the biographical film as something experienced, and, consequently sensorial, in addition to its legitimated aspect.

### **Performing the Poetic With the Staging of the Invisible**

Poetically intuitive since one cannot ignore his treatment of time, Boyle's version reworks the theatrical technique of staging by harnessing the *moments* surrounding the three major campaigns of Apple during the twentieth century: the 1984 launch of Lisa shot with 16 mm filmstock, the 1988 release of Apple II in 35 mm and the 1998 Mackintosh promotion with digital filming. Employing Steve Wozniak as a consultant for his filmic script, Aaron Sorkin

has the advantage of a first-hand account of the former's relationship with Jobs and Job's relationship with his daughter, flashed out authentically in these three filmic moments. It is noteworthy that these events are presented to us with cinematographic differences. Whereas Boyle cinematically aligns Apple's technological innovations with the progress made in filmmaking, one needs to refocus attention to the signs of deixis which, according to the Oxford reference dictionary, would be *discours*, the conversational facet underpinning the backstage drama. In line with this, Currie's (1999) "testimony" appears to have conceptual purchase too when this analysis turns its attention to the illocutionary force of the performative. The performative aspect of the word "moment" is given focus here because of its synonymous relation to the word "stage", appositely linking its temporal significance with Kermode's (15/11/2015) use of the phrase "three-act structure". These "moments" correspond to the Simondonian transduction whereby the human, always *with technics*, contributes socio-culturally, here in the form of (the two Steves' *Eureka moment*) democratised and personalised devices that forever changed how man communicates with one another. One can even say that their invention of the personal computer ushers in the digital age, another reason why this paper is on Job whose life is one defined by the creativity, communication and collaboration that are premises of digitisation and media convergence. These cinematographic uses not only spotlight the durational bases of this filmic biography but also reflexively ties to the technological innovations implied by the etymology of "moment" that is derived from its Latin source "momentum" with semantic connotation to "movement", and the transitions made as cinematic adaptations of Walter Isaacson's biographical book on Jobs, released immediately after the latter's death in October 2011.

If the significant events that occur at the Apple campaigns are given to us backstage in a three-act structure, it is the performative force of the word "stage" that should be at the forestage in Boyle's version. Corresponding to Plantinga's exposition on "the use of staged and re-enacted scenes" in the early versions of *cinema vérité*, the staged and re-enacted elements do more than Currie's "traces", the accurate visual presentation of the scene, and therefore are not merely Plantinga's "asserted veridical representation", a term arguably comparable to the former's use of "traces" (2005, 112), both indicating the fidelity of the photographic. It is the assertion here that the illocutionary act of saying and showing, also the premises of the essay film as defined by Laura Rascaroli in "The Essay Film: Problems, Definitions, Textual Commitments" figuratively actualises Job. Noting that in the glossary to *Life-Writing* (1995), "essay" is defined in its "later application to biographical works it suggested an easy or cursory handling of a life story, limited to a few aspects of a life and abandoning the narrative, or chronological, approach" (22), this paper retrieves the portion "limited to a few aspects of life and abandoning the narrative, or chronological, approach" in order to enhance the essayistic Boyle's biographical experimentation, an approach that invites a type of viewing that makes us move from seeing the biographical film as mere "presumptive fact", thereby not just merely Carroll's (1997) "film of presumptive assertion", also cited in Plantinga's article. However, Boyle's version cannot be said to evince the "transgressive" dimension of the essay film as well because contemporary American filmmaking has borrowed a lot cinematographically from experimental European films. Rascaroli (2008) alludes to Theodore Adorno's concept of 'heresy' in the latter's *Notes to Literature*, a literary technique that signals the indeterminacy, openness and non-fixity of the essay film and now refers too to the new biographical film which leans towards the experimental and arthouse characteristics found in the essayistic. These filmic emergences (the word "emergence" is used with conceptual care) evidently do not adhere to the *historie*, instead it reworks the conversational, or, more appropriately the dialogic, aspect of *discours*

in a transductive manner, indirectly showing *the staged quality* of the visual writing of Job's life, which hinges on cinematography in its portrayal of the key figure's life, making more pronounced the curation, manipulation and edition of details in biographical writing and filmmaking. These filmic events disrupt the Hollywood intensified continuity editing, a kind of editing that simulates the linearity of thought. It is the interruption of the intensified continuity editing that indicates how Stern's version, structured more likely the way fiction films are made that makes it act as a foil to Boyle's version. In fact, Rascaroli's (2008) discussion on the essay film is advantageous to my insistence that biographic films are not merely Plantinga's "asserted veridical representation"; its genealogical premise is given creative force by the thesis of this paper: Job's life is given to us (given in the sense of "gift") by way of iconographic interpellation, a conceptual transducing of both Rascaroli's (2008) "interpellation of the gaze" with Nichol's (1987) sense of the iconographic, which "[significantly and paradoxically] incarnates... [the] body as a precarious balance of person, persona and narrative agent that cannot be any one of these possibilities entirely" (13). Taking Nichol's use of iconography to the level of realism, Boyle's film arguably is an instance of the interweaving of both the Peircean use of "icon" as "resemblance or likeness" and the icon as the renowned British actor who plays the role of Steve Jobs as well as the iconic status of Steve Jobs himself, further enhanced by his symbolic status as the visionary who transformed the manner we engage with one another globally by *shifting the contemporary emphasis from commutation to communication*. Thus it is not just the semantic synonymy of "movement" (also prodigiously indicating the visual writing of motion pictures) as indicated by my earlier espousal of the "momentous"; it is the "momentous" inventiveness of Job's vision and Wozniak's materialisation of that vision.

Using the term "iconographic interpellation" here means a conceptual departure from Louis Althusser's terms which means the hailing to being of a subject that will freely subject himself to the dominant ideology of the society within which he is embedded. This is not an allusion to the Althusserian subjectivation but *the invocative* implication within the word which significantly highlights the "coming into being" of the subject in the visual writing of his life. This use is in addition to Rascaroli's (2008) definition of interpellation which focuses on how the viewer is called upon to visually partake of the filmic content of the documentary, an engagement that relies on Nichol's "ways of seeing" in *Representing Reality*, manners of approach that consider both the objectivity of a historical take and the subjectivity of the directorial auteur at once. One can infer in this interpellative act the performative force of the illocutionary mentioned earlier. According to Plantinga (2003), the "saying" could be inferred as being more assertive than the "showing", a characteristic of the ethnographic documentary, but most film theorists would insist that both the acts of saying and showing can be assertive. But, this paper concerns itself with how the visuality of the showing and the verblivity of the saying provide presence to the absence of the actual person. This is further enriched by the notion of performance which also suggests the possibility of an interlocution and communicative presence of a "you" to an "I", the actor communicating with another actor or the audience or the character interacting with the viewer, the filmmaker with the actor et cetera, an illocutionary demonstration. The "I" as identified cannot be actualised unless there is the "you" in any communicative act, because the process of identity formation in any communicative situation necessarily involves speech acts that have as its fundamental the more than one. More importantly, it is not subjectivation but an interpretative freeing of this person's life in an act of mourning: any biographical creation is a memorious event even if this person whose life is being written is still alive. It is, of course, more poignant when the individual whose life is depicted has passed on. Noteworthy is the fact that Jobs is symbolic of this insatiable desire for innovation, something I can only affirm. Thus this approach to

life-writing reconsiders the Heideggerian being-toward-death: life revealing itself in its move toward death, a paradoxical situation that affirms life due to the fact that one's mortality has to be dealt with at some point. This, for Jobs, occurred in 2009 when confronted with his possibly fatal illness, which is most likely the cause for his inspirational advice on not wasting time.

### **Mackintosh's Culture of Invention**

Time is, indeed, of the essence here because of my emphasis on 'invention' rather than convention. Ingold's introduction to Wagner's *The Invention of Culture* speaks of the inevitability of cultural conventions and how convention and invention imply each other. But this paper insists that the theme of "invention" should take precedence due neither to its novel nor progressive implications (both significantly crucial to our existence) but how it signals the passing of time correlating to life as a mutable flow, only to be momentarily fixed when identified. Lukac's words on discursive films, also cited in Rascaroli's 2008 article, ring true for the new biographical film: "the essayist must now become conscious of his own self, must find himself and build something of himself" (26), words of the profoundest reminder that we invent so that extensions of ourselves, as Marshall McLuhan would have it, could be found, extensions reflective of who we are. It is part of the thesis here that Wyatt Jr., Stern and Boyle, in their filmic representations of Job's life, unwittingly respond to Bingham's title on the biopic. These filmic representations are not just on Job's life but theirs too even as they write his visually; a part of their becoming is enacted with the making of Job's biography in and through the transductive process. Thus something of the same could be said of the biographical: it is not merely the filmmaker or scriptwriter finding himself but us, the audience, collectively finding the individual whose life is exhibited. This interpellation as a type of definitive rediscovery that calls forth not just the definiteness of identity but also the transmediation implied in the word "biographia", the textual refiguring of the real hybridised with the filmic as a re-enacted simulation coming forth as cultural production, an iconographic (re)presentation, of a person's written life. This transmedia re-enactment oddly attests not to the objective recount in the sense of documenting, whether, in Nichol's terms, expository, observational, performative, reflexive or poetic, but the subjective employment of signs, textual or otherwise. In fact, the various biographical versions exemplify our incessant pursuit of the real, the authentic Steve Jobs. Therefore, can one say that the more creative portrayals contain within themselves the potential for an alternative type of veridical addresses? Plantinga's (2003) article alludes to the objections posed by a number of documentary theorists against the hybridised notion of the objective and subjective, concluding with a somewhat facile comment that the fuzziness of boundary is not a good enough argument for propounding this hybrid, an indirect invitation for this rejoinder: while one cannot use the fuzziness of this border as an argument for championing the hybrid, one can extrapolate how the elasticity of the boundary can work in one's favour in accomplishing a more authentic inscriptive accommodation of the historical figure's life. Boyle's biographical film rides on Jacques Lacan's objective-subjective spectrum whose psychoanalytic theory will explain how the identification as interpellation works. The filmic identification with the subject of the nonfiction film occurs when there is a "suture" that Jacques Alain-Miller works with to describe the identificatory process.

Boyle's *Steve Jobs*, in effect, directs attention to the specular and affective identificatory processes of psychoanalysis, the definitions of which could found too in *Life-Writing*, the glossary. It presents these processes of identity constitution as a double bind, a threading that doubles between the viewer and the subject of the biographical film in and through not just

an ideal image but also an idealised point of view from which the subject sees the image, the imperfection of which then repels him even as he is attracted to it. The iconic reflexivity is evident when the viewer sees the filmic subject as the ideal ego via the imaginary and then the ego ideal via the symbolic, both the ideal image for which the subject strives as well as the inherent flaws that make the ideal image not that perfect after all. And this is detected in Kermode's review when he writes: "but it's hard to imagine either of them matching Fassbender's capacity to engage and repel simultaneously. We are at once appalled by Job's denial of his daughter, yet somewhat swayed by Sorkin's sympathetic suggestion that his own adoption was the traumatic key to both his success and failure" (*The Guardian*, 15/11/2015).

## Conclusion

Provisionally concluding here with a word on the Simondonian 'transduction', which is a term proposing the innovative dynamism of the altered pedigree of my genealogical address, evidenced by the multi-layered subjectivity elaborated above and supported by Nichol's use of Peircean semiotics. I shall dwell a little on the ontogenetic process that is an indication of the nature of all life. Key to Simondon's transindividuation is the creator's transductive contribution (transductive because the source code itself is a hybrid between the real and representative, human and technics) to the community by individuals who are tributes to lives well lived. Boyle's 2015 *Steve Jobs* bears testament to the developmental process of the key figure's technological success as well as his personal failures. Memorable they may be, the content of these biographical films matters because they represent lives that are no longer present as such, absent bodies that require presences in the forms of simulations, imitations and representations. One can even assert that the absences of the subjects of life-writing are the very *raison d'être* for the presencing of the writing itself. All sorts of information could be found on Jobs and by him online, indicating the type of legacy he leaves behind. Forbes' "Steve Jobs' Legacy Still Drives Apple's Current and Future Products", written by Tim Bajarin, attributes Apple's ever-innovative philosophy to Jobs' own vision of a "culture of innovation". This "Apple way" is the argumentative crux of the three biographical films elaborated. This information proliferates together with false information too but this only attests to the psychological impact left by a man who dared to live life to its fullest.

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***The Art of Overcoming: Kwasi Akonnor's Self-Portrait as a Cervical Dystonia Survivor***

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**Abstract**

This research article investigates Kwasi Akonnor's self-portrait as a cervical dystonia survivor and its potential as a visual representation of resilience and empowerment. Cervical dystonia is a neurological disorder that causes involuntary muscle contractions in the neck, leading to abnormal head movements and postures. Akonnor's self-portrait, accompanied by a narrative, portrays his personal journey through cervical dystonia, including his struggles and triumphs. Using qualitative methods, this study analyzes Akonnor's self-portrait and narrative to explore themes of disability, identity, and creativity. The analysis reveals how Akonnor's self-portrait serves as a visual representation of his lived experience and his unique perspective on the role of art in coping and healing. The findings of this study suggest that Akonnor's self-portrait provides an alternative perspective on disability, one that emphasizes the importance of embracing one's disability as a part of their identity. Akonnor's use of creativity as a means of empowerment and self-expression highlights the transformative power of art in the lives of individuals with disabilities. By examining how Akonnor's art helps him cope, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on disability and the arts by highlighting the potential of visual art as a means of promoting resilience and empowerment. The findings of this study have implications for practitioners working with individuals with disabilities, as well as for disability studies scholars interested in exploring the role of creativity in disability identity formation and empowerment.

Keywords: Kwasi Akonnor, Art, Self-Portrait, Cervical Dystonia

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## Introduction

Cervical dystonia (CD), also known as spasmodic torticollis, is a movement disorder characterized by involuntary muscle contractions and spasms in the neck (Comella, 2014). These abnormal postures and twisting movements of the neck can cause the head to turn to one side or be pulled backward or forward (Comella, 2014; Jankovic, 2009).

For Kwasi Akonnor, CD manifested in his early age of ten when he began experiencing stiffness and pain in his neck, leading his head to gradually deviate to the right side. Over time, the contractions increased in frequency and his head tilt worsened, making routine tasks like dressing, talking, and working difficult (Akonnor, 2022).

Akonnor describes CD as limiting his physical, social, and emotional well-being, saying "I felt mocked for my strange stance and was often misunderstood as being rude or disinterested" (Akonnor, 2022). The visible and unpredictable nature of his symptoms made him self-conscious in public.

Despite several treatments including Botox injections and physical therapy, Akonnor experienced only temporary relief from pain and functional impairments caused by CD. This endured struggle with a debilitating and socially isolating disease forms the backdrop for Akonnor's self-portrait.

In his self-portrait, Akonnor painted himself from the shoulders up, facing forward. His head is noticeably tilted to the backward, twisted due to ongoing CD spasms (fig. 1). Dark red, brooding colours fill the background behind him (fig. 2).

Akonnor's expression is one of simultaneous vulnerability and inner strength. His eyes closed tight revealing the pains he goes through to the viewer's gaze with a look of acceptance, as if to challenge the assumptions of others regarding his appearance. Small wrinkles at the edges of his eyes, forehead and mouth suggest a lifetime of hardship navigating CD.

The accompanying narrative provides context for Akonnor's artistic representation of himself and experiences with CD. He describes feelings of isolation from "being stuck in my twisted frame that society never understood" (Akonnor, 2022). However, taking up painting in his 20s allowed Akonnor a means of "expression, empowerment, and self-revelation".

Through his self-portrait and words, Akonnor presents a window into living with CD and finding creative ways to cope. His raw depiction and personal narrative invite viewers into his world, highlighting the complex interplay between disability, identity, and art-making.

The purpose of this case study is to analyze Kwasi Akonnor's self-portrait and accompanying narrative as a visual representation of his lived experience with cervical dystonia (CD). By thematically examining the artwork and text, this study aims to explore how Akonnor's depiction of himself addresses themes relating to disability, identity formation, and creative empowerment.

Previous research suggests that personal narratives and arts-based practices provide opportunities for persons with disabilities to author their own identities and promote advocacy (Rembis, 2010). As Akonnor's creative work depicts his journey navigating CD, it

merits analysis of how his art articulate "the interaction between person and society" in the context of disability (Closer, 2018, p.105).

This study seeks to gain insight into Akonnor's perspective by investigating how his self-portrait communicates his realities of living with CD. The overarching research question guiding this analysis is: In what ways does Akonnor's self-portrait serve as a visual representation of his experiences and outlook as a CD survivor?

Addressing this question may contribute to understanding the role of visual art in empowering individuals to shape authoritative representations of their disabilities and lives.

## **Literature Review**

### **Disability Identity Formation and the Social Model of Disability**

Disability identity formation explores how individuals integrate their impairments into a sense of self (Scotch, 2001). Traditionally, the medical model pathologized disability as inherent to the individual (Oliver, 1990). In contrast, the social model views disability as created by societal barriers that exclude or stigmatize people with impairments (Oliver, 1990; Reeve, 2002).

Rather than focusing on cure or deficiency, the social model emphasizes embracing disability as a normal part of human diversity (Rembis, 2010). It locates "disability not in the person but in society's failure to provide appropriate services and accommodate people with various impairments" (Rembis, 2010, p.19).

Adopting positive disability identities has been linked to improved well-being and emotional coping (Dunn & Burcaw, 2013). However, dominant cultural narratives still present disability in negative, non-sexualized ways that position disabled people as ambiguous outsiders (Garland-Thomson, 2002). Through creative expression, individuals can construct counter-narratives that represent disability accurately on their own terms (Meekosha, 2011; O'Toole, 2015). This literature informed exploring how Akonnor's self-portrait presents an alternative identity perspective.

### **Role of Creativity and Arts in Coping With Illness/Disability**

Creative expression through various art forms has been shown to benefit coping and quality of life for those with disabilities or illnesses (Stuckey & Nobel, 2010). Art-making can foster positive emotions, increase self-esteem, and provide a sense of control over one's situation (Malchiodi, 2012; Reynolds & Prior, 2003).

Through creative works, individuals can communicate personal experiences that mainstream portrayals often neglect to represent (Ledger & Edwards, 2011). This empowers disabled voices and promotes alternative stories and perspectives (Champeny, 2018).

Producing and sharing narrative or visual art also allows coping through meaning-making of a disrupted identity (Charmaz, 2002; Reynolds & Prior, 2003). By constructing their disability experiences artistically, people gain deeper self-awareness and processes of acceptance (Letts, 2009; Stuckey & Nobel, 2010).

Exhibiting creative works publicly can facilitate peer support and community, important for well-being especially during illness (Molassiotis et al., 2005; Stuckey & Nobel, 2010). This validates disability experiences and constructs positive social roles outside of limitations imposed by medical models (Nicholson et al., 2002; O'Brien, 2011).

### **Lack of Research Exploring Visual Art by Individuals With Disabilities**

While disability arts and creative practices have gained scholarly attention, research specifically analyzing visual artworks by disabled individuals remains limited (LeGrade & Jipson, 1995; O'Brien & Lyle, 2013).

Much existing literature examines community arts programs and exhibitions involving disabled participants rather than focusing on individuals' artistic expressions (Holder & Kirksey, 2018). Studies also tend to prioritize disability arts' impacts on social inclusion rather than artistic merit or representation (Simpson, 2017).

There is a need for inquiry that centers artistic works to understand the meanings disabled creators assign and communicate through their chosen mediums (O'Brien, 2011). Qualitative analyses could provide nuanced insights into disability identities and lived realities represented within self-generated art (Meekosha, 2011).

Given the demonstrated value of creativity for well-being, further investigations are warranted into how visual arts authored by disabled persons shed light on their realities (Champeny, 2018; Storr, 2005). This may help address gaps where "disabled people are typically portrayed as the subject of works rather than their authors" (O'Brien, 2011, p.144).

Understanding Akonnor's artwork through close examination fills part of this need by prioritizing analysis of a disabled individual's self-generated visual representation. This begins addressing the lack of research centering disabled artists' perspectives through their own expressive works.

### **Methodology**

This research utilizes a qualitative case study methodology. Qualitative case studies allow for in-depth exploration of an individual's experience within its real-life context through various data sources (Yin, 2014).

For this study, the case is Kwasi Akonnor and the unit of analysis is his self-portrait artwork paired with an accompanying narrative. Qualitative methods are well-suited for gaining a rich understanding of Akonnor's perspective as represented through his creative expression (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Data collection involved analyzing both Akonnor's self-portrait image and the written text of his narrative published accompanying the artwork (Akonnor, 2022). Specifically, a thematic analysis approach was used to systematically code and identify patterns of meaning across these data sources (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Trustworthiness of interpretations was strengthened through taking an emic, participant-guided perspective and maintaining reflexivity regarding positionality as a non-disabled

researcher (Nowell et al., 2017). Participant validation was also employed by inviting Akonnor to provide feedback on the accuracy of initial findings (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Together, this qualitative case study methodology allowed for in-depth exploration and contextualized understanding of the themes within Akonnor's creative representation of navigating CD.

### **Thematic Analysis of Self-Portrait and Narrative**

A thematic analysis was also conducted to identify patterns of meaning within Akonnor's self-portrait and accompanying narrative (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This involved closely examining both textual and visual elements through iterative readings to code emerging ideas in an inductive manner (Nowell et al., 2017).

Initial low-inference codes ascribed descriptive labels to chunked data excerpts or specific visual components, like "facial expression" or "description of CD symptoms" (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Focused coding then collated these codes into potential overarching themes.

Themes were continuously refined through analysis across data sources to ensure internally homogenous and externally heterogeneous themes accurately represented the coded data (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Visual memos documented analytical and interpretive insights regarding symbolic representations within the artwork.

To address research questions, themes were analyzed for what they revealed about Akonnor's perspectives on navigating disability, identity formation, and creative empowerment. Disconfirming evidence was also considered to strengthen credibility of interpretations (Patton, 2015).

Participant validation involved inviting Akonnor to provide feedback on thematic accuracy, which confirmed resonance and helped address any misconceptions in the analysis (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

### **Research Questions on Themes of Disability, Identity, Empowerment**

The overarching research question guiding this analysis is:

In what ways does Akonnor's self-portrait serve as a visual representation of his experiences and outlook as a CD survivor?

This broad question is addressed through exploration of the following sub-questions:

1. How does Akonnor's self-portrait depict his experiences of navigating life with a disability? (Closer, 2018)
2. What perspectives on disability identity formation are communicated through Akonnor's artistic representation of himself? (Rembis, 2010)
3. In what ways does Akonnor's self-portrait and narrative suggest that creative expression empowered his sense of self and resilience? (Champeny, 2018)

Analyzing Akonnor's artwork through these lenses provide insight into his unique perspective on living with CD and the transformative role of creativity. The questions aim to understand how his visual depiction addresses interwoven themes of disability, identity, and empowerment.

## **Findings 1 - Disability & Identity**

### **Portrayal of Struggles and Daily Challenges of Living With CD**

Akonnor's self-portrait powerfully conveys his daily challenges living with CD. Through his asymmetrical head posture, twisted to one side (fig. 3-6), viewers encounter the physical struggles of involuntary muscle contractions pulling his neck and face awry.

The dark, brooding tones that fill the background behind Akonnor's visibly strained posture evoke the gloom and isolation plummeting from disabling spasms. His closed eye contact confronts assumptions by attesting "this is what CD looks like" and "I endure this affliction" (Akonnor, 2022).

Akonnor's narrative supplements this visual representation, describing CD symptom fluctuations from "aching stiffness to painful wrenching" that disrupted routines and social participation (Akonnor, 2023). Normal tasks like self-care, hobbies and work became difficulties due to unpredictable "twists that society never understood" (Akonnor, 2022).

Through his artistic rendering, Akonnor presents a window for spectators into the physiologically taxing and socially alienating reality beneath the surface of his fluid yet constrained body. His self-portrait gives form to an abstract neurological condition by translating privately endured hardships into a shareable framed testimony.

### **Embracing Disability as Part of Identity Rather Than Defining Characteristic**

Rather than portraying himself through a lens of deficiency, Akonnor's self-portrait suggests embracing CD as one aspect of a multidimensional identity (Rembis, 2010).

While his physical pose makes CD visibly apparent, Akonnor's strong eye contact conveys an inner resolve and sense of self that transcends medical definitions. The wrinkles on his face represent a lifetime of experiences—not just struggle, but also wisdom and purpose developed through adversity.

In his narrative, Akonnor reflects on developing "understanding of who I am beyond disability" through creative expression (Akonnor, 2022). He acknowledges CD as something he must navigate, not a barrier to self-actualization.

By depicting himself and telling his story, Akonnor reshapes dominant narratives that risk reducing disabled people to conditions (Garland-Thomson, 2011). His portrayal presents disability as a normal aspect of human diversity, rather than as abnormality defining his character (Rembis, 2010).

Akonnor's self-representation embraces an integrated disability identity aligned with the social model perspective (Rembis, 2010). It communicates disability pride through dignified self-authorship.

## **Findings 2 - Creativity & Empowerment**

### **Art as Means of Expression, Control and Finding Purpose**

Akonnor's self-portrait elucidates how visual art empowered him through creative expression, agency, and finding purpose (Malchiodi, 2012).

In his narrative, Akonnor reflects that painting allowed expressing "feelings that words could not convey" regarding navigating disability (Akonnor, 2022). The self-portrait format uniquely captures his lived reality while maintaining control over representation as opposed to being defined by medical or popular perspectives (O'Brien, 2011).

Akonnor depicts himself as the subject but also author of his story. His portrait asserts personal authority over identity narratives (Champeny, 2018). By communicating his perspectives artfully, Akonnor transitions from receiver of disabling labels to active communicator shaping understanding (Meekosha, 2011).

He explains that creating and displaying artwork stimulated "self-revelation and empowerment" by fostering acceptance (Akonnor, 2022). Art-making also provided structure and motivation when confronting social isolation (Stuckey & Nobel, 2010).

Akonnor's self-portrait exemplifies how visual creativity can transform disability experiences into a purpose that cultivates well-being, community, and advocacy through self-generated expression on one's own terms (O'Brien, 2011; Storr, 2005).

### **Promoting Resilience and Acceptance Through Sharing Experience**

By exhibiting his self-portrait publicly, Akonnor fostered resilience through validating his experience and developing community (Molassiotis et al., 2005; Stuckey & Nobel, 2010).

In his narrative, Akonnor discusses exhibiting his artwork and hopes that "viewers will gain understanding and empathy for what it means to live with disability" (Akonnor, 2022). Displaying his portrait enables raising awareness of CD realities while also increasing acceptance of himself.

Presenting his authentic disability identity artistically empower other disabled individuals by role modeling creative coping and self-advocacy (Nicholson et al., 2002). Viewing his portrait may help viewers relate to disability experiences in a more holistic, multi-dimensional manner (Charmaz, 2002).

By sharing control over his public narrative through art, Akonnor cultivates community support and validation crucial for well-being (Molassiotis et al., 2005). His resilience is reflected in creative works that constructively reframe disability from a place of empowerment.



### Kwasi Akonnor's Self-Portrait



Figure 1: Akonnor's self-portrait



Figure 2: Akonnor's self-portrait



Figure 3: Akonnor's self-portrait

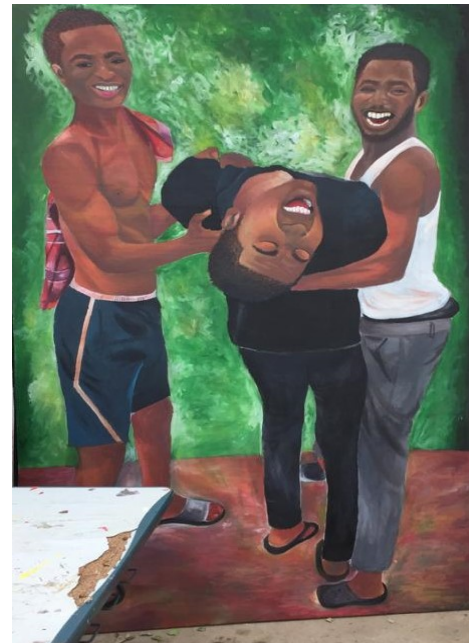


Figure 4: Akonnor's self-portrait with friends



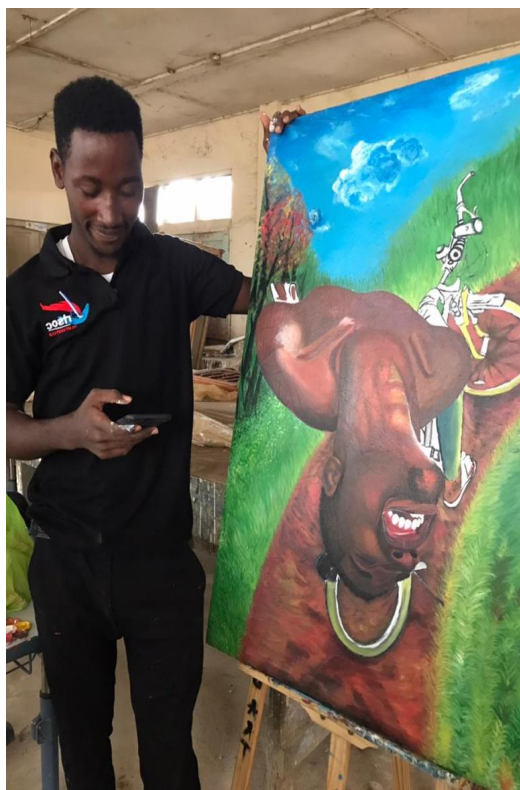


Figure 5: Akonnor standing beside his work



Figure 6: Akonnor standing by his work

## Conclusion

### Articulation of Alternative Disability Perspective

Through Akonnor's self-portrait, he articulates an alternative perspective on disability that emphasizes ability over impairment. Rather than portraying himself as a victim of CD, Akonnor's dignified representation embraces disability as a natural aspect of human diversity.

By presenting his authentic lived experience of navigating disability through creative self-expression, Akonnor models empowerment that counters mainstream narratives of pity or inspiration. His self-portrait reframes disability from a place of authentic control, resilience and holism.

Akonnor asserts disabled people's right and capacity to author their own identity stories. His perspective embraces disability identities aligned with the social model, rejecting narrow depictions that reduce individuals to medical conditions.

Sharing his artwork publicly, Akonnor authentically expands public understanding of what it means to live with disability. He cultivates disability pride and community by role modeling creative coping that fosters acceptance of diverse bodies and minds.

In conclusion, Akonnor's alternative disability articulation makes an important contribution toward shaping more nuanced and inclusive representations that honor disabled people's lived realities and artistic voices. His self-portrait demonstrates the transformative power of creative expression for empowerment.

## **Highlight Transformative Role of Art in Lives of Those With Disabilities**

Akonnor's experience powerfully demonstrates the transformative role that creative expression can play in the lives of individuals with disabilities. Through art-making, Akonnor found an outlet to process his CD journey, assert control over his narrative, and cultivate purpose and community.

His self-portrait illustrates how artwork provided a constructive means of navigating disabling barriers by releasing private struggles into the public as cultural testimony. It restored Akonnor's sense of agency and empowered resilient self-advocacy.

Presenting his lived experience artistically enabled Akonnor to overcome isolation and promote disability pride. By exhibiting his dignified self-representation, his role modeled creative coping that fosters acceptance and well-being.

Akonnor's story suggests the value of creativity for allowing non-conforming expressions of impairment, identity and purpose that cannot be reduced to medical models. His alternative articulation expands public understanding of disability intersections with identity and empowerment.

In conclusion, Akonnor demonstrates the transformative power of art to reshape experiences with disability from places of empowerment, resilience and advocacy. Creative works merit closer analysis to better support disabled individuals' holistic flourishing through self-generated expression.

## **Practical Applications for Disability Support and Future Research**

### **Practical Applications:**

- Incorporate arts/creative therapies into clinical disability support to foster holistic well-being through emotive and agentic expression.
- Develop disability arts programs and advocacy through exhibitions/resources that center self-authored works and alternative narratives.
- Train support staff on asset-based models of disability that reject narrow conceptions and affirm creative identities.

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## *Mass Learning Through Interactive Public Art With Data Sculpture*

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### **Abstract**

An interactive public artwork “English 8 minus 2” was researched and developed by relaying the IoT technology and mass learning principles. This artwork mainly aims at providing students on campus with the opportunity to learn English by installation artwork, which expects to reduce 2 credits from the original 8 credits of English score accordingly. The installation comprises ten LED light pillars, offering two display modes: a light art exhibition and an English learning mode. Moreover, students’ results of English learning in each department will also be reflected at the regular time. In this regard, those engaged in the artwork are not only statically immersed in the aesthetic feeling with the alternation of light and shadow brought by the artwork, but also interacting with the artwork by themselves. Furthermore, we delve into the potential of “English 8 minus 2” to generate motivation, drawing upon the “Self-Determination Theory” proposed by Professor Edward Deci. Additionally, we analyze whether the artwork can bring socio-pleasure, employing Lionel Tiger's framework of pleasures. We anticipate that this interactive learning method, which merges “public art” and “mass learning,” will be applied in more public spaces in the future.

Keywords: IoT, Mass Learning, Public Art, Interactive Installation, Data Sculpture, SDT, Socio-Pleasure

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## Introduction

Since being generated, data operation has played an invisible role. The data is actually stored in the cloud, computer, mobile phone, or various software. With considerable computing speed, it helps us solve the tough and tedious problems confronted by us. We are deeply attracted by such invisible power. The in-depth significance and influence hidden in data will be unveiled if the invisible data operation is presented in a visual way by relying on data transformation so that everybody is able to see, experience, and appreciate it in daily life. When it comes to our research, the relevant data is embedded in art installations and public fields so that participants will be able to experience and understand it. At National Tsing Hua University, every student must complete 8 credits of English courses before graduation, which is very difficult for some students. So, we want to help students learn English and inspire them more motivated, We created an interactive installation artwork and designed this “English 8 minus 2” interactive artwork to provide students on campus to make learning English easier and more fun. By the way. Our installation includes participants’ interaction result data, this data is massive, so it is like big data, and we input them into an installation it is just like Data Sculpture. We build this interactive artwork, if one of the college’s students can reach the highest score, the university administration will consider granting 2 credits for that college for free.

For these reasons, we want to help students achieve this goal. We designed the “English 8 minus 2” installation. It consists of 10 LED light pillars, offering 2 display modes: an English learning mode and a Light art mode. We use IoT technology and mass learning principles to stimulate learning and motivate students. When students achieve the highest score in English learning mode could have 2 credits for free, and then students can reduce by 8 credits, making graduation easier. To use this installation artwork, we have three play modes of learning and presentation. One is English learning mode, on-the-hour light art mode, and dynamic light art mode. Regarding the English learning mode, students need to give answers to English questions by mobile WebApp. When the user scans a QR-Code, and then opens WebAPP, the web app will show some vocabulary questions for the user to click the right answer. One right answer will light up an LED light. Each score for each question is further translated by the IoT program of the cloud server and displayed on the LED light represented, as shown in Figure 1. Students can play with transformed installation art on campus and form a group to learn and make a competition. In this way, they are able to generate a great deal of learning motivation and incentive effect for students on campus.



Figure 1: This is an “English 8 minus 2” installation and light-up form a right answer.



In light art mode: On-the-hour light art mode is used to display the performance status of English learning. The other one is used to perform dynamic effects at a specific time. To sum up the above modes, we not only make an installation for English learning. We also used the “Self-Determination Theory” [1] proposed by Prof. Deci & Ryan to discuss the intrinsic and extrinsic inspiration of the English 8 minus 2 events. Besides, we used Tiger’s four Pleasure Theory [2] to discuss students playing English learning mode and appreciating light art mode.

## Related Work

In 2008, Zhao and Vande Moere [3]. From their perspective, Data sculpture is a physical artificial product. Its objective is to provide the public artwork with data and understanding related to social interaction. In this related work, we are also using the Data of English learning mode results to build a Data sculpture, and that could be a public social interaction mode. The “Data Gate” Development team from Ouch New Media Studio in 2020 [4]. This artwork is considered the first public art of data sculpture for NASA research on artificial intelligence astronomy. It is actually based on the AI technology of the NASA Kepler dataset. The same artwork creation form artist Matthew, created “As We Are” artwork in 2017 [5]. It is a gigantic head-shaped installation that rotates through a database of 3D portraits, including local residents of Columbus and visitors. It is a huge 3D display device that is able to digitally copy the faces of participants. Two cases use the Data to transform an installation like Data sculpture, as shown in Figure 2. We want to use these ideas for our “English 8 minus 2” interactive installation.

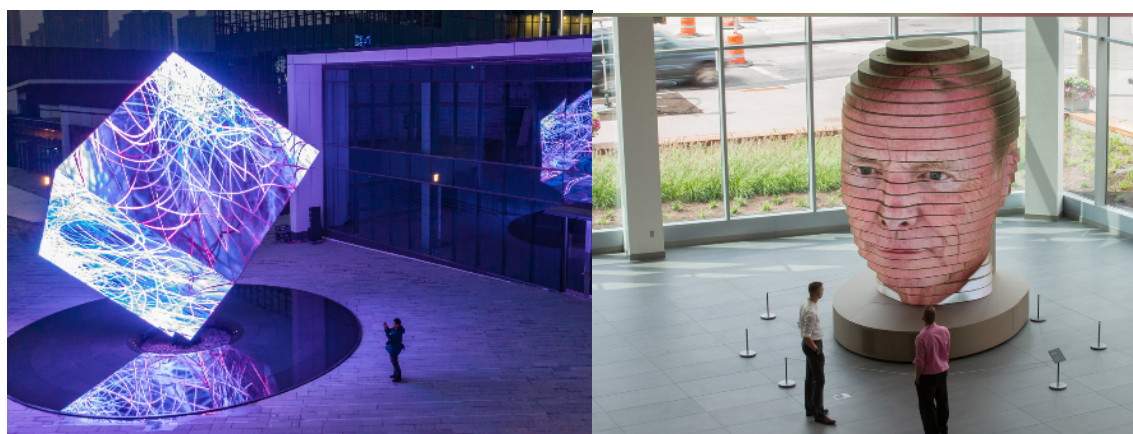


Figure 2: “Data Gate” (Left) and “As We Are” (Right) installation artworks.

In 2021, the New York artist, Jen Lewin created “The Pool.” [6] This artwork using a huge circular field consisting of multiple interactive LED lighting pads shows an aura of effects in the public artwork. Such artwork is a mass interactive type with the purpose of triggering mass pleasure. The interactive effect of lighting is considered the basis for mass learning ability. In 1999. From the perspective of Deborah Kilgore, “collective learning” [7] happens among two or more different people, so the common significance is actually established and the relevant action is taken by the collective. In this research, it points out “mass learning”, since the “collective.” In our research, we use “interactive LED lighting” and “Mass learning” to consist randomly and it is diversified without a fixed team being constructed. Moreover, the individuals interacting with each other in this artwork do not know one another. We survey these related works to find out mass learning and interactive public artwork with data sculpture between related English 8 minus 2 artwork relevant and possible.

In SDT theory, [1] we use extrinsic/intrinsic motivation to find out user self-determination. In this installation, we define extrinsic motivation for mass learning and intrinsic motivation for interactive WebAPP. In pleasure theory, We use these four forms of pleasure and our artwork relation [2]. Physio-pleasure: is the pleasure of the body that may see, hear, and touch. On this level design elements such as comfort durability, wearables, etc. It's like our LED light pillar effect. Psycho-pleasure: is about the user's reactions and their psychological state of mind at the behavior level. It's like our English Learning mode for answering questions. Socio-pleasure: can be seen in the form of rational behaviors at a reflective level of design, also effective installation for sociability. It's like our installation for mass learning. Ideo-pleasure: rely on aesthetics and embodied values in an installation. It may be rooted in psychology, user experience, or environmental elements. It's like our installation artwork and light art mode.

## Methodology

About this artwork methodology: This interactive artwork "English 8 minus 2" is installed at the Pigeon Square of NTHU, which consists of 10 side-by-side LED pillars, Each installation's high as two meters. In this installation technology and structure are split into three blocks: (1) web APP, (2) cloud server, program, and (3) LED data sculpture. The entire system consists of three blocks which are able to transmit information through a wireless network. A set of data transmission systems by IoT technology, which is able to implement a series of interactions and data transmission through mobile phones, cloud servers, and LED lights. In LED lights are totally 3 modes in the artwork which are respectively: "English learning mode", "On-the-hour light art mode" and "Dynamic light art mode."

In this installation technology, WebAPP uses users' mobile phones to open a web page. When the user opens a mobile phone to scan a QR-Code to get a web link and open it. The web link will open a web page, the installation will into English learning interactive mode, and the installation lights will switch to a colorful effect and be ready to play, as shown in Figure 3.



Figure 3: Uses users' mobile phones to scan a QR-Code to get a link and open to play.

In this WebApp program: The user needs to open the web page as a WebAPP to interact. Step 1: It is a web page by scanning the QR code with mobile phones, users may answer questions interactively to add up some score. So they need to select one of the colleges to

represent the user's college, as shown in Figure 4. Step 2: When users see the question on the web app, they need to click one of the questions to answer it. Step 3: According to the instructions, the user will generate the relevant data and effect for the English learning mode, as shown in Figure 4.

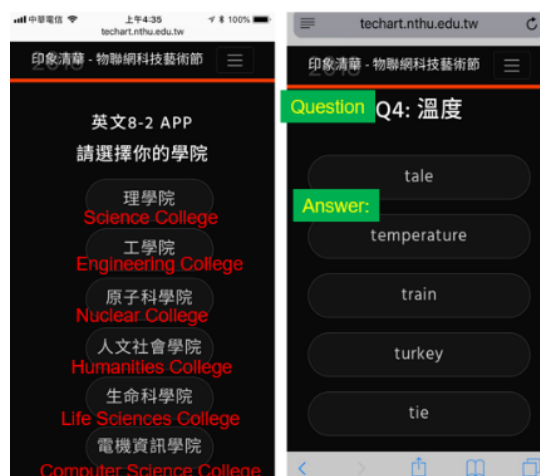


Figure 4: The first step is to select one of the colleges to represent (Left), and click one of the questions to answer (Right).

**The Cloud Server Program:** It is the cloud server program constructed by ourselves and it is used to receive and transmit real-time data from WebApp. The user interactive behavior and results of the English questions will be bi-directional communication between request and response in order to data going backstage. Cloud Server Program also designed to store these questions be as data in the database. Then, it constantly and synchronously uploads the English score to the LED data sculpture for updating the mode value.

**In LED light pillars and data sculpture:** When users complete answer the questions and trigger the LED effect. The Score will transform into the Data and show each college's total score. These colleges' scores will transform into 10 LED light pillars and represent each college in NTHU. Also, these LED light pillars as LED Data Sculpture are mainly used to receive the data from the Cloud Server Program and continuously update the data with the controller. If the relevant data is read, the lighting controller will be interactive results, and shown timely in three modes linked by lighting data sculpture. These modes depend on the Data and use the Cloud Server Program to compute the score's results. When the user's score Data is transformed and sent to the Cloud Server Program. In the transmission and computing of data: Firstly, participants are supposed to connect with the Web App of the mobile phone's network by scanning the QR code to get a unique URL address. In this way, when the participant gets a URL, the answer mode for English learning is initiated. Meanwhile, participants using the Web APP will communicate through the Web Socket and Apache Web Server to transmit and compute in the Cloud Server Program. In the next step, the data of all participants who deal with the English puzzle through the mobile network will be stored in the database with the web server. The data exchange by JSON File and the number of correct answers information from participants will be recorded. All of the exchange and stored data are real-time and bi-directional communication (MQTT Protocol), as shown in Figure 5.

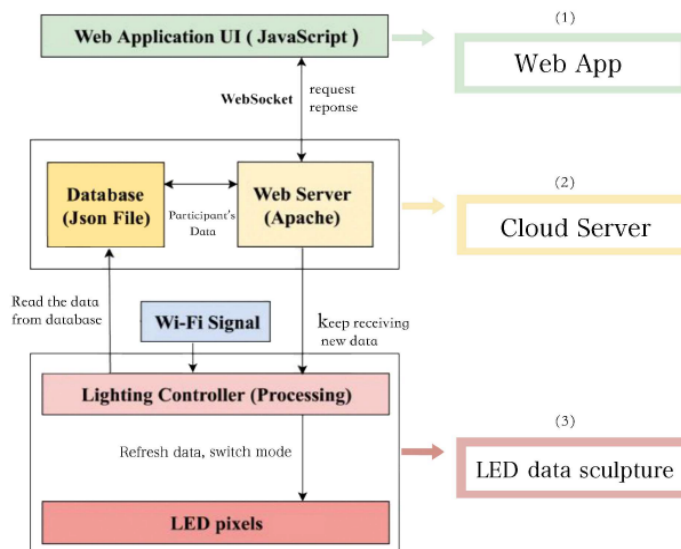


Figure 5: The network and transmitting design for the “English 8 minus 2” system.

When Web APP (1) and Cloud Server Program (2) are transmitting information and messages to each other, Cloud Server Program (2) and LED data sculpture (3) exchange data will be synchronously. The lighting controller is a PC computer and LED control board with part of control components, transformers, and wireless signal processing modules. The LED pixels can be controlled by the processing program. The program runs an effect application to control light artwork.

The above parts, It about technical and Data transform ways to run the “English 8 minus 2” installation. In the English learning mode design detail: We design two sets of question rules in the question database. One is the simple questions of the English examination for students in junior high school. The other is difficult questions from IELTS. The two sets of questions are randomly distributed for participants to answer. When users using a mobile phone scan the QR Code from the stand. Open the web app and select one of the colleges represented on the light pillar. In 60 seconds, the user needs to answer the right question. One right answer value will light up the LED light pillar in one yellow color unit. If the user collects a lot of the right answers, the system will add value for each light pillar. The answer score just like data will transform to each college and show different various colors, as shown in Figure 6.



Figure 6: The user collects a lot of the light answers, which will show different various colors.

In the On-the-hour light art mode. Every hour and system will detect no one playing this installation. The system will show the score value. One answer of scores for the specific college will be shown by the 10 light pillars. According to the time, when no participants interact for a period of time, this effect will run for about 5 minutes. That is very beautiful



and elegant for visual effects, and the LED color will be checked for participants engaged answering in every hour. In Dynamic light art mode: All 10 light pillars will be presented with dynamic white lights for the artistic light show.

### **Mass Learning Survey**

This artwork, we were built during the Tsing Hua Effects Festival in 2019 [8], and we did a survey in 2023 using video records to show and explain how to work for 31 participants. in 2019, at that time, we didn't have to design a survey and do research things. After the COVID-19 pandemic. We are afraid of the virus spreading, so we are doing research this year. In this research, we are designing a survey including two theories to find out whether participants using this work for mass learning is effective and motivation to stimulate English learning.

In the SDT theory proposed by Prof. Deci & Ryan. This theory focuses on an extrinsic/intrinsic motivational theory of personal, development, and social processes. Especially autonomous motivation and controlled motivation. Tiger's four Pleasure Theory focuses on evaluating how pleasurable a product will be used and owned. By Pleasure theory, we want to find out Light art mode for students physio-pleasure and psycho-pleasure. Also, the English learning mode for students is "socio-pleasure" and "ideo-pleasure."

In questionnaire design: We have designed 10 questions for participants to answer, as shown in the Appendix. These are 10 Questions from 1 to 10. All questions are in two theories on how to design and set up. For example Question 1. Would you find it interesting? Could the "English learning mode" in the artwork be a new form of public art? In this question, we design SDT theory to point out extrinsic motivation and in pleasure theory, we get socio-pleasure for a new form of public art in this installation. For other questions, in question 2, we design SDT theory to point out extrinsic motivation and pleasure theory, and we get physio-pleasure. In question 3, we design SDT theory to point out intrinsic motivation and pleasure theory, we get ideo-pleasure. In question 4. we focus on effect experience and inspire more feelings of effect representation. In question 5, we focus on this mobile the WebAPP where answering questions can earn points within the interaction installation and find out which Learning Mode is more interesting. In question 6, we focus on how to better embody the spirit of "interdisciplinary collaboration" and "teamwork?" In question 7, we focus on English scores and inspire the idea of wanting to start studying. In question 8, we focus on new knowledge, and new experiences, and find them refreshing. In question 9, we focus on new learning modes and more effective experiences.

Depends on the above questionnaire design. In SDT theory, we made a survey results. In terms of extrinsic motivation, over 93% believe that extrinsic can be stimulated. In terms of intrinsic motivation over 96% believe that intrinsic can be stimulated. By Pleasure theory, we also made survey results. Light art mode brought students physio-pleasure and psycho-pleasure. Doing English learning mode brought students "socio-pleasure" and "ideo-pleasure."

### **Conclusion**

In future works, This design may become a new type of "Mass Learning" or "Collective Learning", integrating cross-field knowledge and creative ideas into an imagination of the future. It can be used in advertising, creative learning teaching...etc. In Taiwan, we have also

used "English 8 minus 2" for university anniversary activities and applications for some special events. This public interactive taking such content as the objective of creation can be the pioneer for the combination of "Public Art" and "Mass Learning" in the future. It is the contribution of the research to expand the thickness and dimension of the development of mass learning in works of public interactive art. Will the students from the college who finally get the highest score in English studies be reduced from 2 credits? Unfortunately not. The school's Academic Affairs Office thought our idea was very good, but it requires a school meeting to make a decision. Anyway, our "English 8-2" public art learning has been a favorite and recognized by the school and students.

### **Acknowledgments**

Thanks to the Spring Tsing Hua Foundation for providing the related expenses for paper publication, and providing funds to implement the "English 8 minus 2" installation artwork.

## Appendix: Questionnaire Design

Questions	SDT Theory Design in Questionnaire	Pleasure Theory Design in Questionnaire
Q1: Would you find it <b>interesting</b> ? Could the “English learning mode” in the artwork be a <b>new form of public art</b> ?	SDT Extrinsic Motivation	Socio-Pleasure ( new form of public art )
Q2: Regarding the “English 8 minus 2” artwork, <b>the LED effects display the scores</b> for various colleges. <b>Does it inspire you to engage</b> in an “English learning mode” to improve your scores?	SDT Extrinsic Motivation	Physio-Pleasure ( LED effect display the scores )
Q3: Regarding the appearance and visual effects of the “English 8 minus 2” art installation, do you agree that the “art installation of certain data significance can as a <b>new mode of learning</b> ?”	SDT intrinsic Motivation	Ideo-Pleasure ( new mode of learning )
Q4 : "In the Light art mode," do you think that the <b>effect experience</b> of “English 8 minus 2” can <b>inspire more feeling of effect representation</b> to enhance the results of English learning?	SDT Extrinsic / intrinsic motivation	psycho-pleasure ( effect experience )
Q5 : Regarding the “English 8 minus 2” mobile Web APP where answering questions correctly <b>can earn points</b> within the interactive installation, do you find this <b>learning mode more interesting</b> ?	SDT Extrinsic / intrinsic motivation	physio-pleasure ( earn points )
Q6 : if you are a designer and implementing the “English 8 minus 2” interactive art installation, <b>do you think this artwork would better embody the spirit of “interdisciplinary collaboration” and “teamwork”?</b>	SDT intrinsic motivation SDT intrinsic Motivation	socio-pleasure ( interdisciplinary collaboration and teamwork )
Q7: Do you think it’s important to see students from other colleges inputting their <b>"English scores," and does this inspire the idea of wanting to start studying</b> English diligently?	SDT Extrinsic / intrinsic motivation	ideo-pleasure ( English scores and idea of wanting to start studying )
Q8: During the appreciation of the interactive installation artwork “English 8 minus 2,” did you <b>acquire new knowledge, and new experiences, and find it refreshing</b> ?	SDT Extrinsic motivation	psycho-pleasure ( new knowledge, new experiences )
Q9: Regarding the interactive installation artwork “English 8 minus 2,” do you want to know how to integrate <b>it into big data, new learning modes, more effective experiences, or situational atmospheres</b> ?	SDT Extrinsic motivation	physio-pleasure ( new learning modes, more effective experiences )
Q10 : Regarding the interactive installation artwork “English 8 minus 2,” do you have any suggestions?		

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***Carbonization of the Aesthetic and Aestheticization of Carbon:  
Historicizing Oil and Its Visual Ideologies in Iran (1920–1979)***

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**Abstract**

The protracted history of consuming carbon-based energy sources in Iran culminated in 1908 with the momentous discovery of the inaugural oil field in Masjed Soleyman. This newfound carbon-based source not only brought a lot of revenues to Iran but also, brought forth a multitude of materialities like pipelines, roads, bridges, refinery factories, tankers, and rigs into Iran. This new materiality exerted a profound influence on the perception and imagination of Iranians, particularly Iranian artists. Consequently, carbon permeated diverse manifestations within Iranian artworks assuming various artistic approaches; in other words, carbon was inevitably introduced into aesthetics. Serendipitously, the ascension of Reza Shah Pahlavi to power in Iran almost coincided with the discovery of oil. Reza Shah and his successor, Mohammadreza Shah, sought to position themselves as a novel international force governing a "developed" nation for which they needed to lubricate the production-consumption cycle in Iran. To achieve this objective, they championed extensive governmental propagandas that celebrated carbon-based consumerism, and with that, they introduced aesthetics into carbon. Drawing inspiration from Walter Benjamin's notions "politicizing aesthetic" and "aestheticizing politics" and insisting that in Iran, oil/carbon is politics, this paper aims to historicize the process of carbonization of aesthetics in Iranian art realm on the one hand, and aestheticization of carbon in governmental propaganda on the other hand. This paper focuses on visual ideologies in visual artworks, including architecture, painting, and sculpture in the artwork realm and postal stamps, postcards, and paper moneys, on the other hand.

Keywords: Aestheticization of Carbon, Carbonization of Aesthetics, Iran, Pahlavi Monarchy, Visual Ideology

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## Introduction

The Middle East serves as a geographical and economic bridge connecting Europe, Africa, and Asia. Its abundance of oil, a globally significant commodity, positions the region as a key economic hub for production and The impact of oil on the world economy is substantial, influencing various indicators worldwide (Taghizadeh-Hesary & Yoshino, 2014). The flows of this commodity connect local, national, and global scales, symbolizing the mobility inherent in globalization (Hein & Sedighi 2017). In the Middle East, oil plays a decisive role in shaping both the physical environment and the perceptions of those involved in its dealings.

Iran was the first country in the middle east in which Oil was discovered, starting with the drilling of Oil Well No.1 in Masjid Soluiman in 1908 by the First Exploration Company (Nazari & Khajoo, p. 305). This marked the beginning of the region's oil history and the raise of carbon's impact. The discovery triggered significant socio-political changes in Iran, including wars, revolutions, coup d'états, and regime change from the Qajar dynasty to Pahlavi with Reza Shah Pahlavi's crowning on December 25, 1925 (Rahnema, 2011: 115). Reza Shah, a military leader who seized power through a coup, used oil money to project Iran as an international power, following what Foucault called a modernization agenda (Afary & Anderson 2005: 80). The Pahlavi regime, including Reza Shah and his son Mohammad Reza Shah, promoted a carbon-based lifestyle through propaganda to modernize Iran and boost the production-consumption cycle. This paper explores the historicization of the Pahlavis' carbon aesthetization through visual propaganda tools like stamps, postcards, and paper money.

The discovery of oil, a new carbon-based source, not only transformed physical landscapes “producing spaces like warehouses, factories, and skyscrapers” (Iturbe, 2019) but also influenced the artistic imagination of Iranians, manifested in new paintings, sculptures, movies, etc. Similar to the industrial revolution, which “was at the same time an aesthetic and artistic revolution, and it became increasingly urgent that the arts approached the new urban-industrial context and its impact on culture” (Fraga, 2018) this new revolution in energy sources attracted artists' attentions too. The process in which oil as a carbon-based energy impact designers and artists' aesthetic is what I call “carbonization of aesthetic”. Drawing on Walter Benjamin's theory of "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," the concept emphasizes the reproduction aspect in relation to two way of production consists of the oil economy and the media used by the governments to aesthetize carbon. Following, I will historicize the process of carbonizing aesthetic, examining it first at the urban scale and then within the artworks produced by Iranian artists.

## Carbonization of Aesthetic

Oil industry, as Carola Hein (2022) has showed, due to its needs to new kinds of spaces have played a significant role in shaping the environment in “visible” and “recognizable” ways. This huge visible impact of oil industry, was accompanied by a new sense of aesthetic since that carbon “must be understood beyond its technical capacity, viewed instead as a political and cultural force with inevitable spatial repercussions” (Iturbe, 2019). All the rules and regulations for designing spaces and infrastructures for extracting, refining and distributing the oil, based on scientific “positivism” needed a correspondence aesthetic. The omnipresence of the oil as the main commodity flow for Iranian governments during 20<sup>th</sup> century, has resulted in the introduction of its relevant aesthetic into the world of art. In other words, supplementing Stephanie LeMenager` (2012) argument, I would say “the

inescapability of petroleum infrastructures in the twentieth century has entered” not only “literature”, but also any visual arts. This effect or I would say “carbonization of aesthetic”, has manifested in many examples during Pahlavi era.

## Urban Design

Abadan, situated in the southwest of Iran, stands as a prominent example of the carbonization of aesthetic in the country's urban fabric. The city's significance emerged with the discovery of oil in Iran, leading to the establishment of a refinery factory in Abadan due to its proximity to the sea. The Anglo-Iranian oil company, in response to the growing population, constructed housing projects for its employees and workers (Bavar, 2022: 371 & 372). “In this process, the first building to be erected was an iron structure lined with wood” (Crimson, 1997). This iron structure, one of the first of its kind in Iran, reflected the tangible imprint of carbon on physical spaces, challenging the notion of carbon as a mere fuel. The carbon aesthetic extended beyond construction materials and even influenced the rational grids that shaped the entire city of Abadan at the urban scale with the huge impact of Refinery factory on the city.

The grids in Abadan conveyed a message of “scientific efficiency” aimed at optimizing labor and production rather than minimizing energy consumption. Unlike green movements that focus on energy conservation, these grids aimed to maximize production within a specific timeframe. The oil company implemented a panopticon-like system, dividing the city into three zones based on race and class (Zandieh et al, 2020) treating workers as elements of a machine to enhance production efficiency. Although the use of a panopticon for labor discipline is not new, Abadan's scale was unprecedented, with the entire city designed as gears of a single factory. Even, the Oil College's clock tower, resembling refinery chimneys, was serving to remind students of their working hours. Comparing to the cases like American “petrotopias” in the framework of LeMenager’s work (2012), Abadan at that time still lacked “now ordinary US landscape of highways, low-density suburbs, strip malls, fast food and gasoline service island, and shopping centers ringed by parking lots or parking towers”, but still the urban planning “represents itself as an ideal end-state, repressing the violence that it has performed upon”. In other words, it represents a disciplined utopia concealing the exploitation inherent in the carbon-based system, presenting itself as an idealized end-state.

Abadan, Iran's primary oil city, embraced the carbonization of aesthetic and disseminated it to other cities through diverse visual ideologies. Beyond the panoptic spatial organization mentioned earlier, a broader theme of celebrating production and technology emerged in various forms across Iran. Unlike later governmental propaganda that framed technology as a symbol of progress, here, technology and production were valued intrinsically for their beauty. An illustrative example is Houshang Seyhoun's design for the Canadady soda factory in Tehran.

Seyhoun, the first Iranian architect to incorporate iron and concrete in residential designs, showcased transparency in both façade and plan, notably in his design for the Canadady soda factory in Tehran (Haghir, 2020: 457). Situated on a bustling street, the factory's fully transparent façade invited onlookers to observe the production process, resembling a museum. This celebration of technology and production, influenced by the carbon-based approach, featured characteristics such as exposed pipelines, large scale, transparency, and disciplined spatial order. It represented the carbonization of aesthetic, celebrating technology for its intrinsic beauty while overlooking its environmental impact. This aesthetic, part of the Anthropocene aesthetic, serves to distract from the destruction to the biosphere, as suggested

by Nicholas Mirzof to “allow us to move on, to see nothing and keep circulating, commodities, despite the destruction to the biosphere” (Mirzoeff, 2014). As the last but not least point I should say, Seyhoun's transparent façade aimed not to distract but to captivate attention towards the perceived "beauty" of industry. Seyhoun' approach initiated a trend of designs that later was manipulated in governmental propagandas which I will discuss them later.



Figure 1- Canadary Soda Factory. Source: <https://aoapedia.ir/>

## Painting and Sculpture

In various art forms, carbon has uniquely influenced aesthetic expression. Drawing from Thomas S. Davis' (2016) concept of Anthropocene aesthetic, I can say “some of the visual arts” in Iran “configures a more dialectical version of insecurity that figures nonhuman natures as more than a context”. An early example of this influence can be seen in Hossein Behzad's painting "Oil Poverty (The Black Gold)." The artwork portrays a man in distress, surrounded by oil rigs in a dark background, symbolizing the harsh impacts of the oil industry on people's lives. Zeinab Rajabi and Khashayar Qazizadeh (2018) have shown, this painting as part of a series of paintings aims to criticize the oil industry as a phenomenon which despite its huge impacts on people's life, financially was not of any help for them. All that carbon has brought up was misery, poverty and ecological crisis. In other words, “carbonization of aesthetic” here has invoked a radical criticism in artists.

Carbonization of aesthetic found broader critical expressions in the works of artists like Houshang Pezeshknia, a pioneer in the move toward "modern" art in Iran. Working in Abadan during a time when it was by so many considered “the capital of art and literature” (Kiaras, 2009), Pezeshknia, employed by the Anglo-Iranian Oil company, created numerous paintings depicting life in Iranian oil districts. One notable piece of him, "Scientific Theory," portrays an oil city dominated by a giant rig against a dry landscape with a red-orange sun. Some mathematical drawings on the sky cross the center of sun with some scientific descriptions. The land is all dry and it is hard to find any trace of a life in the painting. This painting with its composition, balancing the sun with the oil, with using the color of fire, and with its insistence on positivism, is a great example of carbonization of aesthetic. Again, contrary to the LeMenager `s work (2012), here we have an artist who have questions for “physicists or engineers” not for artists. Also, contrary to Seyhoun's approach, with a sense

of irony, Pezeshknia criticizes positivism of the science and carbon aesthetic. Pezeshknia's dialectical stance, aligns with Walter Benjamin's theory, revealing the emancipatory potential within the criticism of carbon modernization and aesthetic.

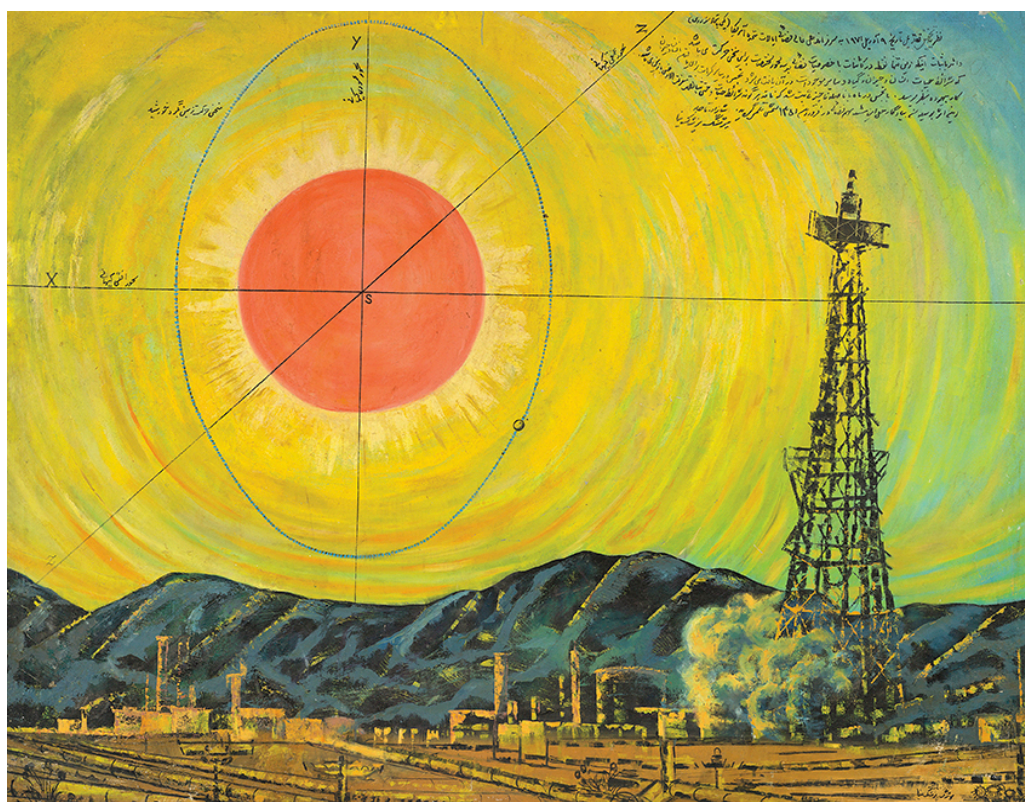


Figure 2- "Scientific Theory", Houshang Pezeshkian. Source: Wikipedia commons.

Other than Pezeshknia who showed this dialectical approach in all of his works, there were artists who showed this impact in few of their works and not in their whole career. Of these artists, it worths mentioning Iran Daroodi and Bahman Mohasses.

Since Iran Daroodi, contrary to Pezeshknia, was from an upper-class family and did not work for the oil company, we can say her work was in a relative distance from the real situation in Iranian Oil districts. However, her painting, "Our Veins, the Earth's Veins" (also known as "Iran's oil"), commissioned by the Italian company ITT in the oil industry (Ravanjou & Samadi Raad, 2018), adopts a heavily critical stance. Using red, white, and black as main colors symbolizing blood, oil, and coldness, Daroodi depicts oil pipelines as veins carrying blood from an industrial city, criticizing carbon for causing pain and suffering. The painting portrays a blast in the pipelines with dark smoke rising globally, and roots spreading from the blast on the ground, emphasizing the city's indifference to the suffering. While Daroodi's works often feature ruins and frozen landscapes (Aghaie & Jafary, 2021), "Our Veins, the Earth's Veins" uniquely blames fossil fuels and the carbon industry for these afflictions. Unlike her other paintings that depict abstract forms in distant frozen landscapes, this work details an industrial city with pipelines, giant tankers, and even structures like oilrigs.

Bahman Mohasses, like Daroodi, hails from a wealthy background, keeping his works somewhat distant from Iranian oil districts. Despite this, he remains critical of carbon. In his dual sculpture "Oil Spill," Mohasses offers an ecological critique of carbon modernization. The sculptures depict dying animals, a fish and a turtle, held in a human hand. The darkness



and the narrow pipeline attached to the hand distinctly highlight carbon aesthetic. Mohasses, with a broader perspective on carbon, addresses a significant ecological issue. As he himself has suggested: “Ultimately, what is the meaning of a painter in a world whose sky lacks any birds, whose sea lacks any fish, and whose jungle lacks any animal” (Montazemi, 2011). His work also like Pezeshknia and Daroodi, embodying a dialectical criticism of carbon modernization, exhibits the influence of carbonization of aesthetic.

Beyond the cases of artists like Hossein Behzed and Bahman Mohasses, the carbonization of aesthetic is evident in the works of numerous Iranian artists, including Ebrahim Golestan (the movie “A Fire”), Shokrollah Manzoor (An untitled painting in a 1964 exhibition named “Southern Oil infrastructures”), Nosratollah Moslemian (a painting entitled “Oil Industry workers’ strikes”), Manoochehr Safoorzadeh (in a series of painting), and even in Noriyuki Haraguchi’s work for Tehran Museum of Contemporary Arts (entitled “Oil Pool”) or more recently exhibitions like “The Black Gold” (at Shirin Art Gallery, 2021), and “Joyful Snow Spray” (By Amin Roshan at Homa Gallery). In these works, oil and carbon is so omnipresent that, similar to what LeMehager (2012) suggested about “Euro-American imagination”, “Oil has become implicitly synonymous with the world, in a large, Heideggerian sense of the human enframing and revealing of earth, thus the world we know”. The carbonization of aesthetic is an inherent consequence of Iran’s interaction with the oil industry, leading to dialectical criticism that unveils the emancipatory potentials of carbon and the oil industry. However, as we explore further, the aestheticization of carbon may not carry the same emancipatory potential.

### **Aestheticization of Carbon**

The oil wealth convinced the Iranian Shahs of their international influence, prompting the Pahlavis to launch an extensive plan of propaganda. Internally, they promoted a consumer lifestyle to boost the production-consumption cycle. Externally, they presented a new image of Iran through ideological propaganda using various formats such as postcards, stamps, flyers, money designs, exhibitions, ceremonies, competitions, and symposiums to aestheticize carbon. I will explore this aestheticization using three mediums—postal stamps, postcards, and paper money—attempting to weave them into a cohesive narrative.

### **Stamps**

In 1915, during the Qajar dynasty, the Iranian National Parliament passed the first postal laws, granting the exclusive right to the government for the publishing, distributing, and selling of stamps (Rahimi & Fathi, 2018). Initially, under the Qajar rule, Iranian stamps featured either a Qajar Shah’s image or the national symbol “Lion and Sun.” However, when Reza Shah came to power in the early 20th century, he replaced the old Qajar stamps with new designs.

Initially continuing the trend of featuring the king’s image and the national symbol, Reza Shah gradually introduced more diverse designs into the stamps. In these new designs, despite the absence of cultural-historical event of this era, like the establishment of first modern university in Iran, or cultural monuments built for Iranian poets (Avery, 2007: 51,64, 65 & Agheli, 2005: 771), there was an implicit attempt to depict an industrialized image of Iran. For instance, in the tenth year of Reza Shah’s crowning, a series of stamps were published which contained pictures like a train crossing a bridge, a factory, a ship, and an

airport. While not heavily emphasizing the oil industry, these stamps reflected the promotion of a "petromodern" lifestyle centered around consumerism.

During this period, Reza Shah prioritized promoting industrial achievements over cultural ones, reflecting his stance on carbon aesthetic. Stamps, as a governmental tool, aimed to convey a message not only within the country but also beyond national boundaries—a message of a "new industrial Iran." This message had dual interpretations: for foreigners, it showcased the power of the new Shah, while for Iranians, it represented a new lifestyle. Essentially, these stamps served to aestheticize carbon for Iranians, preparing them for the shift toward a carbon-based lifestyle. Bridges, airplanes, factories, and ships symbolized elements of a larger system made possible by the seemingly endless sources of oil as a carbon-based energy.

Following the forceful abdication of Reza Shah by the allied powers, all of these plans stopped for a year. In 1942, Mohammadreza Shah aimed to honor his father and assert his own rule by releasing 18 stamps. Ten depicted the Shah, and eight showcased landscapes, including the White Bridge in Ahwaz, Veresk Bridge, a train, a factory, and government buildings. This series expanded to include stamps featuring modern and historical buildings, as well as Tehran Train Station too (Rahimi and Fathi, 2018). This continued until 1951. With numerous stamps featuring bridges, trains, and industrial symbols, it is evident that the aestheticization of carbon remained a significant part of governmental propaganda, albeit subtly.

In 1951, with the nationalization of oil in Iran, significant changes occurred. Although Prime Minister Mohammad Mosadegh spearheaded the nationalization (McMurdo, 2012), Mohammadreza Shah utilized it to bolster himself and the Pahlavi monarchy. In 1952, on the anniversary of oil nationalization, five new stamps were issued, accompanied by three others on oil during 1951-1952. These, along with four additional stamps published on different occasions, formed a series of eleven stamps solely focused on oil (Rahimi & Fathi, 2018). This series highlights the increased importance of carbon for the Iranian monarchy post-nationalization and Mohammadreza Shah's concerted effort in aestheticizing carbon for society. Unlike his father, Mohammadreza Shah made oil a canonical factor in portraying Iran, following a more overt approach to the aestheticization of carbon, facilitated by the prevailing sense of nationalism. This approach extended to other mediums such as postcards and paper money too.

## **Postcards**

Carlson (2009) highlights that postcards serve sociopolitical purposes, offering insights into the mindset of their era. Baum (2003) describes them as a form of "soft news," allowing governments to convey messages subtly. Iran is also no exception in this rule, and both Reza Shah and Mohammadreza Shah utilized the modern postal system to spread their messages. Regarding this, first focusing on a famous postcard/picture, I will discuss how Reza Shah utilized postcards to aestheticize carbon and then, I will discuss aestheticization of carbon during Mohammadreza Shah's reign.

The picture I'll discuss, while not an actual postcard, functions similarly. It's the sole image of Reza Shah visiting Abadan's refinery in 1930, widely circulated and significant for understanding the political climate in Iran at the time. Initially seeming like a straightforward

image of authority at a crucial site, further historical and visual analysis unveils the deeper importance of this postcard-like picture.

Historically, this picture captures a pivotal moment in 1929, amid negotiations between the Iranian government and the Anglo-Iranian oil company to amend their contract. The existing agreement granted Iran 16 percent of the company's profits, but lacking transparency led to calls for changes (Ford, 1954: 17). Reza Shah's visit to the Abadan oil refinery during this critical period symbolized a reclaiming of power. In the image, Shah, leading a group in his new dress code, strides confidently to the right, overshadowing others, including British managers. In the background we see pipelines and tankers forming a cadre for the picture in balance to each other. And in the middle of the picture two oil pipelines are cutting the crew, showing the sudden disrupt that could happen due to the oil negotiations. However, Shah having a wooden cane (symbolically as a punishment tool) in hand is represented as the one who will not let this disruption happen: the arrow in the left side of the picture pointing to him and far away distance where he is looking at, is an insistence on his progress and victory in the future. Indeed, a year after this picture Reza Shah gained enough self-confidence to completely cancel the contract (Mirtorabi, 2017). The immanent result of this cancellation was 4 percent increase in Iran's share of the oil profit. However, beyond immediate gains, this aestheticization of carbon aimed to propagate the idea of progress through the new carbon-based source.

Mohammadreza Shah intensified the aestheticization of carbon compared to his father, publishing numerous postcards. Among them, four stand out—one colorful and three black and white. The colorful postcard depicts Abadan as the "City of Oil," presenting a picturesque scene of the refinery against a blue sky and green landscape. Despite factory smokes, it neglects socio-ecological concerns. The three monochromatic postcards share a similar visual ideology, portraying Abadan as an organized city in a "beautiful" natural setting, reinforcing the aestheticized image of the oil industry.

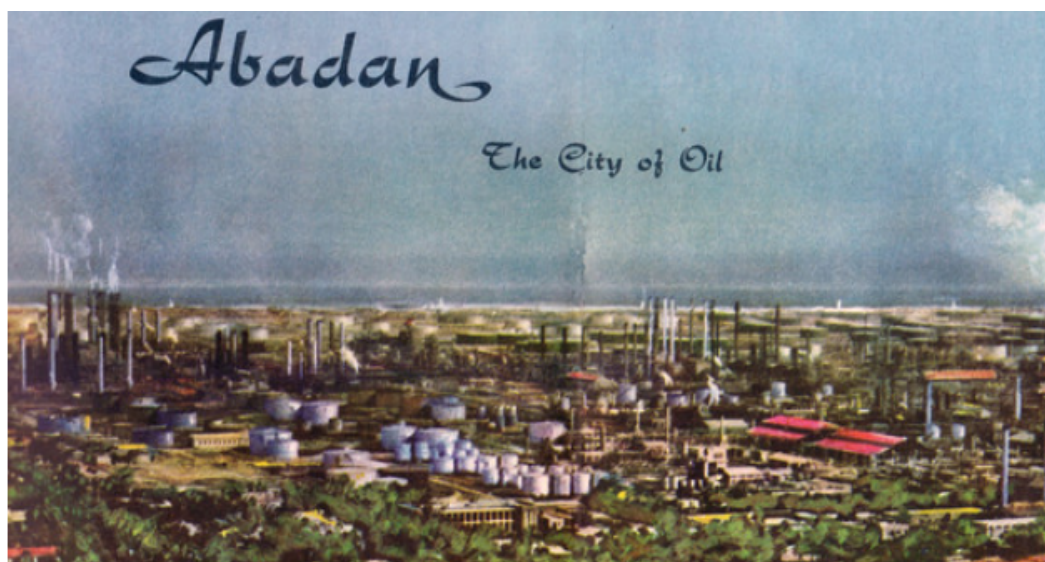
In fact, these pictures are depicting a utopia or following LeMenager (2012) I would like to say a "petrotopia". LeMenger for explaining this term, refers to Harvey who "recognized the implementation of utopianism to result in political systems" that "strictly regulate a stable and unchanging social process" such that "the dialectic of social process is repressed" and "no future needs to be envisaged because the desired state us already achieved" (ibid). The petrotopia or carbtopia described in these postcards is an utopia that is constituted based on the same discourse of abundance that as Herbstreuth (2016 :10) shows shape a major part of politics in countries like America where with the claim "that the country richly blessed with natural resources and that American ingenuity and the power of the free market would make US oil reserves essentially limitless". This aestheticization of carbon based on limitless of energy sources, illustrated in the postcards with endless streets and housing rows, reflects a consumerism where the entire city becomes the consumer object. Additionally, the postcards emphasize the notions of "community" and "neighborhood," highlighting the segregation lines between different areas in Abadan, designed by James M Wilson's company (Crimson, 1997), reinforcing a critique by David Harvey regarding similar ideas in a distinct context.

"The presumption here is that neighborhoods are in some sense 'intrinsic,' that the proper form of cities is some 'structure of neighborhoods, that 'neighborhood' is equivalent to 'community' and 'community is what most Americans want and need (whether they know it or not). It is further presumed that action at the scale defined by this new urbanism is



effective and sufficient to solve problems that exist at all other scales. The nostalgic and spatially limited strain of the utopian dream resurfaces” (Harvey, 2000: 171).

These neighborhoods that supposedly are the solution for all the countries` problems are actually means for covering other problems one of which is (as Harvey also describes) destroying everything for the sake of carbotopia consisting of all the parkways as “scenic drives” LeMenager (2012). If in Benjamin`s Paris people were walking in Passages to get distracted, in the carbotopia depicted in these postcards, people should drive to nowhere to get distracted. The streets are endless and the houses are repeated continuously.



*Figure 3- Postcards from Abadan. photo:wikipedia commons.*

### **Paper Money**

In the aestheticization of carbon driven by capitalist principles and fueled by oil money, money plays a crucial role as the visible embodiment of capital. Recognizing the significance of paper money, which, as Frances Robertson (2005) notes, magically retains authenticity through mechanical reproduction in Walter Benjamin's framework, the Iranian monarchy strategically employed paper currency as a tool for ideological propaganda and the aestheticization of carbon.

Although the explicit representation of carbon aesthetic, as seen in the Abadan Oil Refinery Factory, only appeared on Iranian money after the Oil Nationalization in 1951, the notion of industrial progress through carbon-based energy was a consistent theme in political propaganda since the era of Reza Shah Pahlavi. In a series of Iranian paper currencies from 1936-38, images of the national railway on the 20 Rials and the Royal Ship on the 100 Rials were featured alongside the portraits of the king and historical architectural landmarks. However, in 1951, the Abadan Oil Refinery made its debut on the 100 Rials note, sharing space with modern buildings like Ibn Sina's Tomb on the 10 Rials, the Iranian National Bank Headquarters on the 20 Rials, and Koohrang Dam on the 50 Rials. Subsequently, the image of the Oil Refinery became a recurring motif until 1974 when a new 100 Rials note, commemorating the 50th anniversary of Mohammadreza Shah's coronation, briefly featured the museum of the Pahlavi family.

Jason Stanley (2015) highlights that propaganda can convey truths sincerely while also expressing something true that communicates something false. Similarly, the Pahlavi-era paper money did not depict falsehoods, showcasing real sites like airports, modern buildings, and factories reflective of an ostensibly thriving economy which at least based on numbers was true (See: Esfahani, 2008). However, the communicated value embedded in these depictions, both collectively and individually, fluctuated over time. Following the nationalization of oil in Iran, over 50 percent of the paper money designs prominently featured symbols of this carbon-based source, with the Abadan Oil Refinery appearing on the 100 Rials note. This design, presenting bird-view perspectives of the refinery with interconnected pipelines, aimed to convey how oil enriched Iran and how the government utilized the funds for constructing "modern" buildings. This representation, according to Stanley (2015:43), reflects a "flawed ideological belief," emphasizing the notion that carbon is the true liberator of the country. This observation underscores the thin boundary between "carbonization of aesthetic" as an inherent consequence of oil's existence and "aestheticization of carbon" as ideological propaganda. The critical dialectic prompted by the carbonization of aesthetic in Iranian artists' works offers a glimmer of hope in recognizing the potentials of carbon.



*Figure 4- Aestheticization of Carbon through Paper moneys during Pahlavi Era.  
Source: Wikipedia commons.*

## Conclusion

The discovery of oil in Iran initiated a carbon-based lifestyle, influencing first aesthetics in the realm of art and then governmental propaganda. Carbonization of aesthetic unfolded across diverse scales, shaping urban structures and individual artworks. Simultaneously, aestheticization of carbon became a tool for the Iranian monarchy, disseminating ideological messages through stamps, postcards, and paper money. While this paper delves into a fraction of these processes, there is potential for broader exploration across various fields.

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***Butoh: Sex and Gender Deconstructed in Brazilian Body Practices***

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**Abstract**

The following paper elaborates an analysis of the Butoh practice. Butoh's aesthetics and body knowledge have become part of the cultural studies. Many artists and performers today use Butoh as a dissent practice of gender and sexuality. It is intended to present the work of the Brazilian artist Mogli Saura, creator of Kaos Butoh: a tropical interpretation of the influence of Japanese body art. In addition, it seeks to bring together human knowledge through technology and globalization. To support the discussion the concept of the body is studied in the works of Christine Greiner, Kunichi Uno. Finally, it intends to expose how the artistic practices of the Japanese Butoh master Tatsumi Hijikata elevates the Brazilian body art to strange and disruptive levels and promoted the creation of artworks on culture, gender, and sexuality.

Keywords: Butoh, Kaos, Performance, Performativity, Gender, Sexuality

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## Introduction

I do not seek to define or answer the questions that have been following me as an artist, throughout the studies on artistic poiesis through this text. I intend, in a brief way, to address the questions that surround the theme of Butoh towards the body without organs of Artaud and the western philosophical studies of Deleuze and Guattari. Such piercing issues eventually docked in Brazilian harbor. How the Kasato-maru<sup>1</sup> would come to deliver on our beaches, hundreds of thousands of Japanese lives, fleeing from recession and war, in search of work in Brazilian fields.

As it is impossible to dissociate my practice as an artist from the writing I propose to build, this article is written on first-person pronouns. I am, like the sick body of Tatsumi Hijikata, feverish of art and poetics, so unbalanced and sickened by the rules and norms of academic and social, sexual, and gender conduct, that I already find in my becoming-Butoh (GREINER, 2018), a Kaos Butoh (SAURA, 2012), in harmonious imbalance.

The performative memories unfold in spiral narratives that are necessary as starting points for the reflection anchored within this author. I am an intersex and autistic individual whose self-perception has never been fully embodied. While it is easy to feel as alive as a river or a gale (KRENAK), I often question my identity as a human being, as a sentient being, whose organs serve a Western, ableist, Christian-based, conservative, straight-cis-white-skinned medical taxonomy centered on a Fordist format of capitalist consumption and production.

I, as a Jewish, transgender, non-binary individual, with short stature and a larger body, carry within my being floods of mourning emotions. I remember the first time I witnessed a Butoh performance, when the artist Atsushi Takenouchi and the musician Hiroko Komiya presented the show “Thousands of Drops, Thousands of Flowers” at the ‘Mosaico Cultural Center’ in Brasília, Brazil.

The underground theater that hosted the performance had a grandstand with no more than four rows closely stacked against a wall, creating a dark, icy atmosphere nestled in the red and barren earth of the central plateau. A soft light illuminated Takenouchi's body as he single-handedly performed his dance of shadows and death for two straight hours.

In the final minutes of this memory, I felt tears welling up in my eyes, flowing fast and cunning like the artist's body, although heavy and painful. He picked up a white lily and reached out towards me... From this gesture, anachronistically, amidst all the previous movements, the essence of Butoh contaminated me.

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<sup>1</sup> 笠戸丸 the name of the first ship carrying Japanese immigrants that disembarked in Brazil in 1908 as a consequence of an immigration agreement and cooperation between both countries, aimed at providing labor for the coffee industry.





**Image 1:** Author's archive. 2017.

I was in the front row, and I knew from the beginning, at the source of this memory-river-of-tears, that this gesture was not only going to happen but also transfigure me. During the following week, with an intense workshop led by Tatsumi's disciple, Hijikata, I was torn between translating one word or another from Japanese through the practices of Butoh. A leaden gray sky interspersed with the heavy night of Brasília accompanied the nighttime practices in the bars. We discussed why a nuclear disaster in Fukushima, which had been the proposition for this performance, had triggered emotions of subjugation and survival amalgamated in the bodies of Brazilians.

### ***Chi As the Vital Energy of the Undead Being***

Butoh transcends language barriers and defies Western categorizations of the body and its mechanical functions. Writing about Butoh is an immersion in sensations of pleasure and pain, intertwined with blood, sweat, and tears. Tatsumi Hijikata's Butoh embodies “seeking singular ways to challenge all that has become habitual, standardized, and numb...” (GREINER, 2018, p. 20).

By fostering interdisciplinary research across the realms of arts, philosophy, and semiotics, one can conceive Mogli Saura's performative body as an embodiment of Latin American subalternity, with Kaos Butoh serving as a response to the "becoming-child from the perspective of the body in its current state" (GREINER, 2018, p. 19). According to Christine

Greiner (2018), Hijikata left behind writings that alluded to a "vortex of sonorities, words, thoughts, and images that continually deterritorialize" (Ibid). The Becoming-Butoh of Hijikata proposes a disbalance of the body, yet in Brazil, we inhabit a body denied and imbalanced.

Becoming-Butoh might signify a rejection of the body's annihilation. However, in this context, the performance emerging from the fusion with Butoh reveals singularly vital bodily experiences, infused with "chi," often accompanied by "borderline states of crisis in thought and language" (KUNIICHI, 2018, p. 17).

Furthermore, inhabiting the role of both the "monster that speaks to you" (PRECIADO, 2020, translated by the author) and the researcher, who is also the subject of research, provides me with an imaginative framework for conceptualizing Kaos Butoh as an appropriation through proximity to diverse experiences. Mogli Saura, a non-binary, transgender, and Black artist, embodies a body in crisis: between the realms of death and grief.

The distinctiveness of Brazil in comparison to Japan can be attributed to policies that historically undermine the poor and Black communities in the country, reminiscent of its colonial history as an export colony. It is essential to acknowledge that the Japanese state has also inflicted harm upon vulnerable segments of its population in the past, a parallel to Brazil's own history. This included the endorsement of eugenics practices such as mass sterilization of its disabled population (SITCAWITCH, 1998).

Dissident bodies encompassing varied dimensions of sex, gender, race, age, ability, indigeneity, and refugee status are often excluded from the definition of the Brazilian people, and are subjected to overt necropolitics (MBEMBE, 2018) as a mechanism of control and subjugation. Deprived of the right to mourn (BUTLER, 2015), one of the segments existing as the "undead" within the population is the LGBTQIAPN+ community, of which Mogli Saura is a member. Consequently, Kaos Butoh can be seen as the protective shield (aegis) of a self-reemerging as "chi," a vitality transcending the inert body - a performer in the guise of a zombie.

Through movements, images and words, a state of extreme precariousness is established that announces what a life can provoke and activate, even after it has departed this world (...) Butoh is not a safety net, let alone a shelter. It is closer to an ambiguous perception of the risks that can at the same time put everything to lose or guarantee the insurrection of our dreams (GREINER Apud UNO, 2019, p. 20).

The LGBTQIAPN+ body engaged in Butoh dances within a semiotics of monstrosity, a semiotics that fervently seeks validation. It resides within the nightmares of those encountering this art form and, through dreams, transforms the signs assigned to gender and sexuality, intensifying experiences of vulnerability and unconventional embodiments.

Certain symbolic representations of the monstrous in Japan are more readily accepted and deeply ingrained within their culture than in the colonized West (GREINER, 2017). The potential for identification and the significance of these symbols of aberration as animated entities resonate within Japanese body practices (Ibid). However, in Latin American territories, the power of an art form that defies categorization elevates our understanding of the body to different planes and extracts of comprehension.

Attempting to grasp the art created by Hijikata through the lens of dichotomous and binary frameworks is a futile endeavor. "If the body is not an object or a set of organs, it appears immediately as a fundamental question of what life and vitality are" (UNO, 2017, p. 14-15). Furthermore, Hijikata did not perceive the body as distinct from thought; the performer gave form to ideas through gestures and transcended divisions between West and East, rural and urban (Ibid, p. 31). Thus, on the opposite side of the globe, its seed germinated amidst the challenges of neoliberalism, assuming an unexpected and new configuration: the embodiment of queer "artivism".

Butoh art, as a disruptive and fundamentally counter-paradigmatic force designed to contest control over the body, might appear incompatible with a neoliberal global regime (GREINER, 2017). Nevertheless, in this context, it has discovered fertile soil for its dissemination, functioning as both a language and a source of empowerment for bodies that resist on the outskirts and margins of the capitalist periphery (MBEMBE, 2018).

### **Flesh and Corpses**

Japanese Butoh resonates with me as an almost concentrated tempest of white and red fluids, intoxicating and sweet, simultaneously voracious and delicate. Furthermore, it resembles a tree with numerous branches, as evidenced by one of Tatsumi Hijikata's most renowned performances: "The Revolt of the Flesh". In the selection of its title, a deliberate choice was made to employ the kanji for "carnal," encapsulating the essence of the corporeal form portrayed on the stage. This corporeal form, as interpreted by Kuniichi Uno, emerges as a profoundly mechanical yet inherently emotional "Chimera" (2017).

In addition to the term *nikutai*, there were also other names such as *karada* (体) and *shintai* (身体). In the pre-war period, *shintai* was usually used, but always with many nuances. (...) the *Nihon kokugo daijiten* dictionary defined *nikutai* as the body composed of flesh/muscle and offered *karada* as a possible synonym; but, at the same time, he qualified *nikutai* as "*karada* of sexual desire" (GREINER, 2015 p. 57).

Similar language-oriented subtleties also occur in Brazil. In this instance, Kaos Butoh introduces a neologism derived from the term "chaos," grounded in the principle of linguistic decolonization. In the creations of Mogli Saura, certain characteristics, which may have become commonplace in the aesthetics of Butoh dancers, are deliberately omitted. Brazilian performances are unrefined and more voracious. The body bears distinct imprints of colonization and ethnic-racial memories, simultaneously contrasting with and drawing parallels to Tatsumi Hijikata's work.

Decolonization of a body-space in (a)temporal fragmentation.

Time of immanence - of the event - in constant density.

Time that entangles the past and its (im)possibilities of re-existence in a type of ancestry without origin - with elements both concrete of one culture/history as well as delusional, and no less concrete due to this, of others.

Time in permanent updating, which also brings as a concrete (im)possibility the virtuality of one (or several) future(s), also present(s), in the body.

Future without destiny as a possibility of a "being" yet to come, unmade, unknown, and paradoxically present, just as it is happening, in the body.

Body in dysrhythmia of movements, expansion/contraction with variable axis, off-center and mobile.

Body without defined boundary between within and outside, which by experiencing this specific time (ritual density) dances movements that represent itself on a complexity that embodies politics, history, subjectivity, territory and life as phenomena, which, each in its own way and with its own connections exposes and affirms its difference - in a state of game-dance between life and death - of flows, movements, rhythms, meaning, and existence. (Mogli Saura. Access in: <https://mutha.com.br/2021/05/02/mogli-saura/>)

While many of Hijikata's disciples argue that it is presently unfeasible to practice Butoh within a neoliberal regime (GREINER, 2017), Mogli Saura invokes the monstrous Kaos of the body-cyborg (HARAWAY, 2009) as a possibility of radicalizing the body even within this regime. Moreover, although we acknowledge the evident connection between Artaud and Hijikata, there exists something that extends beyond the notion of the body without organs. Butoh transcends both Western biological taxonomy and Taoist "chi." It embodies a profusion of intersecting paths and crossroads, asterisks and dots, vertices and folds, representing a dysfunctional flesh teeming with vitality even amidst affliction.

Like a seminal itch that fertilizes and contaminates everything, the Butoh Kaos has proven indomitable: a flowing fluid, as vibrant as the rivers of the Krenak people (KRENAK, 2022), and a formidable LGBTQIAPN+ virus. This body remains fragile yet possesses a metallic fortitude, flowing like mercury at room temperature, bearing a dystopian and apocalyptic quality reminiscent of the deep-sea monsters in the Japanese ocean—profoundly irreverent and tragic.

## **Conclusion**

Many of the concepts articulated by Mogli Saura, Tatsumi Hijikata, and their Brazilian and Japanese disciples find their roots in the works of philosophers who share similar concerns. These concerns can be traced back to the writings of Ailton Krenak and Artaud, Deleuze and Guattari, authors who have centered their discourse on vulnerability and the deconstruction of colonialist notions that delineated borders and upheld a white civilization as the vanguard of human progress (KRENAK, 2020).

Contemplating the concept of becoming-Butoh (GREINER apud UNO, 2018) as an intrinsic aspect of a performing body in its primordial state, divorced from human boundaries and norms, may introduce a new perspective on living beings - one that transcends current definitions of humanity and animacy. If we wish to continue existing as a species, it may be necessary to either explore new forms of identification or embrace non-human identifications, in order to redefine our understanding of existence.

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***Linguistic Imperialism and the Extrinsic Motivation of the First Generation L2 Learners  
in a Heterogeneous ESL Classroom***

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**Abstract**

The study aims to investigate the effect of Linguistic Imperialism on the extrinsic Motivation of the first-generation ESL learners in a heterogeneous classroom at the tertiary level in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India. The study defines Linguistic Imperialism in an ESL class room as the dominant forces which inhibits the acquisition of Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing and its sub skills of a sociolinguistic ally disadvantaged learner. The experiment is conducted at Loyola College, Chennai, India. The research design includes the use of research questions and a pilot study through the distribution of questionnaires. The data is analyzed through T-test and paired sample test through the use of SPSS software. The findings reveal that forces like Deductive Teaching, Traditional methods of Testing, Attitude of the dominant peer-group and non-communicative syllabus act as Affective Filters for the process of SLA. The study also suggests methods to overcome the dominant forces and enhancement of the extrinsic motivation of the ESL learners by providing a learner centric atmosphere for the learning of the Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing and its relative sub skills. The study would be beneficial for the facilitators and learners of ESL at the tertiary level with the presence of marginalized learners in the ESL classroom. The study also presents the limitations and scope for further research.

Keywords: Linguistic Imperialism, Sociolinguistic Ally Disadvantaged Learners, SLA, ESL, Affective Filters

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## Introduction

The paper explores the effect of Linguistic Imperialism on the extrinsic Motivation of the first-generation L2 learners in an ESL classroom. The study defines Linguistic Imperialism in an ESL class room as the as the dominant forces which inhibits the acquisition of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing skills of a sociolinguistic ally disadvantaged learner. The study refers to such learners as marginalized learners for they are relegated in an ESL class room due to certain factors. The paper also studies the consequence of Linguistic Imperialism in the process of Second Language Acquisition and its usage. The paper equally concentrates on the sociolinguistic dimensions and the psychology of the first generation L2 learners in a heterogeneous classroom and their reaction to Linguistic imperialism.

## Linguistic Imperialism

Phillipson (1992) had opined that “one characteristic of the majority of the third world countries in which English is a dominant language is that the wealth English provides access to is very inequitably distributed.” (p.11). In the words of Pattberg (2015), “Linguistic imperialism is the replacement of one language by another, more dominant language. It’s a branch of cultural imperialism: one culture loses, and the other wins.” (p.44) The study views Linguistic Imperialism in the ESL class room as the dominance of certain powerful factors over the vulnerable, sociolinguistic ally disadvantaged marginalized L2 Learner.

The sociolinguistic ally disadvantaged marginalized L2 Learner: The sample population of the research could be defined as L2 learners from families which has not treaded into the portals of higher education. The learners are the first members from their families to receive higher education. The parents are either school drop outs or have attended only primary schooling. Moreover, some of the first generation L2 learners have pursued their schooling in their mother tongues and encounter tremendous challenges during interaction at the tertiary level.

The first generation L2 learners also hail from regressive and marginalized socio-economic backgrounds and at times could suffer from low esteem. The first generation L2 learners of the research are further characterized by:

- Higher IQ and learning abilities
- Comprehensive knowledge of the subject of their specialization
- High Intrinsic motivation
- Greater discipline and courtesy
- Low L2 fluency
- Minimum grammatical accuracy
- High degree of Interlanguage
- Low fluency
- Average accuracy

## Data Analysis

The sample population of the study consists of hundred and twenty learners out of which fifteen learners belong to the sociolinguistically disadvantaged group. A questionnaire was distributed in order to gauge the experiences of sociolinguistic ally disadvantaged learners.



**Table 1: Factors Affecting the First Generation L2 learners in the ESL classroom.**

S.NO	FACTORS	SDA	DA	NEUTRAL	AGREE	SA
1	ESL class room culture	7	2	1	20	90
2	Attitude of the dominant peer group	1	2	2	32	83
3	Non Communicative syllabus	3	5	0	20	92
4	Deductive teaching and learning methods	1	4	1	14	100
5	Traditional methods of testing	1	2	1	6	110

### **Experiences of the First Generation L2 Learner and the ESL Classroom**

Studying the experiences of the first generation L2 learner in an ESL classroom is a novel scientific experience. Davis reminisces the views of Chen and Caroll (2005):

Education professionals need to know exactly with whom they are working because of the statistics describing the success of first generations students are not good; in fact, they are succeeding at a rate half that of their non- first generation counterparts. (p.14)

The transition from the primary level to the tertiary level in the ESL classroom is an historic moment in the life of the L2 learners. It marks a new period in the process of SLA in the life of the L2 learners.

The transition is also indexed by unlearning, culture shock, awareness of sociolinguistic disparities and heterogeneous fluency. The first generation L2 learner is confronted with an alien learning environment, new facilitator, unaccustomed peer group, novel methods and language learning techniques. The degree of extrinsic motivation and Zone of Proximal Development is quite minimum for the L2 learners at the initial stage of learning.

## **Facets of Linguistic Imperialism and the First Generation L2 Learner**

The pre dominant aspects of Linguistic Imperialism could be listed as Imperialism in culture, education, media and politics. The Linguistic Imperialism governing the first-generation ESL learner are as follows:

- ESL classroom culture
- The attitude of the dominant peer group
- Non-Communicative syllabus
- Deductive teaching learning method
- Traditional methods of Testing

### **ESL Classroom Culture**

The first-generation ESL learner is suspended in the ESL classroom. Most of these L2 learners are from the rural background and are quite acclimatized to the rural language learning system and culture. The situation is quite similar to the views of Beck and Pace:

Given the largely monocultural nature of the teaching profession, and one's propensity to see the world and act in it from the perspective of a single culture, employing culturally relevant pedagogy, is neither easy nor intuitive. (p.58)

The environment of the ESL class room could be intriguing to L2 learners in the initial stages of entering the process of language learning at the tertiary level. The L2 learners are quite baffled by the presence and academic attitude of the proficient and superlative peer learning group.

The researcher had identified the following factors which could appear as 'Affective Filters' and retard the process of L2 learning. The factors could be listed as:

- an apparent difference in the sense and style of dressing of the affluent L2 learners
- style of the proficient Learners
- dynamics of Input (Class room instruction)
- possession and use of learning materials
- history of language learning at the primary level
- sociolinguistic alterations
- economic problems
- comfort zone with the facilitator
- nostalgia of language learning at the primary level

The first generation L2 learner needs to confront, comprehend, unlearn and outsmart the challenging factors in the initial stages of learning. It would be quite inevitable for the L2 learners to get acculturated to these complex factors.

### **The Attitude of the Dominant Peer Group**

The study refers to the 'Dominant Peer Group' as the L2 learners from affluent and upper middle-class backgrounds possessing desirable proficiency and abilities in the use of LSRW skills. These L2 learners range from being innocent to condescending and indifferent.

The first generation L2 learners would experience a sense of culture shock in the presence of the affluent L2 learners. The first generation L2 learners could develop an inferiority complex which would obstruct the process of Second Language Acquisition. The attire of the affluent learners, their accent, style of communication, stationery and other possessions could be viewed as a sociolinguistic luxury by the first generation L2 learners.

The knowledge of L2 and the Language Acquisition Device of the insecure L2 learners is enfeebled in the presence of the affluent L2 learners. The proficient L2 learners would be unaware to the language learning impediments and sociolinguistic problems of the first generation L2 learners which would have a negative effect on peer learning. The proficient L2 learners who understand the predicament of the disadvantaged learners may be empathetic to the condition rather than approaching the learning problems sceptically.

### **Non-communicative Syllabus**

In the words of Munby (1978), “ The input to the CNP reaches the parameter here known as the interaction (p.67). A rigid Content based and Grammar based syllabus could further convert the first generation L2 learners into ‘At-Risk learners.’ A sense of non-functionality could be dispersed by a rigid syllabus which would further disconnect the L2 learners from the process of English language learning. Further the rigidity of the syllabus fails to incorporate and address the socio-cultural document of the first generation L2 learner. The Localization of a rural or marginalized culture is absent. Learners from the remote villages and marginalized societies may not be in a position to connect with a learning material from Shakespearean world or comprehend the Romantic imageries in Wordsworth’s poems. The Learner may not even comprehend a text on discotheques, pubs, shopping malls, multiplexes etc. In simpler terms the learner would be alienated from the process of second language acquisition.

### **Deductive Teaching Methodology**

Monotonous information on the rules of L2 and imposition of the ‘gate keeping functions of English’ makes the teaching method mechanical and lifeless. Moreover, the Deductive Teaching Methodology is prone to finding fault with the L2 learners’ use of L2 which would retard their fluency of the language at an early stage. The teacher centric method of instructing the learners and the transition from General to Specific in the exposition of grammatical rules could relegate the learner from the process of learning English as a second language. It would further create a sense of fear and anxiety in the minds of the L2 learner.

### **Traditional Methods of Testing**

The traditional syllabus centric method of testing would further intimidate the performance of the first generation L2 learners. The monotonous Paper and Pencil Test may fail to measure the skills and abilities of the disadvantaged learners from an alternate point of view. The L2 learners may be trapped by the ‘test items’ and the ‘rubrics’ of the test which would only galvanize the performance of the proficient learners. The latent language learning abilities of the marginalized ‘test taker’ may not be completely measured in a ‘Paper and Pencil’ test. Moreover the ‘Paper and Pencil’ test creates room for detention which would further demotivate the marginalized L2 learner.

## **Technological Impediments**

Marginalized ESL learners experience issues with technology in terms of culture shock, non-availability of gadgets, connectivity issues etc. Learners from deprived socio-economic backgrounds may not be in a position to afford smart phones, Tablets and lap tops. Moreover remotest rural areas also experience connectivity issues which serves as a series impediment towards language learning at online classes during the pandemic.

## **Conclusion**

Linguistic Imperialism in an ESL class room has a negative effect on the language learning process of the first generation L2 learner. The first generation L2 learner is ‘at risk’ in an ESL classroom. The culture and the methodology of Second Language Acquisition upsets the L2 learner and restricts the process of language learning. The initial disgruntlement with the learning process equally smothers the intrinsic motivation of the L2 learners. The functioning of the ‘Language Acquisition Device’ is also incapacitated due to the centrifugalizing of the marginalized L2 learner.

The effects of the linguistic imperialism at the early stages also denies room for any form of Extrinsic motivation and blocks the Zone of Proximal Development. The study concludes in interest of the marginalized L2 learners that there is a need for:

### ***Re Formulation of the ESL Class Room Culture***

The ESL Class room should be made suggestible in the context of the marginalized L2 learner. The atmosphere could be friendlier for the marginalized L2 learner by housing some paintings of the rural villages and sceneries. Further the L2 learners could be given opportunities to discuss and speak about their rural cultural and ethnic practices. The learning materials could be localized to suit the interest of the marginalized learners. Prescribing learning materials like ‘Lotus’ by Toru Dutt or ‘The Village School Master’ by Oliver Goldsmith would enable the rural learner to identify with the learning materials and connect with the process of English Language Learning.

### ***Dialogue With the Dominant Peer Group***

The dominant peer group defined by the proficient and affluent learners hailing from the cream of the society and upper middle class could be educated on the sociolinguistic conditions of the marginalized L2 learner. There can be mutual interactions between the affluent learners and learners from marginalized sections of the society to remove the pre-existing mind blocks and facilitate understand between the two diametrically opposite factions of learners in the heterogeneous ESL Classroom. It is quite essential for the superlative learners to realize that the marginalized learners are not to be sympathized but need that extra assistance to become effective users of English.

### ***Learner Centric Syllabus***

Nunan (2013) had viewed that “Reflecting on these incidents forced me to confront the disconnect between what learners were able to do in the controlled environment of the class room and their ability to use the language they had learned to communicate outside of the classroom.” (p.6). There has to be a shift from a monotonous, mechanical syllabus to a learner

centric syllabus. The marginalized L2 learner should be involved in the process of learning. The learning process should be enabled from the process of teaching. The syllabus should be communicative in nature. It should focus on meaning rather than form. The syllabus should contain objectives that could be relinquished during the teaching and learning process. The study suggests that the marginalized L2 learners should be involved in the process of syllabus framing and material preparation. Successful senior learners of the kind could be utilized for the purpose. The syllabus should further contain communicative activities which would involve the learner in the act of meaningful communication.

### ***Innovative Teaching, Learning and Testing Methods***

In the words of Bachman (1990), “Language testing almost never takes place in isolation. It is done for a particular purpose and in a specific context.” (p.22). Innovative Teaching, Learning and Testing Methods need to be employed instead of traditional methods of teaching, learning and testing. Innovative methods of testing in the form of Portfolio Assessment, projects, communication activities could be employed instead of a written examination. Alternate testing methods would measure the holistic skills of the ‘test taker’ as opposed to the atomistic testing of the ‘writing’ skills in a ‘Paper and Pencil’ test. Moreover alternative method of testing would measure the proficiency of the learner in the act of communication. The learners are involved in the process of Second Language use through their peers in terms of ‘peer performance’ and ‘group activities.’ The marginalized L2 learner is liberated from the monotony of the written examination.

### ***Technological Enhancement***

In the words of Ken (2010):

Given the breadth of what may go on in Computer- Assisted Language Learning(CALL), a definition of CALL that accommodates its changing nature is any process which a learner uses a computer and, as a result improves his or her language. (p.1)

Marginalized L2 learners should be given gadgets to enhance their online learning of ESL through various government schemes and projects. The connectivity in remote areas should be strengthened to warrant uninterrupted learning in the online sessions.

### **Recommendations and Suggestions**

Sagor and Cox had suggested that:

The daunting task before us as teachers is to try and construct schools and classrooms that will provide the same quantity and quality of need fulfilment for the defeated/discouraged learner that are currently being provided for the successful student. While that may seem like a tall order, it is clearly possible. (p.3)

The study’s recommendations for the elimination of linguistic imperialism would include:

- The employment of a learner friendly and eclectic teaching methodology.
- Peer networking and periodic counselling for the marginalized L2 learners.
- An analysis of the L2 learner’s needs in terms of learning and emotional aspects by the facilitator.

- The use of focussed learning objectives which would augment the acquisition of the major skills of English and its related sub skills of the marginalized L2 learner.
- Inclusion of suggestible, learner centric teaching, learning environment.
- Inductive Teaching of grammar.
- Employing activities and tasks to propel the process of SLA.
- Localisation of a portion of the teaching materials to suit the psychology of the marginalised L2 learner.
- Elimination of prominent Affective Filters and learning impediments.
- The use of Innovative Testing Methods as opposed to Traditional Methods of Testing.

### **Scope for Further Study**

1. The study could be undertaken at the Primary level.
2. A gender based approach to Linguistic Imperialism in the class room pertaining to marginalized L2 learners could be studied in detail.
3. The role of the facilitator in eliminating Linguistic Imperialism could be studied.

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## *Exploring the Use of Infographics in Communicating COVID-19 Pandemic Information in Ghana*

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### **Abstract**

Globally, media houses as well as individuals are adopting various forms of infographics to convey information to audiences. Although extensive research exists on the use of infographics in communicating complex messages, scholars appear to have largely ignored the use of infographics in communicating health information in pandemic situations. Also, not much scholarship can be seen on the use of infographics for communicating health messages in pandemic situations in a developing country like Ghana. Again, critical elements of design such as colour and typefaces have received less attention. The purpose of this study is to explore how media organisations employ infographics to convey complex information like Covid-19 pandemic information to target audiences. Infographics of two leading media organisations in Ghana were selected, categorized and examined with a model adapted from the Art Criticism model of Feldman and Woods. Results revealed that colour, although a major element of design which convey different meanings in different cultures were not well utilised in the infographics explored. We also found conflicting messages on a number of infographics which could inhibit the effectiveness of the messages to the target audience. The authors proposed a model for the appraisal of infographics.

Keywords: Media, COVID-19 Pandemic, Infographics, Health Information, Culture, Ghana

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## Introduction

The advent of internet and its accompanying platforms have caused rapidity in information dissemination and consumption. Text (Bateman, 2014) is manipulated in diverse ways to relay series of information to target groups. According to McCrorie, Donnelly and McGlade (2016), the creative conception and engagement way of visually conveying information aesthetically and succinctly is known as infographics. Messages are presented in various formats using different media. Research on infographics abound in several fields including for instance in education (Matrix & Hodson, 2014); social media marketing (Erdoğan and Çiçek 2012; Jackson 2011); and healthcare (McCrorie, Donnelly and McGlade 2016; Steensma 2016).

In an epidemic/pandemic situation, people need series of vital information, especially, information on guidelines as well as steps to be taken to prevent or contain an outbreak. One of the mediums employed by communicators to disseminate such information to the public is through a combination of written text and graphics, known as infographics (Bekhit 2009). According to Scott, Fawcner, Oliver, and Murray (2016), infographics is a shortened form of information graphics. The presentation of infographics is done to conform to logic, akin to storytelling through the use of data visualisations, written text and photos (Naparín and Binti Saad 2017). Siricharoen (2015) defines infographics as graphic (photo) that presents information. According to Siricharoen (2013), journalism in the 1980s enjoyed the support of infographics albeit some challenges. The use of images only or images and written texts to convey vital information in a visual form to the public is not novel (Lamb and Johnson 2014). According to Siricharoen and Siricharoen (2018) visual communication and for the purpose of this study, infographics dates back to prehistoric era, and it remains one of the fundamental, yet effective means of communicating complex issues. Busselle and Bilandzic (2009) aver that the degree of engaging, transporting, or immersing an audience in a narrative influences the narrative's potential to affect subsequent story-related attitudes and beliefs. Scholars have long conducted studies in different geographical jurisdictions, employing different methods and have emerged with series of findings regarding the use of infographics in communicating health information to the public. For example, a study by Vos, Cohen, Vos, and Cohen (2017) on using photos to convey health and risk messages found that a lot of questions beg for answers regarding how visual messages must be composed vis-à-vis their impact, although the focus on images in health messages has seen an increase. They opined that a lot of infographics have the tendency of being misinterpreted by the target audience. Also, Muir and Munroe-Chandler (2020) aver that in relaying complex information regarding mental health, the use of infographics can be a great promotional tool, because infographics possess the power to visually convey complex information. Designing effective infographics demands a lot than just knowing how to manipulate graphic designing tools. Principles of Design/Art must be taken into consideration (White 2011).

Several experts and scholars have classified infographics into groups. While Mcguire (2019) puts infographics into nine categories, Chibana (2020) categorizes infographics into thirteen (13) groups. Several authors have also classified infographics into a number of categories; however, the ideology remains similar, if not the same – to convey information by the use of written text and photos. The choice of colour scheme for infographics can either effectively convey a message or mar a message. Wansink and Robbins (2016) found that infographics which had action-oriented titles/headings were mostly effective because people who were either passively or actively exposed to such infographics (black & white or coloured) could memorise and recall.

The Corona virus (henceforth, covid-19) which has been declared by the World Health Organization (WHO) as global pandemic (Ghebreyesus, 2020; Gumbrecht & Howard, 2020) has been reported worldwide across various media, electronic, print and new media. The media played their role by informing and educating the masses about the covid-19. The Ministry of Health in Ghana announced her first two covid-19 cases on March 13, 2020 (Cash, North & Utc, 2020).

The use of infographics is not new to the Ghanaian media. In the past some media houses have employed infographics in their news reportage as a means to simplify complex issues or to narrate processes of events (CitiNewsroom on Twitter, 2017; JoyNews, 2020). As Wansink and Robbins (2016) opine, inasmuch as infographics makes comprehension of complex information simple, it becomes a tool for misinterpretation if it is not well executed. (Thompson, 2015; Otten, Cheng, & Drewnowski, 2015). Siricharoen (2015) states that visualising information, like the way infographics does it, is a new and effective way of reaching the public.

In pandemic situations, there is the need to relay clear information. Since infographics has the tendency to simplify information, it is a discipline that requires more empirical attention. Sadly, no study has been conducted to appraise infographics used by media houses in communicating health information in pandemic situations in Ghana. This study seeks to fill this gap by examining the aesthetic qualities of infographics produced by leading media outlets in Accra, Ghana. The main objective of the current study is to examine how some media organisations in Ghana make use of infographics to convey information on public health. This has become imperative because in a seeming busy society, most people do not have much time to read through lengthy statements/sentences in search of instructions on how to prevent contracting the Covid-19 virus as well as what to do when one comes into contact with infected persons.

## **Literature Review**

Prior literature has been reviewed on the following subheadings: Infographics in the media; Importance of infographics in health communication; Importance of colour in infographics designs; Typography and legibility; Design layout; and Types of infographics.

### ***Infographics in the Media***

Otten et al. (2015) assert that infographics present a potent avenue of distilling and transmitting scientific information which are complex in nature in visual forms for easy comprehension. Ghode (2013) reports that Newspapers in India utilise various Infographics in presenting statistical data by employing charts, diagrams, graphs, tables, maps, and lists. In the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bekhit (2009) reports that although newspapers use infographics, they do so sparingly. Bekhit further states that most journalists in India perceive infographics as auxiliary component to written texts, but not an important component of the content of a newspaper. Dur (2014) states that infographics which were only presented in static formats are now available online in interactive forms. Scott et al. (2016) aver that the influence and exactitude of infographics are extremely marked by diversity, and that media houses easily forget the infographics they publish on social media.

### ***Importance of Infographics in Health Communication***

As Scott et al. (2016) opine, infographics are designed to grab audience attention; aid comprehension; promote recall; and ensure adherence to guidelines. Siricharoen (2015) states that as governments all over the world aim at eHealth, the need for infographics experts will soar. Siricharoen (2013) states that bloggers and journalists can make news contexts easy to access and share by using infographics. He further states that the use of infographics is fast growing, and in some cases substituting traditional press releases. Stretching the importance of infographics, Siricharoen and Siricharoen (2018) opine that the human brain possesses the ability to discover and comprehend patterns as well as their connections well, when these are in visual forms. They further state that people are likely to recall images than they will with written texts.

### ***Importance of Colour in Infographics Designs***

Colour can be described as “The visual reaction to the wavelength of sunlight interpreted as red, blue, green and so on; possessing physical properties of hue, intensity and value as well as portraying the psychological and emotional stance of a person” (Cayton cited in Kwakye-Opong, 2014:113). Kwakye-Opong (2014) asserts that, for instance, the colour blue can signify dignity, sadness or serenity, reliability, fidelity, loyalty and honesty, while red may evoke bravery, sin, danger, passion or violence, and yellow or gold may symbolize power to Egyptians and Greeks. However, Kwakye-Opong admits that colour may mean different things to different cultures (see Okyere 2019; Ajibade & Obongha 2012). According to Cohen-Or, Sorkine, Gal, Leyvand, and Xu (2006) when colours are harmonious in a design, they tend to present aesthetically pleasing feeling to humans. Rider (2009) reports that colour is very important in designing. Bleicher (2005) states that colour is very powerful a medium to the graphic designer, especially when it is expertly applied. Colour acts as a filter through which humans see the world (Rider, 2009). Many infographics may be difficult to understand due to wrong choice of colour scheme. For instance, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2002) state that same colour choice could convey different meanings to people from different countries or continents. According to Bortoli and Maroto (2001), colours could produce contextual, linguistic, climatic, gender and demographic meanings; and they further opined that colours possess associative meanings. Breidenbach (1976) reported that in the African context, red is dominant in rituals of affliction. Arslan et al. (2015) opine that designers can either manipulate or attract the attention of an audience through the use of colour. They noted that a fundamental error many infographics designers commit is by using irrelevant colours in the bid to making their infographics more appealing. Many viewers tend to feel uncomfortable when colours used in infographics are strong and intensive. Vanka (1997) opines that a wrong choice of colour in designing may offend a group of people (culture). Schloss et al. (2017) found people’s preferences for colour change with season, hence; designers must be abreast of this. Esteves and Neves (2020;404) found that online infographics are mostly full of “light and saturated colours in graphics, light colours or white in backgrounds, and saturated colours and black in typography”. They also found that most online infographics had tones of yellow, red and blue in the graphics and backgrounds had neutrals.

### ***Typography/Typefaces and Legibility***

The arrangement of type to express meaning and visibility is a technique concerned with typography (Serafini & Clausen, 2012). “The typography of written language not only serves as a conduit of verbal narrative, it serves as a visual element and semiotic resource with its

own meaning potentials” (Serafini & Clausen, 2012:1). Haenschen and Tamul (2020) found that people attribute ideological meanings to typefaces or type styles used in artworks. The wrong choice of font characters vis-à-vis insufficient margins may mar infographics. Intrinsically, Lucie-smith (2004) opines that seriffed characters afford much legibility compared to sans-serifed characters (See Arditi & Cho, 2005). Arslan et al. (2015) aver that when over-sized fonts are used or hierarchy of type is not ordered correctly as well as the background colour for written texts are not properly chosen, the infographics does not achieve its purpose. According to White (2011) legibility of a design is the power of an artwork to be decoded by its target audience (See Nafiseh & Balakrishnan, 2014).

### ***Design Layout***

Layout is one of the basic stages of design such that once it is ignored as a process; the outcome of a design becomes ineffective. It is the process of deciding on the arrangement as well as the sizes of visual elements on a design page (Lok & Feiner, 2001). This clearly shows that it is one of the basic processes any good graphic designer considers. Cleveland (2010) opined that layout is very vital to design in visual communication. Many scholars have conducted studies into various aspects of design (see Myers, McDaniel & Kosbie, 1993; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996; 2002; Van Leeuwen, 2006). Wong (1992) argues that interface designers must learn to develop prototypes in the form of layout like it is done in graphic designing.

### ***Types of Infographics***

Based on what the target of an infographics is or the purpose of the infographics, several scholars and experts have classified infographics. Chibana (2020) classifies infographics into thirteen types namely: mixed chart, list, timeline, how to guide, flow chart, comparison, location-based, photographic, hierarchical, single chart, visualized number, anatomical and visual resume infographics. Mcguire (2019) puts infographics into nine categories, which are: statistical; informational; timeline; process; geographic; comparison; hierarchical; list; and resume infographics. Other authors considered infographics from the perspective of field or organisation such as in infographics in newspaper (Zwinger & Zeiller, 2016; Bekhit, 2009).

### **Methodology**

The Qualitative Methodology was employed, utilising the case study and Art Criticism methods. All covid-19 infographics from selected two leading media organisations were sampled. Criteria for inclusion were that the infographics must be about Covid-19 pandemic and it must be from the two identified media organisations in Accra, Ghana. Ghana recorded the first cases of covid-19 in March, 2020. None of the State-owned media organisations were included because at the time of conducting this study, none had designed any Covid-19 infographics. Our contacts (opted for anonymity) who work in these two organisations were approached and briefed about the study. First, the authors were directed to retrieve the infographics from their websites. However, the authors could not locate the infographics online. Hence; we obtained copies used in this study directly from the two line managers. The creative designers could not publish any artwork without the express approval from their line managers. The creative designers are employees of the media organizations who possess expertise in graphic design. These infographics can be found in the Photos section of the organizations’ social media platform in the following address: <https://www.facebook.com/connect971fm/photos/a.383648991805763/1186520588185262>.

The infographics were published for public consumption. The date of publication for media organisation A is 22nd April, 2020. We then requested for the infographics, which were readily given to us in soft copy, JPEG formats. The authors categorised the infographics. The authors did the categorisation of infographics separately, and later compared results and agreed on a common categorisation. There were other subcategories – infographics with written text and those without written text; infographics involving real human images and those with drawn images. They were then coded and analysed. The elements and subject of each infographics were first described, then the authors analysed the composition and design after which interpretation was given based on the meaning and content of each infographics.

## Results

We received thirty infographics from the two organisations (Organisations A and B). A total of 13 infographics from organisation A and 16 from organisation B. Table 1 summarises the results in relation to the distribution of infographics obtained.

Table 1. Summary of infographics distribution for organisations A and B

Media Organisation	Group One Infographics	Group Two Infographics	Group Three Infographics	Total
A	8	1	2	13
B	15	1	0	16

We coded the infographics to arrive at categorisation. All infographics with obvious similarities in terms of design layout, theme and colour scheme, were grouped into one category after which we selected one infographic for the analysis. After this process, the authors arrived at the following results: Organisation A had five infographics in Category one); one in Category two and one in Category three infographics, totalling seven infographics. Organisation B had eight in Category one, one in Category two, but none for Category three. The total of infographics to be analysed after categorisation is 16. Table 2 below presents a summary of results after categorisation:

Table 2. Summary of results after categorisation

Media Organisation	Infographics (Category One)	Infographics (Category Two)	Infographics (Category Three)	Total
A	5	1	1	7
B	8	1	-	9

## Description

In describing the infographics, the authors did not include the names and logos of media organisations for obvious reasons. As displayed in Table 2 above, we described all preventive infographics for media organisation A. See Figure 1 below:

Figure 1. Category one Infographics for media organisation A



Category one infographics for organisation A: All five infographics were labelled 1-5 during coding for easy reference. All five infographics have similar plain white background with an image inside a hexagonal framework. There is another hexagonal shape slightly above, but it is faded and appears like a watermarked image. The hexagonal shapes have a thick magenta outline. The shapes are located at the left of the page, with written text, also in magenta, to the right of the shapes. The written texts are in san-serif (without serif), and in sentential structures. Infographics 1 has a female in blue apparel, holding a yellow rag in her left hand and a white plastic container (with disinfectant). She is wearing blue hand gloves on both hands and appears to wear a smile. She appears to be spraying the content (disinfectant) of the plastic container on a surface. The lady has her face to the left of the page with her back directly to the written text which reads:

*“Regularly and thoroughly clean surfaces, such as counter tops and doorknobs with a disinfectant.”*

Infographics 2 has an animated human bust in brown colour, black hair and wearing a white face mask. The bust has been set on a blue background and in the hexagonal shaped frame. The face of the image is towards the written text. The written text reads:

*“Sneeze and cough into tissues or the crook of your elbow. If you get mucus or spit on your skin, clean it right away. Avoid touching your face with unwashed hands.”*

Infographics 3 has a female and a male in the hexagonal shape. Both are sitting in a couch/bed. The lady appears to be sneezing into a tissue, with both hands holding the tissue firmly to her nose, while the male figure tilts his head to observe her. The text reads:

*“Avoid close contact with people who are sick, especially people exhibiting respiratory symptoms and fever.”*

In infographics 4, there are two hands under a tap with running water. The text reads:

*“Wash your hands with soap or use hand sanitizer that contains alcohol.”*

Infographics 5 has two different hands interlocked. It looks like a handshake. The text reads:

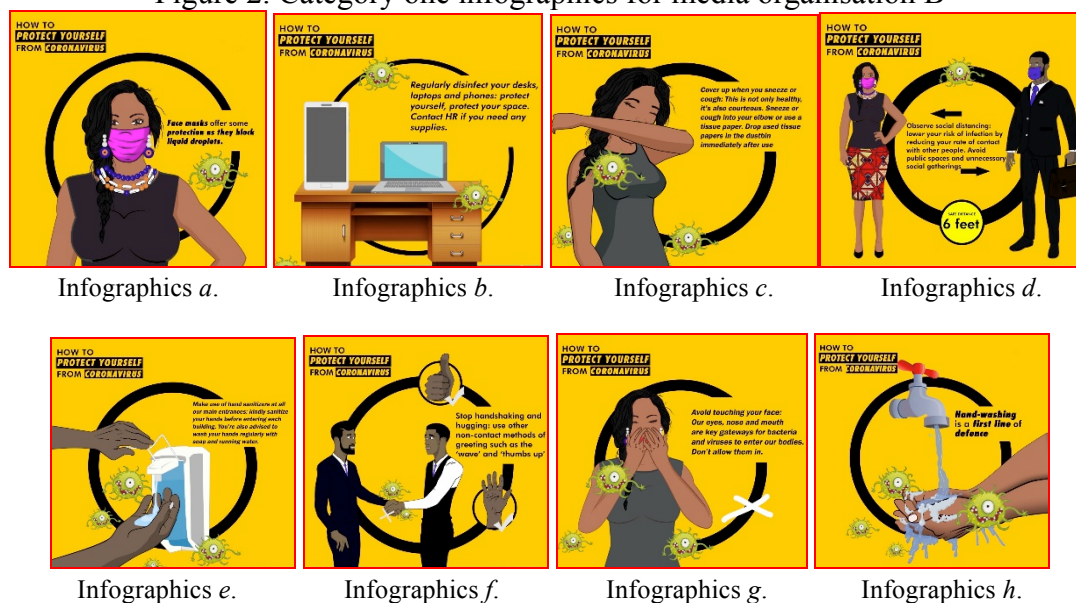
*“Thank you. Share with your family and friends.”*

The “Thank you” is written in bold font size.

The written texts have communicative functions; they are imperative sentences. They seem to instruct, command or order the reader to act and this is made possible by the imperative verbs clean, sneeze, cough, avoid, wash, use and share. These verbs in the sentences urge the reader to do something. They address the audience in an assertive way. The imperative sentences in the category one infographics for organization A do not appear to have subjects. This is because their subjects are implied. They are the second person pronoun you who is the reader or the audience being addressed. The texts of these infographics address the reader directly and this produces a personal effect. The imperative sentences of the above written texts are concise and easy to read. They communicate quickly and instantaneously.

Category one infographics for organisation B: All eight infographics were labelled a-h. They all have same plain yellow background. All infographics have black circle (they are of different sizes though). These circles are behind the images. All the human images are drawn and not real. All infographics have written text as well. All written texts do not have serif. See Figure 2 below:

Figure 2. Category one infographics for media organisation B



In infographic a, there is a female wearing a violet face mask and facing the viewer directly. There is an insect-like image in a tint of green colour and placed above the left shoulder of the female image. The female image is centred on the page. It is the biggest image. Above the insect-like image is a written text in black, which reads:

*“Face masks offer some protection as they block liquid droplets.”*

Infographic b has an office desk positioned almost in the centre of the page. On the desk are an open laptop computer and a mobile phone to the right and left of the page, respectively. The mobile phone is placed erect, and it is taller than the laptop computer. There are also two



insect-like images on the page – one is in front of the desk while the other is high above the laptop computer and mobile phone. There is a written text in black on top of the laptop computer, which reads:

*“Regularly disinfect your desks, laptops and phones: protect yourself, protect your space. Contact HR if you need any supplies.”*

In infographics c, there is a female to the left of the page. Her left hand is placed on her face covering her mouth completely and part of her nose. There are three insect-like images – one on the left side of the lady’s chest, one behind her right elbow and the third one on the black circle in front of the lady. The text is adjacent her head and it reads:

*“Cover up when you sneeze or cough: This is not only healthy, it’s also courteous. Sneeze or cough into your elbow or use a tissue paper. Drop used tissue papers in the dustbin immediately after use.”*

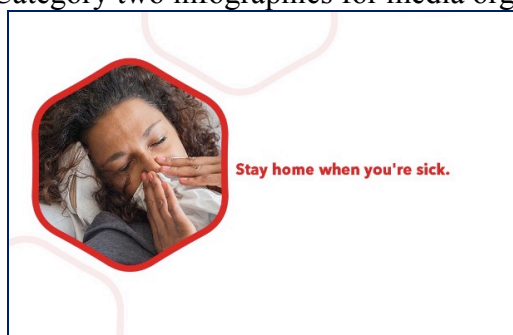
Infographics d has two human images – a male, to the right and a female on the left side of the page.

The written texts of preventive infographics for media organization B begin with a complex sentence which comprises an independent clause Face masks offer some protection and a dependent clause as they block liquid droplets; the two clauses are making factual statements about face masks. The second clause states the reason for the protective attribute of face marks in the first clause. The reader is able to decode the message of the text. The other written texts consist of series of imperative sentences which are introduced by the imperative verbs: disinfect, protect, contact, cover, sneeze, cough, use and drop. The verbs engage the reader and urge them to act in a certain way. The imperative sentences address the audience directly and establish a relationship with them.

### ***Description***

As displayed in Table 2 above, we describe all Category two infographics for media organisation A. The authors then did same for organisation B before moving on to describe Category three infographics for both A and B and finally Category three infographics for the organisations. See Figure 3 below:

Figure 3. Category two infographics for media organisation A



In Figure 3 (Category two infographics) above, the infographics has a photo to the left of the page layout – a female head resting on a pillow with her two hands squeezing a tissue to her

nose. There is a somewhat thick hexagonal magenta/red outline. There is a written text (also in magenta/red colour) that reads:

*“Stay home when you’re sick.”*

The background is almost plain white with two incomplete faded hexagonal outlines – these outlines do not in any way interfere with the artwork. The artwork appears to be almost balanced on the page.

Figure 4. Category two infographics for media organisation B



In the infographics (Figure 4), the background is completely covered in gold colour. There is what appears to be the heading (all in caps with some words in in gold colour and italicised. Those in italics have black background) to the top left corner of the page that reads:

***“HOW TO  
PROTECT YOURSELF FROM CORONAVIRUS”***

There is a thick black incomplete circle sitting at the centre of the orange background. There is a human image (female) with her right hand placed on her chest and her left hand to her mouth indicating she is coughing. There are five images in green in varied sizes. These images look like insects. There is a caption to the right of the head of the female image (which cuts into the circular thick black image) which reads:

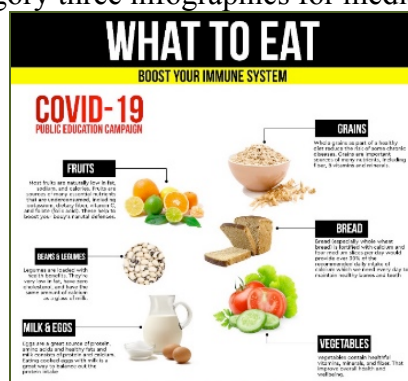
*“Seek early medical help if  
you have a fever, cough and  
difficulty breathing, and share  
your travel history with  
Healthcare providers.”*

Some of the words are italicised and in bold fonts.

### ***Description***

As displayed in Table 2, we describe all Category three infographics for media organisation A. Media organisation B did not have any infographics that fell within this categorisation. See Figure 5 below.

Figure 5. Category three infographics for media organisation B



The image in Figure 5 (Category three infographics for media organisation B) has written texts, images of fruits, beans and legumes, milk and eggs, grains, bread and vegetables with their respective headings and captions. The heading of the infographics is written in white colour on a black background and in all capital letters. There is a sub-heading right beneath the heading in black colour on a yellow background and in capital letters. Beneath the sub-heading on the left of the page is another written text in magenta/red colour (COVID-19 PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGN). All the headings for the images are in white colour and on black backgrounds with arrows pointing to their respective images. We now proceed to discussion using Feldman and Woods' Model of Art Criticism and finally conclude.

## Discussion

We discuss the infographics based on the following themes: colour, typefaces/typography and legibility, image and design layout.

**Colour:** The designer(s) appeared to have used colour sparingly and judiciously. There is a little contrast regarding the colours of the clothes of the human images and the colours of the written text. Contrast provides a form of focus and it is mostly employed to grab attention of a target audience. This conforms to Arslan et al. (2015), because we observed that colour had not served as hindrance to the legibility of the message in the infographics. In the case of Category one infographics for media organisation B, we observed that the background colour was too loud and almost piercing the eye. However, the black images on the gold colour background produce a form of contrast, which is good for attention grabbing. In conveying complex information to audiences, the efficient use of colour is one way by which this could be achieved (Esteves & Neves, 2020). For colour usage in preventive/curative infographics, there is an introduction of yellow/gold, which we believe could have been avoided. However, the artist might have used it to symbolise richness or power (Kwakye-Opong, 2014) or royalty, influence of God in society or continuous life (Dunn, 2014). Moving on, we saw an extensive use of black and we believed by our observations that the artists might be communicating unique symbolisms of “power, sexuality, sophistication, formality, elegance, wealth, mystery, fear, evil, unhappiness, depth, style” as presented by Ajibade and Obongha (2012:19). In Figure 2 (Category one infographics for media organisation B); infographics *f* and *g* could be confusing in respect of the use of colour. White colour was used to indicate prohibited actions instead of red colour. To sum up, the authors believed that the symbolisms of colour as well as the connotations with a culture (in this case the Ghanaian culture) must be taken into consideration.

**Typefaces/Typography and Legibility:** Our discussion was not hinged on the technical qualities of the typefaces used in the infographics examined. Our focus was on the kinds used and how they aided or otherwise legibility. We observed that both media organisations used sans-serif (typefaces without serifs) characters extensively. Although this departs from Ardit and Cho (2005) as well as Lucie-smith (2004) concepts, we observed that characters with serifs might enhance readability individually, however when placed in words the sans-serifed characters might enhance legibility since viewers would not be concentrating on the extensions of strokes. Our next observation was that most of the phrases/sentences were presented in sentence structures, thus only important words or words which began phrases or sentences were written in capital (caps) letters. All capital letters tended to appear blurry or hazy when seen from afar. We also observed that some characters were italicised, probably, to lay emphasis.

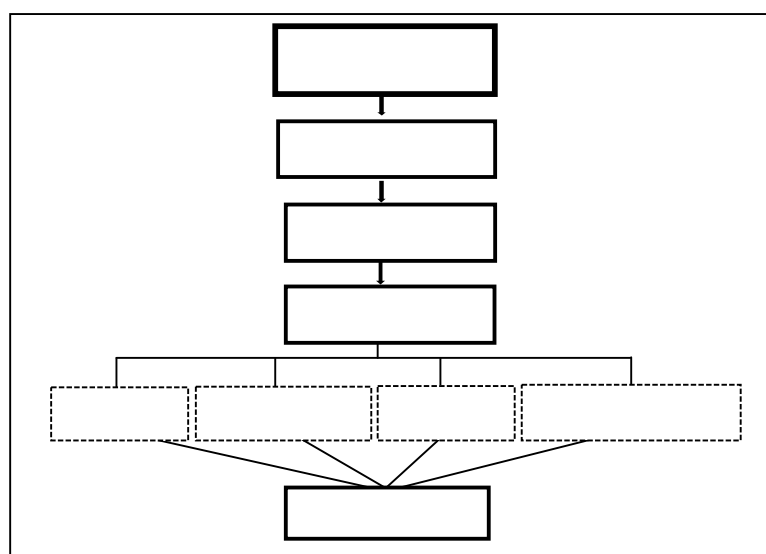
**Image:** We observed that images used were either real photos or drawn. Our critique was that where real human images were used, viewers would have been better attracted to images of their kind (In this instance, images which look like Ghanaians). We also observed that some images did not enhance the meaning or message. For instance, in Figure 4 (Category two infographics for media organisation A), the image did not compliment or enhance the caption “Stay home when you’re sick”. Also, if handshakes must be avoided, then infographics 5 under Figure 1 (Category one infographics for media organisation A) might be communicating a wrong message because the image presented displayed a handshake.

**Design Layout:** We observed that while infographics for media organisation A appeared to lead the viewer through, owing to the simplicity employed in the arrangement of elements, infographics for media organisation B appeared not to be so organised. The use of white spaces is more enhanced in infographics for media organisation A than it is for media organisation B. In layout, elements must have varied shapes and sizes depending on importance. This was not so in most of the infographics for media organisation B.

### Model Proposition

The authors proposed a model (Figure 6) for infographics appraisal.

Figure 6. Proposed Model for Infographics Appraisal



Source: Authors' own

The authors believe that infographics could be well appraised using this model. Infographics critiques would first identify a set of infographics then proceed to categorise the set of infographics, after which the selected infographics would be described. The next step was to discuss the described infographics on a set of constructs (these constructs may differ depending on the objective(s) of the study). Finally conclusions were drawn.

## **Conclusions**

The study explored how infographics communicate health information in a pandemic situation, by foregrounding some elements of design. We conclude that whilst elements of design such as colour, typefaces and lines are important in design, not all infographics examined appear to pay attention to these. Meanings of colours within the Ghanaian cultural system must be further studied especially, in the production of infographics in communicating instructions and information in pandemic situations such as the Covid-19. Also, although there are assertions about legibility and readability of texts regarding seriffed characters and sans-seriffed characters, this must be tested in the Ghanaian context in respect of how best either seriffed characters or sans-seriffed characters enhance or inhibit readability and legibility in infographics. We found that some images used did not enhance the meaning of the infographics either due to placement or the kind of image used. Finally, we found that writing sentences or phrases in all caps may mar legibility since they tend to appear blurry or hazy when viewed from afar.

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*Colorimetry Analysis of a 3D Model of Artwork for Forensic Examination of a Counterfeit in a Virtual Environment*

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**Abstract**

This article describes an experimental analysis of an original artwork using color models. The text discusses color analysis in a 3D point cloud of a digital twin of an artwork. A digital twin of the artwork is created using the Structure of Motion photogrammetry method. CMYK and RGB color models are used for color analysis of the 3D model. The created color digital 3D model is then compared with the color values of the actual work of art measured by a colorimetric device. In the next step of the presented research, the exact values of the color attributes of the artwork are experimentally defined. The original artwork is digitized to a virtual art gallery environment for presentation purposes. The experiment aims to realistically reproduce art in a digital environment and define its originality in a virtual environment using color analysis. Accurate digitization of art into a virtual environment with defined color attributes is the primary goal of the experiment discussed in this text. The presented article also discusses other research possibilities in art digitization and the use of digitization methods in a virtual reality environment in art and social science.

Keywords: Colorimetry, Color Model, Photogrammetry, 3D Model, Digital Twin, Digital Art, Art Digitization, Virtual Reality, Art Gallery, Forensic Science

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## Introduction

The progressive development of digitization affects almost all areas of human activity. Commercial fields, science, and research are forced to respond to the rapid development of modern technologies [1]. It is the same in the field of culture and cultural heritage. This rapid trend in the development of modern technologies was also reflected in art, exhibitions, media, marketing, and other fields.<sup>1</sup> This text discusses the issue of forgery within the digitalization of art. The black market for fakes is the third largest in the world. With the developing digitalization, there was also a need to respond to modern procedures in the area of counterfeiting. Digital image processing and its reproduction in the online and virtual environment in this direction provides excellent potential for research into this issue [2].

This text responds to the current needs in the digitization of art. The issue of identifying the originality of a work of art focuses on the area of color identification and the use of color models and spaces. The color, as well as the material and texture of the work of art, provides much information that can be used in the digitalization of art to analyze the image and research the mentioned issue. As part of the experiment and the creation of a digital twin, the question arose as to whether it would be possible to use some individual steps in the entire process of art digitization to identify original attributes [3]. These attributes could accurately describe specific properties of a work of art. This indicator could be precisely the colors and color properties of art. Image and color analysis can provide valuable information that could partially protect artworks from counterfeiting. In this experiment, we work with a digitized image. Colorimetry methods are therefore used here in the context of image processing, color vision, computer vision, and digitization of works of art [4].

The work of the Czech academic painter and master graphic artist František Peňáz (1912-1996), who was born in Pašovice in the Zlín Region and also lived and worked in the city of Zlín, was used in this scientific work [5]. Specifically, an original graphic work made using the artistic technique of lithography was used. The artwork was printed on handmade paper. It must be noted that this artistic technique and image reproduction always create an individually printed original. This artwork, therefore, provides a reasonable basis for color analysis of a digital reproduction of this author's artwork.

The first analysis of the originality of art is often a visual inspection by a human sign and an initial macroscopic examination, which reveals the difference in the tones and style of the painting, the dream of obtaining a patina. Standard methods for pigment evaluation include stratigraphy, using a polarizing microscope, scanning electron microscope (SEM), or electron microscope coupled to an electron dispersive spectrometer (EDS). However, these classic methods do not solve the forgery problem in a digital or virtual environment. Several approaches and methods are currently used to process and digitize the reproduced image. These methods depend on the methodology used. Research on the issue of forgeries of works of art, products, or misinterpreted photographs varies in their approach. This text presents new procedures for solving the problem based on image analysis of a 3D digital twin of a work of art intended for presentation in a virtual reality environment [6]. For image and color analysis, it uses modern methods of image digitization, photogrammetry, and colorimetry [4,7]. With their mutual connection, one can expect an accurate definition of colors in a digital environment compared to the color of an original work of art and its reproduction in a virtual reality environment.

## Method of Art Digitization

The Structure of Motion method (SfM) was used to digitize and transform the artwork into a 3D model. This photogrammetric method works with a series of 2D photographs of the object. It works with an actual image. The essence of this method is to find points in space. After that, additional points are added based on triangulation. The number of photos used depends on the object's size, the complexity of its structure and texture, and the color and optical properties of its surface. These mentioned properties of the object can affect the quality of the resulting reproduced image. The artwork used in this study is printed using the lithography method on handmade paper, and its size is close to the standardized A5 format. Due to the size of the selected object, it was unnecessary to take many photos. A series of 14 photos of the object was used to create a 3D accurate model. Figure 1 below shows the process of digitizing an object and creating an accurate 3D digital twin of the artwork.

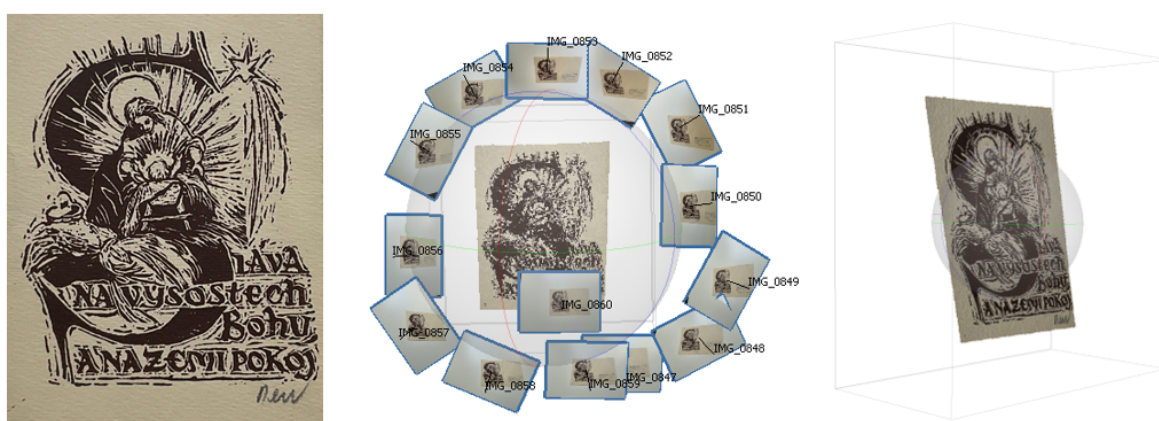


Figure 1: The 3D digitization of the artwork using photogrammetry: 2D photos of the artwork, a series of used photos, and the resulting 3D model.

Figure 1 shows three images. In order from left: The first image is a photograph of the original artwork chosen as the object for creating the 3D digital twin. The image in the middle shows a series of 14 photos of objects and their positions. The resulting digital 3D model from these photos is modeled in the software (SW) Agisoft metashape Professional, which shows the last image. The following table 1 lists the individual parameters of the image in comparison with the parameters and properties of the created 3D model.

PROPERTIES	PHOTO IMAGE	PROPERTIES	3D MODEL
Image size	4,21 MB	Point cloud	2 757 points
Apert. shutter	f/1,8	Key points	12,63 MB
Exposure	1/59 sec	Dense cloud	101 314 points
Resolution	4 032 x 3 024	Point color	3 bands/uint8
Bit dept	24	Faces	132 740
Color model	sRGB	Color model	RGB
Focal distance	3 mm	Focal distance	17 mm
ISO	320	Vertices	68 808

Table 1: Comparison of the properties photo image and 3D model.

This model and parameters are also the basis for image and color analysis using the principles of Colorimetry.

## Application of Colorimetric Methods and Color Models

Colorimetry works with the human eye's principles of image and color perception. It works with color models, color spaces (gamuts), and light. Colorimetry describes colors in numbers. This study uses color models to analyze the colors of an original work of art reproduced in 3D and a virtual environment. Specifically, two color models and their gamuts are used. The CIE1931 trichromatic triangle, which has been standardizing work with colors since 1931, defines the color space. Figure 2 shows CMYK, RGB, and CIE1931 color models with the gamuts used in this experiment.

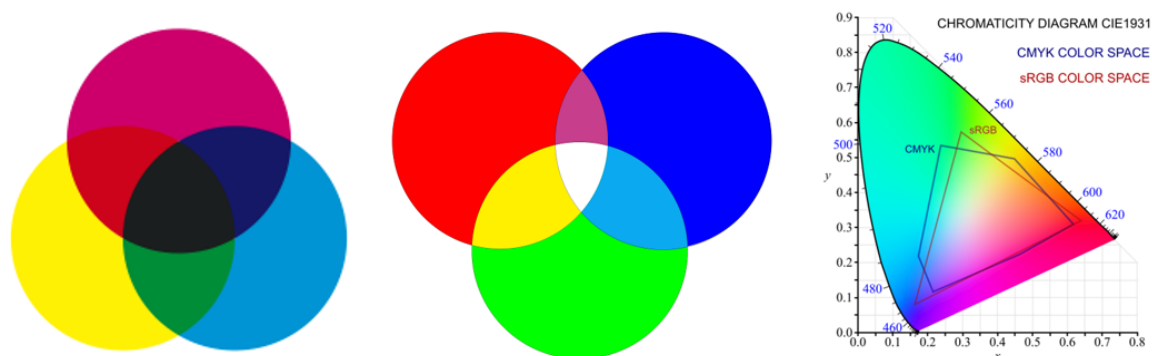


Figure 2: CMYK color model, RGB color model, CIE1931 with CMYK and sRGB gamuts.

Figure 2 shows the CMYK (Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, Contrast) and RGB (Red, Green, Blue) color models. These color models are suitable for this study. The CMYK model numerically describes the physical color applied to the material. In this experiment, a straight black color (Contrast K) is applied to hand-printed paper. The age of the artwork is estimated at 30-40 years. The color and the printed material can change its appearance and properties over time. The ambient conditions can also influence the accuracy of the color values during the scanning of the object.

Black printing ink (K) was chosen for this study, the pigment of which could change over time and thus affect the current numerical values. Measure the color values of black on the printed material; the Colorcatch Nano colorimeter is used, which measures the numerical values of all individual CMYK color components. At the same time, v is also experimenting with the RGB color model, shown in Figure 2 in the middle. This color model works with light, and the resulting colors show all digital displays. The third image shows the CIE1931 trichromatic triangle, in which the CMYK and sRGB color spaces are marked. The color space (gamut) defines the maximum range of color values. In this study, the sRGB gamut was chosen for RGB. Most current display devices display a range of colors in this color space. The simultaneously used measuring device (colorimeter) of color values also gives numerical values within the sRGB gamut.

## The Digital Artwork in a Virtual Art Gallery Environment

Defining the colors of an artwork in digital form is problematic for its reproduction in virtual reality. Creating a virtual environment includes many aspects that need to be considered. In particular, they were concerned with creating a realistic virtual environment. In this case, the goal is a realistic perception of the user embedded in a virtual environment. In this experiment, the goal is a realistic reproduction of the artwork and the definition of its color

properties. This study used the freely available VR environment creation software Unity 2021 for creation and visualization. One of the tools in creating a virtual environment is light. Working with light is essential in this study. The virtual presentation of works of art in virtual galleries is also conditioned by the realistic lighting of the exhibits and the overall virtual space. In this study, the focus is primarily on the visual reproduction of said work of art. The goal is a realistic digital color reproduction of it for a virtual art gallery. Figure 3 shows the influence of the choice of lighting in the VR environment on the color reproduction of the artwork.

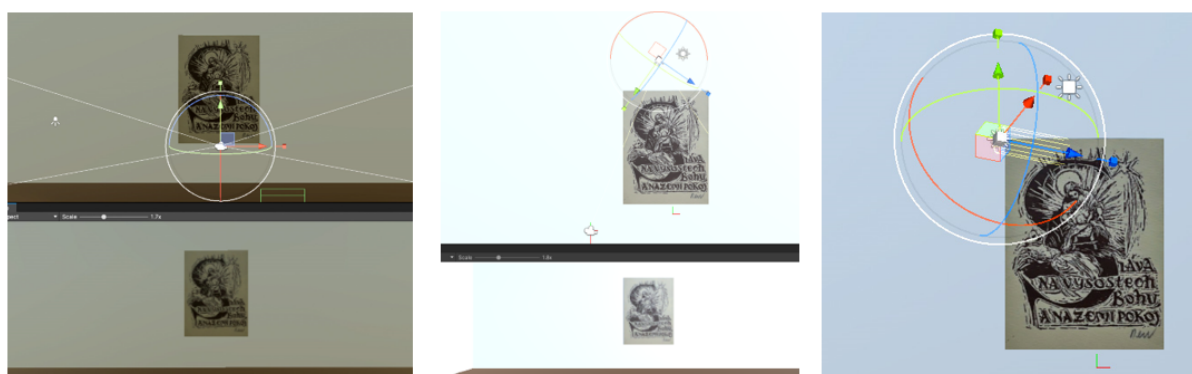


Figure 3: The effect of lighting in a VR gallery on visualizing a digitized work of art.

Figure 3 shows an unlit virtual space where the artwork blends into the natural background. In this case, the lighting in the created VR environment does not work. The middle image shows a VR environment using dispersed white light, reflected in the artwork's color and the overall environment. The third picture visualizes the use of a spotlight to illuminate the exhibit. In this case, more criteria had to be used to determine the spotlighting so as not to suppress the color of the digitized artwork. In Figure 4, a detail of the artwork and the lighting effect in the VR environment are visualized.



Figure 4: The effect of lighting in a VR gallery on visualizing a digitized work of art.

Figure 4 shows the effect of light has a significant influence on the display of the artwork in the virtual environment. By choosing the type of lighting and the object's location in 3D space, we can significantly increase or degrade the quality of its display. Therefore, the lighting attribute must be considered when creating a virtual space.

## Results and Discussion

The artwork was made using the technique of lithography and the printing process of black ink (Kontrast) on handmade paper. This object is, therefore, the carrier of several specific



attributes. This text focuses on the analysis of color and its reproduction in virtual reality. The process black color (K) was measured with a Colorimeter. One place in the entire reproduction was measured, and the absolute value of Contrast in the CMYK model (170, 0, 0) was measured. That corresponds to the assumption of using a printing ink containing a natural black pigment that can fulfill these absolute values and perfect coverage of the printed material with a very rough texture. At the same time, the absolute value of K was used to define all the points in the point cloud forming the 3D model, as shown in Figure 5. This 3D model is one of several stages of creating the final 3D textured model.



Figure 5: 3D model of point cloud with an active absolute K points.

As seen in Figure 5, it was necessary to convert the absolute value of the color component K from the CMYK model to the mathematical representation of Hexa. The values 170,0,0 converted as #000000 in the hex model. The number of points with this precisely defined value in the overall point cloud represents one of the attributes that can be used to transform the object and its texture into a virtual environment.

## Discussion and Conclusion

In this experiment, the possibility of using the color attributes of a work of art to identify its originality was practically analyzed. The color properties of an object digitized and converted into virtual reality remarkably influence the quality of digital reproduction. This study digitized and reproduced a work of art using the lithography technique on handmade paper. The printing color transferred to the material was only black (K). Colorimetry method was used to analyze this color using CMYK, RGB, HEX color models, and the sRGB color space. Black values were measured using the Colorimeter measuring device. After carrying out and repeating several measurements, it was evident that the black color has an absolute value (K 170,0,0). This fact presupposes using a natural black pigment for graphic printing, which has properties for these values and the permanence of the color of the pigment if it is not exposed to sunlight for a long time. This absolute black value was applied in the next steps of the practical experiment.

The 2D artwork was digitized using classic digital photography. A series of photographs was taken that contained a total of 14 photographs. This number of images proved to be sufficient for creating a 3D model. The scanned art object was made in actual A5 format. The next step was to use the SfM photogrammetry method. In this step, a basic 3D model of the object was created. A 3D point cloud was created and analyzed in the next phase of model creation. In



this step, it was possible to analyze the color values of individual points. Using the absolute K value converted from the CMYK color model to the HEX model (#000000), points with this color value in the point cloud were identified and segmented.

The next step in digitizing the artwork was reproducing the 3D model into the virtual environment of the art gallery. In this step, a problem with the resulting reproduction in VR manifested itself precisely in the case of color. Although the 3D model was marked with color attribute identifiers, the resulting display of the object's color was significantly influenced by the lighting of the virtual gallery. This problem thus represents a separate challenge and a future continuation of the experiment. Several simulations of lighting types and intensity were experimentally used in the virtual art gallery. Each of these types significantly influenced the final appearance and color of the digital artwork. It is therefore necessary to add work with light and its simulation in the VR environment as another factor to increase the quality and display of 3D reproduction of art in VR. This attribute also represents another attribute for use in the field of anti-counterfeiting. The presented experiment created further challenges for research and development in the field of art digitization and the presentation of artworks in a virtual environment.

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## ***Historical, Cultural and Religious Aspects of Abdulrazak Gurnah's Novels***

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### **Abstract**

Investigating literature and its interconnection with culture, history and religion is a crucial part of the discussion in contemporary world literature studies. The present research focuses on historical, religious and cultural specificity in “Paradise” (1994) by Nobel prize winner Tanzanian-born English writer Abdulrazak Gurnah. The main focus of the novels concentrates on searching for an ideal place and time for the protagonists concerning social and political issues. Literary scholars and critics have carried out several research on Gurnah’s fictions, including topics as itinerant narratives (Ruberto, 2009), migrant texture (Kaigai, 2014), migrations and diaspora (Moudouma, 2013), narrating power and human relationships (Okungu, 2016), subject and history (Falk, 2007). In the present analysis, the research problem is to investigate how historical, cultural and religious perspectives can reveal the author’s message to his readers. The data was collected from the detailed textual, contextual and conceptual analysis of Gurnah’s novel “Paradise” to figure out the artistic originality of the writer’s works in terms of diaspora literature. Historical, psychological, biographical and comparative methods are applied to achieve the purpose of the research.

Keywords: Intertextuality, Literary Analysis, Culture-History-Religion Interconnections, Bildungsroman, Post-colonial Literature

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## Introduction

There are reasonable changes in how literary studies have been practiced over the last century regarding interconnections between literature and other fields. Analysis and interpretations of fictional literature are mostly linked to various aspects of life and science. These connections might be observed as literature and history, literature and language, literature and culture, literature and psychology, literature and philosophy, literature and science, etc. This list needs to be completed in its sense, and even it is a limitation of the studies carried out in literary studies today. If literature is a subject about life and people, it appears an unquestionable issue whether it is necessary to compare or contrast the connections with other subject fields.

Tanzanian-born British novelist and academic **Abdulrazak Gurnah** (born in 1948) was awarded the Nobel Prize in literature in 2017 *for his uncompromising and compassionate penetration of the effects of colonialism and the fates of the refugee in the gulf between cultures and continents.* While his first language is Swahili, he has used English as his literary language and integrates Swahili, Arabic, and German into most of his writings.

He has said that he had to push back against publishers to continue this practice, and they would have preferred to "italicize or Anglicize Swahili and Arabic references and phrases in his books." He criticizes British and American publishing practices, pointing out that they want to "make the alien seem alien" by marking "foreign" terms and phrases with italics or by putting them in a glossary.

Academic Hamid Dabashi confirms that:

[Gurnah] is integral to the manner in which Asian and African migratory and diasporic experiences have enriched and altered English language and literature ... Calling authors like Gurnah diasporic, exilic, or any other such self-alienating term conceals the fact that English was native to him even before he set foot in England. English colonial officers had brought it home to him.

The consistent themes in Gurnah's works are:

- exile;
- displacement;
- belonging;
- colonialism;
- broken promises by the state;
- memories;
- cosmopolitanism.

The most common setting for Gurnah's works is the coast of East Africa, and many of his protagonists were born in Zanzibar. Although he has not returned to live in Tanzania since he left at 18, he has said that his homeland "*always asserts himself in his imagination, even when he deliberately tries to set his stories elsewhere.*"

Literary critic Bruce King posits, "*Africans have always been part of the larger, changing world.*" His characters are often rooted, alienated, and unwanted and, therefore are, or feel, resentful victims.

The first translator of Gurnah's novels into Swahili, Dr. Ida Hadjivayanis of the School of Oriental and African Studies, has said, "I think, if his work could be read in East Africa it would have such an impact ... We can't change our reading culture overnight, so for him to be read the first steps would be to include "Paradise," "After Lives" in the school curriculum."

As the research question states, the cultural aspect of fictional literature on the examples of British Nobel Prize Abdulrazak Gurnah, and his works, through the thematic processes the following fictions have been selected to study as "Paradise," "By the Sea" and "The Last Gift."

The primary criteria that could help to reveal the language-culture-literature interconnections in Gurnah's works suggested in this research include the following points:

1. Folklore
2. Chronotope
3. East penetration into West culture/literature
4. Diaspora characteristics
5. Role of Colours
6. Specificity of Numbers
7. Gender issues
8. National identity
9. Social Class distinctions
10. Anti/Humanism struggles
11. Reading challenges
12. Religious intertextuality

"Admiring Silence," "By the Sea," and "Desertion" by A. Gurnah concern the alienation and loneliness through the immigrant points of view concerning the very meaning of "home" in real modern societies. Hence, the enumerated fictions above by Gurnah have plenty of common issues that could allow exploring the cultural aspect of fictional literature in a global context.

Gurnah's fiction depicts the intricate meshwork of social codes, emotions, and narratives that shape subjectivity in a precarious and cosmopolitan social reality. His novels repeatedly thematise cultural disorientation, migration, and the efforts of establishing a minimum of social and narrative stability in the form of a home. The chapter reads Gurnah's fiction against a background of Zanzibari history and diaspora. It suggests that various forms of "entanglements" paradoxically provide the means to pull the subject out of states of anxiety and alienation into more viable states of being.

### **"Paradise" by Abdulrazak Gurnah**

"Paradise" is a novel written by Abdulrazak Gurnah, published in 1994. The novel is set in the context of German East Africa during World War I, exploring the impact of colonialism on the region and the complex relationships between different communities. The story centers around a character named Yusuf, a young man from the African mainland, who is captured and sent to work on the plantations of the island of Pate, part of present-day Kenya. The narrative unfolds against the backdrop of historical events, such as the German occupation of East Africa during the war. The characters grapple with issues of power, exploitation, and cultural clash. "Paradise" is praised for its rich prose and its exploration of the human

consequences of colonialism. It delves into the lives of individuals caught in the web of historical forces, providing a nuanced portrayal of the social and political dynamics of the time. The novel received critical acclaim for its depth, historical insight, and Gurnah's skillful storytelling.

### **Historical Aspects of “Paradise”**

"Paradise" by Abdulrazak Gurnah is set against the backdrop of historical events, particularly the German occupation of East Africa during World War I. The novel explores several historical aspects:

**German Colonialism:** The novel is situated in German East Africa, a region that corresponds to present-day Burundi, Rwanda, and part of Tanzania. German colonial rule is a significant historical backdrop, and the narrative captures the impact of European colonialism on the lives of the indigenous people.

Yusuf had heard the boys say that the Germans hanged people if they did not work hard enough. If they were too young to hang, they cut their stones off. The Germans were afraid of nothing. They did whatever they wanted and no one could stop them. One of the boys said that his father had seen a German put his hand in the heart of a blazing fire without being burnt, as if he were a phantom. (Paradise: 16)

**World War I:** The story takes place during World War I when the region was a theatre for conflict between European powers. The Germans, who had colonial interests in East Africa, were in conflict with the British, who sought to gain control of the German colonies in the region.

“It’s a dangerous road,” Simba Mwene said, smiling and taking Khalil’s mockery in his stride. “Especially along the border. Even more so now that there’s talk of war between the English and the Germans.” (Paradise: 199)

**Impact on Local Communities:** The novel delves into the consequences of war and colonialism on the local communities, particularly through the character of Yusuf. Yusuf's experiences, as well as those of other characters, illustrate the disruption, displacement, and cultural clashes that occurred during this tumultuous period.

Yusuf saw that this was the seyyid again, the man who had so casually taken him away from his parents and his home, and who had strolled the hard lands to the lakes with smiling equanimity. (Paradise: 191)

**Economic Exploitation:** The novel explores themes of economic exploitation and the harsh conditions faced by those who worked as “rehani.” Rehani means a child given by parents instead of their debts to rich people. The characters grapple with power dynamics, exploitation, and how colonial structures influenced their lives.

For Yusuf it was an unwelcome interruption to the equanimity his life of captivity had acquired over the years. Despite everything, he had not been unhappy in Uncle Aziz’s shop. He had come to understand fully that he was there as rehani, pawned to Uncle Aziz to secure his father’s debts to the merchant. (Paradise: 56)

Rihani children in the novel *Yusuf*, Khalil and Amina are depicted with psychological traumas, suffering from uncertainty in their lives.

“Paradise” provides a historical lens through which readers can understand the social, political, and economic dynamics of German East Africa during a crucial period in its history. The novel weaves together personal stories with broader historical events, offering a nuanced exploration of the impact of colonialism on individuals and communities.

### **Cultural Aspects of “Paradise”**

In "Paradise" by Abdulrazak Gurnah, the narrative delves into various cultural aspects, exploring the rich tapestry of identities, beliefs, and traditions of the characters within the context of colonialism. Here are some cultural aspects present in the novel:

**Cultural Diversity:** The novel portrays the diversity of cultures and ethnicities within the East African setting. Different communities with distinct languages, customs, and ways of life are depicted, highlighting the richness and complexity of the cultural landscape. The interactions between different communities and the cultural clashes that result from colonial rule are central to the novel. Gurnah examines the complexities of relationships among Asians, Africans and Europeans, as well as tensions within African communities.

He went to the station often, to watch the trains come noisily and gracefully in, and then to wait for them to haul themselves out again, marshalled by the scowling Indian signalman with his pennants and whistle. Often Yusuf waited hours for a train to arrive. The two Europeans were also waiting, standing under a canvas awning with their luggage and important-looking goods neatly piled a few feet away. (Paradise: 10)

**Traditional Beliefs and Practices:** The novel explores the impact of colonialism on traditional African beliefs and practices. The characters grapple with the changes brought about by external forces, and traditional customs often come into conflict with the values imposed by the colonizers.

They visited the town every Friday to say prayers at the Juma’a mosque, and play kipande and football in the streets. Passers-by shouted remarks at Khalil, telling him he was almost a father and should not be playing with children. (Paradise: 49)

**Oral Tradition and Storytelling:** Gurnah incorporates elements of oral tradition and storytelling within the narrative.

He told the story of the beautiful woman who, after complicated stratagems on his part, agrees to take him home, then turns out to be a man. Or the old lady he negotiates with, taking her to be a pimp, but who turns out to be the prostitute he was paying for. (Paradise: 95)

The characters share stories that are passed down through generations, reflecting the importance of storytelling in preserving cultural heritage and conveying wisdom.

**Social Hierarchies:** The novel delves into the social hierarchies within the indigenous communities, examining issues of power, authority, and social roles. These structures are influenced both by traditional cultural norms and the disruptive forces of colonialism. From

the simple life of rural Africa, Yusuf is thrown into the complexities of precolonial urban East Africa – a fascinating world in which Muslim black Africans, Christian missionaries, and Indians from the subcontinent coexist in a fragile, subtle social hierarchy.

Language: Language is a crucial element in conveying cultural nuances. The novel may incorporate different languages spoken by the characters, emphasising the linguistic diversity present in the region and the challenges of communication across cultural and linguistic boundaries.

Table 1: Language Term and Definition

No	Term	Definition	Extract from book
1.	tamburis <sup>1</sup> , siwa <sup>2</sup>	<sup>1</sup> drum [2] <sup>2</sup> horn (of wood or ivory that is the emblem of a chief) [1; p.453]	<i>His expeditions were often accompanied by drums and <b>tamburis</b> and horns and <b>siwa</b>, and when his train marched into town animals stampeded and evacuated themselves, and children ran out of control. [3; p. 3]</i>
2.	kanzu	garment (long robe worn by men) [1; p. 397]	<i>His habitual dress was a thin, flowing <b>kanzu</b> of fine cotton and a small crocheted cap pushed back on his head. [3; p. 3]</i>
3.	tajiri mkubwa	wholesale merchant [1; p. 568]	<i>His father said they brought honour on them because he was such a rich and renowned merchant - <b>tajiri mkubwa</b> - but that was not all, welcome though honour always was. [3; p. 3]</i>
4.	washenzi	uncivilized person [1; p. 970]	<i>'We are surrounded by savages,' he said. '<b>Washenzi</b>, who have no faith in God and who worship spirits and demons which live in trees and rocks. [3; p. 6]</i>
5.	vibarua	temporary employment [1; p. 313]	<i>Their parents worked as <b>vibarua</b>, labouring for the Germans on the line-construction gangs, doing piece-work at the railhead, or portering for travellers and traders. [3; p. 6]</i>
6.	bismillah	in the name of Allah [1; 27]	<i>His uncle unwrapped the food with practised care, muttering <b>bismillah</b> and smiling slightly, then with his palm half open in a gesture of welcome he invited Yusuf to the food. [3; p. 19]</i>
7.	seyyid <sup>1</sup> , waungwana <sup>2</sup>	<sup>1</sup> title of the Sultan of Zanzibar [1; p. 900] <sup>2</sup> well-bred person [1; p. 1010]	<i>The porter shouted for people to make way - 'Let the <b>seyyid</b> pass, <b>waungwana</b>' - and even though he was such a ragged and ill-looking man, no one contested with him. [3; p. 20]</i>
8.	kifa urongo	Rhinoceros [2]	<i>Hey, <b>kifa urongo</b>! [3; p. 22]</i>
9.	marehemu	the dead [1; p. 236]	<i>But he can't be as bad as <b>marehemu</b> my father, God's mercy on his soul,' Khalil continued, unperturbed by Yusuf's outcry. 'Nobody can be.' [3; p. 24]</i>
10.	malai <sup>1</sup> , mofa	<sup>1</sup> originally an Indian dish, heavy whipped cream obtained by heating milk [2] <sup>2</sup> bread [2]	<i>Your Ba would've paid him, so you could stay at home and eat <b>malai</b> and <b>mofa</b> every morning, heh? [3; p. 25]</i>
11.	maluun	accursed person [1; p. 9]	<i>'You want them to bite you? Do you think they have come here to play with you? You are worse than a kifa urongo, you're a feeble-minded child without any spirit. What were you waiting for? Speak, you <b>maluun</b>.' [3; p. 27]</i>
12.	kiyama	judgement day [1; p. 506]	<i>After <b>kiyama</b>, after the day the world ends and God calls everyone to Him ... after kiyama the wolf-men will live in the first layer of Hell, thousands and thousands of them, and they'll eat the sinful people who don't obey Allah. [3; p. 29]</i>
13.	buibui	veil (long black worn by Muslim women) [1; 987]	<i>Women visitors came, draped from head to toe black <b>buibui</b>. [3; p. 36]</i>



14.	hakim <sup>1</sup> , mganga <sup>2</sup>	<sup>1</sup> leader [1; p. 522] <sup>2</sup> rec.doctor [1; p. 287]	<i>For many years doctors have come, learned <b>hakim</b> with long grey beards have read prayers for her, and <b>mganga</b> from over the hills have brought medicine, but it's no good. [3; p. 38]</i>
15.	Juma'a	week [1; p. 1008]	<i>Every Idd he went with the seyyid to the <b>Juma'a</b> mosque for prayers, and once he had been taker1 to a funeral, but he did not know whose it was. [3; p. 39]</i>
16.	shabab	young man [1; p. 1031]	<i>'<b>Shabab!</b> What a brave little brother you are,' Khalil said, slapping Yusuf on the back. 'You'll look after me, eh.' [3; p. 39]</i>
17.	Magendo	Contra band for the border [3; p. 45]	<i>They were awkwardly shaped and covered with hessian. <b>Magendo</b>, Khalil whispered. Contra band for the border. Big money. [3; p. 45]</i>
18.	rehani	Loan [1; p. 539]	<i>He had come to understand fully that he was there as <b>rehani</b>, pawned to Uncle Aziz to secure his father's debts to the merchant. [3; p. 47]</i>
19.	kisirani	bad luck	<i>This is not your business and you must not ask useless questions. rou'll bring ... <b>kisirani</b> ... bad luck. rou want to bring evil on us. [3; p. 49]</i>
20.	'Kijana mzuri	Beautiful boy	<i>'<b>Kijana mzuri.</b>' Beautiful boy, Mohammed Abdalla had said, stopping beside Yusuf and taking his chin in a hand that felt as if it was mottled and scaled. [3; p. 52]</i>

Despite the challenges posed by colonialism, the novel may also depict instances of cultural resilience and survival. Characters may seek ways to preserve and adapt their cultural identity in the face of external pressures. "Paradise" provides a nuanced exploration of the cultural dimensions of East African societies during a time of significant historical and social change. The novel captures the complexities of cultural interactions, adaptations, and struggles within the context of colonial rule.

### Religious Aspects of "Paradise"

In "Paradise" by Abdulrazak Gurnah, religious aspects play a significant role in shaping the characters' lives and interactions.

Islam: The majority of the characters in "Paradise" are likely to be Muslims, considering the historical and cultural context of East Africa. The novel explores how characters practice and express their faith in the midst of colonial challenges. Islam is portrayed as a source of comfort, identity, and resistance for some characters.

You should read the Book whenever you can, especially now that Ramadhan has started. During this holy month, every good act earns you double the blessing you'd receive at other times. The Prophet was told this by the Almighty himself on the night of Miraj. On that night our Prophet was taken from Makka to Jerusalem on the winged horse Borakh, and from there to the presence of the Almighty, who decreed the laws of Islam. (Paradise: 95)

The interactions between characters from different religious backgrounds, particularly in a diverse East African setting, could be explored. The novel examines how individuals of different faiths relate to each other, whether through tolerance, understanding, or conflict. The word "paradise" is also interpreted differently by different religious holders in the novel.

Did you know that is where all earthly waters have their source? The four rivers of Paradise. They run in different directions, north south east west, dividing God's garden into quarters. ... 'Where is this garden? Kalasinga asked. 'In India' I have seen many gardens with waterfalls in India. Is this your Paradise? Is this where the Aga Khan lives?' 'God has made seven Heavens,' Hamid said, ignoring Kalasinga and turning his head aside as if to address Yusuf alone. His voice was slowly softening. 'Paradise is the seventh level, itself divided into seven levels. The highest is the Jennet al And, the Garden of Eden.' (Paradise: 89)

The main protagonist of the novel Yusuf is blessed with beauty as prophet Yusuf A.S., and it demonstrates the intertextuality referring to the Holy books.

- *You'll drive young women insane with your beautiful looks one day. (p. 92)*
- *He likes you, but who wouldn't like such a beautiful boy? Your mother must have been visited by an angel. (p.117)*
- *With your beautiful looks you can have the whole world. (p.199)*
- *One touch from that beautiful boy will cure this wound in my heart. (p. 214)*

## **Conclusion**

Abdulrazak Gurnah's novels, including "Paradise," are characterized by their exploration of complex themes such as colonialism, cultural identity, displacement, and the human consequences of historical and political upheaval. His works often provide nuanced portrayals of characters navigating the challenges imposed by external forces while grappling with their own internal conflicts. His writing is known for its rich and evocative language, vivid imagery, and a deep understanding of the historical and cultural contexts in which his stories unfold. The narratives often unfold against the backdrop of East Africa, where Gurnah himself was born, and his novels contribute to a broader understanding of the region's history and its intersection with global events. Through his storytelling, Gurnah sheds light on the intricacies of relationships, the impact of power dynamics, and the resilience of individuals and communities facing adversity. Themes of cultural clash, the coexistence of diverse traditions, and the consequences of colonialism are recurrent in his works.

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*Art X Instagram Filters: A New Aesthetic Experience for Seeing Artworks in the Contemporary Era*

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Official Conference Proceedings**Abstract**

In this contemporary era, technology has become quite important in the field of art. Recent innovations include the phenomenon of combining Art X Technology with Instagram filters, in which artists create 2D artworks and filters through Instagram that can be used by the audience to see 2D artworks that are transformed into real or moving (3D) objects through the phone screen. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of the use of technology (Art X Instagram Filter) on the audience at exhibitions. The Data was collected by 49 respondents via an online survey via a Google Form link for visitors to the exhibitions "Age Quod Agis" by Liquid Color Community and "Memanen Angin" by Lully Tutus Solo Exhibition in Jogja Gallery. The final result shows that Art X Instagram filters have had a significant impact on how art is created, consumed, and perceived in the digital age. They offer a range of tools that alter the visual appearance of images, allowing users to experiment with different styles, colors, and effects. This is certainly a new media innovation in presenting artworks to be closer to the audience, and the audience has a new way to enjoy and see artwork, where the audience can not only experience 2D artwork but can also use other alternatives to enjoy the artwork by using a phone camera. So the audience also eventually makes a personal choice to enjoy the artwork as a painting or animated by Instagram filters according to their preferences.

Keywords: Art X Instagram, Aesthetic Experience, Impact, Audiences

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## Introduction

What is Art? As a visual culture, Art's position can be understood through various aspects, such as Art as a physical manifestation, Art as a System, and Art as a Value (Pamadhi, H 2012). Understanding these three aspects is crucial in determining Art's contemporary stance. Art as a physical manifestation helps us comprehend the physical representations of concepts and ideas that can be perceived by human senses, such as paintings, sculptures, and installations. Art as a system helps to integrate the position of art as a mechanism that constructs and fosters a 'behaviour.' Art as a Value is related to aesthetics, where the notion of "value" in art resides in every human being, including the artist who creates the work and the audience as consumers of the work.

What is Technology? Tepstra and David (1985) suggest that technology as a cultural system concerned with the relationships between humans and their environment. From the systems perspective Afriyie (1988) defines technology as encompassing: 1) the basic knowledge subsystem; 2) the technical support system (software); and 3) the capital-embodied technology (hardware). This perspective views that technology recognizes the need to identify the different elements of a particular country's technology that are complementary and mutually reinforcing Abd Wahab, Sazali & Che Rose, Raduan & Osman, Suzana (2012).

The relationship between art and technology can be affected by a wide range of factors; for example, when a new technology creates a new form of society, or when new materials are produced from industrial technology, they can both inspire new types of artistic expressions. (Hatanaka, 2016) Recent advancements in augmented reality (AR) technology have begun to position the medium for widespread adoption and cultural impact (Tinnel, 2014).

Tomiuc, A (2014) Augmented reality (AR) technology is an emerging area that can potentially provide museums or art galleries with numerous valued and distinctive chances to raise access to their collections and increase people's learning and enjoyment. It was first introduced in the 1900s as an idea for a digital presentation that overlaps data onto the physical world (Gongz Zhe et al. 2022). According to Azuma et al. (2001), there are three characteristics of augmented reality: (a) integrate real and virtual objects into reality, (b) collaboration between real and virtual objects, and (c) real-time interaction between real and virtual objects. Therefore, the images and sounds generated through augmented reality can significantly enhance the visual and auditory experience in real life (Chen C-A, Lai H-I. 2021).

Instagram should best be understood as a conduit for communication in the increasingly vast landscape of visual social media cultures. The visual image, video, and other combinations of these elements in stories are first and foremost about communicating with one another. Moreover, as the platform amassed over a billion users, platform-provided filters have given way to socially-driven norms and what we argue is the templatability of visual social media Instagram. Instagram is more than app, more than a platform, and more than a jewel in the facebook 'family'. Rather, Instagram is an icon and avatar for understanding and mapping visual social media cultures, whether on Instagram itself, or through the many ways the material world has sought to become 'Insta-worthy' in redesigning practices, cultural institutions and material spaces (Leaver, T, et al 2019).

The application of AR in art is still quite new in Indonesia. In December 2022, WIR Group subsidiary AR&Co collaborated with Celsius to present interactive and immersive visuals of

paintings to visitors through the support of augmented reality (AR) technology. AR&Co developed an Instagram filter that can bring interactive visuals in the form of animated trimatra (3D) that can move and provide a unique experience of historical paintings from three Indonesian painting maestros, namely Affandi Koesoma, Basoeki Abdullah, and Antonio Blanco. This exhibition activity was displayed through the El-Maestro event, which was the launch of the latest fashion collection from Celsius and took place at the Sarinah shopping center in Jakarta (Andaresta, 2022).

The "Age Quod Agis" Exhibition by Liquid Color Community and Lully Tutus' "Memanen Angin" Solo Exhibition at Jogja Gallery are two art exhibitions in Jogja that use Instagram filters to incorporate augmented reality into 2D visual artworks. The same concept is used in both exhibitions to present augmented reality in art, where artists use Instagram filters as a brand-new alternative media for viewers to view and engage with artworks. The goal of this study is to determine how much the Art X Instagram Filters affect how much art exhibition visitors love the pieces on display.

## **Methodology**

Netnography (Kozinets, 2010) is an ethnographic approach to study communities that exist primarily online. Engaging in online participant observation, the netnographer connects to the online community through a computer screen, and the field is located inside the screen. Onal, D (2015). Survey approaches inform us about the relative population, demographic constitution, and frequencies of behaviours of online community members. Social psychological and experimental approaches hypothesize about and test suggested causal relations between important individual and group level variables such as attitudes, memory, and belief. The application of surveys using web-pages or other online formats is called the online survey method. Online survey methods have grown rapidly in the last decade (Andrews et al. 2003; Lazar and Preece 1999). From practically a standing start, online surveys have become the major method for investigating a wide variety of social questions. Online surveys are an excellent way to gain a particular kind of understanding about online communities and culture (Kozinets, 2010).

In this study, data was collected using a Netnography approach and an online survey via a Google Forms link. Following criteria were used to choose the respondents: a.) Use Instagram as a social media b.) Have been to one of the Jogja Gallery's "Age Quod Agis" by Liquid Colour Community or "Memanen Angin" Solo exhibitions by Lully Tutus. 49 participants completed the online questionnaire that the researcher designed for this study. The qualitative analysis of the data was done with the use of graphs and descriptions.

## **Findings and Discussion**

The review of Art X Instagram's impact on audiences through the Google Form Survey link is created using a combination of different questionnaire models, such as Choice, Fill-in, and Scale, as the criteria chosen by researchers to assess the level of consistency in respondents' responses to research questions. As a result, the opinions expressed by respondents in the research survey demonstrate the variables that support and provide an argument for the decisions made by respondents.

### The Typical Respondent Who Attends the Exhibition

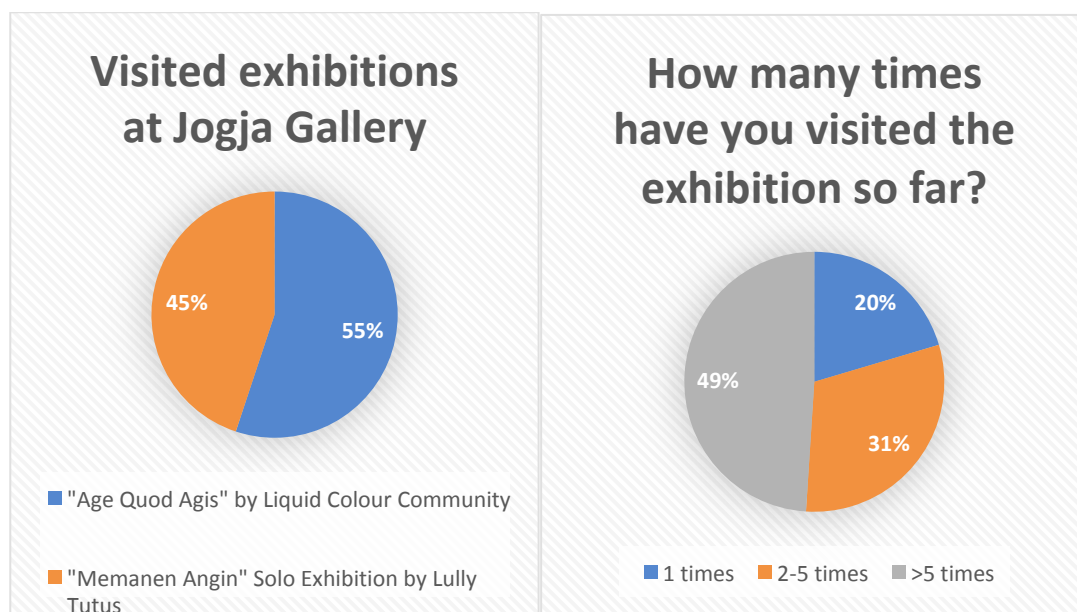


Figure 1. The Typical Respondent Who Attends the Exhibition

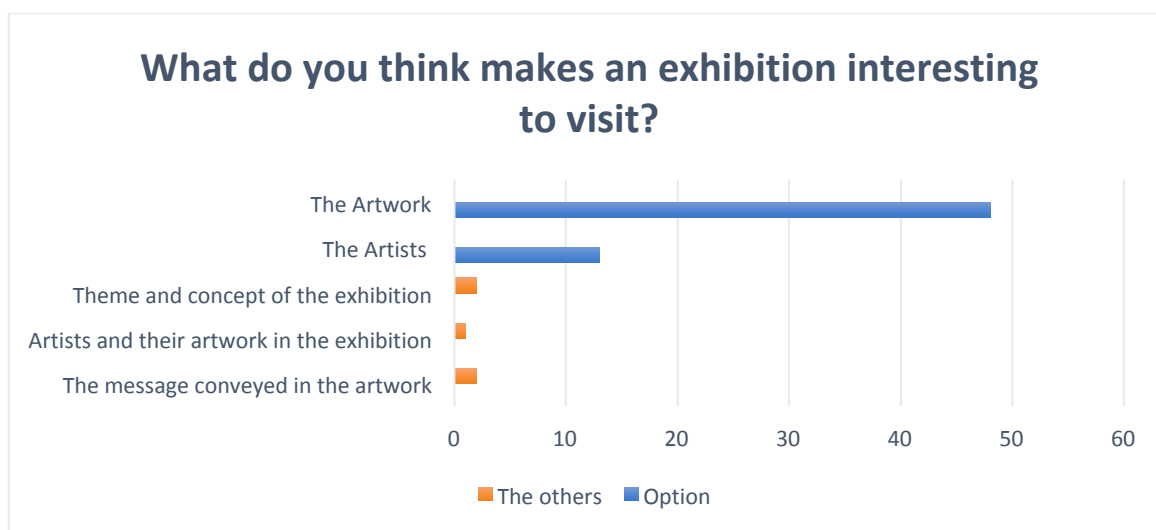


Figure 2. Chart What Make An Exhibition Interesting to Visit

When the author posed the question of what attracts people to art exhibitions, the respondents were given two choices: the first was the artwork, and the second was the artist. The author additionally included a different field that respondents could complete. A lot of respondents said that the main factor determining whether or not an exhibition was interesting or not was the artwork on display, followed by the artist who organized the event. Some responders also added additional information, such as the exhibition's theme and concept, the artwork and its artist, and the artwork's message.



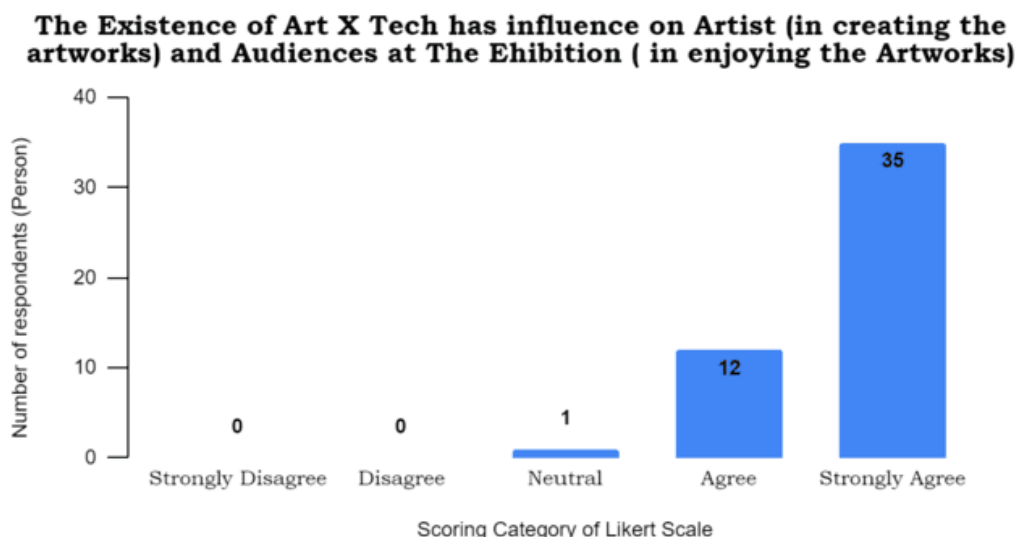


**Figure 3. The Purpose of Visiting an Exhibition**

Next, there is **question about The Purpose of visiting an exhibition.** The author discovered various answers to this question. Every person who visits the Exhibition has a different reason for "why they come to the exhibition and what they are looking for". However, out of all the responses provided by 49 individuals, The author identified several frequently used phrases from the responses given by respondents, including **"Seeing the artworks."** @yantioctere, @anniafirrd, @dailyofqueenz, @puteridk, @ziyahanafau, @sintanurindah, @\_61files, and @nabillaarahma.\_ are all female users. Next is the word **"refreshing."** @anangprayitno (m), @prima\_agustian (m), @clarestate (f), @voicebyputri (f), @queenta (f). **"Like"** the following accounts: @fitriindahwati (f), @ddhilah (f), @eiydze (m), @vikalnt\_ (f), @anitadessy\_ (f), **"Entertainment"** @honeyvha\_ (f), @ariffahningtyass\_ (f), and @sholaaprica (f). **"Curious"** @caninaydl, @novian\_tiandini, as well as additional keywords like **"Healing"**, **"Contemplation"**, and **"making content."**

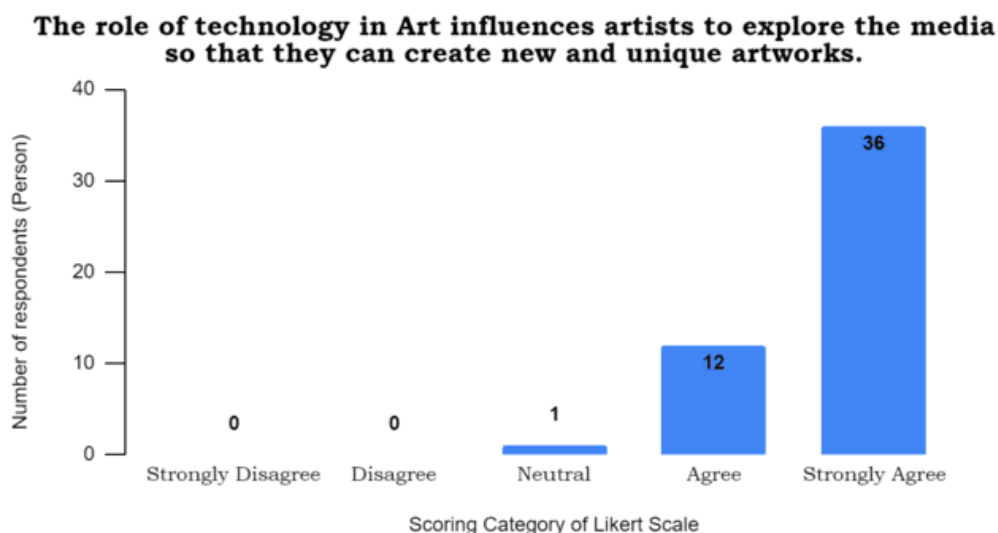
### **The Impact of Art X Tech for Artist, Artwork, and Audience**

Leo Tolstoy answered these questions in "What is Art?" (1897), his most comprehensive essay on the theory of art. Tolstoy's theory has a lot of charming aspects. He believes that art is a means of communicating emotion, with the aim of promoting mutual understanding. By gaining awareness of each other's feelings we can successfully practice empathy and ultimately unite to further mankind's collective well-being. (Chaliakopoulos, 2020). According to this statement, the artist, the piece of art, and the audience represent the three fundamental components of art. The Artist is the person who creates the artwork, the artwork is a medium of Communication, and the Audience is the agent or subject matter of Communication since these three fundamental components are connected. These three factors will definitely be impacted by technology. The author also wants to discover how artists, works, and audiences are impacted by the relationship of technology and art through Art X Instagram.



**Figure 4. Art X Tech Influence on Artist and Audience**

With statement clauses and ratings on a Likert scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is strongly disagree and 5 is strongly agree, the author created a questionnaire type form. "The statistics indicate an evaluation based on respondents' perceptions of the impact of art X technology: 35 respondents (72.9%) highly agree, 12 respondents selected agree (25%) (love visit Exhibition, Seeing artworks, refreshing, entertainment, contemplation) and 1 respondent selected neutral (curious).

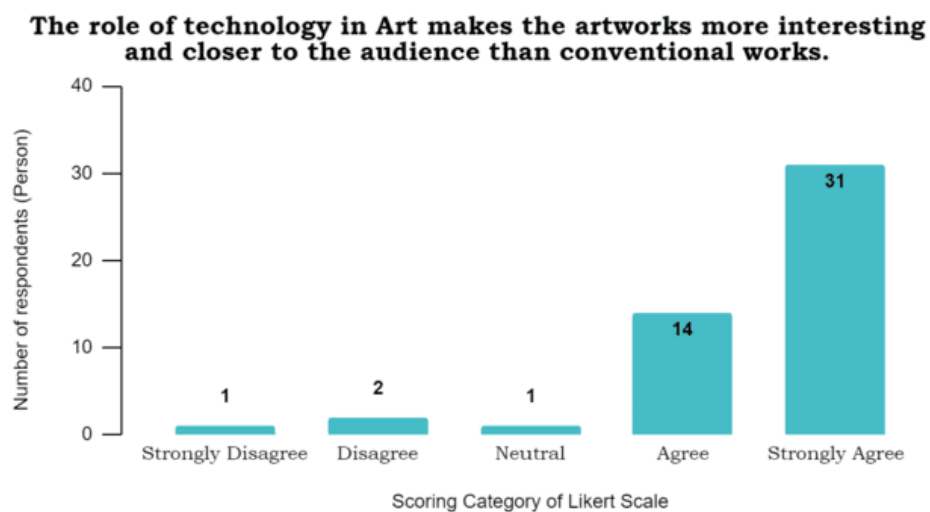


**Figure 5. Art X Tech Influence Artist to Create Artwork**

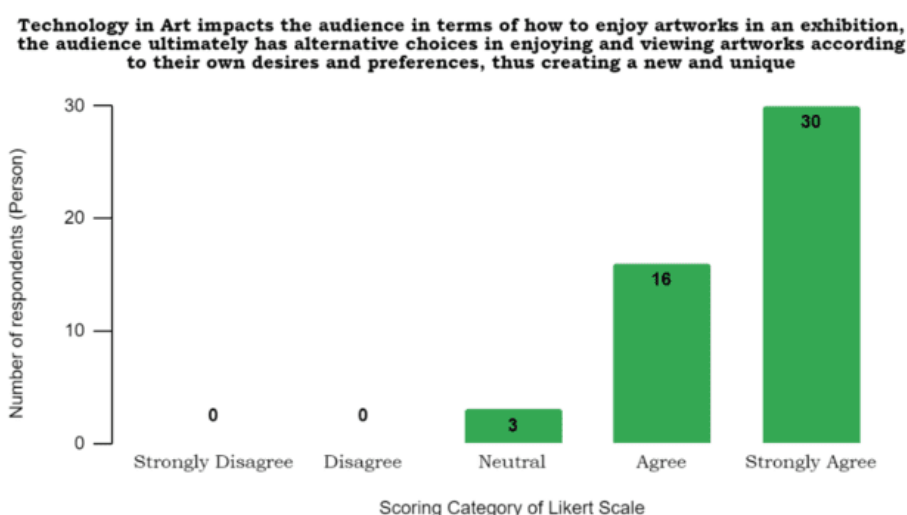
The graph displays opinions about how art and technology affect artists' production of unique and innovative artworks. From the perspective of the audience, 36 respondents (73.5%) strongly agreed with the statement, followed by 12 who agreed (24.5%) and one who responded "Neutral" (2%), according to the study (healing).

The following graph claim indicates that the interaction between art and technology brings the artworks closer to the audience and makes them more exciting. According to the survey

results, 31 respondents (63.3%) highly agreed, 14 agreed (28.6%), 1 selected neutral (2%), (love to visit exhibition), 2 disagreed (4.1%), (love to visit exhibition and contemplation) , and 1 selected strongly disagreed (2%), (love to visit exhibition).



**Figure 6. Art X Tech Influence the Artworks**



**Figure 7. Art X Tech Impact the Audience**

In response to a question concerning the role of Art X Tech for visitors, the author writes that technology in art influences how audiences appreciate the works on view by allowing users to make a different option based on their own preferences and desires, which in turn creates a unique aesthetic experience. Of the 49 participants in the study, 3 selected neutral (6.1%) (healing, explore, seeing artworks), 16 agreed (32.7%), and 30 strongly agreed (61.2%).

## Audience's Aesthetic Experiences With Art X Instagram Filter in Exhibition

*Q: How do you feel when technology is combined with art (through Instagram filters) in the Age quod Agis? Exhibition by Liquid Colour Community in the work of the artist?*



OADYN CHOERODIN

Gugur Gulita #2

Oil, Acrylic, On Canvas

Diameter 190cm

2023

*Please provide a description of your responses, impressions, messages, and experiences.*

\*credit photo: by Instagram,  
@liquid\_color

**Figure 8. OADYN CHOERODIN. Gugur Gulita #2**

"Well, this is very, very woahh. Something new for me, although maybe for other people it's common. But for me, who is a newbie like this, I can know, Oh, it turns out that art can go so far. Really cool anyway." @yantioctere (seeing artwork)

"It was impressive because even though it was just an Instagram effect, I had never encountered it before, so it was new for me and my friends who visited at that time." @anangprayitno\_ (refreshing)

"It's cool; Instagram filters have been popular for a long time, but this is the first time I've seen them integrated into an exhibition. So, if all this time visitors can only "see the exhibition". This time, visitors are "invited" to explore the exhibition more. So I salute this idea." @fitriindahwatii (love to visit exhibition)

"Very interactive and fun. It gives a special impression because you are taken as if you are swimming with the fish from his artwork." @honeyvha\_ (entertainment)

"It was my first time visiting an exhibition that combined paintings with Instagram fillers. I was very interested in trying it. Moreover, there is a barcode to make it easier to access the existing fillers." @rizkaa\_97 (seeing artworks)

"To be honest, I came to this exhibition because I was curious about this 3D concept. How can there be moving pictures? And it turns out that this can move with the help of Instagram filters, and I think this is mind-blowing. It can be that beautiful. When I tried it on my phone, I felt like I was in the dimension that the artist described. Even

though it only happened in the virtual world. But it's real. After all, we already live in a virtual world, don't we? Everything is digital." @ddhilah (love to visit exhibition)

"It was a pleasure to enjoy the artworks of Gugur gulita #2 and a new experience with an interactive exhibition like this. During the exhibition, many visitors queued up to try using the Instagram filter that made the fish image come alive and move. It also shows that, among other artworks, this innovation is so different that its uniqueness can attract visitors to come to this gallery." @Miftakhljnnh (seeing artworks)

"I was amazed because it was the first time I enjoyed a piece of art with such a breakthrough. I think combining technology and art will be an interesting innovation for the art world in the future. Such interactive artworks can also help artists increase awareness so that their artworks are more 'noticed' by the audience." @clarestadc (refreshing)

"Something extraordinary combined with technology that I have never seen before is one of the new things for me about art that can be combined with technology." @abdrrm (explore)

"Very interesting, it must develop anyway. Because the era is getting more advanced, with Instagram filters, it can also make promotional media." @vinarizqiyyy (seeing artworks)

"It was fun and exciting. The paintings are already very beautiful and complex. Plus, the IG filter technology makes it more interactive. I like the work that makes visitors active; it feels like being brought into the painting." @Voicebyputri (refreshing)

"So far, the work of this artist is the most memorable because it carries the theme of fish and is animated with Instagram filters. This makes its own appeal to various levels of society, from those who understand fine art to those who are beginners." @ariwi\_\_ (healing)

"The color combination is just perfect by using modern technology so that it attracts attention and encourages millennials to come and try Instagram filters and take pictures with the work." @eiydze (love to visit exhibition)

The following photographs and videos were posted by individual accounts and tagged on the Instagram account of @Jogja Gallery as proof of viewers' engagement with Gugur Gulita's artwork at the "Age Quod Agis" exhibition by Liquid Color Community.





**Figure 9. The Proof of Audiences Engagement With Art X Instagram Filters**

*Q: How do you feel when technology is combined with art (through Instagram filters) in the Solo exhibition "Memanen Angin" by Lully Tutus in the work of the artist?*



Lully Tutus  
LANGLANG JAGAD  
2023

Please provide a description of your feedback, impressions, messages, and experiences.

\*credit photo: by Instagram,  
@jogja\_gallery

**Figure 10. Lully Tutus. LANGLANG JAGAD. 2023**

"Very funny. as though the piece were alive and well, which, in my opinion, made it more interesting and exciting. Additionally, the filters work well and are simple to use (no crashes or other difficulties)." @anniafirrd (seeing artworks)

"More of a green photograph, old beauty enhanced by history." @Chelianovita (seeing artworks)

"I really like this work. It's not boring, and it's really cool to be able to combine art and technology, especially with an easy way to get filters and use them." @ichanafilah\_

"It's fun because the object used as a filter is a dragon painting, where dragons are usually depicted as monsters, so visitors can be creative with the filters made, for example, like being chased by a dragon, pretending to fight a dragon, etc."@Voicebyputri (refreshing)

"It's very interesting to help visitors enjoy new and unique artworks through contemporary Instagram filters." @rizkinurfiaa\_ (apresiasi)

"I truly enjoy and admire Lully Tutus's artwork Langlang Jagad, which appears to show a dragon painting flying in front of us thanks to Instagram filters." @nabillaarahma. (love to visit exhibition)

“Very interesting since we can actually sense what the artist drew on the canvas then added Instagram filters to, allowing us to understand the significance of the artwork.”  
@muhjanuardo (curious)

"I did not attend this exhibition in real time. But I see the same concept in the presentation of this painting as I found in Lully Tutus' "Memanen Angin", which is the utilization of Augmented Reality features. I see this as a complementary collaboration. Both have a specific visual power. Painting on canvas presents more real textures and color gradations. We can examine the composition and other details as a unified visual aesthetic that is not simple (complex). Meanwhile, augmented reality offers another visualization in the form of motion, which can actually be maximized into narrative power by adding other fragments (such as fragments of burning forests, rainfall, or the appearance of other entities in the augmented reality "Langlang Jagad") so that the artwork can speak more to the viewer. I see that augmented reality, as an idea in this painting, has not been able to bring that power except as an alternative to visual entertainment. Of course, I realize that for artists, this is not an easy thing to do. But there is nothing wrong with making it a challenge to actualize wild ideas. However, as a collaborative step utilizing the latest technology, "Gugur Gulita" and "Langlang Jagad" deserve a thumbs up."  
@minggulegit (contemplation).

"The paintings feel so alive and I'm delighted. And this effectively attracts people to spend time at the gallery immediately.” @sintanurindah\_ (refreshing)

"This is my first experience while visiting the exhibition; I think it is very interesting and very unique, and I really support it because painting can be more advanced."@tegessekar (love to visit exhibition)

"The filter is very interesting, and I think it's cool because it gives visitors a new experience. The modern artwork is unique and makes visitors more enthusiastic. The audience can enjoy art in a different way."@harvironika12 (making content)

The following photographs and videos were posted by individual accounts and tagged on the Instagram account of @Jogja Gallery as proof of viewers' engagement with Langlang Jagad Artwork at The “Memanen Angin” Solo Exhibition by Lully Tutus.



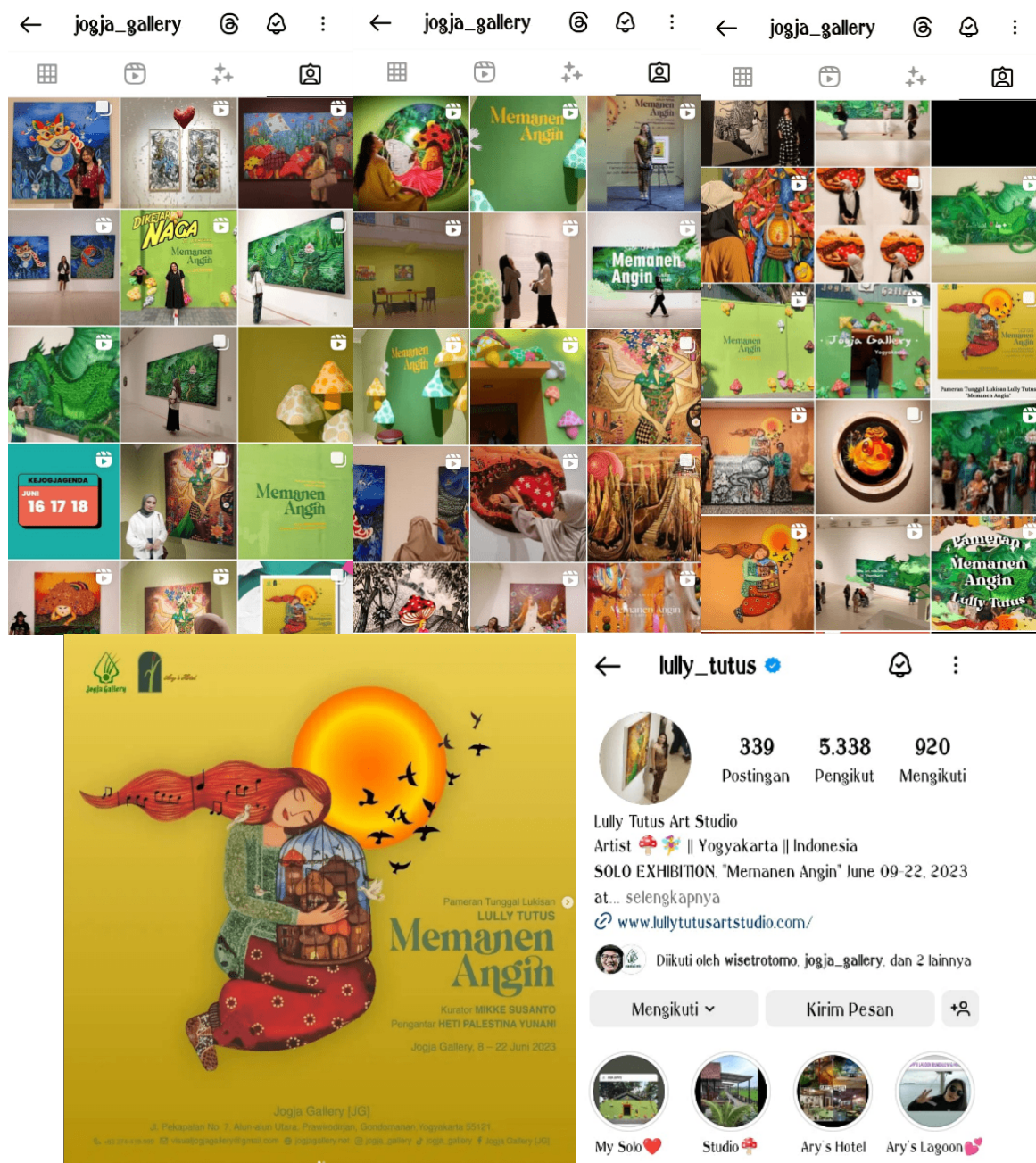


Figure 11. The Proof of Audiences Engagement With Art X Instagram Filters

**Q2: Expectations and Suggestions for the Utilization of Technology in the Arts**

“Hopefully, in the future, there will be more painting exhibitions with technology such as Instagram filters or so on, because this is one way that visitors can explore further in enjoying art.” @sintanurindah\_

“I wish many young people will enjoy learning about art, because art is endless. It is suggested that Indonesian art can be more contemporary if you open an art gallery.” @monicanyaa

“Hopefully there will be more digital art exhibitions held. Through digital technology that continues to develop, it becomes a way to expand the perspective of art itself and, of course, in accordance with the times as well.” @Miftakhljnnh

"More artists want to explore themselves to produce cool artwork." @mariaabenita

"Visitor education is more comprehensively, so people who weren't sure how to do it at first will know since not all visitors are familiar with how technology is used in art." @ ziyahanafau

"I hope that technology in art will be used frequently, rather than simply at special occasions. Because visitors are interested in visiting when it happens. Keep up Indonesian art's success." @ariffahningtyass\_

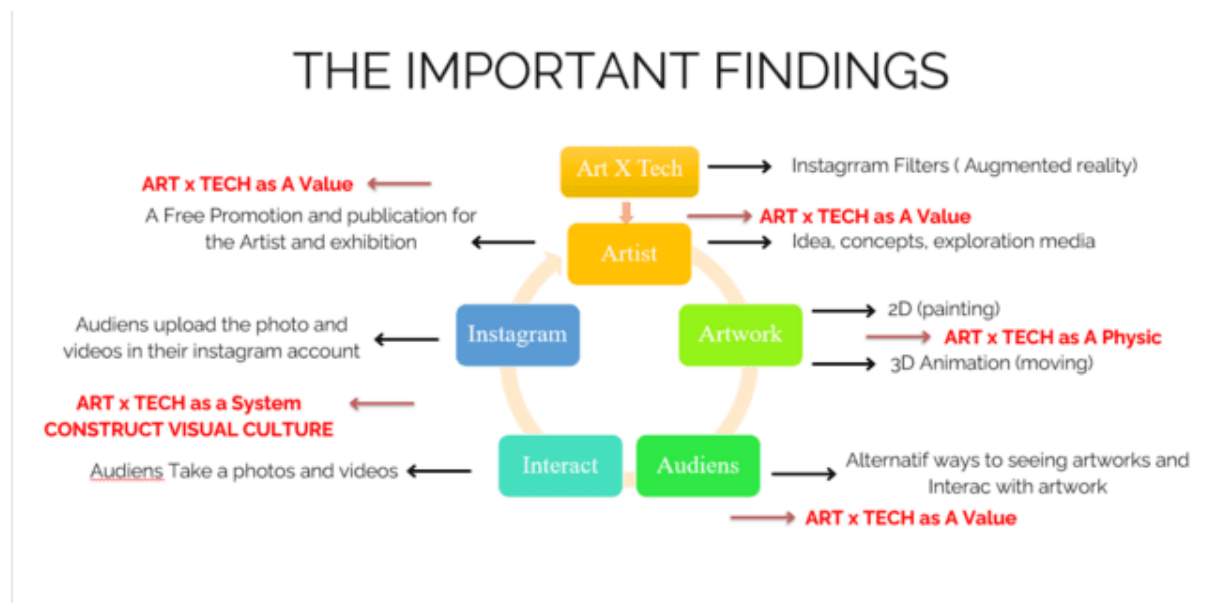
"The application of technology to art should increase, making it more engaging and interactive." @caninaydl

"I hope that this type of art be developed further. not just limited to traditional forms of art, but also able to transcend time and space. Yes, art has no bounds, just like the theme of this exhibition." @ddhilah

"Exploration of the use of technology to support the narrative power in artworks, so that artworks are richer in discourse and interpretation." @minggulegit

### The Important Finding

Based on this research, I found an important thing that is described as a scheme below.



The three essential elements of art—artists, works, and audiences—are all impacted by Art X Instagram. First, the presence of Art X technology via Instagram filters will have an impact on the artist as the person who made the artwork. The things affected include the exploration of media, ideas, and work concepts. After the artwork is generated, Art X Tech converts it into two outputs: traditional works (2D) and animation (3D), each of which has benefits over the other. Paintings and other traditional artwork have the advantage of displaying object specifics, artist techniques, and brush strokes, whereas animated artwork displays effects and motion that can highlight and reinforce the concept's descriptive components. The use of Art X Instagram filters in the exhibition of artworks has given audiences another way to

enjoy them through Instagram filter media, which is another way that audiences as art enthusiasts are impacted by the use of Technology X Art. In the past, the audience has only come and enjoyed the works displayed. On the other side, this new approach by Instagram Filters will encourage people to engage with the piece of artwork, giving them a unique and new aesthetic experience and bringing the work closer to them. According to this study, many visitors engage with the artwork on exhibit by snapping photographs and videos with Instagram filters. Some of them have even posted the images and videos on their personal Instagram accounts, perhaps as a form of self-expression or to showcase something wonderful and unique. It goes without saying that this (sharing on social media) eventually also indirectly helps artists through the use of promotion and publication made freely by the audience to attract more people (followers of their Instagram accounts) to the arranged exhibition.

### **Art X Technology as Physic**

The diagram illustrates the connection between art and technology as a physical phenomenon, represented in two ways: (a) Two-dimensional painting on canvas, and (b) Augmented reality painting of moving objects using Instagram filters with the aid of technology. This indicates that artworks are not limited to a flat surface. Instead, technology enables further exploration of art in both space and time.

### **Art X Technology as a System**

The role of Art and Technology as a system is to ultimately construct visual culture, particularly for the audience to enjoy and interact with artworks. The audience's traditional role has been passive, restricted to receiving and enjoying the artwork presented by artists and curators in exhibitions. The rule of not touching the artwork has created a distance between the art and the audience. However, through the use of technology, specifically augmented reality built into Instagram social media, the artwork can become closer and more interactive with the audience. The audience can ultimately decide whether to experience the work virtually or as a two-dimensional painting. It additionally creates a novel approach to appreciating art through social media platforms, particularly among young individuals passionate about art and aesthetics. This is particularly evident in the "Museum date/Art Gallery date" trend, which is expressed through photo posts and video "reels" on Instagram.

On the contrary, once it ceases to be novel and enters the mainstream, the fusion of art and technology will present new challenges for artists, requiring the exploration of different forms and media to stay innovative and engaging with the audience.

### **Art X Technology as a Value**

Art has value in both the artist and audience. Art and Technology have a great value in these parties. For the artist, Art x Technology provides challenges when creating works of art and exploring media. Indirectly, Art x Technology is an avenue for "publication" and "promotion" when the audience uploads a related photo or video.

For the audience, the concept of "Art x technology" holds significance in terms of media and its ability to facilitate novel forms of interacting with and enjoying artwork at exhibitions. Additionally, through this convergence of art and technology, an innovative means of

appreciating artworks via Instagram social media emerges, allowing visitors to upload photos and videos of the exhibits during their visit.

## **Conclusion**

Both artists and viewers can benefit greatly from art X tech in the future of the arts. At this instance, its use at an exhibition for artists, the role of Art x Tech through Instagram media serves to improve the debate surrounding their artworks by utilizing new media (the use of animation and motion to follow the discourse and produce interactive works with the audience). However, the implementation of Art X Instagram gives the audience options related to alternative ways of appreciating artwork in an exhibition, either in 2D physical form (directly) to see the strokes, textures, and details of the works created by artists, or through the use of Instagram filters to get a new, more interactive experience with artwork by turning 2D works into 3D with the help of prepared effects and motion animations. This enhances the work's vividness and audience proximity while also making it more interactive and engaging.

Art X Instagram filters have had a significant impact on how art is created, consumed, and perceived in the digital age. They offer a range of tools that alter the visual appearance of images, allowing users to experiment with different styles, colors, and effects. As a result, the usage of Art X Tech through Instagram filter media is quite relevant considering the abilities of exhibition visitors, who mostly enjoy documenting moments through photos and videos.

## **Acknowledgments**

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***Farmers' Information Sources Vis-à-Vis Knowledge, Attitude and Practices  
on the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund – Seed Program***

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Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

The study aimed to determine the knowledge, attitude, and practices (KAP) of farmers from Magalang, Pampanga, Philippines on the national government's Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) - Seed Program. It also identified the farmers' sources of information on the programs and their relationship to their KAP. This inferential quantitative research was conducted through a survey among 244 farmers from the Municipality of Magalang, Pampanga. Data was analyzed through the Frequency Distribution Table, Mean, and Chi-square test. Results evidenced that most of the respondents were males, aged 50-59 years old, married, and were high school graduates. In terms of their sources of information on the RCEF-Seed Program, their primary source is the Local Government Unit (LGU). This is followed by the farmers' cooperative and associations, and the barangay officials. The respondents are knowledgeable on the objectives and processes of the Seed Program. They also have a positive attitude toward the program as they strongly agree on the parameters of the Seed Program. In terms of practices, the farmers participated in the Seed Program by always acquiring free seeds and following the protocols imposed by the LGU in the program. The findings also presented a significant relationship between the respondents' sources of information on the RCEF-Seed Program to their knowledge, attitude, and practices. As such, it is recommended that the Local Government Units and other implementing agencies should continue their focus on promoting the programs and reinforce the encouragement to the farmers to avail and engage in the programs.

Keywords: Philippine Agriculture, Seed Program, Information Sources

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## Introduction

Rice is a crucial staple food for almost half the world's population, but increasing its production to meet growing demand faces significant challenges, including climate change, limited agricultural land, labor, and water, and rising input costs. Yet, by 2035, rice production must rise by 114 million tons (Prasad et al, 2017; Rao et al. 2017).

In the Philippines, rice is the third most imported agricultural item. The country depends on rice imports to meet the rising demand driven by population growth (Hou, 2020). The Philippine government introduced the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL), which led to the establishment of the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) to address the issue. The RTL not only eased restrictions on rice imports but also generated government revenue through tariffs. RCEF was created with an annual budget of approximately USD 200 million (PhP 10 billion) for a six-year period, starting in 2019 (Balié et al. 2021).

The provisions of the law state that, from the expected tariff revenues, RCEF is established and used to give direct assistance to farmers and subsidize innovative government activities to strengthen the rice industry. Specifically, the RCEF aims to give farmers additional rice farm machinery and equipment spearheaded by the Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Modernization (PhilMech). Also, funds are used to develop, propagate, and promote inbred rice seeds to farmers facilitated by the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice). In addition, financial assistance is made available to rice farmers through credits managed by the Land Bank of the Philippines and the Development Bank of the Philippines. Furthermore, extension services by PhilMech, the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI), and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) are also given allocation (Tobias, 2019; & Placido, 2019).

PhilRice, serving as the lead implementing agency of the RCEF-Seed component, receives 30 percent of the fund to develop and promote improved rice seeds (Balié et al. 2021). Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, the RCEF-Seed Program made possible the “Ahon Lahat, Pagkaing Sapat (ALPAS) Kontra COVID-19” program by providing various support programs during the pandemic. Assistance to farmers is made possible through the provision of seeds and fertilizer that complement the effort of the RCEF Seed Component for the RCEF-targeted 947 inbred rice municipalities (Department of Budget and Management, 2020).

Still, the implementation of the law and the RCEF programs has sparked mixed reactions and concerns. These concerns relate to the law's impact on Filipino farmers and national food security, and the effectiveness of RCEF Programs in aiding the needs of the farmers in strengthening their rice production (Balié et al. 2021).

Thus, the researchers find it significant to preliminary assess its effectiveness to its beneficiaries, primarily in Magalang, Pampanga, Philippines. In a similar way, the sources of information on the program are identified in relation to the farmers' KAP. This is to make possible the forwarding of necessary recognition of best practices and recommendations for program implementation improvement.



## Methodology

This research project employed a quantitative research design. This method is also known as the iterative process wherein the evaluation of the data gathered is being exerted by the researcher. It is the method that elaborates objective measurement, the statistical, numbers, and numerical analysis of data collected through questionnaires and surveys to explain a certain (Trefry, 2018).

The study was conducted in the Municipality of Magalang, involving all 27 barangays. To carry out the research, the researchers collaborated with the local government unit (LGU) to identify and obtain lists of the registered farmers being the target respondents. Permission from the LGU was likewise sought to ensure that the research was conducted with the necessary support and authorization.

To gather data, the researchers used a survey questionnaire that was carefully designed and structured based on the research objectives and relevant literature. This questionnaire contained questions and items that aimed to capture the necessary information about the knowledge, attitudes, and practices of the farmers regarding the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) - Seed Program. The data collected from the survey was then analyzed using several statistical methods, including the Frequency Distribution Table (FDT), mean (average), and Chi-square Test. These statistical tools allowed the researcher to process and interpret the data to draw meaningful insights and make conclusions about the research objectives and questions.

## Results

Table 1. *Socio-demographic Profile of the Respondents*

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage
27-29	2	0.82
30-39	10	4.1
40-49	53	21.72
50-59	86	35.24
60-69	62	25.41
70-79	29	11.89
80-85	2	0.82
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	213	87.30
Female	31	12.70
<b>Civil Status</b>		
Single	15	6.15
Married	207	84.83
Widowed	16	6.56
Separated	2	0.82
Common Law/Live in	4	1.64
<b>Educational Attainment</b>		
Elementary graduate	56	22.95
Elementary undergraduate	13	5.33
High School graduate	77	31.55
High School undergrad	24	9.83
Technical Vocational	23	9.43
College undergrad	25	10.25
Bachelor's Degree	23	9.43
Master's/Doctor's Degree	3	1.23

Table 1 shows the respondents' distribution in terms of age, sex, civil status and educational attainment. The respondents were mostly males (87.30%), between 50-59 years of age (35.24%), were married (84.83%) and are high school graduates (31.55%).

Table 2. *Sources of Information on the RCEF-Seed Program of the Respondents*

Sources of Information	Frequency	Percentage
Television	3	1.25
Social Media Platforms	1	0.42
LGUs	183	76.25
Co-farmers	11	4.58
Barangay Officials	47	19.58
Farmers' Cooperative & Associations	53	22.08
Radio	0	0
Friends or Family	0	0
Communication Materials such as leaflets, brochures and posters	0	0

As reflected in Table 2, the respondents' primary source of information is the local government unit (LGU) with 76.25%. This affirms the efficiency of the implementation of the LGU mandate which is to support and facilitate communication to the farmer-beneficiaries. Specifically, the LGU relays to the farmer organizations and farmer-beneficiaries the details of seed distribution, such as schedule, drop-off points, and health protocols needed to follow. They also facilitate and support information flow about the capacity enhancement activities with regard to the program that will be held within their province/barangay.

Moreover, farmers' cooperatives and associations are also sources of information with 22.08% as well as barangay officials (19.58%). With the limitations brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, barangay officials and farmers' cooperatives and associations were tasked to facilitate and communicate the delivery of seeds to the farmer-beneficiaries to limit the crowd.

Table 3. *Knowledge of the Respondents on the RCEF-Seed Program*

Statements	Frequency of Correct Answer	Percentage of Correct Answers
The RCEF Seed Program is intended for the development, propagation, and promotion of inbred rice and organization of rice farmers into seed grower cooperatives and associations engaged in seed production.	228	95%
The eligible beneficiaries of RCEF Seed are individual farmers who are not listed in the RSBSA.	201	83.75%
One of the goals of RCEF Seed is to mobilize and strengthen local seed production.	231	96.25%
The eligible beneficiaries of RCEF Seed are individual farmers who are not a member of DA-Accredited Farmers Organization.	190	79.16%
The RCEF Seed Program lowers the postharvest losses of the farmers.	183	76.25%

It is acceptable in the RCEF Seed Program that the rice farm cultivated by the beneficiary is not located in the target province/area.	187	77.91%
The DA Philippine Rice Research Institute (DA-PhilRice) led the implementation of the RCEF Seed Program.	216	90%
There are no health Protocols during the distribution of bags of seeds.	215	89.58%
During seed distribution the farmers will sign the Farmer Acknowledgement Receipt (FAR) and will receive a QR Code which contains the RSBSA Number, name of the farmer, number of bags and the variety selected.	236	98.33%
It is not a goal of RCEF Seed Program to increase the organizations of farmers who will engage in seed production or trade.	209	87.08%
OVERALL	209.6	87.33%

The research findings reflected in Table 3 indicate a strong level of knowledge among the respondents regarding various aspects of the RCEF Seed Program: program goals, eligibility criteria, and distribution process.

Most (95%) of the respondents are well aware of the program's objectives, which include the development, propagation, and promotion of inbred rice. They also understand the program's aim to organize rice farmers into seed grower cooperatives and associations engaged in seed production.

Moreover, a majority, around 84%, possess knowledge about the requirements for program eligibility. This includes being listed on the Registry System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture (RSBSA) of the Department of Agriculture (DA), belonging to the DA-Accredited Farmers Organization (known to 79.16% of respondents), and residing in the program's target area. Compliance with these criteria ensures that only eligible beneficiaries, as per Department of Agriculture guidelines, can access the program's full benefits.

Meanwhile, approximately 90% of the respondents are well-informed about the health protocols in place during seed distribution amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, nearly all, approximately 98.33%, are knowledgeable about the procedures during seed distribution, which involve farmers signing the Farmer Acknowledgment Receipt (FAR) and receiving a QR code containing essential information. These findings indicate a strong understanding of the laws, guidelines, and procedures established for the program's implementation.

Table 4. *Attitude of the Respondents on the RCEF-Seed Program*

Statements	SA	A	D	SD
I believe that the RCEF Seed Program objective to develop, disseminate, and promote inbred rice to the organization of rice farmers, seed grower cooperatives and associations engaged in seed production increases farmers' income.	53.75%	29.17%	12.08%	5%
I think it is appropriate that the eligible beneficiaries of the RCEF Seed Program are individual farmers listed in the RSBSA.	70.83%	7.92%	4.17%	17.08%

I believe that one of the goals of the RCEF Seed Program is to boost local seed production and help promote our own products.	70.83%	22.92%	3.33%	2.92%
I believe it is suitable that the beneficiary's farm area is in the target province/area.	76.25%	17.92%	1.25%	4.58%
I believe DA-PhilRice should lead the implementation of the RCEF Seed Program because it is the government agency that specializes in this field of study.	87.92%	8.33%	2.5%	1.25%
I believe that there should be health protocols during the distribution of seeds to prevent the spread of COVID-19.	92.5%	5.42%	0.83%	1.25%
I think the methods used to distribute the seeds are easy and convenient for the farmers and the program implementers.	90.83%	6.25%	2.92%	0%
I believe that the seed distribution process helps to make the implementation of the program more controlled and organized.	92.92%	5%	2.08%	0%
I believe that the RCEF Seed Program reduces the postharvest losses of farmers which brings benefits to them.	70.83%	19.17%	4.17%	5.83%
I think that the RCEF Seed Program goal to increase the adoption of certified inbred seeds by supporting the development of varieties will help promote local seeds.	83.34%	12.5%	2.08%	2.08%

The research findings indicate a highly positive outlook among the respondents regarding various aspects of the RCEF Seed Program: program objectives, eligibility criteria, implementation, and distribution process.

Specifically, more than half (53.75%) of respondents strongly agree that the program's primary goal, which is to promote inbred seeds among farmers, has the potential to increase their income. Additionally, 70.83% firmly believe that the program effectively reduces postharvest losses, ultimately benefiting them.

Moreover, the majority, 70.83% of respondents, strongly agree that the program's eligibility criteria, which include being individual farmers listed in the RSBSA and operating farmland within the target province/area, are acceptable. This affirmation aligns with the Department of Agriculture's definition of eligible beneficiaries for the RCEF-Seed Program. While non-RSBSA-listed farmers may also receive free seeds, listed farmers are prioritized. Additionally, 87.92% of respondents strongly agree that the Department of Agriculture-Philippine Rice Research Institute (DA-PhilRice) is the appropriate lead implementing agency for the program. DA-PhilRice's specialization in rice research and development makes it well-suited for this role.

Furthermore, 92.5% of respondents strongly agree that health and safety protocols must be strictly observed during seed distribution to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This aligns with local government agencies' practices to ensure safe distribution during the pandemic, including scheduled barangay distributions, body temperature checks, social distancing, and the use of sanitizers and alcohol.

Focusing on the process of seed distribution, 90.83% of respondents strongly agree that the methods used are convenient for both farmers and implementers, and 92.92% believe these procedures enhance program control and organization. A majority, 70.83%, strongly agree that the program's goal to boost local seed production will help promote local products, while 83.34% strongly agree that the program's aim to increase the adoption of certified inbred

seeds supports the development of local seeds. These perceptions are in line with the program's overarching goals to enhance local seed production and encourage the adoption of certified inbred seeds to bolster competitiveness in the global rice market.

Table 5. *Practices of the Respondents on the RCEF-Seed Program*

Statements	Always	Sometimes	Never
I inquire to the Municipal Agriculture Office regarding on the requirements needed to be a RCEF Seed Program recipient.	27.5%	25.42%	47.08%
I receive/get Information, education and communication (IEC) materials on high-yielding and cost-reducing technologies in rice production during the distribution of bags of seeds.	35%	45.83%	19.17%
I watch/read/listen to television, newspapers, social media and radio to get an update and information about RCEF Seed Program.	39.58%	43.75%	16.67%
I give information regarding RCEF Seed Program to my family and friends to update them.	46.67%	38.33%	15%
I ask or inquire for the schedule of the distribution of seeds in the Municipal Agriculture office.	40%	23.33%	36.67%
I encourage my fellow farmers to participate in the RCEF Seed Program	65.42%	27.5%	7.08%
I follow health and safety protocols during seed distribution.	97.5%	1.67%	0.83%
I bring the requirements needed to acquire bags of seeds during seeds distribution.	77.92%	4.58%	17.5%
I get my bags of seeds whenever there is a distribution.	94.58%	4.58%	0.84%
I support the RCEF Seed program's goal of using inbred seeds.	89.17%	6.67%	4.16%

The practices of the respondents reflect proactive engagement with the RCEF Seed Program. There are 27.05% of respondents consistently visit the Municipality, while 25.42% occasionally visit their municipal building to gather information about the program. Moreover, 40% of respondents routinely seek the seed distribution schedule from the Municipal Agriculture Office. These practices demonstrate their initiative to access the program's details.

Moreover, there are 45.83% of respondents occasionally receive Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials during seed distribution, in alignment with the Department of Agriculture's distribution practices. These materials provide valuable insights into high-yielding and cost-effective agricultural technologies. Furthermore, 43.75% of respondents rely on television, radio, and social media to stay updated about the program. Meanwhile, 46.67% of respondents share program information with their families and friends, and 65.42% encourage fellow farmers to participate. This underscores the importance of information exchange and peer influence in the agricultural community.

Nearly all or 97.5% of respondents consistently adhere to health and safety protocols during seed distribution, while 77.92% bring the required documentation. These practices align with the Department of Agriculture's guidelines, which involve physical distancing, sanitizer/alcohol use, temperature checks, and presenting valid identification and RSBSA stubs during seed collection. Further, 94.58% of respondents always claim their seed bags, and 89.17% actively support the program's objective to use certified inbred seeds.

Table 6. *Relationship between the Respondents' Sources of Information vs KAP*

Variables	Pearson Chi-Square Value	Asymp. Sig (2-	Remarks
Sources of Information Vs Knowledge	223.533	.000	Significantly related at 1%
Sources of Information Vs Attitude	239.379	.000	Significantly related at 1%
Sources of Information And Practices	239.056	.000	Significantly related at 1%

As evident from the data presented in Table 6, a noteworthy relationship exists between the sources of information used by the respondents and their knowledge, attitude, and practices regarding the RCEF-Seed Program. This relationship highlights the significant influence of key information sources, such as the Local Government Unit (LGU), farmer cooperatives, and barangay officials, on the respondents' substantial knowledge, positive attitude, and active participation in the Seed Program.

This finding corroborates the research conducted by Wang et al. (2021), which emphasizes the valuable role that interventions and support from relevant organizations can play in increasing farmers' attention and engagement in activities of relevance. This insight underscores the importance of effective communication and collaboration between these influential entities and the agricultural community to ensure the program's success and the achievement of its objectives.

## Conclusion

The study's findings strongly suggest that the RCEF-Seed Program, administered by the Department of Agriculture in collaboration with local government units, has garnered favorable recognition among the farming community. The farmers not only possess significant knowledge about the program but also exhibit a positive attitude and active participation in its various facets.

As a result of these positive outcomes, it is recommended that Local Government Units and other responsible implementing agencies maintain their efforts in promoting and supporting the RCEF-Seed Program. Continuous outreach and communication can reinforce the encouragement for farmers to actively engage with and avail themselves of the program's benefits. This can contribute to the program's sustainability and its ability to fulfill its objectives effectively.

Furthermore, it is advised that future research endeavors delve deeper into the qualitative aspects of farmers' experiences with the program. Conducting qualitative studies can provide richer insights into the personal experiences, challenges, and successes of farmers involved in the RCEF-Seed Program. Such research can complement the quantitative findings presented in this study, offering a more comprehensive understanding of the program's impact on farmers' livelihoods and agricultural practices.

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*A Kaleidoscope of Colors:  
Exploring the Vibrant Palette of Taiwan's Fermented Food Culture*

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**Abstract**

Numerous countries have launched cultural color surveys to emphasize the significance of intangible cultural assets, focusing on local landscapes and human environments. These surveys aim to establish norms that promote historically grounded research, bolstering the identification and cultural value of distinct colors. However, there remains a limited scope of research on the color aspects of cultural experiences, specifically the role of color in daily food practices, necessitating a more comprehensive exploration of cultural appearances. There is an urgent need for a systematic method that ensures accurate recording and presentation of representative cultural colors. This research project was aimed at being completed within two years. Its objective was to review relevant literature on Taiwanese terroir and fermentation culture, investigate the color memories associated with fermented foods, and establish a comprehensive database of cultural colors. During the study, color deduction data showcasing continuous color changes were collected from the raw materials to the maturation stage of 32 fermented foods. Additionally, spectrum data for these fermented foods was meticulously collected and analyzed. Furthermore, 200 questionnaires were gathered and analyzed to delve into the Taiwanese understanding of color associations related to fermented food's smell, taste, and emotional memory. These collective efforts will ultimately contribute to the comprehensive documentation of the cultural colors intrinsic to Taiwan's terroir-fermented foods.

Keywords: Fermented Food, Color Association, Cultural Colors

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## Introduction

Countries worldwide have initiated cultural color surveys of local geographical and cultural landscapes to demonstrate their appreciation for intangible cultural heritage. They have also established corresponding guidelines to encourage the exploration of historical contexts and implied meanings, thereby enhancing the distinctive identity and cultural value of these unique facets. However, most extensive cultural color research primarily focuses on visual design, landscapes, architectural spaces, and historical artifacts. Conversely, color-related research concerning aspects of everyday life, such as clothing, food, housing, and transportation, still needs to be explored and attention to complete the mosaic of cultural life. Furthermore, there is an urgent need to develop systematic methods for acquiring and analyzing color data to enable the precise documentation and presentation of these representative cultural color datasets.

This project spans two years and commences with a review and analysis of literature related to Taiwan's fermentation culture. The objectives include:

- (1) Color measurement of 32 commonly fermented foods in Taiwan entails a detailed record of the color evolution of these fermented foods at various stages, from raw materials to maturity.
- (2) To survey color associations related to the aromas, flavors, and emotional memories of fermented foods among the Taiwanese population.

Finally, the research aims to consolidate the recorded spectral color interpretations of local fermented foods and dietary memory color data to construct a unique Taiwanese fermentation culture color database emblematic of the region's distinctive cultural characteristics.

## Literature Review

### *Fermentation Culture*

In times when agriculture, transportation, and food industries were less developed, preserving food freshness was a vital concern. The concept of preserving food emerged, with fermentation being one method. Fermentation relies on natural bacteria like lactic acid and acetic acid bacteria, yeast, and molds to break down food, creating unique flavors and enhancing nutrients. Different regions have their fermented specialties, such as Korean kimchi, Japanese Natto, or Italian cheese, shaped by local environments and traditions. These foods rotate with the seasons, creating cherished memories and cultural imprints in our hearts.

### *Color Association*

From the perspective of color psychology, our perception, preferences, and cognition of colors are not solely influenced by the physical and psychological characteristics of colors themselves. They are also affected by the environment we are in and our experiences. These experiences, perceptions, and impressions of specific colors are embedded in our subconscious and can resurface in our minds when triggered. This phenomenon of generating various concepts triggered by color experiences is known as color association.

Essentially, color association involves using current colors to evoke memories of past colors. Colors not only have the power to influence mood and emotions but also guide individuals to associate specific meanings with them (Kauppinen-Räsänen & Luomala, 2010).

In the realm of research concerning the association between scent and color, the cross-modal association between color and olfaction/taste has long been a topic of interest for designers and scholars (Adams & Doucé, 2017; Spence, 2011, 2018, 2020). In terms of color and memory associations, colors are powerful information channels within the human cognitive system, significantly enhancing memory, associations, and memory retrieval (Wichmann et al., 2002).

Kaya and Epps (2004) suggest that while the concept of arousal can encompass physical, psychological, physiological, and emotional awakening, emotional arousal has received more attention in memory research than other types of arousal. If associated with pleasant experiences, it tends to preserve long-term memories better and possesses a higher emotional arousing capacity.

### ***Olfaction, Flavors, and Food Memory***

The sensation of olfaction plays a crucial role in our everyday lives, concurrently influencing our emotions, psychology, and physical well-being (Morrot, 2001). Since the human olfactory system bypasses the thalamus and connects directly to various emotional centers within the brain, emotional responses to odors are notably immediate and swift. Consequently, numerous studies have observed that scents can unconsciously affect individuals, whether eliciting emotional responses (Vernet-Maury et al., 1999) or evoking past contextual memories (Chu & Downes, 2000). Simultaneously, olfaction can potently trigger emotions, serving as an effective means to evoke memories (Krusemark et al., 2003).

Sorokowska et al. (2019) contends that although all senses, including vision, olfaction, taste, or audition, can stimulate event-related memories, olfaction stands out as the swiftest in eliciting emotional responses and tends to leave the most enduring perceptual memories among the five senses.

Numerous studies have also demonstrated that odors can subconsciously influence humans, irrespective of whether they trigger emotional responses (Herz, 1998; Vernet-Maury et al., 1999; Morrot, 2001) or recall past situations (Chu & Downes, 2000). Furthermore, the sensory experience of taste, facilitated by the interaction of olfaction and gustation, is recognized for its strong association with memory. The finding is attributed to the heightened memorability of a particular spatiotemporal context when both olfaction and gustation are engaged. With its distinctive ability, Olfaction can unlock previously forgotten but vivid and emotionally charged memories. This phenomenon is commonly referred to as the Proust effect. Over time, the richness of food experiences becomes a critical factor in enhancing cultural and experiential memory (Montgomery, 2012).

### **Research Methods**

In the first year of this study, we collect data related to Taiwan's local food culture and fermented foods and analyze the literature on cultural colors, aromas, flavors, and emotional memory triggers. Expert consultations guided the explicit collection of 36 datasets of fermented food production. During this year, we collaboratively produced 12 fermented items. We employ a color colorimeter for regular color measurements (Fig.1) capturing the color evolution at various fermentation stages, from raw materials to maturity. Simultaneously, we gathered semantic terms associated with aroma and flavor conveyance to conduct a color

association survey among the Taiwanese population regarding the aromas, flavors, and emotional memories of fermented foods.

In the second year, based on expert recommendations, we focus on adjusting the previously conducted fermented food color questionnaire. (Fig.2) We design a digital color questionnaire app for tablets and perform color calibration using professional color management software (Fig.3). We surveyed 200 participants to explore color associations with fermented food memories. Concurrently, we continue collaborative production and periodic color measurements for the planned 24 fermented items. After classifying and archiving color data, we create a comprehensive color profile for the 36 fermented foods, depicting their color evolution from raw materials to maturity. To establish a distinctive color profile of fermented foods within the context of Taiwan's cultural characteristics, stored in the Taiwan Fermentation Culture Color Database (Fig.4). Finally, we employ CIE Lab color space distribution to analyze the relationships between actual colors, aromas, flavors, and emotionally associated colors of fermented foods over time. The study delves into color perception, associations, and memory theories, facilitating a thorough discussion of the aroma and flavor memory associated with color survey findings and concluding with the research's final insights.



Figure 1: Regularly Conduct color measurements and record them using a color colorimeter

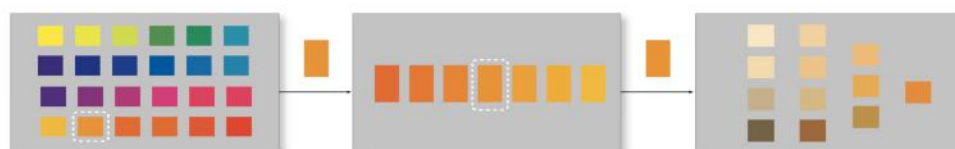


Figure 2: Olfactory and Gustatory Memory Color Association Questionnaire Design



Figure 3: Color Questionnaire APP on iPad

Sample	main ingredient	Color Interpretation Diagram (Precise color will be indicated using the LAB (CIELAB) color space)	Required Maturation Time					
fermented wax gourd	Wax gourd	L*76 a*53 b*54	Approximately 10-14 days	Pickled mustard green	Mustard greens	L*76 a*93 b*66	Approximately 21 days	
	Soybean meal	L*64 a*12 b*24		Salt + soup	L*92 a*93 b*19			
	Salt + soup	L*91 a*83 b*30		Red Yeast Rice (Fuzhou)	Glutinous rice	L*81 a*75 b*69	Approximately 30 days	
Sour Cabbage	Napa cabbage	L*89 a*53 b*24	Red yeast rice	L*27 a*86 b*92				
	Salt + Water + soup	L*96 a*13 b*15	White yeast + Distilled water	L*53 a*71 b*43				
Watermelon pickles	Small watermelon	L*90 a*73 b*43	Approximately 7 days	Red Yeast Rice (Hakka)	Round glutinous rice	L*87 a*86 b*42	Approximately 10-15 days	
	Salt	L*98 a*83 b*24			Red yeast rice	L*28 a*86 b*92		
Acid beans	Snake beans + Salt	L*78 a*54 b*52	At least 14 days	Pickled Bamboo Shoots	20% alcohol rice wine + Fine salt	L*58 a*54 b*46		
	Salt	L*92 a*13 b*44			Bamboo shoots	L*76 a*93 b*66	Approximately 90 days	
Sour Bamboo Shoot	Bamboo shoots	L*93 a*73 b*40	Approximately 7 days		Soybean koji	L*88 a*78 b*42		
	Salt	L*94 a*13 b*35		Salt + Sugar + Rice wine	L*92 a*103 b*19			
Tofu Cheese (Fermented bean curd)	Air dry Tofu cubes	L*68 a*11 b*39	Approximately 60-90 days	fermented soybeans	Soybeans	L*58 a*93 b*90	Approximately 15 days	
	Rice koji	L*89 a*73 b*41			Salt + soup	L*94 a*113 b*11		
	Sugar + Rice wine + Distilled water	L*72 a*19 b*67		Dried Pickled Mustard Greens	Mustard greens	L*44 a*23 b*43	Approximately 30 days	
		Dried Tangerine Peel	Orange peel	L*69 a*71 b*56	At least 1-2 years			

Figure 4: Fermented Food Color Interpretation Diagram

### Current Research Progress and Findings

As the research is ongoing, let us briefly summarize the findings, focusing on the color associations with smell, taste, and memory of tofu cheese and pickled cabbage.

#### Tofu Cheese

Regarding the smell of tofu cheese, most respondents described it positively, with over 60% finding it "fragrant" and "rich." About half perceived it as having a "fermented aroma," and around one-third mentioned it as "sweet." Some respondents used negative descriptors like "moldy," "foul," "rotten," or "sour." Overall, the positive descriptors "fragrant," "rich," "fermented aroma," and "sweet" covered the perceptions of nearly all respondents, accounting for 95.5% of the total.

Regarding color associations with the smell of "tofu cheese," most respondents associated it with shades of red and yellow. In the red range, seven people mentioned "fragrant," and four mentioned "fermented aroma." In the yellow range, nine people described it as "rich," six associated it with a "fermented aroma," five found it "fragrant," and four perceived it as "sweet." While the selected descriptors showed overall similarity, there were subtle differences between the red and yellow ranges.

Regarding the taste of tofu cheese, about 40% of respondents described it positively, with terms like "sweet," "umami," "rich," and "glutinous." Combining these descriptors accounted for 86.4% of respondents who enjoyed the taste.

While respondents selected different colors, most color icons in the chart are located in the upper-right section of the color wheel, predominantly in shades of red to yellow. Within this region are 19 color icons, representing 86.4% of the respondents who tasted tofu cheese (fig.5-8).

In summary, respondents generally associated the taste of tofu cheese with descriptors like "sweet," "umami," "rich," and "glutinous," and these descriptors corresponded to a range of warm colors, including soft and bright tones as well as saturated and intense shades of red and yellow.



In the tofu cheese memory color space map, the distribution of icons appears more scattered compared to the olfactory and gustatory aspects. It can be broadly categorized into three main areas: the red-tone area, the yellow-tone area, and the other-tone area. Most colors in this space are vivid colors situated closer to high saturation and high brightness on the color wheel.

Although slight differences exist in the spatial distribution of colors, the general direction of respondents' descriptions aligns. They frequently mentioned favorable terms related to the sensory experience of tasting dishes, such as "appetizing," "stimulating appetite," "complements rice," "sweet," "aftertaste," "delicious," and "fragrant aroma." From this, we can infer that tofu cheese, with its distinctive flavor and aroma, stimulates the taste buds of respondents and leaves a lasting impression. Saturated orange-red tones and soft, bright yellow tones in the color space primarily represent the sensory memories associated with this. Based on the above findings, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- (1) **Smell Associations:** When it came to the smell of tofu cheese, participants described it as "fragrant," "intense," and "fermented." These smell associations were predominantly positive, indicating that the aroma of tofu cheese evoked pleasant memories.
- (2) **Taste Associations:** Respondents associated tofu cheese with flavors such as "sweet," "savory," "rich," and "glutinous." These taste perceptions were often linked with positive emotions and experiences.
- (3) **Memory-Color Associations:** The color associations related to the taste, smell, and memory of tofu cheese tended to be in the warm color spectrum, including shades of red and yellow. These colors were associated with terms like "appetizing," "aromatic," and "stimulating."






Ingredients	Production Method			Completion
				
Air dry Tofu cubes, Rice koji, Sugar, Rice wine, Distilled water	Air dry Tofu cubes are blanched in boiling water, drained, and set aside. Mix rice wine, sugar, and water evenly for later use.	Using chopsticks, place tofu embryos in a glass jar, arranging them in a single layer with a spoonful of rice bean paste between each layer. Pour the sugar and wine mixture in two separate pours.	After spraying the lid with alcohol, seal the jar and store for two weeks to one month before consuming.	In summer, it takes about 2 months, and in winter, 3 months to complete. After storing for one year, the color deepens, resulting in aged tofu.

Figure 5: The Production Method of Tofu Cheese (Fermented bean curd)

The study indicates that taste, smell, and memory associations with tofu cheese are primarily positive and often linked with warm and vibrant colors, reflecting this food item's sensory and emotional aspects.



Figure 6: Olfactory, Gustatory, Memory Color Association of Tofu Cheese

### Pickled Cabbage

According to the data, six individuals (2.67% of the respondents) chose "pickled cabbage" as their favorite fermented food. The participants' descriptions of the smell of pickled cabbage can be categorized into positive, neutral, and negative. Among the positive descriptions, Most participants described the smell of pickled cabbage as 'sour' and 'sweet and sour.' Half of them also mentioned 'fragrant' and 'fresh.' Therefore, among those who chose pickled cabbage as their favorite fermented food, all of them found the 'sour' flavor to be the most prominent, followed by 'sweet and sour,' and then 'fragrant' and 'fresh' flavors.






Ingredients	Production Method			Completion
				
Napa Cabbage, Salt, Water	Water Soak and rinse quickly	then drain Apply salt to the cut surfaces (2% of cabbage weight)	Cover with a lid and place in a cool, room-temperature area	The fermentation process takes a total of ten days to complete.

Figure 7: The Production Method of Pickled Cabbage

Regarding the association of colors with the smell of pickled cabbage, two respondents chose [Light Yellowish Green (lt yG,125)], followed by [Light Grayish Purple (ltg pR,2)], [Orange Yellow (lt rY,77)], [Deep Yellowish Green (dp YG,119)], and [Pink Yellowish Green (p yG,121)], each chosen by one respondent. From the color space diagram above, we can observe that most icons are located in the yellow to yellowish green area, slightly towards the lower right side of the color wheel. The predominant color in this area is a bright and soft shade of yellowish green.



Figure 8: Olfactory, Gustatory, Memory Color Association of Pickled Cabbage

In conclusion, based on the respondents' descriptions of the smell of pickled cabbage, it can be inferred that there is a specific relationship between the descriptors "sour, sweet and sour, fresh, fragrant" and the bright and soft shades of yellow to yellowish green.

Regarding the taste of pickled cabbage, in positive descriptions, four respondents (66.7%) thought it was sour, and four respondents (66.7%) thought it was sweet and sour. Additionally, three respondents (50%) found it to be delicious, two respondents (33.3%) found it to have a sweet aftertaste, two respondents (33.3%) found it to be salty, and two respondents (33.3%) found it to be mellow. Finally, one respondent (16.7%) thought it was sweet, refreshing, sticky, sour, spicy, salty and fresh. Based on the above information, more

than 60% of the respondents believed that the taste of pickled cabbage is "sour" and "sweet and sour." Half of the respondents found it delicious, with a sweet aftertaste.

Firstly, regarding the olfactory (smell) color associations with pickled cabbage, most respondents perceived it as a smell of "sourness, sweet and sour," and associated it with bright and soft yellow to yellow-green hues.

Moving on to the taste color associations with pickled cabbage, respondents generally described its taste as "sour, sweet, and sour." They associated it primarily with orange-yellow tones, followed by yellow-green hues.

Lastly, in terms of the memory color associations with pickled cabbage, respondents had the strongest impression of "pickled cabbage and pork hot pot," mentioning words such as "sour and fragrant, fresh and sweet, appetizing, warm." The corresponding color associations were mainly in the range of orange-yellow to orange-red hues.

In conclusion, respondents tended to associate pickled cabbage with "sourness, sweet and sour, sour fragrance" regarding smell, taste, and memory. However, the color associations with smell leaned more towards yellow-green tones than taste associations. We found that memory associations were influenced by personal recollections, leading to a preference for orange-yellow to orange-red hues.

Regarding the association of colors with the taste of pickled cabbage, respondents chose [Light Purple-Red (lt pR,5)], [Light Orange (lt O,53)], [Bright Orange (b O,57)], [Orange Yellow (lt rY,77)], [Light Yellowish Green (lt yG,125)], and [Light Blueish Green (lt bG,149)]. From the chart above, we can observe that most color icons are distributed on the right side of the color wheel, predominating orange-yellow and yellow-green hues. Based on the above findings, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- (1) **Smell Associations:** Most respondents associated the smell of pickled cabbage with bright and soft yellow to yellow-green hues. Specific color choices included Light Yellowish Green, Light Grayish Purple, Orange Yellow, Deep Yellowish Green, and Pink yellowish Green.
- (2) **Taste Associations:** Respondents primarily associated the taste of pickled cabbage with orange-yellow tones, followed by yellow-green hues. Color choices included Light Purple-Red, Light Orange, Bright Orange, Orange Yellow, Light Yellowish Green, and Light Blueish Green.
- (3) **Memory-Color Associations:** Respondents associated pickled cabbage with the mnemonic color associations of "pickled cabbage and pork hot pot." They described it as "sour and fragrant, fresh and sweet, appetizing, warm." The corresponding color associations were mainly in the range of orange-yellow to orange-red hues.

## Discussion and Conclusion

This study surveyed the taste, smell, and mnemonic color associations of fermented foods that respondents liked or consumed frequently. A total of 245 respondents were interviewed, and after excluding 20 invalid questionnaires, data from 225 respondents were collected.

Based on the collected information, the top ten most frequently consumed or preferred fermented foods by the respondents were stinky tofu (26.2%), miso (19.1%), fermented bean



curd (9.7%), soy sauce (6.6%), dried radish (6.6%), followed by doubanjiang (3.5%), plum vinegar (3.5%), red yeast rice (2.6%), cucumber (2.6%), and pickled cabbage (2.6%).

During the study, we found that the respondents' mnemonic color associations were greatly influenced by sensory stimulation. As a result, the color space maps of smell, taste, and memory often exhibited similar distribution patterns. However, compared to taste and smell, mnemonic color associations usually had higher lightness and chroma levels. For example, the above image shows the smell, taste, and memory color space maps of stinky tofu. From the horizontally juxtaposed charts, we can observe that the smell and taste color markers of stinky tofu are evenly distributed on the inner and outer sides of the color wheel, leaning towards orange-yellow tones overall. On the other hand, the memory color markers are noticeably closer to the color wheel, indicating a preference for vibrant and bright reddish-orange tones.

We can also infer that the more concentrated the distribution of color markers is, the more consistent the respondents' mnemonic color associations are with the item. There is also a higher correlation between specific taste, smell, and memory descriptions. It is worth noting that even if there is a connection between taste, smell, memory descriptions, and specific colors, that color cannot universally represent that particular sensation. For example, both miso and soy sauce have a description of "fragrant," but their color markers are distributed in different positions. Therefore, the collected color impressions in this study only apply to fermented foods related to them.

In addition, the items that respondents or their family members have made before were most commonly dried radish, fermented bean curd, and pickled small eggplant. The items that respondents liked or consumed most frequently were stinky tofu, miso, and fermented bean curd. The survey results for these two categories of items were significantly different. This difference is due to the flourishing development of the modern food manufacturing industry and the wide variety of fermented products available. Nowadays, people can easily purchase stable, transportable, and preservable ready-made fermented products in supermarkets or stores. Therefore, homemade fermented foods are different from the most popular fermented foods. Based on the above, whether the convenience of obtaining fermented foods and the decrease in people's participation in making fermented foods will affect the taste, smell, and mnemonic color associations of fermented foods remains to be observed.

At the same time, this study was concentrated in northern Taiwan. Although Taiwan is small and densely populated, there may still be regional differences in culture and customs. We suggest that future researchers visit various regions and explore the Hakka areas where fermentation culture thrives to obtain more comprehensive research information.

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*Copy As Original: Artistic Practice Before and After Appropriation*

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Official Conference Proceedings**Abstract**

Contemporary art can be approached through actions that challenge the classic notion of originality and authenticity. Artistic actions regarding authenticity reversals were rather pluralistic before the Appropriation Art movement of the late 1970s. The first part of the research reviews key actions spanning from the Readymade use of utilitarian objects as art to the question of the power of authorship and knowledge in the postmodernist movement of the 1970s. Such investigations revealed evidence for both the practice and theoretical aspects of the Art Appropriation movement. Instead of providing a comprehensive, the second part of the research analyzes two case studies: the American-born, Paris-based artist Sturtevant and the Canadian art trio General Idea. With the discovery of Sturtevant's repetition of pre-existing works from the 1950s to the 1980s, the discussion aims to distinguish the blurred recognition between “copy” and “appropriation”. Subsequently, the work of General Idea, such as the “Imagevirus,” reveals the post-appropriation era of the late 1980s. Rather than reworking the works of others, these artists appropriated mass media’s approach to disseminating information to the public. By comparing these two sets of works, this research, on one hand, traces the progress of the appropriation strategy: from object-based recreation to informative dissemination; from personal critics to technology intervention; from work of individuals to questioning the role of institutions. It attempts to look forward to the role of artistic practice and institutions in an age when originality is outdated, and the assembly of knowledge is not exclusively dominated by authorities and museums.

Keywords: Appropriation, Mass Media, Sturtevant, General Idea

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## Introduction

Appropriation is evident throughout art history. Romans copied Ancient Greek sculptures and replaced bronze with marble. Innocent or forgery replicas passively increased from the 1950s, driven by the demand for museum acquisitions following the rise of tourism. However, Western history was often depicted as a monomorphic progress with a series of events, heroes, and eruptions. Therefore, originality or origin remained dogmatic within classic Western culture. The age of mechanistic production before the First World War marked a new approach to artistic practice. Walter Benjamin appreciated the mechanical reproduction that erased the visual significance between the original and the copy. The classic recognition of originality started to fade. The productivity and speed-centered society pushed artists to align with current social values. The supreme being of the Genius vanished. Art workers, as they were willing to be called, took on a professional role akin to any other workers and rejected artisanal execution and aesthetic delectation.

By tracing the evolution of artistic actions challenging originality, this research aims to bridge theoretical discussions and artistic practice, providing different perspectives on artistic practice in the current cultural context.

### 1. Before the Appropriation Movement (1920s – 1970s)

Readymade artists relocated utilitarian objects by anonymous makers in the museum context and elevated as artwork. Such operation made two major contributions: triggering the link between the artwork and its particular site and “propose artists cannot make, but can only take what is already there.”<sup>1</sup> Duchamp, the pioneer of such acts, embraced mental art and mounted a bicycle wheel on a kitchen stool in 1913. He did not intentionally make a piece of art or any functional setup at the moment of making. The object served as a delight installation in his bedroom until Readymade became an influential idea. *The Bicycle Wheel*, was considered as an assisted element with components assembled and modified by the artist. *Fontaine*, is a much straight forward contribution of a porcelain urinal exhibited at the société des artistes indépendants in 1917 without any noticeable assembly or modification at the hands of the artists. While most Readymade works dealt with ordinary objects without significance and were cheaply manufactured in large quantities<sup>2</sup>, *L.H.O.O.Q* (first conceived in 1919) merged a few different aspects. The media was a discarded postcard without any value; meanwhile, with the print of the Italian Renaissance masterpiece *Mona Lisa*, the pencil-drawn moustache with beard and the replaced title *L.H.O.O.Q* by Duchamp. What was the statement here? Was it solely by chance of encountering a postcard in the street? Or did it contain some myths or homage to the *cosa mentale* of Leonardo da Vinci? Or just a joke in rejection of value and fame?

Guy Debord’s logic of *Détournement*<sup>3</sup> may create some critical reception to such attempts. There are three situations of *Détournement*: Minor *Détournement*, Deceptive *Détournement* and Extensive *Détournement*. Minor *détournement* recontextualize commonly known elements in order to subvert traditional cognition. Deceptive *détournement* works on significant elements to update their scope of meaning. Extensive *Détournement* combines

<sup>1</sup> Crimp, D. (1993). The Museum’s Old, the Library’s New Subject. *On the Museum’s Ruins* (pp. 71). MIT Press.

<sup>2</sup> “...the choice of these ‘readymades’ was never dictated by aesthetic delectation...a total absence of good or bad taste.” Duchamp, M. (1961). *Apropos of ‘Readymades’*. Lecture presented at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 19 October 1961. *Art & Artists*, 1(4), July 1966.

<sup>3</sup> Debord, G., & Wolman, G. (1956). A User’s Guide to *Détournement*. *Les Lèvres Nues*, 8, Antwerp, May 1956.

fragments of the previous two kinds. *The Bicycle Wheel* and *Fontaine* presented a solid link to the logic of Minor Détournement, and *L.H.O.O.Q* appeared closer to Deceptive and Extensive Détournement.

While artmaking and collection became a “recognizable monetizing social form”<sup>4</sup> after the massive Duchampian influence, contemporary art practice during the 50s and 60s took very pluralistic or conflicting approaches in meaning and context. Although, Duchamp repeatedly denied as a precedent of anyone. Many artists were institutionally perceived as fellows of this companion form to distort originality and authenticity by denying aesthetics and extraordinariness. Robert Rauschenberg, for example, applied the hybrid technique of mixing painting and sculpture to present ordinary objects. Jasper Johns examined the significance of light bulb, beer cans, toothbrush and over forty variations of American flags through drawings, prints, sculptures and notes. Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg’s ten years loved relationship from 1954 brought them to the artist community between First and Sixth Avenue in Lower Manhattan. Their regular communications around The club (1948-1957, 1959-1970) with John Cage, Willem de Koning and Barnett Newman emerged powerfully relevant to the Abstract Expression. Furthermore, the initial gallery system was established with a number of exhibitions organized by art dealer Leo Castelli within the same artist circle.

Meanwhile, the capitalist mode of consumerism during the 1950s gave birth to the mass culture phenomenon. Some hard-corn Pop artists with a solid link to illustration and comics played the visual clichés game as image duplicators. Their protocol embodied many popular culture icons: Marilyn Monroe, Mao, Brillo, Coco-cola, Superheroes, and Micky Mouse, for example; elements from the world of trademarks, entertainment and TV commercials were collected, arranged, multiplied and printed by artists or others. Clement Greenberg may name this “vulgar” art system “kitsch language”. Laurence Alloway called it “mass popular art.”<sup>5</sup> Distinct from the Abstract Expressionists, they were these rather loud, naughty teenager-like characters who did not look back<sup>6</sup>. While Adolph Gottlieb claimed that: “Abstract art will last 1000 years.” Lichtenstein teased: “I am going to get tired of comic strips in a year or two.” Warhol claimed: “In a few years, everything of mine will be pointless.”

“...everybody should be a machine...Pop art's about...its liking things...because you do the same thing every time. You do the same thing over and over again. And you do the same...”<sup>7</sup>

Bringing commercial characteristics to the canvases was dangerous for art criticism. Warhol's radical attitude toward the “machine” and the heavy use of commercial icons could drag him into the dilemma of philistinism or as a betrayal of the anonymity declaration of the Readymade. However, G.R Swenson accomplished Warhol's proposition of calling Pop actions a challenge rather than defeat by laudatorily reviewed: “...abstract art tries to be an object which we can equate with the private feeling of an artist, Andy Warhol presents

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<sup>4</sup> Duchamp, M. (1964). *The Afternoon Interviews*. Interviewed by C. Tomkins at Duchamp’s apartment on West 10th Street in New York. Text transcribed and edited from original audio recordings with permission from the MoMA Archives, *Calvin Tomkins Papers*, V.2 and V.3.

<sup>5</sup> Alloway, L. (1958). *The Arts and the Mass Media*. *Architectural Design*, London, February 1958.

<sup>6</sup> Lippard, L. R. (1985). “It is a product of American’s long-finned, big-breasted, one-born-every-minute society... involved with the future than with the past.” *Pop Art* (p. 11). Thames & Hudson Inc.

<sup>7</sup> Warhol, A. (1963). *What is Pop Art?* A revised transcript of Gene Swenson’s 1963 interview with Andy Warhol, transcribed and edited by Jennifer Sichel. *Oxford Art Journal*, Oxford University Press, February 21, 2018.

objects we can equate with the public feeling of an artist.”<sup>8</sup> Harold Rosenberg affirmed that emphasis on “kitsch” is the only way to discover and integrate the most up-to-date fundamentals of society. If you do not hear me, I will say it again and again, louder and louder. The weapon of salvage repetition in Pop made Duchamp an ardent Warhol fan. Readymade dealt with the mass-produced everyday objects within the question of what art is; Pop focused on the copy-paste and distribution of imagery material recognizable by everyone, equivalent to the diffusion of mass media. Warhol also created a highly exposed identity to the public, while Duchamp rarely made manifestations. With every life moment recorded, polaroided and assembled into the *Diary* and *Daily Pic*. Both the work and the image of the artist was transparent to the public.

“The modernist copying is not a means to this end. It is the end. Or rather, it is the means to different ends.”<sup>9</sup>

Pop artists perceived art through mass within the capitalist modes of artistic practice and distribution. In contrast, the conceptual art community (or the ultra-conceptual art, according to the definition of Lucy R. Lippard) took the heritage from Marxism and Dadaists to facilitate radical political and counterculture propositions. A small group of artists during the 1960s, who lived in Avenue A, D, and the Bowery, shared their close network among Robert Ryman, Lucy R. Leppard, Sol LeWitt, John Cage, George Brecht and Robert Filliou. They developed intellectual and radical work to defend their left-wing political affinities (such as anti-Vietnam war and Women’s Liberation Movement). The focus was the democratic attitude toward dematerialized art rather than object-based interventions. These artists freed themselves from the art dealers, galleries, institutions or any established systems. In short: art is not for sale. Sooner after, the reunion with Flux and Happening artists promoted an intensive use of the printed format- artist books as the democratic form of distributing artistic, social and political ideas. Exquisite of the artwork was transformed to an affordable and multiple-like format for to serve the general public. Art as idea and art as action. The ultra-conceptual art moment from the middle of 1960s to the beginning of 1970s did not complement the favor of art dealers by the not-for-sale format. Art critics and institutions at the moment also somewhat ignored it with its hard-to-defined intentions devoted to countless, distinct and multi-contextual social events. Instead, Minimalism won popularity with eclecticism implications, which was still within the concern of anti-aesthetics with another operation of aesthetics. “Less is More, But It’s Not Enough”, Robert Huot announced on a banner of his New York exhibition in 1978.

Such conflicts between the left-wing community and the conservative power contiguously battle. Cultural movements called to action to challenge the archaeological orientation of knowledge and the abdication of the power of single authorship. The new literature revolution in France with heavy Marxism influence brought two pioneers, Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault, who both worked at the University of Paris VIII. Responded to what Roland Barthes claimed as “the death of the author” with “the birth of the reader”, Foucault published *Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?* in 1969. He proposed writing as “...a game...creating a space into which the writing subject constantly disappears”. Foucault proposed that the author no longer worked as the creator of a story but to collect, archive, and organise stories

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<sup>8</sup> Sichel, J. (2018). “Do you think Pop Art’s queer?” Gene Swenson and Andy Warhol.” *Oxford Art Journal*, 41(1), Oxford University Press, February 21, 2018.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. page 12-22



told by others though “What is an Author.”<sup>10</sup> Deleuz developed *Différence et répétition*<sup>11</sup> in 1968, which questioned the classic definition of identity into a non-hierarchical process. John Cage was one of the significant pioneers of such a concept by understanding “the function of art is to imitate Nature in her manner of operation.”<sup>12</sup> As such, he escaped the composery control through the Chance Operation inspired by the Chinese book of change: *I-Ching*. The concept of the modern copy negotiated questions of authority, grand narratives, and genius. Following the abovementioned actions, appropriation emerged as a widely adopted artistic strategy from the late 1970s to the early 1990s. Review such movement offers a path to trace the civilization process in the Western culture and the construction of public perception. Simultaneously, it may also provide an opportunity to understand the contexts of other cultures. For instance, classic Chinese philosophy emphasizes the awareness of time and history as a continuous transformative process, where originality is not considered crucial.

## 2. Appropriation Movement

Artistic actions concerning citation, referencing and replication were only given a name around the late 1970s as the Art Appropriation movement. Such movement, on one hand was prompted when re-photography and film montage were applied as the most modern tool; on the other hand, brought by theoretical discussions regarding the relationship between reality and spectacle in the age of mass media.

The Picture show, curated by Douglas Crimp in 1977 brought a radical phenomenal to the art society. The exhibition gathered five young artists, Troy Brauntuch, Jack Goldstein, Sherrie Levine, Robert Longo and Philip Smith, who shared a kinship of claiming their ownership by rephotograph the work of others. Baudrillard justified Appropriation Art in social perspective in 1981 by introducing *Simulacres et Simulation*. This book is commonly considered as an update based on *The Society of the Spectacle* of Guy Debord. Debord instructed three stages of *Détournement* to perceive and challenge how the mass media substituted life into its representation. Baudrillard considered above instructions merely functioned for the past<sup>13</sup>, when reality and representation exclusively merged in the 1980s<sup>14</sup>. Therefore, originality became meaningless. Artists at the time immediately picked up this new influence and intensively focused on authenticity reversal in the following years.

However, Crimp soon raised his consciousness regarding how appropriation lost its particularity when it became a postmodernism tool shared by different cultural aspects. Thus, Crimp reviewed and furtherly distinguished the work of Levine, Richard Prince and Rauschenberg. Levine rephotographed the work of others without transformation. Photography, for her, was the tool and strategy that another tool could perform. In the case of Prince, by redoing the advertising photography, he appropriated the institutional strategy during the museum crisis of the late 1980s: the acceptance of commercial photography. Rauschenberg appropriated his own work by shifting from a painter using images as material to a photographer who could capture everything as his art. Above all, Crimp pointed out that

<sup>10</sup> Foucault, M. (1969, February 22). Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur? [What is an Author?]. Lecture at the Société Française de Philosophie.

<sup>11</sup> Deleuze, G. (1968). *Différence et répétition*. Presses Universitaires de France. (Original work published) Deleuze, G. (1994). *Difference and Repetition* (P. Patton, Trans.). Columbia University Press.

<sup>12</sup> Patterson, D. (2008). John Cage: *Music, Philosophy, and Intention*, 1933-1950. ROUTLEDGE. (p. 68).

<sup>13</sup> Evans, D. (2009). Seven Types of Appropriation. In *Appropriation, Documents of Contemporary Art* (pp. 13). Co-published by Whitechapel Gallery and the MIT Press.

<sup>14</sup> Baudrillard, J. (1994). “(Simulation) is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal.” In *The Precession of Simulacra, Simulacra and Simulation*. The University of Michigan Press.

Prince and Rauschenberg emerged in a delicate position. It accommodated the institutional discourse of constructing the field of knowledge through arranged objects, while not intervening within it due to the nature of photography<sup>15</sup>. In short, the art of *Appropriating Appropriation*.

From Richard Prince to Sherrie Levine, from Debord to Baudrillard, from the implication of the significance of images to the incorporation of fragments to the new sublimity, these debates stated an explicit operation of juxtaposition and reimaging, where both the resource and the appropriation method were registered with the prefix of trans- or post-. Work-after-work, they can mostly be called. Such actions, were still focused on the artistic discourse itself. Crimp noticed such limitation and declared that appropriation was mainly a tool of “merely reflective, not productive of social relations”<sup>16</sup>. Crimp dived into AIDS activist art for its extraordinary insert of art directly into the public sphere around 1988. Rather than fixating on artistic discourses, AIDS art encompassed a broad spectrum of social struggles concerning the lack of healthcare, discrimination in governmental policy, drug addiction problems and the desire for sex liberation.

### 3. General Idea and Sturtevant

General Idea: The Canadian artist trio (Felix Partz, Jorge Zontal and AA Bronson), and epidemic victims made the AIDS motif from the LOVE version of Robert Indiana. From 1987 to 1994, by timely showing its visibility in public, such as wallpapers, subway posters, magazine pages, videos, billboards, public sculptures and lottery tickets, the AIDS motif normalized the meaning of the deadly reality into a popular gesture. “Imagevirus”, as General Idea called the project, can be referred to Burroughs’ obsession of fungus and junk addiction. A new cosmos for artistic production appeared, encompassing the appropriation of mass media aesthetics and understanding the channels through which the message was distributed. General Idea's oeuvre is fragmented, evident in its size, subjects, approaches, styles, and content. While much of the work can be approached through the appropriation strategy, this approach simultaneously prevents it from being perceived as a cohesive whole. AA Bronson once identified the significance of reading in the group's early formation, citing books by Gertrude Stein, William S. Burroughs, and Marshall McLuhan<sup>17</sup>. A “collide-scope of interfaced situations”, McLuhan described his book *The Medium is the Message*, may also express General Idea's work. McLuhan pointed out that the nature of communication media shapes our society more than its content. Electronic technology reconstructed the relationship between individuals and others: substance was substituted by process, and the public became the mass audience. The role of General Idea, thus, revolves not around individual elements but functions as a channel for reflecting real-time struggles, essentially becoming the medium itself.

In the meantime, understanding the relationship between artistic production and media can provide a deeper understanding of Sturtevant, “Copy as Original”, the American-born and Paris-based artist replicated other contemporaries, such as Marcel Duchamp, Andy Warhol, Claes Oldenburg, Jasper Johns, Joseph Beuys, Keith Haring and Félix González-Torres. She

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<sup>15</sup> Crimp, D. (1993). “...photography is too multiple, too useful to other discourses... will always participate in non-art practice, will always threaten the insularity of the art’s discourse.” In *Appropriating Appropriation, On the Museum’s Ruins* (p. 134). MIT Press.

<sup>16</sup> Crimp, D. (1993). “Photography at the End of Modernism.” *On the Museum’s Ruins* (p. 21). MIT Press.

<sup>17</sup> Bronson, A. A. (2010). Explained by AA Bronson’s essay, “Myth as Parasite/Image as Virus, General Idea’s Bookshelf from 1967-1975.” In G. Bordowitz (Ed.), *General Idea: Imagevirus* (p. 67). Afterall Books.

finally made her name recognizable as the mother of appropriation through the White Column show in 1986, a compromise she rejected<sup>18</sup>. Sturtevant brutally banished repetition at the beginning of 1990 and picked up video mockups as her new tool. *The Greening of America, House of Horrors, The Dark Threat of Absence and Fragmented and Sliced ...* Sturtevant's digital work embarrassed the audience with the fragmented reality of violence, money and sex, taken from mass media. Two different bodies of work appeared in the same exhibition, *The Razzle Dazzle of Thinking* at Musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris 2010. One section, *Wild to Wild*, featured Sturtevant's famous replications in a conventional exhibition setting, such as *Duchamp 1200 Coal Bags* and *Gonzalez-Torres Untitled (America)*. The second part, the *House of Horrors*, offered visitors a theme-park-like Ghost train (*Le Train Fantome*). Bats, skeletons, zombies, vampires, the journey began with encounters with Hollywood's horror film masterpieces and ended with drag queen Divine<sup>19</sup> licking dog poop. The choice of theme park might be relevant to Baudrillard's description of Disneyland neither true or false, but a "deterrence machine set up in order to rejuvenate in reverse the fiction of the real."<sup>20</sup> And duo-setup could remind Crimp's assumption of two distinctions of appropriation through two architects, Michael Graves and Frank Gehry; one interpreted style from the past, and the other dealt with the current material conditions. The same as General Idea's work cannot be approached individually, Sturtevant's operation also works as a comprehensive whole. By positioning these two distinctive sections side by side, Sturtevant conveyed a clear message: the glorious art history dominated by masters simultaneously shared the dark current of the civilization process.

## Conclusions

Sturtevant firstly confused the institution and art market by appropriating the author and then shattered the museum and built a noisy, bustling street by throwing a piece of dog poop. And, General Idea, guilefully, opened a cooperative shop, mass-produced, covered the poops with colorful sugar coats and sent it to everyone. The work of both artists evidenced a dramatic shift in art during the 1990s. On the one hand, they marked the end of the Appropriation Art movement based on authorship and authenticity; on the other hand, it revealed a new stage of artistic practice not centers with artistic reproduction but engaging to comprehensive social material constantly and immediately. Rather than understanding such shift as a result of theoretical progress, it is rather influenced by the progress of communication technology. Boris Groys declared that the age of digital reproduction is "primarily interested in itself."<sup>21</sup> McLuhan named "mass-audience" the successor of the public with instant electronic speed. Millions witnessed the four days of non-stop live broadcast during President John F. Kennedy's funeral in 1963. However, the public only approached the gun murder by reviewing the record. In 1991, the Web and HTML Tags was opened to the public as the universal linked information system. On September 11, 2001, the world co-experienced the airplane attack. Many TV programs immediately switched to live broadcasting of the second and third attacks after the first crash. The media can capture and disseminate everything happening now in real-time, not as the past or future. Artists seamlessly caught the message

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<sup>18</sup> Sturtevant. (1993). "I am not an Appropriationist by taken of intention and meaning." *Sturtevant: The Brutal Truth* (p. 20), lecture at Salzburger Kunstverein, Austria. Quoted by U. Kittelmann & M. Kramer. Hatje Cantz.

<sup>19</sup> Drag queen, Divine is the protagonist of American counterculture scenarios in John Waters' film *Pink Flamingos* in 1972.

<sup>20</sup> Baudrillard, J. (1994). *The Precession of Simulacra. Simulacra and Simulation* (p. 415). The University of Michigan Press.

<sup>21</sup> Groys, B. (2016). *Modernity and Contemporaneity: Mechanical vs. Digital Reproduction. In the Flow* (p. 137). Verso.

and responded by engaging with the public domain and adopting a multitude of multidisciplinary methodologies in their work.

*Relational Aesthetics*, published in 1998, and *Postproduction*, which followed four years later, are two of the most widely circulated theories describing the artistic scene of the 1990s. Both were written by Paris-based art critic and curator Nicolas Bourriaud. These books illustrate two common themes in how art responds to social, technological, and economic progress: a new focus on collective sensibility and the postproduction of other cultural products. In 1983, AA Bronson and Peggy Gale co-edited *Museums by Artists*, which revealed the initial actions of counter-classifying museums. For instance, Marcel Broodthaers appointed himself as the director of his fictional “Musée d’Art Moderne, Département des Aigles” from 1968 to 1972; Hans Haacke redefined the museum’s mission as “corporate sponsorship<sup>22</sup>.” During the 1990s, with the advancement of digital media, museums finally recognized the urgency to introduce a heterogeneous mixture of what was happening here, there, and now. While “postproduction” is a technical term that refers to the editing process of audiovisual material. Bourriaud borrowed this vocabulary and applied it to describe the artistic process of transforming “script-like value” into “form”. While working with existing cultural materials is not a new concept, what distinguishes it from art appropriation is that this activity is rooted in based on sharing. Artists such as Philippe Parreno, Rirkrit Tiravanija, Thomas Hirschhorn, and Daniel Pflumm were presented for supporting Bourriaud’s observations. *Relational Aesthetics* and *Postproduction*, together proposed a new sphere: art, creativity, and the construction of knowledge could no longer be viewed as thematic subjects, and the roles of individuals, collectives, and institutions began to merge.

## Acknowledgements

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<sup>22</sup> Bourdieu, P., & Haacke, H. (1995). “What we have here is a real exchange of capital: financial capital on the part of the sponsors and symbolic capital on the part of the sponsored.” *Free Exchange* (p. 17). Stanford University Press.

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## *Using Machine Learning to Classify Art Style in Naturalism and Realism*

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### **Abstract**

Art styles have evolved over time in response to changing cultural, societal, and artistic influences. The naturalism and realism art styles emerged as artistic and philosophical movements in the 19th century, and while they had some similarities, they also had some important differences. There is, however, a challenge in fully recognizing and understanding the complexities of these art styles. This study aims to investigate how machine learning techniques, including LeNet, Pretrained ResNet-50, and Pretrained MobileNetV3 models, can be used to classify naturalism and realism art styles. The Pretrained MobileNetV3 model demonstrates superior performance for the classification of naturalism and realism, achieving an accuracy rate of 95% and outperforming other models in terms of Precision, Recall, F1-score, and overall accuracy. This model's effectiveness in accurately classifying naturalism and realism art styles holds promise for various applications in art analysis, interpretation, and curation. This research contributes to advancing the understanding and application of machine learning in the field of art style classification. By utilizing suitable machine learning models, art researchers, historians, curators, and museum professionals will be able to analyze extensive art collections efficiently.

Keywords: Classification, Machine Learning, Naturalism, Realism

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## Introduction

The development of art styles over time reflects the evolving cultural, societal, and artistic influences, shaping the trajectory of artistic movements. Naturalism and realism have captivated audiences across generations, presenting distinct approaches to visual representation. While both emerged as artistic and philosophical movements in the 19th century and share some similarities, they also have important differences (Hauser, 1999; Novak, 2007). Naturalism meticulously captures reality, paying close attention to detail and emphasizing the influence of environmental, hereditary, and social factors on individuals (Silviani & Rinjani, 2022). On the other hand, realism primarily focuses on accurately observing and depicting everyday life without delving into the underlying causes of human behavior. It often centers on ordinary subjects and the experiences of everyday life (PUTRA et al., 2017).

However, understanding the complexities of these art styles and discerning their differences can be daunting and overwhelming. Thus, machine learning, with its ability to recognize patterns and make informed decisions to distinguish the styles. Using the concept to learn the data from the dataset and train to adapt the new information given (Alzubaidi et al., 2021; Lee & Shin, 2020). As a result, it is expected that classification in machine learning will yield high-accuracy results.

Therefore, the primary objective of this study is to investigate the application of various machine learning techniques in art classification. This comprehensive approach has significant implications for the broader art analysis and interpretation field. Art researchers, historians, curators, and museum professionals can efficiently analyze extensive art collections by employing different machine learning models, such as LeNet, Pretrained ResNet-50, and Pretrained MobileNetV3. This multi-model exploration offers valuable insights that contribute to understanding Naturalism and Realism, their prevalence, and distinguishing characteristics. Furthermore, it enriches our knowledge of these art styles and their cultural significance, expanding the horizons of art analysis and interpretation through the utilization of various machine learning techniques.

## Methods

### *A. Dataset and Data Acquisition*

The dataset used in this study was sourced from the Wikiart dataset, a vast collection of annotated artwork encompassing approximately 80,000 artworks categorized by genre, artist, and style class. For this research, a specific subset of data was carefully chosen from the Naturalism and Realism style classes. We selected 240 artworks and divided them into 120 artworks from each class to ensure a balance in representation. The dataset predominantly consisted of oil paintings, with images limited to the jpg/jpeg format for consistency purposes. In order to facilitate effective model training and evaluation, an 80:20 split was implemented, allocating 80% (100 images) of the dataset for training and reserving 20% (20 images) for validation. Figure 1 provides an overview of the dataset and its composition. This commonly used split ratio was employed to maintain the continuity of features and strike a balance between the training and evaluation phases (Amir et al., 2023; Joseph & Vakayil, 2022). The specific distribution of training and validation images can be seen in Table 1.



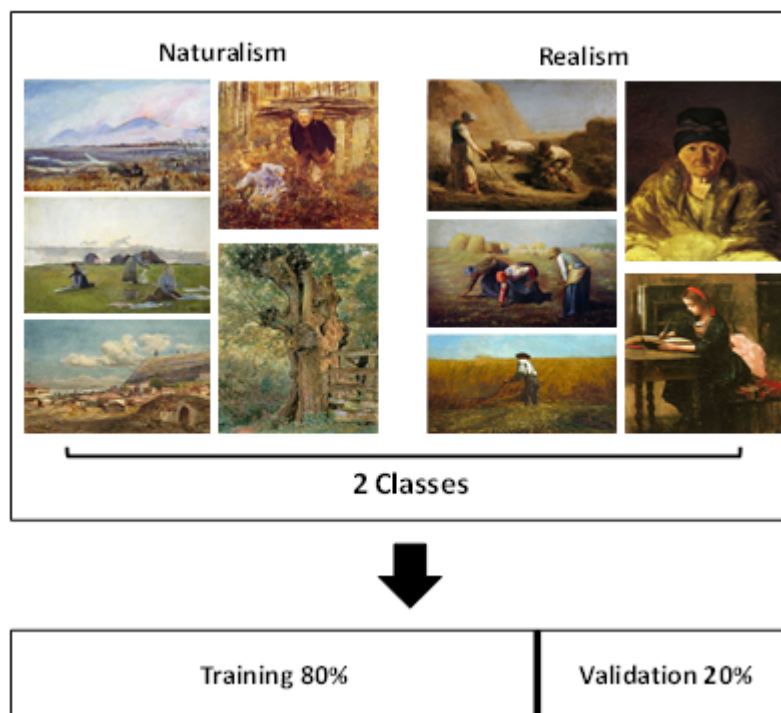


Figure 1: Dataset Composition

Class	Training	Validation
Naturalism	100	20
Realism	100	20

Table 1: Dataset for Classification

### ***B. Architecture Data Processing***

The image classification architecture consists of several key components. First, the input image is scanned to identify unique characteristics specific to paintings, focusing on elements such as brushstrokes, color palettes, and composition that contribute to the artistic style. Next, features are extracted using convolutional layers to capture distinct patterns and details. As the model progresses, the features are condensed and abstracted by reducing pixel dimensions. These condensed features pass through interconnected layers, where intermediate neurons help extract abstract features and understand complex relationships. The transformed features are then used in the image classification layer, applying machine learning techniques to assign the image to predefined categories. The method also involves training and validation, where the model learns from labeled data, adjusting parameters to minimize prediction differences. Validation assesses the model's performance on unseen images, ensuring its ability to generalize and accurately classify new paintings. This integrated approach of architecture and method enables accurate recognition of painting characteristics and classification into specific styles (Figure 2).

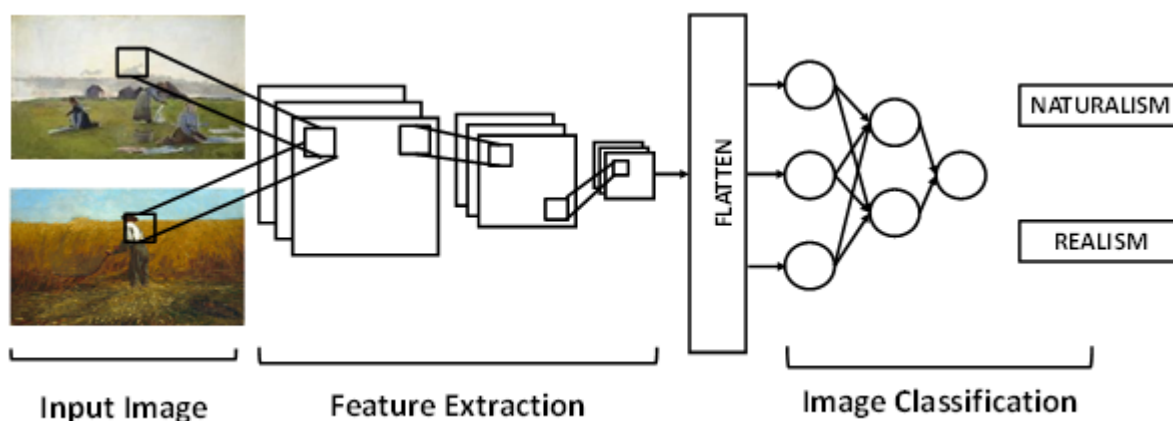


Figure 2: Architecture of Image Classification Method

### C. Machine Learning Models

This study used several machine learning models LeNet, Pretrained ResNet-50, and Pretrained MobileNetV3, to classify naturalism and realism art styles. The model used a loss function with cross entropy error, optimization function, and learning parameters such as Recall, Precision, F-1 Score, and Accuracy. The performance is compared based on the metric performance of each model.

#### LeNet

LeNet is widely used in machine learning classification, especially for image classification, because it extracts hierarchical features, handles translation invariance, leverages local connectivity, shares parameters efficiently, and captures spatial hierarchies (Khan et al., 2020). These qualities make LeNet highly effective in recognizing and differentiating objects within images while efficiently processing large datasets.

#### Pretrained ResNet-50

The Pretrained ResNet-50 is a deep learning architecture consisting of 50 layers that have been trained on a large dataset of images from ImageNet (Rezende et al., 2017). It is selected for its smaller parameter size, enabling faster model loading and training (Ikechukwu et al., 2021). The proposed solution involves pre-processing the data, training the model using the Pretrained ResNet-50, and performing image classification.

#### Pretrained MobileNetV3

The Pretrained MobileNetV3 model is well-known for its robustness in extracting features from the input image (Alsenan et al., 2021). This lightweight convolutional neural network model has gained recognition for its ability to achieve a harmonious balance between accuracy and computational efficiency (Abd Elaziz et al., 2021).

### Results

The performance metrics of the three models are compared and summarized in Table 2. Figure 3 displays the results of the LeNet model, Figure 4 showcases the performance of the Pretrained ResNet50 model, and Figure 5 presents the outcomes achieved using the Pretrained MobileNetV3 model.

Model Performance Comparison	LeNet		Pretrained ResNet-50		Pretrained MobileNetV3	
	Natural	Realism	Natural	Realism	Natural	Realism
Precision	71%	74%	83%	100%	91%	100%
Recall	75%	70%	100%	80%	100%	90%
F1-Score	73%	72%	91%	89%	95%	95%
Accuracy	73%		90%		95%	

**Note:** Natural, Naturalism.

Table 2: Dataset for Classification

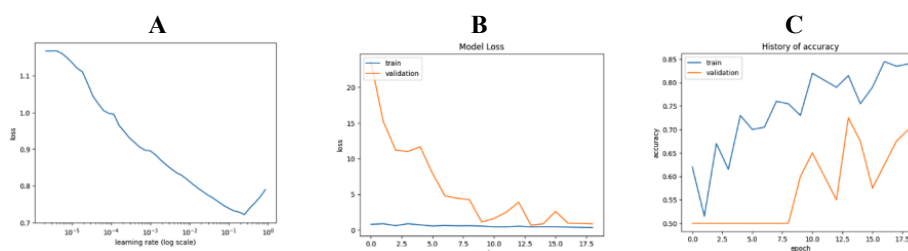


Figure 3: Result of LeNet model. The learning rate (A), model loss during training and validation (B), the accuracy during the training and validation (C)

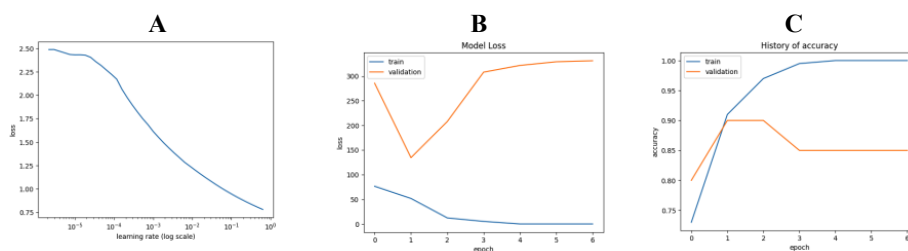


Figure 4: Result of Pretrained ResNet-50 model. The learning rate (A), model loss during training and validation (B), the accuracy during the training and validation (C)

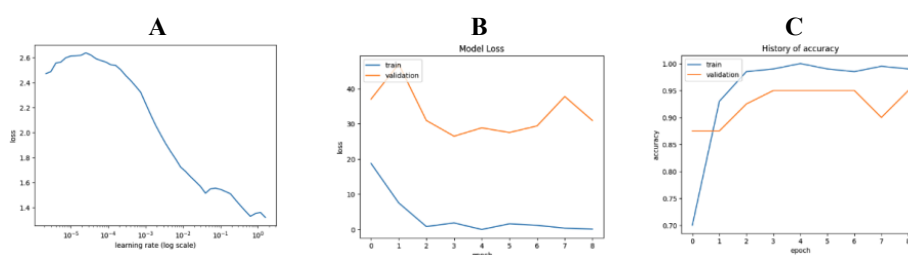


Figure 5: Result of Pretrained MobileNetV3 model. The learning rate (A), model loss during training and validation (B), the accuracy during the training and validation (C)

All models demonstrated proficiency in accurately classifying samples of naturalism and realism from a dataset of 240 images, achieving an impressive mean accuracy rate of 86%. The evaluation of the model’s performance, considering Precision, Recall, and F1-score metrics, provided additional validation of its effectiveness in distinguishing between the two art styles.

## Discussion

From the results, it is evident that each model demonstrates varying levels of performance in classifying naturalism and realism. The Pretrained MobileNetV3 model demonstrated superior performance across all metrics with all values above 90%. It achieved an impressive accuracy rate of 95%, indicating the model's strong capability in accurately classifying the dataset. The second highest was the Pretrained ResNet-50 model, which showed notable performance as it attained an accuracy rate of 90%, showcasing its effectiveness in distinguishing between naturalism and realism. The LeNet model was the lowest. However, it showed a good performance with an overall accuracy of 73%.

Based on the comparison of these models, it is evident that the Pretrained MobileNetV3 model outperformed the other models in terms of precision, recall, F1-score, and overall accuracy. This superiority can be attributed to its architecture, which creates deeper networks that positively impact model accuracy and efficiency during training (Horry et al., 2020). Its superior performance highlights its potential as a highly effective model for classifying naturalism and realism art styles. The model's ability to accurately distinguish between naturalism and realism holds promise for various applications in the field of art analysis, interpretation, and curation.

However, there is still a limitation in this study. First, the evaluation was conducted using a relatively small dataset of 240 samples, which may not fully represent the entire range of naturalism and realism artworks. Future research should aim to utilize larger and more diverse datasets to validate the models' performance in different contexts. Last, while the Pretrained MobileNetV3 model demonstrated superior performance in this study, it is worth exploring other machine learning models and ensemble techniques to assess their effectiveness in art style classification.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, this study investigated the application of machine learning for art style classification. The models demonstrated varying performance levels in classifying naturalism and realism, with the Pretrained MobileNetV3 model surpassing others in all metrics. It effectively distinguished between art styles, particularly in classic painting. The application of this comprehensive approach has a significant impact on the field of art analysis and interpretation and is useful to art researchers, historians, curators, and museum professionals in order to analyze extensive collections of art in a systematic manner.

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***Developing Children's Critical Thinking Abilities Through Critical Pedagogy:  
Is the Ghanaian Culture a Threat?***

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**Abstract**

Most African countries have focused on transforming education from teacher-centred methods to learner-dominated forms of education. Since the major goal of the recent transformations in African education is to foster the development of learners' critical thinking/problem-solving skills, it makes sense if teachers across the continent adopt instructional approaches that align with critical pedagogy. We, however, suspect that the tenets of critical pedagogy and critical thinking development appear to be extremely at variance with the culturally accepted norms of bringing up children in the socio-cultural context of Ghana. Based on a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of some selected Ghanaian proverbs, the current study aimed to analyse how children are culturally constructed and how that potentially poses a threat to the implementation of critical pedagogy and the development of critical thinking in the Ghanaian child. The findings confirm the idea that the socio-cultural norms of most African societies tend to inhibit the growth of students' critical thinking abilities. We argue that the way proverbs shape children's identities within the sociocultural context of Ghana tends to have a detrimental effect on how well children learn as well as the development of their critical thinking skills. Our analysis therefore concludes that a Ghanaian child may be born a critical thinker, but the socio-cultural expectations and the cultured upbringing thwart the realisation of this innate potential.

Keywords: Critical Thinking, Critical Pedagogy, Critical Discourse Analysis, Childhood Construction, Ghanaian Proverbs

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## Introduction

The development of children's critical thinking and problem-solving appears to be one of the crucial aims of African education in recent times. Learners in Africa are expected to develop their critical thinking and problem-solving skills to function effectively and contribute to societal development (Schendel, 2013; Setlhako & Msila, 2013). Teachers are, thus, encouraged to adopt learner-centred methods. This approach, endorsed by researchers, enhances rational analysis and evaluation of information. These are attainable when given the chance to challenge the status quo (Rahimi & Sajed, 2014; Oberman & Sainz, 2021). We argue that such an approach to education aligns with critical pedagogy. Nonetheless, critical pedagogy, an educational approach crucial for developing critical thinking skills (Rahimi & Sajed, 2014), appears to clash with traditional African society's socio-cultural norms and expected child-adult power relations (Ndofirepi & Cross, 2015). Teachers' preparedness to enact a pedagogical approach that clashes with established sociocultural norms of a typical African society like Ghana is the suspicion that provoked our interest in this study. Our particular interest was to unveil the Ghanaian worldview of *childhood* and how such worldview and societal expectations could inhibit the enactment of critical pedagogy and the development of children's critical thinking abilities. To this end, the current study engaged in a Critical Discourse Analysis of childhood constructions in some selected Ghanaian proverbs.

In the next sections of the study, we briefly present the nexus between critical thinking and critical pedagogy, the African perspective of childhood, how proverbs serve as a tool for constructing social reality, and CDA as an analytical framework for the study. After that, we present the research methods, results, discussions and conclusion, and the study's limitations.

## Critical Pedagogy and Critical Thinking

The objective of critical thinking is to enable students to logically and thoroughly challenge existing knowledge (Ennis, 1996). According to Norris and Ennis (1989), critical thinking focuses on rational and introspective thoughts that determine what should be done or believed. This suggests that knowledge should be generated in the classroom, allowing students to confirm the accuracy and legitimacy of information, eliminating the need for forced absorption. When it comes to finding knowledge, critical thinkers in the classroom are generally encouraged to challenge preconceived notions, expand on their own opinions, and reflect on their activities (Dahl et al., 2018). This implies that promoting critical thinking in the classroom demands teachers to adopt pedagogies that eliminate timidity and empower students to explore knowledge. Critical pedagogy appears to be one of the most effective methods of achieving such a form of learning (Giroux, 2010).

Freire's problem-posing approach in education encourages active student participation, stimulating cognitive and expressive abilities, challenging the curriculum, and assessing repressive systems in social settings. Freire's work was crucial to the adoption of critical pedagogy in classrooms. The development of critical thinking abilities is linked to the implementation of critical pedagogy in the educational system (Cowden & Singh, 2015). It requires teachers to facilitate learning by challenging conventional African society's views on child education, fostering critical thinking abilities, and addressing effective instructional challenges. However, our major argument is that the African worldview about childhood does not seem to align with such an educational approach to developing the critical thinking skills of children. The next section throws more light on this scholarly discourse by looking at how childhood is viewed in the African sociocultural context.



## **The African Perspective of Childhood**

Childhood is thought to be a sociocultural construct (Hedegaard, 2009; Gittins et al., 2020). This means that one's cultural background has a role in defining one's status as a child. According to Ndofirepi and Cross (2015), a child in a typical African tradition is expected to give up his interests and follow the social norms that have already been established. In Africa, children are often viewed as disabled and reliant on adults for guidance and protection. They are expected to study hard and uphold social norms, leading to a stereotype of them as incomplete human beings with limited physical and cognitive development.

African culture limits children's physical, social, and cognitive development, requiring obedience to adult commands and preventing them from recognising their superiority. It is, therefore, forbidden for them to question or contest an adult's orders, regardless of whether they are suitable or not (Twum-Danso, 2009). According to Oppong (1973), children who challenge the authority of adults are likely to face bad outcomes such as early death, disease, or calamities. The study explores the deeply ingrained African notions of childhood and how these values are reflected in oral traditions, specifically proverbs. In the next section, we give a firm justification for using proverbs as our unit of analysis by defining what proverbs are and why their role in defining reality is so significant to Ghanaians.

### **On Proverbs**

Proverbs function as a tool for constructing social reality, philosophy, worldview, and the customs and beliefs of certain African cultures (Gyan et al., 2020; Mariwah et al., 2022). African proverbs are significant cultural tools that embody the customs, history, beliefs, and values of a community, serving as primary records of folklore and social standards for societal well-being. According to Gyekye (1996), proverbs and other oral traditions are used as standards for determining absolute truth. As Awedoba (2000) posits, proverbs are so important in Ghanaian society that people do not question their authenticity or sincerity; consequently, questioning a proverb and its tenets is tantamount to questioning the wisdom of the ancestors. This would be deemed arrogance and a violation of the sacred, according to Awedoba. As a result, Africans see proverbs as objective realities and are, thus, particularly likely to adhere to their precepts in real-life situations.

Since it is usually a portrayal of social realities, researchers have attempted to uncover how social issues such as gender inequality are usually embedded in proverbs as well as how they manifest in real-life situations (Diabah & Appiah Amfo, 2015; Diabah & Amfo, 2018; Gyan et al., 2020; Dzahene-Quarshie & Omari, 2021; Mariwah et al., 2022). The current study, therefore, contributes to the academic discourse on how proverbs mirror societal realities.

### **Critical Discourse Analysis**

Since critical pedagogy aligns with the principles of CDA, it was chosen as the analytical framework for the current study. Critical pedagogy aims to make children and society as a whole aware that they live in a suppressive environment where domination and authority are the norm (Clemitshaw, 2013; Bayoglu & Gumuseli, 2016; Amuzu, 2021). Through the application of CDA, we can learn how social structures are designed to continuously maintain power asymmetry and suppression. This framework, both theoretical and analytical, reveals the relationship between language and society. CDA is employed in the analysis of both transparent and opaque structural interactions pertaining to dominance, discrimination,

power, and control that are expressed through language (Wodak, 2004). This framework investigates how social injustices are deeply ingrained in a particular culture's language across various aspects of life, including politics, religion, and education.

CDA includes the objects of moral and political evaluation. Analysing them should have an effect on society by exposing power abuse, empowering the voiceless, and mobilising people to remedy social wrongs. In adopting this framework, we specifically refer to Richardson's (2007) three basic guidelines for analysing discourse. These include the exposition of (1) what language reveals about the society in which it was used, (2) the perceived influence of language use on people's social relationships in the society, and (3) the language's ability to either perpetuate or mitigate the continuation of unpleasant or oppressive social practices. Thus, in this study, we apply CDA to examine what Ghanaian society says—through the use of proverbs—about children's critical thoughts and how that could impact the implementation of critical pedagogy and the development of critical thinking in early childhood education.

### Research Methodology

The approach to this study was purely qualitative. In all, 76 proverbs about children in various languages were gathered from four languages, including Akan, Dagaare, Ewe, and Ga. These proverbs came from both oral and published sources. The proverbs from Akan, specifically, were collected from *Bu Me Be*, a book written by Appiah et al. (2007). Proverbs from Ga were also collected from Engmann's (2021) *Kpawo-kpawo toi kpawo abei (folklore of the Ga people)* book. As there are not many publications on proverbs in the other two languages (Dagaare and Ewe), the researchers had to rely on oral sources. Proverbs that specifically mentioned "child" and those that only addressed children in figurative form met our inclusion criteria. Proverbs that had the word "child" but did not depict childhood roles or the physical, mental, and emotional development of children were all eliminated. Although proverbs have underlying meanings and can be interpreted differently depending on the communication setting, the researchers were more interested in the proverbs' literal meanings and their historical contexts.

### Results

The study's findings are presented and discussed in this section. The research is organized around three primary topics that demonstrate how childhood is viewed in the Ghanaian socio-cultural context. The analysis was centred on how proverbs are used to reflect child cognition, children's curiosity and aptitudes, and children's subservience in Ghana's sociocultural setting.

#### *Construction of Childhood Cognition*

In Ghanaian philosophy, childhood appears to be considered a period of human growth characterized by impaired reasoning, thus denying individuals or children the right to make thoughtful or helpful contributions to communication. The proverb presented below provides support for this argument.

(1) *Akɔdaa nyansa ne panin dee nse* (Akan)

An elder's wisdom is not the same as that of a child.

(Appiah et al., 2007; p. 148, no. 3226)

The above proverb implies that the indigenous people of Ghana tend to consider age a reliable indicator of intelligence and critical thinking capacity. Older people are, thus, usually placed at the top of the intellectual hierarchy, despite our general understanding that age is not a valid indicator of intellect. There is, therefore, the tendency that the views of older people would be preferred to those of children, given the perceived life experience older people have. The foregoing argument is strengthened by Proverb (2).

(2) *Ɖevi dɔ ametsitsi kuku efe ta dɛ wɔbuna dɛ eme* (Ewe)  
A child's face is never shown when s/he wears an adult hat.

The Ewe proverb (2) above metaphorically relates one's head to the size of his/her brain. The larger your head, the more wisdom you possess. It suggests, therefore, that an adult's hat is likely to obscure the eyesight of a child because adults have larger hats, which could impair the vision of a child when worn. The implication of this is that a child's and an adult's cognitive capacities are never comparable. In this regard, adults often assume children are incapable of societal functioning due to their cognitive limitations, as supported by proverbs.

(3) *Akɔdaa nim adidi na ɔnnim asem ka* (Akan)  
A child is capable of eating but lacks self-expression skills.  
(Appiah et al., 2007; p. 148, no. 3220)

(4) *Akɔdaa nim wa bɔ na ɔnnim ahorɔ te* (Akan)  
A child is capable of coughing but not spitting.  
(Appiah et al., 2007; p. 148, no. 3221)

(5) *Gbeke le, waa ejwaa, jee akpokplonto* (Ga)  
A child can shatter a snail's shell, but not that of a tortoise. (Engmann, 2021)

Several Ghanaian proverbs treat children as though they have very little knowledge. Proverbs 3, 4, and 5 characterise children as beings with shallow minds who are unable to ponder deeply. The word "child" can refer to any individual younger than the majority of a group performing a task, indicating that they cannot handle tasks requiring significant cognitive effort. As long as a person is relatively younger among a group, he is and will always be considered a child. In some discourse situations, 25-year-olds may still be considered children, suggesting that, traditionally, once you are the youngest among interlocutors, you would be, in most cases, expected to submit to elderly views.

### ***Ghanaian Worldview of Childhood Curiosity***

The Ghanaian National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NaCCA) emphasises a constructivist teaching philosophy, requiring students to actively explore new information and construct knowledge with minimal teacher guidance (Ampadu & Danso, 2018; Arioder et al., 2020). The Ghanaian perspective on children's knowledge conflicts with the need for children to have a strong sense of curiosity and a keen interest in hidden information. As can be observed in the sayings below.

(6) *Akɔdaa repe adekɔkɔ ahwe a, yɛte damenama ahanhan kyere no*  
If the child wants to see a red thing, we show it the leaves of the Ashanti blood shrub.  
(Appiah et al., 2007; pg149 no.3229)

(7) *Akɔdaa su mpaanin su a yegye no ayieasetoɔ*

If a child cries like an adult, he contributes to the funeral expenses.

(Appiah et al., 2007; pg149 no.3235)

(8) *Akɔdaa bɔ mpanin bɛdɛ a, yɛsua no mpanin nnesua*

If a child designs an adult strap, he is made to carry adult loads.

(Appiah et al., 2007; pg148 no.3201)

Some African children often attempt to surpass adult expectations, despite being considered weaker cognitively and physiologically. This behaviour among some children is usually considered an anomaly. The Akans, for instance, usually label a child who is overly inquisitive as *akwalaabɔne* (Bad Child). This signals that children are not expected to explore beyond their boundaries, as the proverb (6) suggests. In most civilizations, the colour red denotes peril. Because the Ashanti blood shrub has more red pigment and therefore more indication of risk, it should be displayed to a child who is drawn to danger. The impression given in Proverb (7) supports this opinion. Adults weep during Akan funerals in a way that is different from how a child would weep. The Akan culture values rich literature and uses literary techniques to pay tribute to the departed, a practice not usually expected of children. Children's excessive crying during funerals is known as *suhunu* (unnecessary crying). A child's attempt to mimic adult intelligence at a funeral may lead to unpleasant effects, as crying symbolises the pinnacle of maturity and intelligence. More so, as seen in (8), a child must always be forced to bear the weight of an adult whenever he tries to do adult-level work. This supports Smeryer's (2007, p. 2) assertion that, in the majority of educational environments, children's sensitivity and intelligence are "constantly thwarted by the obtuseness and neuroses of punitive adults."

### ***Servitude***

Drawing on the proverbs listed below, we further argue that most Ghanaian societies have an uneven power dynamic between adults and children. Children are expected to blindly follow the norms and instructions of their elders.

(9) *Vi di tɔ mewɔa tɔ mugbe o*

(Ewe)

A child may look like his father but cannot function exactly like him.

(Oral source)

Proverb (9) shows that, as a youngster, you are always inferior to grownups. This is an empirically supported topic in the literature. Africans frequently violate the rights of children, particularly students. Sutherland (2014), for instance, has revealed that children's voices are constantly silenced in African early childhood classes. Children may have issues but cannot communicate them. Those who try are frequently penalized for being disrespectful. As Nthontho (2017) indicates, making a child's voice heard by adults is an unusual phenomenon in the African socio-cultural setting. Most African nations' socio-cultural beliefs frown on such freedoms. Respect for such sociocultural values, according to Sutherland (2014), is a fundamental reason why African children's human rights are continually restricted.

### **Discussions and Conclusion**

Drawing on the results presented in the current study, we argue that social constructions of childhood in most Ghanaian cultures do not seem to provide opportunities for critical

thinking growth through critical pedagogy. The findings of the study suggest that the Ghanaian worldview seems to reject the training and upbringing of children democratically; hence, the possibilities for enacting critical pedagogy could be thwarted. This is because it is known that educational approaches that align with critical pedagogy are often discouraged in classrooms due to their deviation from African sociocultural norms (Ndofirepi & Cross, 2015; Nthontho, 2017). While critical thinking requires questioning conventional wisdom and established norms of society, our findings show that the Ghanaian culture, as reflected in the proverbs analysed, demands an asymmetric power relation between children and adults in all facets of life and human development.

The idea that children's opinions and rights are suppressed in the African environment has been challenged by more recent researchers, such as Wilson (2022). The author suggests that following superiors' orders in childhood does not necessarily mean marginalisation but rather a process of socialisation that instils a sense of social responsibility. Such a position is strongly opposed by earlier scholarly debates. Obeng (1998), for example, contends that obligations like respect and obedience endanger children's creativity and initiative because they are afraid to challenge these socio-cultural norms, which empower them to speak up on issues that affect them. Our finding lends weight to the arguments raised by Obeng. The findings show that the Ghanaian culture seems to perceive childhood as a human species with limited cognitive and physiological abilities. Hence, children are expected to submit to adult wisdom and directions. On this basis, we argue that there is a risk that children who are inclined to question the reliability of adult information may be silenced since that is not what the culture seems to expect of them. We further hypothesise that such cultural expectations could detrimentally affect the NaCCA's quest to develop children's critical thinking abilities. This argument is contingent on the fact that children are living in a somewhat suppressive cultural environment where their critical thoughts are disregarded and sometimes misconstrued as an act of disobedience and immorality. This affirms the assumption that a child's critical thinking skills could never grow in a society where children are not allowed to challenge presumptions and preconceived notions, among other factors (Rahimi & Sajed, 2014). On this basis, we recommend that an effective situational analysis be conducted before implementing educational innovations, emphasising the need to reject cultural norms that diminish children's talents and cognitive capacities.

### **Limitation of the Study**

The major limitation of the current study is the inability to include proverbs from the many languages in Ghana. Further studies in other languages are therefore required to obtain a comprehensive view of how other cultures in Ghana construe childhood and how it could affect the development of critical thinking skills.

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***The Characteristics of Chinese Artificial Intelligence Policies for Innovations in Industry:  
Policy Distribution and Inclination***

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**Abstract**

Globally, many countries have elevated artificial intelligence (AI) to the level of a national strategy. It is widely recognized that AI plays a pivotal role in contributing to sustainable national economic development, industrial upgrading, technological progress, and innovation. The purpose of this research is to identify different phases of China's AI policy issuing evolutions and reveal the characteristics of its issuing distributions and inclinations for innovations in industries. We employed a bibliometrics-based research framework to characterize the development and evolution of China's AI policy across its main regions. The framework integrates bibliometric methods for identifying core policy elements and tracking their evolution, as established by other researchers. It also utilizes quantitative network analysis to investigate the characteristics of AI policy distribution, and co-word analysis to identify the AI policy inclination features. The data for this study were primarily sourced from the PKULAW database, encompassing AI-related policies from 2017 to the present. First, China's AI policies and their four stages of evolution were collected and summarized, providing the primary interpretation of iterative trends. Second, the core objectives in each policy at each stage were analyzed to elucidate policy inclinations. The visualized results reveal four iterative stages corresponding to the years 2017, 2018-2019, 2020-2021, and 2022, each presenting distinct policy orientations in the realm of innovation. These findings are expected to stimulate further discussions among scholars and practitioners in the AI and innovation domains who have a keen interest in China's AI policy.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence (AI), Policy Distribution, Policy Inclination, China's Innovation Industry

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## 1. Introduction

It has been recognized that AI impacts different types of supply chains, product design management, healthcare, e-commerce business, education, law, etc. (Li, 2020; Verma, Sharma, Deb, & Maitra, 2021). In this context, researchers have begun to pay attention to AI-related research, leading to an explosive growth in related articles from 2017 to 2022. In recent articles, with the release of reports, plans, and policy documents, an increasing number of countries worldwide are focusing on this area. More than 30 countries have released national AI policy strategies so far (Schiff, 2022). For example, China has released 982 plans, laws, and policy documents to promote AI development in various areas (www. pkulaw.com, 2023), and the 117<sup>th</sup> U.S. Congress introduced 130 AI-related policy documents in 2021 (AI Index Report, 2022), up from just one in 2015. Besides China and the US, other countries have introduced AI policies with AI strategies, such as the European Union and the United Kingdom (Qu and Kim, 2022). These policy documents and reports provide informative content on the development and future directions of AI research. By exploring these strategies and trends of a country's AI development, we can compare different strategies that focus on different regions and examine the relationship between such dimensions and pillars, thereby establishing a basis for policy evaluation and improvement (Yang & Huang, 2022).

While current AI policy research has been increasingly compared to before, research on China's AI policy for innovations in the industry is limited. This is especially true for studies focusing on policy orientations and scenarios related to China's AI development directions. This research aims to analyze the characteristics and trends of AI-related policies for innovations in industries, with a focus on policy distribution and inclinations. The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Section 2 presents current AI policies and evaluates China's AI policies. Section 3 outlines the research methods, including data screening and the division of research periods. Section 4 provides the data analysis and discussion for each phase. Finally, in Section 5, we conclude our research, discuss policy implications, and outline limitations for future research agendas.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 AI Policies

Recent research on AI policies can be categorized into three main dimensions. (1) Topic analysis across countries. Some scholars have employed structural topic modeling techniques and qualitative analysis to identify the topics addressed by national AI policies and their relative importance across countries. For instance, Saheb and Saheb, (2023) integrated the results of a topic modeling analysis of 30 national AI policies with a textual analysis of the policies. Guenduez and Mettler (2023) examined the policy narratives in AI policies of 33 countries by combining the novel technique of structural topic modeling and qualitative narrative analysis. Van Berkel et al. (2020) identified national AI policy documents across 25 countries and highlighted differences between them. (2) Evolution of AI policy in specific regions. Some researchers have focused on the evolution of AI policy within a particular country or region over the past decades. For example, Yang and Huang (2022) characterized the development and evolution of China's AI policy. Liu et al. (2022) analyzed the characteristics of the innovation policy mix using data on 116 China's AI policy programs from 2009 to 2021. (3) AI industry innovation and policy design. Some scholars have focused on identifying laws related to AI industry innovation and designing policies to support innovation and global leadership. For instance, Arenal et al. (2020) developed an Asymmetry

Triple Helix framework to assess the status and prospects of China's AI innovation ecosystem.

## 2.2 The Evaluations of China's AI Policies

However, among previous research on AI policies, few studies have analyzed the characteristics of AI innovation policies for industries in China at regional levels. Research related to China's AI policies has mainly focused on the following domains: (1) the analysis of Chinese AI strategic areas (Allen, n.d.; Roberts et al., 2021; Schiff, 2022); (2) the specific application areas of AI through policy analysis (Knox, 2020; Sun & Medaglia, 2019; D Valle-Cruz, Ruvalcaba-Gomez, Sandoval-Almazan, & Criado, 2019); (3) policy effect evaluations (Liu et al., 2021; Valle-Cruz et al., 2020); (4) national policy comparative analysis (Hine & Floridi, 2022).

However, the above summary of existing studies reveals the main characteristics and limitations as follows. Firstly, these studies tend to primarily rely on qualitative analysis of relevant policies, with a focus mainly on some of China's national AI policies. They often exclude regional policy implementations. Secondly, in many cases within this research, there may be a lack of comprehensive AI policy comparisons, textual analysis, and network analysis of distribution characteristics based on regional policies. Thirdly, due to the absence of a comprehensive analysis of policy documents, these studies might overlook external attributes or fail to account for how policies are internalized by regional governments. Fourthly, the understanding of AI policy often remains tacit, and there is a lack of a process for transforming this tacit knowledge into explicit knowledge through data and mapping analysis (Nonaka, 1998). Lastly, these policy analyses tend to overlook the unique status of specific fields and may not use co-word analysis to extract the most significant aspects.

Therefore, to address the research gap, we conducted a bibliometric analysis to examine the evolutionary trends of China's AI policies from 2017 to 2022 and the roles of core government agencies in policy-making. Our focus was on analyzing 69 national and 310 regional AI-related policy documents.

## 3. Methodology

To compare the connections within these policies in terms of characteristics and trends, some scholars often use the bibliometric methods that focus on the reference relationships among policy documents (Cheng, Zheng, Xiong, & Lin, 2022; Yang & Huang, 2022; Zhang & Guan, 2022), as well as policy collaboration networks and citation networks (Huang, Chen, & Yi, 2021; O'Leary & Vij, 2012). This research primarily employs quantitative mapping to explore the external attributes of policy documents, utilizing bibliometric methods and network analysis to create an understandable model for policy document analysis. It addresses the following two research questions: 1) What are the characteristics of policy distribution? 2) What are the characteristics of policy inclination for innovation in industries? The key steps of the research steps are outlined in Figure. 1.

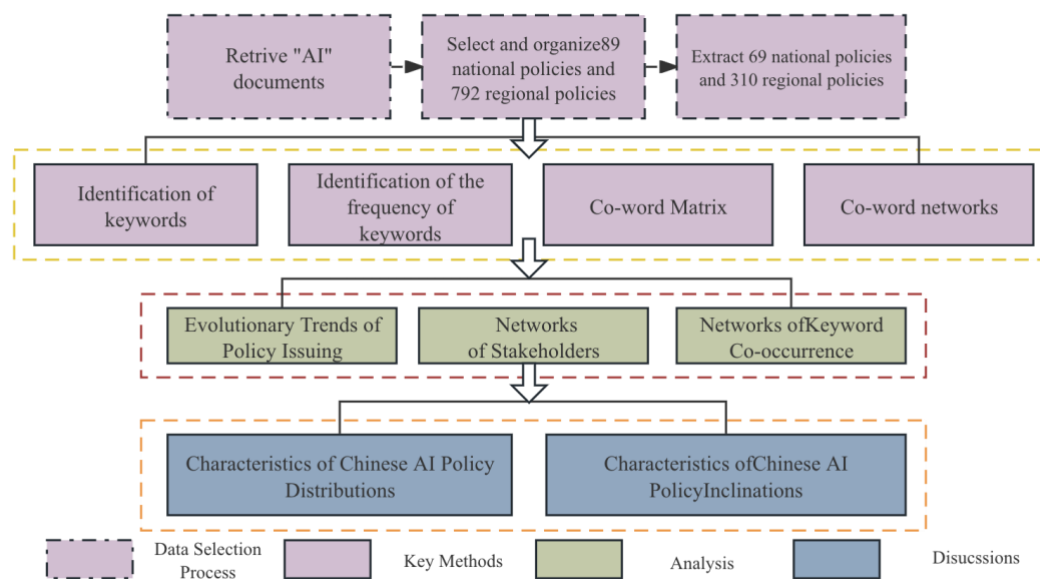


Figure 1. The Framework of Research Process

### 3.1 Data Collection and Screening

Policy documents were collected from the PKULAW Database (<https://www.pkulaw.com>). We extracted and identified three policy elements: policy-issuing trends, policy-issuing stakeholders, and policy inclinations. Policy-issuing trends refer to the specific release time for the public; policy-issuing stakeholders are government departments responsible for formulating and releasing the policy; policy inclination refers to policy orientation, specifically, the aspects the policy leans towards and focuses on. Detailed analysis is provided in Section 4.

### 3.2 Bibliometric Analysis

Bibliometric analysis is a “rigorous method for exploring and analyzing large volumes of scientific data” (Donthu, Kumar, Mukherjee, Pandey, & Lim, 2021) to reveal development trends in specific research areas (Tarkowski, 2007). Bibliometric analysis is typically applied in the academic literature domain because early Chinese policy documents used keywords to characterize the core content of the policy (H. Li et al., 2016). However, keywords from the constituent elements of policy documents have been excluded by the government since 2012 (Yao & Zhang, 2018). Therefore, we first established a threshold based on word frequency in the AI policy documents using ROST-CM software. Second, we analyzed the core content of the documents in each phase based on the high-frequency keywords.

### 3.3 Co-word Analysis

Co-word analysis is used for researching trends, indicating that frequency is proportional to similarity (Chen, Chen, Wu, Xie, & Li, 2016; Hong et al., 2016). Its purpose is to identify co-occurring words and the absence of keywords (Ronda-Pupo & Guerras-Martin, 2012). This research involves three steps for extracting core words from Chinese AI policy documents using the co-word analysis method. First, we retrieved the top 10 keywords with high frequency from existing policies. Second, we merged some similar keywords that might affect the rationality of the results and standardized them. Third, we established a co-word

matrix by calculating the frequency of keywords that appear in the same policy text (Chen et al., 2016; Yao & Zhang, 2018).

### **3.4 Mapping Network Analysis**

Network analysis is a method that involves collecting interconnected units using a graph to map and analyze their relationships within an organization and society (Monaghan et al., 2017; Tichy et al., 1979). In this research, co-word networks are employed to explore shifts in topics related to innovation in industries within Chinese AI policies across different phases. Cooperation networks are also used to reveal relationships among the policy stakeholders. To address the questions regarding policy distribution and inclination characteristics, a joint policy-issuing network was constructed using Gephi.

## **4. Data Analysis of China's AI Policy Documents**

### **4.1 Data Source**

To compile AI-related policies, we searched the PKULAW database starting from 2017 to 2022. We chose this timeframe because there was limited focus on AI-related innovation industries before 2017. Initially, we collected 89 national AI-related policies and 792 regional AI-related policies spanning the years 2017-2022. To narrow our focus on innovation in industries, the policy documents must include “artificial intelligence” in their titles, and the policy-issuing organizations must include provinces, municipalities, and autonomous regions. Then we excluded AI-related policies related to healthcare and medicine, and industrial standards. After applying these criteria, we obtained a final dataset consisting of 69 national policy documents and 310 regional policy documents.

### **4.2 Policy Issuing Trends**

Figure 2 illustrates the timeline of China's AI policy issuance and phases to visualize the policy trends. On the X-axis, we have the policy issuance time, while the Y-axis represents the quantity of policies at each stage. To categorize these stages, we adopted a three-dimensional policy instrument framework inspired by Rothwell and Zegveld (1985). These stages are as follows. (1) The environmental side (2017): this marks the initial phase of AI policy development. (2) The demand side (2018-2019): during this phase, policies focused on stimulating demand for AI technologies. (3) The supply side (2020-2021): policies in this phase aimed to enhance the supply of AI-related resources and infrastructure. (4) The new supply side (2022): this represents the latest phase, which likely includes novel approaches to AI policy. The detailed analysis of China's AI policy issuing time and quantity at different stages are as follows (see Figure. 2).

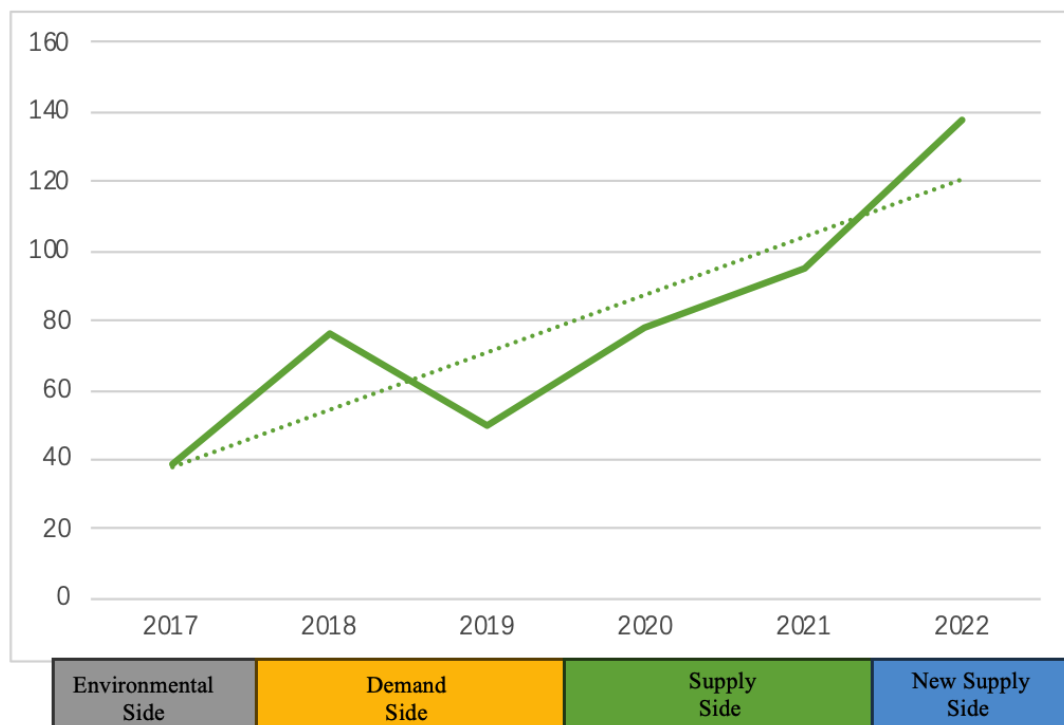


Figure 2. The Trends of China's AI Policy Issuing

In the initial stage, corresponding to 2017, China saw the issuance of three national policies and 36 regional policies related to AI. These policy developments signaled China's strategic commitment to positioning AI as a leading force in a new wave of technological transformations. Following the issuance of these national policies, a total of 33 regional policies were released, constituting a significant majority at 91.67% of the policies issued during this stage. This phase is categorized as the "environmental side" of policy implementation, signifying a crucial step in setting the desired objectives and outcomes, as highlighted by Qu & Kim (2022).

Table 1. The First Stage of China's Policy Quantity: 2017

National	Regional	Total
3	33	36
8.33%	91.67%	100%

The second phase covers the period from 2018 to 2019, during which a greater number of AI-related policies were issued. In comparison to 2017, the number of national policies increased several-fold. 28 national policy documents were being released, and 86 regional AI-related policies were successively issued. The policy approach during this stage was characterized as the "demand side" since AI development policy transitioned into a highly practical phase (Yang & Huang, 2022).

Table 2. The Second Stage of China's Policy Quantity: 2018-2019

National	Regional	Total
28	86	114
24.56%	75.44%	100%

The third phase covers the period from 2020 to 2021. During this time, 28 national policies and 110 regional policies were issued regarding AI innovations in various industries (Table 3). These favorable policies have increasingly encouraged provincial and municipal AI innovation and development efforts in various industries since 2020. In 2020, the MOST issued 6 supportive regional AI pilot zones, enhancing collaborations with universities to promote the integration of disciplines and expedite the training of graduate students in the field of AI. This shift implies that AI policy instruments have transitioned to a “supply side” approach, which includes a focus on “cultivating talents” (Qu & Kim, 2022).

Table 3. The Third Stage of China’s Policy Quantity: 2020-2021

National	Regional	Total
28	110	138
20.29%	79.71%	100%

In 2022, China entered a new stage. There was a notable increase in the issuance of regional AI-related policies compared to previous years, accounting for 89.90% of the total (refer to Table 4). This year, the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST) and six other stakeholders jointly issued the “Guiding Opinions on Accelerating Scene Innovation to Promote High-quality Economic Development with High-level Application of Artificial Intelligence”. This signifies that the Chinese government is inclined to invest more in AI adoption for scene innovations, a part of the “supply side” approach. Furthermore, there were 18 competition notices for AI application innovations being released. These policies were expected to attract more AI talents and indirectly strengthen the industrial innovation path of AI.

Table 4. The Fourth Stage of China’s Policy Quantity: 2022

National	Regional	Total
10	89	99
10.10%	89.90%	100%

### 4.3 Policy Distribution

Policy networks are defined as a form of political governance within a society that reflects the evolving relationship between the state and society (Borzal, 1998; Marsh & Smith, 2000; Kenis & Schneider, 1991; Sugimura, Akakura, Yotsushima, & Kawasaki, 2023). In this paper, we adopted a joint policy-issuing network to identify various policy-issuing stakeholders based on their collaborative relationships. Tables 5 and 6 display the core national and regional stakeholders of China’s AI policies, respectively. In terms of our analysis process, we first constructed a joint AI policy issuing network matrix, with each node in the network representing a policy entity, and the edges between nodes signifying joint policy relationships. Then, we utilized Gephi software in this study to visualize the policy distribution and obtain the final clustering results. The clusters were divided by different colors, and the size of nodes depended on the clustering coefficient.

Table 5. The Core National Stakeholders of China's AI Policies

Stakeholders	Acronym	Total Issues
Ministry of Science and Technology	MOST	26
Ministry of Industry and Information Technology	MOIIT	9
Ministry of Education	MOE	8
National Radio and Television Administration	NRTA	6
National Development and Reform Commission	NDRC	5
Office of the Central Cyberspace Affairs Commission	OOTCCAC	3
China Machinery Industry Federation	CMIF	2
Standardization Administration	SA	2
Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security	MOHRSS	2
Department of Science and Technology, Ministry of Transport	DOSTMOT	2
Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security General Office	MOHRSSGO	1
Ministry of Civil Affairs	MOCA	1
New Generation AI Governance Expert Committee	NGAGEC	1
Ministry of Transport	MOT	1
China National Intellectual Property Administration	CNIPA	1
Chinese Association for Artificial Intelligence	CAFAI	1
China National Intellectual Property Administration Cyberspace Administration	CNIPA	1
Ministry of Finance	MOF	1
State Administration for Market Regulation	SAFMR	1
National Information Security Standardization Technical Committee	NISSTC	1
National Bureau of Statistics	NBOS	1
State Council	SC	1
China Securities Regulatory Commission	CSRC	1

Table 6. The Core Regional Stakeholders of China's AI Policies

The Regional Stakeholders	Acronym	Total Issues
Guangzhou Municipal Science and Technology Bureau	GMSTB	11
Shanghai Municipal Commission of Economy and Informatization	SMCOEI	8
Wuhan Municipal Science and Technology Bureau	WMSTB	7
Guangzhou Municipal Industry and Information Technology Bureau	GMIITB	6
Hefei Municipal People's Government	HMPG	6
Xiamen Municipal Industry and Information Technology Bureau	XMIITB	6
Hefei Municipal Science and Technology Bureau	HMSTB	5
Department of Economy and Information Technology of Hubei Province	DOEITOHHP	5



Jinan Municipal Industry and Information Technology Bureau	JMIITB	5
Tianjin Municipal Industry and Information Technology Bureau	TMIITB	5
Tianjin Municipal Science and Technology Bureau	TJMSTB	5
Chengdu Municipal People's Government	CDMPG	4
Hangzhou Municipal People's Government	HZMPG	4
Department of Industry and Information Technology of Hunan Province	DOIITHNP	4
Jinan Municipal Commission of Economy and Informatization	JNMCOEI	4
Shenzhen Municipal Industry and Information Technology Bureau	SZMIITB	
Changsha Municipal Science and Technology Bureau	CSMSTB	4
Changsha Municipal Science and Technology Bureau	CSMSTB	4
Chengdu Municipal Bureau of Economic and Information Technology	CDMBOEIT	3
Chengdu New Economic Development Commission	CDNEDC	3
The People's Government of Gansu Province	PGOGSP	3
Big Data Development Bureau of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region	BDDBOGX ZAR	3
Hefei Municipal Development and Reform Commission	HFMDRC	3
Nanning Municipal Industry and Information Technology Bureau	NNMIITB	3
Shanghai Municipal People's Government	SHMPG	3
Shanghai Xuhui District People's Government	SHXDPG	3
Science, Technology and Innovation Commission of Shenzhen Municipality	STICSM	3
Shenyang Municipal Science and Technology Bureau	SYMSTB	3
Chongqing Municipal Science and Technology Bureau	CQMSTB	3

### ***Phase1: 2017***

Figure 3 shows that no national AI policies regarding innovations were jointly issued national policies at this stage. In terms of regional stakeholders, the Shanghai Municipal Commission of Economy and Informatization (SMCOEI) and the Shanghai Municipal Finance Bureau (SHMFB) jointly issued a notice on “Issuing the Implementation Rules for the Special Support of Artificial Intelligence Innovation and Development in Shanghai”, which is the first collaborative action to promote the development of the AI technologies for innovation in industries.

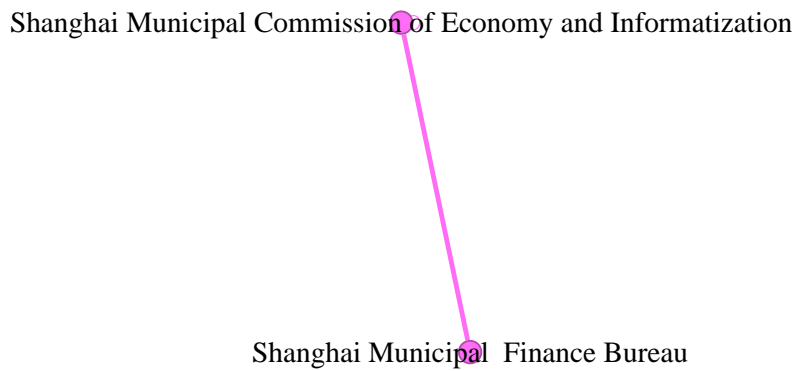


Figure 3. The Issuing Networks of China's AI Policies: 2017

**Phase 2018-2019**

Figure 4 shows that the number of nodes was increasing, and the connections in the network of cooperation were emerging because the size of nodes has been distinguished, and there are five clusters of joint issues. At this stage, regional joint policy issuing was more connective and systematic among local stakeholders. We can see the five stakeholders from Shanghai jointly formulated “the Implementation Measures for Accelerating the High-quality Development of Artificial Intelligence in Shanghai”, to engage talents in the field of AI, breakthrough key core technologies, promote the demonstration application of AI, and accelerate the construction of a national highland for AI development. This demonstrates that the closest collaborative relationship existed in Shanghai's regional governments, and the cooperation between stakeholders was generally strengthened.

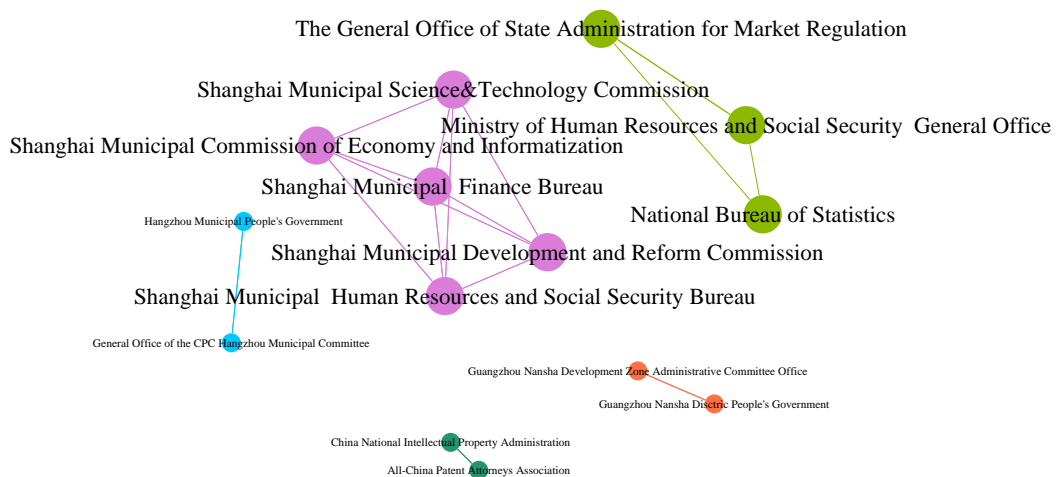


Figure 4. The Issuing Networks of China's AI Policies: 2018-2019

As illustrated in Figure 5, there was a sudden surge in policy networks during this phase. As mentioned earlier, the number of policies experienced significant growth at this stage. Several key national government bodies jointly issued the “Guidelines for the Construction of the

National New Generation Artificial Intelligence Standard System.” This initiative aimed to establish an AI standard test and verification platform. Additionally, the MOE, the NDRC, and the MOF released “Several Opinions on the Construction of ‘Double First-class’ Universities, Promoting Interdisciplinary Integration, and Accelerating Graduate Student Training in the Field of Artificial Intelligence.” This policy was designed to foster the development of more AI talents. Furthermore, regions such as Guangxi, Hefei, Anhui, and Shanghai established their own regional joint policy-issuing networks within regional agencies to promote collaborative innovation plans for AI in industries. It is evident that during this phase, AI entered a stage characterized by cross-border integration and independent innovation in the field of AI.

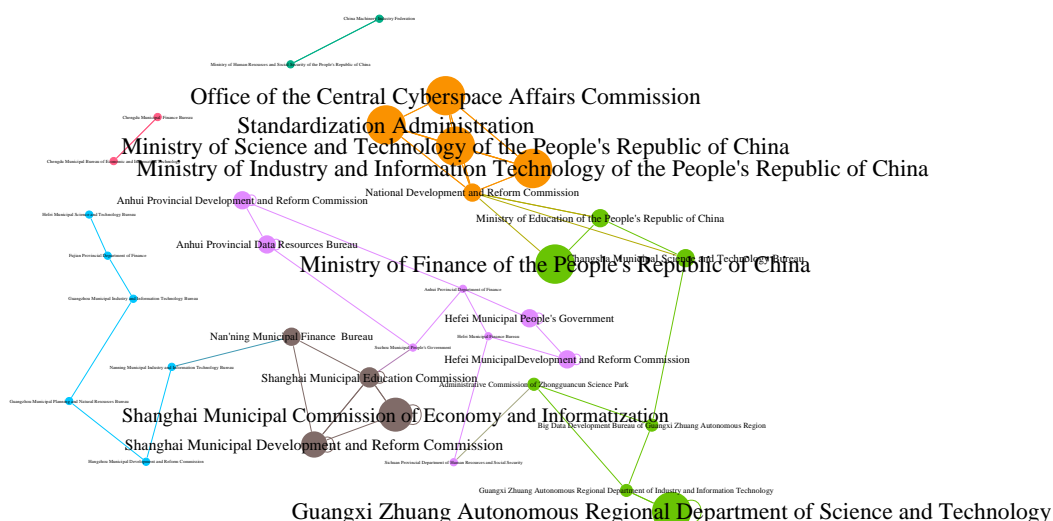


Figure 5. The Issuing Networks of China’s AI Policies: 2020-2021

Figure 6 reveals that national joint AI policies were significantly more systematic, and the cooperation among stakeholders had increased. It also indicates that the AI policy field was dominated by a community cluster formed by the MOIIT, and the MOST, NDRC, NRTA, and MOT, which are responsible for the macro-level distribution of AI Policies, such as the “notice of the General Office of the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology and the General Office of the Ministry of Science and Technology on holding the first ‘XingZhi Cup’ National Artificial Intelligence Innovation Application Competition in 2022”. In terms of regional stakeholders, Shandong, Zhengzhou, and Sichuan occupy the highest clustering coefficient with subsequent policies regarding AI competitions. This period represents that policy instruments shifted from an “environmental side” in 2017, to a “demand side” in the 2018-2019 period, to a “supply side” in the 2020-2021 period, and then entered a new “supply side” in 2022, indicating that AI innovation policies entered a stage from focusing on “cultivating AI talents” to “attracting AI talents”.

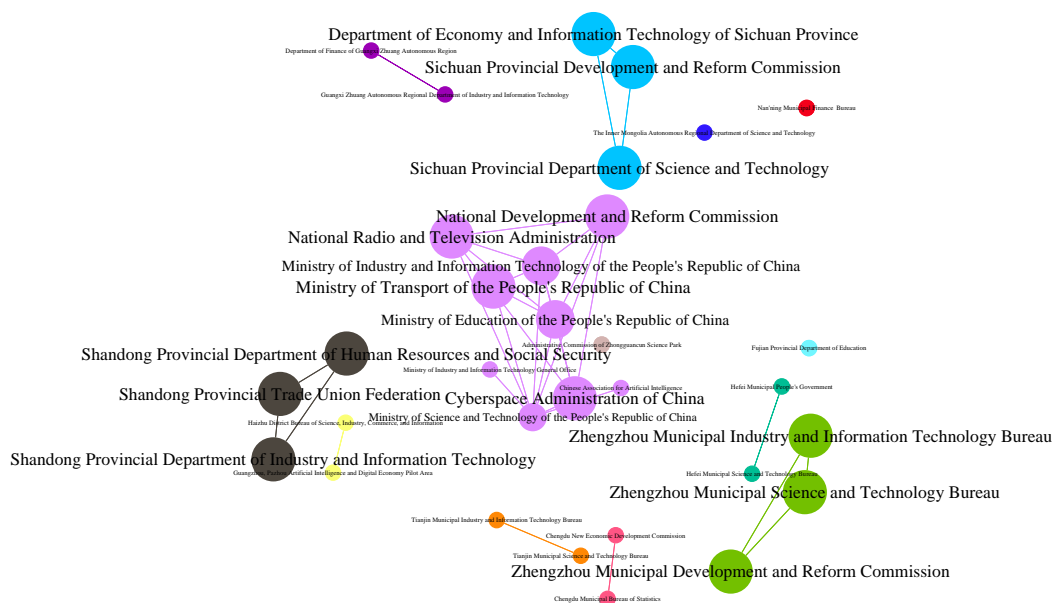


Figure 6. The Issuing Networks of China's AI Policies: 2022

#### 4.4 Policy Inclination

This paper adopted a bibliometric analysis method for keywords with high-frequency screening to study the potential relationships between them, thereby identifying the focus of the AI policies for innovation in industries. The Gephi software was employed to visualize the networks of the most frequently used keywords based on co-word matrices, which “intuitively reflect the relationships among high-frequency keywords” (Yao & Zhang, 2018, p. 88).

##### *Phase 1. 2017*

Table 3 shows the top 10 high-frequency keywords in China's AI policies. It reveals that China's AI focuses on developments, innovations, and practical implementations at this stage, such as the keywords “develop”, “application”, and “build”. The “New Generation of Artificial Intelligence Development Plan” was positioned as a medium - and long-term plan for the development of AI at the national level, the first strategic plan for system deployment in the field of AI in China, and also a guiding document for building China's AI first-mover advantage in the future. Subsequently, the government introduced a series of relevant policies, and China's AI entered the initial stage of technology-driven economic development. Figure 7 shows the connections among these words. It was performed by Gephi software, clustering five colors that identify five different inclination characteristics, but here we mainly analyze the two main clusters. The red cluster was headed by the high frequency of keywords “intelligent”, “develop”, “technology”, and “application”, which demonstrates that AI policies issued in this stage were related to the plans for an “intelligent” or “smart” technology reform. The purple cluster was led by the high frequency of the keyword “build”, “innovate”, and “platform”, which proves that AI policies planned to focus on more practical



Table 8. Top 10 High-Frequency Keywords in China’s AI Policies during 2018-2019

Keywords	Frequency
Intelligent	4347
Technology	2716
Develop	2211
Application	2104
Enterprise	2080
Innovate	1988
Build	1837
Project	1431
Platform	1399
Field	1358

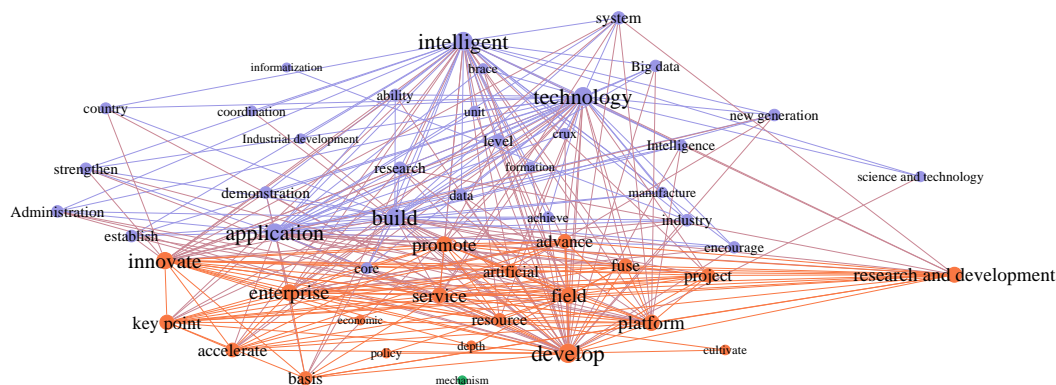


Figure 8. Network of the Most Frequently Used Keywords during 2018-2019

**Phase 3. 2020-2021**

Table 9 lists the top 10 high-frequency keywords in China’s AI policies during 2020-2021, and Figure 9 illustrates the network of most frequently used keywords. These keyword clusters became increasingly more interactive among policy keywords at this stage. Four connective clusters with four colors are performed. Cluster 1 (green) indicates the most frequently used keywords are “intelligent”, “develop”, and “build”, which stay at the same level of frequency compared to previous stages; however, these keywords were extracted from the one that with “technology” and “application” in cluster 2 (purple). This is in that the keyword “technology” at this stage is inclined to a more specification, such as “scene”. Cluster 3 (black) is headed by the keywords “enterprise” and “research and development”, which demonstrates that China’s AI Policies are inclined to provide great support to the economic entity.

Table 9. Top 10 High-Frequency Keywords in China’s AI Policies during 2020-2021

Keywords	Frequency
Intelligent	3145
Technology	2357
Application	1996
Innovate	1952
Enterprise	1799
Build	1769
Develop	1745
Project	1439
Unit	1295
Service	1290

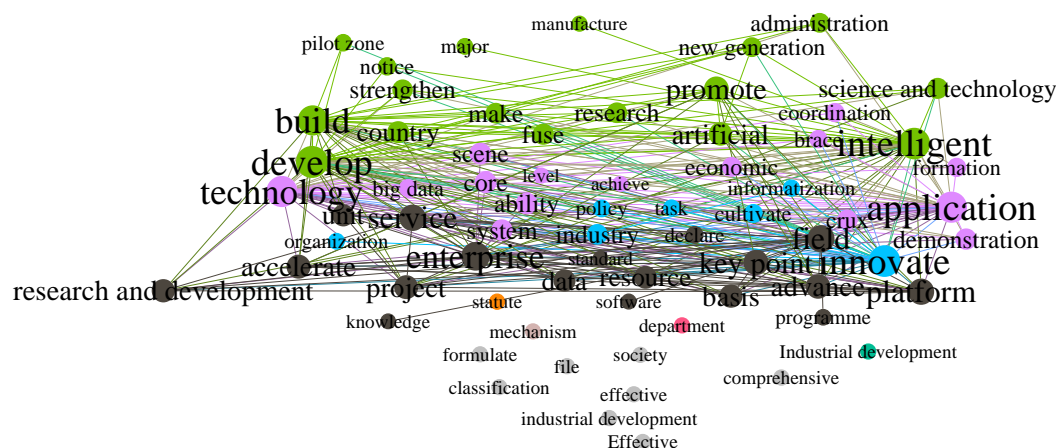


Figure 9. Network of the Most Frequently Used Keywords during 2020-2021

**Phase 4. 2022**

The frequency of keywords shows an overall increasing trend (Table 10), and the frequency of keywords in a single year 2022 increased compared with the previous stage. Figure 10 illustrates the network among keywords using clusters. There are five clusters at this stage, each cluster has close connections with others. It is clear that the keywords “scenario”, “declare” and “competition” appeared, and the corresponding policies also indicate that the country was comprehensively and vigorously promoting multi-dimensional AI construction at this stage. For example, the MOST, MOIT, and MOE issued “Guiding Opinions on Accelerating Scene Innovation and Promoting High-quality Economic Development with the High-level Application of Artificial Intelligence”. This further demonstrates China’s AI policies focused on the practical implementation of AI-driven industrial innovation and cross-border integration in 2022.



Table 10. Top 10 High-Frequency Keywords in China’s AI Policies in 2022

Keywords	Frequency
Intelligent	3998
Application	3145
Project	2357
Declare	1996
Unit	1952
Innovate	1799
Technology	1769
Enterprise	1295
Scene	1439
Develop	1436

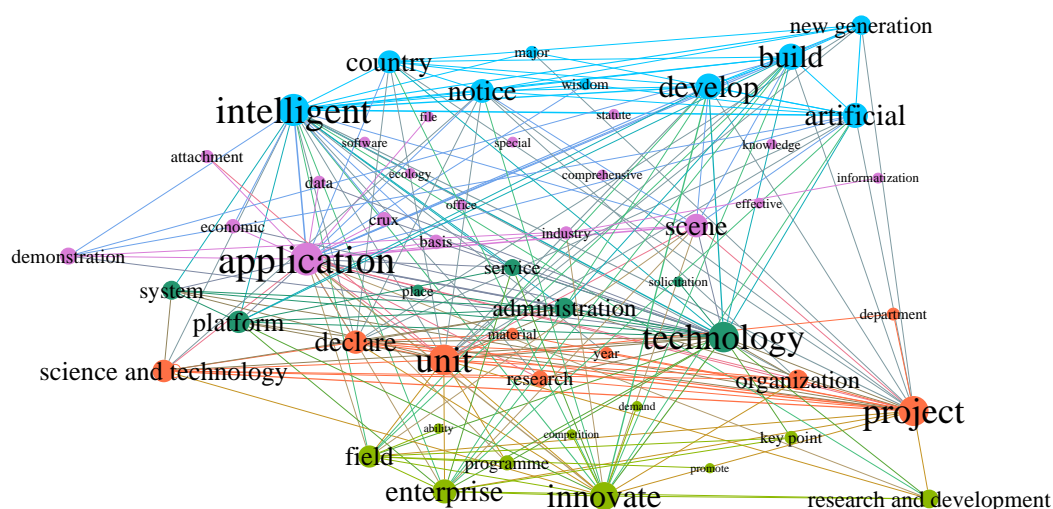


Figure 10. Network of the Most Frequently Used Keywords in 2022

## 5. Discussions in Three Dimensions of China’s AI Policy

### 5.1 Characteristics of China’s AI Policy Distribution

From the results of the issuing networks of China’s AI policy, the main issuing authorities in the first stage (2017) were primarily regional stakeholders. In the second stage (2018-2019), in addition to regional departments, key issuing departments such as the MOST, the CSRC, and the MOE emerged. In the third stage (2020-2021), the number of documents issued by national stakeholders such as the MOIIT, the NDRC, and the MOST continued to rise. Simultaneously, regions like Guangzhou and Tianjin experienced a sustained increase in the issuance of documents related to AI, surpassing the number of documents issued by other regions by a significant margin. In the fourth stage (2022), the characteristics of the issuing authorities were essentially similar to those observed in the third stage. This indicates a



continuous increase and cooperative connections in the number of authorities issuing AI policies in China. First, it signifies that the formulation of AI policies is orchestrated through multi-stakeholder participation (X. Li, Zhang, Hui, & Lang, 2020; Wilson, Claussen, & Valverde, 2021; Yang & Huang, 2022), involving both central and local authorities, as well as various regional entities. Second, it reflects a shift from policy issuance by a single entity (the MOST) to a diverse range of entities, including educational and other administrative departments. This suggests that the standardization of AI development regulations is expanding more domains and even other industries.

## **5.2 Characteristics of China's AI Policy Inclination**

According to the previous analysis of the results of China's AI policy inclination in 2017, the focus at this stage is to accelerate the development of the AI industry. The NDRC, the MOST, the MOIT, and the CAOC formulated the "Three-Year Action Implementation Plan for 'Internet Plus' Artificial Intelligence". Regional governments, such as the Chengdu Municipal Committee and Municipal Government, issued notifications to promote the development of the regional AI industry, and the General Office of SHMPG issued a notice on the Implementation Opinions of the City to Promote the Development of a New Generation of Artificial Intelligence. However; these policy documents mainly stayed at the planning stage.

During the period between 2018 and 2019, national and regional stakeholders issued AI policies focusing on practical domains, such as the keywords "build" and "platform". The MOST was the first to issue a policy document regarding the construction of a national pilot zone for innovation in the field of AI. Subsequently, several policies have been promulgated on the establishment of pilot areas. For example, in 2019, the MOST issued "The Guidelines for the Construction of The National Pilot Zone for Innovation and Development of New-Generation Artificial Intelligence", aiming to construct a national new-generation AI innovation and development pilot zones in an orderly manner to give full play to the role of local stakeholders, and to promote the in-depth integration of AI and economic and social development. This implies that the focus of regional AI policies was gradually shifting to a practical phase.

Therefore, with the continuing building of pilot zones, the emergence of the keywords "pilot zone", "cultivate", "fuse", "field", "coordination", and "industrial development" at the third stage indicates policies issued a focus on the deep integration of AI with the real economy. From 2020 to 2021, Chinese regional governments mainly focused on the construction of AI pilot zones and technology industrial development zones, further promoting the clustering development of the AI industry, fostering deeper integration between AI and the real economy, and implementing comprehensive measures. This involved constructing a system based on the themes of "industrial clusters", "intellectual property", and "demonstration projects". Also, China's government continues to support seven regions for the construction of a national pilot zone for AI innovation, and these regional governments successively issued policies regarding the construction of AI pilot zones.

As previously mentioned, the phase in 2022 is a “new supply side” in that AI policies highlight talent recruitment through different innovation competitions. Furthermore, the characteristics in this phase showed that China focused on advancing projects related to the new generation of AI, further refining and constructing AI application scenarios, emphasizing the establishment of AI ecological scenarios, and overall promoting innovation in new generation AI scenarios.

## 6. Conclusion

This article focused on the current six-year AI policies in China in terms of the issuing trends and the characteristics of distribution and inclination by a bibliometrics method. We collected 69 national and 310 regional AI policy documents and identified their issuing phases, stakeholders’ joint networks, and keyword frequency and networks. We finally summarize the characteristics of China’s AI policy, and provide some insights for scholars and policy researchers.

In general, the number of AI policies increased multiply from 2017 to 2022, especially after the “New-Generation Artificial Intelligence Development Plan” released by the SC (2017). The growth in the number of AI policies indicates that AI fields have received increasing attention from national and regional dimensions. From these four stages, it can be seen that the development focus varies, and the development focus of each stage is determined based on the achievement of the objectives of the previous stage of AI policies and the current state of social development. For example, the development layout of the AI industry has always been the goal of all four stages. The second stage inherited the comprehensive industrial development planning for AI construction from the first stage, and on that basis, it integrated the real economy, innovation investment, and financing support methods. In the third stage, it integrated big data information infrastructure and developed new-generation AI innovation development pilot zones. In the fourth stage, it developed typical artificial intelligence application scenarios in response to the demand for AI application scenarios.

However, there are some limitations in our study. First, in addition to the bibliometric and network analysis of policy documents, we should adopt qualitative text analysis to characterize national targets and strategies. Second, as the themes of China’s AI policies are focused on and reflect policy content, we should collect all the policy themes to analyze the policy keywords. Third, the favorable context of China’s AI development indicates that China has gradually entered a high-quality development era. Therefore, in the future, it will be necessary to focus on the research path of high-quality AI development.

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## *Unveiling Red Culture in Zhang Yimou's Films Through a Semiotic Perspective*

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### **Abstract**

From "Red Sorghum" (1987) to "Full River Red" (2023), Zhang Yimou's illustrious career spanning over four decades has been marked by a distinct emphasis on color, particularly the vibrant shade of red. In Zhang Yimou's films, red transcends its role as a mere color, birthing a visual language that masterfully conveys his creative concepts. This study aims to redefine the signified of red within Zhang Yimou's cinematic repertoire, considering it as a pivotal element embedded within the traditional Chinese cultural and spiritual system. Employing case studies, historical analysis, and textual analysis, this research offers a nuanced interpretation of this aspect of Zhang Yimou's films by integrating the theories of film semiotics, psychoanalysis, visual culture, and feminism. By comparing and analyzing the utilization of red imagery across different countries' films, we highlight the paramount role of red in Zhang Yimou's works in the shaping of national and ethnic imagery and cultural identity. Ultimately, as a carrier of ideological texts, Zhang's use of red must be understood within the socio-cultural fabric of the depicted periods, taking into account its meaning in the context of national propaganda. Engaging in a discourse with the intertextual relationship between the film's narrative and the socio-historical context, this study illuminates the gradual emergence of the cultural significance associated with the color red. By unraveling the rich tapestry of red culture in Zhang Yimou's films, we gain deeper insights into the profound implications and evocative power that this color exerts within the realm of cinematic storytelling.

Keywords: Zhang Yimou, Red, Chinese Cultural, Signified

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## 1. Introduction

China, with its distinctive history, politics, societal structure, and culture in Asia, holds a unique position in the realm of world cinema. The trajectory of Chinese cinema's development reveals the pivotal role played by the fifth generation of directors, with Zhang Yimou, a prominent figure in this cohort, emerging as a renowned film director in China, garnering numerous accolades at international film festivals. All these factors are the reasons why we did this study.

Throughout Zhang Yimou's cinematic oeuvre, the color red has consistently held a central position. Whether manifesting as an artistic expression or embedded in narrative content, red encapsulates unique emotions within Zhang Yimou's works. Red, originally a color word, however, the signified of red in Zhang Yimou's movie has broken through the traditional original definition of color, and its signified has been transformed, but turned to become an image style, forming a unique narrative style of *red film*, from the movie narrative shows a Chinese culture, has evolved into a sign of revolution, communism, and socialism in the context of Chinese history.

As a kind of movie, *red film* has an important position in the development process of Chinese movies. As far as the status of *red film* research academic, the historiographical research is the main focus, and therefore, this kind of research literature is mostly found in the works of movie's history. Works such as Cheng Jihua's *History of Chinese Film Development* (1981), *Chinese Film History* of Yu Ji (2017). In addition to historiography, Chinese film scholars have delved into various aspects of film ontology. For example, *Red Film, Television Drama and the Creation and Dissemination of Red Culture in the New Century* of Guo Yingmin (2012), the doctoral thesis *Research on the Art of Metaphor in Red Films* of Zhang Yanxiao (2022). Those studies of *red films* are more focused, with more in-depth and specific discussions on characterization, narrative strategy, audiovisual language, and so on.

Zhang Yimou's *red films*, however, depart significantly from the conventional understanding of *red films*. As for Zhang Yimou, his films emphasize humanistic concern in content and the spirit of artistic innovation in form. Thus, a comprehensive study of Zhang Yimou's films holds immense significance in the realms of film creation, film history and film theory. Nevertheless, at present, the study of Zhang Yimou's films mainly focuses on the narrative style. Sutton (1994) discussed about the background of the creation of Zhang Yimou's movie from the perspective of China's history. Zhang Xudong (2005) and Ellsworth (2013) analyze the narrative features from a specific film. Besides that, there are a number of scholars have analyzed the color art in Zhang Yimou's films, and some scholars have analyzed the red elements of one of Zhang Yimou's films, such as *Colourful caparison, Lovely beauties and national emotions – The research of body in Zhang Yimou's Films* of Li Qiang (2015), but a systematic examination of the overarching red motif in Zhang Yimou's cinema is notably absent.

Based on this, in this paper, starting from the movie *Red Sorghum* (1987) to *Full River Red* (2023), we summarize the red elements that appeared in Zhang Yimou's movies during his forty years of movie making, and try to analyze these red images, and dig deep into the cultural signified behind the red signs with the help of the theories of semiotics. From red images to red narratives, red shows the refraction of history, society, and culture. The research and discussion of the visual theme of *red film* should be based on the visual



language itself. In the face of the red phenomenon of Zhang Yimou's movie, it is of great significance to make theoretical responses and academic reflections.

## **2. Analysis of the Concept and the Development of *Red Film***

Red has a unique significance in Chinese culture, emerging as a crucial s woven into the fabric of Chinese identity. However, throughout the extensive course of history, the connotations of red have evolved dynamically, reflecting the changing tides of time.

For the art of film, the red culture derived from the meaning of red has also become a unique phenomenon of Chinese cinema. This section aims to delve into the concept of red film and untangle its developmental trajectory.

### **2.1. Concept of *Red Film***

The Chinese people have maintained a profound affinity for red since ancient times, employing it as a decorative hue for ornaments. The significance of the red sign has garnered attention across diverse fields such as history, literature, culture, and art, giving rise to concepts like red history, red literature, red culture, and red art. Within the realm of cinema, filmmakers found inspiration in the multifaceted meanings of red, leading to the emergence of the term *red film*.

Regarding the concept of *red film*, Chinese academic circles have different opinions on its definition. The Chinese scholar Dong Yifen defines a *red film* as a New China's film that promotes the spirit of revolution (Dong Yifen, 2013); this point is also mentioned by Li Jiechao that red films are movie and television works created with revolutionary discourse as the main form (Li Jiechao, 2010). In addition, Zhang Xianxi (2020) and Liu Dingyu (2015) started from the perspective of time range and argued that *red films* appeared after the founding of the People's Republic of China.

In the realm of film art, the *red culture* stemming from the symbolic meaning of red has evolved into a distinctive phenomenon within Chinese cinema. After sorting out the concept of *red film* from different eras of scholars, we found that, generally, the *red wave* of Chinese films began after the founding of China in 1949. For the Chinese people who had just escaped the oppression of feudalism and imperialism, the red reflected a process that a people who overcame difficulties and achieved victory. At this moment, the *red film* has revolutionary and emancipated significance. Although a definitive conceptualization of *red films* is yet to emerge within the academic community, the content and temporal scope of *red films* remain discernible.

### **2.2. Development and Communication of *Red Film***

Every cinematic creation is a product influenced by specific societal, political, and cultural dynamics, bearing a distinct epochal character. Consequently, the genesis of red films is intricately intertwined with the zeitgeist, with different historical periods offering diverse contexts for the evolution of *red films*. From today's point of view, the formation of such movies as *red films* has gone through a long development process.

The first is the twenty-seven-year period between 1949 and 1976. Due to the period affected by the war, the *red films* of this period had a clear tendency of revolutionary ideology. The

period between the 1980s and the beginning of the 21st century is considered the second period of *red films*. Compared with the previous period, *red films* have seen innovations in theme, style, and character image. The *red films* of this period highlighted the characteristic of poetic creative style. The period between the beginning of this century and the present can be called the third stage. The presentation of *red film* narrative has been entirely created in the context of the commercial era, so the presentation of visual discourse in the film text is richer.

*Red films*, over different historical epochs, have fulfilled their role as conveyors of Chinese culture, signifying that the sign of red is in a perpetual state of dynamism, evolving alongside shifting historical contexts. The distinct status of *red films* distinguishes their function from that of other commercial movies. In essence, *red films* employ both verbal and non-verbal sign systems, communicating messages to the audience through metaphorical means. They represent the mainstream values of Chinese society, endowing red films with a unique and artistic characteristic.

### **3. The Composition and Application of Red Elements in Zhang Yimou's Films**

Zhang Yimou exhibits a pronounced penchant for incorporating red elements into his films, evident in costume design, props, lighting, and various other facets. His works concentrate on the second and third period of *red film*, so, the significance of the red is shown diversely in his films.

In this section, our focus is directed towards a comprehensive analysis of the red elements in Zhang Yimou's films, examining both form and content levels to unveil the characteristics of his *red films*.

#### **3.1. Red Images From The Form Level**

Color in cinema operates as a distinctive language system, wielding a unique charm in its expression. Zhang Yimou, starting with his inaugural film *Red Sorghum* (1987), adeptly deploys the impact of vibrant colors to etch a lasting visual imprint on the audience.

The film *Red Sorghum* (1987) immerses viewers in a world saturated with red, conveying diverse implications. The red sorghum field at the beginning of the film shows the most primitive desires of humanity, reflecting respect for life and the desire for freedom, however, at the end of the film red returns to be the main color of the entire screen, here, it became a sign of blood. The red background runs throughout the film, its meaning also shows a praise of liberated life, while, which is also a means to reveal the tragic destiny of its characters.

This expressive technique recurs notably in the film *Hero* (2002). Red is the dominant color palette in the part of this movie where Wuming looks for the Canjian. Here, red does not symbolize warmth and joy, but contains the emotion of resentment. The red color is a metaphor for the hatred of the Qin king and symbolizes human strength, will and revenge. Simultaneously, a love duel between two women unfolds in this segment. The red of the whole picture is an imitation of the subjective visual image seen by the blood seeping from the eyes of the characters and is exaggerated, and this kind of color discourse with a strong sense of form is precisely Zhang Yimou's pursuit of beauty.

From *Red Sorghum* (1987) to *Hero* (2002) red evolves into an external manifestation of the movie's thematic context. Zhang Yimou utilizes red to construct various contextual layers, delivering visual impact, stimulating public imagination, and prompting thoughtful reflection. In Zhang Yimou's films, the incorporation of red enhances the aesthetic tension of the film while concurrently conveying his distinctive aesthetic consciousness.

According to Metz, cinema is a system of language, the transmission of signified in movies is figured out in the same way as the mechanism of communication in human language (Metz, 2011). As a special vocabulary in the composition of language cinematographic, the red things in the movie it also becomes a way to express the signified in Zhang Yimou's *red film*.

Across Zhang Yimou's films, red elements have a lot in common. For instance, in *Red Sorghum* (1987) features red sedan and red headwear; in *Ju Dou* (1990) showcases red dyed cloths; in *Raise the Red Lantern* (1991) incorporates red lantern and clothes, in *The Story of Qiu Ju* (1992) include red peppers and the red cotton clothes in *Not One Less* (1999) and *My Father and Mother* (1999). These red things bring people immediately into the background of the Northwest of China, enriching the characterizations of the different characters. These things participate in the narrative of the movie as a visual language, and the emotions that the movie wants to express participate in the narrative in a non-verbal way with the help of these things.

The use of these *reds* not only fits the background of the story's development, but also plays a key role in shaping the characters. The use of specific red things in the movie can reveal the national culture behind the red. Specific red elements in films divulge the national culture embedded in red, offering a genuine reflection of rural life in Northwest China. Zhang Yimou infuses his national culture into his films through red symbolism, preserving the films' distinct national characteristics. Consequently, red, as a unique cultural sign, creates a distinctive visual ambiance in Zhang Yimou's films. The extensive incorporation of red backgrounds and imagery has contributed to categorizing his films as *red films* in form.

### 3.2. Red Images From the Content Level

Cinema, as an art form, revolves around narrative, with the content plot serving as the linchpin of storytelling. Mitry posited that the plot is the rationale behind weaving together events that may hold significance (Mitry, 1997). In Zhang Yimou's films, red serves not only as a formal compositional element but, more crucially, assumes a leading role in narrative, with Zhang Yimou utilizing red to depict history, extol women, and eulogize life.

Zhang Yimou's early films captivated audiences through the strong visual impact of red elements on objects or scenes, thereby crystallizing into a distinctive visual symbol. However, in the 21st century, a transformation occurs in Zhang Yimou's films: red ceases to be a mere representation; instead, it evolves into a narrative method. In essence, red transitions from form to content, from code to logic, and from denotation to connotation.

From a narrative perspective, red of *red films* of Zhang Yimou shouldn't be limited to color alone in his middle and late films. Instead, it serves as a sign representation of China's national ideology conveyed through the color red. Consequently, Zhang Yimou's red films during this period reflect the system and conceptual trajectory of social and historical development.

As the influence of *red film* continues to expand, Zhang Yimou's films include not only historic revolutionary events, but also the dissemination and promotion of advanced ideas. Throughout Zhang Yimou's film career, his central narrative always takes the Chinese historical event as its cinematic background. In his films such as *Full River Red* (2023), *Cliff Walkers* (2021), *Sniper* (2022) and *The Flowers of War* (2011), they all show a specific period in China's history. Zhang Yimou narrates that period of history during the war with his unique artistic perspective. All these films transmit strong feelings of patriotism through their representation of war, while telling the heroic stories of their characters' victories.

In addition to the historical background, Zhang Yimou's films showcase the translation of stories imbued with Chinese characteristics onto the screen, shaping his unique cinematic style of Chinese storytelling. In the films like *Raise the Red Lantern* (1991), *Ju Dou* (1990), *House of Flying Daggers* (2004), *Curse of the Golden Flower* (2006), Zhang Yimou draws on his personal experiences of growing up to depict the evolution of an entire nation. In these films, there is no explanation of a clear period setting, nor is there any extensive use of red elements. At this point, red has been internalized as a kind of spiritual support for the characters.

In Chinese culture red has perennially been associated with revolution. Thus, in Zhang Yimou's films, the description of love is sometimes given a strong political connotation. In *Lifetimes Living* (1994), *Under the Hawthorn Tree* (2010), *Coming Home* (2014), the films are not about the traditional myth of love, but rather moves closer to the politics of mainstream discourse. These films intricately intertwine revolution and love, dissolving the politicized expression of ideology into the narrative logic of love, thereby crafting a distinctive narrative style with Chinese characteristics.

Whether chronicling individual growth experience or love journey, Zhang Yimou is able to perfectly combine the revolutionary theme with it, which also forms a film narrative with Chinese characteristics, and this form of narrative style with revolutionary significance has also become Zhang Yimou-style *red film*. At this time, the meaning of red is no longer the color on the surface but transformed into a deeper red spirit.

#### **4. The Cultural Signified of *Red* in Zhang Yimou's Films**

The cultural significance of red is a crucial element in the construction of what is commonly referred to as *red culture*, a thematic thread that Zhang Yimou skillfully weaves through his distinct cinematic language. However, the cultural connotations encapsulated by red find meaningful interpretation primarily within the realm of specific Chinese films. The decoding of these cultural signifiers necessitates an understanding of specific codes, highlighting that the comprehension of the signified is contingent upon contextual and culturally specific elements. The evolution of the signified is not an instantaneous occurrence; rather, it unfolds across different levels of understanding.

In Zhang Yimou's films, red emerges as a significant facet of the audiovisual language, both in its formal and thematic dimensions. *Red culture*, positioned as the ultimate signified within the context of red films, serves as a vehicle to portray Chinese reality and propagate mainstream culture. This analysis delves into the nuanced exploration of the cultural signified within Zhang Yimou's *red films*, employing semiotics as a lens for examination.

#### 4.1. The Signified of Feminine

Zhang Yimou's cinematic oeuvre prominently features female figures, occupying a central role in the narrative across his 24 films, with the exception of *Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles* (2005). Consequently, the majority of Zhang Yimou's films bear the indelible mark of female growth.

The representation of women's individual growth in Yimou's films transcends mere depictions of personal experiences. Instead, it utilizes the female figure as a symbolic signified, elucidating the transformative process in the portrayal of Chinese women. These female images can be categorized into three archetypes: the traditional, the rebellious, and the female image in the new era. These archetypes function as semiotic signs imbued with meaning, demanding interpretation through diverse codes. External elements such as China's historical context, political climate, and social culture, along with internal factors like genre comprehension for Chinese audiences, contribute to this intricate web of codes.

However, the creation of these meanings is a gradual process. In Zhang Yimou's *red films*, these female figures often represent the development and change of traditional Chinese culture. Precisely because they have undergone these social revolutions, they present diversity.

For the image female in Zhang Yimou's films, the female subjects will unfold different behavioral processes in different narrative contexts, and the processes resulting from women's interactions with other things or stories can precisely be seen as processes of symbolic representation. The female figure is produced by the audience attaching meaning to the text of the film narrative, and this symbolic text transmits the signified to the audience, and after receiving the symbolic meaning transmitted by the female figure, the audience obtains interpretive meaning from it.

As a result, the realization of the evolution of the female image in Zhang Yimou's film is that the form traces the growth and transformation of Chinese women under social and historical changes through the narrative of the growth of miniature individuals. From this perspective, the use of red elements in Zhang Yimou's films is not only for dressing up the female figure, but also for serving as a sign to metaphorically represent women's growth experiences. Typically, red costumes are the most common props used by Zhang Yimou. The red clothes are the representative dress of Northwestern women, which appeared frequently in Zhang Yimou's early films as a representation of traditional female identity. When women take off this garment, it is also a sign that women's identity is undergoing a change. The signified of women's red clothing as a vernacular culture disappears here and instead becomes a metaphor for female revolution. In the process, the signified of red has also achieved a change from form to content.

#### 4.2. The National Signified

In Zhang Yimou's films, alongside the feminine signified, the paramount signification within the red narrative often manifests as the national signified. Any kind of culture is the accumulation of historical development. Cultural development is inherently intertwined with historical evolution, and the red narrative in Zhang Yimou's films serves as both a critique and transcendence of national spiritual culture, undergoing a transformative process into a novel cultural paradigm. The red culture emanating from these films represents an

amalgamation of traditional values from the revolutionary war era, possessing profound national significance.

From the point of view of content, the red narratives in Zhang Yimou's films are more based on the idea of national resistance and salvation in different periods, but Zhang Yimou pays more attention to the representation of common characters rather than the representation of revolutionary fighters or great leaders in traditional *red films*. In between, the cinematic plot gradually derives from the signifier of history to the signified of national spirit. For example, in film *Full River Red* (2023), Zhang Yimou used the red color of cherries to express a specific meaning. This red is both a plot thread and an emotional thread, an expression of the dual emotions of love and patriotism, which consequently articulates the isomorphism between the love of family and country. Through his films, Zhang Yimou demonstrates a sense of national awakening, the spirit of social criticism and resistance awakens the public's vision of the nation, at the same time, it also expresses the beautiful nature of life through love.

From form to content, red has achieved a metamorphosis from the signifier to the signified. Red is no longer a mere cinematic narrative, but more an expression of national spirit. The red in Zhang Yimou's films is artificially imposed to serve a specific ideology. Therefore, Zhang Yimou's film constructs a system of cinematic ideology through this model of red narrative. In this system, the dynamics of the red narrative reconstructs the historical myth and shapes the discourse of the national spiritual narrative.

Drawing on Roland Barthes' perspective, myth is a mode of speech, is "a system of communication, that it is a message cannot be possibly be an object, a concept, or an idea; it is a mode of signification, a form" (Barthes, 1972: 109). Although the use of the red is not expressed in the same way in Zhang Yimou's different films, it ultimately produces the same cultural signified. This suggests that Saussure's primary semiotic system, comprising the signifier and signified, is not the ultimate semiotic system. Instead, it integrates into a new semiotic framework, contributing to the formation of the mythic sign, as articulated in Barthes' secondary semiotic system. So, myth is a "second-order semiotic system". And in this mythic system, the original signification of the red color in the movie has disappeared and has been given a new signification under the new signified, and the new meaning is the dominant ideology of the current society that the red movie is trying to emphasize.

## 5. Conclusions

*Red films*, as a popular form of art, assume a pivotal role as conveyors of national spirit and propagators of China's fundamental cultural values. These cinematic creations serve as a medium for the reproduction of the revolutionary ethos embedded in the Chinese populace, with the culture of red films intricately woven into the core values of Chinese society.

Zhang Yimou, a renowned Chinese director, has significantly contributed to the realm of *red films*, with many of his works exemplifying this genre. Despite the observable shift in Zhang Yimou's *red films* from an artistic to a more commercial trajectory over their developmental course, the ideological impact of his films has undergone a transformative evolution. Spanning from his debut film, *Red Sorghum* (1987), to his latest production, *Full River Red* (2023), Zhang Yimou's cinematic journey reflects a noteworthy progression from a focus on the visual aesthetics of red to the nuanced development of red narratives. This distinctive

narrative style has not only carved a niche for itself in Chinese cinema but has also steered the overall trajectory of the country's cinematic landscape.

Functioning as a cultural vessel, cinema holds an indispensable role in the transmission of cultural narratives. Whether relying on the visual symbolism of red for storytelling in his early works or delving into the intrinsic meanings of red in his more recent films, Zhang Yimou consistently endeavors to narrate China's history and present nuanced images imbued with oriental connotations to a global audience. Across four decades of creative experience, Zhang Yimou's *red films* have evolved to underscore the significance of women and their national relevance, aligning seamlessly with the distinctive role that red films play in shaping societal values and fostering social and cultural development.

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***Orientalism and Self-Orientalization: A Case Study of Female Images in Chinese Films  
Awarded at the San Sebastian Film Festival***

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**Abstract**

Since the 1980s, Chinese cinema has gained international recognition, with an increasing number of Chinese films receiving accolades overseas. The portrayal of women in Chinese films has emerged as a contentious and significant creative theme. This research focuses on 11 award-winning Chinese films showcased at the San Sebastian Film Festival, employing textual analysis and cultural interpretation within the framework of Chinese history and contemporary cultural context. By utilizing feminist film theory, gaze theory, gender studies, and semiotic studies, this study aims to classify and summarize the female images depicted in these films. Drawing on the theories of Orientalism and self-Orientalization, it critically examines the representation of women in the films under study. Additionally, it explores whether these films cater to the Western market's imagination of Chinese women. Through a comprehensive interpretation of the film texts, this research identifies various archetypal female images, including tragic victims of patriarchal systems, virtuous wives and mothers, objects of male desire, and damsels in distress. Despite women's attempts at growth and resistance in these films, they often meet with failure, death, or madness. By analyzing the multi-faceted cultural identities portrayed in these female images, this study not only presents a comprehensive understanding from the male "other" perspective but also sheds light on the transformation and continuity of Eastern femininity as perceived from a Western viewpoint.

Keywords: Female Images, Orientalism, Self-Orientalization, Chinese Films, Feminism

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## 1. Introduction

Since the 1980s, an increasing number of Chinese films have gained international exposure, earning recognition from numerous overseas film festivals and achieving popularity among Western audiences. According to incomplete statistics, five Chinese films have received nominations for or have won Oscars at prominent film festivals worldwide. Additionally, 24 films have been nominated for or have won awards at the Cannes Film Festival, 28 films at the Venice Film Festival, 48 films at the Berlin Film Festival, and 13 films at the San Sebastian Film Festival. Within this array of nominated and award-winning films, the portrayal of women in Chinese cinema has evolved into a contentious and crucial creative theme.

Researchers have yet to conduct detailed research on the San Sebastian Film Festival, and there are very few in-depth studies on the female images in award-winning Chinese films at the film festival. Regarding the topic of Orientalism, more research focuses on the presentation of the Orient from a Western perspective in Hollywood films. Little attention has been paid to Chinese films appearing in European film festivals. Especially the Spanish Film Festival.

After carefully reviewing the information, the author found that since the 1st San Sebastian Film Festival, a total of 13 Chinese films have won awards, and in 11 of them, female characters have played leading roles or important supporting roles.

Looking at the Chinese films that have won awards in San Sebastian, almost all of them have women playing the leading roles. Women with oriental charm and beauty are increasingly favored by the San Sebastian Film Festival. As one of the narrative elements, the female image is frequently recognized in film festivals and is worthy of our thinking and research. This study focuses on 11 award-winning Chinese films screened at the San Sebastian Film Festival, conducting textual analysis and cultural interpretation within the framework of Chinese historical and contemporary cultural contexts.

## 2. Literature Review

By utilizing feminist film theory, gaze theory and gender studies, this study aims to classify and summarize the female images depicted in these films. Drawing on the theories of Orientalism and self-Orientalization, it critically examines the representation of women in the films under study. Additionally, it explores whether these films cater to the Western market's imagination of Chinese women.

Laura Mulvey's *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema* is an influential essay published in 1975 that applies psychoanalysis to film theory and criticism. It argues that mainstream cinema constructs a male gaze that objectifies women and positions them as passive spectators. It also proposes alternative modes of cinema that challenge this dominant ideology. The essay is considered a landmark of feminist film theory.

Edward Said proposed in *Orientalism* that Western knowledge about the East does not arise from facts or reality, but from preconceived stereotypes, that is, the East is described through comparing the characteristics such as science, democracy, rationality, the notion of progressing, and civilian population which is assumed that the West possesses. The East is stationary. Every region of the East is the same for the orientalist discourse (Bulut, 2002:25).

This discussion establishes the antagonistic relationship between “East” and “West.” Said related the binary opposition of West and East to the binary opposition of male and female. Orientalism itself is a thoroughly male field, and it uses sexist colored glasses when examining it. “Women are usually the product of male power illusions. They represent endless desires and are more or less stupid,” and most importantly, they are willing to sacrifice.”

### **3. Methods**

The research method of this article is mainly a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis. Use the literature research method to conduct a systematic and in-depth study of the female images in the award-winning films, and select individual cases for specific analysis. On this basis, we will specifically and in-depth interpret the female images in the award-winning films to make them more typical.

#### **3.1 The literature Research Method**

The literature research method involves collecting, identifying, and organizing literature to form a scientific understanding of the facts under study. The literature gathered for this dissertation comprises several key components. Firstly, it includes video footage of the films selected for this research, along with interview videos featuring relevant award-winning directors. Secondly, it encompasses domestic and foreign newspapers, journals, master's and doctoral dissertations, and monographs related to the San Sebastian Film Festival and the study of women's images within the film festival. Thirdly, it encompasses relevant theoretical books, such as *The Second Sex* in Feminist Theory, the Orientalist monograph *Orientalism*, Feminist Film Theory *Visual pleasure and narrative cinema*, and other specialized theoretical books pertinent to this research.

#### **3.2 The Qualitative Analysis Method**

The qualitative analysis method employed in this study involves analyzing the object of study. It utilizes methods of induction, summary, and analysis, allowing for the thoughtful processing of collected materials to recognize the essence of the phenomena studied. This method is the primary research approach adopted in this paper. By summarizing and categorizing the images of women in films, the research aims to explore the reasons behind their portrayal and survival within their respective contexts.

Furthermore, the case study method, another qualitative analysis approach, is employed as a primary research method. This involves analyzing representative films and works. For instance, movies like *Red Firecracker*, *Green Firecracker*, *Sunflower*, *I Am Not Madame Bovary*, *Nanjing Nanjing*, and *Wuhai* are scrutinized to provide in-depth insights into the themes under investigation.

### **4. Findings**

In the film, both visually and semantically, the orientalist discourses bases on the distinction between I / Western and other/Oriental is reconstructed and the stereotypes related to this duality are repeated. In the analysis, to a certain extent, it is concluded that the images of the “East” is created in accordance with the ideology of San Sebastian film festivals and Western society and represented as the “other” (AVCI, İ. B., & ERGÜNEY, M., 2022:23).

## 4.1 “The Other” Four Images of Chinese Women

Simone de Beauvoir pointed out in *The Second Sex*:

The reference that defines and distinguishes women is men, but the reference that defines and distinguishes men is not woman. She is a subordinate person, the essential. The inessential. He is the subject, the absolute, and she is the other. (De Beauvoir, S.2007: 29)

In the Chinese films that won awards at the San Sebastian Film Festival, women’s status and living conditions are in a subordinate position. The male perspective that men invariably form the hegemony of male subject discourse, while women are often in a position of being watched, marginalized, and oppressed as the other. For a long time, men have defined themselves as the subject, and women have become the other. In the discourse of others, although the female image appears as the protagonist in film and television works, she has to accept scrutiny from the patriarchal cultural center. Women have to exist according to the rules set by men. Although they have struggled, it is difficult to escape from the shadow of patriarchal society.

Through a comprehensive interpretation of the film texts, this research identifies various archetypal female images, including tragic victims of patriarchal systems, virtuous wives and mothers, objects of male desire, and damsels in distress. Despite women’s attempts at growth and resistance in these films, they often meet with failure, death, or madness.

By analyzing the multi-faceted cultural identities portrayed in these female images, this study not only presents a comprehensive understanding from the male “other” perspective but also sheds light on the transformation and continuity of Eastern femininity as perceived from a Western viewpoint.

### 4.1.1 The Tragic Victim of the Patriarchal System

The first image, the tragic victim of the patriarchal system, is like *Red Firecracker*, *Green Firecracker*. In a sprawling family dedicated to the craft of making firecrackers, the absence of male heirs positioned Chunzhi, the lone daughter, as the exclusive inheritor of the family factory. Raised under the guise of a boy and addressed as Young Master in her childhood and later as Dongjia, Chunzhi confronts a stringent familial decree: to secure her position as the future matriarch, she is mandated to forgo marriage throughout her life. Despite this, Chunzhi remains to be venerated as the lord of the manor, her subordinates, spanning all ages, treating her more as a symbol—Dongjia—almost overlooking her identity as a woman, a young girl replete with emotions and desires. The entrance of a painter from elsewhere disrupts the tranquility of the ostensibly antiquated manor, introducing an element of dynamism. Within this narrative shift, Chunzhi discovers an unexpected connection with the capricious painter. As their love blossoms, the once orderly life of Chunzhi is thrust into disarray, challenging societal norms and expectations.

The film focuses on the repressed sexual culture in deep mansions. The host who disguises herself as a man carries the objectified image of women. The love affair with the hired painter ends tragically, just like the women in the shadows, who can never escape the clutches of patriarchy. This is a typical Oriental spectacle film, creating a Chinese film that is culturally coded according to what Said calls Westerners’ “Orientalism.”

### 4.1.2 A Virtuous Wife and Mother

The second image is that of a virtuous wife and mother. In 1976, poet and feminist Adrienne Cecile Rich introduced the concept of “Institutionalized Motherhood” in the book *Of Woman Born: motherhood as experience and institution* characterizing it as an expectation imposed on motherhood by patriarchal society. Rich articulated this notion, stating, “Institutionalized motherhood requires women to have motherly instincts rather than wisdom, to be selfless rather than self-actualizing, to build relationships with others rather than create the self.”

This myth of motherhood intentionally accentuates the role of mothers in childbirth and child-rearing, emphasizing their loyalty to motherhood while obscuring their individual personality traits and inherent gender consciousness as women. Consequently, the portrayal of mothers under the guise of this myth becomes an alienated image, marked by a compromised sense of individuality and a diminished experience of female gender consciousness. This distorted image is a consequence of the enduring influence of the subtle yet pervasive impact of patriarchal culture.

This type of female image like *Sunflower* is the most common in Chinese movies, as a mother. These characters selflessly give up their own desires and sacrifice themselves for their families, husbands, and sons.

### 4.1.3 The Object of Male Desire

The third image is the object of male desire, such as *I am Not Madame Bovary*. The film narrates the tale of Li Xuelian, an unassuming rural woman, and her husband Qin Yuhe, who engage in a “fake divorce” to secure a residence and, clandestinely, to facilitate the birth of a second child. However, complications arise when Qin Yuhe refuses to acknowledge the “fake divorce” and promptly weds another woman, disavowing any recognition of their prior arrangement. In pursuit of justice, Li Xuelian takes Qin Yuhe to court, seeking a ruling that would declare their divorce as falsely claimed and mandate their remarriage. Disheartened by the legal defeat, she opts for a genuine divorce from Qin Yuhe, whom she denounces as an “animal.”

The narrative takes an unexpected turn when Li Xuelian, in an effort to clear her name from the derogatory association with “Pan Jinlian,” embarks on a decade-long journey to address her grievances. Her quest spans from the town to the county, from the city to the province, and eventually to the capital city.

Simone de Beauvoir’s seminal work *The Second Sex*, provides a comprehensive exploration of the historical evolution of women’s status from primitive to contemporary society, delving into biological, psychoanalytical, historical, and mythological perspectives. In the film a recurring theme is the dynamics of male “seeing” and female “being seen,” captured visually through the use of round shots that evoke a sense of voyeurism in the audience.

Within Chinese culture, Pan Jinlian symbolizes the archetype of the “bad” woman, embodying societal disdain when women deviate from established moral norms. Li Xuelian, the protagonist, challenges this archetype by fundamentally differing from Pan Jinlian—she is not a womanizer, seducer, or murderer. However, the male-centric concepts persist as neutral, and the discourse surrounding them is inherently legitimized. Li Xuelian’s

decade-long petition is driven by the imperative to shed the stigmatizing label of “Pan Jinlian” and defend her dignity.

Beyond the themes of “seeing” and “being seen,” the film is enriched with imagery surrounding Li Xuelian’s body. Deep-rooted prejudices against women often subject their bodies to negative biases, portraying them as symbols of evil, desire, and sin. Li Xuelian’s body becomes a powerful element in the narrative as she seeks “revenge” by bargaining with it at the butcher’s shop. In patriarchal societies, women’s bodies are perceived as controllable, their representation becoming intricately tied to the discourse of power.

Judy Butler’s theories on the body’s relationship with power find resonance in the film, as Li Xuelian becomes a tool of production and an object manipulated by those in positions of power. The antagonist, Big Head Zhao, cunningly seeks control over Li Xuelian by manipulating her body, illustrating the exploitation of the body as a means of asserting dominance. Li Xuelian’s initial resignation from her petition, driven by the belief that she could lead a peaceful life, is disrupted when she discovers the deceitful machinations of those around her. Her relentless pursuit of justice is rekindled, revealing the intricate interplay between gender, power, and societal expectations in this cinematic narrative.

As Laura Mulvey said, the heroine Li Xuelian in the movie is treated as an object of desire, which is also the reason for her tragic fate. She wanted to file a complaint and clear her name. She uses men and is used by men. She awakens the subjective consciousness of lower-class women, but her tragic fate of lifelong loneliness also hints at the difficulty of modern women seeking identity in a patriarchal society.

#### 4.1.4 Damsels in Distress

The fourth image is the girl in distress, such as *City of Life and Death*, *Wuhai*, etc. The women in this type of film try to resist male oppression and gain freedom, but are unable to get out of their predicament.

*City of Life and Death* is a cinematic portrayal rooted in the historical context of the Nanjing Massacre, wherein the theatre of war becomes a crucible for feminist and nationalist contestations. At the epicenter of this ideological struggle lies the female body, wielded as a tool in a complex dance of rivalry and salvation. This dual function manifests as women employ their bodies for the simultaneous rescue of others, their nation, and ultimately themselves.

The film unfolds a narrative wherein women emerge as both saviors and victims, their destinies intricately entwined with the power dynamics of men. While initially positioned as agents of salvation, the conclusion reveals a nuanced reality where women, despite their instrumental roles, remain tethered to the dominion of male influence. The portrayal of women as the “second sex” underscores an inherent limitation in their ability to transcend this categorization, compelling them to grapple with the inexorable fate of being authored by societal norms.

In this cinematic exploration, *City of Life and Death* delves into the multifaceted dimensions of war, highlighting the intricate interplay between feminism, nationalism, and the female body. The film prompts contemplation on the enduring challenges faced by women, their

agency, and the complex negotiation of identity within the constraints of a historical narrative that often dictates their roles as either victims or survivors at the behest of male power.

These types of female images reflect the living conditions of Chinese women to a certain extent, but being able to win awards in the West is in line with the West's imagination and recognition of China. They are chosen by some film creators who aim to win awards. In his hands, he is constantly shaping it intentionally or unintentionally, constantly using it to repeatedly show China under the Western imagination.

#### **4.2 “The Other” of Chinese Film**

From a comprehensive perspective and in the context of historical development, the Orientalist discourse within the realm of overseas Chinese film studies is not an isolated phenomenon. Its primary source lies in the typological distortion of China's image within narratives of foreign films. Despite significant changes in China's national image and the portrayal of its people since the era of reform and opening up, they continue to face Orientalist distortions in the image responses of overseas films. These distortions are not only ethically questionable in terms of image portrayal but also compromise the authenticity of these expressions.

In his exploration of Orientalism, Said identifies a paradox encountered by Oriental artworks. European Orientalist scholars emphasize the value of these works, yet simultaneously insist that “Oriental's itself ought not to be taken in its entirety.” (Said, E. W., 1979:128) This duality involves the selective interpretation of Oriental texts, constituting the theory of Fragments in Oriental Studies. Said always made it plain why the “Orient” on its own could not survive a European's taste, intelligence, or patience. What said was really saying was that literary works had to be properly transformed by the Orientalist before it could begin to be appreciated. The Orient, as depicted, becomes subservient to Western culture in these fragmented interpretations, existing merely as a reference that affirms the values of Western culture.

Among the Chinese films selected for the San Sebastian Film Festival, awards are bestowed upon films that embody Orientalist themes, appealing to Western society. These films often portray images of China and Chinese women, typically depicting women from less developed regions or rural areas, emphasizing their sacrifices.

On the other hand, the films that won awards at the San Sebastian Film Festival have always been in the position of the Other under the Orientalist scrutiny of Western society. The issue of Orientalism in award-winning films overseas has always been a source of concern. However, film and television are not benign forms of entertainment, but are imbued with power as makers of meaning and identity (Hughes, M., 2019. 02). In order to win awards, filmmakers' self-Orientalism has become increasingly obvious. The film festival stands from the perspective of the first world, emphasizing the pain and helplessness of women in the third world. Through the construction of differences, it highlights the bad habits in the traditions of the third world. Orientalism quitted being the issue of East and West as Said stated and turned into an internal matter of East. The actors of Westernization aren't the Westerners any more. The Eastern societies Easternize themselves through their elites possessing the western values. The Eastern people make the social marking on the other Easterner. In fact, the East reproduces the West inside it even when it resists to the West through the arguments of “theirs” (Bezci and Çiftçi, 2012:160). The employed or vocally

articulated orientalist images aren't incidental. The producer and directors has chosen intentionally the "bad" characters of the films among the regressive, feudal China and revealed his perspective and intention (Mert, A., 2015:24.). Within this constructed cinematic landscape, women emerge as deliberate objects of expression, embodying the mystique and wonder associated with the Orient.

Inside China, some scholars or critics attack film directors Zhang Yimou and Chen Kaige whose successes in various international film festivals depend largely upon their being recognized by Western scholars and critics because their films are regarded as a version of Orientalism, or more exactly, as images made exclusively for a Western audience (Wang, N. 1997. 57).

## **5. Conclusions**

It has been nearly 30 years since 1994, when director He Ping's double hit knocked on the door of the Golden Shell Award and Chinese films entered the world stage. Chinese films are increasingly recognized by world film festivals.

Through the analysis of female images in Chinese award-winning films at the San Sebastian Film Festival, this article can see that the women created by China are more stereotyped images from a male perspective. The West's acceptance of Eastern women is more from the perspective of Orientalism. Although the spread of female image culture has spread Chinese culture to a certain extent and promoted the development of feminist film theory, it has also caused Chinese filmmakers to create in order to win awards and cater to the West, and the degree of self-Orientalization has deepened, making women in movies The one-sided image will affect the true and objective dissemination of the image of women and the image of China in China.

Judging from the history of film festivals and Western mainstream society's acceptance of Chinese films, works that meet Orientalist expectations seem to be more popular. Investigating the reason, the temptation of Orientalism to mainstream society is a reason that cannot be ignored.

Directors' cultural criticism in movies cannot help improve the image of China and Chinese women, but it can further strengthen the West's positional advantage in the comparison of East and West, and the evidence to prove this advantage comes from an "insider." The seriousness of the West is more convincing and will naturally be welcomed by the mainstream.



**Appendix**

<b>Film</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Director</b>
Red Firecracker, Green Firecracker	1994	42	He Ping
Together with You	2002	50	Chen Kaige
Letter from an Unknown Woman	2004	52	Xu Jinglei
Sunflower	2005	53	Zhang Yang
Thousand Years of Good Prayers	2007	55	Wayne Wang
Exodus	2007	55	Peng Haoxiang
The Equation of Love And Death	2008	56	Cao Baoping
City of Life and Death	2009	57	Lu Chuan
I Am Not Madame Bovary	2016	64	Feng Xiaogang
Wu Hai	2020	68	Zhou Ziyang
Kong Xiu (A Woman)	2022	70	Wang Chao

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***Laboratories and AI Applications:  
The Sites of Knowledge Production or Commodity Manufacture***

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**Abstract**

In order to maintain the social stability, healthcare, has always been an issue that governments cannot ignore. Since Bismarck implemented the social health insurance model in Germany, modern nations around the world have consistently attempted to address the problem of the uneven distribution of medical resources through systems such as healthcare systems or health insurance. Taiwan is no exception to this trend. However, new challenges have arisen after the implementation of Taiwan's National Health Insurance (NHI) program. The availability of affordable and convenient healthcare, which has made it easy for the public to access diagnoses and treatment from physicians, has pushed Taiwanese society into an ultra-aging stage, widening the distribution gap of doctors between cities and regions. Artificial intelligence (AI) appears to be one of the potential solutions to address the aforementioned issues. However, without the imperative of COVID-19 prevention and public health governance, AI might not have necessarily evolved into a domain perceived as a 'new medicine,' valued by governments, practiced in hospitals, and embraced by the general public. This research aims to investigate the dispositif of AI applications in medicine in the society of Taiwan. This research finds that the development of the dispositif that revolves around AI applications in Taiwanese society parallels the process of 'Pasteurization' as argued by Bruno Latour in the context of French society.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence in Medicine, Dispositif, Actor-Network Theory

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## Introduction

In order to maintain the social stability, healthcare, has always been an issue that governments cannot ignore. Since Bismarck implemented the social health insurance model in Germany, modern nations around the world have consistently attempted to address the problem of the uneven distribution of medical resources through systems such as healthcare systems or health insurance. Taiwan is no exception to this trend. However, new challenges have arisen after the implementation of Taiwan's National Health Insurance (NHI) program. The availability of affordable and convenient healthcare, which has made it easy for the public to access diagnoses and treatment from physicians, has pushed Taiwanese society into an ultra-aging stage, widening the distribution gap of doctors between cities and regions. Nevertheless, compared to urban areas, rural regions in Taiwan are typically inhabited by elderly populations in need of long-term medical care (Legislative Yuan, Republic of China, 2022). However, according to reports from the Taiwan Medical Association (2020), physicians tend to concentrate in urban areas. Additionally, fewer and fewer doctors are willing to specialize in traditional medical fields such as internal medicine, surgery, obstetrics and gynecology, pediatrics, and emergency medicine. This trend can be attributed to the long working hours in outpatient clinics or surgical settings, coupled with limited reimbursement under the NHI system. Consequently, medical students are increasingly reluctant to pursue careers in these fields. Instead, they are turning to areas such as self-pay healthcare.

While the distribution of doctors remains uneven, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the government has found that the integration of 'big data, AI applications, and physicians' experiences' is an effective approach to prevent the spread of the epidemic. The information mentioned above will be transformed into 'effective information,' which is transformed as valuable substance for both the general public and healthcare personnel, once this information is input into algorithms to drive AI applications, even in the absence of an adequate number of doctors. This experience of containing COVID-19 is called 'Taiwan model'(台灣模式) by the government of Taiwan (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of China).

The Taiwan model for combating the pandemic by using communication technology not only gained international recognition through publishing the academic article by the minister of Health and Welfare, Chen Shih-Chung (2021), but also bolstered the Taiwanese citizens' confidence through the coverage in foreign media (石田, 2021; Hale,2022). However, as the Taiwan model continues to receive attention, more and more actors start to approach the vital technology of the model, that is, AI application. As the result, 'the Taiwan model' shifts from its original context. This phenomenon is possible to be observed through several interviews with the key figure in the technological pandemic prevention, namely the Minister Without Portfolio, Audrey Tang. As a software programmer with experience in combating viruses, she was interviewed by various types of media. Even on the topic of national security, she was invited to comment based on her experience in applying AI applications to prevent the pandemic (BBC,2022). This reveals the original meaning of AI applications has shifted to other social issues.

When the Japanese media reported on how the uniqueness of Audrey's personal background made her qualified for technological pandemic prevention tasks, the Vice President of Taiwan, Chen Chien-Jen shared the article through social media and referred to what she has done as 'a model for AI application in pandemic prevention' (see Figure 1).

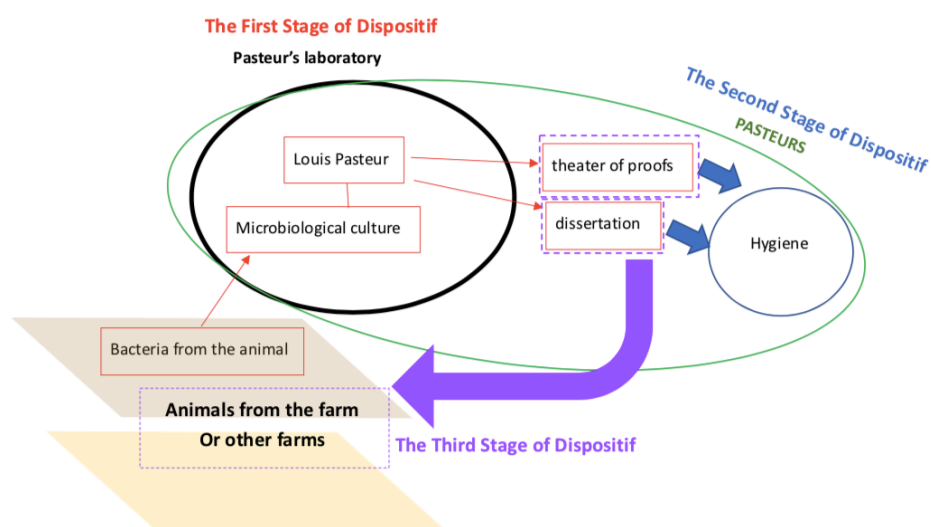
This study is curious about the interactions among different social actors. Applying the concept of Bruno Latour, this research aims to investigate the main research question: whether there is any assemblage being formed by actors of the society in Taiwan?



**Figure 1: The Vice President praised Audrey Tang as not only the life and soul of the national pandemic prevention team but also the founder of the model for AI applications in pandemic prevention on his Facebook account.**

**Research Method**

Via archaeological analysis of modern medical history, this research focuses on Latour's significant study, which demonstrated how Louis Pasteur's experiments with bacteria became objects of interest for various actors in 19th-century French society. Latour (1993), through his investigation of Pasteur as the chemist conducting experiments in the laboratory, showcased how the theory of bacteria became intertwined with the name PASTEUR, diffusing throughout the whole society in France. Latour's study illustrated how the notion of 'science' was constructed through the translation of various actors in French society. After being translated by different actors in their respective fields, the idea of 'science' gradually transformed into a form of belief rather than merely a way to practice empirically. To illustrate how the notion of science became the belief of French citizens, Latour argued three stages of dispositif among 'bacteria-chemist-laboratory-public health-medicine.' To apply Latour's concept, this research visualizes his arguments (see Figure2).



**Figure 2: Three Stages of Dispositif, The Landscape of The Pasteurization of France**

Drawing upon Latour's logic, this research finds that there is an assemblage between AI applications, AI operators and Big data, which is translated by actors as the pride of Taiwan. The curiosity that arises from this finding is, as the AI application, initially used to assist certain actors such as the government, public health experts, physicians, and citizens, in controlling the pandemic, gradually deviates from its original purpose, what does the assemblage constructed by these actors revolving around AI applications mean?

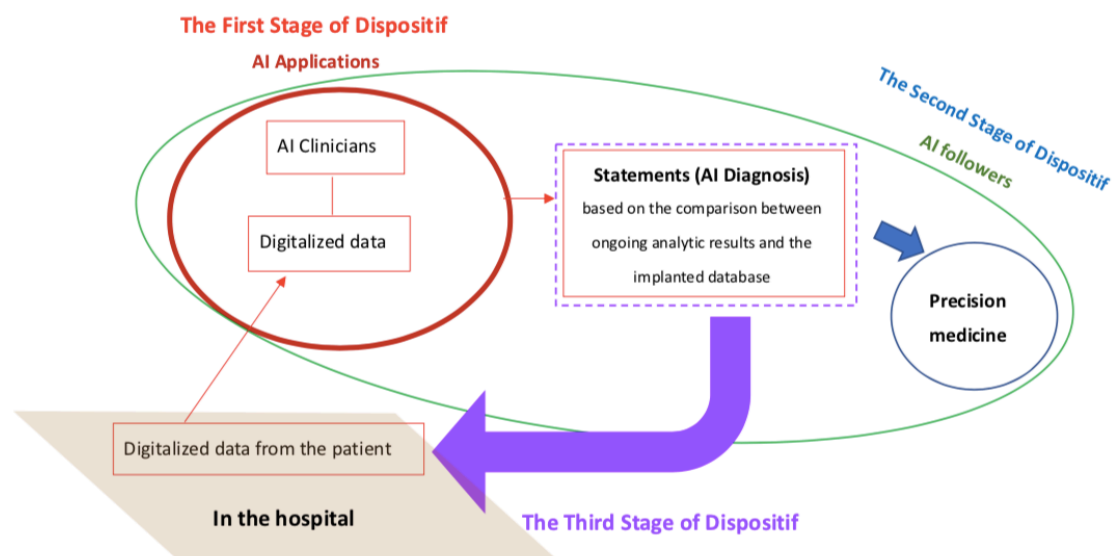
In the context of technological pandemic prevention, the government of Taiwan has begun to promote a new plan for economic development, namely the Big Health Industry plan. Therefore, this study takes the Big Health Industry as a case of observation (see Figure3). Following Latour's approach, this study investigates how actors translate AI applications into their own fields when AI applications interact with corresponding fields.



**Figure 3: Big Health Industry**

## Finding & Discussion

This study presents two primary findings. Firstly, it identifies the emergence of a dispositif in Taiwanese society, a process is termed as 'AIrization' in this study (see Figure4). AIrization refers to the sanctification and simplification of AI applications into a belief system, which occurs through three stages of dispositif. Secondly, the study focuses on the translation of AI applications within hospitals that support the Big Health Industry plans. This study found that relevant hospitals' explanations to the public about the role of AI diagnosis (which is a type of AI application) are oversimplified. This simplification process is reminiscent of Latour's argument that 'Pasteur's bacterial experiment' was simplified through the theater of proof and became a concept that spread to public health and other fields under the name PASTEUR. This phenomenon reflects the transition from the first-stage dispositif to the second-stage dispositif.



**Figure 4: The Forging Dispositif, The AIrization of Taiwan**

## Conclusion

This study concludes that although AI medical care is still in its very early stages, if actors continuously diffusing the notion of AI by oversimplifying it, the dispositif between first-stage and second-stage will be more stable. Once these two stages are firmly built, they will become the base of the third-stage of the dispositif. In other words, the oversimplified information will be further translated. At this stage the public will ignore the importance to criticize the oversimplified meaning of AI. It implies that AI applications would be regarded as a panacea by the public. The public will naturally accept the logic that once the digitalized data is input into the AI application, the disease will automatically be cured. However, what is overlooked is that these discourses are just interpreted language used by different actors to translate AI applications into their own domains.

The next stage of this research will involve conducting interviews with AI application operators (i.e., clinicians) in urban and regional hospitals. By gathering insights from clinicians who actually operate AI applications in various regions, this research will provide further validation for the current arguments made in this study. The following questions can serve as avenues for the further development in this research. What are the actual changes that AI applications are bringing to the field of medical care? Do AI applications especially AI diagnosis applications gradually become a means of regional hospitals to solve the problem of a shortage of doctors? Or, in order to attract the public to accept AI applications, the way the hospital explains the concept of AI diagnosis to the public has gradually transformed the practices of AI diagnosis into a new type of fast and convenient commodity.

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*Conservation of Cultural Values in Construction Selendang Dance  
as a Heritage of Puti-Puti Tarusan*

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**Abstract**

The preservation of the cultural values of Shawl Dance is carried out through rearrangement using construction methods. Because this dance had experienced extinction, restructuring was carried out. Restructuring was carried out to provide new colors to produce a definitive and innovative form of Selendang Dance both in terms of movement, floor patterns, music and costumes. The Research & Development (R&D) method is carried out descriptively and evaluatively using the Borg and Gall (2003) model which is modified by conducting preliminary research, investigation, observation, performance/teaching demonstrations, interviews, discussion and evaluation. Implementation of the Selendang Dance construction method through demonstrations, product trials, evaluations, work revisions, confirmation of innovative presentation methods. The arrangement of the structure of the Selendang Dance is carried out through the narration of a descendant of Puti-puti who is still alive. Then it was agreed to restructure or rearrange the construction of the Selendang Dance in a way: (1) strengthening the movement motive which had been disjointed due to extinction. (2) developing a performance model for the Selendang Dance from monotonism to a more attractive and dynamic proven form, so that it has selling points for the performing arts community. The form and structure of the dance still refers to the cultural values of the descendants of the Puti-puti Tarusan as the heirs to the selendang dance.

Keywords: Selendang Dance Heritage of Puti-Puti Tarusan, Cultural Values, Construction Method, Innovative Way of Presentation

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## Introduction

The research aims to restructure or rearrange the Selendang Dance form using construction methods, so that a definitive Selendang dance structure is formed. Applying the construction method can provide a new color in achieving an innovative presentation model from a monotonous form to a more attractive and dynamic proven form. So it has a selling value that contributes to the community's economy.

The Selendang dance which developed among the Puti-puti descendants of the eighth King Tarusan, is accompanied by *dampieng* vocals (Nerosti & Yuliasma, 2018). This dance is accompanied by the accompaniment of welcoming the Prince, the King's son, who will sit at the altar to hold the wedding. This type of dance is also found in Inderapura, but it is called the Employees' Dance because it is danced by male royal employees (Susanti & Nerosti, 2020). The Inderapura Kingdom began to form a new government in the 15th century and was once successful in the archipelago after the weakening of its parent government, namely the Pagaruyung Kingdom (Asnan, 2013; Sudirman, 2014). This Puti-Puti Tarusan heritage Selendang dance has not been danced for a long time and can be said to be extinct (Nerosti, 2020). The findings show that the movements are no longer complete, not structured in a structured manner. Each movement only consists of one repeated motif so that there is monotony without variation. The floor pattern has not been arranged, the accompanying music is only accompanied, the costumes do not have a special design. Preservation is carried out as a solution to increase productivity, through the application of construction methods, restructuring, identifying movements to achieve innovative Selendang dance presentations.

Preservation is carried out to maintain artistic and cultural values or traditional values by developing dynamic manifestations according to the development of society, but still adapting to the situation and conditions of the traditions adhered to by its supporters (Ranjabar, 2006). Preservation can also be carried out in the form of cultural revitalization. Through three steps, namely: (1) introduction and understanding to raise awareness, (2) collective planning, and (2) generating cultural creativity. To carry it out, it requires a preservation process and strategy with techniques based on the cultural conditions that require preservation (Alwasilah, 2006).

## Methodology

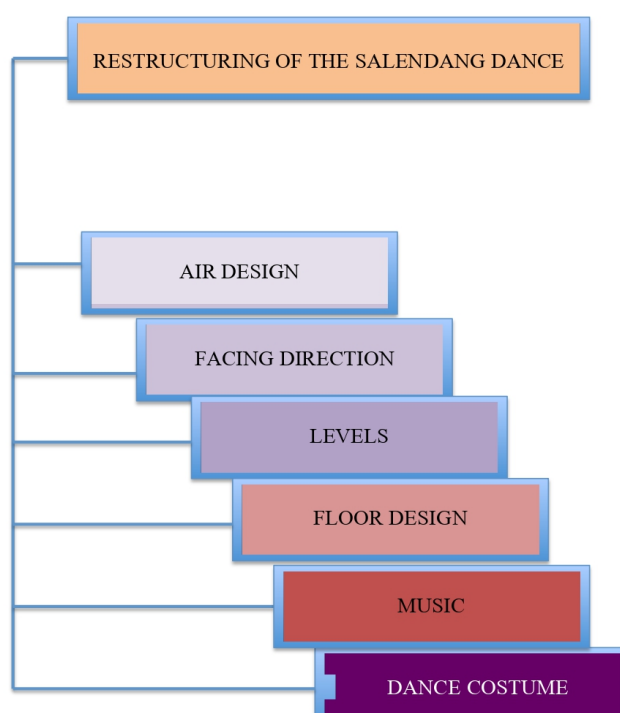
The Research & Development (R&D) research method is used to produce a product, namely an innovative form of Selendang Dance presentation. Descriptive and evaluative methods are used to collect conditions in the field. Then carry out restructuring so that a definitive Selendang dance structure is formed. Development of the Selendang Dance performance model from a monotonous form to a more attractive and dynamic proven form. The form of application through trials is carried out using a modified Borg and Gall model development procedure. The development research procedure according to Borg and Gall (Gall et al., 2003) is:

...research and information collecting, planning, developing preliminary form of product, preliminary field testing, main product revision, main field testing, operational product revision, operational field testing, final product revision, and dissemination and implementation.

Even though the research procedures for the development of Borg and Gall were field tested repeatedly, in the research that will be carried out, Borg and Gall's theory can be modified in the research that will be carried out as follows: (1) Research to obtain information about the existing Salendang Dance in the field, (2) Data is identified to design steps for implementing the Shawl Dance Construction Method. (3) Data is analyzed to apply Construction Methods in the laboratory (4) Implementation of innovative presentation methods is carried out. (5) Trials were carried out in the studio in the reconstruction process and innovative presentation methods. (6) Product evaluation was carried out by presenting dance experts, (7) Revision of works that had been tested with artists, (8) Conservation in the form of socialization of works held Salendang Dance performances which applied innovative construction methods and presentation methods.

This research process begins with restructuring or rearranging the form of Shawl Dance using construction methods, including:

- Arrange the movement lines (top design) according to the dance flow in the floor pattern
- Arrange the facing direction according to the floor pattern
- Setting levels
- Restructuring the music by improving the vocal quality and adding musical instruments as creative dance accompaniment
- Designing costumes that do not yet have an appropriate model and design
- Restructuring is carried out to form an original dance structure formed in accordance with local traditions



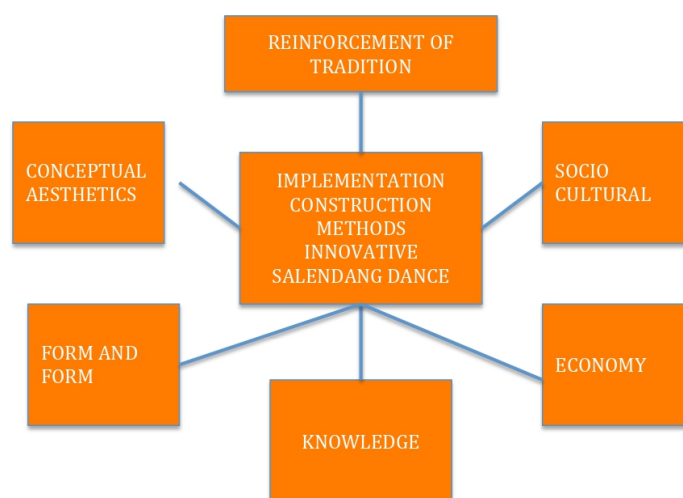
**Figure 1. Conceptual Framework (Nerosti Design, 2023)**

The findings show that the movements are no longer complete, not structured in a structured manner. Each movement only consists of one repeated motif so that it is monotonous without variation. The shortcomings of this research are: (1) the movements are carried out repeatedly. (2) the short motif is only in the form of a pose without variations in the upper

design, (3) the floor pattern has not been varied, (4) the accompanying music has not been properly structured, because it is only accompanied by the rhythm of the dampiang song, (5) the costumes also do not have a special design.

For this reason, Reconstruction is carried out: According to Hamzah (2020) reconstruction is: rearrangement, reorganization, repeat the demonstration as if it were actually happening (Hamzah, 2020). According to Qardhawi reconstruction, preserve the original, repair and strengthen, carry out updates without changing the characteristics of the original (Nerosti, 2020).

The concept of strengthening traditions in reconstruction Salendang dance as below:



**Figure 2. Strengthening Tradition (Nerosti design, 2023)**

## Findings and Discussion

Selendang dance developed in Koto XI Tarusan District, South Pesisir Regency, West Sumatera, Indonesia. Selendang Dance is a traditional dance danced by women, which previously developed among the Puti-puti (King's Daughters) of Tarusan in the 18th century (Nerosti, 2018). This dance is accompanied by accompaniment to welcome the King's Prince who will stand at the altar. Dampiang is a traditional song sung by middle-aged mothers. However, after the extinction of the royal system in Indonesia, art and culture in small kingdoms also became extinct, except in Java, palace cultural remains can still be seen both in Yogyakarta and Surakarta (Soedarsono, 2002).

The Selendang Dance is almost extinct and many of its movement structures have been lost, and suitability for musical accompaniment is no longer relevant. So that this cultural heritage which has historical value does not become extinct, it needs to be preserved by restructuring or rearranging it so that a definitive Selendang Dance structure is formed.

The restructuring was carried out with the approval of the surviving Puti-Puti Tarusan: Princess Reno Intan (at Pasar Tarusan), Princess Noermaya (at Simpang 3 Tarusan), Princess Cahyo (at Pondok Tarusan), Princess Darna (at Jirek Duku Tarusan), Princess Darna is the only one who still remembers the Selendang Dance performance when she was 7 years old. At 78 years old, Princess Darna was only able to illustrate how the dance event was

performed at the welcoming ceremony for the prince who was about to stand at the wedding ceremony.



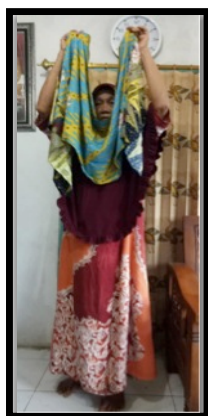
Princess Darna said that the Selendang Dance first appeared at the same time as Dampieng, which was sung by middle-aged women. “*Ayooo dampieng... Ayoo dampieng, antaaah antaaah antaaah*. The mothers of the bride's family spontaneously danced using shawls,

**Figure 3. Nerosti and Princess Darna**  
(Nerosti, document, 2019)



Sometimes they open the shawl with both hands, blocking the groom. They say “*ambeknyo supayo jan bagageh sajo nak basuo jo anak daro*”. (Block him back so he doesn't rush to meet his future wife ).

**Figure 4. Ambek Movement**  
(Nerosti, 2020)



Princess Darna said: I only remember the phases of the movements. I don't remember the series of Selendang Dance movements anymore.

They moved their scarves up and down, but at that time they only followed the Dampieng rhythm, there was no complete dance, the dancers' standing formations had not yet been arranged. Movements appear spontaneously.

**Figure 5. Anjuang Movement**  
(Nerosti, 2020)



**Figure 6.**  
**Bakuruang Movement**  
(Nerosti, 2020)



**Figure 7.**  
**Limpapeh movement**  
(Nerosti, 2020)



**Figure 8.**  
**Ikek movement**  
(Nerosti, 2020)

The values of Selendang Dance can be interpreted in the following movements:

### 1) *Paga Movement*

This means that a fence keeps other people from entering, has two meanings, namely a house fence and a self-fence. The strongest fence is the fence of good deeds, namely good deeds.

The strongest fence is the fence of good deeds, namely good deeds. In everyday life, traditionally paga has two meanings, namely house fence and self-fence. The meaning contained in this dance is to protect oneself for the bride and groom, so that nothing untoward happens during the party. Especially protecting yourself so that the bride and groom are not influenced by bad things. This movement is carried out by the dancer by holding a scarf in both hands by stretching the scarf in front of the body at chest level. Dancers walk 4 steps towards the guest or follow the rhythm of the music.

### 2) *Balabeh Movement*

The balabeh movement is a firmness in maintaining heritage, both in the form of inheritance and non-physical, namely customs that must always be maintained. Firmness in maintaining heritage, whether in the form of heirlooms or non-physical assets, namely customs that must always be maintained. The meaning of traditional teachings, if studied, can be a measure of progress over time in the field of human morals. Therefore, during this movement the scarf is always stretched tightly. This movement is done while walking, diagonally to the right and to the left. Every step taken always uses a double step or childbirth step. Both hands hold the scarf so that the movement gives the impression of a gate.

### 3) *Anta Movement*

This movement is the opening movement of the Salendang dance, which is performed at the beginning of the dance when the groom has arrived at the bride's house to carry out the

marriage contract. The function of the anta movement is to accompany the groom to the altar, but in the dance performance when the groom arrives In the courtyard of the bride's house the dampiang is immediately sung. There are a total of 8 dancers, the meaning of the gift in this tradition is proof of the prospective groom's ability and responsibility for the woman he will marry. Therefore, the items that are given should not be haphazard and should really be the daily needs of the bride-to-be.

#### **4) *Limpapeh Movement***

This movement imitating a flying butterfly can be interpreted based on the Minangkabau adage: *Limpapeh* di rumah nan gadang, umbun puruak pegangan kunci. Women in Minangkabau are a strong pillar at the top of the household and country, and the key to the good and bad of a country. This movement aimed at women is interpreted as advice for the bride. *Limpapeh* is a small, fragile white butterfly. Its wings are very easily damaged, even if they are blown by the wind, their wings can tear. Therefore, it is assigned to women who must be good at taking care of themselves. Refinement of language in general should be accompanied by refinement of mind, because women are housewives who will educate children as descendants of kings and princesses. Women also have to be trustworthy because they are the holders of inheritance in the gadang house.

#### **5) *Bakuruang Movement***

*Bakuruang* or *Kuriek Kundi*: *Nan kuriek iyolah kundi, nan merah iyolah sago, nan baiek iyolah budi, nan endah iyolah baso*. The most valuable meaning in social life is to associate with good character and good manners. This movement also depicts *Bakuruang*, where the bride is always locked up at home and is no longer allowed to meet her future husband, 3 days before the wedding ceremony takes place.

#### **6) *Ikek Movement***

This movement is interpreted as the wife's duty to bind her husband's heart, through good service. All the husband's needs can be met by the wife. It is expressed in the proverb: "Padi diikek jo daunnyo, stem ditungkek jo dahannyo". The wisdom used by someone in leading their nephew's child, to finance it a business is sought.

#### **7) *Anjuang Movement***

This movement is likened to a high place. If you want to be tall, you will be challenged, raise your mind and *haluih baso* jo stale. If you want to be appreciated by other people in society, maintain your good manners and use pleasantries or speak beautifully. As the tourism sector in Indonesia develops to improve the economy, whatever the form and function of dance in human life, creativity and innovation are needed. In fact, traditional arts should be diverse. is a true source of inspiration for artists to create works of art according to market tastes. Every ethnic group in Indonesia wants to show their identity. Identity that shows identity. For this reason, art that once existed in a tourism destination is a potential that can be developed as a tourism sector. The tourism sector is definitely a money field. Therefore performing arts exist between cultural and commercial contexts.



## 8) Warih Movement

This movement begins as the closing of the Selendang Dance. All the dancers put their scarves in both hands, standing face to face. This movement is likened to the proverb "Warih samo dijawek, pusako samo ditolong" (The same inheritance is accepted, the same inheritance is helped to maintain it). This means that inheritance is a moral responsibility for the lineage that receives it to pass it on to the next generation. Heritage must be helped together to preserve it. The legacy will continue to be passed down to the next generation.



**Figure 9.** The process of applying construction methods in the dance laboratory (Nerosti document, August 20, 2023)



**Figure 10.** Innovative Selendang Dance resulting from the application of construction methods performed at a Tarusan wedding party in Padang City, 16 September 2023 (Nerosti Document, 2023)

From the development of the form of presentation using the construction methods that have been applied, it produces its own style in the Selendang Dance of the Tarusan puti-puti descendants. Style can be influenced by social culture, environment and natural surroundings (Nerosti, 2018). The characteristic that appears in the Selendang dance is the graceful movements. This kind of dance developed around the 1920s and has characteristics of gentle movements. This matter has colored the perception of some Minangkabau artists and cultural



figures regarding the specificity and uniqueness of dance Minangkabau (Erlinda, 2021). This is very different from the character of the new Minangkabau dances which are performed through the use of elements of pencak silat or pancak movements which originally came from Pamenan (Utama, 2016).

## Conclusions

The preservation of the Selendang Dance has been carried out through construction methods in the form of restructuring the Selendang Dance, including innovative and high-quality movement arrangements. The reconstruction of the Selendang Dance has produced a new form which is the preservation of a traditional dance that is almost extinct. Its initial function was to welcome the king's children at a wedding party, but now it is logically used as a dance to welcome guests which is characteristic of Tarusan (Nerosti, 2020, 2021, 2022). This dance has undergone a renewal process which has been created innovatively in terms of movements, floor patterns, costumes and music. This dance can be performed in various Minangkabau traditional ceremonies, including welcoming the Penghulu (tribal head), babao events, welcoming marapulai and welcoming government guests. Innovative music on vocals and varied playing of musical instruments. Costumes are also arranged creatively according to the requests of the community as stakeholders. The motifs used in the make-up and props used in the shawls are developed according to people's tastes. The development of choreography occurs not only because of preservation factors, but also because of professionalism which is characterized by creativity (Nerosti, 2021). With innovative forms of presentation, the demand for dance increases. The motivation is money. Money is not just a symbolic expression of aspects of life, but money is also a symbolic expression of aspects of artists' economic life which is getting better. The role of dance is becoming stronger in social, cultural, political and religious (Damsar, 2006).

From the eight movements of the Shawl Dance, the cultural values contained in the dance can be gleaned, which can be explained as follows. The *paga* movement shows that women must protect themselves with faith, namely the strength of the religion they adhere to. *Balabeh* described women as needing to always be careful, firm with principles that are not easily shaken. The *anta* movement describes when the groom arrives at the bride's house, then he is taken to the altar. You must not rush but have dignity so that he is respected by the bride's family. The *Limpapeh* movement is intended for women, even though they are fragile or weak, they must have high character and self-esteem without being belittled by others. *Bakruang* movement, women don't need to leave the house if they have nothing to do, because they need to do household work. In the *ikek* movement, women must be good at tying their husband's heart in a polite way. The *anjuang* movement shows that women need to be praised and admired or have their dignity elevated, because they are trusted to receive inheritance (*warih*) in the matrilineal system.

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***Kamala Harris in Ghana and the LGBT Agenda:  
An Analysis of Media Coverages of the Issue***

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The Kyoto Conference on Arts, Media & Culture 2023  
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

During Kamala Harris' recent visit to Ghana, the issue of the rights of people who identify as LGBT in Ghana was raised at a joint press conference with the President of Ghana. At the conference, Kamala Harris commented on protecting the rights of people who identify as LGBT in Ghana. Her comments, which caught a lot of attention, were widely reported in the media. Thus, the current study investigates how the media framed and reported this issue as a way of analyzing the media's framing of LGBT-related issues in Ghana. Using framing and critical discourse analysis, the study revealed that three issues surrounding the joint-press conference attracted the most media attention. These included Kamala Harris' comments themselves, the response of the President of Ghana on the issue, and the reactions of some members of parliament, particularly the Speaker of Ghana's parliament. Three frames were found to be the main means through which the stories were reported. These included 1) the portrayal of Kamala Harris as an LGBT advocate 2) the labeling of Kamala Harris' comments as undemocratic, 3) the president's response as unsatisfactory. The findings of this study have implications for media and sexuality studies in Ghana.

Keywords: Kamala Harris, LGBT, Media Framing, Critical Discourse Analysis, Ghana

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## Introduction

In most Western countries where the rights of people who identify as lesbians, gays, transgender and queer (LGBT) are protected, studies on media representation of the LGBT community has received a lot of attention over the years (Holzhacker, 2014; Jacobs and Meeusen, 2021; Kian et al., 2015) yet the situation is not the same in conservative cultures like Ghana where the rights of people who identify as gays and lesbians are still controversial (Baisley, 2015; Nartey, 2022; Tettey, 2016).

Recent studies on this issue in the West have found that media frames about people who identify as members of the LBGT community are more positive. For instance, Kian et al., (2015) mentioned earlier conducted a study on media news reports on Jason Collins, an NBA player who came out as being gay while playing in the NBA and found that most media houses who covered this story portrayed the NBA player as a 'hero'. Jacobs and Meeusen (2021) also found that media frames have shifted in terms of visibility and tone with gay people being given more visibility in the media. Negatives tones surrounding gay people in the media have shifted for a more positive ones according to their study.

The case in Ghana is, however, different. As mentioned earlier studies on media representations of people who identify as LGBT in the Ghanaian media are limited. Yet, the few current studies have concluded that media frames of people who identify as LGBT in Ghana are mostly negative. For instance, Baisley (2015) argued that the dominant frames used by opponents of LGBT in Ghana are those of decolonization frame arguing that the promotion of LGBT is a form of cultural imperialism that renders pro-LGBT human rights frames useless. Nartey (2022) also found that media frames in Ghana about LGBT people are usually biased and inflammatory portraying LGBT people as deviants and immoral. Tettey (2016) also argues that in Ghana, the media often offer their platforms to politicians and religious leaders who often promote homophobic ideas.

Though the current literature on the issue in Ghana has established that media frames about the rights of LGBT people in Ghana are predominantly negative, the extant literature has focused their studies on media representations of LGBT people in Ghana over the last decade (Baisley, 2015; Nartey, 2022) with few studies discussing the contemporary situation in Ghana. Given this, the current study, seeks to fill that gap by analyzing recent media reports concerning LGBT people in Ghana using Kamala Harris recent visit to Ghana and the LGBT related issues that came up during her visit as a case study.

On March 26, 2023, The US Vice President (VP) Kamala Harris visited Ghana as part of a week-long trip to three African countries namely: Tanzania, Ghana, and Zambia with the aim of recasting the US as a vital partner of the African continent. The US Vice President's first stop on her tour to Africa was Ghana. She met with the president of the Republic of Ghana on Monday, March 27, 2023, at a joint news conference where the topic of LGBT rights in Ghana was discussed. The US VP's response to the matter included a statement in which she expressed her strong feelings in favor of defending LGBT rights in Ghana. Her comments which came at a time when an anti-LGBT bill is before the parliament of Ghana received massive backlash from the media and the people of Ghana. Given this, the current study analyzed the media coverages of the issues concerning LGBT rights in Ghana as stated by Kamala Harris and identify the frames used by the Ghanaian media to report their stories on this issue. To this end, the study seeks to achieve the following objectives: 1) to highlight the

dominant LGBT related issues surrounding the event that attracted the most media attention 2) to unearth how these issues were framed in the major online news outlets.

This study is significant because it adds to the pool of knowledge on media framing of minority groups such as LGBT people in conservative cultures like Ghana and could serve as a source of reference for future researchers interested in this topic. It also adds to the discourse of sexuality and media within the Ghanaian context.

### **Framing of LGBT Issues in Western Media**

As earlier indicated, studies on media framing of LGBT related issues have seen an increase in recent times. However, most of these studies have been based on Western media representation of people who identify as gay or lesbians and the impacts of such representations on society's perception of the LGBT society (Jacobs and Meeusen, 2021; Kian et al., 2015; Kerrigan and Pramaggoire, 2021).

For instance, Jacobs and Meeusen (2021) earlier mentioned conducted a longitudinal content analytical study on television framing of LGBT people from 1986-2017 in Flanders Belgium. The study which was aimed at examining trends in the amount of LGBT news stories over time, the representations of LGBT people in the news and document the evolution of tone in media framing of LGBT related news found that patterns in media frames of LGBT people have shifted from deviance and abnormalities to equal rights and victim frames and that journalists have shifted from problematizing homosexuality to now problematizing homophobia.

On this same note Kian et al. (2015) conducted a study of media representation of LGBT people in the United States by investigating how the news media framed reports of NBA player, Jason Collins who came out as being gay and found that the media framed this story as a landmark in US sports history portraying the US sports industry as being accepting to people who identify as members of the LGBT.

The case in Ireland was quite similar. Kerrigan and Pramaggoire (2021) also conducted a study on the media's representation of an Irish gay politician, Leo Varadkar during his tenure of office from 2017-2020. The study which conducted a comparative analysis of local Irish media news content against that of international news media content about the politician found that while local Irish news media was largely homophobic portraying the politician as unfit for office due to his racial and sexual orientation, that of international news media was more positive portraying the politician as a hero.

In summary, it can be said that studies on media framing of LGBT related issues in western societies are extensive and have mostly found that the western media often use positive frames when reporting news stories about LGTB related issues. The case in most African countries is, however, not the same.

### **Framing of LGBT Issues in African Media**

The African situation is unique to its own socio-cultural context. Studies on media framing of LGBT related issues in Africa are limited because the issue of the rights of people who identify as gays and lesbians is still controversial in most African countries like Ghana. However, the few existing studies conducted on this subject, have found that media frames of

LGBT issues in most African countries are negative (Adamczyk et al., 2015; Amenaghawon and Ayatande, 2019; Nartey 2022; Tettey; 2016).

For instance, Adamczyk et al., (2015) conducted a cross national study on how media frames LGBT related issues in three different countries namely, the United States, Uganda and South Africa and found that the media in the United States are more likely to frame LGBT issues as civil right issues given their economic and democratic development. Whereas the media in countries such as Uganda and South Africa are more likely to frame LGBT related issues from religious perspectives. Amenaghawon and Ayatande (2019) also conducted a study on newspaper framing of LGBT related issues in Nigeria through a content analysis of articles related to homosexuality published by one of Nigeria's widely read online newspapers, *Punch*. Their study found that the newspaper mostly framed homosexuality and LGBT related activities in Nigeria as illegal and unacceptable.

In Ghana, Tettey (2016) conducted a study of media framing of LGBT issues and found that media in Ghana offer their platforms for politicians and moral entrepreneurs to promote ideas of homophobia and heterosexism and argue that this role played by the Ghanaian media often engendered anti-homosexuality sentiments among the general Ghanaian publics. On this same note, Nartey (2022) also found that the media in Ghana promote anti-homosexual sentiments among the Ghanaian public by framing homosexuals as social misfits or non-conforming individuals. Thus, it can be concluded that media framing of LGBT related issues in Ghana and other African countries in general are mostly negative as seen from the literature.

### **Framing Theory**

Framing theory is a concept closely related to the agenda setting power of the media that emphasizes the media's power to influence what issues people consider as important. However, diverging from the traditional agenda setting theory, framing theory not only explains how the media presents certain issues as more important than others but also how the media places these issues within a certain context of meaning. As Entman (1993, Pg. 52) posits "to frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and/or treatment for the item described". In effect, framing theory argues that how certain information is presented to an audience influences how the audiences process the information. Framing theory is widely used in media studies to investigate how media selection and interpretation of news items influences audiences' comprehension of specific issues. It is an approach to analyzing news discourses which mainly deals with how public discourse about public policy issues is constructed and negotiated (Pan and Kosicki, 1993). The theory is employed in this study to identify how the media framed certain aspects of Kamala Harris' comments concerning LGBT rights in Ghana as more relevant than others and show how these media frames influences discourses about LGBT issues in Ghana.

### **Methods**

The data for this article was based on news articles on Kamala Harris' LGBT Comments in Ghana posted by major online news outlets in Ghana. To collect data, a Google search for news articles with the keywords "Kamala Harris in Ghana and LGBT Issues" was conducted. The search yielded over 800,000 results. However, the search was filtered by focusing only



on articles posted by news channels owned by Ghanaian media houses and targeted at Ghanaian audiences. After filtering the articles from various online news portals, and screening to eliminate news sources that do not directly speak to the topic under consideration an eventual sample size of 140 articles were realized. These included articles from Ghana Web, Myjoy online, Pulse GH, Myinfo GH, Adom online, Peace FM online among others. The news articles eventually sampled for the study spanned from March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2023 to April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Given the objective of the study, the collected data was then analyzed for recurring themes. The themes were then categorized to identify the most dominant issues addressed in the articles and the critical discourse analysis (CDA) was then used to analyze the findings.

According to Van Leeuwen (2009) CDA is based on the tenet that text and discourses play a major role in maintaining and legitimizing inequality, injustice and oppression in society and uses discourse analytic methods to show how this is done, Critical discourse analyst do not only rely on discourse analytics methods but also critical social theory. Fairclough (2013) also argues that CDA is the application of the traditional critical social analysis in language studies and contributes to the understanding of the relationships between discourses and other social elements such as power relations, ideologies and institutions. CDA has been widely used in studies that focuses on media representation of minority groups including people who identify as members of the LGBT society. In this study, CDA is used to analyze how these media frames might reinforce stereotypes and prejudices against people who identify as LGBT in Ghana.

## **Results and Discussions**

As earlier mentioned, the researcher purposefully sampled 140 articles for the study after engaging in a thorough Google search for news articles published about this event. The 140 news articles were from 19 news agencies out of which 2 were state owned and 17 were privately owned. The idea behind including state and privately-owned media was to investigate whether media ownership play a role in influencing media framing of LGBT related news. The 19 news sources were either fully online news portals such as Ghana Web, Pulse GH and Modern GH or traditional news agencies with an online presence such as GBC Online, Peace FM Online, and Metro TV Online.

### **Major Issues Surrounding the Event Reported by the News Media**

One of the objectives of the study was to investigate the major issues surrounding the event which attracted the most media attention. To this end, the headlines of the various news articles were analyzed. News headlines usually captures the main ideas of a news story and one can tell the content of a story simply by reading the headline (Van Djik, 1998 cited in Bonyadi and Samuel 2013). Headlines are brief summaries of the news that aim to summarize, elicit thought, raise issues, and, frequently amuse the audience. The purpose of news headlines is to attempt to entice and engage news audiences by giving the readers or audiences a fair idea of what a news article might be about (Scacco and Muddiman, 2016). Given this, the headlines of the various stories were studied to get an idea about what the stories were about and see which angles of the issue caught the attention of the media. The results revealed that the stories were mainly reported from three angles. Below are some headline examples in support of these findings.

- (i)LGBTQ+ is a human right issue-Kamala Harris- **Ghana Web 28.03.23**

*(ii) I feel very strongly about supporting freedom, equality for all people-Harris on anti-LGBTQ+ Law- GBC online-27.03.23*

*(iii) Anti-Gay Bill: Akufo-Addo goofed in his comment to Kamala Harris-Sam George-Modern Ghana 28.03.23*

*(iv) Foh-Amoaning “fires” Akufo-Addo over his recent response to the anti-LGBT bill question-Ghana Web 03.04.23*

*(v) Speaker Slams Kamala Harris’ take on LGBTQ+ in Ghana, calls out Akufo-Addo-MyJoyOnline 28.03.23*

*(vi) Your comments on anti-gay bill undemocratic. Babgin tells Kamala Harris-Modern Ghana 28.03.23*

The above are some examples of headlines from the various news portals that covered this issue. A critical study of these headlines reveal that the media houses reported stories about this event from three different angles. These included Kamala Harris’ comments themselves, the response of the president of Ghana on her comments and the reactions of members of parliament and other prominent members of society on the issue. As seen from the headlines above, the first two (I-II) headlines are examples of news stories that reported the issue from the perspective of Kamala Harris’ comments themselves. The middle (III-IV) headlines are examples of new stories that reported the issue from the perspective of the President’s comments and reactions of members of society on his comments and finally the last set of headlines (V-VI) reported their stories from the perspective of the reactions of members of parliament and other prominent members of society on Kamala Harris’ comments. Headlines of these nature are seen throughout all the sampled news stories for the study.

### **Media Frames Used in Reporting the Stories**

Another objective here was to identify the frames that were used by the news agencies in reporting the major issues surrounding the event. Based on Entman (1993) concept of framing, the focus here was to identify how the media highlighted certain aspects of the major issues surrounding the event as more important and how these media frames reflect the general representation of LGBT issues in the Ghanaian press. From the analysis, It was found that three major frames were predominant in the news articles sampled. This included; the portrayal of Kamala Harris as an LGBT advocate, the labeling of Kamala Harris’ comments as undemocratic and unwarranted, and the portrayal of the presidents’ response as unsatisfactory.

### **Kamala Harris as an LGBT Advocate**

One of the major frames which the news articles used in reporting the story was the portrayal of Kamala Harris as an LGBT advocate. This frame was used mainly in news articles that covered the story from the perspective of Kamala Harris’ comments themselves. By using this frame, the media portrayed Kamala Harris as advocating for a cause that is considered unacceptable in Ghana. Here, it was found that most news articles reported Kamala Harris’ visit to Ghana to strengthen Ghana-US relations as a false pretense to promote LGBT agenda in the country. Below are some extracts of news stories using this frame.

1. *The Executive Secretary of the National Coalition for Proper Human Sexual Rights and Family Values, Moses Foh-Amoaning has alleged that the main **purpose** of the visit of the Vice President of the United States of America, Kamala Harris to Ghana is to promote LGBTQI- Ghana Web, 29.03.23*

2. *Vice President of the United States of America, Kamala Harris, has added her **voice** to the debate over the passage of the Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values Bill 2021 currently before Parliament to criminalize the activities of Lesbians, Gays, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer (LGBTQ) in Ghana- Pulse GH, 28.03.23*

3. *Eric Adjei contends that if Harris' coming to Ghana has anything to do with lesbians, gays, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQI) **advocacy**, Ghanaians ought to be aware of it- Ghana Web, 28.03.23*

The above are extracts from some of the news articles that promoted this frame. As seen from the extracts the main *purpose* of the US Vice President's visit to Ghana was to promote LGBT rights. The use of words such as 'purpose', 'voice' and 'advocacy' in relation to Kamala Harris and LGBT rights in these extracts suggest that the reason for her visit is motivated by pro-LGBT agenda. Here, Kamala Harris is being portrayed as an advocate of LGBT whose main purpose in Ghana is to address LGBT issues and promote the rights of people who identify with this community in Ghana. A critical look at the news stories additionally reveal that the stories do not portray Kamala Harris as a "hero" who has come to fight for the rights of people who identify as LGBT in Ghana but as an advocate of moral corruption whose sole motive for visiting is to impose western values on Ghanaians. This is in-line with the findings of Baisley' (2015) who cited Thoreson (2008) as arguing that in Africa, homosexuality is seen as foreign. A misconception she traces back to the earlier works of African Anthropologist who made assumptions that Africans were largely heterosexuals and homosexuality was foreign to their culture.

### **Kamala Harris' Comments as Undemocratic and Unwarranted**

Another major frame which was found in most of the news articles analyzed was the portrayal of Kamala Harris' comments as undemocratic and unwarranted. These frames were especially dominant in news articles who covered the story from the perspective of members of Ghana's parliament including the Speaker of Parliament as well as some prominent members of society on the issue. From these stories, it was seen that Kamala Harris' comments were seen as an intrusion in the sovereignty and democratic dispensation of the country. Below are some extracts of news articles where this frame featured.

4. *The Speaker of Parliament described her comments as **undemocratic** and "should not be tolerated." "What is democracy? That someone should have to dictate to me what is good and what is bad? Unheard of because we have decided to devalue ourselves and go begging?..." Mr. Bagbin said on Tuesday- Myjoy Online, 28.03.23*

5. *Son of Ghana's first president Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, has asked the United States to desist from **foisting** its culture and beliefs relative to same-sex relationships on Ghana- Ghana Web, 10.04.2023*

6. *The phrase ‘sovereign nation’ is again back on the debate plate, thanks to US Vice President Kamala Harris’ “human rights” comments in relation to the LGBTQ situation in the country- Myjoy Online, 31.03.2023*

As seen from the extracts above, the news articles were this frame featured the most portrayed Kamala Harris’ comments as undemocratic, echoing the words of some prominent figures in Ghana. The news articles, through this frame, portray Kamala Harris as a form of western imperialist who is engaging in cultural imperialism by pushing for the rights of people who identify as LGBT in Ghana. The use of words such as ‘undemocratic’ and ‘foisting’ suggest that Kamala Harris’ comments are viewed as imposing and forceful. “Undemocratic” is used to refer to something not agreeing to democratic principles and “foisting”, on the other hand, means forcing another to accept an idea or a belief. The use of these words in relation to her comments suggests that by advocating for LGBT rights in Ghana, Kamala Harris violates the principles of democracy and disregards the sovereignty of Ghana as indicated in the news story reported by Myjoy online. Baisley (2015) argues that one frame often used by opponents of LGBT rights is the decolonization frame that assumes that LGBT rights is a form of colonialism and needs to be resisted. A situation she calls the myth of African exceptionalism which assumes that homosexuality was introduced to Africa by colonizers. This is also in harmony with the findings of Tettey (2016) who argued that in Ghana, the media often give their platform to politicians who often promote homophobic views which promote homophobic sentiments among the general public.

### **The Presidents’ Response as Unsatisfactory**

Another frame that was found to be predominant in most of the news stories was the framing of the response of the President of Ghana on the matter as unsatisfactory. Here, it was also found that news articles where this frame were used mostly reported their stories from the perspectives of the proponents and supporters of the anti-LGBT bill, such as from the perspective of Mr. Sam George, a member of Ghana’s parliament spearheading the anti-LGBT bill and from some religious leaders. Below are some extracts as support for this finding.

7. *Mr. Nartey, George also **slammed** President Akufo-Addo for **defying** the position of his government and **shying** away from telling Kamala Harris in the face the position of the country on homosexuality...- Citinews, 28.03.23*

8. *In the view of Bishop Mensah, the president could have used the occasion to make his **Christian religious** beliefs regarding same-sex marriage known, he chose to be a bit **diplomatic** in his response to a question on homosexuality- 3News, 29.03.23*

9. *The Catholic Bishop of Konongo-Mampong, Most Reverend Joseph Osei-Bonsu, has called on President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo to be **emphatic** on his stance on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ+)- GH Times, 04.04.23*

10. *The President of the Catholic Bishop Conference, Most Revered Matthew Gyamfi has **criticized** President Nana Addo Danquah Akufo-Addo’s response to the question on LGBT in Ghana at a joint press conference with the Vice President of the US, Kamala Harris. According to him Akufo Addo should have spoken about the **culture** of Ghana and the stance of many Christians on the Proper Human Sexual Rights and Ghanaian Family Values Bill- Ghana Web, 30.03.23*

As seen from the extracts above, certain members of the Ghanaian public were dissatisfied with the response of the President of Ghana, Akufo-Addo on Ghana's position on the promotion of LGBT rights in Ghana. For instance, in the story reported by Citinews, Mr. George Nartey, a member of Ghana's parliament is reported as saying that the President was shying away from defending the anti-LGBT bill, a bill that is a product of his government. Additionally, the stories reported by 3News, and the Ghanaian (GH) Times also revealed that some religious leaders were dissatisfied with the president's position on the matter and called on him to come back with a more emphatic response one that reflects his values as a Christian. By focusing on this aspect of the story, the news articles portray the President's response as unsatisfactory and not representative of the views of the ordinary Ghanaian on homosexuality. Thereby, calling on the President to come out with a much clearer response. These findings are in-line with the conclusions of Tettey (2016) who found that religious leaders and politicians play a major role in promoting homophobic sentiments in Ghana.

## **Conclusion**

This study sought to investigate the media framing of the events surrounding Kamala Harris comments on the rights of people who identify as LGBT in Ghana. To this end, the study had two objectives, to identify what major issues surrounding Kamala Harris' LGBT related comments that attracted the most media attention and identify the frames used by the media in reporting these issues.

The results of the study showed that the issues surrounding Kamala Harris's comments that caught the most media attention were the comments made by Kamala Harris themselves, the response of the president of Ghana on the matter and the reactions of certain members of parliament on Kamala Harris' comments such as the Speaker of Parliament. The study also found that three main frames were used by the media to report their stories on the issue. These frames included; Kamala Harris as an LGBT advocate, Kamala Harris comments as undemocratic and unwarranted and the President's response as unsatisfactory.

The findings further revealed that by using these frames, the media portrayed the aspects of the story in favor of proponents of the anti-LGBT campaign in Ghana. Nartey (2022) found that in Ghana the media often portrayed people who identify as LGBT as undesirable. Thus, by focusing on these frames, in their reportage, the media portrays the LGBT as undesirable within the Ghanaian context. Baisley (2015) also found that in Ghana media frames portray the promotion of LGBT as a form of cultural imperialism and often use the decolonization frame to counteract any pro-LGBT frames in the media. Her findings were supported by the study which found that the media portrayed Kamala Harris' comments as undemocratic labelling her as a cultural imperialist. The conclusion that religious leaders and politicians play a major role in promoting homophobic sentiments in Ghana are also supported by this study (Tettey, 2016).

The following recommendations are made to media practitioners and future researchers in this field. To offer people who identify as LGBT a fair representation in the Ghanaian media space, the media must make a conscious effort to report stories concerning LGBT people from both perspectives and not solely from the perspectives of anti-LGBT proponents as revealed in this study. By doing this, the media promotes the principle of balance and fairness when reporting issues affecting people who identify as LGBT in Ghana and avoid reinforcing any biases and stereotypes affecting them. Also, future research on a topic similar to the current study can investigate social-cultural factors that encourages negative frames of LGBT

people in the Ghanaian media space and how these can be addressed. This study has implications for media and sexuality studies in Ghana.

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***Disability Art at the Exhibition “Seni Raba Menggambar Suara”***

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**Abstract**

People who are visually impaired from birth cannot see two-dimensional visual objects and do not even have visual memories in their lives. This paper focuses on the recognition of the visually impaired (since birth). This research uses the method of literature study from the Indonesian Visual Art Archive (IVAA) and data reduction with interviews. This exhibition activity has the opportunity to provide an aesthetic experience of blind psychology as a form of education. An important finding in this research is the aesthetic experience of disability in the stage space feeling the darkness of life through dark space and audio sound. The combination of insight into the psychological experience of blindness (since birth) and the development of audio access is a way to understand the aesthetics of "Disability Art". The conclusion is the development of art as a space to recognize disability in society, and the perspective of understanding disability art. This research can be a further study for future researchers by further reviewing audience responses using questionnaires as validity.

Keywords: Aesthetic Disability, Art Disability, Blind

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## Introduction

Disability art in art spaces from the perspective of most people in Yogyakarta, such as "the artist paints with his feet", "paints with his mouth", "dances with his deafness", and "paints with his blindness". In addition to these contexts, there are also activities that invite people with disabilities that are labeled as inclusive art activities. However, there are still spaces for activities and artworks that do not consider accessibility as an important context of inclusion, as well as a large view of the context of "disability" which is highlighted only from a medical perspective with different abilities. Disability is not only the context of medically detected conditions that can affect disability artworks that the author will discuss as the focus of the research.

Disability art is by/for disability, referring to Hickey-Moody, not works that tell stories about disability but are not made by disabled artists and vice versa, disabled artists who do not depict disability topics (Hickey-Moody, 2021). The recognition of disability as part of society can be a form of public pedagogy as described by Hickey-Moody in 2009 and continued in 2021 who concluded that disability art as a public pedagogy to raise awareness of issues, theories, and the development of disability studies into a separate field. The context of Hickey-Moody's public pedagogy in the art exhibition space as an offer to view disability art will be discussed in this research.

The research on disability art in this paper is based on the exhibition "Seni Raba Menggambar Suara". The event was held at the IVAA building. Activities were held on June 15-July 15, 2022, by Muhammad Haryanto (Nanang) who is visually impaired and collaborated with Ki Samidjan, Kus Sri Antoro, Mrs. Kawit, and Bodi IA. The activities included Wayang Disabilitas held at the opening on June 15, 2022, a discussion on disability advocacy on June 24, 2022, and a discussion on disability art on July 15, 2022. The term "Seni Raba Menggambar Suara" comes from the word "Raba", which is the access of the blind in recognizing the shape/surrounding environment through touching with their hands or sticks, while "Suara" is the hearing access they use in recognizing something and expressing what they feel directly/verbally and online through voice notes on their handphones. Overall, "Seni Raba Menggambar Suara" is an artwork that represents the voice communication of the visually impaired that is realized in visuals using tactile access. The exhibition is a project of the Indonesian Visual Art Archive (IVAA) that draws on the psychology of a blind person. IVAA chose Muhammad Hariyanto who is usually called Nanang. He is a blind person who has experienced sensory visual impairment since birth and certainly has no visual memory. Interestingly, the disability art activities in this project invite visitors to recognize the disability of the visually impaired from birth through a dark room and audio sound.

Previous studies from various countries have analyzed research topics that aim to be perceived by the visually impaired. Touch as an aesthetic experience about The Blind Astronomer Exhibition (2013) by South African artist Berco Wilsenach participated in inviting visitors to engage with the works through the sense of touch, using the method of experience that blind people bring with art, a combination of insights from psychology experiments so as to encourage tactile encounters as enriching and enhancing ways of understanding aesthetics, and simultaneously visual and tactile (Lauwrens, 2019). Audio description in the visual arts, Self-portrait of Dora Maar, the research translates images into words. A case study of the Self-portrait of Dora Maar, about eye tracking is briefly described and the museum's audio description for the blind and visually impaired is introduced (Wendorff, 2021). The language of the camera in The Favourite's audio-description (El

lenguaje de la cámara en la audiodescripción de *The Favourite*), this study analyzes when and how ONCE describes the language of the camera in the film *The Favorite* (Yorgos Lanthimos, 2018) to identify the advantages and disadvantages due to sound redundancy that can interfere with the understanding of the message and the artistic experience for the visually impaired (González M.C, 2023).

The explanation above is one of the most common research topics discussed about accessibility/intent to be received/felt by the blind (Wendorff, 2021; González M.C, 2023) and how the tactile understanding of the blind as an idea of aesthetic understanding (Lauwrens, 2019). In contrast to the topic that will be discussed by the author in this paper, taking from the angle of activities sourced from the visually impaired as subjects and their work as objects, Hickey-Moody continues how the artistic practice of disability art invites audiences to recognize disability as a public pedagogy and opens the discussion of disability art views more on the group view of medical inclusion spaces.

### **Focus Method**

This research focuses on using descriptive qualitative, using a case study approach by drawing conclusions or generalizing phenomena or populations from cases (Johnson, 2005) Case one is the view of disability artworks from blind psychology at the "Pameran Seni Raba Menggambar Suara" and other related cases to complement it. Other cases are related to finding out the perspective of the background activities, the perspective of performing disability artworks, and the value of disability as a public pedagogy. Using data collection from the IVAA YouTube media "Seni Raba Menggambar suara", catalog documents, and in-depth interviews. Data sources through YouTube with the title "Pementasan Wayang Disabilitas" which tells the story of Muhammad Hariyanto as a blind person who has a great interest in art and Kus Sri Antoro who assists the introduction of art media, as well as Ki Samidjan as the artist of the Mbah Ki Samidjan Wayang Waste craft. The research uses data reduction according to Miles and Huberman in Sugiyono (2005: 91) and source triangulation to determine validity according to Denzin in Sugiyono (2007).

## Findings and Discussion



Figure 1: Katalog Pameran “Seni Raba Menggambar Suara”  
Source: Indonesia Visual Art Archive

The opening performance work at the exhibition "Seni Raba Menggambar Suara" entitled "Wayang Disabilitas" is one of the cases of disability art that is mostly carried out by medical space disabilities that does not stop there later as a public pedagogy that will be discussed further. IVAA is the Indonesia Visual Art Archive the institution that conducts this project. The background of this project is based on the topic of disability, which often becomes a space for discussion, which then continues with an archive exhibition at Taman Budaya Yogyakarta in 2019. The exhibition showed that art space activities involving disability were minimal. Therefore, IVAA organized a pantomime theater performance project from the deaf and mute community entitled 'Ba(Wa)yang', and the discussion led to the planning of an experiential activity process to introduce the visually impaired.

The basic idea came about when a visually impaired person whose first profession was as a massage therapist shared his concerns. The visually impaired person, who has had a sensory impairment since birth, played a central role in the IVAA workshop project. The reason for the urgency is that blind people who have obstacles from birth cannot justify, have no visual memory in their lives, and have stories that can be shared with people as a form of social concern for disability. This provided a new idea for IVAA to open up opportunities to introduce visually impaired people to the community. Dwi Marianto, the curator of the

exhibition said, "This exhibition is a way of being. Different and unique is natural, as the potential of beauty itself," described in the exhibition catalog book, *Image One*. This project only uses the method of meeting one person with a visual sensory impairment since birth, and people without disabilities who collaborate to introduce elements of fine art in the making of works such as wayang, painting, and, narrating the story of the blind experience as a disability art performance. However, this paper focuses on the aesthetic of the audience through the analogy of blindness, as well as the psychology of the experience as a form of disability art.

### **1. Disability Art of “Wayang Disabilitas”**

A work of performativity in the form of a 'storytelling drama' about disability issues entitled "Wayang Disabilitas". The setting of this exhibition creates a space of disability, where the exhibition invites the audience to experience blindness. The performance does not use wayang as its medium, although there is a project to make wayang a three-dimensional work on display. In the exhibition setting, the artist creates a space of disability, where he invites the audience to experience blindness. The puppets are not staged because they use a metaphorical system of blindness in a dark space and audio access for 'storytelling drama', as well as instrumental editing. The context of wayang in taking the name of the Mahabharata story character 'Wayang Destarasta' is a metaphor for the artist's experience as a blind person, while Gandari (a puppet character who initially did not experience blindness like the audience) is a metaphor for the audience to experience blindness through the space of a blind puppet show. The characters of the artist's friends (Desta in the performance) are replaced with the names of puppet characters such as Pandu, Boris, and Sengkuni.

### **2. Disability Art of “Bayang Disabilitas”**

The name "Wayang Disabilitas" is the context of its performativity, not the physical puppets or the physical shadow of the puppets, but the shadow in the context of the imagination imagined by the audience through narratives or tales that raise issues of disability and works of art in the context of blindness. The physical position of the puppets is not visible, the audience is invited to feel the sensation of being blind. This concept invites visitors to contemplate and imagine learning aesthetics through works that have tactile access from the blind. Dwi Marianto says, "Trying different media is a virtue," he explains in the exhibition catalog book in picture one.

### **3. Disability Aesthetics Encounter Techniques**

The technique used in the aesthetic meeting of disabilities with visitors is carried out in a dark room covered with a black cloth/backdrop which is carried out at the beginning of visitors entering the IVAA Building until the disability puppet performance is finished. This activity system invites visitors to recognize the dark atmosphere, and, those with disabilities who are visually impaired and rely on access to communication with sound. The Hickey-Moody perspective is an offer to open the analysis of the performativity of "Wayang Disabilitas".

Through this system, it is similar to the idea in the theory of "reverse integrity" (Hickey-Moody, 2021). The theory is a collaboration of meeting 'with' disability and 'without' disability into an inclusive work of art. The second theory "culture of intellectual disability" is introduced more specifically with an intellectual disability or Down syndrome through dance performances as a disability artwork that has the context of public pedagogy offered by

Hickey-Moody. An understanding can be drawn from Hickey-Moody's second theory, which explains the definition of what is meant by "Behavior Disabilities". This is to open up accessible opportunities and recognize the barriers experienced by people with disabilities. Opportunities that can be developed open up new discoveries for a person to justify, appreciate, and express the experience of disability as a discourse in any medium, including art. Disability art, as a medium of disability discourse to the public, can be studied as an understanding of 'public pedagogy' according to Hickey-Moody.

#### 4. The Value of the Disability Aesthetic “Wayang Disabilitas”

Disability aesthetics can influence political consciousness/decision-making policies in viewing people with disabilities or can be understood as Hickey-Moody's offer of "public pedagogy". The encounter with the audience affects the encounter of the work, where the disability aesthetic system emerges. The political consciousness/public pedagogy in the value of this project finds awareness of the story narrated through access to the dark space of the blindness metaphor.

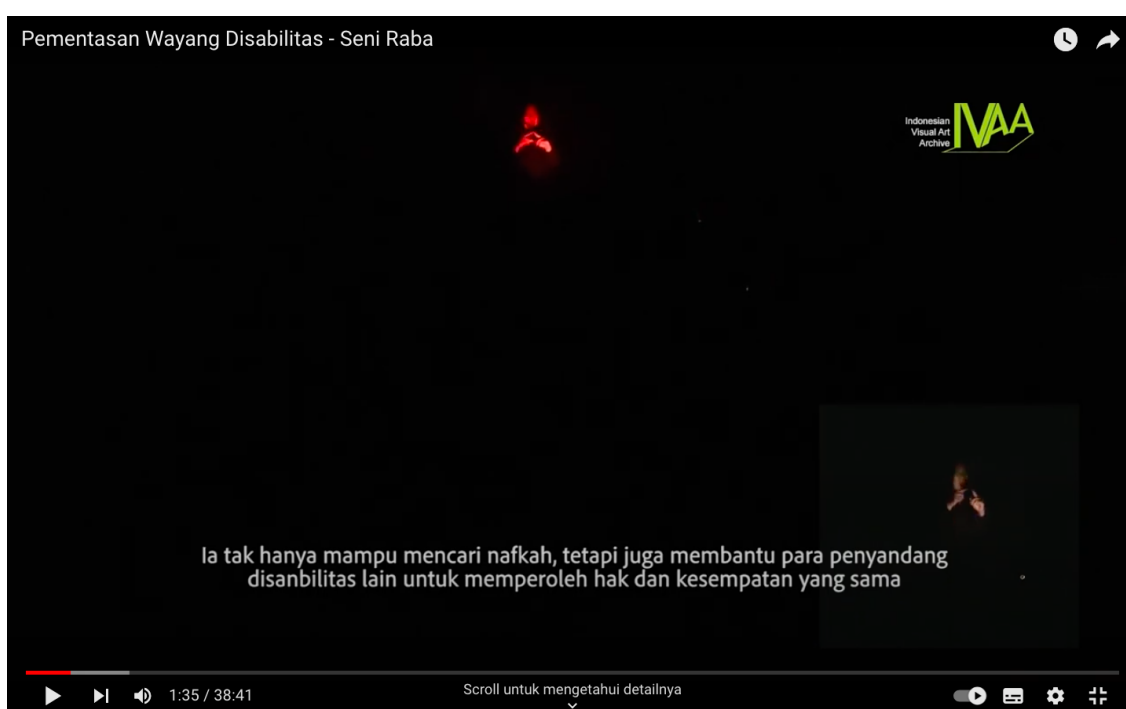


Figure 2: Pementasan Wayang Disabilitas

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JTIsbcyxwMg>

The initial story tells the story of Desta, a millennial child who has not yet entered school age. One day he plays with his friends Pandu, Sengkuni, and Boris. Desta is carried on a bicycle by Pandu. Desta, who knew the thrill of cycling, wanted to feel the control of the bicycle, and after Pandu finished saying "Can you?" to him, not one minute later the bicycle they were both riding fell into the river. The other friends made fun of him by saying "No wonder you fell, you're blind" Desta who didn't know his condition and the term "blind" heard it was confused and asked about it. They laughed and answered "A blind person is disabled" and made fun of him while cheering "blind..blind..blind..blind...blind". Finally, Desta went home and told the incident to his mother. His mother explained that Desta was not disabled and only differed in the ability to see in various ways while his mother had eyes only.

Growing up, Desta Melenial Usia Anak learned about her blindness during junior high school, because her teacher taught her to use a cane. When Desta asked, "Why do I use a cane mom"? His teacher replied, "You are blind, so you have to learn to use a stick". This made Desta realize his different condition. After graduating from school, Desta could paint, read, and write. When he got home, Desta asked his mother how his friends were doing. Suddenly, his mother did not mind explaining that Pandu had glaucoma, so his sensory vision was impaired. Then there was another friend of his who had a disability due to an accident, such as a broken leg and a broken hand. After a few days, Desta visited his friends to invite collaborate in painting the art of touch. In the end, Desta the Adult Millennial did not carry his heartache and invited his friends who had made fun of him in the past to be creative without being burdened by his limitations according to most people. That is the essence of the story of "Wayang Disabilitas" by Muhammad Haryanto (Nanang).

The above discussion of the narrative flow of the drama "Wayang Disabilitas", the representation of issues and experiences of blind artists so that there is an encounter that raises the aesthetics of disability that can be taken as a public pedagogy for the audience, which makes Hickey-Moody an offer of understanding in this discussion. Another case of the disability aesthetic encounter system, borrowing the perspective of Sigmund Freud through the unconscious relationship between the artist and the audience forms an unconscious encounter of imagination. The artist's personal unconscious while telling the story in the drama performance "Wayang Disabilitas" in remembering his experience and vice versa for the audience in accepting it into the atmosphere as a blind disability. The Hickey-Moody working system relationship that meets between the theory of unconsciousness and the meeting of the theory of "reverse integrity" then shows novelty as a pedagogy when finding things that are accessible to someone who has a disability and do not impose and does not harm.

The condition of the wayang story is bullied which can be learned as public pedagogy, that a person's condition is not a mistake and cannot be used as an exception in socializing, but how we recognize them so that they can be part of the social community. Disability, of course, everyone can experience, such as when someone has a certain disease/accident so that they have limitations told in the performance of "Wayang Disabilitas" by Desta's friends as adults. Everyone unconsciously has limitations/disabilities, how to choose friendships, companions, and limited interactions or places that are excluded by someone, as well as religious space groups, economic classes, ethnicity/race, and customs. These have unconsciously created appropriate inclusion spaces in their groups since humans have existed.

Syntagmatic through three analyses of disability artwork, system, and aesthetic value of narrative as public pedagogy. Art has a role as a connector to recognize everyone's "behavioral disabilities" so as to open up inclusion policies to find offensive subversions. There is also the problem that most of the views of disability artworks in the medical space inclusion group (physical and mental barriers) can be said to be different disabilities/disabilities. This can affect unique findings due to medical group conditions such as the introduction of blindness, painting using feet, hands, mouth, or affect techniques. Sigmund Freud's offending perspective asserts that the "disability" movement grows out of group barriers that are not accepted by society in socializing which of course concerns all humans (Oliver, 2012). Therefore, disability art is not limited to the medical disability group, although most belong to that group.

## Conclusion

The introduction of the experience of people with visual impairments who have experienced obstacles since birth as public pedagogy through the disability artwork of the Wayang Disabilitas performance by inviting visitors to enter the experience of "Aesthetic Disability" in a dark room and audio sound access, as well as sign language translator facilities for deaf people. An important finding in this paper, "Behavior Disability" is the author's proposed understanding of the two-source theory by Hickey-Moody in 2021. The opportunities that can be developed open up new discoveries for people to justify, appreciate, and express the experience of disability as a discourse in any medium, including art. Here, disability is present in all humans who have unconsciously categorized themselves/limited themselves and have exceptions to social barriers since humans have existed. So disability art can be raised from various categories of race/ethnicity, religion, economy, education class, and other social categories. This makes disability art a channel for public pedagogy in the context of disability itself. The research limitations add the context of understanding disability art to Hickey-Moody's theory in 2021 and open the view that disability art is not only in the medical space.

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***Music and Choreography Metaphors in Spoken Language Rhythm Modelling and Their Application to Computer-Assisted Pronunciation Training for Mora-Timed Japanese***

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**Abstract**

The article describes the development and assessment of a computer-assisted pronunciation training (CAPT) environment to improve prosody practice focusing its particular setup for Japanese. Users interact with the system by replicating model utterances, while the system feedback is provided in the form of pitch curves contrasting the learner's pronunciation against the model. Complementing the pitch graphs with the audible output and quantitative metrics provide objective evaluation of pitch quality. However, we observed that learners of Japanese, a mora-timed language, faced significant challenges in understanding and applying the feedback effectively, since Japanese rhythmic patterns are not encoded well in the pitch curves. To address this, we explore the use of additional instructive feedback models such as musical and even choreographic notations. Along with rhythmically enhanced phonetic transcription, these interfaces have sufficient flexibility to include syncopations and silence. Music notation has standard features, which can represent the important components of language rhythm including the time signatures capturing the assigned rhythm for a phrase, the notes symbolizing variations in pitch, and the timed rests that can be helpful in visualizing the mapping of the phrase to rhythmic units. We share practical CAPT scenarios supporting pronunciation exercises in Japanese. In particular, we use examples of Yodel music to model the phrases characterized by complex language rhythmic patterns. Vocal music can be helpful and inject fun into the learning process. We also noticed that rhythmic structure of utterances can be described with dance movement patterns, for example using known graphic dance notations.

Keywords: Speech Visualization, Language Rhythm, Pronunciation Training, Music Notation, Choreographic Notation, Cross-Disciplinary Study

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## Introduction

Present-day intelligent language learning environment are complex multiaspect and cross-disciplinary systems involving the contributions from various areas of knowledge and expertise, naturally including language instruction, applied linguistics, psychology, and phonology, but also the recent technology achievements enabled by speech processing algorithms, human-machine interfaces, multimedia technology, mobile and communication solutions, to mention a few (Figure 1). Instruments delivered by the technology advances created new learning possibilities, which do not simply engage the digitization of learning materials but create new scenarios, which are impossible to support without using intelligent technologies of knowledge representation management.

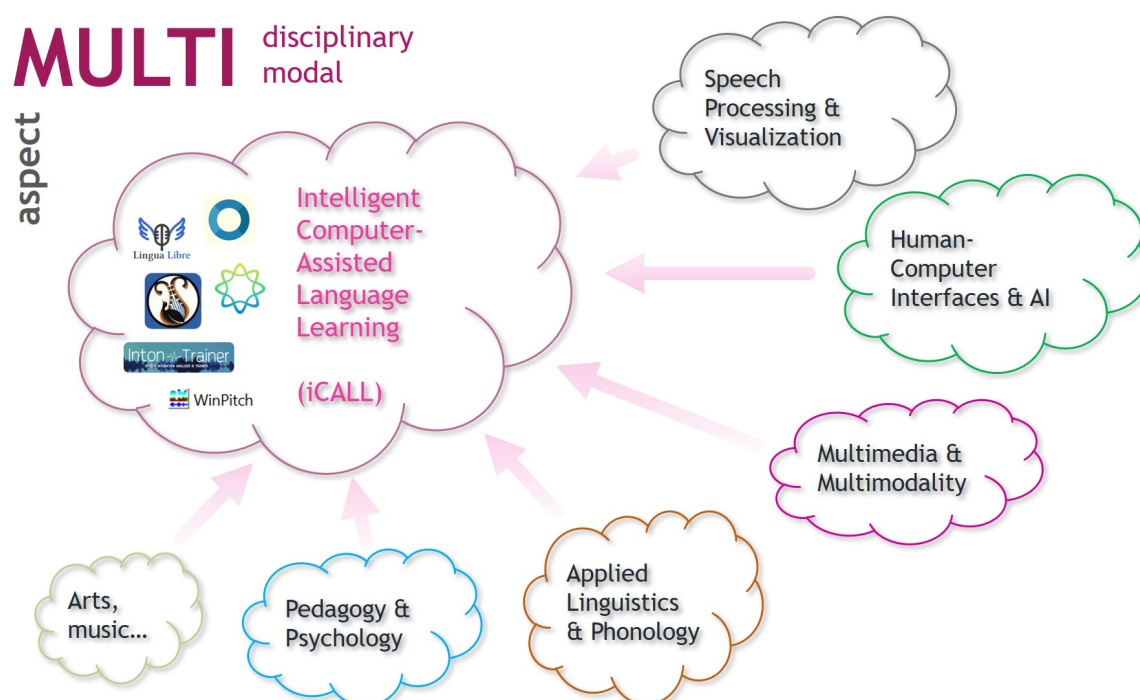


Figure 1: A variety of disciplines contributing to iCALL.

In addition to the symbiotic connection between non-technical education and computer and software engineering, achieving the higher levels of multimodality of learning system, improving descriptive and instructive feedback production, and their better personalization can be significantly enhanced through leveraging the user's personal experience beyond the pure scope of language learning. In this perspective, models and metaphors borrowed from arts, music, and literature can provide a novel more engaging learning experience. By integrating these disciplines into computer-assisted pronunciation training (CAPT), we cater to different learning styles and cognitive preferences, allowing learners to interact with the material in more personalized and intuitive ways. The incorporation of familiar aesthetic and rhythmic structures from the arts may serve as mnemonic devices, aiding in the retention and reproduction of linguistic patterns, such as prosody. This interdisciplinary approach not only enriches the language learning landscape but also helps to foster a deeper appreciation for the intricacies and interconnectedness to the fundamental principles of art and music. This innovative fusion, therefore, holds promise for more effective and enjoyable language acquisition experiences.

Intelligent computer-assisted pronunciation training (iCAPT) environments represent a particular class of iCALL systems with their specific challenges. CAPT feedback personalization, as well as the problems of training and evaluating the pronunciation remain an important topic in the scope of language instruction research.

In process of developing CAPT environment based on pitch digital processing (Pyshkin et al., 2019), and its multilingual setup for using for prosody practice in languages from different phonology groups, we discovered the numerous challenges in adequate modeling of language rhythm required to tailor the multimodal feedback to language learners, particularly for syllable-timed and mora-timed languages. The following text examines possible ways to enhance the CAPT system feedback at both descriptive and instructive levels through the incorporation of music- and choreography-based explanations to the CAPT exercise interfaces, to address the above-mentioned challenges.

Nowadays, implementing a successful learning environment often assumes exploring the indirect connections between the disciplines, incorporating gamification scenarios into the learning workflow, using technology solutions enhancing the feedback from the learning system to its users as ironically depicted in the famous scene of George Cukor's *"My Fair Lady"* movie with Audrey Hepburn and Rex Harrison, where Prof. Higgins used a candle for evaluating the correct pronunciation of a plosive sound (Figure 2). This candle is a humorous and apt metaphor of the cross-disciplinary application of engineering technology to pronunciation training; in a sense, that device is a prototype of a technology-assisted pronunciation training system.



Figure 2: Pronunciation training feedback can involve engineering devices.

In our research, we are trying to bring music and even choreography models to language learning process. Indeed, music and even choreography are arts, where rhythm stands for an essential systematic feature, therefore, applying music and choreography metaphors for modeling and visualization of mora-timed rhythmic patterns can complement other known ways of pitch visualization, so that to address such language features, which are usually out of possibilities in traditional pronunciation training systems, including syncopations, necessary periods of silence, superimposition of mora-timed phrase to a characteristic rhythmic template, all necessary for meaningful spoken language interpretation.

### ***StudyIntonation* CAPT Environment at a Glance**

The testbed for the current study is provided by *StudyIntonation*, a pronunciation training environment developed in the frame of ongoing project on using signal and speech processing algorithms applied to the construction of prosody-based CAPT system (Bogach et

al., 2021). Figure 3 depicts a simplified system architecture that illustrates the flow of interaction and data through various components of the CAPT system. Starting from the learner's interface, the diagram likely shows the process by which the learner's spoken input is captured, processed, and analyzed.

The main interface of the system accessed by language learners is provided by the mobile application, enabling the user's access to the pronunciation exercises, each of them is supported by the plotted pitch graphs representing both the model utterance recorded by native speakers and the user's attempts visually contrasted against the model. Pitch visualization and its further evaluation is possible because of using digital signal processing algorithms and dynamic time warping for pitch curve analysis, the latter enabling constructing pitch similarity metrics.

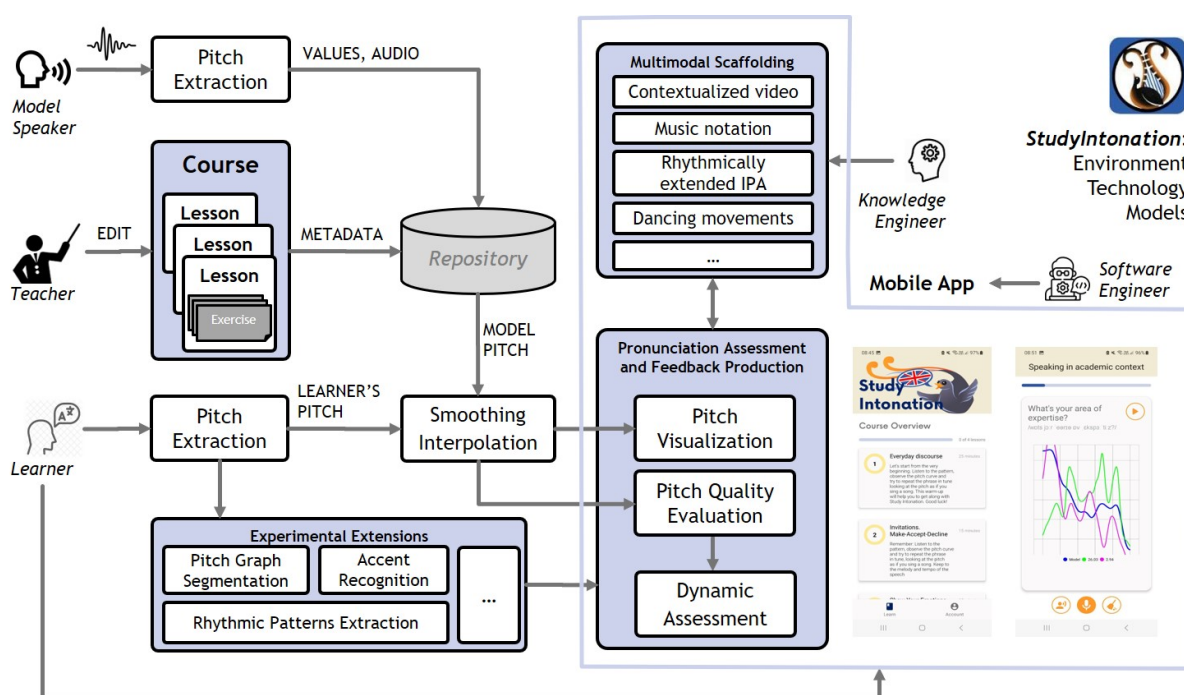


Figure 3: StudyIntonation CAPT system architecture.

As described in our earlier work (Mikhailava et al., 2022), there are many practical ways to harness a higher level of multimodality through tailoring both the CAPT interface and CAPT feedback production, including support for contextualized attitudinal exercises, using model video, learner's recorded pitch reproduction; and, the most important in the scope of this study, finding better ways for utterance rhythm visualization, and rhythm-based pronunciation improvement recommendations. Though pitch curves, phonetic transcription, and pitch similarity metrics all together provide an objective intonation visualization, they lack an instructive value and do not completely address the aspects of CAPT personalization and support of variety of learning styles.

### Music Notation as an Instrument to Model Language Prosody

Using graphic representations similar to music notation in the application domains other than music itself is not a novel concept. The mathematics of music provides a formalized language that meticulously structures timing and rhythm. As brilliantly pointed by John Thelwall as far as in 1812, *"Nothing is in present better ascertained or more clearly demonstrated, than the*



*mathematical proportion of the bars of music*” (Thelwall, 1812). Etienne-Jules Marey, the French scholar and physiologist (who was one the firsts to accommodate a music-like notation to describe movements), admired music notation (Marey, 1868) as a universal language which is a graphic expression of “*very fugitive, delicate, and complex movements, no language could express*” (translated from French – E.P.). “Old times” considerations of Thelwall and Marey are in harmony with more recent research on applying music models to mora-timed language constructions: “*Radically divergent contexts can share similar musical structures. As musicians know, feeling the sense of rhythm, and sharing rhythmic structures from beyond one’s own shores creates a bridge across languages and cultures*” (Gilbert & Yoneoka, 2000).

### **Back to History**

In Thelwall’s work (1812), the concept of cadence (a central component of music harmony) was extended for its application to language prosody:

*I lay it down, therefore, as the first principle and basis of all rhythmical theory and analysis, and of all instruction for the improvement of human utterance and composition,- that a cadence; is a portion of tuneable sound, beginning heavy and ending light;-Secondly, that a foot is a syllable, or number of syllables, occupying the space or duration of such a cadence.* (Thelwall, 1812)

In turn, in his “*The Essentials of Phonetics*” (Ellis, 1848), John Ellis defined a formalized model to describe a spoken language rhythm with (using contemporary computing definition) a temporal ternary model for English rhythmic pattern definition (Figure 4).

We wil ilustrat ðez rzmáres bj a fu llnz from ðe begíniq ov Miltun, not distíngwifin sub-acsénted silab'lz az suq, but recniq ðem amún ðe acsénted silab'lz, in ørder tu simplifj ør analisis, az far az ðe rit'm iz consérnd. ðe grupin ov ðe wurdz iz ðon bj hjfenz.

Ov mánz férst disobédiens, and ðe fruát	0-1-, ½-0,01,00-0-,0-1-	(1)
Ov ðát forbið'n tré, huuz mórtal tást	0-½-,01,0-½-,0-1,0-1-	(2)
Brót ðét intu ðe wúrlð, and ól ør wó	½-1-,00-,0-1-,0-½-,0-1-	(3)
Wid lós ov 'Ed'n, til wun gráter máu	0-½-,0-1,0-0-,0-1,0-1-	(4)
Restór us, and regán ðe blísful sét,	01-,0-0-,01-,0-1,0-1-	(5)

Figure 4: Rhythmic patterns from “*The Essentials of Phonetics*” (Ellis, 1848).

Figure 5 is composed from two examples of simplified music notation for modeling quite complex declamation rhythmic patterns that we can find in the amazing works of William Thomson (Thomson, 1904).

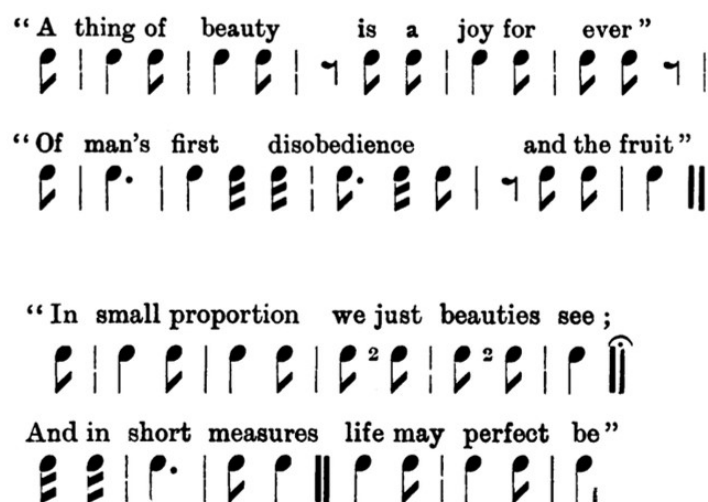


Figure 5: Simplified music notation for language rhythm modeling (Thomson, 1904).

The historical insights into the musicality of language resonate with the aims of modern CAPT systems. Applying music notation to language prosody in CAPT thus taps into time-tested methods, providing learners with a familiar visual and auditory schema that can capture the subtleties of pronunciation from phonetics to prosody. This blending of tradition with technology showcases a multidisciplinary strategy, marrying historical language theories with contemporary learning solutions in a concise, effective teaching methodology.

### ***Mapping of Rhythmic and Syllable Patterns***

For mora-timed languages such as Japanese, understanding spoken language rhythmic divisions of the utterance into portions (known as language isochrony) is one of the critical elements of spoken language proficiency. Japanese poetry could be considered as an excellent natural source for understanding the rhythmic formatting of spoken Japanese. Many know that traditional Japanese *haiku* is composed based on regular syllable-based model, where 17 syllables (mora) are split across three small portions of poetic text with the first one of five, the second one of seven, and the third one of five syllables, thus making the  $5+7+5=17$  mora structure. Fewer know that for the purposes of authentic spoken language interpretation and haiku translation, one needs to understand that the mora patterns are not the same as rhythmic patterns (Gilbert & Yoneoka, 2000). In fact, to assure a correct haiku reading, 17-mora verse must be mapped to a 24-unit three bars four beat rhythmic pattern as Figure 6 illustrates using the example of famous Basho’s “Frog” haiku: “*An old pond – / A frog dives in / Water sound*” as translated in (Basho et. al., 2006). Only because of such mapping, the rests and syncopations can be respected for appropriate meaningful reading.

Interestingly, though the effect of haiku reading for learning Japanese rhythmic patterns is quite obvious, the implications of Japanese haiku reading can be helpful not only for learners of Japanese language, but also for English language education, especially by Japanese learners. Thus, there is a definitive cross-cultural context (Kono, 2011).



ふるいけや  
かわずとびこむ  
みずのおと



Figure 6: Haiku: mapping a 17-mora verse to 24-unit rhythmic pattern.

### ***Modeling Japanese Rhythmic Patterns: Combining Music Notation With Rhythmically Formatted IPA***

The above mentioned rhythmically enhanced phonetic transcription introduced by Ellis (Ellis, 1848) is one of first examples of using additional rhythmic formatting of language prosody. While using common phonetic models (such as IPA), many Japanese language textbooks still lack a good instrument to introduce the rhythmic patterns. Computerized language learning systems could serve as research environments to experiment with different approaches to enhance traditional phonetic transcription with rhythmic information, for example, as shown in Figure 7.

Kana (Phonology feature)	Extended IPA Pitch within the pendulum rhythm	Time signature
おはようございます (mora)	(o-ha)-(jo:-go)-(dza-i)-(ma-sui)-(●-●)-(●-●) (LH)-(HHH)-(HH)-(HL)-(●●)-(●●)	3/4
こんにちは (mora)	(ko-n)-(ni-tji)-(βa-●)-(●-●) (LH)-(HH)-(H●)-(●●)	4/4
こうえいです (long vowel)	(ko:-)-(e:-)-(de-sui)-(●-●) (LH)-(HH)-(HL)-(●●)	4/4
しゅっぱついたします (staccato)	(ʃu-p-pa-tsu)-(i-ta-fi-ma)-(sui-●-●-●) (LHHH)-(LHHH)-(L●●●)	4/4

Figure 7: A sketch of an approach to extend IPA with rhythmic information.

Such enhancements can naturally be presented along pitch graphs, model speech video recording, and music notation, the latter can be more beneficial for those users having at least elementary music background (as it can be seen from the *StudyIntonation* mobile app screenshots for Japanese pronunciation training presented in Figure 8).

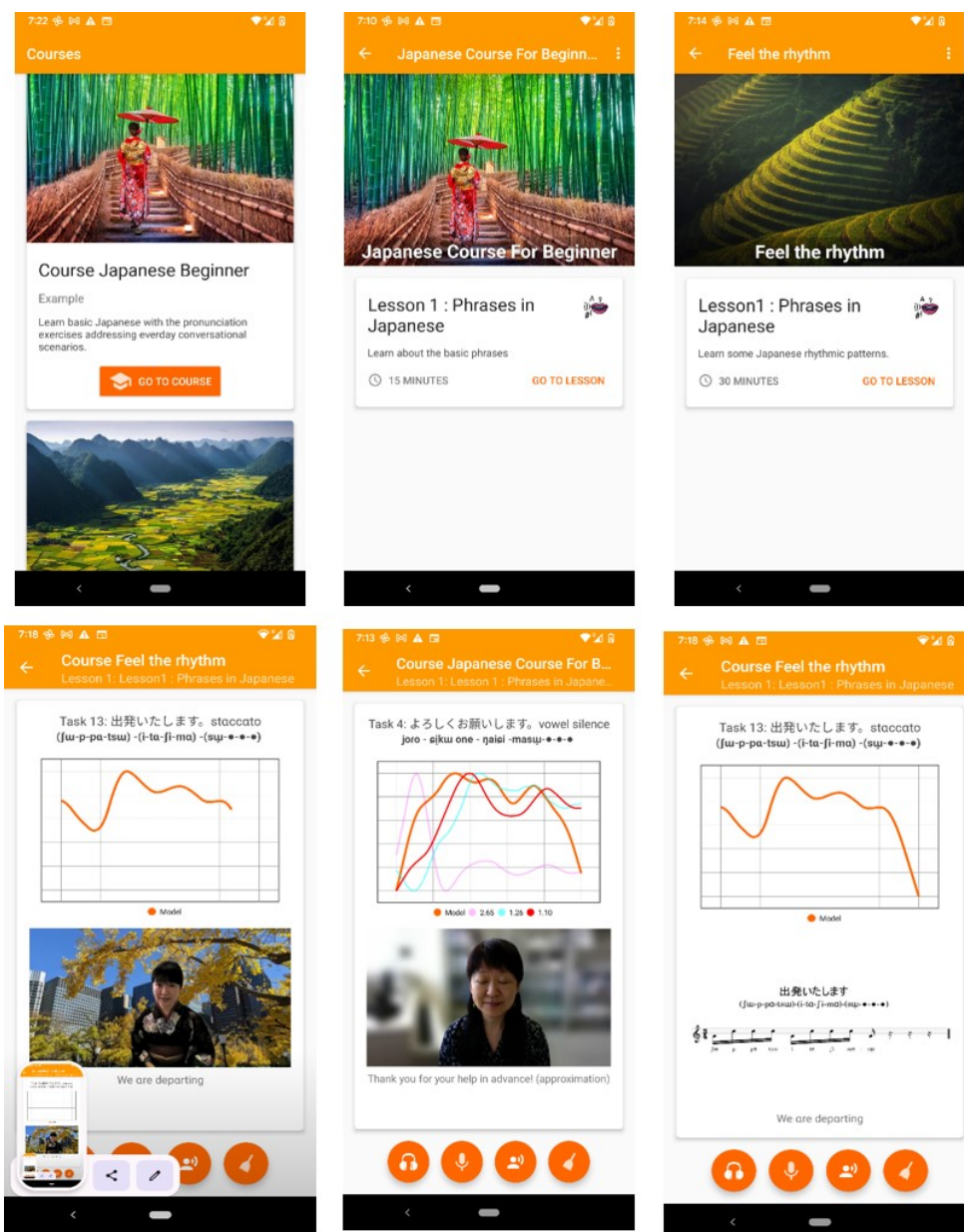


Figure 8: *StudyIntonation* mobile app interface for learning Japanese.

Music notation has standard features, which can be helpful in representing the important components of language rhythm including the time signatures that can naturally represent the constant rhythm assigned to a phrase, the notes that can represent pitch higher and lower tones, and the timed rests that can be helpful in visualizing the mapping of the phrase to rhythmic units (Pyshkin et al., 2023). As we demonstrate with the examples of Yodel music (Figure 9) used to model the phrases characterized by complex language rhythmic patterns, vocal music can be helpful and can also inject fun into pronunciation training.

Original melody, <https://www.nicovideo.jp/watch/sm31238029>, 0'48



Rhythmic markup for a phrase in Japanese

[Is it a little strange? Is that so? Well then, I have no choice but to fix it]

1 mora=♪



Figure 9: Constructing complex rhythmic patterns using Yodel music.

Breath control, an often-overlooked aspect in language learning, is crucial for mastering the ebb and flow of a language's rhythm. By engaging with the breathing patterns intrinsic to singing, learners can develop a more intuitive feel for the pauses and stresses within a language's melodic structure. This kinesthetic connection helps internalize the prosody of the target language, enabling learners to feel the melody in their speech.

### Connecting Music Rhythmic Patterns to Choreography Elements

As singing can contribute to breathing control improvements, the similar effect can be reached by body movement exercises. Are there better body movements connected to musical patterns and rhythmic models rather than movements of dancing?! Indeed, why not to try to model the rhythmic structure of utterance with dancing patterns, represented in some way, for example using known graphic notations.

### *Dancing Patterns for Speech Rhythm Modeling: A Primer*

Unlike integration music representations to pronunciation training exercises shown in Figure 8, incorporation of dancing patterns is not currently supported in our CAPT system and presented here as a potential future research direction. Exploring the kinaesthetic synergy between dance and speech, we posit that learners may benefit from the integration of dance movements to reinforce language rhythm and pronunciation. Based on Steiner's "*Lemons Lemons Lemons Lemons Lemons*" (Steiner, 2016), the Royal Ballet's 2023 production "*The Limit*" (Winship, 2023) nicely demonstrates how the spoken text can be explicitly included to the choreographic construction in a way that choreography shapes the text and creates a visual and meaningful reflection of a language rhythm. The possibility to apply this concept to language learning (thus, in opposite direction) pivots on the premise that learners could map the dynamic features of pronunciation—such as stress, intonation, and timing—to corresponding dance steps and sequences. By embodying the rhythm of speech through dance, learners may discover a more visceral understanding of the language's prosody. Dance, with its structured movement patterns, offers a tangible counterpart to the abstract rhythms of speech, providing a physicality to pronunciation that could enhance memory retention and intuitive learning.

For this discussion, we took the pronunciation exercise for utterance repetitions of “Good morning!” in Japanese. A possible way to help learners to feel the correct rhythmic model of a phrase is to encourage them to repeat the phrase several times, while keeping the necessary rhythmically adjusted moments of silence between the repeated utterances. The rhythmic pattern of a single phrase becomes better understood after repeating the same phrase within one pronunciation exercise attempt, just as one repeats movements or movement sequences in dancing phrase. Figure 10 illustrates a possibility to map the spoken phrase rhythmic pattern to the repeated sequence of relatively simple ballet steps for Japanese “Good morning!”. Indeed, why not to begin the day with a sequence of dance steps?

おはようございます  
(o-ha)-(jo-go)-(dza-i)-(ma-su)-(●-●)-(●-●)

Repeat (e.g., from other leg)

*Tendu temps lié*  
*Pas de basque*  
*Pirouette*  
*Pas de bourré*

Figure 10: Following phrasal rhythm with ballet steps.

### ***Dance Graphic Notations: Case Study***

As soon as we want to introduce choreography elements to complement a music and phonetic rhythmic pattern, we need to find a suitable approach to enable such elements inside a pronunciation training application. Model video would be a perfect way to incorporate choreography patterns to the system, however the exercises could already be linked with multimedia frames including contextualized video and audio recordings, and the system itself is not assumed to be a dancing virtual instructor. Therefore, searching for kinds of schematically presented diagrams or simplified images looks like more affordable, from the perspective of its practical feasibility, as well as organizational, implementational, and (by and large) computational expenses. Such diagrams could be sketched using one of known graphic notations. Surprisingly, in the long history of dance notation, there are not so many practical approaches applicable to our case. Figure 11 draws on a timeline-mapped visualization of the brief history of such notations.

The ornamentally-beautiful model known as Beauchamp–Feuillet notation was apparently the first documented formalized system to describe Baroque dance movements (mostly footwork) and staging, where Pierre Beauchamp, the French choreographer, dancer, musician and composer states for a probable inventor (Powell, 1995), while Raoul Auger Feuillet, choreographer and dance theoretician, put the approach to practically usable description and implementation (Feuillet, 1701). Presenting the movements along with (and across) music lines was one of innovations to clarify the relation of the steps to the music.



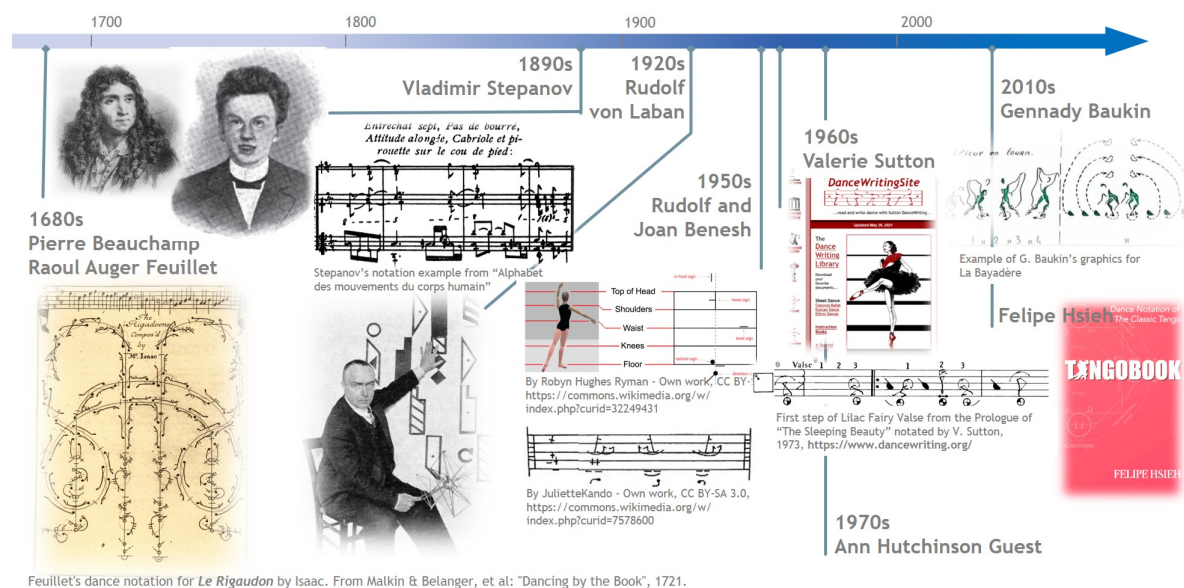


Figure 11: Ballet notations in time.

The next significant contributor to the development of systematic dance notations that must be mentioned in the context of our interests is Russian dancer Vladimir Stepanov (1866 – 1896), who died in the young age but succeeded in creation of the complex system for ballet notation (Stepanov, 1892), the method used and further improved by Alexander Gorsky who notated many classical ballets (mainly by Petipa). The collection of scores created by Gorsky after Stepanov's death and subsequently under the supervision of Nicholas Sergeyev, the Imperial Ballet director with the Mariinsky Theater in 1901 – 1917, is now known as Sergeyev collection (Sergeyev, 1944). The scores based on Stepanov notation are still in active use in modern times, both for completely new productions and reconstructions of Romantic ballet performances. Conceptually, Stepanov followed a novel idea to implement a dancing notation using music score-like graphic model, the concept formulated by Etienne-Jules Marey already mentioned above in the context of discourse on music notations, as far as in 1868 (Marey, 1868), thus creating the first system that, on the one hand, is based on the anatomical structure of the human body but at the same time, uses the graphic model similar to musical writing plays to describe specific dancing movements (Rousseau, 1995) mainly, those used in a classical ballet.

Probably, except the revolutionary notation suggested by Rudolf von Laban and defined in terms of spatial models and concepts rather than body movements modeling, most subsequent efforts to ballet or dancing graphics are based on body modeling, music score mapping, or tracking, including the contributions by Rudolf and Joan Benesh (Benesh & Benesh, 1977) and Valerie Sutton (Sutton, 1981).

### *Towards Integration With a CAPT System: Expectation and Challenges*

In a computer-assisted environment it would be natural to investigate the possibilities to apply movement visualization techniques (Kyan et al., 2015) of virtual reality models, for example such as reported in (Anjos, Ribeiro & Fernandes, 2018). While these techniques excel in guiding precise physical movements, their application to pronunciation training requires overcoming the disjuncture between the kinesthetics of dance and the cadence of spoken language. CAPT systems must capture sound signals and represent perceived prosody

rather than the gross motor skills in dance. This requires a specialized approach that goes beyond direct replication of existing computationally expensive models.

The notations briefly introduced here provide important insights to formalized systematic graphic languages for modeling dancing movement modeling. However, we must admit that in most cases a high level of expertise could be required to understand and decode those models, though the meaning of some graphic symbols for relatively simple elements can be understood by many. From the viewpoint of notation “decodability” by non-experts, the less-formal choreography drawing patterns sketched by Baukin in his “Ballet in graphics” (Baukin & Sorochinskaya, 2013) published in connection to La Bayadère full clavier score by Minkus (Minkus, 1877) could be more practical for representing dancing movements in the form that can be easier interpreted by many. However, from the perspective of practicality, there are obvious challenges, since to design such dancing movement sketches, the drawing skills are required in combination with some expertise in linguistics, as well as in music and choreography. Therefore, probably, there is good space for researching a possibility to use AI generated graphics (Guinness, 2023) and corresponding required studies in the emerging domain of AI engine prompt engineering (Liu & Chilton, 2022).

## **Conclusion**

The integration of musical notation into CAPT systems has opened a novel avenue in pronunciation tuition, marrying the strictness of musical structure with the intricacies of spoken language. Drawing on the rich history of prosody research and pedagogy, exemplified by pioneers like Thelwall and Ellis, our approach utilizes the established, formalized language of music to convey the complex concepts, such as rhythm and pitch. The methodological use of musical notation extends beyond mere visual aids, serving as a bridge between the learner's cognitive understanding of language structure and their auditory perception of its musicality. This allows learners to perceive the tonal and rhythmic patterns of language through a musical score. Looking ahead, the exploration of choreography as a metaphor for language prosody presents a hitherto unexplored avenue of language research. By considering the potential of dance as a kinaesthetic framework for pronunciation training, we are on the cusp of broadening the scope of language learning tools to include not just the ears and eyes, but the entire body.

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## *Error Correction in Language and Content Classes: Teachers' and Students' Views*

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### **Abstract**

Errors are an integral part of the learning process. While learners see errors as something negative, for teachers errors can serve as a valuable source of information about the weak sides of the students and help shape the course content accordingly. The research on error correction focused on the types of oral feedback on language given by content and language teachers (English language in both cases). The researcher observed content and language classes focusing on the frequency and type of error correction used by the teacher. Content classes included university students' Literature and History classes, while language classes included Academic Reading and General English classes. The results of the lesson observation show that language teachers implement a variety of error correction techniques and use them more frequently than content teachers. The main argument of the content teachers for not applying error correction techniques is the factor of time. Though they notice their students' errors, they consciously do not correct them or use direct error correction for the sake of time. Students' survey results show that students prefer being corrected in both types of classes. Moreover, they indicate that teachers ignoring students' errors lose their reputation among the students as they consider the teacher's language proficiency low.

Keywords: Content, Error Correction, Recasts, Metalinguistic Feedback

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## Introduction

What is an error? Errors have been defined by different dictionaries in different ways. For example, Cambridge Dictionary states that an error is “a mistake, especially in a way that can be discovered as wrong”. Collins Dictionary says that an error is “something that you have done which is considered to be incorrect or wrong or which should not have been done”. However, the definition that is used for this article is the one that is provided by the Oxford Dictionary, which states that an error is “a mistake, especially one that causes problems or affects the result of something”. For the given article, the terms *error*, *mistake* and *slip* are used interchangeably.

Talking about the definition of error correction, a website called unacademy.com defines error correction as “a form of feedback given to learners to help them improve” (Unacademy, 2023). The definition will be used later in the article to discuss the results of the research. Moving to the types of error correction, there are different ways teachers can correct students’ errors.

Lightbown & Spada offer the following types of error correction techniques:

- Explicit error correction
- Recasts
- Clarification requests
- Metalinguistic feedback
- Repetition

Explicit error correction is used when the teacher provides the correct form to the students directly, it can be called a direct error correction or “on-spot error correction”. The second type of error correction is recast, which is a reformulation of the student's utterance in the right way. For instance, if a student says “I goes to the cinema”, the teacher can say “So you went to the cinema.” The teacher reformulated student's incorrect statement by using the correct version. It is implicit because the teacher does not directly say that this is a mistake but students hear and understand it. Next is clarification requests and they happen in two cases where there is a problem with the content, the teacher does not understand what the student wants to say in terms of the content or there is a language issue. For example, a student may say “I am a cooker.” and the teacher can reply “Excuse me?” So the student will understand that the teacher did not understand the meaning of the utterance and will correct the utterance to “I'm a chef”. Meta-linguistic feedback is one more type of error correction, where the teacher again indicates that there is an error, but does not directly state what it is. However, the teacher elicits the right answer from the students in the form of meta-linguistic feedback, which involves the use of grammar terminology. For example, if a student says “We live in an flat”, the teacher can say “An flat”. What article do we use with consonants?” and the students will say the correct answer. Finally, there is repetition where the teacher repeats the student's utterance not correcting anything but highlighting the error or the problematic area with the intonation. If a student says “Mary likes cooks” the teacher may reply: “Mary likes **cook**?” (rising intonation.) which again indicates that there is an error (Lightbown and Spada 2013).

## Research Method and Results

### A. Lesson Observation

The research consisted of 10 lesson observations conducted by 4 teachers. There were five content classes and five language classes with two teachers observed for each stream. Content classes included Literature, Medieval History, Introduction to Literature, and Ancient Literature (Years 1-3). Language courses consisted of General English language and Academic Reading courses (Year 1).

The results of the research show that out of 100% of errors made by students during content classes, only 18.2% of errors were corrected by the teachers, while for the same number of classes, out of 100% of language mistakes, 51% of errors was corrected by language teachers.

Class	% of corrected errors	Class	% of corrected errors
Ancient Literature	30%	Academic Reading	60%
Introduction to Literature	50%	Academic Reading	55%
Literature	0%	English Language	40%
Literature	11%	English Language	50%
Medieval History	0%	English Language	50%
Total	18.2%		51%

Table 1: Percentage of errors corrected per class

The average number of error corrections for language classes was from a minimum of 40% to a maximum of 60% per class. For content classes, the maximum was 50% but it was only one case (Introduction to Literature) while there were two cases where there was 0% error correction in the whole class (History and Literature classes).

Content	%	Language	%
Recasts	71%	Recasts	35%
Explicit	29%	Metacognitive	30%
		Repetition	20%
		Explicit	15%

Table 2: Comparison of Error Correction Techniques

Comparing the types of error correction techniques used by the teachers, recasts were the most common type of error correction used by both language and content teachers. 71% of recasts were used by content teachers and 35% of language teachers used recasts as well. The only other error correction technique used by content teachers was explicit error correction (or on-spot error correction) where teachers directly correct the students' mistakes without any explanation. Meta-cognitive feedback is in second place among the error correction techniques used by language teachers, 30% of errors were corrected using this type of error correction. Technique number three is repetition and explicit error correction was the least common type of error correction used by language teachers.

Samples of error correction techniques noticed during the classes are presented below:

#### *Content classes*

1. S: It cost 15 000 *funts*.  
T: Pounds. (explicit error correction)
2. S: It can be any irony.  
T: Yeah, it can be any type of irony. (recast)
3. S: ...and then she *sign* /sign/.  
T: Oh, signed /saimd/ (recast)

#### *Language classes*

1. S: What did you do? /wɒt did ju: du:/  
T: /wɒ didʒə du:/ (connected speech) (recast)
2. S: I like drawing when I was a child.  
T: Do you still like or you liked in the past?  
S: In the past.  
T: What form do we use to make past tense?  
S: -ed, I liked. (meta-linguistic feedback)
3. S: It was start in 1940.  
T: Started. (explicit error correction)

4. S: I hate chemistry /tʃemɪstri/.  
 T: I hate chemistry?/tʃemɪstri/ (questioning intonation)  
 S:???  
 T: Who can pronounce this word correctly?  
 Several students: Chemistry /kemɪstri/ (repetition)

Moving to the outcomes of the research, it can be seen that the hypothesis that was stated before “Language teachers correct students’ mistakes more often than content teachers” was proved by the fact that only 18% of mistakes in content classes were corrected by teachers, while 51% of errors were corrected by language teachers for the same number of classes. The aim was also achieved because the researcher could check and identify what types of error correction techniques were used by teachers more often (recasts for both cases). Finally, moving to the definition of error correction again, it states error correction is “a form of feedback given to learners to help them improve”. While there was no formal interview with the teachers after the observations, there were some informal talks and content teachers indicated that they notice all language mistakes made by their students, but this is their conscious choice not to correct those mistakes in order not to spend time for that. This is their choice to focus on the improvement of their students’ content knowledge rather than language accuracy.

## **B. Student Interviews**

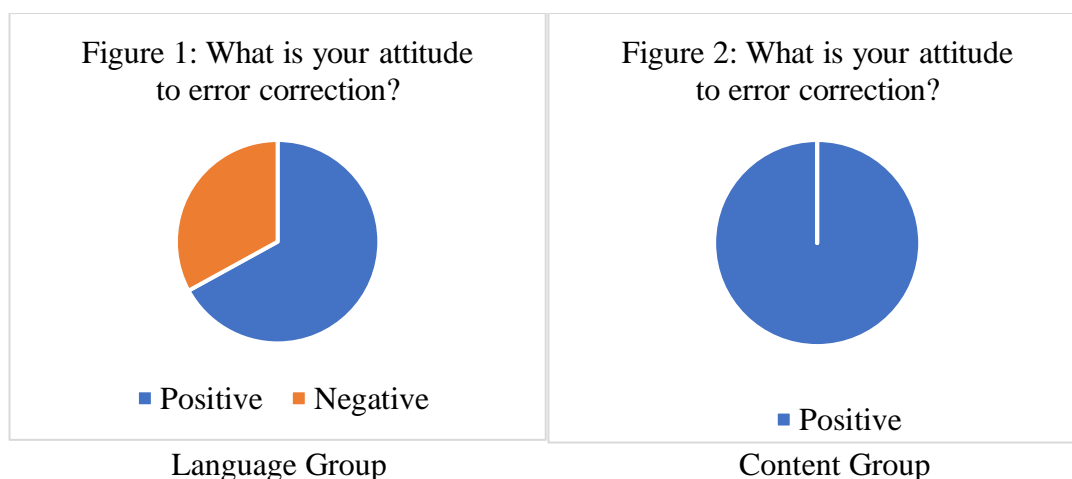
The second part of the research focused on the students' views on the presence or absence of error correction. The students were divided into 2 focus groups: Content and Language. The number of students in each group was 10; the interview was conducted once for each group. The Content group had the interview in English; while the Language group had their discussion in students’ L1- Russian and Uzbek. The Content group included students from Year 1 to 3, while the Language group was represented by Year 1 students only. The Content group contain students of English Education, whose major is English language teaching and they already have knowledge about methodology, ways and techniques of conducting classes as well as some information about error correction. The Language group consists of students from different schools- Business, Engineering, Education etc. They cover mainly General English and are not aware of the peculiarities of the teaching sphere, specifically error correction.

Each group was asked the same set of questions:

1. What is your attitude to error correction?
2. Do you pay attention to the teacher correcting students’ errors during the lesson?
3. What are the reasons for the teacher not to correct students' errors?
4. What types of error correction do you see as the most effective?
5. Should teachers in content classes correct students’ language mistakes? \*

\* Question 5 was given to the Content group only.

The results of the focus group interviews showed mainly similar views of the students on error correction in both Content and Language classes.

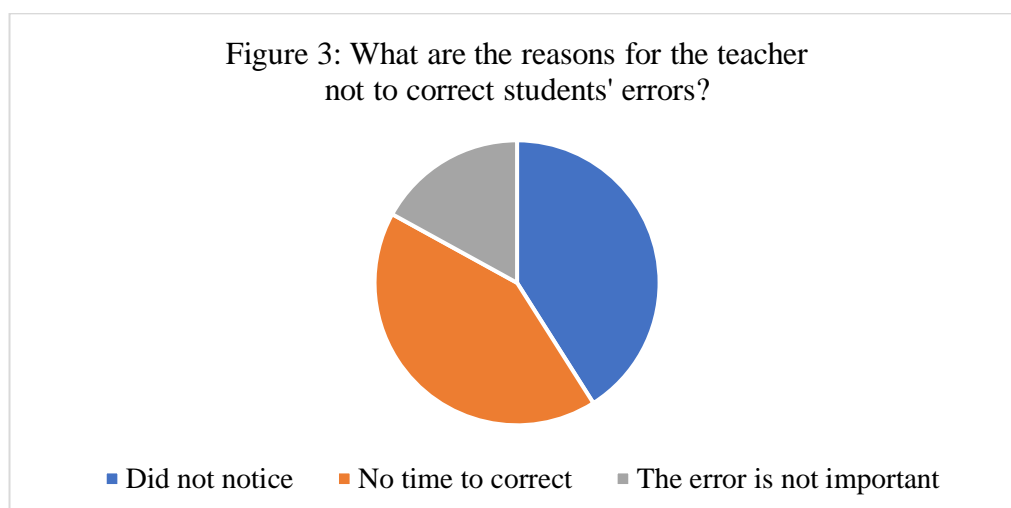


Question 1: What is your attitude to error correction?

100% of students in the Content group indicated that they have a positive attitude toward error correction. While the views of students in the Language group were not as uniform. 33% of students mentioned that they feel humiliated and embarrassed when the teacher corrects their errors (both on-spot and delayed error correction). Though they understand the necessity of the error correction they want it to be conveyed in another way.

Question 2: Do you pay attention to the teacher correcting students' errors during the lesson?

Here the answers differ based on the course of study. Year 1 students in both groups mainly replied that they did not notice error correction (70% for the Content group and 87% in Language). Most of Year 2 and 3 students replied that they notice whenever the teacher corrects errors. What is notable, students want their teachers to correct the errors. They indicated that when the teachers fail to correct students' errors they consider the teacher not to listen to the students carefully, ignore the errors or they may even consider the teacher's language proficiency not to be high enough to notice those errors.



Question 3: What are the reasons for the teacher not to correct students' errors?

The students gave several answers to this question:



The teacher did not notice the error;  
The teacher had no time to correct the error;  
The teacher considered the error unimportant.  
The last point was given by the Content group students only; while the first two options were mentioned by both groups.

Question 4: Should teachers in content classes correct students' language mistakes?

This question was given to the Content group only as they have classes with English as a medium of instruction. In spite of those classes being focused on the Content rather than Language the students expressed strong views that error correction should be present in all classes.

Question 5: What types of error correction do you see as the most effective?

The lower-level students favoured recasts or any other form of immediate error correction as it saves time and directly shows the students the error. Nevertheless, higher-level students preferred such types of error correction as metalinguistic feedback. They point out that students do not always understand that they are being corrected- for example, using recasts- very often students perceive this type of error correction as the teacher simply echoing their utterance. Another point expressed by the students is that very often the students simply repeat the correct version after the teacher not really understanding what the mistake was and how it was corrected. To overcome these problems, the teacher may use metalinguistic feedback. Though it has the drawback of being time-consuming, the students selected it as the most effective for making progress. The teacher does not only correct the error (or asks other students to do it); they also explain what the error is and how to form the correct utterance. This makes the learning process more conscious for the students.

## **Conclusion**

It is believed that content teachers are less concerned with the language mistakes that occur during their classes. The research aimed to compare the frequency and types of error correction techniques used by language and content teachers. The results prove the hypothesis that language teachers correct their students' language mistakes more often than content teachers. While the content teachers choose to omit language errors of students for the sake of the content, the students have a negative view of this situation and prefer to be corrected both in language and content classes.

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***Disaster and Blessing: Alternative Writings on Yellow Peril Narratives in Late Qing China***

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**Abstract**

The Yellow Peril, with anti-Asian racism, has long been criticized. Some scholars noticed the Chinese reproduction of this discourse, but they tend to agree that Chinese intellectuals in the late Qing only emphasized China would threaten the West, thus ignoring the role of Chinese in the cultural translation. As Lydia H. Liu suggests, when a concept passes from the guest language to the host language, its legitimated new meaning is more invented within the local environment of the host language rather than just transformed. *Huanghuo*, literally meaning the yellow disaster, is believed to be the equivalence to the Yellow Peril. In the traditional vein of *yin* and *yang*, disaster and blessing are interchangeable. Therefore, *Huanghuo* is an unpleasant object that should be transformed into its opposite: *Fu*, namely fortunate and happiness. Drawing on the political commentaries of Chinese intellectuals and popular fiction in the late Qing, this paper will explore the process of cultural translation from the Yellow Peril to *Huanghuo* and point out that *Huanghuo* represented the slave nature and the ideal citizens of the Chinese at the same time. In vernacular literature, *Huanghuo* retained its local meaning as a disaster and was used to accuse Chinese nationals of servility. Meanwhile, *Huangfu* took up the positive place of the Yellow Peril. To conclude, both represented the intention of Chinese intellectuals to enlighten the Chinese people and reform late Qing China under the belief in the positive causal relationship between nationals and their nation as suggested by Liang Qichao.

Keywords: Yellow Peril, Translingual Practices, Late Qing China

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## Introduction

European natural historians first attributed the color of yellow to Asian populations in the eighteenth century. Perceiving Asians as “yellow” was not just a color-based taxonomy, it indicated the comparison between “us” and “them”. Yellow Peril narratives began to be prevalent in Euro-American discourses when racial theories and nationalism were developed from the mid-nineteenth century onwards (Urbansky, 2018). The arrival of Chinese immigrant workers in North America and the military potential demonstrated by the Japanese in the Russo-Japanese War and the Boxer Uprising led to the belief that Asiatics were the economic competitors of the natives and would conquer Western civilization with diseases and moral degradation (Lyman, 2000). It is within this context that the supervillain Dr. Fu Manchu in Western popular culture was created. He represents the stereotypical image of Asians as intelligent, cruel, and determined to world domination.

The Yellow Peril has long been associated with anti-Asian racism in which Asians are depicted as violent, diseased, and mysterious. The rapid economic growth of China in the twenty-first century and the COVID-19 pandemic have given it a new lease on life. Scholars pay considerable attention to criticizing the Western knowledge production of the Yellow Peril in political, cultural, and social realms. However, post-colonial studies’ efforts to debunk the Yellow Peril myth essentialize this notion in Euro-American terms. As Franck Billé points out, the Yellow Peril is not a linguistically and culturally stable racist term (Billé, 2018). Its discourse varies in different places and has changed over time.

In the past decade, the Yellow Peril narratives and their political function in China started to be noticed by scholars. They tend to agree that Chinese intellectuals in the late Qing defended China and established national identity via Yellow Peril narratives, which they believed pointed to the threatening advantages of Chinese civilization over the West (Yang, 2010; Tsu, 2006). These scholars notice the same ethnocentric patterns of Yellow Peril discourse in China as in the West. In other words, the original Yellow Peril discourse didn’t change in the cross-cultural interpretation, and Chinese intellectuals just chose another side of the same coin. This idea ignores the civil crisis sparked by foreign pressure at the historical moment and the role of the host language, Chinese, in the cultural translation. As Lydia H. Liu suggests, when a concept passes from the guest language to the host language in translanguaging practices, its legitimated new meaning is more as invented within the local environment of the host language rather than just transformed (Liu, 1995). *Huanghuo*, which literally means the yellow disaster, is believed to be the equivalence to the Yellow Peril. In the vein of yin and yang, disaster and blessing are interconnected and interchangeable. Therefore, *huanghuo* is an unpleasant object that should be transformed into its opposite: Fu, namely fortunate and happiness.

When Chinese intellectuals translated the “Yellow Peril”, they encountered the Western and Chinese contexts at the same time. How did they build and maintain the equivalence between the Yellow Peril and *huanghuo*? In order to examine this translanguaging practice, situating cross-cultural interpretation in the actual historical environment is in order. In what follows, drawing on the political commentaries of Chinese intellectuals and political fiction in the late Qing, this essay will explore the process of cultural translation from the Yellow Peril to *huanghuo* in the late Qing in order to understand the Yellow Peril discourse in China.

### ***Huanghuo: A Threat to the West or a Disaster for Itself?***

The notion of the Yellow Peril was first introduced to China from the translations of Japanese texts. The Yellow Peril was translated as *huangse huan* (yellow disaster) (European Countries and Humanitarian, 1900) or *huangse weixia* (yellow danger) (The Westerners and Humanitarian, 1900). Japanese authors avoided becoming the major target of Yellow Peril accusations and thus distinguished themselves from “uncivilized” China. The Chinese translation from Japanese articles didn’t convey the complexity of the Yellow Peril discourses. Instead, Chinese intellectuals focused on the aspect of “the awakening of China” after the Boxer Uprising and didn’t continue to discuss the translations mentioned above.

Mai Menghua is an advocate of the Hundred Days’ Reform. He used “*huangren huohai*” to refer to the Yellow Peril in his two articles about the Boxer Uprising, which were written during the time of peace negotiation between the Eight-Nation Alliance and China. Mai believed that in response to the Boxer Uprising, most Europeans could neither reach a consensus to invade China in order to prevent Europe from being destroyed nor lift the repression although some thought that without Western repression the “threatening China” would not be the case. In the end, he concluded that the West would find a middle way to support the Qing government and use it as a tool to control China (Mai, 1990).

In Mai’s opinion, *huangren huohai* denoted a “powerful and intelligent” nation, as many scholars have pointed out (Yang, 2010). They ignore an important fact, however, that this appreciation had conditions. In the article “On China after the Peace Negotiations” (Mai, 1991), Mai noted that Euro-Americans regarded the Chinese as “powerful” and “intelligent” because the Chinese refused to be slaves in comparison to Africans and Indians. In fact, Mai thought that the Chinese were “slaves”, “prisoners”, “submissive”, and the “Sick Man of Asia”. Instead of considering the Yellow Peril as a recognition of the advantages of China, Mai criticized the “national character” of the Chinese populace with the Yellow Peril narratives. He believed that China was unable to become a threat in that it had the severe sickness of servility. In the words of Mai, the Qing government was a “puppet” controlled by the West and the Chinese became the “prisoners” after the Peace Negotiations. It can be seen that the early translation practice happened in the civil crisis sparked by foreign pressure. China had been constrained to sign unequal treaties with foreign powers and was struggling to retain full sovereignty. The Yellow Peril discourse here denoted an unfinished power of China. Its potential could not be achieved until the Chinese grew out of slaves and became *guomin* (meaning the citizens of the nation-state) and Liang Qichao put this idea forward.

Liang is the first Chinese intellectual who translated the Yellow Peril as *huanghuo*. In the article “The New Methods to Destroy a Nation” (Liang, 1901), he invoked the view of Sir Robert Hart (1835–1911), the Inspector-General of the Chinese Maritime Customs Service, and noted that on the one hand, the West had a deep fear of China and they warned each other the danger of China in the term of *huanghuo*; on the other hand, it was the *huanghuo* that invited the repression of the West on China. *Huanghuo* had two meanings here: the threatening power of China and the disaster that the Chinese brought for themselves.

In the article “THE PEKING LEGATIONS: A NATIONAL UPRISING AND INTERNATIONAL EPISODE” published in August 1900, Hart discussed the Western policies towards China after the Boxer Uprising (Hart, 1901). The main purpose of Hart’s article, in Liang’s view, was to suggest that foreign powers should help the Qing government prevent uprisings and benefit from economic exploitation. Hart described the Chinese as an

“intelligent, cultivated, sober, and industrious race,” (p. 51) who “had slept long but was awake now” (p. 51–52). He believed that the Boxer Uprising was “a purely patriotic volunteer movement” (p. 52) with an aim to exclude foreigners. To prevent the patriots from invading Europe with “Mauser rifles and Krupp guns”, Hart thought that the easiest solution was to support the Qing government as they shared the same purpose to repress the patriotic movements.

Liang provided two explanations for Hart’s ideas. First, he believed that Westerners knew the power of civil rights and autonomy, so they decided to support the Qing government in order to prevent the birth of a strong nation-state. How did the West achieve it? In what followed, Liang stressed that the West realized the property of servility among the Chinese and would make use of it during the Peace Negotiation to keep the potential threat under control. Liang thus argued that it was the slave nature of Chinese nationals that brought “*huo* (the disaster)” of being invaded and repressed.

In Liang’s perspective, “*huo*” mainly came from the servility of the Chinese. Rather than attribute the disaster to Western exploitation, he emphasized that Chinese nationals were seeking *huo* themselves by being the slaves of the government, who had borrowed national debts from foreign powers. Liang indicated that the Chinese were content with the Boxer Protocol, showing a special quality of obedience as slaves which was easy to be taken advantage of in politics. The solution is self-education which he distinguished the education of *guomin* from the education of slaves and the education of slaves of the slave. The education of *guomin* could save China from servility and prevent any *huo* in the future.

Liang claimed that all 400 million Chinese were “real slaves” who were unable to be independent of others. However, as Mai Menghua showed, the Chinese were regarded as “powerful” by the West because they refused to be slaves. The label of “real slaves” meant that for Chinese intellectuals, a strong China that might pose a threat to Western civilization hadn’t existed. In this case, how should we understand the Yellow Peril discourse in China?

Tracing the process of translation of the Yellow Peril by Liang Qichao, *huo* first appeared in the article “A Warning of the Danger of Partition” to discuss the possible invasion of foreign powers in 1899 (Liang, 1899); influenced by the Japanese discussion of national character, Liang attributed *huo* to the servility of Chinese nationals in his letter to Kang Youwei, where he noted that the decline of China had now reached its peak, and “its corruption and sickness were rooted in the slave nature of Chinese and could only be cured by the medicine of liberty”(Liang, 1999, p. 5931); and Liang translated the Yellow Peril as *huanghuo* in his commentary on Hart’s articles, which didn’t just denote the threatening power of China. The Yellow Peril discourse in the West interacted with the national imagination of Chinese intellectuals in a more complicated way. When the Yellow Peril was translated into another language as *huanghuo*, it maintained its local meaning in the host language—disaster. In other words, after the “Yellow Peril” was introduced to China, this term departed from its original discourse and the indigenous implication developed. In the opinion of Liang Qichao, *huanghuo* had two meanings. One was the Chinese threat to the West, and another was the disaster that the Chinese brought to themselves.

It seems that Chinese intellectuals didn’t always identify China as a threatening power, instead, they tended to focus on criticizing the Chinese character of servility when translating Yellow Peril narratives. In the end, *huanghuo* only retained the connotation of the disaster, while the positive meaning of the Yellow Peril was taken by *huangfu* (yellow blessing). In

ancient Chinese philosophy, the duality of *huo* and *fu* is an indivisible whole and they are able to transform towards each other. The next section will discuss the relation between *huanghuo* and *huangfu*, and how it reflects the Yellow Peril discourse in late Qing China.

### ***Huangfu: An Educated Huanghuo and the Promise of Modernity***

The popular political fiction at the time illustrated the interconnection between *huanghuo* and *huangfu* in the minds of Chinese intellectuals. Tang Baorong, a friend of Liang Qichao, published the novel *Huang Xiu Qiu (Yellow Embroided Earth)* with his penname Yi Suo in *New Fictions* in 1905 (Tang, 1985). This story is set in Liberty Village in which most villagers share the surname “Huang”. It means the color, yellow. The Liberty Village inhabited by the Huang (yellow) family has no liberty at all due to external oppression. Huang Xiuqiu is the name of the heroine, literally referring to “sewing a globe”. Her husband is Huang Tongli, which means the universal principle. Huang Xiuqiu causes a sensation in the village when she releases her bound feet. Huang Huo, a relative of Xiuqiu, reports it to the officials in the hope of getting money from the confiscation of Xiuqiu and Tongli’s property. Here, Huang Huo is the incarnation of the (negative) Yellow Peril. He serves the bureaucrats and takes advantage of the old institutions to satisfy his own interests. Everything will turn into a disaster with him. He has a son named Huang Fu, who receives an education from Tongli and gets on well with the enlightened woman Huang Xiuqiu. In the end, it is Huang Fu who establishes a new independent, liberated, and autonomous village.

The father-son metaphor of *huanghuo* and *huangfu* represents the way in which Chinese intellectuals thought about the Yellow Peril. Huang Huo personifies the sickness of China, and Huang Fu reflects the promising future of China in the imagination of Chinese intellectuals. How does *huanghuo* transform into *huangfu*? What kind of education does Huang Fu receive?

Tongli is the representative of contemporary intellectuals who were determined to reform China. In the first chapter, Huang Xiuqiu asks her husband to repair or reconstruct their damaged house. Huang Tongli stresses that there is no point to repair a house in a village which has been deprived of freedom. He has been pondering how to restore the liberty of the village and finds that the way to achieve liberation is to educate the villagers. Huang Tongli establishes a modern school with Western knowledge and *guomin* education, which emphasizes the subjectivity of each individual in the national political process (Shen & Hsiao, 2006). In Xiuqiu’s dream, the French Madam Roland who appreciates equality and liberty comes to enlighten her. Huang Xiuqiu thus becomes a “modern” woman urging women to refuse to be slaves to men. She calls it “female education”, which she believes is the first step of *guomin* education. Tongli considers the knowledge passed on by Madam Roland as *fu*.

This story conveys two important ideas: First, *huanghuo* and *huangfu* were integrated into the binary of *guomin* and slaves. *Guomin (huangfu)* as the ideal nationals could empower China, while slaves (*huanghuo*) would only bring disasters to China. Many Chinese intellectuals in the late Qing intended to build a strong nation-state. In their opinion, the slave nature of the Chinese was the reason for their oppression in political, economic, and military spheres. By invoking *huanghuo*, Chinese intellectuals criticized that the unmodernized populace impeded the potential for China to become a strong nation-state. They believed that *guomin* education, enlightenment and modernization would transform Chinese from slaves to *guomin* (such as Huang Fu). The latter is regarded as the foundation of a new China. As the novel *Huang Xiu Qiu* shows, Huang Huo represents the notorious, unmodernized feudal bureaucrats who have

brought disasters to China; and Huang Fu is in fact a metaphor for the powerful China that has achieved modernity with Western knowledge, autonomy and liberty.

Second, the narratives of *huangfu* and *huanghuo* rationalized the exclusion of modern Western principles and internalized colonial knowledge. For example, this novel acknowledged China's inferiority in the hierarchy of races. In Xiuqiu's dream, the French Madam Roland gives her a book on geology. Tongli explains to Xiuqiu that geology also means that human beings on earth can be classified into five races, with the white race having the best civilization and the yellow race lagging behind in everything. *Huangfu* promised a progressive modern China, but it still placed China under racial hierarchies. At the end of Xiuqiu's dream, after they have achieved autonomy for the village, she still seeks recognition from Madam Roland. In comparison to it, another political fiction *The Predict of Huang Huo* also imagines a powerful Chinese nation-state in the future. It shows that China has conquered Europe. The Chinese no longer seek the approval of the West, but still live in a European way. As Ashis Nandy notes, when non-Western intellectuals encourage their people to defeat the West by imitating it, they are in effect allies of the West (Ashis Nandy, 1983). These novels reveal that *huangfu* and *huanghuo* were created in the colonial discourse; such narratives reproduced the modernity of the West and legitimized Western ideas in China.

In the novel *Huang Xiu Qiu*, Huang Fu is the modernized *guomin* who is liberating the village, and Huang Huo is a slave of the old institutions and only corrupts the village. *Huanghuo* is deemed as the translation of the Yellow Peril in Chinese, but it has clearly deviated from the original meaning of the Yellow Peril in the process of cultural translation. This section argues that *huanghuo* and *huangfu* constituted together the Yellow Peril discourse in late Qing China, which was profoundly shaped by the colonial context.

## Conclusion

It is hard to understand the Yellow Peril discourse in late Qing China without considering the way in which Chinese intellectuals translated and used the term "Yellow Peril". This essay has discussed the early translations of the Yellow Peril and located them in the historical context. The "otherness" of Asians cannot be attributed to merely the beliefs about racial superiority and inferiority. Yellow Peril narratives emerged at a period when the economic and political inequalities between China and the West began to develop. The pursuit of a strong nation-state in response to a civil crisis provoked by foreign pressure generated the Yellow Peril discourse in China. The new meaning of the Yellow Peril was formed in the process of translation and specific historical conditions.

This essay argues that the "Yellow Peril" in late Qing China has two meanings: It can be a powerful threat to Western civilization, but it also refers to a weak and sick state that had brought oppression upon itself. *Huanghuo* has long been identified as the translation of the Yellow Peril. However, it is not a strict equivalence to the Yellow Peril. Their difference and relation can be well illustrated in the structure of *guomin* and slaves. As Liang Qichao wrote in his "Four Songs of Loving Nation" published in *New Fictions*: "Every time *huanghuo* is mentioned with the feelings of horror and terror, and it is a nightmare that has haunted the Western barbarians for a hundred years...Lovely, *Guomin*! Lovely, *Guomin*!" (Liang, 1902, pp.206–207). On the one hand, *huanghuo* referred to a threatening China, which was formed by *guomin*. On the other hand, it was a consensus among Chinese intellectuals to consider the national character of China as servility, and they associated this character with disaster,



which is the original meaning of *huo*. Thus, *huanghuo* represented the ideal citizens and the slave nature of the Chinese at the same time. In vernacular literature, *huanghuo* retained its local meaning as a disaster and was used to accuse Chinese nationals of servility. *Huanghuo*'s interconnected notion *huangfu* took up the positive place of the Yellow Peril. It represented the intention of Chinese intellectuals to enlighten the Chinese people and reform China in order to make it free from oppression and become a great power.

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## *The Ocean as 'Splendor' in James Prudenciado's Made of Saltwater*

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### **Abstract**

When it comes to the ocean in literature, as it is generally used, multiple authors have utilized this body of water to discuss or imply powerful and sometimes incomprehensible messages and meanings that may often contain sublime implications. This paper aims to discuss the vast, inevitable terror and pleasure present in the sublimity of the ocean and how this perception of water is used as a literary device in James Prudenciado's *Made of Saltwater*. While it remains close to Edmund Burke's definition of sublime, the ocean, the sea, and those inhabiting the water themselves evoke powerful emotions that, at the same time, present greater meaning based on how it exists in the text. Rather than simply being sublime, it falls in line with Neferti Tadiar's definition of the Remaindered Life, making the ocean's sublimity an existence that leans away from the concept of disposability. Despite the astonishment and even horror present, Prudenciado's poetry uses sublimity as one transformed; it becomes a 'life-time' outside the realm of waste and value, existing for personal satisfaction yet thoroughly vital despite its lack of contribution to progress. This paper presents the incomprehensible feelings of great magnitude from which no aim or goal is implied and how such things create in themselves a personal goal for the sake of Splendor, a term equated to the Remaindered Life.

Keywords: Ocean, Sublime, Remaindered Life, Life-Times, Disposability

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## Introduction

How often has the ocean or the sea made a home in literature? From the top of our heads, at least one novel or poem comes to mind that discusses it, either to pay homage or to speak of its horrors. In the cases of Western Literature, immediate examples such as Herman Melville's 'Moby Dick' and Edgar Allan Poe's 'Manuscript in a Bottle' can come to mind, discussing tales that connect themselves to the body of water prominent within the setting. In The Philippines, poets such as J. Neil Garcia have used water to represent boundless desire. As he describes the first of his seven-poem sequence titled 'Gift', "this poem's utterance is being spurred by the sea's own oscillating gestures of tenderness and cruelty, and by the lyric self's realization of its "permeability" to the other (and therefore, of its own impossibility)" (Garcia, 2016). The ocean and the human are connected. They watch the movement of the water and find it equivalent to their own life. As the narrator says:

And I know my task  
for the day  
to take in and let go,  
to push against land and  
pull away, to love you without claims. (Garcia, 2016)

We see here that the ocean becomes a representation of human emotion. Yet this isn't all that takes the form of the ocean. For some, it is not simply a mirror reflecting; it can also be the narrator itself. The human and water are the same as seen in James Prudenciado's book, *Made of Saltwater*. Here, the ocean entwines itself with the people who have suffered, particularly about their identity. One example of this can be found in his poem, 'At the Beach in the Far North, I Lost My Hanafuda Earrings, Lost My Eyeglasses, and in the Blinding Darkness of the Night, I Found a Boy':

All night, we bathed in the shallow shore, bodies  
submerged underwater, holding onto each other tight  
enough we became one with the water—  
shapeless, our heart, beating in unison, causing  
fleeting small ripples. (Prudenciado, 2022, p. 91)

Happiness becomes akin to the movement of the sea. Ripples become heartbeats. The nuance lies in the author's intentions, but the ocean, the sea, and any body of water are transformed beyond what it is as it exists within the text. In such circumstances, wouldn't it be possible then to consider the ocean representing something beyond itself? Just as J. Neil Garcia utilizes the ocean's 'boundlessness' to show intense emotions, this greatness too, can be considered in its sublimity to mean another concept. This paper aims to discuss how bodies of water can not only be the narrator, one and the same, but that this coupled with the water's sublimity can also become a representation of a remaindered life, particularly in the work earlier mentioned, James Prudenciado's *Made of Saltwater*.

## The Effects Humans Have Made on the Environment

Now, in the new age of man, several scholars have thought to label the current era based on the effects humans have made on the environment. One anthropologist, Anna Tsing, discussed the label in her work, *The Mushroom at the End of the World*, and mentioned this to be the age in which human actions have significantly affected the earth in a way that

ensures we have left a strong mark on the planet. Anthropocene, as it is called, is also a term she admits to be rather contradictory. While it is meant to celebrate the effects of man, she points out how the negatives seem to be more noticeable. The message of this term, rather than uplifting, states “without planning or intention, humans have made a mess of our planet” (Tsing 2021). Modern capitalism and its negative effects become equivalent to the concept, and the despair it has caused humans becomes the highlight of the age. The waste-value dialectic begins to persist, and the value of human progress is made a priority at the cost of everything else. With such a time perhaps it is easy to think of the question, how can humans find their brief respite among it all? It’s from here that the idea of the Remaindered Life is formulated.

A concept properly described and discussed by Neferti Tadiar based on countless research, she once elaborated on the Remaindered Life in an interview upon the release of her book with the same title. She first defined the concept by describing how “human life is ... only just the means of more value creation” (Chatterjee 2022) within the context of the waste-value dialectic. As she describes it, the capitalist environment that has occurred in recent times has focused primarily on how valuable humans can be. It is based on not only their existence but also their actions and their contributions to their communities. Waste too, which was mostly equated to the ones struggling in a capitalist society, becomes an important tool for value. For value, for this system, to continue to exist, waste must be constantly used. It is subjected to violence in which it is “effaced, enrolled, exported, or expunged” (Gidwani et al., 2016). Based on this, she states that waste does not necessarily turn into something valuable. Rather, it becomes valuable based on how waste is utilized. Tadiar provides an example both in the interview and in the book itself, mentioning the extrajudicial killings that occurred during the war on drugs in The Philippines. The slum dwellers who are shot by the police, she explained, are revalued because of what people can do with such waste (Chatterjee 2022).

Returning to the remaindered, it is what falls out of the ideas of the production of value and the irrelevance of waste. In her work, ‘Decolonization, ‘Race,’ And Remaindered Life Under Empire’, Tadiar defines it as “the unabsorbed residue of an epistemic translation and real subsumption of “non-human” forms of life by capitalist production and exchange” (Tadiar 2015). There is a life-making present that does not need to have value for it to exist. The production of value and the exclusion of waste are not primary factors as to why people participate in or develop the Remaindered Life. Here, there are transformed ways of living that people strive for without a need for reason or purpose. Rather than having one out of necessity and whether or not it contributes to anything, people simply create a life-time, the Remaindered, because it brings them happiness regardless of whether it is short-lived or not. For them, the importance of how much enjoyment is felt is what entices people to continue pursuing it, especially since it does not equate to either being waste or being valuable. As her book, *Remaindered Life*, states, it is “life that escapes valorization” and is “a situation bearing possibilities for the radical remaking of “human” social relations” (2022).

While its political and social concerns may seem to be completely separate from the humanities, it is imperative to note that literature can and does play a crucial role in the presence of this remaindered life. Literature assists in the reclaiming of this life-time. What cannot be subsumed is a means to show a person’s freedom, and Tadiar first alludes to this in her work, *Fantasy Production*, wherein one example discusses the poetry created based on domestic helpers. While most of their bodies are treated as feminine beings-for-others (2004), literature created in their name to show their subjectivity presents one that is not commodified. Rather, power is made while reaching beyond the confinements of this

inhumanness. Ruth Elynia S. Mabanglo makes use of this idea in her collection of works, ‘Mga Liham ni Pinay’ (In English: ‘Letters of Pinay’). Here, the woman narrator represents the whole of the DH community, taking the form of different women all at the same time. The idea of them being replaceable items existing only for the use of their masters is at the forefront of the concept of the DH Body being a lesser race, so for Mabanglo to utilize and reclaim this concept as a means to show the inherent ‘humanness’ of each domestic helper is a means to go against that; to turn around the very image of an inhuman human. As Tadiar puts it in *Fantasy Production* (2004):

Mabanglo takes the substitutability of women, their exploitative exchangeability within a capitalist, sexist and racist socio- economic order, and turns it into a means of partially experiencing the lives of the women for whom she feels. (p. 138)

It intensifies the already existing idea of women being beings-for-others and turns it into a method in which their potential and power are realized rather than made subservient. From here, the remaindered begins to exist as the women’s subjective lives are not made to be commodified, and their existence is not considered as a means only to further progress.

Yet we cannot say that the remaindered life-times can be specific to this sort of genre. While it can show itself as a reclamation of a commodified characteristic by turning it around to show subjectivity, it can also make a home in literature even in the subtlest of forms. Take into consideration Tadiar’s statement on the remaindered life:

[It] is not disposable life but is the superfluous effect and performances of life-times made and lived by such disposable life in its social reproduction—the excess of life-making (or “survival”) that does not merely produce disposable life for capitalist serviceability or expenditure. (Tadiar, 2022)

Considering the term ‘performances’ implies a possibility of it lacking limitations on how this concept can be represented or symbolized. Life-times entail the many lives people go through. While we could say it doesn’t equate to every human being, they are still ones that are considered to have disposable lives, humans that are made to experience the effects of the age of Anthropocene consistently. If that is the case, wouldn’t it be possible for that subtlety mentioned earlier to make itself present in the text through the ocean, particularly in its sublimity?

Sublimity was a term first heavily discussed by Longinus. It “consists in a certain loftiness and excellence of language” (Longinus 2006). It follows no human reason, instead going beyond that, and this particular characteristic means it can also not align with what we consider reasonable or agreeable. It’s a force to be reckoned with to the point where even the one experiencing the sublime does not have any hope of controlling it. It’s outside the will and Longinus, adding in his work ‘On The Sublime’, discussed that it contains a great enough power capable of enticing or even confounding the judgment of the person. Rameshwor Singh, who had discussed Longinus, pointed out that the author also differentiates this Sublime from the false one, with the latter mostly consisting of simple, exaggerated, or inflated use of language with little to no substance (2019). Rather than grandiose, it appears tawdry and completely childish.

This concept was further expounded upon by Edmund Burke in his philosophical inquiry who described it as “productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling”



(2014). He labeled it as the strongest emotion precisely because he didn't define it as either a positive or negative one. It doesn't matter whether it is pain or pleasure. What's important is the "passion" that is produced by the sublime. He goes on to say it is 'astonishment', which he defines as "that state of the soul, in which all motions are suspended, with some degree of horror" (Burke 2014). Leaning on neither good nor bad, it simply inflicts upon the person experiencing the emotion a feeling of great, incomprehensible magnitude. Returning to our idea of the ocean, its nature, and existence can also be equated with this sublimity given how unfathomable and beautiful it could be all at once. Its terrifying nature can evoke powerful emotions in others when it is used in literary works. It is sublime in the same way that it is paradoxical. As McKinstry puts it, "It can bring hope and life, but also can create fear and destruction; it is a realm of possibility and potential, but equally a place of limitation and interruption" (2019).

The Pacific Islands, in particular, have a strong connection with the water given how much resources are derived from these. Take the case of the anthropologist Epeli Hau'ofa, in the year 1993, discussing in his essay, 'Our Sea of Islands', the relation of the people to the water. While many have thought the Pacific to be a place lacking in resources, it is wrongly belittled with its inhabitants being seen as having extreme dependence on other groups for survival and livelihood. His essay urged for the need to go against such a mindset through the idea of 'Oceania'. He encouraged this to be introduced in academic settings to show the richness of the Pacific while also going against the degradation forced upon the people due to their way of life. Hau'ofa's usage of the term is present for most of the text, but it is most apparent how important the word is at the end, as he begins his conclusion with the following lines:

Oceania is vast, Oceania is expanding, Oceania is hospitable and generous, Oceania is humanity rising from the depths of brine and regions of fire deeper still, Oceania is us. We are the sea, we are the ocean. (1993)

Hau'ofa relates the people in the Pacific to the body of water that encompasses their home. Oceania is not simply a means to describe their land, it is also the people. Just as it is belittled, so are the inhabitants. This sort of relationship cannot be so easily severed given how much of their lives have been associated with the water. While his essay only considers the Pacific Islanders, The Philippines as well shows a connection with the water. The sublimity of it can also be equated to a remaindered life-time of the people, and literature plays a role in such a representation. Such is the case of *Made of Saltwater*, which was introduced earlier in this paper.

Published in 2022, *Made of Saltwater* is a collection of poems written by James Prudenciado whose work reverberates this same idea of the ocean being one with people. He connects the ocean with the people whose stories are being told within the lines of his works. Whether it be the narrator such as in the poem, 'Theory of Our Origins,' who states "my head is a house invaded / by flood" or the readers themselves in 'Growing up Queer' who are told, "You are an extension of the sea— / your skin, the seabed alien to the sun" (Prudenciado, 2022, p. 19, p. 29), he makes sure to constantly remind the reader of the speaker's and even the listener's ties to the surrounding saltwater, specifically the ocean connected to the Visayan Sea, which is close to the place he was born in.

Yet, when one looks at the poems contained in his book, Prudenciado doesn't generalize in the same way Hau'ofa related all Pacific Islanders to the ocean. For him, the ocean is more closely tied to a specific group of marginalized people. He does so not just by using the ocean

but also the water's inhabitants. Multiple poems have related queer people to mermaids or fish, and in the poem, 'The Anthropology of Our Queerness', with the title already a clear giveaway, he even begins with this particular line in his numbered list: "we are small bodies of water, our skin changes with the / waxing and waning of the moon" (Prudenciado, 2022, p. 35). For Prudenciado, while he does once mention that the people in Samar which he discusses heavily in his works are "children of the sea" (2022, p. 96), the ocean is more closely equivalent to those who have experienced a long history of trauma and violence due to either queerness or gender.

One could say that this representation is all there is, and while he specifies what the ocean is and who it is supposed to represent, it does not at all remove it from its concept of sublimity. Rather, the terror and the pleasure usually equated with the sublime are clearly represented in his work, albeit with further implications.

To begin with, *Made of Saltwater* introduces the reader to two sections. First is 'The Bruising', which remembers the past, mainly the pain associated with grief, heartbreak, and hate. Most of the poems are rife with such feelings, especially helplessness. The first poem, for instance, implies the lack of free will as the speaker talks of a child given the chance to choose between two things. The poem, which is entitled 'Rites of Passage', simply ends with a choice forced upon them: "you chose the doll / you were handed / a gun" (Prudenciado, 2022, p. 15). There is nothing here but conformity, the poem implies, and it being the first introduces the reader to the feelings contained within this section. There is no hope here, almost as if only the terror of being unable to adjust according to the will of society remains. Pain is what this is in the context of the sublime.

The second section is entitled 'The Loving', which James called "a love letter" to himself and to those who experienced helplessness but are now longing for a better tomorrow. Similar to The Bruising, the first poem, 'On Loving a Son of Manila, in Waray,' starts well with "I love you clear and indiscriminate as the daytime sky" (Prudenciado, 2022, p. 71). It introduces us to Prudenciado's ways of conveying the growing hope in the incoming works. Here, as we can all see, there is love, possibly happiness. It is a stark contrast to the former that's riddled with pain. We could understand that this is the book's pleasure in line with sublimity.

The book clearly depicts the two important aspects of the sublime. It becomes incomprehensible in a way because the pain and pleasure are present within the text as two different yet inseparable parts of one whole. Yet how he utilizes the ocean in this manner also implies another idea: the transition of 'The Bruising' to 'The Loving', the pain intertwined with pleasure, giving way to an emotion far greater than what we can expect, echoes in some way the possibility of achieving survival based on previously experienced violence. Here the Sublime mingles with the concept first suggested by Neferti Tadiar: the idea of the remaindered life achieved as a result of removing oneself from the concept of waste and value.

As implied earlier, Tadiar speaks of the remaindered life as a place that escapes commodification, removing itself from the throes of capitalism. Lying outside of this area of disposability, the beauty of its existence is that it "reminds us of times of living that long for a place of belonging, which shared and mutual being beyond the dominant ontologies and ecologies of global life might allow, even nourish" (Tadiar, 2022). They are moments of fleeting splendor, going beyond the value-making order by helping us realize other

perspectives that are not only for the sake of progress. This particular splendor also exists within Prudenciado's words, and in particular, raises the importance of the sublimity within it.

Rather than simply remaining as sublime, which, as mentioned, evokes strong, powerful emotions in a reader, Prudenciado's use of the ocean in his poetry, as it transitions from 'The Bruising' to 'The Loving,' turns the sublime into an object of splendor. It becomes, in itself, a remaindered life now reclaimed and completely separate from the purpose of value-making. The terror of the ocean's sublimity exists within his works such as in 'Kadayaw' (in English: The Full Moon):

you watch us cry as we ache  
our bodies are water  
we are made of tears  
pull our sadness in  
and let it drift away with the ebbing sea (Prudenciado, 2022, p. 60)

The ocean is personified in the human in a manner that leans toward pain. Yet as we continue with the rest of the book, the idea of the human as the ocean invokes a notion of the sublime that now leans toward pleasure. Let's return to the poem first introduced, 'At the Beach in the Far North, I Lost My Hanafuda Earrings, Lost My Eyeglasses, and in the Blinding Darkness of the Night, I Found a Boy':

All night, we bathed in the shallow shore, bodies  
submerged underwater, holding onto each other tight  
enough we became one with the water—  
shapeless, our heart, beating in unison, causing  
fleeting small ripples. (Prudenciado, 2022, p. 91)

While Burke's description of the sublime never equated it to only either the positive or the negative emotions, Prudenciado makes a clear distinction between the two as the ocean's sublimity moves from one emotion invoked to the other, thereby becoming strongly tied to Splendor. Here, there is no more need to care about the presence of necessity in the actions a person commits. Now, there is only the thought of becoming 'human' "who continue to seek pathways to escape the order of their fate (a fate of perpetual, because immanently failing, becoming)" (Tadiar, 2022). With love as a focus, James Prudenciado has created a response to the ongoing intergenerational trauma and othering caused by society continuing to prioritize progress and the notion of value. No longer must a person focus only on whether or not they contribute something. What matters now is the remaindered life-times that were created from such struggle.

Yet, just as was mentioned earlier, this does not necessarily mean that the remaindered life exists completely outside of this dialectic. Tadiar admits it is impossible to completely separate the remaindered life due to its very existence having been caused by the two in the first place. It is inseparable from it because there wouldn't have been a life that exists outside of something if the very thing was nonexistent. In the same way, the ocean's sublimity and the emotions created due to them also coexist even if they contradict. 'The Loving,' while a section that was clearly written with love, echoes of pain still present and not forgotten, littered with it as if persisting. An example of this is the poem entitled 'Water.' The mention of the ocean relates itself to the pleasure of the utmost degree:

The night you first met  
 you were both lost and  
 wet of the moment,  
 both so primeval;  
 his incandescent body  
 was the moon, pulling you by your waist,  
 teaching you how to rise and ebb like the tide. (Prudenciado, 2022, p. 85)

Yet the poem itself does not at all only depict happiness. The tone of the poem, despite being contained in ‘The Loving,’ is dire. There is sadness present as the narrator tells the story of the two lovers within the poem. The two lovers are close to the idea of love but not quite there, because there is an awareness of how the feeling is still incomplete or imperfect. After all, despite the heat of the moment and the pleasure induced, it cannot avoid the fact that it began still with this:

When lonely, he tells you he loves you like rain, and you,  
 lonely enough too to convince yourself he loves  
 you the way he needed clean water back in his days in the slum.  
 (Prudenciado, 2022, p. 85)

James Prudenciado is aware that the current pleasure and hope that grows from ‘The Loving’ could not also completely separate itself from what caused it. Survival and coping with trauma can never truly be devoid of violence in the same way Splendor is a life-time born from disposability. Sublime, in all aspects of its astonishment from the good to the bad, will be intrinsically tied to splendor’s moments of happiness, but not in a manner that feels hopeless. Rather, Prudenciado chooses to still side with the idea that there is hope for healing, even if the past cannot truly be forgotten. In his book’s final poem, ‘Name,’ he implies the same sentiment in the final stanza:

Decades later, I was a whole new colony  
 of corals. Meaning sometime in the distant  
 past, was a disaster—  
 but at least to the fishes, I was the most  
 beautiful disaster  
 to have ever descended to the seafloor. (Prudenciado, 2022, p. 104)

## Conclusion

Prudenciado uses the presence of the ocean in his poetry similar to how water comes upon land. It appears in his poems like waves, crashing in lines and disappearing in others. Despite the title, *Made of Saltwater*, being a direct implication of the importance of the ocean for both him and all of his works, the clear mention of the ocean does not often occur in all of his lines. Instead, it lingers within the characters, with the narrators, or even the readers. The ocean is us, the ones that felt helpless, the ones that Prudenciado wished would love themselves a little better in some way or another. The sublimity of the ocean then becomes a piece of every person too. Pain and pleasure coexist and cannot be fully separated, similar to the idea of splendor. The presence of the ocean as both sublime and splendor seems to be a reminder of how healing does not necessarily mean all is forgotten. There was helplessness, and it cannot be cut out and buried within the water never to be seen again, not completely. What matters is that the sublime continues as splendor, moving forward, living within the

Anthropocene with hope. Giving us a place wherein we move towards each other, as Tadiar puts it, “in ever more generous worlds of mutual being and shared living” (2022).

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***The Result of Lesson Learned to Develop a Manual for Development of Social Media Knowledge Project in Southern Border Provinces of Thailand***

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**Abstract**

This research focuses on the problem of poverty and unrest prevailing in Thailand's 4 southern border provinces during the digital era. To contribute to the resolution of these challenges, the researchers undertook a social media knowledge development project spanning from 2020 to 2022. The project's implementation process involved several key steps, which were carefully analyzed and documented by a working group comprising 15 individuals. The primary aim was to consolidate the information and insights gained from the project into a comprehensive manual. This manual, in turn, serves as a concise reference guide and an effective roadmap for organizing future training sessions, aimed at further enhancing the body of knowledge related to social media in this target region. The lessons learned from this project underscore the importance of a well-structured implementation process, which can be summarized into three distinct parts. Firstly, Part 1 comprises two initial steps: the analysis step, involving research and data collection, and the design and public relations step, involving expert meetings and alliance coordination. Secondly, Part 2 focuses on the training phase, involving two key steps: knowledge development through content and image creation, as well as fostering creativity; and an inspiring step that includes mentoring and stimulating learners, followed by diligent follow-up. Lastly, Part 3 encapsulates the post-training phase, which consists of a single step: evaluation. This evaluation encompasses lesson learned, fulfillment of objectives, reinforcement of concepts, and assessing the learners' progress. To structure and analyze the lessons learned, the researchers utilized the ADDIE Model conceptual framework, which played a crucial role in elucidating the project's effectiveness and guiding the future development of similar initiatives in addressing socioeconomic challenges in this region.

Keywords: Lesson Learned, Manual, Social Media, Southern Border Provinces of Thailand

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## **Introduction**

Communication holds a pivotal role in human life, transcending beyond basic necessities and serving as an essential element for human existence. Especially in the information age or digital era, communication has become even more critical, as it plays a central role in shaping human life and societal development. The abundance of information in this era accentuates the significance of effective communication, making it a catalyst for progress and growth in societies and communities [1].

The advent of online social media platforms, such as Facebook, Line, Twitter, Google Plus, Instagram, and YouTube, has revolutionized the landscape of communication, providing limitless opportunities to establish connections without constraints of time, place, or equipment, merely requiring a smartphone. This transformative power of online social media has left a significant impact on the world, leading many organizations to recognize its importance and actively promote proper usage and creativity on both individual and organizational levels to drive positive change in society [2].

In the context of Thailand, the southern border provinces have always held special importance due to their geographical distance from the central administrative center and their cultural proximity to neighboring regions. These provinces possess distinctive societal, religious, and cultural characteristics, often facing challenges in various aspects, including social, psychological, economic, political, and governance-related issues. Misunderstandings and mistrust between government officials and the local population have been persistent concerns. To address these complexities comprehensively, the Thai government formulated specific policies, culminating in a unified direction to tackle overall security issues in the southern border provinces [3].

Against this backdrop, the Center for Communication and Integrated Service Studies (CCISS) at King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi initiated a project aimed at developing knowledge in online social media to foster creative benefits in the southern border provinces from 2562 to 2564 BE (2019-2021). The primary objectives of the project are twofold: to disseminate knowledge about the proper use of online social media to enhance mutual understanding in the southern border provinces and to equip the target group with the knowledge, understanding, and skills to utilize online social media correctly and creatively. Additionally, the project aims to generate benefits for the community and society as a whole.

The project's success relies on collaborations with various partners, including government and private sector organizations, to ensure effective implementation [3]. Through a meticulous working process, the project team has documented multiple phases and steps, summarizing the information into a handbook. This handbook serves as a concise guide to understanding the project's implementation process and will be valuable for future training and knowledge development initiatives. The data compiled in the handbook represent the collective insights and lessons learned by the 15 members of the project team.

### ***Scope of Work***

1. Training Program: Implement a 12-month training program titled the "Development of Social Media Knowledge Project in Southern Border Provinces of Thailand."



2. Target Audience: Conduct training sessions for four groups, comprising a total of 120 participants selected from three provinces in the southern border region and four districts in Songkhla province.
3. Expert Trainers: Engage experienced professionals in the field of social media to conduct direct training sessions, equipping participants with essential knowledge and skills for effective and creative use of online social media.

### **Objective**

The primary objective of this project is to extract valuable lessons learned from the Development of Social Media Knowledge Project in Southern Border Provinces of Thailand. The project team aims to utilize the ADDIE Model as the central framework to guide the development of a comprehensive handbook. This handbook will serve as a valuable resource, summarizing various insights and experiences gained throughout the project's implementation process.

### **Literature Review**

The ADDIE Model is a widely used instructional design process that enables designers to create effective learning experiences. Developed by the Florida State University's Center for Educational Technology, it focuses on analyzing problems and finding efficient solutions. The model's systematic and iterative approach allows for continuous improvement and refinement of instructional materials, making it valuable for designing effective learning experiences in various educational settings. Its adaptability and effectiveness have enhanced teaching methodologies, benefiting learners worldwide.



Figure 1: showed ADDIE Model Process

The project team has categorized the training process into three main parts as follows:

1. Before Training:
  - Utilize Analysis and Design and PR steps to plan the training, develop the course curriculum, and implement promotional activities.
2. During Training:
  - Implement the Develop step to create comprehensive knowledge content aligned with the course curriculum.
  - Utilize the Implement step to deliver knowledge effectively during the training sessions using engaging teaching methodologies.
3. After Training:
  - Evaluate the training's outcomes and effectiveness to gather participant feedback and identify areas for improvement.

## Methodology

The research methodology adopted for this study is qualitative in nature. Data collection occurred through a joint lesson analysis conducted by a 15-member team in April 2023. The data was gathered after the completion of the "Development of Social Media Knowledge Project in Southern Border Provinces of Thailand," which spanned from 2019 to 2020. This was followed by a two-year summary and revision phase from 2021 to 2022. In 2023, the team analyzed and extracted the lessons learned.

Given the project's complexity, which involved multiple steps and collaborations with various government agencies as partners, the project team was tasked with preparing a project manual. To facilitate this, the ADDIE Model was employed as the primary framework for developing the manual.

## Results

The joint lesson analysis conducted by the team of 15 members yielded intriguing findings:

<p><b>Part 1 - Pre-training Phase:</b></p> <p>Step 1 - Analysis: This phase was research-based and focused on identifying the learners' needs and requirements.</p> <p>Step 2 - Design and Public Relations (PR): The team concentrated on designing the core curriculum of the training program and strategizing public relations (PR) efforts for effective promotion.</p>
<p><b>Part 2 - During Training Phase:</b></p> <p>Step 3 - Develop: The team dedicated this phase to creating knowledge content and materials for the training program. It encompassed three main aspects: Content Creation, Visual Creation, and Creativity and Inspiration.</p> <p>Step 4 - Implement: During this phase, the team ensured the effective application of the acquired knowledge during the training program. It involved two main aspects: Consultation and Stimulate and Follow-up.</p>
<p><b>Part 3 - After Training Phase:</b></p> <p>Step 5 - Evaluate: The focus of this phase was to assess the training program's effectiveness and its impact on the participants. It involved three main aspects: Extracting Lessons and Refinement.</p>

Table 1: Summary Flowchart of the Project Implementation Process

These results highlight the comprehensive and multi-step process of the training program, underscoring the significance of each phase in achieving the desired outcomes.

### *Step 1 - Analysis*

During the analysis phase, the research was conducted to gather accurate and precise data necessary for the project. Quantitative research methods, including surveys, were utilized by the team of operators to analyze various fundamental data. Meetings and brainstorming sessions were conducted to draft the main curriculum, and surveys were employed to gather opinions on the proposed training curriculum. The aim was to ensure that the content of the training program aligned with the participants' needs.

Data collection involved seeking opinions and expectations related to the curriculum to develop a curriculum that best suited the participants' requirements. Surveys were administered to relevant stakeholders, including government agencies, educational institutions, and individuals with connections to the southern border provinces. The sample size was determined using the Yamane formula, with a desired confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 2%. Stratified and purposive sampling techniques were applied to ensure representation.

Data was planned and collected in each province in the southern border region, and the collected data from surveys and interviews were then qualitatively analyzed by experts to summarize and develop a curriculum suitable for the context of the southern border provinces.

Based on the survey results from the sample group, the project team categorized the main content into three clusters:

- Cluster 1: Basic Knowledge for Media Literacy - Focusing on fundamental concepts related to digital media organizations, content categorization, digital media consumption behaviors, and potential risks associated with digital media usage.
- Cluster 2: Digital Literacy for Safe and Beneficial Living – Emphasizing understanding digital life and utilizing digital media safely and beneficially.
- Cluster 3: Creative Digital Media for a Better Life and Society - Involving the creation of innovative digital media for personal and societal development, including designing and producing creative digital media, incorporating business strategies, and media ownership in the production process.

### ***Step 2 - Design and Public Relations (PR)***

To implement the designed curriculum effectively, the project team organized meetings with academic and professional experts in information technology, communication, and law. Additionally, collaboration with partners from various government agencies and educational institutions in the southern border provinces was crucial to ensure that the training curriculum was well-suited to the local community's needs.

The project was divided into three parts:

- a. Part 1: Practical Training - A three-day, two-night training program scheduled on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday.
- b. Part 2: Group and Individual Projects - Participants were assigned to create projects, and mentors provided guidance and follow-up.
- c. Part 3: Show and Share Activity - Participants presented and shared their projects, and awards were given to outstanding group and individual works.

The target audience for the practical training comprised personnel in the communication and public relations field from government agencies, responsible for media information dissemination and understanding. Each training session was conducted in the provinces of Pattani, Narathiwat, Yala, and four districts in Songkhla, with 30 participants in each location.

Regarding the application process, the Southern Border Army Region 4 and the Santi Witya Center had the authority to consider and select individuals to participate in the program. The

total target number for training was set at 120 participants, necessitating effective coordination with local partners to achieve the project's objectives successfully.

### ***Step 3 - Develop***

The Develop phase involved the implementation of the practical training program, spanning three days and two nights over the weekend (Friday, Saturday, and Sunday). Training sessions were carried out in the selected provinces, following the well-designed curriculum. Subject matter experts and professionals conducted the training sessions through various formats, including lectures, discussions with key individuals in the area, and hands-on exercises.

The emphasis during this phase was on creating creative content and fostering learning about digital media. The key aspects were:

- a. **Creating Content:** Participants learned to create engaging and innovative content for online social media communication. They were guided in crafting text messages and communication materials that are creative and effective in online communication.
- b. **Visual Communication:** Participants explored the art of visual communication through photography and videos, especially using their mobile devices. They were introduced to techniques and ideas to communicate effectively through images, conveying messages creatively.
- c. **Creativity:** This aspect focused on cultivating creativity among the participants, helping them understand different types of online media and fostering an appreciation for the creative use of digital media. The objective was to encourage a creative approach to using online social media as a means of effective communication.

The training sessions were divided into three important topics: content creation, visual communication, and creativity. Participants were encouraged to experiment and think innovatively during the training. Practical techniques were provided for utilizing smartphones as tools for photography and video production.

The project aimed to develop a sense of creativity and understanding of various online media platforms, instilling an appreciation for creative use and acceptance of online communication through social media. By the end of the Develop phase, participants were expected to be well-equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to utilize online social media creatively for the benefit of their work and the community.

### ***Step 4 – Implement***

After the practical training program, participants were assigned two post-training activities:

- a. **Group or Prototype Work:** Each group, consisting of no more than 10 participants, was tasked with selecting a topic and utilizing online social media to create content that would benefit their respective communities. The quality of the work was judged based on the number of likes and followers. Each group presented their work during Activity 3.
- b. **Individual Work:** Participants were also required to create individual projects using the knowledge gained from the training. They were asked to develop content suitable for online social media platforms. Each participant had to present one project during Activity 3.

For these activities, the project team provided guidance and support through LINE groups and assigned mentors to each group. The mentors communicated with the participants, offering advice and encouragement.

Furthermore, to ensure that participants followed through with their projects, the mentors and project team conducted follow-up activities. They met with the participants informally at coffee shops or other relaxed settings within the community. During these meet-ups, they motivated the participants and took photos of their projects to be shared on social media. This approach proved to be highly effective, as it boosted participants' confidence in creating content, storytelling, and sharing their work on online social media platforms.

By implementing these post-training activities, the project team successfully facilitated the application of the knowledge gained during the training program. It also encouraged participants to actively utilize online social media for the benefit of their communities and beyond.

### ***Step 5 – Evaluate***

In the final training session, participants from all four rounds were gathered together in Songkhla province, totaling 120 people, to proceed with the following steps:

- Lesson Recap and Enrichment: The "Show and Share" activity was the third activity for participants who completed the practical training in each province. They had to come together again for this practical training. In this activity, participants integrated the knowledge gained from all three subject groups, combined with their experiences and knowledge acquired from previous follow-ups by mentors, using various formats as follows:
  - a. Lesson Recap for Creative Use of Social Media
  - b. Enrichment with Advice from Mentors and Fellow Participants
- Reinforcement: After the joint activity of lesson recaps, participants continued to present individual and group work. Awards and prizes were given for outstanding performances.
- Evaluation: To evaluate the program's effectiveness, the project team conducted quantitative research to measure the level of knowledge, understanding, application of knowledge, confidence, and ability to disseminate among the participants.

During the training period, most of the participants demonstrated high levels of knowledge, understanding, and application of the knowledge acquired. They were also confident and capable of disseminating and sharing the knowledge gained via social media, exceeding expectations. Notably:

- a. Participants showed the potential to create positive content on Facebook pages with a significant number of views, reaching tens of thousands. This means that the positive content shared by the local community was effectively spread through online social media to a large number of people outside the region. Additionally, participants could effectively present their work using statistical reports, such as views, reach, likes, and shares, which were interesting and credible.
- b. The exchange of learning and camaraderie within and between groups and between participants and mentors were evident. Participants from diverse backgrounds established good relationships with each other, accepting each other as friends or even calling each other relatives. The exchange of learning occurred in various aspects,

such as new media technology and presentation techniques, where the younger generation conveyed knowledge to the older generation.

Overall, the training program achieved a high level of success in terms of knowledge acquisition, understanding, application, confidence, and dissemination capabilities among the majority of participants. The unexpected positive outcomes highlighted the potential of participants to create impactful content and the value of their mutual learning and camaraderie.



Figure 2: showed the participants



Figure 3: showed the reinforcement with the presentation of awards

## Discussion

The After-Action Review (AAR) is a crucial process for reviewing the project's outcomes, encompassing lessons learned, successes, failures, and overall team insights [6]. Key principles of the AAR involve conducting it promptly after task completion, creating a conducive atmosphere, employing a facilitator to stimulate discussions, asking relevant questions, analyzing problems, comparing plans with actual outcomes, and documenting essential issues. In this project, the team adeptly applied these principles to develop the training manual. By applying it in conjunction with the ADDIE Model in conducting research on learning media, as referenced in various past research studies conducted by the research team [7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17].

## Conclusion

The project follows the ADDIE Model, comprising three parts and five steps, with multiple phases and detailed actions. The team successfully secured funding and support for research and development, leading to the creation of knowledge about online social media for creative purposes.

## Suggestions

To implement the project in the border province areas, strong coordination with regional partners, including government agencies, private organizations, and local communities, is essential. Additionally, facilitators must consider local cultural aspects related to religion, food, and lifestyle, heavily influenced by Islamic practices. The rural charm in these areas may facilitate participants' embrace of new knowledge.

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***Disability or a Personal Lifestyle?  
Examining Indian and Foreign Depictions of Obesity in “Double XL” and “The Whale”***

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**Abstract**

Growing obesity rates are a serious problem among Indigenous populations in several nations throughout the world. Numerous media studies have been done on various elements of obesity, but there hasn't been much research done on how obesity is portrayed in the media, particularly in films. Recent films released from both industries with the underlying theme of obesity are taken as primary sources. *The Whale*, directed by Darren Aronofsky and *Double XL* by Satram Ramani which both came out in 2022, are compared using quantitative content analysis. The paper analyses how obesity is portrayed in Indian and foreign films through a comparative study of contemporary Hollywood(American) and Bollywood(Indian) cinema. The themes explored in this paper are, firstly the framing of obesity in both films, secondly, the social problems faced by obese characters in the film and lastly, how gender roles are defined in the film. Goffman's theory of social stigma which mentally classifies an individual as undesirable based on attributes like physical appearance and deformations is applied in analysing the content of both films through their screenplay and script.

Keywords: Obesity, Film Studies, Content Analysis, Gender Roles

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## Introduction

Obesity is a common and complex health issue that has attracted a great deal of attention and concern in today's society. Obesity, defined as the excessive accumulation of body fat, has profound implications for individuals, communities, and healthcare systems. This article will examine the portrayal of obesity in Hollywood and Bollywood, shedding light on how these influential film studios contribute to the discourse on this issue. Obesity is an increasingly important issue considering its multidimensional impact on societal aspects such as physical health, psychological well-being, social mobility and the public. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), obesity has reached epidemic proportions globally, with over 2 billion adults considered overweight, and more than 650 million of them classified as obese, as of 2022 (source: WHO Obesity Fact Sheet). Obesity is not simply a matter of personal identity or behaviour but is closely related to socioeconomic factors, cultural norms, and environmental influences. In today's society, its importance extends beyond personal health, including physical characteristics, self-esteem, and social factors. Understanding how obesity is portrayed in media such as Hollywood and Bollywood is important because it shapes and reinforces public perceptions and attitudes. In this context, portrayals of obesity in popular cinema reflect social attitudes, often reflecting and influencing stereotypes and prejudices. This article will go further into the cinema of portrayals of obesity in Hollywood and Bollywood, including how these portrayals affect public understanding. It will examine how they contribute.

The way in which Hollywood portrays obesity in movies has been influenced by complex cultural and social factors that interact. These factors determine how the industry portrays obesity and can lead to both positive and negative representations. Here are some of the major cultural and social influences on Hollywood's approach to this issue. Cultural beauty standards in Hollywood have long been influenced by Western beauty standards, which tend to prioritize thin and lean bodies. This cultural norm has historically led to the under-casting of obese actors in leading roles. Because of the emphasis on thinness, overweight or obese people can be portrayed as outsiders or comic regressors. Hollywood is a for-profit industry and tends to cater to the wants of the audience. There has been a tendency to present people with traditional norms of attractiveness, which can exclude obese individuals from mainstream roles. This focus on gains can stifle bodies that are portrayed in the movies. Cultural stereotypes surrounding obesity, such as the "happy fat man" or "lazy food" attitude, have influenced Hollywood's portrayal of overweight people. These stereotypes provide misconceptions that persist and can reinforce social biases, making a grandiose tribute more complex and realistically real. Hollywood is careful not to cause controversy or offend audiences. This could cause the film to move away from a truly solid portrayal of obesity, opting for a safe, one-dimensional portrayal that avoids scrutinizing the issue.

## Changing Perceptions

Over time, changing social attitudes and the advocacy of body positivity have influenced Hollywood to rethink the way obesity is portrayed. The industry is beginning to reflect attitudes and values revealing changing body image and inclusiveness. Socio-political movements such as body positivity and fat acceptance have led to a rethinking of social attitudes towards obesity. These movements have led Hollywood to include more diverse body types and challenge stereotypes. The increased demand for representation and diversity in the media, spurred by discussions about inclusive representation in the film industry, has changed the image of obesity by way of affecting people all around and calling voices on the

front and back of the camera. There has been a noticeable shift in the way Hollywood portrays obesity in recent years, with some films focusing on the emotional and social challenges faced by obese individuals, painting a sympathetic picture and more true to the industry. This constant change reflects the importance of media in both the expression and formation of cultural norms and values.

## **Theory**

Erving Goffman's theory of social stigma provides a framework for understanding how certain characteristics, including physical appearance, can cause people to be viewed as undesirable in society. In the context of obese characters in the media, especially in movies, Goffman's theory helps analyse the public perception and treatment of obese people.

### **Goffman's Theory of Social Stigma**

Goffman's seminal work, "Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity" (1963), examines how individuals with stigmatized traits navigate social interaction. He defines stigma as an attitude that disqualifies a person from full acceptance in life, resulting in a "tainted personality." He identifies three types of stigma; Physical disgust which involves the body and includes traits such as obesity, character stigma which involves a perceived character flaw or moral failing and racial stigma which involves a person's own race, nationality or religion.

Goffman distinguishes between a person's public identity (as seen by others) and their private identity (as they see themselves). In cinema, obese characters are often swallowed up in society's perception of their bodies, which can affect their self-esteem and perceptions. He discusses how marginalized individuals can experience social isolation and discrimination. In movies, overweight people can face discrimination, ridicule, or discrimination from other people, reflecting social biases and attitudes toward obesity. His theory corresponds to the emotional and psychological struggles of individuals with stigmatized characteristics. Fat characters in movies can internalize social judgment, leading to issues such as low self-esteem, anxiety, desire for social acceptance, etc. Goffman also emphasises how marginalized individuals may struggle to meet social role expectations. Overweight characters in movies may have difficulty playing certain roles (e.g. a romantic hero or heroine), affecting their self-esteem and social acceptance.

Goffman argues that stigma can be a metaphor for deeper issues. In movies, obesity can be used metaphorically to represent emotional struggle, personal growth, or social criticism (Goffman, 1963).

## **The Whale**

"The Whale" is a drama film directed by Darren Aronofsky and released in 2022. The film talks about an obese man named Charlie, portrayed by Brendan Fraser, who tries to reconnect with his daughter while struggling with his health and image issues by seeing himself as a monster (both physically and mentally). As the two try to repair their relationship, the film explores themes of redemption, forgiveness and the intimacy of human relationships. It dives into the protagonist's emotional and physical struggles as he seeks an opportunity to reconcile and understand his loved ones. Obesity is a defining feature of Charlie. His morbid obesity is not only a physical condition but also a metaphor for his emotional and

psychological struggles. His overweight symbolizes his emotional weight and the gravity of his past mistakes.

The film explores the physical challenges of obesity, emphasizing how it limits Charlie's mobility and overall health. It also delves into the social stigma and judgment that often accompanies obesity, as Charlie faces discrimination and prejudice from others. Charlie's obesity is a source of tension in his relationships, especially with his teenage daughter as it reveals his inability to be a good father figure. Charlie struggles with issues of self-esteem, guilt, and a desire to atone for past actions. The main themes also, highlight the complex physical, emotional and social aspects of this situation in the protagonist's life.

Erving Goffman's theory of social stigma can be applied to the character of Charlie in the movie "The Whale" to understand how society perceives and treats obese individuals. Goffman's theory suggests that stigma arises when society labels certain traits or behaviours as socially unacceptable. Being marked and often marginalized, Charlie's obesity gives him a "tainted identity" in the eyes of society. It is mainly recognized by its extra weight, which is its defining characteristic. This stigma affects how he interacts with others, challenging people to see his true self beyond physical appearance. He tries to deal with his stigma by hiding his obesity within his clothes. As the film progresses, however, this strategy becomes more complicated. He also tries to deal with the stigma through interactions with his daughter and tries to be a "good" father despite his physical condition and past actions.

Goffman's theory emphasizes the social isolation and discrimination experienced by marginalized individuals. In the film, Charlie faces prejudice and discrimination because of his obesity. It is often met with hurtful, disapproving and judgmental comments from others, reinforcing the idea that obesity can lead to social isolation and abuse. His theory also resonates with the emotional and cognitive challenges that obese individuals may face. Charlie's weight is a symbol of his emotional burden and past mistakes, and his struggles with self-esteem issues and guilt are evident throughout the film. This is Goffman's idea that individuals who are stigmatized often internalize negative social thoughts, resulting in emotional distress. Goffman's theory describes how individuals with stigmatized traits may struggle to meet social role expectations and maintain self-esteem. In the film, Charlie's obesity affects his ability to be a father and strains his relationship with his daughter. He deals with feelings of inadequacy, reinforcing the effects of stigma on self-esteem and social activities. More importantly, "The Whale" uses Charlie's obesity as a metaphor for his emotional and psychological struggles, including Goffman's idea of stigma as a metaphor for deeper issues, and shows how obesity represents not only his physical condition but the burden of his past actions and regrets.

## **Double XL**

Directed by Satram Ramani, "Double XL" narrates the complex story of two obese women, Saira (played by Sonakshi Sinha) and Rajashree (played by Huma Qureshi), navigating the difficult terrain of social expectations and body criteria. In a society that often refuses to be seen beyond their size, Saira and Rajashree bravely confront widespread beauty standards. Their overlapping stories revolve around pursuing career ambitions from distant life decisions to the hustle and bustle of the city of London. Shedding light on the struggles faced by aspiring sports major Rajashree whose dream is crushed by her mere outward appearance and the weight of life's prejudices. When this resilient couple meet by accident, they find strength and unity in each other's company. Their journey becomes a powerful statement that

challenges conventional notions of beauty and affirms that dreams and aspirations transcend physical appearance. As Saira and Rajashree embark on this empowering journey, "Double XL" explores themes of breaking beauty standards, defying societal expectations, and the sustainable strength that comes from embracing your own identity.

## **Comparative Analysis**

While "Double XL" and "The Whale" both address themes related to body image and societal expectations, they differ significantly in their narratives, characters, and approaches.

### **1. Genre and Tone**

"Double XL" is categorized as a drama and a comedy, meaning a mixture of comedy and serious subject matter. The inclusion of humour suggests that a lighter approach to the topic can be taken and that humour can be used to address social norms. "The Whale" was directed by Darren Aronofsky, which may lean more towards dramatic and psychological elements given Aronofsky's tendency to explore complex and intense themes in his films.

### **2. Setting and Cultural Context**

"Double XL" includes a trip to London, meant to explore different cultures and possibly add elements of globalization. Changes in the environment can affect the expression of social expectations and beauty standards.

### **3. Characters and Relationships**

The main characters in "Double XL" are Saira and Rajashree, plus-sized women who find each other's support as they pursue their dreams. They seem to emphasize the strength of friendship and mutual power. "The Whale" stars him as Charlie, played by Brendan Fraser, whose morbid obesity is the primary metaphor for his emotional and mental struggles. It's about Charlie's inner journey and the impact his weight can have on his relationships.

### **4. Themes and Message**

"Double XL" seems to emphasize the challenges faced by plus-sized individuals in achieving career ambitions and challenging societal norms of beauty. The film may carry a message of empowerment and self-acceptance.

"The Whale" appears to use obesity as a metaphor for emotional burdens and past mistakes. The themes may revolve around redemption, guilt, and the complexities of human relationships.

### **5. Directorial Style**

Satram Ramani, known for his work in the Indian film industry, may bring a distinct Bollywood style to "Double XL," potentially incorporating song and dance sequences and vibrant visuals.

Darren Aronofsky, a renowned Hollywood director, often employs intense and thought-provoking visuals in his films. His directorial style tends to be more dramatic and psychological.

In summary, while both films touch upon themes related to body image and societal expectations, they diverge in terms of genre, setting, characters, and directorial style. "Double XL" seems to blend comedy and drama, highlighting the strength of friendship, empowerment, and cross-cultural experiences, while "The Whale" may delve into the psychological aspects of its protagonist's journey, using obesity as a metaphor for deeper emotional struggles.

## Theoretical Framework

Applying Erving Goffman's theory of social stigma to the analysis of "The Whale" and "Double XL" provides insight into how societal perceptions, judgments, and stigmas impact the characters in these films. Goffman's theory focuses on how individuals with stigmatized attributes navigate social interactions, manage their identities, and cope with societal expectations.

### 1. Visual and Script Analysis

#### a. "The Whale"

- *Charlie's Reluctance to Face the Public:* Charlie's reluctance to face the public and turning off his webcam during online teaching reflects his internalization of societal stigma. Goffman would argue that Charlie feels the need to manage his spoiled identity by avoiding public scrutiny due to his obesity.
- *Daughter's Fat-Shaming:* Charlie's daughter's fat-shaming can be seen as an externalization of societal attitudes toward obesity. Goffman's theory suggests that individuals with stigmatized attributes may face discrimination not only from society but also within their close relationships, impacting their self-esteem.
- *Self-Sacrifice for Daughter:* Charlie's decision to prioritize saving money for his daughter's future over seeking treatment for himself aligns with Goffman's concept of sacrificing personal well-being to fulfil societal roles. It reflects the internalization of societal expectations and the belief that he deserves to suffer.

#### b. "Double XL"

- *Parental Pressure on Rajshri:* Rajshri's parents pressuring her to get married quickly due to concerns about her size illustrates the external imposition of societal norms on an individual's life choices. Goffman's theory emphasizes how societal expectations can influence personal decisions and aspirations.
- *Sports Channel Interview Rejection:* Rajshri being denied a sports channel interview based on her size reflects the externalization of societal judgments. Goffman would argue that the rejection is a manifestation of societal norms regarding appearance affecting opportunities, reinforcing the stigma associated with obesity.
- *Saira's Relationship Struggles:* Saira's decision to tolerate her model boyfriend's infidelity due to societal beauty standards aligns with Goffman's concept of managing one's identity to fit societal expectations. Saira's belief that she can't find a more attractive boyfriend highlights the internalization of societal beauty ideals.

## 2. Goffman's Key Concepts

- **Public and Private Identities:** Both films depict characters grappling with the contrast between their public and private identities. Charlie and Rajshri experience challenges in presenting themselves publicly due to societal stigmas, leading to the need to manage their identities.
- **Stigma as a Metaphor:** In "The Whale," Charlie's obesity becomes a metaphor for deeper emotional struggles, with societal stigma contributing to his reluctance to face the public. In "Double XL," Rajshri's rejection from the sports channel interview reflects how societal stigmas limit opportunities based on appearance.
- **Role Expectations:** Charlie's self-sacrifice for his daughter's future and Rajshri's pressure to get married quickly illustrate the impact of societal role expectations on individual decisions, aligning with Goffman's concept of role expectations affecting behaviour.

In conclusion, analysing "The Whale" and "Double XL" using Goffman's theory shows how the social stigma of obesity influences the characters' behaviours, choices, and interpersonal relationships. The theory provides a framework for understanding the complex development of one's identity managed in the face of social expectations and decisions.

### Conclusion

The movies "Double XL" and "The Whale" present different approaches to obesity, reflecting individual reactions to social stigma. "Double XL" discusses self-acceptance, trust and dignity as a way to overcome the associated social judgment which is strong. In contrast, "The Whale" shows a character who has internalized social cynicism. He sees himself as a "sick monster" unworthy of happiness because of his obesity. The application of Erving Goffman's theory of social stigma to these narratives reveals that the profound impact of social perceptions on individual experiences. In the "Double XL". People like Saira and Rajashree are examples of disregard for social norms. They are opposed There are standards of beauty that emphasize the importance of self-confidence, for example, Goffman's concept of monitoring one's identity in the face of external measures. On the other hand, "The Whale" shows a character, Charlie, who internalizes life The stigma of seeing herself as unworthy of happiness because of obesity. Goffman's theory helps Explore how social norms can profoundly affect an individual's emotions, and have consequences. Feelings of inadequacy and sacrifice.

The importance of social exclusion is a recurring theme in both films, mirroring Goffman's theme They emphasized the impact of stigma on an individual's interactions in society. In "double". XL," the characters face social rejection but find strength in self-acceptance and each other support. The social discrimination Charlie faces in "The Whale" isn't just outside though. internalized, emphasizing the pervasive impact of social stigma on Individual well-being. It should be noted that unlike Hollywood, Bollywood is not a single entity, it is an image Obesity and understatement can vary greatly from film to film. While some movies. perpetuate stereotypes and prejudices, others challenge these values and seek to promote the body's Positive and self-acceptance. In conclusion, the films offer small perspectives on how individuals navigate through life Stigma associated with obesity. "Double XL" promotes empowerment storytelling Through self-acknowledgement, while "The Whale" explores the

negative effects of being an addict Social Decisions. Goffman's theory provides an in-depth analysis of the same. The complexity and depth of managing one's identity in the face of social expectations The impact of social discrimination on personal experiences. Ultimately, these films contribute to. An ongoing conversation about body image, social norms and the importance of kissing Stories that challenge conventional beauty standards.



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***Journey of Denial, Acceptance and Transformation:  
Discovering Meaning in Han Kang's 'The Vegetarian'***

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**Abstract**

The term "trauma" pertains to events or circumstances that elicit significant emotional distress. It surpasses an individual's capacity to handle the situation and causes them to feel powerless. Trauma thus affects an individual's identity and is highly personal, being shaped by various elements. The Protagonist Yeong-hye in Han-Kang's novel *The Vegetarian* (2007) defies societal norms by adopting vegetarianism, ultimately resulting in a transition in her Identity. The three parts of the novel deal with, firstly, her choice to abstain from consuming meat creates a consequential impact on her family. Secondly, her desire to become like a plant, thirdly Yeong-hye being admitted to a psychiatric hospital. The narration of various characters in the three parts of the novel provides a deeper understanding of the protagonist Yeong-hye. This paper adopts the methodology of Cathy Caruth's phenomenal work *Unclaimed Experiences* (1996) to study trauma through narration in literature, with the interconnection of Affect theory to study Yeong-hye's demeanor. The methodology will help in understanding the impact trauma has on a character's behavior. Throwing light on denial, acceptance, and transformation. The paper aims to analyze Yeong-hye's resistance and redefinition of her Identity from fragments into whole through traumatic encounters and create a new meaning of being human.

Keywords: Trauma, Han Kang, Transformation, Cathy Caruth, Lauren Berlant, Identity

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## Introduction

The study of trauma and its far-reaching effects on one's personal experiences and sense of self has been extensively researched across multiple academic fields. Traumatic experiences are defined by events that exceed an individual's ability to manage, often resulting in feelings of helplessness and emotional turmoil. Extensive research has been conducted across various academic disciplines on the topic of trauma and how its profound impact shapes individual experiences and identity. Trauma is considered to be events that overwhelm an individual's coping mechanisms, resulting in a sense of powerlessness and emotional distress.

According to Berlant (2011), Moments of uncertainty can make us feel as though situations that evoke dreadful anxiety can be quelled by embracing optimism. The theory presented here offers a comprehensive insight into the interdependencies among attachment, aspiration, and the challenging realities of contemporary society. As academics grapple with the complexities of navigating an increasingly unstable world fraught with persistent inequalities, Berlant's theory of cruel optimism presents a captivating lens through which to analyse the inherent contradictions between the longing for a brighter tomorrow and the harsh obstacles that impede its attainment.

Han Kang's "The Vegetarian" (2007) is a poignant exploration of trauma as the protagonist, Yeong-hye, challenges societal norms by adopting vegetarianism, leading to a transformative journey in her identity.

In the late 19th century and the 20th century, the form of aesthetics in Korean literature received much influence from Europe literature (Lee Tae-dong, 1996). The influence of European literature had been making innovations in Korean literature which was known, had tendency to be realist. One of the Korean novels, which successfully step outside from the realist tendency and become an anomaly in Korean literature, is a novel '*Ch'aesikjuuija*,' by Han Kang which had been translated in English as '*Vegetarian*.' (Savitri, 2018, p.1)

Han Kang's "The Vegetarian" is a captivating work that probe into the intricacies of societal expectations and individual rebellion. Told through three perspectives from protagonist Yeong-hye, the novel provides a poignant commentary on the complexities of human behavior and the impact of cultural norms on an individual's psyche.

The First section of the narrative elucidates Yeong-hye's choice to relinquish meat consumption, which caused a seismic shift in her family dynamics and disrupted the conventional societal order. Her husband, Mr. Cheong, struggled to fathom her decision, and familial tensions escalated as her rebellion challenged the established norms. The second section of the book offers a unique perspective through the eyes of Yeong-hye's brother-in-law, an artist fixated on capturing her evolution into a plant-like existence through hauntingly vivid dreams. As the plot thickens, the line between reality and fantasy becomes increasingly blurred, exploring the concepts of control, desire, and artistic interpretation in a surreal and thought provoking manner. The third section of the book centres around In-hye, Yeong-hye's sister. Here, In-hye confronts the aftermath of Yeong-hye's choices and her own internal battles. With Yeong-hye's hospitalization, the narrative explores the complex topics of mental well-being, cultural expectations, and the enduring repercussions of nonconformity for both individuals and their loved ones.

This paper seeks to delve into the intricate layers of trauma and its impact on identity through the lens of Cathy Caruth's seminal work, "Unclaimed Experiences" (1996), while also incorporating Affect theory "Cruel Optimism" by Lauren Berlant to decipher Yeong-hye's complex emotional landscape with a cruel end.

### **Tracing Denial**

The novel commences with Yeong-hye's abrupt resolution to renounce meat, a decision that goes against the deeply ingrained meat-eating practice of society. Her choice is met with bewilderment and mistrust, marking the outset of the story's exploration into the familial and societal repercussions of rejecting a staple element in her diet.

Yeong-hye regularly experiences powerful dreams filled with vivid and surreal images of blood and violence. The detailed and symbolic depictions of these dream sequences are both discomfiting and intriguing, leaving a lasting impression on the viewer. Kang (2015) describes Yeong-Hye's dream:

But the fear. My clothes still wet with blood. Hide, hide behind the trees. Crouch down, don't let anybody see. My bloody hands. My bloody mouth. In that barn, what had I done? Pushed that red raw mass into my mouth, felt it squish against my gums, the roof of my mouth, slick with crimson blood. (p.10)

The novel's opening section portrays a crucial juncture in Yeong-hye's life, wherein a recurring dream catalyzes events that affect her personality and attitude towards food, specifically meat. The dream's continuous recurrence highlights its significance in shaping Yeong-hye's character and behaviour, leading her to reject meat and embrace vegetarianism. The dream sequences in the novel are intricately woven into the narrative, emphasizing their importance in the story's overall theme. The author's use of symbolism and dream imagery effectively conveys the protagonist's psychological and emotional struggles, providing a deeper insight into Yeong-hye's complex and multi-faceted character.

As Caruth (1996), writes:

the breach in the mind's experience of time, self, and the world—is not, like the wound of the body, a simple and healable event, but rather an event that, like Tancred's first infliction of a mortal wound on the disguised Clorinda in the duel, is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known and is therefore not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again, repeatedly, in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor. (p.8)

Through the first part of the book we see Yeong-hye Struggling in her personal choice of denying meat. Through the narrative of her husband we can trace the trauma erupting in the actions of the protagonist. Her behavioural shift as a woman, wife and as a human being gives us a glimpse of the impact of trauma.

### **Emerging Acceptance**

Yeong-hye experiences a surreal metamorphosis, accepting a life akin to a plant's. Her brother-in-law, fascinated by her desire to transform into a tree, embarks on an artistic

endeavour to chronicle this evolution. The tale blurs the boundary between reality and symbolism as Yeong-hye embraces her novel persona, rebuffing conventional expectations.

The denial which turned into desire to become like a tree presents a new identity of Yeong-hye. “She smiled in response. Her smile was quiet and thoughtful, not dissimilar to that of his wife. For all the world as though she were a perfectly ordinary woman.” (Kang, 2015,p.51). we can trace the changes in her expression and the identity she is building through every phase by the other character’s narratives.

Yeong-hye's transformation throughout the novel is a poignant reflection of the profound impact of trauma. Her old self is gradually replaced by the unbothered lifestyle. The novel provides a powerful commentary on the long-lasting effects of trauma and how it can shape you for better or for worse. At the end of section two of the novel we see acceptance in Yeong-hye behaviour.

Up until then, Yeong-hye had seemed oblivious to her sister’s presence in the apartment; only now did she look over at the two of them, her face a perfect blank. Her gaze was utterly devoid of any form of expression. She slowly turned her back on them and walked out onto the veranda. The chill air rushed into the apartment when she opened the sliding door. He fixed his eyes on the pale blue of her Mongolian mark, seeing the traces of his saliva and semen that had dried there like sap. Suddenly it felt to him that he had grown old, had experienced everything there was to experience, and that not even death held any fear for him anymore. (Kang, 2015, p.65)

Her acceptance and the desire to be plant like act as a shield towards the trauma. Theory by Lauren Berlant proposes “‘Cruel optimism’ names a relation of attachment to compromised conditions of possibility whose realization is discovered either to be impossible, sheer fantasy, or too possible, and toxic.” (Gregg and Seigworth, 2010). Such an optimism by Yeong-hye unveils her as a strong woman, but the unconventional approach will gradually bring her demise.

### **Radical Transformation**

In the book's third section, Yeong-hye is admitted to a mental health institution, where her sister In-hye visits her frequently. Through In-hye's observations, the reader becomes aware of the toll Yeong-hye's nonconformity to societal standards has taken on her mental wellbeing. The institution serves as a backdrop for an exploration of the complexities of mental health and the challenges that arise when individuals do not align with societal norms.

Yeong-hye’s increasingly odd behavior had become noticeable around three years ago, when she’d suddenly decided to turn vegetarian. She lost so much weight it was quite shocking to look at her, and she practically stopped sleeping altogether. Yes, she’d always been quiet, but at that time she would say so little that any kind of meaningful communication was impossible. (Kang, 2015, p.73)

Yeong-hye's transformation can be interpreted as a strategy for coping with trauma and the pitfalls of optimistic expectations. Nevertheless, the metamorphosis engenders a profound sense of loss and isolation. The plant-like semblance assumed by Yeong-hye creates a perceptible chasm between her and human connections, thereby amplifying her detachment.

The symbolic connotations of her transformation expose the intricate challenges that individuals encounter when striving to negotiate the fine line between personal authenticity and societal expectations.

Lauren Berlant's theoretical construct of cruel optimism serves as a valuable lens through which to examine the complexities of Yeong-hye's choices. Cruel optimism refers to the phenomenon in which individuals develop a strong attachment to conditions that are intrinsically damaging, where the very objects of their desires ultimately become sources of harm. By employing Berlant's framework, one can gain deeper insight into the intricate interplay between desire, attachment, and the forces that shape human agency. Yeong-hye's inclination towards a more natural and uncontaminated way of life, signified by her transformation into a plant-like being, can be interpreted as a manifestation of optimistic attachment.

She's stopped talking. She's also been trying to pull the IV needle out, so we had to get her into the secure room and give her a tranquilizer before we could put it back in. How she has the strength to shake us off... (Kang, 2015, p.78)

The attachment is cruel in the sense that it isolates Yeong-hye from societal norms and deepens her mental health struggles. The optimism implanted in her desire for transformation becomes a source of cruelty, leading to further alienation and tribulation.

Yeong-hye twisted away from her sister. "You're just the same," she whispered, her voice barely audible. "What are you talking about? I..." "No one can understand me...the doctors, the nurses, they're all the same...they don't even try to understand...they just force me to take medication, and stab me with needles." (Kang, 2015, p.84)

Yeong-hye is willful until the end. Though physically she is fading away but her optimism is still intact until the end. Her constant gaze towards the trees is a constant reminder of her cruel optimistic approach.

But if the cruelty of an attachment is experienced by someone or some group, even in disavowed fashion, the fear is that the loss of the object or scene of promising itself will defeat the capacity to have any hope about anything. (Gregg and Seigworth, 2010, p.94)

This might point to something as banal as a scouring love, but it also opens out to obsessive appetites, working for a living, patriotism, all kinds of things. One makes affective bargains about the costliness of one's attachments, usually unconscious ones, most of which keep one in proximity to the scene of desire or attrition. (Gregg and Seigworth, 2015, p.94)

Trauma, which emanates from Yeong-hye's dream, exerts a powerful influence that shapes her life. Her refusal to consume meat and subsequent transformation into a plant-like state are her ways of coping. They are her efforts to establish authority over her life and escape from the traumatic realities she has faced. The optimistic attachment to an idealized reality proves cruel, intensifying psychological unravelling and aggravating trauma.

## **Conclusion**

The life of Yeong-hye, depicted in the novel "The Vegetarian," provides a poignant example of the dangers of cruel optimism. At first, the optimism surrounding the pursuit of alternative ideals may seem promising, but it can eventually turn into a source of cruelty, making the pain worse and leading to psychological distress. The book examines the fine balance between being true to oneself and the potential risks of optimistic attachments that deviate from societal norms. Yeong-hye's journey is a valuable lesson on the consequences of such attachments.



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***Creative Content Strategy of Thai Films Industry Increasing Economic Growth  
in COVID-19 Pandemic Situation***

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The Kyoto Conference on Arts, Media & Culture 2023  
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**Abstract**

This research aimed to investigate the factors that influence audiences' decisions to watch Thai films and examined the tactics, strategies, and economic value creation processes of the Thai film industry. The researcher studied the overview of content creation strategies in the film industry and the revenue of Thai films related to the economic values' creation using sample groups selected using a simple random sampling method and comprising the basic information of Thai films originally released in 2019-2020. The findings were as follows:

1. The most influential aspect of content strategy on the decision to watch Thai films was the use of engaging narrative techniques (mean = 4.05, SD = 0.80). There were additional factors that convinced audiences to watch a film, such as captivating characters, unconventional screenplay structures and unusual image presentations that were impossible to encounter in daily life or were related to tourism.

2. The content strategy of Thai films had impacted on economic value creation in terms of promoting tourism (mean = 4.05, standard deviation = 0.85).

3. The situation of Thai films during 2019–2020 (including the Covid-19 pandemic) revealed that the content strategy of Thai films was crucial for the stimulation and recovery of the Thai film industry (mean = 4.05, standard deviation = 0.91). In addition, contemporary Thai films have had to adapt to the Covid-19 pandemic and the current trends of Thai films affected by digital media, as of dramas, series etc. Consequently, entrepreneurs and film producers must keep up with the situation and adaptations.

Keywords: Thai Films Industry, Creative Content Strategy, COVID-19

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## Introduction

The examination of Thailand's status across diverse dimensions is elucidated in light of the 12th National Economic and Social Development Plan spanning the years 2017 to 2021. An analysis of the economic landscape revealed discernible constraints in the initial triennium of the 11th National Economic and Social Development Plan, characterized by a deceleration in economic expansion and increased volatility. Notwithstanding these challenges, Thailand underwent a notable transformation in its production structure, transitioning from an agrarian focus to a greater emphasis on industrial and service sectors. (Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, 2017) Within the ambit of the 12th National Economic and Social Development Plan, strategic objectives were articulated, envisioning Thailand as a high-income nation with equitable income distribution. Positioned as a regional hub for transportation and logistics, the goal is to evolve into a trading and service-oriented nation, fostering the production of organic and safe agricultural products. Emphasis is also placed on nurturing creative and highly innovative industries with an environmentally friendly orientation (Direkwattanachai, 2012).

The enduring significance of the Creative Economy policy in Thailand's economic trajectory is evident, grounded in the fusion of cultural assets and creativity, innovation, or technology. This policy framework leverages economic processes or activities to generate products and services with commercial or social value. Thailand's creative industries, comprising 12 primary sectors, including the Thai film industry and the Performing Arts Industry Group, are identified as pivotal contributors to the country's economic advancement. (De Vany, 2004) In the broader context, these creative industries emerge as vital drivers aligning with the objectives outlined in the National Economic and Social Development Plan. Specifically, the Thai film industry, situated within the broader arts and culture domain, is acknowledged as a cornerstone in propelling the nation's economic development (Yotphonwat & Lapjarupong, P. 2009).

The Thai film industry holds paramount significance in the multifaceted development of the nation, impacting its economic, social, and cultural dimensions. Its recognition as a key component within the creative industries, as per the categorization in the creative industry database system of the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, accentuates its competitive standing. (Klaisikaew, 2019) This classification not only enhances the industry's competitiveness but also serves as a catalyst for the formulation of strategies geared towards the production of innovative and novel cinematic works. Such strategies play a pivotal role in captivating the attention of consumers and viewers, thereby influencing popular trends within society and various demographic groups (Levison, 2010).

Despite the current gradual pace of expansion in production within the Thai film industry, attributed to the limited market share held by a few agencies, organizations, and investors, periodic resurgences underscore its inherent vibrancy. The industry's cyclical revitalization generates popularity trends among audiences and contributes significantly to revenue generation. The appeal of Thai films is intricately linked to various elements such as engaging narratives, well-developed characters, compelling scenes, renowned actors, excitement, uniqueness, and the exploration of new cinematic genres. (Davis, 2015) These aspects collectively constitute the content of the film, influencing audience decisions to purchase film tickets. In the realm of film language, the allure of these elements is encapsulated in the concept of "interesting film pages."

The film industry operates as both an investment in production and a creative endeavor, driven by the aim of deriving profits from viewer-generated income. Positioned as a mass media industry, it facilitates communication with large audiences, disseminating creative works to the public and creating economic value through selective viewing. (Gershon, 2017) Recognizing the consequential role of content creation in marketing strategies, advertising, and viewer persuasion, this study delves into the research topic, "Creative Content Strategy of Thai Films Industry Increasing Economic Growth in COVID-19 Pandemic Situation" The researcher underscores the importance of content in fostering economic value, shaping cultural identity, and contributing to the overall development of the film industry.

## Research Question

The research topic is "Creative Content Strategy of Thai Films Industry Increasing Economic Growth in COVID-19 Pandemic Situation." The researcher has determined the questions for conducting the research: 1. What strategies does the Thai film industry have for creating content to create economic value, especially during the COVID-19 outbreak? 2. What factors influence the choice of watching Thai Films?

## Objective

1. To study tactics, strategies, and economic value creation processes of Thai film industry.
2. To study various factors of choosing to watch Thai film of audiences.

## Research Framework

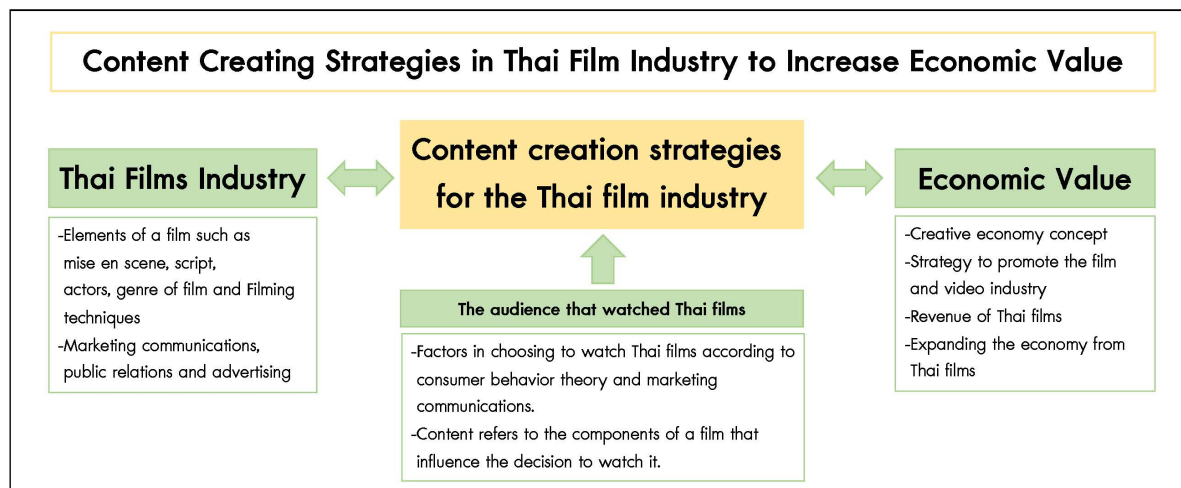


Figure 1: Research Framework

## Research Methodology

1. Study information, theories, concepts, and relevant research documented in each issue and dimension.
2. Preliminary study of Thai films released in Thai cinemas between 2019 and 2020 using qualitative data analysis.
3. Conduct an audience survey to investigate the factors influencing film viewing choices. Prepare designs for a quantitative questionnaire, incorporating demographics, attitudes, motivation, satisfaction, and elements of film across various topics.

4. Collect quantitative research data by conducting surveys with audiences in Bangkok and representatives from various provinces across Thailand.
5. Process and analyze data from questionnaires to examine the relationship between the film producer's output and the audience's response.

## Research Scope

The research targets the Thai film industry as its primary population, encompassing various stakeholders such as production agencies, organizations, companies, and investors engaged in the creation and dissemination of Thai films. Furthermore, the study includes the audience that actively engages with and watches Thai films as a significant subpopulation within this research framework.

The research data will be collected from two distinct sample groups: 1) Films exhibited nationwide in theaters during the period of 2019-2020, with a focus on comprehensively analyzing content creation strategies within the film industry and examining the economic impact on the creation of value, particularly in relation to the income generated by Thai films. 2) Survey responses will be gathered from audience groups in Bangkok and representatives from various provinces in each region, specifically addressing content-related issues to discern their film preferences.

## Result

The findings from the research investigation on the "Creative Content Strategy of Thai Films Industry Increasing Economic Growth in COVID-19 Pandemic Situation" are elucidated in the subsequent sections.

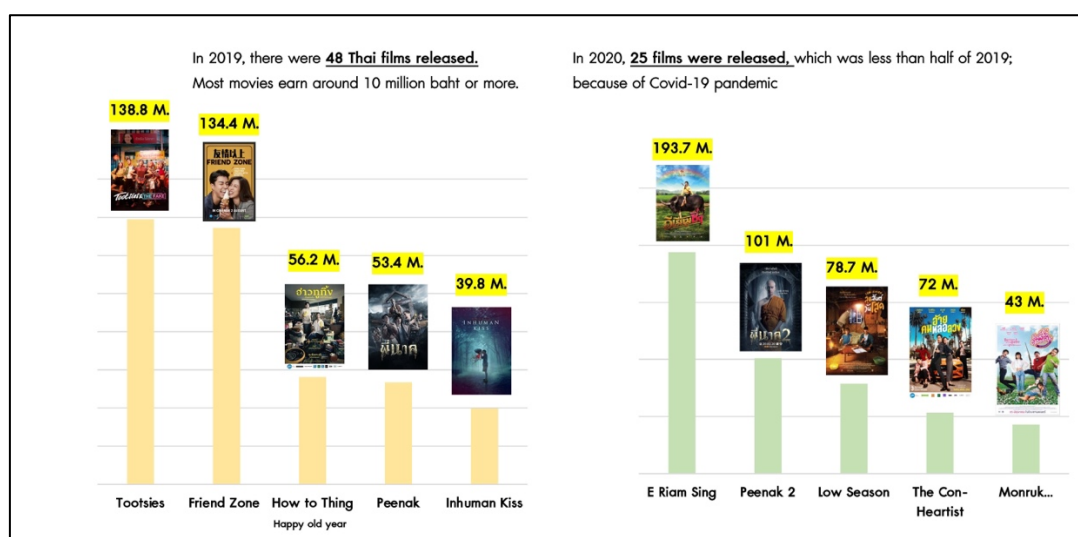


Figure 2: Income of Thai films shown in theaters (2019 – 2020)

In 2019, there were 48 Thai films released. The highest-grossing film was *Tootsies & The Fake*; its revenue was 138,800,000 baht. And in 2020, 25 films were released, which was less than half of 2019; because of Covid-19 pandemic, a number of films to be released were postponed. The highest-grossing film in 2020 was *E Riam Sing* earning 193,700,000 baht.

Table 1: The factors influencing viewers from various fields in choosing to watch Thai films  
N = 387

Detail	$\bar{x}$	S.D.
Choosing to watch Thai films based on the interestingness of the script or topic in the film.	4.17	0.87
Choosing to watch Thai films based on artistic elements that are interesting, attractive, and exciting.	4.04	0.84
Choosing to watch Thai films for the skilled actors and their good acting abilities.	3.99	0.90
Choosing to watch Thai films featuring actors who have worked in previous films.	3.82	0.82
Choosing to watch Thai films based on advertising and public relations (promotion).	3.81	0.81

Table 2: The content strategies that affect the decision to watch Thai films

N = 387

Detail	$\bar{x}$	S.D.
Choosing to watch Thai films that have interesting narrative techniques.	4.05	0.81
Choosing to watch Thai films that feature intriguing character development.	3.97	0.89
Choosing to watch Thai films with a new script structure.	3.93	0.86
Choosing to watch Thai films that have unusual visual presentation content not seen in everyday life.	3.90	0.92
Choosing to watch Thai films with content related to current social issues.	3.80	0.85

Table 3: The content strategies of Thai films that affect the creation of economic value

N = 387

Detail	$\bar{x}$	S.D.
Strategies for creating Thai film content can promote tourism.	4.06	0.85
Content creation strategies for Thai films are important for generating income.	4.04	0.82
Content creation strategies for Thai films can promote competition in the Thai film industry.	4.01	0.84
The content creation strategy of Thai films can reflect Thai society.	4.01	0.91
The content creation strategy of Thai films can create a reputation for Thailand.	3.93	0.80

Table 4: The situation of Thai films in 2019-2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic

N = 387

Detail	$\bar{x}$	S.D.
Thai film content strategies are very necessary to stimulate and revive the Thai film industry.	4.05	0.91
Thai films today need to adapt to the COVID-19 situation.	3.98	0.87
Thai films today are affected by other digital media such as dramas, series, etc.	3.94	0.91
Thai films are currently affected by COVID-19.	3.93	0.91
Thai Films have been affected by viewing decisions and trends during COVID-19.	3.92	0.87

## Conclusion

1. The most influential aspect of content strategy on the decision to watch Thai films was the use of engaging narrative techniques (mean = 4.05, S.D. = 0.80). There were additional factors that convinced audiences to watch a film, such as captivating characters, unconventional screenplay structures and unusual image presentations that were impossible to encounter in daily life or were related to tourism.
2. The content strategy of Thai films had impacted on economic value creation in terms of promoting tourism (mean = 4.05, S.D. = 0.85).
3. The situation of Thai films during 2019–2020 (including the Covid-19 pandemic) revealed that the content strategy of Thai films was crucial for the stimulation and recovery of the Thai film industry (mean = 4.05, S.D. = 0.91). In addition, contemporary Thai films have had to adapt to the Covid-19 pandemic and the current trends of Thai films affected by digital media, as of dramas, series etc. Consequently, entrepreneurs and film producers must keep up with the situation and adaptations.

## Discussion

1. From a study of Thai films during 2019 - 2020, it can be shown that comedy films, love films, and supernatural films (Thai Novel) have gained high popularity. This shows the strategy of creating Thai film content that can lead to economic value creation.
2. During 2020, the number of films released in theaters was more than double less than in 2019, but the income of the highest-grossing Thai films was higher than in 2019. This shows that audience groups were still waiting and following to watch Thai films even during the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. The decision to choose to watch Thai films from the audience shows that a film's content creation strategy is important. It can be divided into elements of a film in various aspects such as the script, storytelling, actors, characters, social issues, and Film sequels.
4. Continuing to increase economic value, the research found that adding economic value in promoting tourism or enhancing Thailand's reputation is an important strategy that can be further developed. Additionally, this includes presenting Thai culture.

The research results are consistent with Phonpirun.P (2007) delineated the concept of the creative economy and its implications for Thailand, asserting that the creative economy manifests as a process or activity deriving from two principal factors: 1) intellectual capital or knowledge, and 2) application skills for leveraging creativity (or knowledge) to attain maximum commercial benefit. Intellectual capital can take the form of the original "knowledge base" or "new knowledge," serving as a foundation for expanding ideas. This form of capital may emanate from human capital, such as education and training that fosters novel ideas, as well as cultural capital, including Thailand's distinctive cultural heritage. Social capital, encompassing local customs and knowledge, also contributes to this intellectual reservoir. Application skills, or adaptive skills, encompass the proficiency required to apply knowledge and intellectual capital effectively in the production of goods and services. These skills play a crucial role in creating tangible value and economic worth through the realization of innovative ideas.



Moreover, the discernible trends within the Thai film industry underscore the necessity for governmental policies and support. Various challenges and circumstances have significantly impacted the Thai film landscape, particularly in the current context of the Covid-19 pandemic. Given these circumstances, strategic content interventions are imperative to stimulate and rejuvenate the Thai film industry. Aramwit R., & Thada-Amnuaychai M. (2016) research on the direction and trends of the Thai film industry during the period from July 2014 to July 2015 sheds light on pertinent details. This timeframe witnessed a decline in industry revenue attributed to reduced viewership of Thai films and a decrease in film production. In 2014, for instance, 40 Thai films were released with 35 earning less than 30-million-baht, indicative of a crisis in the industry.

The research findings suggest potential solutions to the challenges faced by the Thai film industry, drawing insights from successful approaches in countries such as South Korea and Australia. These examples highlight the transformative impact of governmental support on industry growth, contributing not only to the economic development of the film sector but also enhancing Thailand's global image. Consequently, Thai films can be viewed as flagship products with each production possessing substantial economic value, given the considerable budget required for filmmaking.

It is imperative for the government to perceive films as potent tools for promoting Thainess. Film content inherently encapsulates diverse Thai characteristics, encompassing elements such as cuisine, attire, and various aspects of Thai societal life. Leveraging these aspects not only facilitates the growth of the film industry but also provides a means for distributing Thai products abroad, showcasing the richness and uniqueness of Thai culture to an international audience.

### **Suggestion**

1. For further study, the researcher can explore strategies for creating film content in the current situation, especially after the outbreak of Covid-19. Nowadays, there is increased popularity in watching films through the streaming system, providing insight into the current direction and trend.
2. Carrying out research design can involve adding a sample group to collect data, which includes Thai film producers such as producers, directors, actors, and scriptwriters.
3. The research results obtained this time, as a Thai film producer, can be used to enhance your ability to create works. This includes individuals involved in planning strategies for the Thai film industry and policies aimed at generating added economic value through media influence, "Soft Power."

### **Acknowledgements**

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cooperation throughout the data collection process. Additionally, heartfelt appreciation is expressed to all faculty, staff, and individuals who played pivotal roles in facilitating and ensuring the success of the research as envisaged.

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***Development of an Entertainment Talk Show Format  
to Promote Critical Thinking Skills Among Generation Z***

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**Abstract**

The objective of this study is to study the development of an entertainment talk show program format to promote critical thinking skills for Generation Z. The data were collected using in-depth interviews with criterion sampling: (1) the Generation Z audience; (2) program producers; and (3) communication experts. The results of the components of entertainment talk show program for Generation Z revealed the following: (1) the program topic must be up-to-date, accurate, reliable, and able to meet a wide range individual needs of the audience; (2) the overall presentation of the program should be informal, innovative and entertainment; and (3) the program presenter/host should have a balance between entertainment and information, be sagacious, self-confident and reliable; and (4) the time and mood of the show; the average length of the program is 30 minutes. There were criteria for selecting guests and being accepted by the Generation Z audience. The results of the development of an entertainment talk show program format to promote critical thinking skills revealed the following: (1) pre-production process: the topic should be intriguing or emotionally impactful which led to promoting critical thinking skills. The scripts should lead to controversy, encourage opinions, and include information about the platform for viewers to share their opinions; (2) the production process: program presenter/host and guests should review the topic before filming; and (3) the post-production process and the evaluation of the production process focused on consistency, continuity and implementing audience opinions. The evaluation of program focused on managing audience opinion and a platform for various comments on the audiences.

Keywords: Entertainment Talk Show, Promoting Critical Thinking Skills, Generation Z

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## Introduction

The Hakuhodo Institute of Life and Living ASEAN (HILL ASEAN) is a major advertising agency in Japan that studies consumer behavior. Generation Z in six ASEAN countries (Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Philippines) found that since 2021, Generation Z has become a relatively large proportion of the population in the ASEAN region. Currently, this population represents approximately 24% of the total population and will become the main group of consumers in the future. The truth is that this generation use various social media platforms for different purposes, for example, Facebook is for catching up on news, Instagram is a virtual diary, Twitter is for sharing information in real-time, and finally, TikTok and YouTube for the purposes of entertainment and content creation (Hakuhodo, 2021).

The YouGov RealTime Omnibus found that Generation Z uses YouTube the most, compared to other types of online social media, followed by Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram, in that order. Additionally, it was observed that within this group, the use of TikTok is characterized by watching live broadcasts, such as those from online sellers, followed by tracking the activities of artists and celebrities, and then following the news, respectively. (marketingoops, 2022) The information is consistent with research on the lifestyle of consumers in Generation Z, revealing that they are interested in social issues, particularly those related to the economic situation, such as professions or further education. In terms of their approach to life and expression of opinions, it was found that Generation Z tends to be straightforward and outspoken, disliking prolonged waiting times and not feeling the need to tolerate situations that are not right (Kuawiriyapan, and Suwannamek, 2020).

Generation Z lives in a society that has many problems. They are concerned about various aspects of their lives, such as economics, politics and society, inequality, human rights issues and the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, they are enthusiastic about solving social problems together with other people in their generation and like to criticize things around them (Hakuhodo, 2021).

Generation Z has changed the way that media is used. Online media has become the main way to search for information and entertainment. Promoting critical thinking skills is something that should happen along with changes in technological development. I am concerned about the importance of promoting critical thinking to benefit Generation Z audiences. Therefore, I had the idea to develop an entertainment talk show program format for the members of Generation Z.

## Methodology

The data were collected using in-depth interviews with criterion sampling: (1) the Generation Z audience are as follows: the criteria for the sample audience of Generation Z viewers refer to the generation born between 1997 and 2012, with previous experience in accessing entertainment talk show media through online channels (11 people); (2) program producer: the criteria for the sample audience of program producer refer to those with least three years of relevant work experience in media production for a target audience of members of Generation Z. The responsibilities should be related to any part of the media production process (pre-production, production, and post-production), or they can involve responsibilities; in all three parts of the media production process (5 people); and (3) communication experts: the researchers select communication scholars, emphasizing

expertise and diverse abilities. The selection is based on experience and relevance to the field of communication (3 people).

## **Conclusion**

This study focuses on examining and developing the format of entertainment talk shows based on research to enhance critical thinking skills through the perspective of involved parties. There are three target groups: (1) the Generation Z audience; (2) the program producer; and (3) communication experts in order to obtain information for program production, including data on the program format and perspectives for blending content analysis.

The research summary is divided into two points. The results of the components of an entertainment talk show program for Generation Z revealed that first, the topic of the program must be up-to-date, contain accurate information, should be reliable and able to meet a wide range of individual needs with the audience; second, the overall presentation of the program should be informal, innovative and entertaining. The visuals in the communication of the program should be able to provide viewers with a clearer picture, enhance understanding of the content, reduce uncertainties, and lead to more thoughtful consideration; three, the program presenter or host should create a balance between information and entertainment. They must possess the skills to express their opinions appropriately in different situations and their commentary should be moderate and unbiased; and four, the time and mood of the show and the average episode length of an entertainment talk show should be considered based on appropriateness and additional environmental factors. The content provider may find it suitable to present the entire program in 15 to 30 minutes. However, from the perspective of the Generation Z audience, they prefer watching talk shows that last between 30 to 60 minutes, with the content divided into at least three segments. There are also criteria for selecting the guests who may be accepted by Generation Z.

The results of the development of an entertainment talk show program format to promote the importance of critical thinking skills: first, in the pre-production process, program producers should incorporate content that promotes analytical thinking in the form of program content or discussion topics. The content that sparks curiosity and ignites knowledge results in Generation Z viewers expressing their opinions while watching the program. On the other hand, content that aligns with societal interests or evokes emotional responses will lead Generation Z viewers to share their thoughts after watching the program. In developing an entertainment talk show script, it is crucial to design the conversational style of the host that leads to generating debates, questions, or encourages audience comments. Alongside this, clear instructions should be provided within the script regarding how and when opinions should be expressed or analyzed during the program. Also, considerations should be made on whether the show is live, if it can be viewed retrospectively, and which channels are available for audience comments; second, in the production process, the program presenter or host should engage in discussions and review the topics of the conversation before starting the recording, especially the host who needs to gather information or prepare in advance. This is to control the issues and guide their own opinions during the discussion; and finally, in the post-production process, the evaluation of the production process should not be narrowly focused on any specific aspect but should emphasize consistency and continuity in the assessment. Additionally, it is essential to incorporate viewer feedback into the evaluation process. Program producers should actively manage and sincerely welcome viewer feedback, providing channels for diverse audience opinions. Moreover, there should be a careful

selection of feedback, focusing on essential aspects that reflect the impact of communication to enable meaningful analysis.

In summary, the channels for disseminating entertainment talk shows based on research to promote the analytical thinking skills of Generation Z, YouTube and Facebook are the most intriguing channels. This is because they can effectively respond to the behaviors and preferences of the Generation Z audience. Apart from the convenience of content, these platforms also allowed immediate interaction through comments, and providing an avenue for expressing opinions in real-time. Additionally, it serves as a platform for practicing analytical skills by engaging in discussions on the topics presented in the program.



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***How to Be Insufferable on Facebook: Revealing Communities of Practice and Social Construction Through Social-Media Dynamics***

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**Abstract**

Facebook is one of the most influential media dynamics in modern history and it is the most popular social media platform in the world. Several years ago, Wait but Why, a popular blog revealed a pattern of user behaviors that made a post insufferable. This textual analysis uses these core ideas to ascertain ways these distinctions are at work on the platform, and how Facebook builds communities of influence. Social constructionist theory informs this study. This review suggests that the rhetoric on Facebook evolves into more than a channel for information, it is a mediated social space where original information becomes negotiated social meaning for the users. Overall, this study finds that communities of individuals are significant in identity building as per the tenets of the communities of influence model.

Keywords: Communities, Influence, Facebook, Social Construction

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## Introduction

Facebook is one of the most influential media dynamics in modern history and it is the most popular social media platform in the world, with 2.96 billion active users. Ten years ago, Wait but Why, an online publication that highlights amusing observations, published a blog called “7 Ways to Be Insufferable on Facebook” (Urban, 2013). The author, Tim Urban, asserts that “A Facebook status is annoying if it primarily serves the author and does nothing positive for anyone reading it” (np). This is a deceptively simple idea but causes wide-ranging issues as social media users generally engage with the platform for a beneficial result. Building and sharing identity, professional or personal, is intended to be enriching but social missteps have profound consequences on one’s personal brand.

The utility of social media is often questioned and concerns regarding online hubris are prominent. According to Purohit (2019), individuals falling prey to the negative effects of social media is an accepted fact in popular and recent public discussions. Further, many misuses of social media exist and Purohit asserts people unintentionally come across as trolls, even though they are somehow seeking to gain advantage over others. Poor decisions by individuals have adverse consequences and there are indeed keys to avoiding negative perception. Purohit further asserts success is all about confidence, and it is no surprise that many are out of touch with the way others perceive their posts or the general tone of their profile.

Evidence amassed over the years shows that these platforms are damaging in a myriad of different ways. Misinformation, body image issues, and projecting a false reality are paramount among the criticisms, but there is little exploration regarding smaller irritations that are just as damaging to individuals as their impact accumulates over time. Urban’s blog highlights seven areas of hubris based on five areas of motivation that make readers disengage with a post. These five areas of motivation are deeply instilled in human nature including:

- Image Crafting: The author wants to affect the way people think of them.
- Narcissism: Only the author’s thoughts, opinions, and life philosophies matter. The author and the author’s life are interesting in and of themselves.
- Attention Craving: The author wants attention.
- Jealousy Inducing: The authors want to make people jealous of their lives.
- Loneliness: The author is feeling lonely and wants Facebook to make it better. (2013, np)

Based on these motivations, Urban identifies seven characteristics of “insufferability” that find root in the cultural zeitgeist. This study looks for these moments to explore how prominent they are in the current landscape of social media. Moreover, it explores how these dynamics are constructing a negative reality in the eyes of others. Facebook posts were used in this model to explore these social media dynamics and explore social constructionist thought. The seven characteristics of hubris (found in the method section) noted by Urban are used to find themes that build impressions, and explore how dominant they are in the social media landscape. In contrast, Urban gives two other broad categories of posts that he calls “unannoying.” These are used to help build themes for analysis as well.

Social constructionist theory as well as communities of practice are used as theoretical frameworks to observe these dynamics. Social constructionist theory, first explored by Berger and Luckman (1966), is used to illustrate ways individuals on social media may adjust to

influences and expectations. Social space and the behavior observed in this study may play a key role in indicting social media dynamics. According to Bourdieu (1984) social space in terms of peer networks is the social capital of an individual. As individuals engage and interact in various aspects of life they develop certain dispositions toward their identities and the ways they are expected to behave. Bourdieu further explains that these dispositions, combined with other complex social behaviors and expectations, will start to inform individuals of their place in a social order and they will begin to embody this expectation in their habitus, thus, constructing their reality. This discourse analysis is designed to indicate how prominent areas of hubris are among the sample group. This is done by exploring Facebook, as an interactive cultural landscape. The rhetoric from 24 undergraduate's Facebook pages, including comments is scrutinized herein for themes related to Urban's original article. Facebook, as an online social landscape, is used to explore in what ways subtle-negative or positive rhetoric finds its way into cultural zeitgeist. This study explores those conversations and looks at how they are address by others.

## **Literature Review**

Theories of communities of practice and social construction as they apply to social interaction in a digital space guide this study. In terms of social constructionist thought, relationships are paramount to the value individuals place in themselves and how investment in those relations are returned in the form of self-awareness. Webb (2014) notes that the original goal of the web to harness collective intelligence, has been overshadowed by changing business models, the need for hits, and false engagement on social media. Knowledge of online digital communities like Facebook has grown from the field of community building, which traditionally explores public discourse, self-cultivation, and validation. The literature shows three important themes that arise from looking at social control and communities of influence; understanding the rules of a platform, the negotiated process of identity building, and truth and social action.

## **Understanding the Rules of the Platform**

As individuals begin to realize the online world has different social norms than in the physical world their understanding starts to change for that particular marketplace of ideas. According to Lin (2005), this marketplace can be economic, political, or community based. A social landscape provides an individual with an understanding of individual demands and how they fit in an overall structure. Meeting those social demands provides the individual with satisfaction and a motivation separate from conventional norms of behavior. This structure creates unofficial rules that maintain the community. Boicu (2011) observes that the online community rules are expected to be the foundation on which a practicing community is built, but there are many interpretations of net etiquette. Chatting is perceived differently by some communicators: "They hesitate between defining it as a one-to-one interaction or as a permissive genre for quarrelling and deviation from the main topic. Concerning conformity with the main topic, it is the most infringed rule within the data and it often becomes an argument against inconvenient issues or persons" (p. 61). Boicu sees rules as a learned behavior but others find them more explicit when the groups goals are well-defined. According to Silva et al, (2009) cohesion in an online community surrounding a special topic or interest is brought about by explicit ground rules regarding membership, presence of moderators, availability of profile information, and net etiquette. Silva argues there are tacit warrants for discerning pertinent posts and the deployment of specific techniques of a discipline. The study further found that without the exercise of power through the disciplinary

techniques imposed by ongoing users and the “owner” of the original idea, the existence of the community is jeopardized.

This discourse leads to well defined roles in the community over time. This is consistent with Berger and Luckmann’s (1967) assertion that reality is constructed by social interactions to build meaning and this meaning depends on the way people interact with each other. This provides a symbolic reality for the social world. In the case of the individual, the alteration of the social world will lead to an altered reality.

### **The Negotiated Process of Identity Building**

Berger and Luckman ((1967) further alludes to the idea that a person’s identity is heavily influenced by continued interaction with others whereas their view of the world and their own identity is negotiated. This sounds like a negative dynamic, but Wenger (1998) asserts that positive “communities of practice” arise from these dynamics as well. The author explains that groups of people, who share a passion for a craft, skill, or profession learn how to perform more effectively if they interact regularly. Morrison (2014) confirms this assertion, contending that over time, bloggers develop discourses appropriate to the medium. This study of “mommy” bloggers looking at posting and commenting practices denotes use of the forum builds a community around the narration of unconventional opinions. The compositional practice of commenters minimizes conflict and prioritizes emotional support. Fox (2000) builds on this idea granting that participants in a communities of practice might be a community, but other actors in that network theory could comprise human and non-human actors, any of which could be “bad actors”. Changes in the actions of non-human elements in the actor-network, as well as changes in human action, increase the sum of knowledge embodied in the network, but that is not always positive because the intention is nebulous.

### **Objective Truth and Social Action**

This brings the review back to the individual and their ability to recognize the influences placed upon them in a digital community. It appears to depend on the understanding the individual actor brings to the table. According to Jorgensen and Phillips (2002), knowledge is not objective truth; rather it is a product of categorizing the world into products of discourse. Worldviews and identities can change over time. This premise privileges the anti-foundationalist view that knowledge is not grounded but is contingent on malleable social discourse. Discourse as a form of social action plays a part in producing the social world. The authors further assert that there are links between knowledge and social process, thus there are links between knowledge and social action. Webb (2014), as previously noted, asserts that the original goal of the internet, to harness collective intelligence, has been overshadowed by changing business models, the need for clicks, and false engagement on social media. Although original founders and participants in digital communities likely follow the rules, the need for expanding audience allows for others with less social investment in the communities to take part. This results in what Webb describes as a coarsening of discourse.

Beyond communities of content, excessively negative or extraneous comments are a concern for large media companies and individuals alike. The usefulness of online participation is also a multifaceted dynamic. According to Mitchelstein (2011) many bloggers welcome interactions with readers and appreciate their comments, but asserts also that newspaper moderators have a low opinion of the quality of user contributions. The authors findings suggest that online discussions were a phenomenon shaped by the motivations and practices

of participants and facilitators. These motivations and actions, when successful can grow as well. According to Fanselow (2007) place-based bloggers invest many hours cultivating content and discussion (usually for free) because they love their respective communities. Some local sites in Fanselow's study evolve into more traditional advertiser-supported news outlets. But few community bloggers were in it for the money. They value the civic function of supporting and informing their respective communities.

The literature shows communities that engage online are often able to determine optimum ways to communicate on a given platform through observation and interaction, this necessitates a negotiation of identity for a positive result. The literature is rich in the area of community building but is limited in explorations of self-cultivation, validation, and hubris. With this in mind, this study was guided by the following research questions.

RQ1: Are areas of hubris apparent in the sample discourse?

RQ2: How do specific areas of hubris manifest in the discourse?

RQ3: What motivations in the discourse reveal about social constructionist theory and communities of influence?

RQ4: What areas of usefulness or enjoyment, beyond the insufferable, are engaged on Facebook?

## Methodology

The methodology used in this study employs textual analysis as explored by Crystal (1992), which allows discourse to be examined as an ongoing dialogue making up units of thought. Crystal references these exchanges as sermons, arguments, jokes, or narratives rather than social media posts specifically, but the threads and comments corresponding to the research questions share the same dynamics as other continuous dialogues. This method calls for the examination of entries by looking at structure, such as cohesion, coherence, intentionality, acceptability, informativeness, situationally, and intertextuality. This method of inquiry was found to be appropriate for the study as these structural elements create similar categorical themes such as those explored by Urban. To align with the goals of this study, Urban's themes are modified slightly and not reflected in this analysis exactly, but the intent remains intact. With this in mind, the themes of hubris explored herein include:

- 1) **The Brag**
  - a. A post making life sound great, either in a macro or micro sense.
- 2) **The Literal Status Update (and The Cryptic Cliffhanger)**
  - a. The exact thing going on at a given moment.
  - b. A post that makes clear that something good or bad is happening in your life without disclosing any details.
- 3) **The Inexplicably-Public Private Message**
  - a. **Description:** A public posting from one person to another that has no good reason to be public.
- 4) **The Out-of-Nowhere Oscar Acceptance Speech (and The Step Toward Enlightenment)**
  - a. **Description:** An outpouring of love for no clear reason and aimed at no one in particular.
  - b. **Description:** An unsolicited nugget of wisdom.
- 5) **The Incredibly Obvious Opinion**
  - a. **Description:** When a big event happens, a post chiming in with the opinion we've heard 1,000 times.

Further, the following categories of posts are described as not containing hubris and are not insufferable, according to Urban. They are also used to create positive themes for categorization.

1) **Interesting/Informative**

- a. **Description:** An important, impactful, original item of information that has neutral bearing on social image.

2) **Funny/Amusing/Entertaining**

- a. **Description:** An effort to amuse an audience in an attempt to brighten their day.

Discourse analysis, as a qualitative method, is closely related to social constructionist theory as noted by Jorgensen and Phillips (2002). Both are central to the idea that, “our ways of talking do not neutrally reflect our world, identities and social relations, but rather play an active role in creating and changing them” (Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002, 1). According to Burr (1995), discourse as a form of social action plays a part in producing the social world. If there are connections between knowledge and social process, there are connections between knowledge and social action. Discourse analysis can also give meaning to reality. According to Fairclough’s (1995) work on critical discourse analysis, the method explains the blogosphere through the concept of intertextuality, or the ways in which individual texts draw on elements of other texts to create new discourse. It is this combination that causes meaning to change, and thus the social and cultural world.

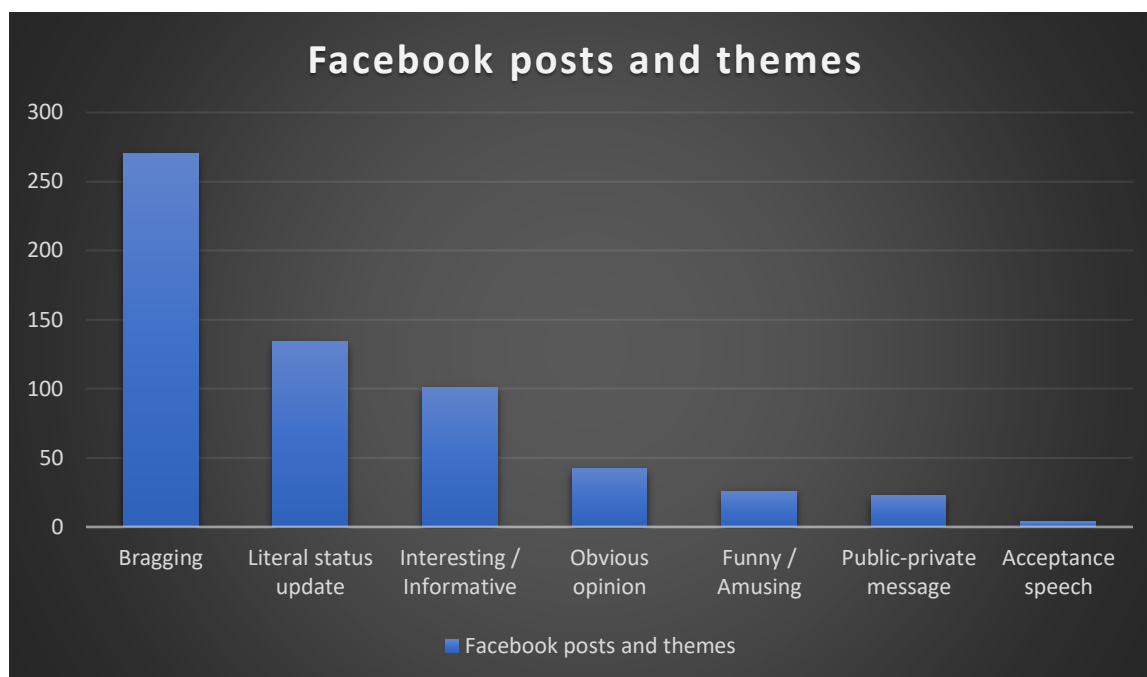
This analysis seeks to explore meaning among Facebook posts, the posts are examined as conversations, including all of the comments included with each post. To further this goal, the study explores the Facebook profiles of 24 undergraduate students willing to share and print the first 25 original posts of Facebook Friends in their profiles. In all 600 Facebook posts were examined for this study. All posts were cultivated during the same week in conjunction with an assignment in a media law class exploring how people use social media. The participants were mostly junior mass communication majors at a small Southern university. All participants were informed how the assignment would be used beyond the classroom and given the opportunity to opt out of the exercise for an alternative assignment. All chose to participate, and were curious about what their Facebook profiles would reveal. Further, all participants were given anonymity. The collected artifacts included all comments assigned to the posts, as these conversations were sparked by the original post. To remain consistent with the goals set by the research questions, advertising, and shared items (often memes), and reposted material was not included with the first 25 posts unless they were expanded on significantly by the post-maker. “Likes” and other responses by the audience are considered as they indicate positive or negative affirmation of an individual post. The original post and comments were sorted and analyzed for similarities and deeper meaning related to the research questions.

## Results

Overall, this review observes the users examined have not evolved far from the exercise in hubris and “insufferability” Urban observed over a decade ago. However, other dynamics are at play, and some areas of unsavory behavior were rare among the sample group. There are also a strong contingent of users who engage the platform for storytelling and news. Figure 1 shows the Facebook posts as they matched themes found in the sample group. If a post had more than one theme it was placed in the area most dominant, subjectively chosen by this



researcher. Those instances tend to occur in the “Literal Status” and “Interesting / Informative” categories, but also a few shared characteristics with “Bragging” and the Literal Status.



*Figure 1.*

*Out the 600 posts, the most dominant theme was by far bragging; 270 out of 600 (or 9 out of every 20) posts fell into this category. The seven themes are presented below in descending order of occurrence.*

Bragging takes many forms and that theme dominates the posts in this review. There are 270 posts that matched this description. In terms of discourse and feedback, an individual bragging is never called out for the activity, in fact all feedback was to praise or congratulate an individual for being lucky, talented, or having a gifted / attractive child. Bragging, in and of itself, does not fit neatly into one area. Urban observes this and subcategorizes bragging into several dynamics. Figure 2 describes this distribution as it subdivides in the following ways:

- 1) The “I’m Living Quite the Life” Brag: Description: A post making life sound great, either in a macro sense (got your dream job, got your degree, love your new apartment) or a micro sense (taking off on an amazing trip, huge weekend coming up, heading out on a fun night with friends, just had an amazing day).
- 2) The Undercover Brag: Like the blatant brags above except behind a frail disguise. This includes all humblebrags, indirect brags, brags disguised as a rant, etc.
- 3) The “I’m In a Great Relationship” Brag: Description: A public expression of your extremely positive feelings for your significant other, friend, or loved one, or an anecdote signifying the perfection of your relationship.

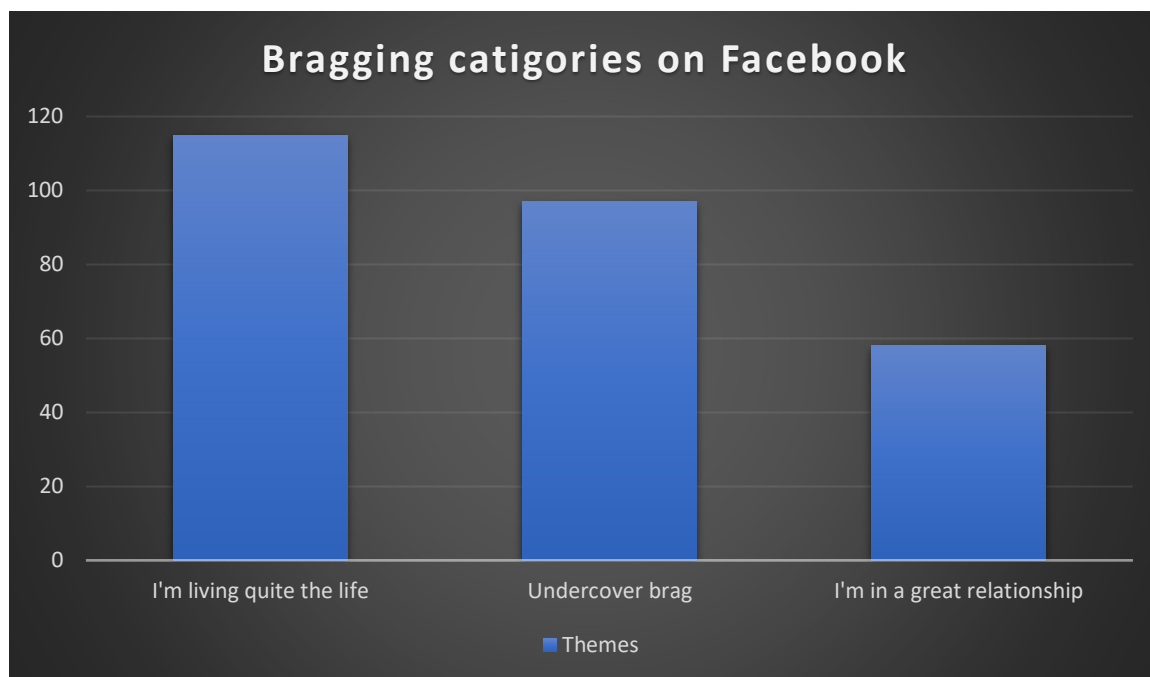


Figure 2.

*Urban's descriptions of "bragging" is prevalent in the posts observed for this study. All posts that contained that attribute are readily categorizable into one of the categories noted here.*

The bragging theme, "I'm living quite the life," aligned with 115 posts. The theme of an "Undercover brag" aligned with 97 posts, and the theme relating to "I'm in a great relationship," aligned with 58 posts. The posts where bragging occurs generally consists of those showing excitement for an award, event, or accomplishment. Comments include:

- "Proud beyond words- Brooke placed 3rd in the state qualifying her for Opens next week! Hard work and pure determination right there! Way to go Beast!"
- "City Champs! Great job boys and coaches. Such a fun season! And St. Simon came home with both trophies! Q had his highest scoring game with 23. So proud of this boy and how his skills have developed over the last 2 years. Great job Royals!"
- "Enjoying a Tybee Island stopover on our way to Florida."
- "My job must have a lot of faith in me, they keep giving an impossible work load. At least I get paid well." (... undercover brag)
- [Birthday wish] "... my beautiful sister, I couldn't do life without you. I know your day will be just as special as you are. you are my bestie boo, my twin, personal nail tech, and I would do anything for you." (... in a great relationship)

The literal status update themes include, thank-yous, and acknowledgments of a day of recognition (in this case World Book Day). Most are short. Earnest requests for help and advice are also present, but these are outliers in this area. Most literal status posts consist of pedestrian observations in the moment. Most are superficial, but a few others have deeper description, like posting a morning fitness routine. The "superficial" posts include requests not to be bothered before the poster has had their coffee (with a photo of their coffee), sitting down to a meal (a photo of the meal), a photo of a gas pump with the price and the words "thanks Biden", etc. Other examples are:

- "It's World Book Day. I'm reading, 'Beloved' by Toni Morison ... Again."
- "Have some tea to warm your stomach." – photo of tea.
- "I found that my cooking is getting better and better." – Video of poster cooking.

Superficial posts were found in other categories as well, but 101 posts attempted to be interesting or informative. These, by-and-large, consisted of short narratives or anecdotes. It is perhaps debatable how interesting or informative these items are however they are in the category with this theme if the poster is attempting to engage with a general audience on a topic of general or universal interest. Here are some examples:

- “Over the weekend, I caught myself feeling down because I’m not where I wanted to be at this point. I was too busy focusing on where I am to be proud of how far I’d come. I forgot that I’m always a work in progress and that I can always push harder! Buckling down on my nutrition for the final phase.” – with a gym photo
- “Bloodroot, twinleaf, trout lily, Jacob's ladder, nice cows and a jennet all by the road.” – with photos of plants.
- “Just a reminder, No Bible study tonight. We will resume again next week. Be Blessed!!”
- “Had a need to deal with Geico insurance this week and so far, quite impressed. They don’t mess around in taking care of things!”
- “Adam & Allie are trying to help their school raise money for a new playground! Right now, their entire elementary school shares one, so they have days where they don’t get to use the playground during recess... so they’re trying to build a second one, and we need your help!”

Urban defines the obvious opinion category as an attention seeking need to engage safely on Facebook, but this study finds political discourse, supported by their communities, passes without resistance, and does indeed gather support. Further, this category revealed a “feigned argument” dynamic whereas the individual posting gives the counter point to an ambiguous idea that may or may not be in their social habitus. This gains attention and promotes discourse. There are 43 posts that share this theme in the sample group. These individuals make comments on news items or rebroadcasts misinformation in their own words. In the examples below, no one argues that Dolly Parton is not a national treasure, we do deserve dogs, and Donald Trump’s performance as president is missing context:

- “I don’t care what anyone says, Dolly Parton is a national treasure. Can you imagine giving all your money away for charity and books.”
- “We don’t deserve dogs.”
- “If Trump was so bad, why was unemployment so low, and the economy so good? Don’t you like jobs and money?”
- “Nashville gets excited about its sandstone replica of the Parthenon; but Columbus has a topiary replica of Seurat's "A Sunday Afternoon on the Ile de la Grande Jatte" and that is obviously the winner.”

Humor, or attempts to engage in that way, only occur 26 times among the sample group. According to Urban, “Ideally, interesting statuses would be fascinating and original (or a link to something that is), and funny ones would be hilarious. But I’ll happily take *mildly amusing*—at least we’re still dealing with the good guys” (2013, np). The discourse of which can be described as mildly amusing or hilarious contained far fewer reactions than the those associated with hubris, but the reactions contained were positive, normally receiving the laughing emoji. Here are examples of such posts:

- “Trusted colleague: “Want to Slack huddle real quick?” Me: “I don't know what that means, but I'll try anything for you.”
- Me: “That freeze took out all the early pawpaw blooms.” Mom: “Well. Pawpaws need to learn.”

- “For the first time ever ... and even as I type this, I find myself shocked it hasn’t happened before ... but for the first time ever, I got beard shampoo up my nose and couldn’t stop sneezing in the shower. New fear unlocked.”
- “The pillows in my hotel room have these labels, which is cool, except the one labeled soft is actually the firmest, and as you see there is a mystery pillow on the far left. A night of intrigue has begun. – photos of pillows marked soft, firm, and unmarked.”

Urban theorized that the public/private message is an attempt by the poster to be cool and make one’s life appear vibrant and fun to show everyone what good friends you and the recipient are, and to make others jealous. The observations on this theme show more of a mindless disregard that one is in a public area or an attempt to only engage with a specific social / interest group in the public space. These posts are missing context, are private jokes, or only engage certain individuals of groups. There were 23 posts that shared this theme in the sample. Examples include:

- “I guess sun light is the best disinfectant.” [this may have been a reference to the January 6 attack]
- “The Burlison boys are taking over Vegas.”
- “Had a great time with my girls last night. Pizza, pizza!”
- “Sent you a message on messenger. Please read.”

The acceptance speech was the least common theme observed in this study. There were only four found in the sample. According to Urban this is normally an outpouring of love for no clear reason and aimed at no one in particular. Examples included:

- “I’m thinking about this quote by Zora Neal Hurston: “(s)he didn’t know (s)he was heaven and earth boiled down to a drop.” I’m learning to internalize this thought as I go through life’s journey. I hope you are, too.”
- “Just in case you needed to know what Heaven on Earth really looks like. United more than divided. Don’t let the world fool you. Blessed to have seen it and driven to see it more often.”

The themes found on Facebook often corresponded to Urban’s “7 ways to be Insufferable on Facebook,” however the utility or benefits of such posts were not always clear. Although themes associated with hubris were common, and image crafting dominates the posts, there are many who use the platform of personal enjoyment and important community information. The engagement with social themes informs a narrative about communities of practice and social construction.

## Discussion

For those who use social media many of the posts found above likely sound quite familiar. The timbre of word use and interactions are unusual in terms of daily interactions, but at the same time familiar in the context of the platform. (RQ1) The findings of this study suggest a significant relationship between individuals who use hubris to interface with general and specific public groups. In this case, individuals negotiated a changing cultural landscape and conform to norms that are long established in their online communities. That negotiated identity often serves to bolster image, alleviate isolation, and rationalize worldview. Further, it serves as a foil to challenging political and social positions as the changeover between the objective world and the digital world gives permission from the group to challenge facts the mainstream media sphere accepts. Facebook itself manifests as an enhanced reality resulting

in little understanding of an individual's user's life beyond their outward affect, real or performed. For good or ill, it is in this way Facebook creates communities that influence one another.

Community building can be seen in terms of social construction as individuals demonstrated their investment in themselves, their world views, and relationships. Facebook users add context to their communities, this is what Lin (2001) defines as a cultural market of ideas. Berger and Luckmann (1967) assert meanings are socially constructed by social interaction. This study supports this. Individuals learned how they fit in the overall structure of the changing platform as they negotiate rhetoric, receive feedback, and see the same dynamic in others. Meeting those social demands provide the individual with a sense of place among their digital communities experiencing the same or very similar outside influences.

Urban provides specific tools to observe hubris as a social media dynamic, but hubris goes beyond bragging. (RQ2) The posting dynamics of this study generally are associated with motivations like image crafting, narcissism, attention craving, and jealousy inducing. These motivations often drown out more altruistic motivations like awareness, seeking help (for one self or others), humor and entertainment, or news. Image crafting isn't necessarily negative in certain contexts; many observed in this study where trying build a personal brand for professional reasons. (RQ3) Facebook users do show in this way they are aware of the power of the platform but not of the power the platform has on them. This modification of reality to fit needs and be accepted is consistent with Berger and Luckmann's (1967) observations regarding symbolic reality in the social world. For many Facebook users drafting a version of themselves and their worldview that optimizes the strengths of the digital community returns a gratifying image of the way they want things to be. The more of these positive interactions that were returned to the individual, the more posters wanted to engage with this marketplace of ideas. This is certainly consistent with Lin's (2005) observations regarding behaviors that move away from those which are considered conventional. The intentions of outside actors, as addressed by Fox (2000), to influence communities was not directly observed as an influential dynamic. The communities drawn together through common interests or views subtly governed themselves, influencing behaviors and building knowledge within communities, themselves directly interacting with each other. There was little advertising snuck into responses to posts, but these were entirely ignored in the sample.

The effort to build a community of like-minded individuals happens organically over time. (RQ4) There is no evidence among the sample group that individual users of Facebook spend a significant amount of time diligently cultivating posts, doing research on an issue, or really care about accuracy at all. This supports Webb's (2014) assertion that collective intelligence is dominated by superficial engagements and pandering to the audience. The engagements were often terse and extraneous, but this sample did not expose course, excessively-negative content. This study suggests two themes in the messages. The first is that users place no premium on context, but the second is perhaps best characterized as a loyalty to the image. Considering some of the reporting on Facebook about the ways individuals negotiate and think about life, even when it is notable how outlandish some observations can be, many respondents maintained their decorum. Although the rhetoric was robust, it was also even handed. This is perhaps unexpected, but "fighting" was not observed, further demonstrating that communities find their own, or at least observers in this case, refrained from engaging. This is supportive of communities of practice theory as explored by Wenger (1998) as the collective participation of interested individuals cause the "product" to be a balanced manifestation, even when it has little utility. The rhetoric presented an uninhibited

marketplace of ideas where the actors supported and built on the ideas in the original post and other participants. Although the platform is provided, many of the relationships and meanings are only accessible from shared experiences outside the conversation. This is evidenced as users gave one another few answers in terms of usable actions in any area. At best, users enjoyed some satisfaction in articulating their frustrations with similar positions.

Facebook users gave remarkable context to the dynamic first explored by Urban as information flowed from posts and stories. It also resounds with the need for education in reflective-media literacy and criticism of uses. The rhetoric was not always gentle or detached but posts did inform dynamics of social constructionism.

## **Conclusion**

This study suggests that the rhetoric on a social media, in this case Facebook, evolves into more than a distribution channel for information and many users are engaged in insufferable communication, as defined by Urban. The finding indicated by this study show that areas of hubris was often an overarching theme. However, post and response earnestly attempting to be informative or amusing where also observed among the sample groups. The discourse observed was a social space where original information evolved and was negotiated into social meaning for the users. Overall, this study also identified themes consistent with community building, expanding knowledge (or misinformation), and image building. The study demonstrated that although Facebook users were negotiating these changes in the media environment, they had little agency beyond the information itself as an empowering mechanism.

The study was limited in a variety of ways. Facebook represents only one facet of social media, the sample was taken only over a short period of time, and demographics of the group sampled consisted of mostly traditional college age students. The study did not account for other ways individuals engage on Facebook, like the sharing function, responses to ads, private messages, etc. The study privileged the idea of “insufferability.” Facebook was an open forum so it is impossible to determine for certain what motivations were involved in the rhetoric, although the anecdotal evidence indicates posters were earnest. An examination of rhetoric involving a more regulated audience and larger sample might have different findings. Further, no attempt was made to ascertain the potential effects of Facebook on the audience. Future research in the form of a formal content analysis is anticipated to explore how the dynamics explored in this study stand up in a quantitative exploration. The findings here – as qualitative – are not necessarily generalizable, but this is an important step in any theorizing about social construction or communities of influence through the lens of online communities.

Overall, the author argues this study helps inform the broader discussions on the potential impact of social construction on specific communities by using the lens of communities of influence to explore Facebook. In this case Facebook users are observed in an environment where many users were navigating identity.

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*The Management of the Teaching of Traditional Thai Folk Dances in  
an Online Course for Lifelong Education*

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**Abstract**

The purpose of this research was to develop an online folk dance teaching management method. The study found that 1) Thailand provides teaching of national dance subjects that are scheduled to be taught from kindergarten to secondary. The contents of that courses are large, such Thai dance, drama, and folk dance. Folk dance in four regions of Thailand has different movements. Each performance depends on the traditions of each region. For example, (1) Northern has a team dance style. (2) Central, emphasizing the way of life of the villagers, using Thai standard dance postures. 2) Most Thai folk dances are instrumental music with many postures; the researcher designed the online coaching material for Thai folk-dance learning by dividing it into five steps: (1) Analyzing the dance postures by hands, feet and body turning. (2) Grouping the postures to make it easy for teaching. (3) Developing a teaching material by creating a video clip to demonstrate the dance postures with explanations, beginning with counting from one to eight steps in the first round, then demonstrating the same postures with the rhythm humming and the last one with the music. Moreover, the video also has costumes, hair, and make-up demonstrations. (4) Applying the materials to online long live learning without time and place of learning limitations. (5) Online coaching by learners sending back their dance video clips, and the coach gives them the feedback. The result shows that the teaching media can shorten the students' learning time.

Keywords: The Management of the Teaching, Traditional Thai Folk Dances, Lifelong Education

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## Introduction

Thailand is a country that has its identities and unique cultures created with the wisdom of its ancestors. This culture has passed down through generations, especially traditional Thai dance, which reflects the beautiful and delicate Thai culture. Moreover, UNESCO has recognised Khon and Nora as an intangible heritage.

Thailand's performing arts are diverse according to the lifestyle of the ethnic group and also depending on the influence of nearby countries. The performing arts can be categorized into two types:

- 1) Thai traditional dance represents gorgeous postures, the dedication of the costumes that imitate the royal and melodic music. Thai traditional dances are Rabum-Rum (Emphasizing the dance postures and harmony) and Khon (a high-class dance drama, the dancers have to wear full Khon masks and dance following the lyrics).
- 2) Thai folk dance, which is Ram and Rabam, represents the identity of people from different regions as follows:
  - (1) Northern Folk Dance or “Fon” is a culture of Lanna people and ethnic groups in the northern area: Tai group, Lue group, Yong group, Kern group, etc. The identity of Fon is the gentle and delicate dance postures.
  - (2) Central Folk Dance is related to the way of life. It stresses simple and fun for entertaining people after their work. Moreover, many Central dances have improvised lyrics to show the wit between men and women.
  - (3) North East or Isan Dance is a simple dance with a joyful rhythm. The dances convey the way of life of the local people in terms of beliefs and entertainment. Isan dance can be divided according to cultural groups, which are Northern Isan influenced by Lao culture, called Sengfon and Lam, and Southern Isan, influenced by Cambodia, called Reum.
  - (4) Because the Southern part has been a trade centre from the past until nowadays, Southern folk dance has been influenced by India, Java-Melayu, China, and Europe, resulting in the dancing arts being divided according to cultural groups which are Thai Buddhist culture and Thai Muslim culture. Thai Buddhist culture dances show people’s beliefs, traditions, and ritual ceremonies, for example, Nora and Nang Talung. While Thai Muslim culture dance is influenced by Europe, especially Rongngeng Music

Thailand has emphasised national arts and culture learning, as the National Education Act (No.1) B.E. 2542 states that there should be learning arrangements aimed at cultivating awareness and promoting the arts. Moreover, the national culture lessons and integration processes must be issued for each educational level, considering the curriculum that includes dance subjects in the art department since basic education and specific courses at the higher education level. However, most of the teaching process is usually in the education system. The researcher realised that it should be classified as lifelong education as well, because there are many dance contents, both traditional and innovative forms, and the teaching time is limited. In addition, there are a small number of teaching materials and teaching media that is usually dance show. It is not a demonstration of dance postures and costumes. So, the learners had to practice the postures and movements following the dance clip from YouTube, which made the dance incomplete. Because of this, the researcher realised that if there is a study of the online media teaching of folk dance subjects for lifelong education, it will bring more benefits to students, and teachers in performing arts.

## Research Objective

To develop the online teaching style for Thai folk dance.

## Research Methodology

### 1. Population and Sample

The main population is 150 students from the Performing Arts Department, Faculty of Fine Arts, Songkhla Rajabhat University.

Sample group: the researcher randomly selected 27 students from the Performing Arts Department, Faculty of Fine Arts, Songkhla Rajabhat University.

### 2. Research Plan

This study is experimental research in the form of One Group Pretest Posttest Design, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. One Group Pretest Posttest Design**

Pre-test	Intervention	Post-test	Number of students
O <sub>1</sub>	X	O <sub>2</sub>	27

Where: O<sub>1</sub> = Pre-test  
 O<sub>2</sub> = Post-test  
 X = Intervention using Performing Art learning management system for lifelong learning.

Method 1) Select a sample group into one experimental group. 2) Conduct a Pre-test 3) Organize an action or experiment with the experimental group. 4) Conduct a Post-test. 5) Compare the differences between the Pre-test and Post-test.

## 3. Research Tools and Creation Method

### 3.1 Research tools

3.1.1 The folk-dance skills practice lesson the lesson preparation step is as follows:

1) Analyzing the content of folk dance skills training 2) Photo and graphics 3) Performance demonstration videos

3.1.2 The folk dance teaching model for lifelong education has five steps as follows:

1) Analysing dance postures 2) Dividing dance postures into sets 3) Developing teaching media 4) Creating teaching sets 5) Delivering teaching media to students

### 3.2 Methods for creating and checking the quality of educational tools

3.2.1 Studying documents, theories, and research related to the development of teaching and learning for efficiency and high academic achievement, primarily through the one that using media and innovation.

3.2.2 Studying the creation of teaching media and planning the process of creating a teaching package.

### 3.3 Developing teaching media process

3.3.1 Analyzing the practice of folk dance skills and using the data to prepare class documents and video clips.

3.3.2. Developing teaching media while conducting a field experiment with students in the experimental group.

## 4. Evaluating Quality and Satisfaction using the assessment form, Likert scale, created by the researcher.

4.1 Five experts evaluated the teaching media in terms of accuracy and suitability evaluation, and the researcher improved the teaching media following the suggestions.

4.2 One hundred and fifty educational staffs and students evaluated the satisfaction of teaching media.

## Data Analysis

### 1. Surveying of Folk Dance

The researcher wants to select basic dances to create self-learning teaching media for children, youth, and the public, and it can be lifelong learning. The survey was conducted by 50 experienced educational staff, including preschool, primary school, and secondary school teachers and university lecturers. Forty-six per cent of the answers were from secondary school teachers. The survey found that Northern dance was Fon Leb, Central dance was Rum TerdTeng, Southern dance was Nora and Isan dance was Seng Keatip.



Figure 1: Surveying of Folk Dance.

### 2. Postures Analysis

The form of folk dances obtained from the survey are performed with instrumental music, without lyrics. The researcher analysed the dance postures of each song and found that there

were many dance postures as follows: (1) Fon Leb postures (2) Seng Kratip postures (3) Klong Yao dance postures (4) Nora dance.



**2.1 Fon Leb** has a single posture with stomping feet along the dance. The dance has ten hand postures, which are one and two directions as follows:

The feet posture pattern moves by stomping feet 7 times to the right, changing to the left, and moving in the same pattern until the end.

The hand postures are changing at the same rhythm as the feet postures. The hands postures' names are called following Mae Bot Dance of Thai Classical Dance, making it easier for students to remember it, for example, Tha Yung Fon Hand, Tha Chan Song Klod, Tha Wai, Tha Bid bua ban, Tha Prom See Na, Tha Bua Chu Fak etc.

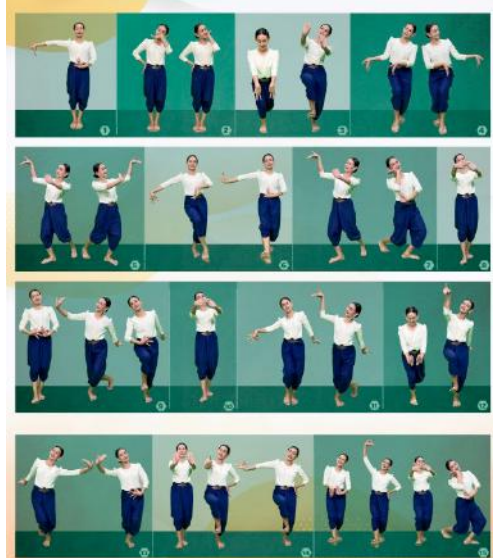


**2.2 Seng Kratip** has a lot of postures, combining single and pair postures. The dance has 13 postures as follows:

The feet' postures can be divided into three forms which are 1) Stepping by toe 2) Standing and poking feet on the floor while sitting down and standing up slowly 3) Stomping feet 3 times then putting heel, front feet, and lifting feet up.

The hand postures are similar to the Jeep position in Thai classical dance and also the unique postures which are 1) Loose clutching hand switch left to right 2) Putting both hands together at hip level 3) spreading hands out of the body 4) Repeat clutching hands like squeeze sticky rice.





**2.3 Klong Yao Dance** has a lot of postures, and the postures are double postures, which means the dancers have to do each posture in both directions. The dance has 15 postures as follows:

The feet' postures can be divided into three forms 1) Stomping feet 2) jumping step switching into left and right 3) Side step switching into left and right 4) Tob Tao or repeat poking the front feet on the floor 5) Step forward and poke the back foot on the floor.

The hand postures are called following Mae Bot Dance of Thai Classical Dance, for example, Rum Sai Mue Diaw, Tah Eye, Tha Yim, Tha Cherd Chin, Tha Sod Soi Mala etc.



**2.4 Nora Dance** has a lot of set postures, including standing and sitting and linking postures. The dance postures can be divided as follows:

The feet postures have three forms: 1) Small stepping 2) Stepping and lifting the foot at the back and side 3) Lifting the foot up switch to the left and right 4) Feet sliding 5) Stepping and Kneeling in an angle post.

The hand postures have their own identity: Hand lifting an angle at head level, Putting one hand at mouth level and another hand on chest, and Jeep postures at different positions, for example, Jeep at the lower tummy level position, face level position, front position, etc.

Figure 2: Postures Analysis.

### 3. Designing and Developing the Teaching Media

From the analysis of the dance postures in each dance above, it was found that there were many dance postures for each song. The researcher designed a folk dance teaching model in 5 steps as follows:

- 3.1 Analyzing the dance postures separately in the hand part, the hand level, Jeep posture and the feet part, the footstep, the foot lifting, and the body turning in various directions throughout the music.
- 3.2 Dividing the dance postures into sets for ease of teaching and will teach step by step, which are 1) Repeats teaching hand postures until the students can do it. 2) Start teaching feet postures by keeping hands at hip. 3) Combining hands and feet together. 4) Teaching how to change direction with those postures.

- 3.3 Developing the teaching media by creating video clips emphasised the teacher demonstration as follows: 1) The teacher demonstrates hand postures slowly, 2) The teacher demonstrates the feet's postures slowly, 3) The teacher demonstrates hands and feet postures together using the format: (1) demonstrating one posture at a time and counting numbers 1-8, (2) demonstrating the same dance posture and the students have to sing on their own, and (3) demonstrating the same postures with the music.
- 3.4 Preparing the teaching media for self-learning includes pre-post tests, dance history worksheets, posture worksheets, costume worksheets, and makeup worksheets.
- 3.5 Delivering the teaching media to the students to study before onsite class and in the class, the teacher plays a role as coach.

#### 4. Applying Results

The researcher developed the teaching media and applied it to the Thai folk dance class, using ten years of teaching experience teaching results compared with teaching media class results. The result shows that the teaching media can shorten the students' learning time.

**Table 2. Applying Results**

<b>Dance Name</b>	<b>Teaching Time (By Instructor)</b>	<b>Teaching Time (By Media)</b>
Fon Leb	3 Hours	1 Hour
Seng Ktatib	4 Hours	2 Hours
Klong Yao Dance	12 Hours	4 Hours
Nora Dance	8 Hours	3 Hours

#### Discussion

1. In the Development of Performing Arts learning media for Lifelong Education, the researcher found that the importance of providing lifelong education is a lifetime learning of the learners. Considering the experimental group in the research, which were dance students who graduated from general schools, their previous knowledge of general dance was almost non-existent. However, when they learned from the teaching media that the researcher had prepared similarly to a classroom teacher, the students' score after self-learning was more than 80 per cent. Lifelong education can happen anywhere, every time, so students must be committed and desire to learn. Consisting with Achanya Rattanaubon (2019) stated that lifelong education 1) must believe in the potential of a person to be a motivated person and able to learn following their needs. 2) Continuous learning at all times is the heart that leads to create individual positive changes. 3) Good learning occurs when the learners can value the benefits they will receive, and it meets their needs. People can learn by themselves and choose learning methods, including spending time on learning as appropriate to one's abilities. In addition, learning and learning activities can occur in every area. There are no limits to zones and boundaries of learning.
2. Measuring academic achievement in teaching and learning, whether studying in the system or outside the system, the important thing is the development results of the students. In this research, the researcher chose to measure academic achievement in a way that focused on the practical skills of individual students, emphasising the importance of practising the dance postures of each region. This is considered a functional test that focuses on the results of dance practice that has evolved from the first study period. The

researcher separated the examination according to the content. Every content will be evaluated in 3 periods: before class, during class, and during the exam at the end of that content. This is consistent with Wirat Wannarat (2015), who stated that the practice exam is a comprehensive assessment of desired essential ability characteristics. The goal of the examination is divided into 3 phases, including the pre-study phase, the period between studies and the end of the study period, the exam guidelines will have examples to follow.

3. The teaching media development must begin by analysing the content of the folk dances that will be used to create the teaching media by exploring the important content and the postures. The dance moves of each performance 1) Designing the teaching media that will be used in the learning system, 2) Designing and creating content, including objectives, activities, and formats of the presentation, 3) Creating teaching media, 4) Testing the trial system with the target group including evaluating the quality and satisfaction of the system in order to adjust until a complete learning system is obtained. The researcher's work process is consistent with Thanaphong Chaiyalapho, Ekkalak Phoksappaiboon and Prin Sopa (2016), who have developed online lesson media, named the design of interaction media and multimedia using the following steps: 1) Studying the principles of design and the use of online media lessons, 2) Lesson designing, consisting of (1) content analysis, (2) determining lesson objectives, (3) determining content and activities, (4) determining methods of presentation both in the overall lesson and each unit, 3) Lesson sketching is the process of creating a plan for each lesson that will include the content. The details regarding text, images, sound, and connection of various parts in the lesson, 4) Creating lessons as designed, 5) Testing out lessons with students, 6) Inspecting and evaluating the quality of lessons will consist of (1) checking efficiency, by the researcher and experts, (2) evaluate the achievement of lessons from pre- and post-tests, (3) survey student satisfaction with online lessons.

### **Suggestions and Conclusion**

At present, there are many dance teaching materials, mostly video clips published on YouTube. However, there is still a lack of development in the form of demonstrations with descriptions. The history of the dances is essential and should be created as teaching media which demonstrates and lectures for students to research and use to develop their dancing skills.



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***Socially Engaged Art Practice for Mental Caring and Social Inclusion:  
The Case Study of the International Center for Wound Repair and Regeneration, Taiwan***

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**Abstract**

This research offers analysis and findings from a series of socially engaged art practices implemented by The International Center for Wound Repair and Regeneration in Taiwan to enhance mental health and well-being and promote the social inclusion of patients of a rare hereditary disease: the 'Epidermolysis Bullosa (EB).' The EB patients often suffer from frequent formations of blisters on their body and skin. Such blisters form from low mechanical stress on the skin, and mucous membranes can trigger mental and health disorders, leading to the patients' lifelong needs for caring as well as social alienation. In 2020 the Center launched artist-in-residence schemes in the medical school and invited artist Hsu Jo-Chun (b. 1991) who is also an EB patient, to conduct an education program that brought the artist to visit different EB patients and co-create visual artworks that genuinely express each patient's aspiration and feelings. At the end of the program, the artist also curated an exhibition in the open space of a university hospital entitled 'The Pain Will Fly Away,' which presented the works of herself and participants together, telling the stories of the community that experienced such a rare disease. In the following years, the artist and the Center continuously collaborated on socially engaged art projects in the public sphere. This action-research will discuss the process and findings of this long-term project, which aims to empower EB patients through artistic activities and increase the public's understanding of EB patients through workshops, exhibitions, and education to create a platform for the caring of collective individuals and advocacy of social inclusion.

Keywords: Social Inclusion, Socially Engaged Art Practice, Artistic Intervention in Transforming the Public Sphere

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## Introduction

This paper provides discussions and observations from initiative research on a socially engaged interdisciplinary art project, a collaboration between artistic practice and medical service. The paper offers analyses and findings from a series of socially engaged art practices implemented by The International Center for Wound Repair and Regeneration in Taiwan to enhance the mental health and well-being and promote the social inclusion of patients of a rare hereditary disease, the 'Epidermolysis Bullosa (EB).' Inherited epidermolysis bullosa (EB) encompasses some disorders characterised by recurrent blister formation resulting from structural fragility within the skin and selected other tissues (Fine, 2010). EB patients often suffer from the frequent formation of blisters on their body and skin. Such blisters form from low mechanical stress on the skin and mucous membranes can bring mental and health disorders leading to the patients' lifelong needs for caring as well as social alienation.

In 2020 the Center launched artist-in-residence schemes in the medical school and invited artist Hsu Jo-Chun (b. 1991) who is also an EB patient, to conduct an education program that brought the artist to visit different EB patients and co-create visual artworks that genuinely express each patient's aspiration and feelings.

At the end of the program, the artist and researcher of the International Center for Wound Repair and Regeneration Lee Yi-Jun also co-curated an exhibition in the open space of Cheng-Kung University Hospital and its medical school, entitled 'The Pain Will Fly Away,' which presented more than 40 pieces of works, including drawings and installation artworks from herself and participants (i.e., the EB patients and their family) telling the stories of the community that experienced such a rare disease. In the following years, the artist and the Center continuously collaborated on socially engaged art projects in the public sphere. Through artists' talks, participatory art workshops and exhibitions in a social venue (i.e., a public sphere of a medical system rather than a conventional art space), this socially engaged art project seeks to transform the usual routine of the medical service. This research will discuss the process and result of this long-term project, which aims to empower EB patients by creating artwork so that they can express and present themselves to the general public. In this way, their art collectively brings genuine emotions and messages from the inner world of rare disease patients that can have powerful impacts on the audience. In addition, through artistic activities and increasing public understanding of EB patients, the project intends to create a dialogical platform for the caring of collective individuals and advocacy of social inclusion.

The research includes discussions of the value of artistic creativity, challenges the conventional power structure of doctor-patient relationships, and open up questions about to what extent an established medical caring system could do for rare disease patients beyond treatment. This action-research also reflects on what could be the impacts and transformations from such a socially engaged art project to the medical caring system.

## Project Description

The International Center for Wound Repair and Regeneration was established in 2012 as one of the labs specialised in the research area of a rare hereditary disease, the 'Epidermolysis Bullosa (EB). EB is the name for a group of rare inherited skin disorders that cause the skin to become very fragile. Any trauma or friction to the skin can cause painful blisters. It is caused by a faulty gene (gene mutation) that makes skin more fragile. There is currently no

cure for EB, so treatments only aim at relieving symptoms and prevent complications such as infection. However, since it is an incurable disease many EB patients and their close families can face life-long suffering and burden from caring for such a disease. EB patients often have difficulties in their social life, problems of social exclusion and discrimination (Chen, 2023).

Regardless of the limits of medical science and service for rare diseases such as EB, the Center aims to fulfil 'medical humanity' and 'holistic health care' for the patients (Chen, *ibid*). Since 2018, the centre has launched a series of charity concerts and drama camps, inviting EB patients, their families, and the public to participate in the events. It was in 2020 that Dr Lee Yi-Jun proposed the idea of collaboration with artists and launched a series of socially engaged art projects with EB patients to promote public audiences' knowledge and understanding of EB, thus transforming the medical profession and empowering EB patients. The experiment of mental caring and social inclusion for EB patients from this socially engaged art project that combines artist-in-residence schemes, art education programs for EB patients, exhibitions, and workshops in the NCKU hospital and medical school, carry on to this day.

### **Art for Art's Sake or the Transformation of The Public Sphere? Method and Action**

A conventional understanding of art often concerns artists' devotion to making their artworks, the aesthetics of the art genre, and the viewers' appreciation of art. In addition, art is often produced in artists' studios and exhibited in museums or art spaces. It was in the 1960s that German artist Joseph Beuys (1921-1985) coined the idea of 'social sculpture' that challenged the possibility of creativity and suggested that artists' efforts could change society (Birchall, 2015). It was in the same vein that the concepts of a 'new genre public art' (Lacy, 1994) emerged in the 1990s. This 'new genre' had very much to do with addressing social issues and expressing activists' desires to interact directly with new audiences and accomplish concrete goals. They achieved this through profuse open-mindedness and by recognising the artist as a facilitator of others' creativity. With a similar ethos, community art development in the UK intended throughout the 1970s to engage with particular communities and issues concerning their benefits or identities. This brought a 'social turn' to artists' practices. Since the 1990s there has been an increasing number of artists' practices and theoretical publications focusing on socially engaged art, such as the studies of Claire Bishop (2012), Grant Kester (2004), and Pablo Helguera (2011). Socially engaged practice, also called social practice or socially engaged art, can include any art forms involving people and communities in debate, collaboration, or social interaction. This can often be organised as the result of an outreach or education program, but many independent artists also include such practice within their own work. Socially engaged practice can be associated with activism because it often deals with political issues. Artists working within this field often spend much time integrating themselves into the community they wish to help, educate, or share with. As Bishop's view on socially engaged art suggests:

When viewers become participants in a work of art or co-producers, there is a transition in the aesthetic considerations. It could be said that socially engaged art is the neo-avant-garde; artists use social situations to produce de-materialised, anti-market, politically engaged projects that carry on the modest call to blur art and life. (Bishop, 2006)

It is in this light that researcher and facilitator Dr Lee Yi-Jun's viewed himself as an activist taking part in a socially engaged art practice project with the aim of transforming and

renewing the medical community and in particular the caring system. Lee mentioned the following in a book published by the Center:

The traditional imagination of medical treatment and illness is a structure of opposition and duality, but holistic care is a parallel and inclusive relationship, so I set two goals initially. The first is to bring people from different occupations and classes closer together... Especially when the help of modern medicine to EB patients is minimal, how to make the boundaries of medical professions are unclear. How to help the patient create his value as a person with the whole team, this is the work worth looking forward to the target. (Chen, 2023: 238)

Working with the health sector is now an essential part of many cultural ecologists, with artists, designers, and professionals in the creative industry contributing their expertise to the spaces and experiences of healthcare, for and with staff and patients (Penketh and Riding, 2023; Campagnaro, Prima and Ceraolo, 2021). The World Health Organization (WHO) maintains that ‘Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity’ (Fancourt & Finn, 2019). In recent reports such as ‘Creative Health: The Arts for Health and Well-Being’ (APPG Arts, Health and Well-being, 2017), researchers provide evidence that the role of art has been influential in advocating the importance of artistic activities for health and well-being. These reports demonstrate how arts programmes significantly impact on hospital environments by supporting and encouraging patients’ voice throughout their own treatment, and by humanising provision with the development of compassionate care initiatives that reduce isolation and enhance community cohesion (APPG Arts, Health and Well-being, 2017, Penketh and Riding, 2023).

Lee was inspired by the activists' approach and collaborated with artists of various disciplines, having hosted concerts and drama camps for EB patients’ community since 2018. Since 2020 Lee has curated socially engaged art programmes and worked with artist and EB patient Hsu Jo-Chun. Although the ‘effectiveness’ of this project which is neither ‘empirical research’ nor ‘art therapy’ is at this stage not yet proven, Lee has sought to develop an action-research project that can transform the medical and caring system of a medical school at an university.<sup>1</sup>

### **Art Beyond Expression and Communication: Empowerment for the Community of EB Patients**

A 2017 report on creativity and well-being ends with a particularly pertinent quote from artist Grayson Perry:

Art helps us access and express parts of ourselves that are often unavailable to other forms of human interaction. It flies below the radar, delivering nourishment for our soul and returning with stories from the unconscious. A world without art is an inhuman world. Making and consuming art lifts our spirits and keeps us sane. Art, like science and religion, helps us make meaning from our lives, and to make meaning is to make us feel better. (APPG Arts, Health and Well-being, 2017)

It is important to recognise the importance of creative and cultural engagement in supporting the mental health and well-being of a generation of young people who have experienced very

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<sup>1</sup> See the author’s interview with Lee on August 2023.

particular challenges in recent years. Artist Hsu Jo-Chun was born and diagnosed with 'Epidermolysis Bullosa (EB).' When she was born and diagnosed with EB her mother, Mrs. Ku Bao-Ying, realised how much suffering and difficulties her daughter would have to overcome throughout her life. Mrs Ku recalled all the efforts her daughter and herself made for her to be able to cope with her illness and go to school to acquire an education at all costs. Since Jo-Chun's childhood, Mrs Ku has observed that her daughter is full of imagination and enjoys free-hand drawing so much that she can no longer pay attention to her pain and unbearable itchiness due to her physical condition. Unfortunately, the effects of the EB illness have made Jo-Chun's right eye almost blind, and her left eye could be significantly weakened because of a wound caused by a blister. Although the illness has made her eyes in a critical condition, this cannot stop Jo-Chun's dream of pursuing her career of being an artist. No matter how much such an illness tortured her body and mind, it could not hinder her enthusiasm for creation. In the world of art creation, she found a spiritual sustenance (Chen: 2023:66-76).

In 2020, Jo-Chun was awarded a curatorship for the group exhibition previously mentioned in the gallery of National Chiang Kai-Shek's Memorial Hall entitled 'The Pain Will Fly Away,' which presented more than 40 pieces of works from herself and the EB patients participants about the community that experienced the disease. While making this happen, Jo-Chun spent one year co-creating with some patients and visiting them at home to create artworks together. Some of the patients who could travel were invited to join Jo-Chun's studio for collaboration. The process of co-creating and the feeling of being supported by the art project greatly uplifted the patients, and some were encouraged to show their works to the public for the first time. It was through such an exhibition that the public had the opportunity to learn about this rare disease as well as the creativity of the community of EB patients. The exhibition helped the patients to display different kinds of works, and as such they became empowered by the public discovery of their unique creativities rather than attracting attention merely because of their disease.<sup>2</sup>

In the exhibition, Jo-Chun's work '*Looking for Protein*' (Fig.1) was inspired by her series of genetic tests due to her particular skin condition. In the lab of The International Center for Wound Repair and Regeneration, when she observed the appearance of the cells under the microscope, she was amazed by the beautiful image, although she learnt from the doctor that the problem with the EB patients' skin arose from the shortage of a particular protein that should be contained in the skin of normal condition! In her ink painting, the micro image contains dots and lines that were transformed into a giant imaginary space, and the image also resembles the overlapping mountaintops in a brush painting. There is harmony within the movements in between the gaps. However, she still wishes the gap (i.e., the painted golden colour stripe that represents the missing parts of protein from the skin of EB patients), to be closed just because of her hope to be miraculously healed. (Chen, 2023:79-80).

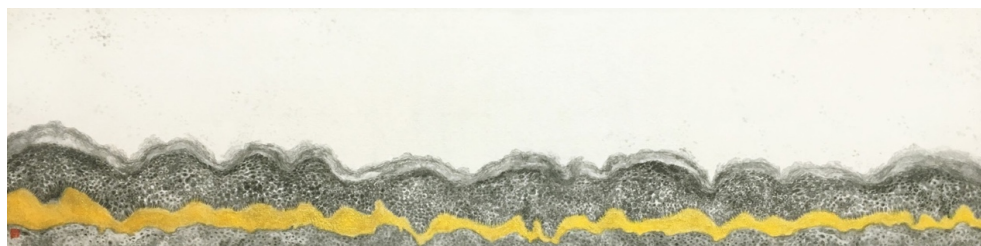


Figure1: Hsu Jo-Chun, *Looking for Protein*, 2019. Ink and colour on silk

<sup>2</sup> See the author's interview with Hsu on August 2023.

Another participant, Zhi-Jay ( pseudonym ), was a 20-year-old severe patient who thought he had no artistic talent and was unwilling to participate. However, Jo-Chun encouraged him to use a simple hole-punching machine to make holes in the paper roll. He recorded the various pains and how his body felt daily and, finally, Zhi-Jay completed a ten-meter-long visually stunning installation artwork, entitled “*Diary*”. The installation is a diary-creation in a form that resembles bandages. (Fig. 2) It is like a diary in an abstract form but that concretely shows brief experiences on an everyday basis (Chen, 2023 : 266).



Figure 2: Installation work *Diary*, in *The Pain Will Fly Away* exhibition, open space of medical school of Cheng-Kung University Hospital

Another work, a painting by Yu Ming( pseudonym )entitled “*Tolerance of Every Difference*”, displays astronauts and aliens enjoying the beautiful scenery together in the vast and boundless universe, living in harmony and interacting happily. (Fig.3) Yu Ming believed this was the most beautiful scenery. Although he suffered from the disease the boundless universe meant this to him, he had unlimited space to pursue his dreams of experiencing such a beautiful scenery. The beautiful scenery and experience presented that he finally overcame the challenges of the disease and that he achieved self-realisation in his heart. Through his paintings, Yu Ming wanted to express that people can get along happily and should not be limited by diseases or other unwelcome conditions. Although Yu Ming is different from ordinary people, he also longs to get along in harmony with others and become good friends. He also hopes this painting can encourage other EB patients with the same disease as him to bravely fly towards their ideal (Chen, 2023:268-269).



Figure 3: *Tolerance of Every Difference*, by co-creation project participant Yu Ming



Following the exhibition at the Gallery of National Chiang Kai-Shek's Memorial Hall, the show was displayed at the medical school of Chen-Kung University Hospital for three months. The corridors of the medical school, where the medical students and staff of the hospital passed through every day, were transformed into exhibition spaces and filled with artworks about the patients' feelings about life. Through the patients' artworks, the medical students and the wider audiences developed a better understanding of EB. The success of these two shows for the community of EB patients came as a broadcast of voices from an unknown outcast of society addressed to the public sphere in general and, in particular, the medical system. The expressive and narrative story-telling style created rich meanings and imaginations for the viewers to be able to understand the inner world of patients suffering from a rare disease.

In 2021, Hsu Jo-Chun was invited to artist-in-residence schemes in Taipei Artists Village, designed to promote cultural equality and diversity. At the end of the residency, she presented her works in an exhibition, *'The Pathway to Shadow - Cultural Diversity and Inclusivity Group Show'*. Jo-Chun was inspired by what she saw from the microscope in the hospital lab while she had regular checkings and appointments due to her disease. The curator's statement of the show explained her work briefly:

From cell slice to gene sequence examined through the microscope, we realise that human beings are vessels of genes, and the mutation of genetic factors is critical to the proliferation of life. Using everyday paper as her creative medium, Hsu uses different paper fibres to create various spheres that refer to the collaboration between similar but different cells that exist and form the body. (Pan, 2022)

During this residency, Jo-Chun transformed her style and medium from Chinese ink painting into a three-dimensional work entitled *Co-Existence* (2022). (Fig.4) Again, she used her artworks and the public space to tackle significant issues of cultural equality, diversity, and social inclusion.



Figure 4: *Co-Existence*, 2022, Taipei Artist Village exhibition

After the exhibition, later in 2022, Jo-Chun was invited to the National Cheng-Kung University Medical School and Hospital for another artist-in-residence scheme launched by researcher Dr Lee Yi-Jun. The scheme, made up of the residency, education programs, workshops, talks, and a solo exhibition curated by Lee Yi-Jun and Tung Wei Hsiu (the author) and entitled *"Making a Wish in the Boundless Universe"*, gave Hsu Jo-Chun the opportunity to connect directly with the audience. (Fig.5) The most notable feature of this

exhibition was her works created with hand-made pulp. Jo-Chun collected all kinds of waste papers such as daily diaries, rice paper for calligraphy practice, school examination papers, report cards and so on. She went to various departments to collect large stacks of medicine's lists and medicine boxes. She mixed all the materials of different papers together with water and put them into a blender to make all kinds of pulp. Then, she poured the different pulps into large washbasins and dried them in the shade to become pieces of drawing paper rich in texture and touch. These papers were transformed into an installation of balls of various sizes hanging in the space of the corridor of the medical school. This kind of 'recycling' is also associated with the meaning of 'cracks' (i.e., what was missing in the skin of EB patients). Jo-Chun said: *"When I broke and dismantled something and then rebuilt it to create all kinds of wrinkles and seams on its surface, it is just like another stack of life"* (Chen, 2023:81).



Figure 5: Exhibition opening held in the passage connecting the medical school and Cheng-Kung University Hospital

During the residency and the exhibition, medical school students and medical care staff could take part in the workshops as well as exchange ideas with the artist and make their own pulp balls made from papers collected from their daily lives and turn them into sculptures. (Fig.6) The whole experience explored the spiritual meaning of the material that relates to the body and personal life through the art practice - just like the materials Beuys used were also recurring motifs in works suggesting that art, common materials, and one's "everyday life" were ultimately inseparable. In this respect, making art with the artist and using materials from one's own life becomes both educational and therapeutic (Simane, 2021). In this regard, artists have indeed the potential to bring change to the real world rather than make art exclusively for the artworld.



Figure 6: Participants and workshops during the exhibition

### **Conclusion: The Impacts and Effectiveness of the Socially Engaged Art Project in a Medical System**

After surgery, I always sewed up the wound of the patients and left. In the past, I thought I had done my job. Only now I realise the significance of caring for patients' pain. In the future, I will be even more sympathetic and pay more attention to the pain of my patients! (Chen, 2023: 270)

The above quotation was from the dean of the medical school of National Chen Kung University, Prof. Shan, Yan-Shen, after he became aware of and experienced Dr Lee's socially engaged art project. As already mentioned Dr Lee, who worked for the International Center for Wound Repair and Regeneration, has been since 2018 key to the series of artistic events aiming at improving the medical caring system and regenerating the public sphere to the benefit of both the patients and the medical staff. His approach is action-research, which he experiments with artists of different disciplines and the wider audience.

The overall research on socially engaged art practice is still going on and far from being complete. If the research does not aim at producing a result from some empirical method, it

certainly seeks to transform the public sphere as a form of ‘soft activism’ of which art and the artist are the catalysts. This has so far been achieved by taking Dr Lee’s action-research as the core method.

*‘Is this going to work?’* A question that Lee asked to himself after the first drama camp organised for EB patients and their families in 2018 (Chen, 2023:264). Lee is certainly also very concerned with aspects of effectiveness. Following feedbacks from the patients, their families, and the doctors of the medical schools and hospitals (Chen, *ibid.*), Dr Lee was from 2020 onward able to regard his entire endeavour as an instance of socially engaged art practice. This is when he began to ask artist such as Hsu Jo-Chun to become more involved with patients and engage with the medical caring system within the public sphere. Dr Lee has since seen his ideas being accepted with even further expectations for more artistic events in the future from the administration and staff of NCKU medical school and hospital.<sup>3</sup>

As for artist Hsu, she has gradually experimented other modes of expression through her art practice and changed from making mainly traditional ink paintings to using different mediums such as installation art as well as different approaches such as socially engaged art. Artist-in-residence schemes, exhibitions and workshops brought her art beyond the conventional notion of the studio practice and transformed it into a social experience of dialogical and collaborative nature. She engaged in art activism, changed the feelings of the other patients, and renewed the way doctor-patient relationships are thought in the health care system. In contemporary art history, legendary British artists John Latham (1921-2006) defined ‘artist as incidental person’ to bring changes to the social organisation or community (Rycorft, 2019). Beuys also had his well-known motto of ‘artist as shaman’ to express the ability to heal society. They both pioneered a form of intervention that inspired subsequent artists to enhance community life and address issues of individual and collective sense of identity.

As Penketh and Riding put it recently about the intersection of art and health care:

Whilst the intersections of arts and health often amplify the ongoing debates between the intrinsic and instrumental value of the arts, in recent years we have all experienced the arts in very personal and often profound ways. (Penketh and Riding, 2023:213)

Our overall research in socially engaged art practice certainly takes into account perspectives from model artists and remains by nature interdisciplinary. However, given the arts’ potential for contributing to health matters the research equally considers the kinds of practice that are experienced in the most personal and profound ways.

As far as the on-going experimental project at The International Center for Wound Repair and Regeneration is concerned, it has created a platform for dialogue. The project is making us aware of artistic expression’s power to voice the feelings of a community with a rare disease. Freire views dialogue as an ‘inter-subjective investigation’, as a way of getting to know the ‘others’ and yourself. (1996). The dialogical practice is obviously also vital for artistic intervention in the medical caring system, for it fosters understanding of differences and transformations for sociocultural inclusion.

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<sup>3</sup> See the author’s interview with Lee on August 2023.

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***More Than Entrepreneurial Activity:  
The Practice of Selling Nasi Pecel That Reproduces Public Space***

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**Abstract**

Lore into traditional food has documented that the practice of preserving traditional food is as important as the traditional food itself. More than just entrepreneurial activities, everyday practices such as selling traditional food have been influential in the reproduction of public space and the identity of the city. We seek to elaborate this study further by exploring evidence from traditional food in the Global South countries. In doing so, we work with 30 *nasi pecel* sellers in Mataraman cities in East Java province in Indonesia to explore the practice of selling *nasi pecel*. Drawing on our fieldwork in the cities of Madiun, Nganjuk, Kediri, and Jombang; our research employs a qualitative approach by utilizing archives and/or documentation, FGD notes, and interviews; all these are utilized to gather foodmaps. Our findings showcase the practice of selling *nasi pecel* is particularly influential to reproduce public spaces in which people from different backgrounds socialize to converse on different social issues. The centrality of such social interactions within the socio-historical context of Indonesian society is also discussed in dialogue with literature in public spaces. Our engagements also demonstrate that a particular area, as well as traditional food, determines the politics of everyday life of the city and their residents. The practice of selling *nasi pecel* also reproduces the capital of women entrepreneurs in their legitimate businesses.

Keywords: *Nasi Pecel*, Foodmaps, Public Space, The Politics of Everyday Life, Global South, Fieldwork

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## Introduction

A portion of *nasi pecel* is served by its sellers to people who eat it, either during breakfast or at night. A plate of *nasi pecel* usually consists of warm white rice, vegetables that have been boiled/steamed before, including long beans, cabbage, spinach, kangkong, cassava leaves, sprouts, basil, *kembang turi*, then doused with a legit and slightly spicy peanut sauce on top. It is incomplete if it is not added with complements such as *peyek* or other variants of side dishes. As one of the traditional foods, Indonesians especially who live on the Java island, are no longer unfamiliar with *nasi pecel*, including in the four Mataraman cities that became our research locations: Nganjuk, Jombang, Kediri, and Madiun. These four cities are located in East Java with a total distance of about 200 km or 5 hours' drive. Madiun is even known as the city of *pecel* as it goes along with the city branding. The word 'pecel' itself means vegetable that is squeezed after boiling (Budiyanto, 2023). When looking at its history, the presence of *pecel* has existed since ancient times in 1800 AD, known from the archive found in *Serat Centhini*. In addition, in *Babad Tanah Jawi*, *pecel* is mentioned to have been served along with peanut sauce, which was favoured by the people at that time until today. *Nasi pecel* has become one of the most popular traditional cuisine in Indonesia (Loi, 2020).

*Nasi pecel* is sold at an affordable price, ranging from Rp 5,000-15,000 or more depending on the variant of side dishes eaten with *nasi pecel*. In addition, it is available everywhere, home-cooked, and not too difficult to prepare. Rice is staple food in Java, including Mataraman cities, and *pecel* represents an interethnic and diasporic encounter. Furthermore, *nasi pecel* is mostly sold by women sellers in the four research cities: Ngajuk, Jombang, Kediri, and Madiun. These *nasi pecel* sellers are women working in the small and medium enterprises sector, which is the main source of livelihood. From here, the trading activities carried out by *nasi pecel* sellers are not just an act of entrepreneurship, but a wave of actor networks that sustain family life and become a recognisable face in the city where they live (Cavanaugh, 2023). This research aims to explore two main things, namely how the practice of selling *nasi pecel* in these four cities embodies public space and how its cultural repertoire shows the politics of everyday life.

## Previous Research

Previous research that discusses food seen from the experience of travellers in cyberspace, these food travellers articulate and position themselves in cyberspace by accumulating the capital they have and highlighting gender strategies—in this case is feminine capital—that is strengthened (Swastika, 2016). In addition, in an effort to mediatise the #stopfoodwaste issue, Garda Pangan, a non-profit organisation, conducted interesting programmes in Surabaya and through their social media to attract more attention from local residents (Swastika, 2018). Similarly, research conducted by Mares (2012) on how immigrants trace their identity through the plate of food they eat and the memory of the taste of the dishes eaten. Then Dean et al. (2012) which shows the cultural repertoire of the use of household utensils that are closely related to food. By referring to these sources, this research shows the cultural repertoire of the practice of selling and consuming *nasi pecel* in Nganjuk, Jombang, Kediri, and Madiun, four cities in East Java. In this cultural repertoire, the practice of selling *nasi pecel* has gone beyond entrepreneurial practices by small and medium enterprises, but portrays the politics of everyday life of urban residents in public spaces. In terms of their location, selling *nasi pecel* has transformed a public space where citizens access material culture in the form of traditional food. In that public space they can be connected to each

other. *Nasi pecel* sellers also occupy a site with a vernacular design to represent a site of cultural consumption.

From four cities as research locations, we collected data from 30 *nasi pecel* sellers. They became informants for the duration of the study which was conducted over eight weeks. We used the snowball technique to recruit *nasi pecel* sellers during the fieldwork (Hayes-Conroy, 2010). Fieldwork was chosen because we wanted the data to be based on participatory co-creation through verbal and nonverbal communication. The aim of the fieldwork was to present a form of intentionally designed experiences that involved sensory manner. Communication centred on understanding how sites we visited were bound by *nasi pecel* served and consumed. The selection of the four cities was also based on proximity reasons, both proximity or areas that are still in the East Java region as well as the manageable distance of fieldwork. In addition; Nganjuk, Jombang, Kediri, and Madiun are also known as cities that sell *nasi pecel*. In collecting data, we not only interviewed *nasi pecel* vendors, but also bought their food and interacted with fellow consumers. The busy nature of *nasi pecel* trade requires us to have a strategy to not disturb or we accommodate the busyness of the traders. Ethical process means the ability to immerse oneself in the *nasi pecel* sellers' activities and mingle with other consumers. The language we used was predominantly Javanese which they often use on a daily basis. This go-along method helps us collect stories and data from the informants without disturbing their routine of selling *nasi pecel* (Brinkmann, 2014). Some *nasi pecel* stalls are quiet so that it allows us to come directly and interview but in other locations, *nasi pecel* stalls are very crowded so there is no need to force an interview. This is part of the ethical reflection itself. The result was a large body of empirical material and over 200 photographs (Hodgetts, et al., 2007). To process the data, we act as *bricoleurs* (Strauss, 1962) by working in an interdisciplinary manner to explore the depth of the data and analyse it validly and reliably.



Figure 1: *Nasi pecel* served in Mataraman cities, Indonesia

## Conclusion

Based on the field research we have conducted in Nganjuk, Jombang, Kediri, and Madiun, we can gather several points, which in this case focus on the story behind the process of selling and buying *nasi pecel* in Mataraman cities. The first is the fact that sellers of *nasi pecel* have become an integral part of the residents of the Nganjuk, Jombang, Kediri, and Madiun. It would've been very easy to find *nasi pecel* with a variety of side dishes and their respective characteristics. All the *nasi pecel* stalls served the dishes based on their home recipes. The main characters were women vendors who mixed the *pecel* seasoning recipe and

prepared boiled vegetables and complimentary side dishes so that they could be sold as a dish called *nasi pecel*. Not only as cooks, we also saw that most of the *nasi pecel* merchants are women with a range of ages. Some are still students, housewives, and even elderly mothers, also they are women vendors by the female naming as we know in Bahasa Indonesia or Javanese such as ‘mbak’, ‘bu’, ‘mak’, or ‘jeng’. For instance, at Bu Mursini’s *nasi pecel* stall where the mother and daughter-in-law sell *nasi pecel* and other complementary dishes together. There are quite a few who have been selling *nasi pecel* for generations and usually the person entrusted to continue the business is the daughter in the family (Jackson, 2011).

We also discovered the fact that the majority of *nasi pecel* sellers in Mataraman cities sell this dish as their main occupation in order to improve the welfare of their families. One of them is the story of *Warung Pecel Pincuk Bu Hj. Djiyah*. Djiyah’s stall is a business that has been running for 20 years. Initially, Mrs. Djiyah worked odd jobs to support her family, but one day she ventured to sell *nasi pecel* she made herself and it turned out that many people liked her cooking. She consistently sells *nasi pecel* and adds various choices of side dishes, that is where the success of *Warung Pecel Pincuk Bu Hj. Djiyah* began. Djiyah has now become one of the must-visit culinary destinations in Jombang. With the same enthusiasm and hope, Yoyon, Djiyah’s daughter-in-law decided to learn the recipe for *pecel* seasoning directly from her and finally she and her husband decided to open a *nasi pecel*. We found that most of the *nasi pecel* sellers in Mataraman cities aim their business as the only or main source of livelihood (Cavanaugh, 2023). This means that all family members’ needs, especially financially, must be met from income through selling *nasi pecel*, this is all because of the belief in the irreplaceable selling value of *nasi pecel*, especially for the local community (Jackson, 2011).

### **The Identification of *Nasi Pecel* Sellers Through the Foodmaps**

Throughout the fieldwork, we realised that the story of *nasi pecel* trade is not as simple as selling in the morning or at night at roadside stalls. Therefore, a mapping is needed, which is known as foodmaps (Marte, 2007). Foodmaps can be used to research the sites that we visit, occupy, and even consume as public spaces. Furthermore, foodmaps are needed because it is necessary to know the existence of *nasi pecel* sellers who apparently form a pattern. The existence of *nasi pecel* sellers is not random and scattered but centred at several points in each city. They also usually sell in strategic locations so that consumers can easily come to them to buy and eat *nasi pecel*. These *nasi pecel* sellers serves their dishes in front of shop that have closed for the night, while some sell in the morning on main roads or in markets. In these four cities, they can be grouped into two types: morning and night time *nasi pecel* vendors; where the morning is more accessed by locals, usually the neighbours or other local area, while the night time *nasi pecel* is much more open to out-of-town visitors. Aside from the time relation, another landmark of these foodmaps is that *nasi pecel* sellers occupy the sidewalks at night along the main roads. This condition is common on Indonesian roads. In the development of the landscape of cities in Indonesia, we cannot deny that the street is the pulse or a city where almost all citizen activities are centred there, including trade. The idea of public space then emerges because it is in this area where people meet that is not limited to commercial purposes. Foodmaps also comes with evidences of vernacular design found massively in *nasi pecel* trading sites in four cities. They sell by arranging selling utensils, such as plastic or wooden tables and chairs. On the table are large containers containing *pecel* vegetables, side dishes, and peanut sauce. They also provide cold and hot drinks so some vendors need to set up a stove to boil water. Eating areas are available on the spot, on long benches or mats on the pavements. For light, vendors install light bulbs and put up banners

with the name of their stalls and the menu. They use names that are synonymous with ‘female naming’ because they always begin with ‘bu’, ‘mbak’, ‘jeng’, and ‘mak’. Each stall can accommodate 3-4 people as a selling team and 10-15 consumers who eat on the spot. Not far from the stalls, consumers can park their vehicles either motorbikes or cars. Additional information here, even in Madiun, we found that there is a *pecel* monument installed right in the main road area.

Talking about the identities embedded in *nasi pecel* sellers we met, they are all women who rely on this *nasi pecel* business as the main livelihood of their families. Female *nasi pecel* sellers known as ‘bu’, ‘mbak’, ‘jeng’, or ‘mak’ become a network of small and medium enterprises in these cities. Hall suggests that the naming of identity is changed to identification, which is organised in multiple and fluid ways. Identification as “a strategic and positional view of identity” is a way of enacting identity strategically and adjusted to the position in which the identity is articulated. Hall (as cited by Bell, 2001) mentions that identification provides ample opportunities for self-representation based on their choices. Their identification is closely related to their strategy of managing capital. The mode of capital as the critical perspective of entrepreneurial activity in selling *nasi pecel*. The focus of Bourdieu’s thinking is on social practices that manifest in daily life. Bourdieu organises society in a vertical dimension which is shown through actors in social classes who have high or low economic capital. This condition gives birth to a logic of ownership that determines the relationship between social class and practice and struggle of it. Capital can be owned by someone, it can be tangible materials or various attributes that carry cultural significance. Capital consists of 1) economic capital which is a resource in the production process and financial, economic capital that is most easily converted into from other capital; 2) cultural capital is contained in forms such as education level, graduate status, knowledge, cultural codes, language skills; 3) social capital lies in the social position of actors, such as status, position, title, surname, prestige; then 4) symbolic capital is all forms of recognition, either by institutional or non-institutional groups (Haryatmoko, 2010; Jenkins, 1992).

For *nasi pecel* vendors, they clearly get economic capital from the profit of selling *nasi pecel*. If a portion of *nasi pecel complete* with side dishes is priced at Rp 15,000 and multiplied by a minimum of 50 portions sold, then a net profit of 70% is taken, so every day the vendors can pocket around IDR Rp 525,000. Then add the proceeds from the sale of drinks. Cultural capital arises from the knowledge and skills of these vendors to prepare, process raw ingredients, cook, serve rice, *pecel*, side dishes, drinks, while offering their menus with their marketing skills. As a material culture, *nasi pecel* is a traditional food that has sustained for hundreds of years in Java; one of the ways of preserving *nasi pecel* is through these vendors. Further, social capital is obtained when *nasi pecel* vendors are able to socialise with each other, not even a few of them are members of an association of *nasi pecel* vendors. Also, social capital is collected when they are able to negotiate as well as intercultural meetings with shop owners who provide a place for them to sell. Then symbolic capital is exchanged when their existence is recognised by the public, by their loyal customers. In addition, some vendors, especially those located in Madiun, have been able to continue this *nasi pecel* business as a family business from one generation to the next. Bourdieu borrowed the concept of capital from economics because some features of capital can explain the unequal power relations within social classes, hence the differences in social status. Capital can be accumulated through investment, capital can be given to others through inheritance, and capital is able to provide benefits according to the opportunities its owner has (Bonnewitz as cited in Haryatmoko, 2010). Bourdieu’s capital is a variety of sources, both tangible and intangible, from which a person can achieve success in a particular arena. For him, such an

arrangement would make clear the arena of struggle, what is at stake, and what kind of capital is needed to play a role in the game, which directs the logic of ownership that determines the relationship between social classes and their practices (Haryatmoko, 2010; Jenkins, 1992).

The body in this study is a cultural locus for gender-related meanings. McDowell (1999) suggests that masculine culture has identified women with aspects of the body, while men are free from such bodily markings. The body is present in the presence of agents who are female *nasi pecel* sellers as working-class women. Working-class women accumulate a pool of capital and to mark that capital is legitimised as power for their position, but the normative view states that women are subjects who do not typically do so, women are considered not capital-accumulating subjects. They are capital-bearing objects where value can be increased by the presence of women in a social group, such as husbands with wives or families with mothers (Thorpe, 2009). But with this *nasi pecel* business, they are present as subjects who are able to accumulate their capital. Since the 1990s, feminist scholars have argued that women are not only able to accumulate capital, they also control their own form of feminine capital. For Skeggs (as cited in Thorpe, 2009) femininity is embodied, at once born of competence and therefore can operate as capital. Femininity, as part of cultural capital, is a discursive position present through gender relations that is encouraged to be inhabited and utilised by women *nasi pecel* sellers. The use of femininity is driven by social position in class, gender, sexuality, region, age, race that ensures femininity can be utilised and resisted in various ways. The use of femininity, consisting of female capital and feminine capital, as part of cultural capital is needed in the labour market. Female capital refers to the benefits that can be reaped from being a woman, while feminine capital is the benefits that come from one's character or skills or the benefits that come from being feminine. Both of these capitals can be seen in their figures. Being female and feminine can lead to certain earnings in the social arenas of family, work, education, and so on (Thorpe, 2009).

If spatial matters between public and private, or between inside and outside, also shape gender distinctions so that a binary comparison between masculine and feminine emerges (McDowell, 1999), then women *nasi pecel* sellers in this condition cannot be applied. Their identity narratives are fluid and dynamic, they can embrace traits that were previously compartmentalised. They merge everything in the practice of trade in public spaces that are easily found in the cities of Nganjuk, Jombang, Kediri, and Madiun. Women *nasi pecel* sellers are intertwined in public-private issues, being independent and dependent in their interplay with other parties, being inside and outside the home, also merging their main work with activities such as caregiving, networking, filling their free time. Identity is ultimately composed of aspects of "the social landscapes out there" where the process of identification becomes more open, varied, and complex (Hall, 1996).





Figure 2: Women vendors in their *warung* serving *nasi pecel* to the consumers

### Spatial Practice is Situated in the Public Space

During the field research period, we also discovered a unique element that differentiated sales of *nasi pecel* in the city of Mataraman from other cities. This lies in the factors that cause a stall to be able to sell in front of the shop at night only with an agreement. In fact, most of these agreements were made without requiring the *nasi pecel* sellers to pay rent. The agreement was established due to various factors, whether because of the good relationship between the *nasi pecel* sellers and the shop owners which has existed for a long time, the willingness of the shop owners to give their places for free use, and so on. The agreement between the *nasi pecel* sellers and the landowners will certainly influence the implementation of environmental regulations around the place where they sell. An example is determining the area that will be used as a place to sell and the duration of time for selling. Most of the existing agreements only require *nasi pecel* sellers to pay the electricity and water costs used to sell in front of the shop. *Nasi pecel* sellers usually give some of their wares to landowners to express their gratitude. Behind their daily operation at stalls, during the interviews we have conducted, it turns out that the interactions between the parties are quite diverse and surprising considering the reality of the agreements. *Nasi pecel* sellers occupy the space in front of the Chinese-Indonesian owned shops in the main roads around Mataraman cities; such as Cokroaminoto Street in Madiun, A. Yani Street in Nganjuk, and Dhoho Street in Kediri, and Wahid Hasyim Street in Jombang.

After conducting fieldwork, we also discovered the particular characteristics of each *nasi pecel* stall located in these cities. The way each region serves *nasi pecel* is varied, although they all come back to the conclusion that *pecel* rice is really delicious. One of the significant differences from Nganjuk's *nasi pecel* is that most stalls provide the option to add *sambal tumpang* which is placed on top of the *nasi pecel* along with additional side dishes. The *sambal* has a distinctive taste and aroma that are very easy to recognize just by smelling. *Sambal tumpang* itself is a condiment sauce mainly made by *tempe*. For *nasi pecel* in

Jombang, the characteristic is the addition of *lodeh*, a coconut milk soup based vegetable dish, which is placed directly together as part of *nasi pecel*. This may feel foreign to most people, but it tastes delicious. The textures of food when chewing a spoonful of *nasi pecel* can be felt even more because of the element of *lodeh*. *Nasi pecel* served in Kediri can be said to be quite general compared to the other three cities. In Kediri, there are rice stalls that include a choice of chili sauce, there are also those that serve basic *nasi pecel* without the addition of chili sauce or *lodeh* as is usually served in Nganjuk and Jombang. Even so, the number of people interested in *nasi pecel* in Kediri is no less numerous than those interested in other cities. The distinctive taste of processed peanut sauce is one of the main factors why people still return to continue consuming *nasi pecel* in Kediri. Meanwhile in Madiun, precisely in HOS Cokroaminoto Street, there are a number of *nasi pecel* stalls located along the road which have become culinary tourism spots that are always busy with visitors. When it comes to *nasi pecel* in Madiun, there is no need to doubt the authenticity of the taste of each portion. Through our field research while in Madiun, we have visited seven *nasi pecel* stalls and indeed the quality of each *nasi pecel* ingredient is very well maintained. All the *nasi pecel* that we have consumed while in Madiun really confirmed to us that Madiun has the right to be labelled as *Kota Pecel* (the city of *pecel*).



Figure 3: The representational space of *nasi pecel* trade

In the practice of selling or buying *nasi pecel*, what is consumed is no longer food as material culture, but also consumes space. The study of place is developed basically because almost all social and cultural theories contain explanations of place-spatial relations, also not forgetting time relations in their own ways. Thus, representational space (lived space) is the site where agents/subjects live, inhabit, and construct their narratives of everyday life (Johnson, et al., 2004). Southeast Asia is closely related to the trade sector and is filled with interactions between people from many groups and social classes. The road, therefore, can be understood as a place for dis-placement, the road is a place to pass, the road accommodates the movement of various forms, postures, and various human forms (Jacobs as in Raihana, 2011). The attachment between consumption activity and the space in which this activity takes place because the place that accommodates the activity provides a spatial context in which objects or services can be used, purchased, compared, and evaluated. This condition indicates the physical place has been culturally contextualised as space. A place does not function solely as a physical setting, but also as centres of consumption that surround it (Urry, 1995).

Over the past decade, research focusing on the Global South has surged. This popularity should be understood not as a marker of research based on regions or geographical locations



in the southern hemisphere alone, but rather as an interpretation of postcolonial ideas and decolonisation of a nation across time and between specific sites. The interconnection of the Global South with the global region expands our view of economic, political, socio-cultural issues in Asia, Africa, and Latin America (Haug, 2021). A Global South perspective needs to be placed in this research of *nasi pecel* trade in Mataraman cities to show the complexity of the data findings. Tracing back the sites that are used as selling points, it explains how cities in Indonesia are mostly built of two approaches. Looking at the history of the formation of cities in Indonesia, there are two types of cities; port cities which are used as trading points and have international shipping lanes and inland cities as administrative centres located in agricultural areas (Raihana, 2011). Inland cities are built on the banks of rivers, while trading cities exist as coastal cities. By this explanation, we can look specifically at Southeast Asia regionalism as the school of thought we can build from and within the region and also as the continuity of doing critical and reconstructive research work which is incorporated with local knowledge.



Figure 4: The practice of selling nasi pecel as seen in the study of a reconstructive knowledge and politics of everyday life

The practice of selling *nasi pecel* on the main roads reproduces the public space for local citizens and tourists, it also reproduces the cultural sites within the four Mataraman cities; Nganjuk, Jombang, Kediri, and Madiun. The production of space lies within these three findings of “spaces of representation” as a) the site of economic, socio-cultural, and politics of everyday life where *nasi pecel* is the embodiment of local, affordable, sustainable gastronomy, b) the site of public encounters and the relationality of space which can be consumed, and c) the site of capital that is exchanged. Capital not only defined as pricing value or profit by selling *nasi pecel* but it is extended into the social capital, cultural capital, and symbolic capital, one and another capital are exchanged or even fought to possess. The deeper thought then is which one is the least and which one is more valuable out of those capitals. The main concern is not the mere idea of selling something humble but rather the efforts of the sellers, most of whom are women, to continue the legacy of *nasi pecel* and to

support the family's income. The gastronomy of *nasi pecel* originally came from a tradition and their local knowledge, yet it embodies the concept of a commons based on shared knowledge of cooking *nasi pecel* recipes. After the research was finished, we reflect on the results we got, in this case what we did had several limitations. This research has not looked in depth from the perspective of buyers who are also in the same public space as *nasi pecel* sellers. Apart from that, we also recommend research with a quantitative approach to cover a wider distribution of traders so that it can be seen from the lore of actor network theory with the hope that research that looks more closely at a network can emphasize on cultural practices in a public area.

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***The Confirmation of Individual Existence Through Physical Sensations:  
The Representation of Heterosexuality in the Works of Amy Yamada***

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**Abstract**

From the late 1980s to the 1990s, feminist criticism peaked in Japanese literature. In response to this trend, some female authors depicted independent women who were not dominated by men in their works. However, the works of Amy Yamada differ from this trend. In her works, she depicts women indulging in sexual love with men. This is because she is confronting a different issue from feminist criticism. This paper analyzes Yamada's *NEWSPAPER*, *Fossil of Raindrops*, *DIET COKE*, and *R* written in 1994. Women in these works are in sexual relationships with men and try to affirm their existence through physical sensations. For example, a woman in *DIET COKE* has desires "to be eaten" by her partner, which indicates not only her wish to become one with him but also her attempt to feel the contour of her own existence through the pain caused by being devoured. Additionally, the woman in *R* likens herself to a "rainbow" in the sense that her existence has been shaped by "thousands of different colors, smells, and sounds." These characters seem to reflect the mentality of people in the 1990s. According to Hiroyuki Chida (2013), a specialist of pop culture, the youth in the 1990s had a problem of having indeterminate identities. This paper examines how Amy Yamada responds to this issue by depicting women who feel their existence through physical sensations and relationships with the opposite gender.

Keywords: Japanese Novels, Amy Yamada, Identity, Heterosexuality

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## Introduction

This paper analyzes four short stories, *NEWSPAPER*, *DIET COKE*, *R*, and *Fossil of Raindrops*, all of which are included in the short story collection, *120%COOL*, written by Amy Yamada in 1994. Yamada (1959-) was awarded the Bungei Prize in 1985 for her work, *Bedtime Eyes*, which marked her debut in the literary world. Many of her early works from the 1980s to the 1990s, including her debut novel, depict sexual relationships between men and women. In her works, the characters emphasize building a relationship through physical connections, not spiritual ones. Noriko Mizuta, a scholar of comparative literature, states a view on Yamada's works as follows: "There is no drama and no plot, only the validation of women's eros and its power, and the temporal space of the present which makes that eros possible" (1995, p.101).

The four works analyzed here are no exception. There are no dramatic changes in the story lines of these novels, and dialogue is scarce between the characters; instead, the majority of these works are devoted to the physical contact between the characters and their emotional narratives. The narrators' values of love and sexuality are expressed. Therefore, it is important to focus on what the protagonists and other characters say, rather than on what events occur in their relationships. By analyzing the narratives of the protagonists, commonalities can be found in the ideas and beliefs that underlie these four works. Arimasa Osawa, in his commentary at the end of *120%COOL*, describes these four works as so "Amy Yamada-style" that he does not want to explain them (p.219). In this paper, the main characteristics of the four works will be examined in terms of what they say, how they deal with the opposite gender, and what kinds of values they hold to clarify Yamada's style, which lies at the root of these works.

From the late 1980s to the 1990s, when these four works analyzed here were published, feminist criticism in Japanese literature had peaked. In response to this trend, some female novelists depicted independent women who were not dominated by men in their works. However, these four aforementioned works of Yamada depict women who are dependent on men and indulge in sexual love with them; thus, they seem to run counter to the feminist trends. However, they partially correspond to feminist criticism in that they resist social norms and family systems, which sometimes oppress women's behaviors and emotions. For example, Yuko, the protagonist of *DIET COKE*, is skeptical of the generally accepted view of "true love" in which "fever-like attachment, followed by sensuality, and trust" line up in order (p.145). "True love" in this description would refer to the romantic love ideology. Additionally, in the other three works, the female characters' resistance to the romantic love ideology and the institution of marriage is radically expressed in the form of love affairs. According to sociologist Chizuko Ueno (1987), the romantic love ideology was dismantled in Japan in the 1980s. Masanao Kano, a historian, also pointed out that the framework of marriage was beginning to waver at that time, and Japanese feminists had begun to criticize the institution of marriage itself (2004). Thus, these four works partially correspond to the feminist criticism of the 1990s in that they resist existing marital relations, marriage, and the morality that sustains such institutions.

It must be noted that simply analyzing these four short stories from the perspective of feminist criticism does not adequately explain why the female protagonists in these works are so obsessively concerned with the body in their heterosexuality. Yamada appears to confront an issue that differs from feminist criticism. What issues underlie these works that obstinately depict the physical relationships between men and women, and how do these novels respond

to such issues? This project aims to answer these questions by analyzing the narratives of the protagonists of these works while referring to the social and cultural context of the 1990s.

### **The Works of Yamada and Japan in the 1990s**

The protagonists in the four works are both cognizant of their partners' gazes and the uniqueness of their own existence through such perspective. The female narrator of *NEWSPAPER* is a married woman but has a sexual relationship with a younger man, "J." Their physical contact is emphasized in this work. When they embrace, the narrator describes her feelings in the following way.

I keenly feel his eyes falling on me. He can see all things, but these eyes are unique in the world, both in the past and in the future. His eyes, which exist only in the present, are surely focused on a moment in my life. (p.106)

Although "J" can "see all things," the narrator believes that his eyes on her are "unique in the world," and through his eyes, she recognizes the irreplaceability and uniqueness of her own existence. Thus, the sense of being looked at by her partner builds the narrator's sense of self.

The same is true for other works. In *R*, the female narrator, "Coke," is going out with a man, "Pepsi." She says that she loves the way "Pepsi" looks at her, just like the protagonist of *NEWSPAPER*. In *Fossil of Raindrops*, a young male narrator has a secret affection for a married woman. They do not immediately begin a sexual relationship, because she is married. When the young man manages to suppress his own passion, the woman feels compassion for him and she begins to cry. Seeing her crying, the young man says, "Now it is no one but me who is making her tears spring," and "What a poignant sight to see a woman shedding tears for me" (p.133). This narrative indicates that he deeply appreciates the fact that she is looking at him with impassioned eyes. Thus, the protagonists of Yamada's works, regardless of their gender, have a strong sense of self and are sensitive to the way others look at them.

These characters' attempts to discover their own uniqueness seem to reflect the mentality of Japanese youth in the 1990s. The bubble economy had collapsed, and the expiration of the Grand narratives that unified society through ideology or creed was widely talked about in Japan. At the same time, the existential problems of the individual, such as the fluctuation of personal unity, consistency, and individuality, were discussed from various aspects. Modernization led to rapid urbanization and broke up the communities that once supported people, thus, weakening human relationships, and the individual was thrown into a society of mass consumption. In such a society, many people are guaranteed a certain standard of living, while individual differences are obscured. Sociologist Shinji Miyadai compared young people who blend into such a society as "a piece of empty signs" with "chameleons" (1994, p.106). In other words, he revealed that people's individuality was erased and anonymized in the city.

Based on Miyadai's argument, Hiroyuki Chida, a specialist in Japanese literature, summarized that young people living in the 1990s had a problem of having indeterminate identities. He points out that "it is essential to pursue further in the future how literary works narrate the problem of individual existence" (Chida, 2013, p.22). Furthermore, literary critic Amiko Enami, speaking of the future mission of novelists, said, "What do novelists write about after we lost the Grand narratives and solid identities? This question has become a

challenge for writers who have appeared since the 1990s” (2017, p.280). Thus, in the 1990s, the issue of the uncertainty of one’s existence was discussed in all fields. For both writers and readers, how to depict and read individual existential issues has become one of the challenges in the realm of literature since the 1990s.

It is uncertain whether Yamada is consciously reflecting these individual existential issues in her works. However, it is possible to understand her works from the perspective of this issue. In the postscript to the collection of short stories, Yamada wrote as follows.

There is only one thing that is certain. That is what the person is there at the present moment. If the present moment in which the person is standing is the only certainty, that certainty will be connected and time will flow only for that person. (p.214)

This quotation, which refers to “the person is there at the present moment” as the only “certainty,” suggests that Yamada is conscious of her attempt to find the certainty of individual existence. In addition, the characters in *R* have anonymity. The narrating woman in *R* is called “Coke,” and her paramour is called “Pepsi.” You can notice that their anonymity is emphasized by the fact that “Coke” and “Pepsi,” symbolic products of mass consumption society, are used as the characters’ names. There appears to be an attempt to express the ambiguity of their existence by assigning interchangeable signs to characters’ names, which inherently testify to the identity of the person. In this way, the answer to the first question is as follows. The issue of individual existence, which was widely discussed in the 1990s, underlies these four works of Yamada. The characters, who have a strong sense of self and are cognizant of other’s eyes upon them, reflect the mentality of people in the 1990s, whose existence experienced fluctuations.

### **Confirmation of Individual Existence Through Physical Sensations**

How do the protagonists in the four aforementioned works respond to the problem of having their own unstable identities? To come to the point, physical sensations such as sight, sound, and touch are important role for the narrators to deal with this issue. They recognize the irreplaceability and uniqueness of their own existence through the physical sensations that arise in their relationships with the opposite gender.

In the heterosexual love depicted in these works, language, reason, and order are removed and physical contact is emphasized. In *NEWSPAPER*, “J,” who has a sexual relationship with the female protagonist, is a student of English literature and has a stack of English newspapers in his room. The physical contact between them in his room emphasizes their wild relationship in contrast to the world of language symbolized by the English newspapers. The protagonist feels that “the movement of his finger is more important for me than world crises,” which are reported in the newspapers, and says that she “too personally rejects all morality” (p.114). She does not face others who might be in “world crises,” but rather, she faces the *other* who exists before her eyes. Her sentiments on her own relationship with J are expressed as follows.

I believe only in concrete phenomena. I believe in the phenomena that J’s touch makes my eye moist, that his inarticulate voice causes him to strain his arms, and that entwining our fingers makes him feel deep affection for me and make up his passionate words. In other words, I want to believe what sincere bodies tell me. (p.116)



This quote shows that the emphasis is on the physical senses. In addition to this, the narrator recognizes that the object J is facing is herself, as the phrase “for me” points to. She confirms the contours of her own existence through the physical sensations that arise in the physical relationship with J. The reason why this protagonist emphasizes the body rather than words is that she finds certainty in her own existence through physical sensation.

*DIET COKE* also depicts heterosexual love, in which “Yuko” and “Yoshiki” are connected through their bodies. Yuko, a female narrator of this story, says, “There was no vocabulary in relationship with him” (pp.155–156) and that they never spoke in “terms related to love” (p.161). Yuko also compares Yoshiki, who devours hamburgers, to a “carnivore,” and she describes their relationship, which emphasizes physical pleasure rather than words, as “we are animals” (p.154). Thus, you can find similarities with *NEWSPAPER* in that it depicts animal-like physical relationships rather than verbal or rational ones.

Yuko is financially independent to the extent that she appears to Yoshiki to be a “rich career woman” (p.149). However, externally defined social identities, such as status, are not important for her to confirm her own individuality. Instead of finding her identity in social activities, she confirms the contours of her existence in her physical relationship with Yoshiki. For example, Yuko sees Yoshiki devouring junk food and has a desire “to be eaten by him” (p.159). Reading between the lines, it becomes clear that she has a desire to become one with Yoshiki. Meanwhile, she also has a slight feeling in her heart that she does not want him to eat her. This statement would imply that she also wants to preserve the contours of her own existence. She is ambivalent about whether she really wants Yoshiki to devour her. When the latter part of this story describes their physical contact, Yuko actually perceives that she is being eaten by Yoshiki. Then she “holds back tears” and feels pain in her ears (p.160). Through the physical sensation of pain, she confirms the contours of her existence.

In *R*, the female narrator, “Coke,” extensively talks about her physical senses. For instance, she says, “My hip has been touched, grabbed, and lifted up by Pepsi many times, so has got the touch” (p.183). This description indicates that the existence of “Coke” has been formed by the physical sensations provided by “Pepsi.” She also likens herself to a “rainbow” in the sense that her existence has been shaped by “thousands of different colors, smells, and sounds” (p.183). It is evident that the presence of the other, “Pepsi,” and the physical senses, such as sight, smell, and hearing, play essential roles in defining the presence of “Coke.”

The narrator of *Fossil of Raindrops* differs from the three works analyzed so far in that the narrator is a young man. This narrator is sensitive to the concrete and beautiful phenomena before him, and he feels alive by putting into words what he sees and feels. For example, he says, “I wander the streets alone, picking up sentiments and creating poems in my mind” (p.121). However, he was an introvert before he met a woman. He says, “I never tell others about the sweet thoughts which arise in my mind” (p.120), and “I lose myself in my own thoughts amidst various pranks of nature” (p.121). Subsequently, it becomes possible to read his self-enclosed character and that he can grasp the phenomena before his eyes with a sharpened sensitivity, but keeps them to himself. The appearance of a married woman triggered a change in his closed nature. The young man says, “I am changing my life of creating sentiments through the things which pop into my eyes. I am now able to give people a variety of sensitivities that I had been quietly hiding” (p.138). In his relationship with the married woman, he begins to open up about his sharpened sensitivity to others rather than keeping it to himself. In the three works I have already analyzed, the members of the opposite gender were prerequisites for the female narrators to confirm the contours of their own

existence through physical sensations. However, *Fossil of Raindrops* depicts the process in which the narrator, a young man with a closed personality, who keeps his sharpened sensitivity to himself, confirms his selfhood and opens up about his own physical senses to others through his heterosexual relationship with a married woman.

As suggested above, the protagonists in these four works recognize the irreplaceability and uniqueness of their own existence through physical sensations. Therefore, these works responded to the existential problem of the Japanese youth in the 1990s by depicting relationships in which the body takes precedence over language, reason, and order.

To grasp the specificity of Yamada's response, let us review what attempts were made by people in the 1990s to overcome this problem. It is hard for people to be forced to live in reality with the ambiguity of individual uniqueness. There is a danger in trying to escape outside of reality to relieve this trouble. The cult, *Aum Shinrikyo* (Aum Supreme Truth in English) was the result of seeking relief outside of reality in order to overcome it (Miyadai, 1995). This cult established a fictional and simplistic righteousness that would ruin reality to create an ideal community. The devotees surrendered to this single righteousness and placed themselves in an environment in which they could remain unaware of the inherent nature of their own existence. This group was responsible for the Tokyo subway sarin attack in 1995 and had tried to forcefully ruin reality.

This attitude of trying to establish an empty concept outside of reality is not unique to *Aum Shinrikyo*. In a review of his own life in the 1990s, Critic Shunsuke Sugita notes the continuity between *Aum Shinrikyo* and philosophy and other forms of literary criticism of the time. He revealed that his own existence at the time was "empty" and recalled that he loved reading highly abstract literary criticism (Sugita, 2017, p.244). He said that such literary criticism had fallen into "closed theory," pointing out that it was "Aum reality itself" because it "attempted to overcome the emptiness of history with an empty idea" (p.244). Sugita's point of view implies that neither the establishment of a fictional justice outside of reality nor immersion in the world of abstract concepts can be ways to overcome the existential problems inside reality.

In contrast to these attitudes, the peculiarity of the ideas inherent in Yamada's works emerges. The protagonists do not find themselves in fantasy outside of reality, nor do they confine themselves to abstract ideas but rather try to recognize the contours of their own existence by grasping the sensations within reality. To express this sense of immediacy, she depicts heterosexuality in which the body precedes language, reason and order.

## Conclusion

The underlying issue of *NEWSPAPER*, *DIET COKE*, *R*, and *Fossil of Raindrops*, which depict the heterosexuality of men and women, is the issue of individual existential uncertainty, which was regularly discussed in the 1990s. The characters in these works do not find themselves in fantasy outside of reality as the devotees of *Aum Shinrikyo* did, nor do they confine themselves to abstract ideas. They, while being anchored to reality, gain a sense of being alive in the present through the physical sensations that arise in their physical relationships with the opposite gender and confirm the contours of their own existence. Therefore, these works responded to the existential problem of the Japanese youth in the 1990s by depicting relationships in which the body takes precedence over language, reason, and order.

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***Dynamics of Digital Transformation as a Competitive Strategy in the Media Industry's Digitalization Era: A Case Study of Metro TV-Indonesia***

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**Abstract**

Technological developments have changed many things, including how people consume media. Technological developments disrupt conventional media, and digital transformation responds to changing conditions. Conventional media newsroom management is changing the organizational structure of coverage and production (news gathering; news production) to meet the challenges of the digital era. Many theories and business models are no longer relevant in this digital era. The phenomenon of the main is no longer the main. A newspaper can no longer survive sales or circulation and advertising. Television can no longer rely on revenue from advertising revenue alone. In today's digital era, companies must change their mindset from relying on primary revenue (stand-alone) to an ecosystem-based business that allows actors to orchestrate various outside resources. This phenomenon is inevitable because technological development has changed how people consume media. Viewers who enjoy free-to-air terrestrial television broadcasts switch to watching via streaming video. The formulation of this research problem is how the dynamics of digital transformation face competition in the era of digitalization of the television industry in Metro TV Indonesia. The results showed that Metro TV formed a Digital Hub Division as the "main kitchen" of the digital transformation process. The goal is to improve the quality, extension version, and diversification of Metro TV content into various social media platforms, portals, and websites. In the digital transformation process, Metro TV applies the three forces of Chris Anderson's theory of The Long Tail: production democratization, distribution democratization, and supply and demand connection.

Keywords: Digital Transformation, Television, Long Tail

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## Introduction

Indonesia is entering an era of convergence; this is marked by many media combined into one media that can be accessed simultaneously by the use of Internet access. The ability of online media to distribute news for free, faster, interactive, and right away (event in the making) is considered media mainstream as the proper condition to expand the reader network and foster loyalty. conventional media must adapt and adopt digital technology to maintain its existence and continue to develop in the era of increasing digital technology. The press will die if it persists with conventional concepts and does not want to adapt to developments in digital technology.

Since 1998, one by one, the conventional media in Indonesia have adopted a multiplatform strategy by establishing website-based online media. Print media transform and establish an online news portal to present news online. The first online media site in Indonesia is [Republika.co.id](http://Republika.co.id). In that year, Tempo magazine also released [tempointeractive.com](http://tempointeractive.com) (now Tempo. co), a daily publication Kompas, under PT Kompas Cyber Media, also founded [Kompas.com](http://Kompas.com) in 1998. Kompas no longer positions itself as a printed newspaper but as a multimedia information provider with various platforms such as the internet, mobile, and digital devices. With this strategy, Kompas management hopes to maintain consumers of printed newspapers while expanding their consumers with media Digital Kompas.

Print media conventional institutions are shifting to digital transformation, and TV stations are following suit by building websites and developing digital formats. TV stations implement various information technology applications and communications to support news gathering, processing, broadcasting, and developing business.

In the media industry, digital transformation can be identified as the joining of various media channels that were previously considered different and separate (radio, television, print, and internet) into a single digital platform(Lugmayr & Dal Zotto, 2016). Previously, the content of newspapers, magazines, radio and television. present information individually, then the analog content is transformed into bit data, thus allowing text, audio, and visuals to be presented and integrated into the same platform(Lugmayr & Dal Zotto, 2016). Every single content can be converted into bits of data that are not differentiated. Content will become increasingly digitized. Through digital technology, content can be sent across media platforms, and audiences can enjoy it through various platforms (Lugmayr & Dal Zotto, 2016).

Digital transformation is not just a shift in technology or technological processes or simply multiplatform strategy; digital transformation also means a shift in industrial, social, and cultural paradigms. In the middle of the climate fiercely competition, every media organization is aiming for the most significant piece of the pie, digital transformation is a media management strategy to increase power competitive and reduce future uncertainty. Digital transformation is not just about technological change but also changes in media institutions themselves. For this reason, media transformation is a process rather than an outcome. Digital transformation is reshaping the landscape of journalism in various ways. Converging processes and goals produce 'effects convergence', which has an impact on media work, newsroom structure, values, and professional norms, as well as the form and diversity of content produced (Spyridou & Veglis, 2016). Convergence raises severe implications about how journalism is done. Journalism is shifting to a digital type of

storytelling, interactive, and multimedia, as well as independent, multi-skilled, and news production by technology (Zafra, 2018).

The focus of this study is the Jakarta-based Media Group Network, a media conglomerate run by journalist, and entrepreneur, Surya Paloh. This group owns Metro TV (television), Media Indonesia (newspapers), *Metrotvnews.com* (news online), *MediaIndonesia.com* (news online), *Medcom.id* (news portal), *Lampung Pos* (newspaper), and MG Radio (radio station). Metro TV is within the Network Media Group corporation, which owns all conventional platforms such as newspapers, television, and radio, as Integrated companies engaged in content, services, and infrastructure are inferior to other media corporations such as Kompas Group, MNC Group, and *Elang Mahkota Teknologi* (Emtek) Group in carrying out digital transformation. Metro TV only took its digital transformation seriously in early 2022 by establishing Digital Hub as the central kitchen of Media Group Network's multiplatform digitization process that capitalizes and monetizes its social media platforms. Previously, Metro TV already had social media accounts and a website, *www.metrotvnews.com*, which does video streaming television broadcasts—according to Agus Mulyadi, Metro TV's social media accounts, and website had not been optimized at that time. Metro TV carries out digital transformation with the Digital Hub while maintaining the television platform as a core business. Television platforms are maintained while diversifying content through social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, and TikTok.

In this study, researchers observed and interviewed five people involved in Metro TV's digital transformation process: Don Bosco Selamun, President Director of Metro TV, Agus Mulyadi, as Director of Digital Hub, is involved in Digital Hub's operational decisions. Farah Dina is the Head of the social media and Video Digital Hub, in charge of all operational activities for the social media and video teams. Nunung Setyani, Head of News Convergence Project. Ade Firman, Head of Assignment Editor of MGN Press. Then, Deni Fauzan is in charge of all operational social media and SEO efforts. Observations and interviews (Creswell. j. w, 2013) were conducted to answer problems or meet research objectives, namely to find out and analyze the digital transformation process carried out by Metro TV. In this chapter on results and discussion, researchers analyze data in a broader context, using theories or other scientific studies. The objective of using theories, concepts, or other scientific research is to aid in a comprehensive review of all data gathered as primary data through interviews and observations. To be able to answer the research problem "how Metro TV transforms in the digital era," the researchers divided the data findings into four sub-chapters as follows: first, the concept of Metro TV's central kitchen in carrying out digital transformation; second, how to reproduce Metro TV content into social media; third, creativity in reproducing Metro TV content into social media; and fourth, how to distribute Metro TV's reproduction content into social media.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Anderson explores “the long tail” as the shift from traditional business models, which focused on selling a small number of popular items in large quantities, to a new model that allows companies to sell a larger number of niche items in smaller quantities. This concept is referred to as the "long tail"(Anderson, 2006).

The basic idea behind the long tail is that the internet and online retail have dramatically decreased the costs of distribution and storage, allowing businesses to offer a wide variety of products and services, catering to niche markets and specific interests. In the past, physical

stores had limited shelf space, so they primarily stocked popular, mainstream items. With the rise of online platforms like Amazon, Netflix, and iTunes, businesses can now offer a vast array of products and content, even those that appeal to a smaller audience.

Anderson (2006) argues that this shift has significant implications for businesses, consumers, and culture. He suggests that the future of commerce lies in the ability to tap into the long tail, allowing consumers to find exactly what they want, no matter how obscure, and enabling businesses to profit from catering to these niche markets (McDonald, 2008).

The Long Tail has been influential in shaping the way businesses approach online retail, digital marketing, and content distribution. It has become a foundational concept in e-commerce and has inspired entrepreneurs and businesses to explore opportunities in niche markets, leading to more diverse product offerings and personalized experiences for consumers.

### Strategies for Digital Transformation



Figure 1: Three Digital Transformation Strategies in Media Group Network

#### ***Media Management Asset***

The "Digital Hub" organization is in charge of Metro TV's digital transition. Metro TV has been undergoing a digital revolution for almost 15 years. However, the context of digital transformation carried out 15 years ago is more about the process of moving the results of coverage or footage and TV programs stored on tapes (in the form of DVC-Pro, Mini-DV, and Compact Disc) into a file-based library system (file-based). The purpose of transferring the coverage material and television program is to facilitate the finding for future production purposes, such as footage or coverage documentation that is still needed in news production today. Or the need for past programs for the benefit of current programs. Transferring material documenting coverage, footage, and programming TV shows is still being carried out today. The goal is to simplify the process of producing or making news today that requires footage or documentation coverage without looking for physical tapes or CDs. With this transfer process, producers who need footage or documentation of coverage or impressions can pull directly in the form of files from the editing operational system and Dalet. According to informant Agus Mulyadi, his party is late in implementing digital transformation, albeit it is not entirely too late. While key informant Wayan Eka Putra believes that digitization is more than late, it is more about the focus of a distinct company. According to Wayan, Metro TV has been transforming for a long time; Metro TV has long integrated television content in the digital domain through live streaming on



www.metrotvnews.com. Metro TV has been moving coverage materials and analog-based programs, such as cassettes and CDs, into a file-based library system in addition to live streaming. The transfer of material and metadata processing is still occurring today.

### ***MGN Press***

In November 2021, Media Group Network implemented a newsgathering convergence strategy by uniting journalists from its three business units: Media Indonesia (print media), Metro TV (broadcasting media), and Medcom. Id (online portal) into a convergence project called MGN Press. The study's results revealed that the growing need for human resources is the main reason why the convergence process in the Media Group Network must be carried out immediately in 2021. The Head of Assignment Editor of MGN Press, Ade Firman, stated this:

So, in our condition, the composition on TV is mostly cameramen rather than reporters. Meanwhile, Media Indonesia also needs human resources (journalists), Medcom does the same, Medcom only has 6 reporters. So if you rely on each platform, you need very large recruitment. Meanwhile, if they are merged, the total number of all journalists is 70, which is quite a large number. Moving on from that, we are considering convergence. So, all journalists were merged and the results were decent. (Ade Firman, Head of Assignment Editor, July 2022)

Head of the News Convergence Project, Nunung Setiyani, said the idea of convergence of newsgathering was indeed based on the desire to unite resources, especially human resources, in the Media Group Network. The combination of human resources is expected to overcome the shortage of journalists on each platform.

We must be efficient in using human resources. We can no longer freely hire such a large number of people. If we take people, specifically for printing only and have to fulfil all print needs, only for TV needs, then only for online needs, the need for human resources will be very large, that's no longer possible.

Based on the statement above, it can be said that the newsgathering convergence strategy is considered a way to solve the problem of human resource needs which are getting bigger day by day in the Media Group Network. Amid declining conventional media revenue, companies can no longer be free to recruit new people to become journalists only for the needs of one platform. The media convergence strategy is a necessity. This is as stated by Wayan Eka Putra, deputy head of the News Convergence Project.

Now the revenue is much smaller than 5-10 years ago. If we keep doing the same business, it's the same as committing suicide. Because this convergence occurs, it allows us to add new channels. That is one of the positive effects of convergence.

By implementing newsgathering convergence, journalists who are members of MGN Press must make various adjustments, starting from changing work patterns, increasing cross-platform skills, and changing their mindset, that they are no longer print, television, or online journalists. A journalist from Media Indonesia is required to be able to take videos, write and send scripts faster, and be able to do live reports for television needs. While a Metro TV reporter is usually accompanied by a camera person and vice versa, now, they must be able to do their reporting. A reporter must be able to take pictures, both photos, and videos, and, a

camera person must be able to write scripts and do live reports. Meanwhile, a Medcom.id journalist must also have print and television journalist skills. This multi-skill and multitasking journalist ability eventually gave rise to the term video journalist or VJ. However, creating a video journalist is not easy.

This was also acknowledged by the person in charge of news gathering convergence in the media group network as well as the President Director of Metro TV, Don Bosco Selamun.

Of course, it's not easy. How to let people know that he works multiskilled and multitasking, that's a problem. I said it's not easy, everyone says it's hard to do, getting people to work multi-skills is not easy.

For Don Bosco, apart from competence, what is also a big challenge is how to change the mindset and minimize the sectoral ego of the platform.

Each platform, the people, have their ego. But we can minimize this. So there must be a common understanding, that I am no longer a TV person, a print person, or an online person. The mindset must be changed, it can no longer be an ego platform.

This challenging process can be seen from the stages of the newsgathering convergence strategy that the Media Group Network goes through in an effort of human resource efficiency.

### ***Digital Hub***

March 2022, the Digital Hub has been undergoing multiple processes to increase the quality, extension version, and diversity of Metro TV programming across various social media platforms and websites. According to sources, the digitization process has transformed Digital Hub into the core kitchen for generating all Media Group Network platforms. By making Digital Hub the central kitchen, Media Group Media Network (MGN) business units such as Metro TV (electronic), Media Indonesia (print), and Medcom (online portal) benefit from synergy. Digital Hub is a strategic partner in the Media Group Network's digitization of all channels. Wayan Eka Putra, a key source, perceives Digital Hub's benefits as the central digital transformation kitchen since Metro TV operates in a convention climate that Media Group Network established first. According to Wayan, the convergence of coverage under the Media Group Network results in efficiency, speed, and more effective and efficient human resource management.

Farah Dina elaborated on the Central Kitchen concept used at the Digital Hub. According to Dina, the Digital Hub strengthens the organization by splitting it into five domains or sections to serve as the Media Group Network's Central Kitchen. Each unit has its own set of duties and obligations. The five units are shown in the chart as follows:



Figure 2: Central Kitchen Digital Hub

The social media team manages its accounts and belongs to the Media Group Network. This social media team has KPI initiators in followers or subscribers. SEO Team (Search Engine Optimization) and Data Analytics. This team manages all content that holds performance data, such as social or paid media data. For example, if a brand wants to camp a product, then the SEO and Data Analytics team will manage all data, visitor data, Google Analytics trends, etc. In addition to the interests of third parties, the SEO team and analytical data are also tasked with providing hashtag recommendations to the editor. This team provides information on issues or themes currently crowded below on social media and recommends raising the issue to Metro TV, Medcom, or Media Indonesia. The central kitchen concept encountered during the process of reproducing television content to content for social media platforms meets at least three "advantages" of digital transformation, as revealed by Yoo et al. that digital transformation can increase the focus on efficiency, innovation, and product improvement (Yoo et al., 2012). Furthermore, Metro TV's Digital Hub is already part of Media Group Network's convergence model ecosystem. At least four variables contribute to the formation of an ecosystem, making the central kitchen concept more feasible in the Media Group Network setting.

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## Discussion

Digital Hub as the central kitchen of digital transformation. This philosophy aligns with the three forces of Chris Anderson's The Long Tail theory. The first strength of The Long Tail is production democratization, which, according to Anderson, "The Democratization of

Production means that everyone has access to the tools of production. Everyone in the social and creative teams has access to all production materials. Based on observations, the process of reproducing Metro TV content into content for social media can be done by anyone without restrictions and "zero cost." All social media coordinators and Digital Hub creative teams have the freedom to select and reproduce Metro TV content into social media platform content according to the character of their respective social media platforms. The philosophy of "one person who shopped" is the output of the convergence of news gatherings that had already been carried out before launching the Digital Hub. Thus, Metro TV's Digital Hub is already in the convergence model ecosystem carried out by the Media Group Network.

The process of reproducing or reproducing Metro TV content to the content of various social media platforms can be seen with one of Chris Anderson's three strengths of *The Long Tail: Production Democratization*. The principle of democratization of production in the concept of the central kitchen is seen in several examples given by informants and based on the author's observations. Chris Anderson, in *Production Democratization*, divides these strengths into four independent parts, namely: CV (content variety), SV (service variety), CLV (classified variety), and PV (participation variety).

When Metro TV was airing breaking news of the trial of Police General Ferdy Sambo (for example), four Digital Hub field teams immediately performed the functions Anderson mentioned, namely "CV", "SV", "CLV" and "PV". The Social Media Team and Video Content Creative Team perform the content variety (CV) function by producing footage from the trial in court in various formats according to the characteristics of the intended social media platform (treatment clipping program). Then the Web Team also performs the function of variety service (SV) by live streaming Metro TV's free-to-air broadcasts to [www.metrotvnews.com](http://www.metrotvnews.com) websites, [www.medcom.id](http://www.medcom.id) and [www.mediaindonesia.com](http://www.mediaindonesia.com) and live-on to YouTube channels (@metrotvnews). Then, the Social Media Team also runs the function of classified variety (CLV) assisted by recommendations from the SEO Team, which provides trending topic data and Google Analytics on trending themes or issues. With SEO data, the Social Media Team conducts the process of producing breaking news content for social media content based on the classification of issues, needs, age segments, hobbies and other interests. This classification results in different variations of content products for each social media platform. Furthermore, finally, the participation variety (PV) function is carried out when the Social Media Team creates social media content that involves audience participation in the form of live IG, chatroom features or other interactive programs as a form of diversity of participation.

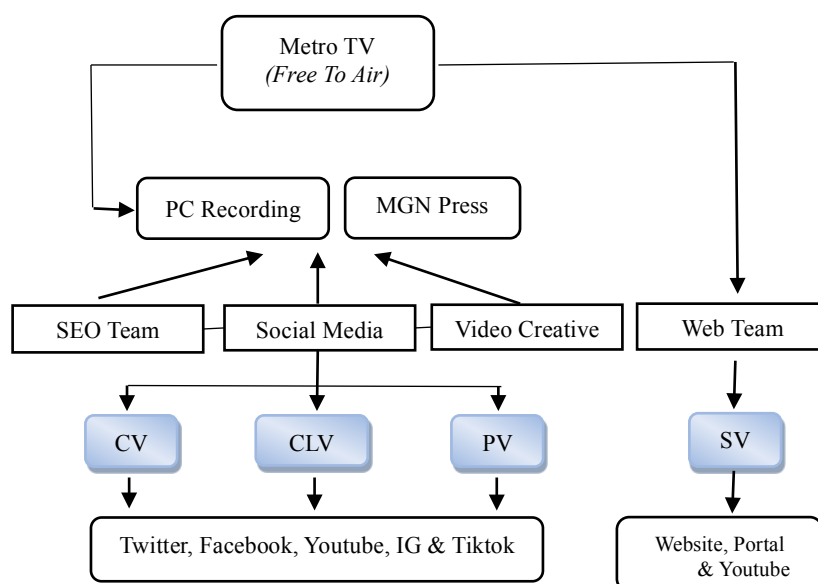


Figure 3: Application of Production Democratization in TV Content Production to Social Media, Website & Portal

If Production Democratization has four independent indicators (CV, SV, CLV and PV), Chris Anderson mentions the Access Options (AO) factor in the strength of Distribution Democratization as an independent indicator. Anderson defines *Distribution democratization* as "everyone has access to distribution via the Internet." According to Anderson, freedom of distribution occurs when everyone can distribute everything through the Internet. The distribution process carried out by Digital Hub shows that there is freedom in accessing information and distributing via the Internet. With internet technology, every team in the Digital Hub has access to distribute content to various social media platforms (McDonald, 2008).

Access Options (AO) make it easier for all crew at the Digital Hub to reproduce and then distribute it on the MetroTVnews website and Medcom portal as well as various social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and Twitter. According to Andersen, in *Long Tail*, the focus is shifted from relatively few hits (usually in the form of products in major markets) in the head of the demand curve to niche markets that are large in the tail (Huang & Wang, 2014).

In addition to distribution democratization, the process of diversifying and distributing television content into content for various social media platforms on the Digital Hub can also be seen from the third strength of *The Long Tail* theory, namely Supply and demand Connection. Digitalization today has changed the way consumers interact with producers or service providers. Digital Hub has digital activity, a social media content created based on subscribers' and followers' requests, comments or responses, similar to the interaction between the media and its consumers. In the past, viewers had to be in front of the television set to enjoy the broadcast (AM Putra et al., 2020).

## **Conclusion**

Media Group Network launched "Digital Hub" as the central kitchen of Metro TV's digital transformation process. As a central kitchen, Digital Hub aims to improve the quality, extended version, and diversification of Metro TV content into various social media platforms, portals, and websites. In the process of digital transformation, Digital Hub applies the principle of the three strengths of Chris Anderson's The Long Tail Theory, namely: production democratization, distribution democratization, and supply and demand connection. The application of the three strengths of The Long Tail is found in the process of transforming Metro TV (free-to-air) content into portals, websites and social media.

The digital transformation process of Metro TV content results in changes in the functions and content of the portal medcom.id, mediaindonesia.com and metrotvnews.com. Changes in function and content also occur on Metro TV's social media accounts, namely Facebook (@Metro TV), Instagram (@metrotv), TikTok (@metro\_tv), Twitter (@Metro\_TV) and YouTube (@metrotvnews). Social media, which previously functioned as a promotional media for television programs, turned into a medium for distributing free-to-air Metro TV content, both in the form of video streaming, video lates and treatment clipping programs as well as program promotion media.

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*Exploring Non-human Language and Vision in Virtual Reality  
Within the Context of Visual Culture*

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**Abstract**

This study investigates non-human communication and perception via virtual reality (VR) in the field of visual culture. It seeks to integrate visual stimuli and evaluate a non-human perspective in a simulated environment. To lay the groundwork, an emphasis is placed on comprehending the conventional human perspective, particularly through an examination of cinematic and filmic language. The language of film, including narrative structures, shot compositions, and editing techniques, has had a substantial impact on our understanding of non-human visuality. By carefully analyzing the linguistic structure of film, we can gain insight into how human visualize non-human. The study then shifts its focus to investigating language and vision of non-human entities using virtual reality. Using VR's potential to challenge established human perceptions, visual cues are strategically placed to emphasize the non-human viewpoint. The objective is to uncover new dimensions of visual comprehension in VR while revealing the limitations and biases of human perception. The purpose of this study is to expand our understanding of visual culture beyond human experience by investigating non-human language and vision using virtual reality technology. Through a rigorous analysis of linguistic elements in cinema and its relevancy to VR technology, we aim to uncover new perspectives and investigate visual communication that is more inclusive in an interconnected visual culture.

Keywords: Virtual Reality, Non-human Vision, Visual Culture

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## Introduction

In the modern landscape of communication and perception, the incorporation of virtual reality (VR) has emerged as an enticing way to explore new dimensions of visual comprehension (Tai & Chen, 2021). Utilising the immersive capabilities of VR technology (Rueda & Lara, 2020), this study investigates the realm of non-human communication and perception in the context of visual culture.

The tapestry of visual culture, which is woven from the fibers of human perception and expression, evolves continuously in response to technological developments (Reia-Baptista, 2010; Rose, 2014; Zhang, 2006). This research examines the intersection between two transformative forces: the language of film and the virtual technologies to represent non-human vision. These forces converge to transform our understanding of visual storytelling and our perception of the world. This study's overriding objective is to broaden the horizons of visual culture beyond the limits of human experience. Utilising the transformative capabilities of VR technology, we set out on a mission to investigate non-human language and vision. Through a meticulous synthesis of cinematic language and VR applications, the study aims to diversify viewpoints, thereby facilitating the investigation of visual communication and perception within a broadened and interconnected visual culture that considers non-human entities.

As we delve deeper into the philosophical underpinnings of epistemology and aesthetics, we discover the foundations that support the comprehension of human and non-human perspectives. The philosophy of knowledge, or epistemology, acts as our compass, navigating us through the complexities of understanding and perception (Bradford, 2015). Aesthetics, a subfield of epistemology, sheds light on the essence of beauty and sensory experiences, expanding its scope to include non-human entities (Nadin, 1991). Our research is centred on a comparison of human and non-human perspectives within VR technology. As we traverse this enthralling terrain, we concentrate on the complexities of visual perception, investigating the anatomical differences in ocular structures that distinguish between species. We provide a comprehensive understanding of how diverse species interpret their environments by shedding light on the intricate interaction between vision and anatomy.

Nevertheless, our voyage is not devoid of obstacles and considerations. As we navigate the complexities of comparative analysis, technical constraints, ethical concerns, and the realism of VR simulations loom large. Recognising these factors is crucial for ensuring the authenticity and comprehension of non-human experiences in virtual reality. In the following sections, these aspects will be discussed in detail, illuminating the way forward in our mission to unravel the mysteries of non-human language and vision, all within the rich tapestry of visual culture.

In this transformative odyssey, we hope to shed light on the multifaceted dimensions of perception, bridge the chasm between the human and non-human worlds, and forge new paths for the study of visual culture in the swiftly evolving digital age.

## Epistemology and Aesthetics in Non-human Perception

The philosophy of knowledge and its acquisition, commonly referred to as epistemology, serves as the foundation of our investigation into non-human communication and perception. This branch of philosophy contains numerous subfields that contribute to our understanding

of the world as a whole. To embark on this transformative voyage, a solid epistemological foundation must be established. Aesthetics emerges as a central branch of epistemology, providing insights into the nature of beauty and sensory experiences (Friedman, 2016). As a branch of philosophy that investigates beauty and taste, aesthetics plays a crucial role in comprehending the sensory experiences that result from our interactions with the universe, extending its scope beyond the human domain to consider non-human entities (Levinson, 2009). Along with aesthetics, another branch of philosophy, ontology, contributes significantly to our investigation of non-human communication and perception. Ontology concerns itself with the nature of existence, confronting questions about which entities exist or can be said to exist, how they can be categorised, related within hierarchies, and subdivided based on similarities and differences. Through ontological inquiry, we acquire a deeper understanding of the nature and position of non-human entities in the world. Two additional philosophical perspectives, cognitive relativism and contextualism, are pertinent to our study. According to cognitive relativism, knowledge is culturally relative and devoid of objective truth (Rescher, 2003). Contextualism, on the other hand, asserts that knowledge is context-dependent, with the meaning of a statement contingent upon the context in which it is made (Partee, 2004). By investigating these epistemological perspectives, we set the groundwork for a deeper understanding of how non-human entities perceive the world and how their cultural and environmental contexts influence their perceptions (Goldstein et al., 2014; Hird, 2012). This epistemological foundation guides our subsequent exploration of aesthetics, sensory perception, and the transition to nonhuman perspectives.

### **Aesthetics, Sensory Perception, and the Transition to Non-human Perspective**

At the intersection of philosophy and sensory perception, aesthetics plays a central role in our investigation. As the branch of philosophy concerned with the nature of beauty, taste, and the creation and appreciation of art, aesthetics hinges on our five senses—sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell—as conduits through which we engage with the world and appreciate beauty in its diverse forms (Freeland, 2012). To fully comprehend the concept of beauty, a dynamic interaction between human observers and diverse artistic forms or works of art is required (Nadin, 1991). Each of the artistic movements functions as a canvas for the expression of beauty, providing avenues for appreciating the beauty of the world (Mallon et al., 2014) and gaining insight into the nature of non-human perspectives. Our research endeavour focuses primarily on measuring and comprehending the non-human perspective. The incorporation of cutting-edge virtual reality (VR) technology enables this endeavour. Our objective is to seamlessly incorporate visual stimuli within a controlled environment, thus creating a compelling simulation of a non-human viewpoint. Before venturing into the realm of non-human perspectives, it is essential to have a thorough grasp of the conventional human perspective. This requires a thorough analysis of cinematic and filmic language, which includes narrative structures, shot compositions, and editing techniques (Lino et al., 2010; Medhurst, 1982). The language of film has significantly influenced our understanding of visual storytelling and our perception of the world (Kaiser & Shibahara, 2014). The intriguing transition from the human perspective to claiming the non-human perspective adds depth to our research voyage. This transition involves the strategic use of visual signals within the VR environment, revealing the untapped potential of technology to amplify the non-human perspective. Through this inter-disciplinary investigation involving epistemology, aesthetics, sensory perception, and virtual reality technology, our research aims to uncover previously unexplored dimensions of visual comprehension. In addition, it seeks to illuminate the inherent limitations and biases embedded in human perception. This holistic approach provides a comprehensive comprehension of beauty and its multifaceted manifestations in the

era of digital immersion, all the while building on the solid epistemological foundation established at the outset of our investigation.

### **Comprehending the Conventional Human Perspective: A Bridge to the Non-human Realm**

Understanding conventional human perspectives is essential to understanding non-human perspectives. This task requires a thorough analysis of filmic language, including narrative structures, shot compositions, and editing (Finn, 2015; Koutsoubou, 2010). Film's storytelling has forever changed how we see the world and interpret visual narratives (Kraft et al., 1991). Film language—narrative structures, image compositions, and editing—is essential to visual storytelling. Many film and media studies references support this claim (Bradbury & Guadagno, 2020; Smilevski et al., 2018; Yuan, 2018; Zhou, 2005). No Film School claims that filmmaking uses a global cinematic language. This universal language lets us see hope, fear, love, and excitement on characters' faces. The camera deftly reveals key plot points and our deepest emotions through subtle movements and framing (Hellerman, 2021). Industrial Scripts defines cinematic language as a set of techniques and conventions used in film to communicate with the audience. Lighting, performances, cinematography, and editing convey emotions and ideas (Scripts, 2021). Videomaker shows how cinema has become a global language, using shots, shot sequences, scenes, and dramatic sequences to tell a story. Organising cinematic elements like language structures improves a video's narrative impact and makes it accessible and engaging for a variety of audiences (Schmierer, 2019). In addition, Ken Aguado explains visual storytelling in film and TV. This art form uses optical effects to make films transcend language barriers and connect with audiences through imager power (Aguado, 2021). The Writing Studio examines film's unique language, where art directors, directors, and cinematographers collaborate to create visuals. In this field, filmmakers use camera work, sound design, and visual effects to artistically convey the story's essence and complexities, capturing the 'bits and pieces' of the narrative in the visual tapestry (Dercksen, 2015). The Film Fund Blog shows how visual narrative transcends language to deeply engage viewers. Visual storytelling alone conveys emotions, conflicts, and character development in films (Johnson, 2023). We enter the unfamiliar world of non-human perspectives by strategically using cinematic storytelling conventions (Wright et al., 2012). This transition is ongoing in our study of non-human perspectives, especially in VR technology (de Klerk et al., 2019). The shift from human to non-human adds depth and dimension to our research. By using visual indicators and signals in the VR environment, this transition shows how technology can augment and simulate the non-human perspective. Understanding the conventional human perspective is essential to studying non-human perspectives. This understanding helps you navigate the unfamiliar and prepares you to use VR to accurately simulate non-human perspectives. Immersive simulations using film language can bridge human and non-human virtual reality experiences.

### **Embarking on a Comparative Journey: Exploring Human and Non-human Perspectives in VR**

Our research goes beyond observation to compare human and non-human perspectives, which is key to understanding perception using virtual reality (VR) technology. VR delivers an unforgettable experience that lets us see the world as non-humans (Rueda & Lara, 2020). In this comparative analysis, we focus on the intricate aspects of visual perception, often manifested as ocular structure differences. Comparative anatomy is fascinating, and we learn how eye characteristics affect how different species perceive their environment.

Chicken vision, which contrasts with human vision, is one of our examples. Chicken irises have adapted to their environment (Aleman & Schaeffel, 2018). Optimal for long-distance navigation, prey detection, and mate selection, their larger eyes relative to head size provide a wider visual field. Their higher density of photoreceptors, especially cones, enhances their ability to perceive colours, including ultraviolet light. The chicken pecten, which nourishes the retina, and the "double fovea," a unique adaptation in many bird species, improve visual acuity across a wide range (Wai et al., 2006). We conclude this artwork by comparing human and non-human perspectives. We use VR to show the complexities, differences, and limitations of each perspective to help humans understand the non-human experience. This ambitious project shows how virtual reality can help us understand visual culture and navigate digital perception. This investigation connects human and non-human domains, revealing perception's complex nuances and expanding visual culture research. Our study of human and non-human perspectives in visual culture has prepared us for a transformative direct comparison. This crucial phase of our investigation maximises VR technology's immersion. We want to help humans and non-humans understand each other. Understanding the complexities, differences, and limitations of each perspective will do this. Consider the extraordinary world of vision in animals other than humans, using the chicken as an example, to shed light on this path. Evolution has shaped the chickens' visual environment to meet their specific needs as a species. One distinguishing characteristic is the placement of their eyes on the sides of their heads, which affords them a field of vision significantly greater than that of humans. Despite having very little overlap between their eyes, chickens have approximately 300 degrees of monocular vision, whereas humans have approximately 120 degrees of peripheral vision and approximately 60 degrees of binocular vision. Due to this adaptation, they are able to detect potential dangers and navigate their environment without excessive head movement (in my garden, 2019). Figure 1 depicts a comparison of the visual fields of humans and chickens.

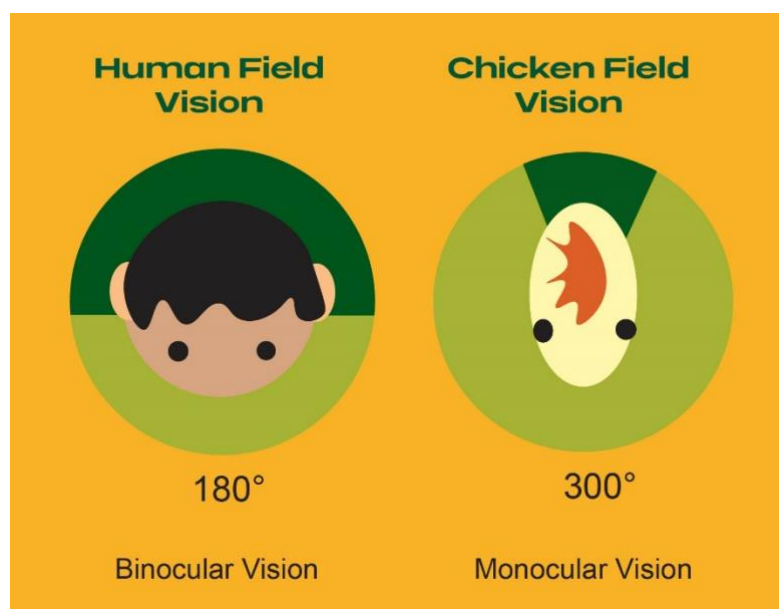


Figure 1. Human vs. Chicken Vision

For such a wide field of view, chickens have sacrificed their depth perception. In order to compensate for this deficiency, they exhibit the peculiar behaviour of bobbing their heads from side to side, which enables them to determine distances more precisely. This difference in visual acuity is a result of the vastly different lifestyles and ecological niches of chickens and humans. Chickens prioritise panoramic awareness due to their need to avoid being

consumed by predators, whereas humans prioritise depth perception due to their need to develop their eyesight for precise activities and complex environments (in my garden, 2019). Another fundamental difference between human and chicken vision is the ability to distinguish between colours. A large number of cone cells in the human retina allows for the detection of a broad spectrum of colours and contributes to the colourful symphony that is human colour vision. In contrast, chickens have only two types of colour receptors, which makes their colour vision system more straightforward. Due to their decreased sensitivity to the red portion of the spectrum, it is difficult for them to perceive the full spectrum of colours in the same manner as humans. As a result, they may perceive certain tones as various shades of grey or entirely different colours (Ham & Osorio, 2007; Odeen & Håstad, 2003). Due to their exceptional colour vision, chickens are able to navigate their environment effectively. They are able to differentiate between edible and non-edible objects and use colour cues to identify flock members. The adaptive differences between human and chicken colour vision illustrate the divergent evolutionary paths of humans and chickens. In order to ensure their own survival, chickens have developed a more basic colour vision system, whereas humans have developed a more nuanced colour vision system, which enhances their enjoyment of the various hues around them (Lind, 2016; Olsson & Kelber, 2017; Schmidt et al., 2004). A study conducted by researchers investigates the complexities of chicken vision in greater depth. According to their research, chickens are tetrachromatic, meaning their eyes contain four distinct types of photoreceptor cones (in my garden, 2019), while humans are trichromatic (Verrelli et al., 2008). Figure 2 depicts a comparison of trichromatic and tetrachromatic.

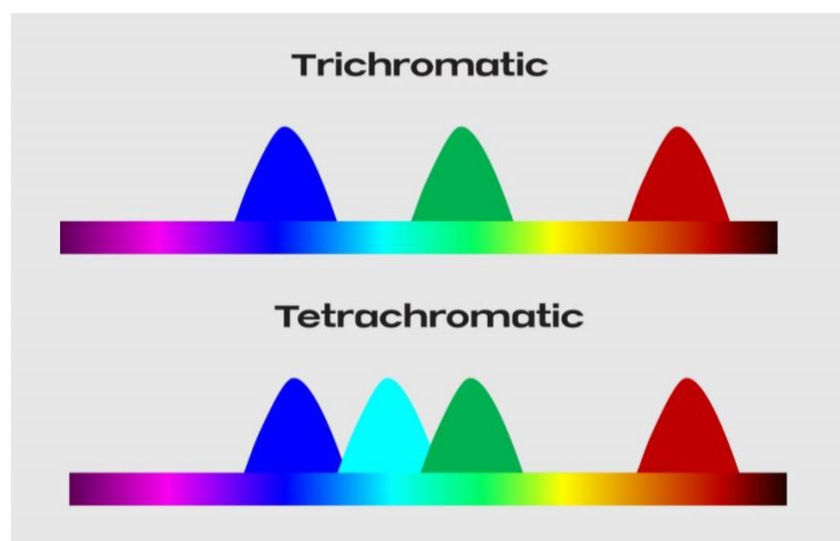


Figure 2. Trichromatic and Tetrachromatic Color Vision

Trichromats, like humans, have three photoreceptor cones for the RGB colour spectrum, as shown in the figure. Chickens, as tetrachromats, have an additional cone to see cyan. Chickens have RGCB vision due to their expanded cone range. Chickens' tetrachromatic vision lets them see cyan and other colours beyond the RGB spectrum. These species' unique environmental and survival needs have led to unique colour perception adaptations (in my garden, 2019). Our exploration of comparative vision in virtual reality shifts to the perspectives of humans and non-humans. Chicken vision is an example of non-human perception to illustrate perception's complexities. This divergence in vision, with its wide field of view and specific adaptations, illuminates anatomy, environment, and perception. Our study of chicken vision illuminates these differences and shows how visual culture shapes our perceptions and interactions with the world. These insights, grounded in non-

human vision, will help us examine the integration of different perspectives in virtual reality environments, enriching our understanding of visual culture in the digital age.

### **Navigating Challenges and Considerations in Comparative VR Analysis**

As we compare human and non-human perspectives in virtual reality (VR), we must recognise and address several challenges and considerations that affect the authenticity and comprehensibility of the non-human experience. Technical constraints, ethical considerations, and VR simulation realism affect our comparison. Comparing human and non-human perspectives in VR is hindered by technical limitations. Even though VR technology is advanced, it may not fully replicate non-human sensory experiences. Although we can simulate a chicken's field of view, we may not be able to replicate its visual acuity, photoreceptor adaptations, and cognitive processes. Be aware that even the most immersive VR environments can only approximate non-human sensory realities. These technical limitations must be acknowledged to accurately interpret our comparative study results. Ethical considerations are also important in our comparison. We must be ethical and responsible when studying non-human perspectives to help humans understand them. Informed consent from participants is needed when using non-human avatars or perspectives. Participants who view the world from a non-human perspective may also experience emotional or psychological effects. Respecting ethical boundaries and participant well-being are key to our research. VR simulation realism is crucial to our comparative study's efficacy. The degree to which virtual reality (VR) environments replicate non-human experiences affects human comprehension (Alyahya & McLean, 2021). Careful design, accurate data integration, and a thorough understanding of the non-human perspective are needed to create high-fidelity VR simulations. To replicate poultry vision, one must accurately represent their visual field, colour perception, and head movements. Interpretations of non-human experiences can result from representational errors. Thus, virtual reality simulations must attempt realism. Interpreting our comparative analysis results is difficult. A nuanced approach is needed to understand how VR viewers perceive and interpret non-human experiences. Are cognitive biases and anthropocentric interpretations real? Do humans realise non-human perspectives' limitations? These questions emphasise the need to analyse and interpret our findings, taking into account human and non-human aspects of the experience.

### **Creating the VR Experience**

To provide a comprehensive comparison of human and chicken perspectives, we undertook the challenging task of developing a virtual reality (VR) experience that accurately simulates the poultry's sensory environment. This endeavour required a comprehensive comprehension of the distinctions between the tetrachromatic vision of chickens and the normal trichromatic vision of humans. While we strived for accuracy, it is crucial to note that the VR experience is merely a simulation of how chickens see the world, not a perfect replication.

Using Adobe Premiere Pro CC, we edited video footage as the initial phase in the production process. In order to simulate tetrachromatic vision, we had to introduce cyan to the visual spectrum. This required adjusting several Adobe Premiere Pro parameters, including hue, saturation, luma, and RGB curves. Using credible sources regarding chicken vision, we adjusted these settings to approximate tetrachromatic vision. It was then exported as a cube file, making it compatible with VR platforms. Figure 3 depicts the waveform of a chicken in Adobe Premiere CC.



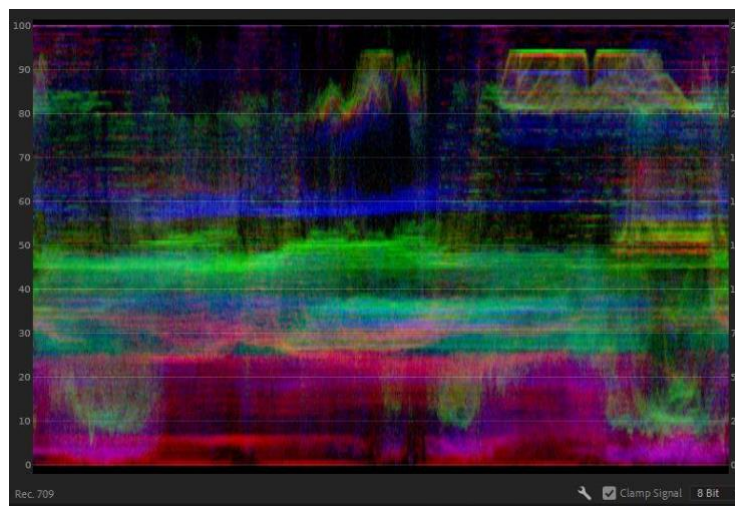


Figure 3. Chicken Waveform

We recorded VR footage with a 360-degree camera. Our camera was the Insta360 Insta360x3. For an authentic chicken's perspective, we used an arbitrary and unplanned approach. The 360-degree camera was placed in the chicken's cage so it could move freely and interact naturally. This subtle method ensured the chicken's movements and behaviour were real, laying the groundwork for our VR experience. We considered mounting a small camera on the chicken's head. We soon discovered that the chicken couldn't support the camera. Thus, we carefully observed and replicated the chicken's movements during filming. We accurately simulated the chicken's 300-degree field of vision, compared to 180 degrees for humans. We used 360 studio apps to adjust the field of view to match a chicken's perspective. After filming, Adobe Premiere was used to edit the footage. The tetrachromatic filter accurately simulated chicken vision. We had to meet technical requirements to immerse viewers in the chicken's visual world. This included VR devices, which are needed to fully experience VR content. In these VR experiences, they see the world from a chicken's eye, which is novel and stimulating. Figure 4 compares human and chicken output (filtered) to preview the results. These environments allow VR headset users to fully experience a chicken's perspective. In this unforgettable experience, cutting-edge technology and a chicken's perspective bridge human and non-human perception. This innovative VR experience aims to advance visual culture research by revealing the complexities of non-human vision.



Figure 4. Human vs. Non-Human Output on VR



## **Impact on Visual Culture and Opening New Dimensions**

Our VR research on human and non-human views has a huge impact on visual culture. As we learn more about perception, we develop new ideas that challenge our preconceptions and spark new art, media, and communication conversations. Visual culture is a living tapestry of self-perception (Davis, 2019). Understanding, discussing, and connecting with the visual world are all part of it. VR technology allows visual culture to expand by connecting humans and nonhumans. Our study may change how we create and view visual content, which is important. Immersing ourselves in non-human sensory truths teaches us about visual experiences. The new information may affect how artists, filmmakers, and other creators work. It allows for new story formats that appeal to more perspectives. Consider what this means for directors. Our study challenges film language and encourages filmmakers to try new storylines and visual cues that appeal to humans and nonhumans. It encourages content that crosses boundaries, which helps different species communicate. Dialogue and media are also greatly affected. The way we talk to and understand non-human things will change if we put ourselves in their shoes or see things through their eyes. Now that environmental films can show animal life, people value biodiversity more and want to protect it (Collard, 2016). Under the theme "Exploring Non-Human Language and Vision in Virtual Reality Within the Context of Visual Culture," our research is groundbreaking. It shows how VR can help us understand digital visual culture. As we progress with this research, perception research expands. It connects human and nonhuman worlds and illuminates visual culture's complexities. We lead the way towards a more inclusive and compassionate world as we explore nonhuman perception. The new dimensions we create allow us to enjoy the complex tapestry of all visual culture beyond what humans can feel. By bringing human and nonhuman voices together, our study breaks down barriers. It challenges anthropocentrism and encourages us to explore visual culture's many perspectives. We gain empathy, understanding, and respect for different worldviews by doing this. These new dimensions are also evident in education and study. They help teachers engage students in learning and encourage critical thinking, pushing them to think bigger. Our research helps people from different fields collaborate beyond academic fields.

## **Conclusions**

Our study of non-human language and vision in virtual reality (VR) intersects with the rich tapestry of visual culture in the digital age, where the virtual and real merge. Our journey to transcend human comprehension has opened new doors in visual storytelling and perception. Our research has illuminated the path to understanding human and non-human perspectives, from epistemology and aesthetics to cinematic language and virtual reality. Epistemology has taught us to appreciate perception's complexity, while aesthetics has expanded our understanding of beauty and sensory experiences to include non-humans. The comparative analysis of human and non-human perspectives in VR technology illuminates the complexities of visual perception and the anatomical differences that affect diverse species' environmental interpretations. The study of chicken vision shows how visual acuity, colour perception, and anatomical adaptations affect how species interact with their environment. Our pursuit is not without ethical considerations and challenges. We emphasise authenticity in our exploration of non-human realities as we navigate technical limitations, ethical boundaries, and VR simulation realism. Our transformation requires us to embrace multifaceted perception, bridging human and nonhuman realms. As we explore visual culture in the digital age, we affirm that virtual reality's fusion of human and non-human perspectives offers new storytelling, dialogue, and comprehension opportunities. In this

visual culture tapestry, we transcend our own perception to embrace the many ways the world is seen, felt, and expressed.

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## *Panopticon Perspective: Visual Analysis of a Film*

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### **Abstract**

Bent Hamer's movie *Kitchen Stories* (2003) is a Norwegian movie that is a combination of the post-war context within the research storyline of daily life practices. Kitchens are places where parts become wholes: where various ingredients could be combined and turned into a new form. In the film, space turns into a research field about a story of the growing relationship between two men, the story of post-war peoples, and the story of a scientific attempt in the movie *Kitchen Stories* (2003). In the visual analysis of the film, the focus is the roles and visual storytelling to analyze the power relations between characters that are an observer (Folke) and an observed (Isak). The steps of the storyline are considered to understand the roles and individual struggles by highlighting visual perspectives, and individual breaks of the gaze. Thus, composition and challenges provide a change in power relations between characters. Its cinematography gives ideas about how the tactics in daily life become a way to fight against the system and how the character improves individual solutions to cope with power in the kitchen. Overall, the analysis aims to explain the structure with the Foucault Panopticon perspective, surveillance, and gaze. Michel de Certeau took a different approach to daily life practices, in the film, as Individual Solutions, Isak improves some tactics in daily life to struggle with the power system that is settled in his personal space.

Keywords: Panopticon, Film Analysis, Visual Analysis

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## Introduction

During the late 1970s and 1980s, the media and social sciences started to focus on different approaches rather than mainstream and dominant paradigms. Ethnographic approaches in social sciences create a broad field to work with various practitioners in multiple methods. Researchers have concentrated on micro-perspectives to understand the whole picture, so these methods have become critical points for visual storytelling. Bent Hamer's movie *Kitchen Stories* (2003) is a Norwegian movie that is a combination of the post-war context within a research storyline of daily life practices. The study focuses on the movie to analyze the power relations between the observer (Folke) and the observed (Isak) and aims to explain it with the Foucault Panopticon perspective, surveillance, and gaze. As individual solutions, Isak improves some tactics in daily life to struggle with the power system that is settled in his personal space. The kitchen turns into a research field about a story of the strong relationship of two men, the story of post-war peoples, and the story of scientific endeavor in the movie *Kitchen Stories* (2003). Thus it opens a new door for a concept to analysis of panoptic view and tactics in everyday life. The role of Folke could be considered as an example of a panoptic view which represents the power supplied by the government. The following steps of the storyline break the gaze and it becomes possible to see a change in power relations between Folke and Isak. Also, tactics in daily life become a way to fight against the system. Isak improves individual solutions to struggle with power in the kitchen. These practices also change their communication and help them interact with each other.

The film's director prefers to craft an array of themes and perspectives by using a research project storyline. Primarily, it is essential to cover the social and historical context of the country in the 1950s to interpret the story. Throughout the post-war period, the government invested in rebuilding their nation to recover the social, economic, political, and social effects of the war. Within the complexity, gender roles took place on the table. According to the UNESCO report, "in 1950, only 28% of adult women were working outside the home compared to 34% in 1920. The number of women who married increased during the whole of this period, but of this only 3% were economically independent in 1920 and 6% in 1950." (Norwegian National Commission, 1989). In the movie where the impact of the historical process is seen, the new ways of the roles in the kitchen, and the system circulation in daily life are taken into consideration in different ways with the storyline.

In the movie storyline, The Swedish government sponsored a mass observation project and there is a drawn schema that shows Sweden housewife's kitchen routines and movements in the kitchen during six weeks. In the chart, the thickness of the lines increases or decreases with the intensity of the traffic, they aim to decide the locations of items in the kitchen. Their focus is to decrease the amount of traffic in the kitchen if more rational designs and layouts for these food preparation areas could be devised. Instead of the habits of Swedish housewives, the research part starts to focus on the gentle study of male loneliness. The observers live in the caravans next to the house, and observers can enter and leave the environment at any time, but the order is to avoid personal interactions with his subject and they cannot interfere with daily habits in the house. The plan consists of basic principles: an inspector installs himself on a stepladder in the volunteer's (Isak) kitchen and for weeks logs all movements and business in the kitchen. The scientist *Folke (Tomas Norström)* is sent to a rural Norwegian town, where he becomes an observer of the kitchen odd single man Isak (Joachim Calmeyer) who dreams of getting a horse with the research corporation, but only a doll causes him to refuse to cooperate. Folke is granted entry into the kitchen where he sets up an umpire chair in a corner to observe Isak. At the beginning of the process, Isak refuses



to stay in the kitchen and cook upstairs and starts to observe Folke through the little hole in the ceiling. Folke obeys the rules at the beginning and avoids patient interaction. Ultimately, they start to share a couple of things and become friends in the end. Folke's boss finds out about the friendship between the two and fires him from the job. When Folke decides to come back and live with Isak, he witnesses an ambulance at the door, letting the audience speculate Isak's (or merely his horse's) death. The last scene is a blank telephone call in the kitchen, notifying Folke of Grant's visit. The movie reflects the critical points in terms of the power system between characters and a story for the observational method used in the movie. Thus, this paper will focus on the layers of meaning power relations between Folke (Observer) and Isak (Observed) in the practices of "Everyday Life" with Foucault's gaze and interpretation of the panoptic view.

### **The System of Power Relationship Between Observer and Observed in The Kitchen**

The power relationship is discussed from different perspectives and Foucault brings multiple terms to define relationships and systems in the 1970s. A Panopticon which is a theoretical model of a disciplinary power structure is defined as a ring-shaped building that contains a central observation tower surrounded by cells or rooms arranged in a circular. The design of the system allows a single watchman to observe all inmates without the inmates being able to tell whether or not they are being watched. In terms of the psychological effect of constant surveillance, the uncertainty of being watched opens a chapter for the panoptic gaze that becomes the ruler and the subject becomes the object being the subject. Foucault also mentions that man's gaze is panoptic because he objectifies what he is looking at. "It is an important mechanism, for it automatizes and deindividualizes power. Power has its principle not so much in a person as in a certain concerted distribution of bodies, surfaces, lights, gazes; in an arrangement whose internal mechanisms produce the relation in which individuals are caught up" (Foucault, 1979, p.202). He defines that because of this structure, individuals fall into the trap of a non-personal power relationship that individualizes the individual, which exacerbates him/herself as a result of continuous surveillance.

The Panopticon serves as a powerful metaphor for highlighting the dynamics of power, and surveillance in modern societies. In this paper, the movie *Kitchen Stories (2003)* is analyzed in terms of a panoptic perspective by looking into cinematography and storytelling. In the movie, there is a reflection of the panopticon both physically created with the chair and research task ruled by the government. While the design of the surveillance concept in the movie works with the observer located in the corner, the concept of power works with a similar purpose. The researcher (Folke), who is assigned by the government, collects data about Isak by observing his daily activities when he is in his kitchen. He occupies Isak's personal space in the kitchen and he becomes a dominant mechanism as happens in the system of the watchtower. In addition to the power system, Foucault states the surveillance by arguing the gaze. With rules about the scientific attempt, both of the characters know roles and rules for how they should act to each other. According to Folke's assignment, his role is to look at him by sitting on his chair in the corner and record Isak's daily activities in the kitchen. As a neutral observer, Folke has been assigned to collect data in a non-judgmental manner free of personal opinions, or curiosity and he is not allowed to go beyond the boundaries of the kitchen. Folke as an observer role starts the speaking eye and reflects on a paper what he sees in the kitchen. Isak struggles to stop him watching by turning off the light, not cooking in the kitchen, and hanging up the clothes in the middle of the kitchen. Without interaction, Isak becomes the object of an overarching gaze and the character roles and movie sets are supporting points of the domination. Firstly, Folke takes place in a high position with

the chair which allows him to look from a high angle which provides a dominant position. Secondly, he records what he sees around the kitchen and about him. As the story unfolds Folke's new attempts, his standpoint evolves from neutrality to a growing curiosity and active engagement with Isak's life. He first takes the salt from the shelf, shares his tobacco with Isak, and the first time Folke leaves his chair to drink coffee. Thus, the power relationship starts to change and Isak tries to do the same thing like sitting in the chair and trying to draw some lines on the record.

### **“Tactics” of Isak to the Practice of Everyday Life**

Everyday situations as micro-structures like families had turned into a working field to draw macro perspective. “A healthy respect for the importance of studying culture at the level of everyday life has been at the core of cultural studies from the beginning.” (Gibson, 2000, s.255). With ethnographic research, “The Everyday” has become an important perception of understanding people, behaviors, and cultural references (Droner, 2006). The French scholar Michel de Certeau took a different approach to daily life practices and made an explanation about the struggle in daily life. He defines the activities and strategies as a “way of operating” because ordinary life is a side of struggle against the grand institutions of the dominant order (Droner, 2006). “Must vigilantly make use of the cracks that particular conjunctions open in the surveillance of the property powers. It poaches in them. It creates surprises in them. It can be where it is least expected. It is a guileful ruse. In short, a tactic is an art of the weak” (De Certeau, 1988 as cited in Droner, 2006, p.349) Certeau makes an important critical distinction between strategies and tactics in this battle of repression and expression. Strategies are used by small or large institutions and organizations to deal with some external entity. Tactics are defined as defensive and optimistic physical and psychological actions in more narrow spaces for individuals (De Certeau, 1984).

In the movie, the character Isak tries to keep himself away from the observer. He keeps his daily routines like smoking or drinking coffee in the kitchen at the first step. Following days, he changes his attitude and starts to cook upstairs to keep himself away from the observer. As a further step, he drills a small hole in the ceiling to watch him from the top because of his curiosity about what he records. He tries to stay away from his look and observation while taking advantage of the observer's limited movement in the home. Another tactic is the turning light off while both of them sitting in the kitchen not to let him observe while he is eating. Also, Isak starts to hang wet clothes in the middle of the kitchen to interrupt the connection and limit his point of view. So, Isak is not able to change or control a research project held in his space, but he applied small and destructive tactics to fight agonies against Folke and the program. Also, Isak's different daily activities in the kitchen like cutting Green (his neighbor) and bathing create a struggle for the observer. Further interactions help the development of a relationship between people who have not known each other before. They start to spend time together, so it becomes a process of developing a strong relationship. They have dinner, smoke pipe, and celebrate Isak's birthday. Then step-by-step, the relationship grew and got close. Isak lied to Folke's boss to keep his research safe. In other words, they lose the hierarchy and power relations in the research process and their friendship causes Folke to lose his job in the research program.

### **Conclusion**

Kitchens are part of houses where different ingredients can be mixed and cooked to have new forms. In the movie, kitchen is the center of storyline and it turns into a research field about a

story of the interesting relationship between two men, the story of post-war peoples, and the story of scientific endeavor in the movie *Kitchen Stories* (2003). Thus, the movie plot and cinematography open a new chapter for a concept to analysis of panoptic view and tactics in everyday life. The role of Folke could be considered an example of a panoptic view which represents the power supplied by system. The following steps of the storyline break the gaze and it becomes possible to see changes in power relations between Folke and Isak. Also, tactics in daily life become a way to fight against the system. Isak improves individual solutions to struggle with power in the kitchen. These practices also change their communication and help them interact with each other. Lastly, the movie emphasizes and criticizes the observational neutrality in research by showing us the irrepressible human tendency to communicate. The story shows both the panopticon and tactics in daily life that are essentials of surveillance and the uncertainty in modern societies.

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***Animation Pipeline Disruption:  
Study Case of Usage of Game Engine in Animation Student Project***

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**Abstract**

Technological developments lately have disrupted many things. One of the disruptions was the production of 3D animated short films. Beane (2012) has described production pipelines for 3D animation production. A lecturer and CG (Computer Graphic) artist in animation, we are used to hearing about the 9 phases in 3D production: research and development, modeling, rigging, layout, animation, VFX, lighting, and rendering. However, since 2015, a lot of game engine software has sprung up, making the animation process much easier and more independent for 3D Artists to create works, such as Unity, Unreal Engine, Cry Engine, and others. Based on this phenomenon, the author sees how agile students learn these processes and quickly adapt them to create their animation films. Therefore, the researcher will conduct a case study on three short films that use a game engine in their production pipeline and how it affects the conventional 3D production pipeline. The research aims to discover its influence and relevance to the traditional 3D pipeline.

Keywords: Animation Pipeline, Game Engine, Short Animation

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## Introduction

Initially, animation originated as a method of filmmaking that utilized the principle of persistence of vision, where moving images were created based on several still images arranged sequentially. (Max Hartmann, 2015). This research proved that to create a consistent image, humans have a frequency of 24 Hz in 1 second. This term is known as 24 frames per second. Based on this principle, forms of animation began to develop. One of the significant developments is digital technology. This means that animation production nowadays does not only use paper as a medium but also with computers and digital. In 2016, Unity Engine released Project Adam. (Efremov, 2023) This project was one of the most significant animation breakthroughs in 2016; in making it, the production team used a game engine - software used to create games and applications - to produce the visuals for the film. This can be done because of a feature called real-time rendering, which conventional 3D production software does not have.

Since then, the popularity of game engines for creating various forms of entertainment has become increasingly widespread. Apart from games and animation, the benefits of game engines have also penetrated the film industry. Currently, two large commercial game engines are often used in film and animation making: Unity and Unreal Engine. (program-ace.com, 2022). These two game engines even released features used for animators and filmmakers by creating the taglines Unity: 3D Animation Software for Film & Television and Unreal Engine: Film & Television. According to data released by Grand View Research, the market valuation of these two game engines is getting bigger and bigger. The market valuation for game engines in 2023 will be 2,688.8 billion dollars and will increase until 2030 with a prediction of reaching 8,261.6 billion dollars. Annual market growth will increase by around 17%. Indirectly, this figure shows that the use of game engines is increasing (Grand View Research, 2022).

From a production perspective, using game engines in production offers many benefits. The first benefit is that it is easy to get excellent visual results. The second advantage is that a real-time rendering feature makes the rendering process much shorter (cgicoffee.com, 2020). Cutting production time will have an impact on many things. One of them is fewer working days and more efficient use of electricity. The third advantage is that, until now, the two game engines have not been paid for up to a specific production level. Game engines can be freely downloaded and used by companies or individuals. This is understandable because, on the other hand, game engine companies also need data from users about the usability of their products. These benefits have also contributed to the industry's increasing popularity of game engines.

The use of game engines has also spread to students. Many students are starting to explore using game engines for various personal projects. Seeing this phenomenon, in this research, the author wants to find out about two important things; the first is that the author wants to find out about the utilization of game engines for various independent projects from students. Second, the author seeks to confirm whether the 3D animation creation pipeline is still relevant today. In this research process, the researcher did not intervene regarding when and how game engines should be used for animation production. The students who were observed learned to use game engines from various sources available on the internet, as well as mentoring from peers. The author hopes that with this research, the author can find patterns of using game engines for animation production that can be applied in classroom learning in the future.

## Research Method

In this research, the Researcher uses mixed methods, namely a collective case study followed by observation as a research method. The author will conduct a case study of 3 student works that use game engines. The game engine chosen by the four teams was Unreal Engine, released by Epic Games. Then, researchers will make observations for each group regarding the use of game engines. Each student has the freedom to determine their pipeline.

In this research, the author will observe how students adapt to the 3D production pipeline when using game engines as one of their productions. The animation production pipeline comprises 9 phases: Research and Development, modeling, texturing, rigging, layout, animation, Visual Effects, lighting, and rendering (Beane, 2012). This production pipeline is widely used by students and independents in making 3D animated films. Each phase has a crucial role in the creation of 3D animated films. In his book, Beane explains the processes that occur in the nine phases. Each phase has its schedule and difficulties. The following is a production workflow by Andy Beane.

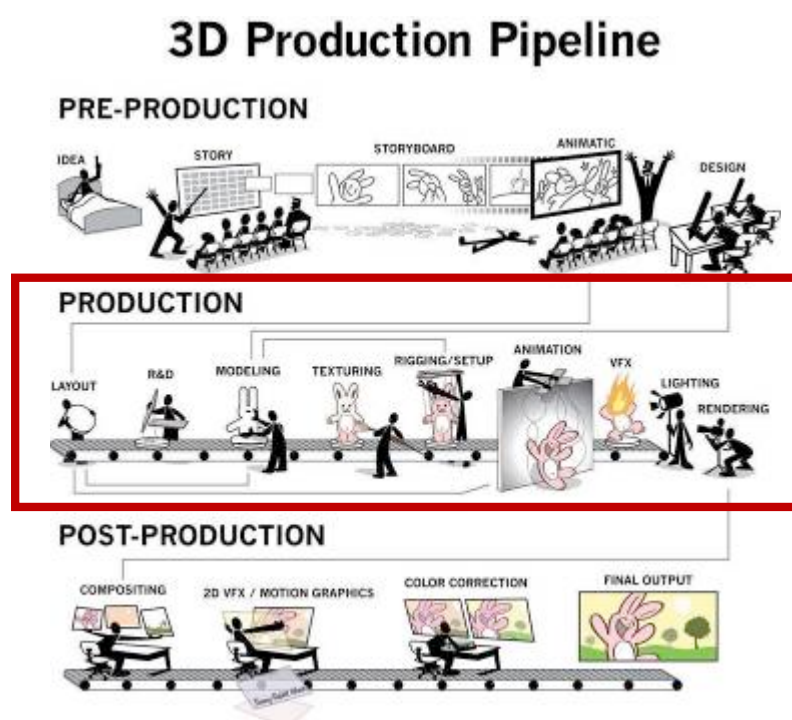


Figure 1: 3D Animation Production Pipeline by Andy Beane

In practice, several software is used to produce 3D animated films. For example, for 3D modeling work, there is Autodesk Maya, Zbrush, or Blender. Texture or digital painting work can also be done in Adobe Illustrator, Photoshop, or Substance software. However, when entering the rigging phase, the production workflow is generally reduced to just one software, such as Autodesk Maya or Blender, until it finishes the lighting and rendering phase.

## The Cases

The following are the three films used as data sources for the research.

## 1. Furwell

Furwell tells the story of a person who misses his deceased pet. Amid his longing, the person felt the spirit of his pet inviting him to play one last time. In the end, this incident brought peace to the person. (P.Y., 2023) Aaylen Archangela P. Y directed this film.



Figure 2: Title Screen Furwell

Furwell was created in 2023, starting from January to July. The technique used is a 3D animation technique with a non-photorealistic visual concept. This film, which is around 5 minutes long, emphasizes visuals like a painting with lots of soft shading and textures like brush strokes. In making this film, the production pipeline changed to the conventional 3D animation production workflow. The following is the treatment that occurred in the making of this film:

1. In this project, there are only eight work phases. This project has no VFX phase, as no VFX was done for the 3D level: research and development - modeling – texturing – rigging – layout – animation – lighting – rendering. For this team, the absence of VFX made this production much more straightforward. Visual effects, such as smoke and increasingly transparent pets, were carried out in the post-production phase using After Effects.
2. In this project, The Research and development phase oversees the entire production from the beginning of modeling to the end of rendering. This aims to function as a Research and Development technical supervisor for the move from Autodesk Maya to Unreal Engine.
3. Non-photorealistic visual style does not cause problems in production. This is because the texture provided has been prepared to be a non-photorealistic result during the texturing process, such as color selection and soft shading given to the environment.
4. In this creation, Unreal Engine is the game engine software. Unreal Engine contributed to the lighting and rendering stages. Other production parts are done with Maya software.

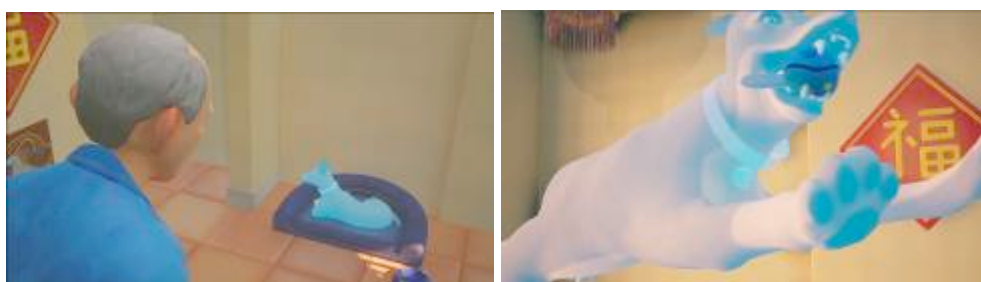


Figure 3: Screenshot from Furwell's cut scene



The use of Unreal Engine is in the lighting phase and rendering phase. In this process, it can be seen that the use of game engines is beneficial in the final production phase. This team uses a game engine to help the lighting and rendering process faster because they do not have much time. For more details, we can see the production flow of the Furwell Animation 3D film in the chart below.

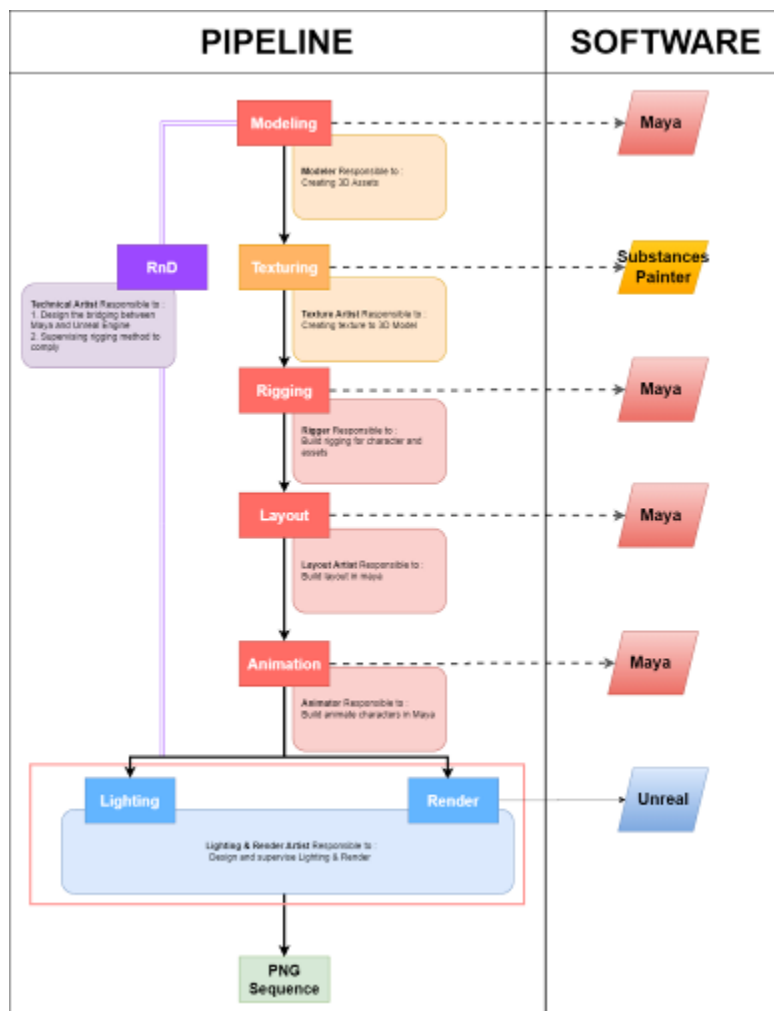


Figure 4: Furwell Production Pipeline

## 2. Swalty

Swalty is a story about the conflict between kitchen spices, namely Sugar and Salt, regarding who humans like most. In the end, they both realized that despite their differences in characteristics, in the end, they could not help but reconcile the situation and could produce good food. (Ritchie, 2023) This 3D Animation film, which is 4 minutes and 58 seconds long, was directed by Nyimas Fathiah Ritchie. This film was made to participate in the XVI Gemastik Competition. This national-scale (Indonesia) competition targets students in technology and informatics. In this competition, the student team was successfully selected to become finalists.



Figure 5: Title Screen Swalty

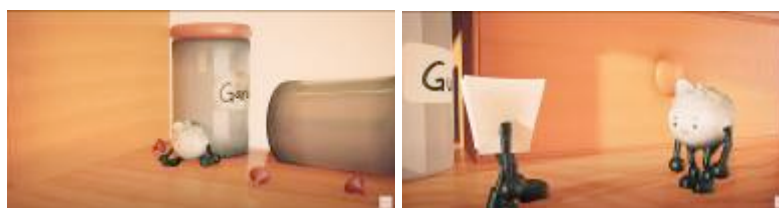


Figure 6: Screenshot from Swalty cut scene

The duration of making this film was concise, namely, two months of work from pre-production to the post-production process. The production team performed several production adjustment processes to get around the minimal time. The following are the steps taken:

1. The Production Team uses motion capture to assist the animation process. At the start of production, the assumption was that motion capture was expected to reduce animation time, which took quite a long time.
2. The Production Team uses a game engine in film production. The team will utilize the real-time rendering feature of Unreal Engine.
3. The software used in Swalty production is Autodesk Maya for modeling and rigging. The production team uses Substance Painter to create texture assets at the texturing stage. The team used Axis, motion capture software, and reprocessed in Maya at the animation stage. Layout, lighting, and rendering stages using Unreal.
4. Adjusting the sequence of production phases between the layout phase and the animation phase. In this Swalty production, the Production Team first carried out the animation process and then the layout phase. The animator focuses on capturing movements according to what has been depicted in the storyboard using motion capture, while the modeler and layout artist prepare the set to be immediately ready for use in Unreal Engine. When the animator successfully imports movements from motion capture into 3D characters, the results are immediately given to the layout artist for layout directly in Unreal Engine.

The following is a chart showing the production flow carried out.



Figure 7: Swalty Production Pipeline

### 3. Cybercock

Cybercock tells the story of the struggle of a fighting chicken from a village against a fighting chicken that has been well-trained. This cockfighting takes place in the future, where technology has been used to help improve the performance of fighting cocks. Darsan Marco Tanuardi directed this film. This film was released in 2020, 3 years before Swalty and Furwell (Tanuadi, 2020).



Figure 8: Cinematic Render Cybercock

The production team used the Unreal Engine game engine in the final stage to make this film. The production team chose Unreal Engine because it was hoped that Unreal Engine could cut the film production time. In the initial plans for this film, the film was planned to be around 10 minutes. The production team also used Unreal to create the visual effects in this film. The total time required to produce this short film is around six months.

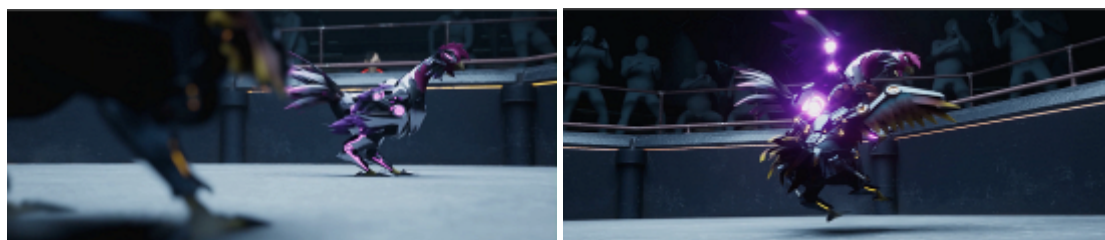


Figure 9: Screenshot from Cybercock cut scene

In general, the workflow used in making this film is similar to the two films above, Sewalty and Furwell. The software used is Autodesk Maya, starting from modeling to the animation phase. In making this film, the Production Team also used Unreal Engine to create the visual effects in the film. Examples of visual effects are sparks, explosions, and smoke. The research and development division is vital in overseeing the production process. Modeling and rigging were tested repeatedly because many aspects were tested in this film, such as rigging for the chicken character, shaders for the lights on the chicken's body, and visual effects created by collisions between objects in Unreal Engine.

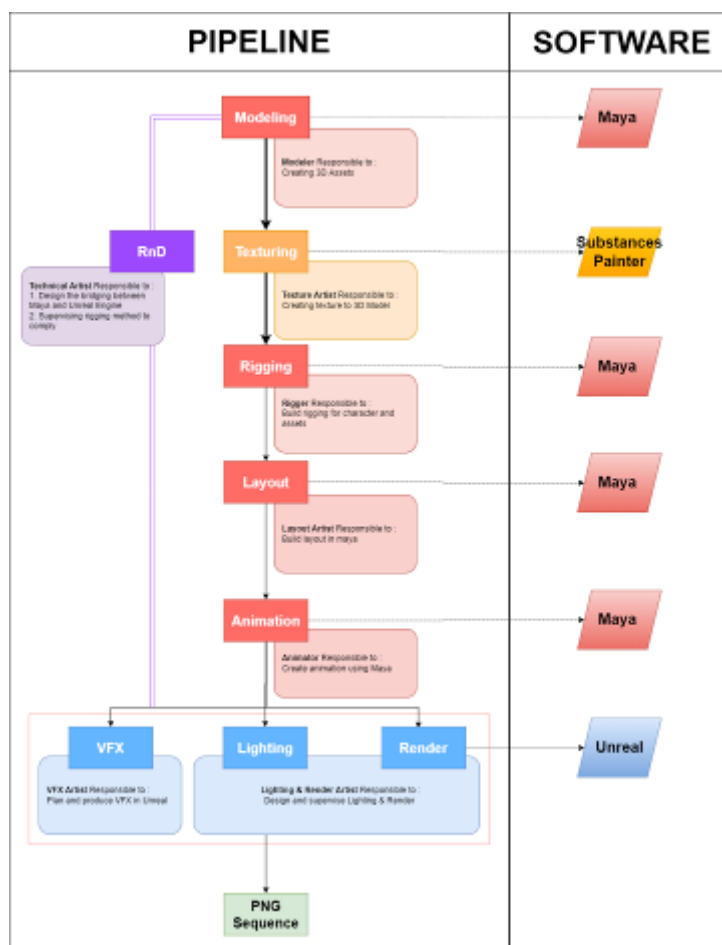


Figure 10: Cybercock Production Pipeline

## Findings

Based on the observations of the three projects, the author obtained several findings that can be considered for development, especially in animation education. These findings are:

1. Unreal Engine does offer much faster production speeds in terms of rendering calculations because of the real-time rendering feature.
2. Using the rendering settings in Unreal Engine is quite simple. This can make it easier for students to produce good renderings. However, this convenience will have a negative impact if students do not fully understand the rendering process in depth.
3. Using game engines also allows animators to create production workflows according to what is needed on a project.
4. Game Engine also makes production much more efficient because the required tool (computer) resources are less than conventional rendering methods. The use of electricity is more efficient compared to conventional rendering.
5. One of the weaknesses of rendering using a game engine is that several errors are sometimes not predicted at the start of production. Besides that, the solution to this problem is not necessarily in the forum or documentation on the official website.

## Conclusion

Based on observations made on three projects that use game engines, the author can conclude that game engine unitization is inevitable in the animation industry in the future. Based on the author's observations in this research, game engines have succeeded in disrupting the

animation industry. Many individuals, students, and professionals have tested game engines in independent projects. However, the presence of game engines in the animation industry has not been able to change the previously established 3D animation production flow. The impact will be felt in clustered 3D production phases (lighting, VFX, and rendering). The impact factor mainly includes efficiency and how each phase works. Until now, the presence of game engines cannot massively change the animation pipeline.

The advantage of the game engine is real-time rendering, which helps produce 3D animated films for individuals, especially students. The ease of access to the Unreal Engine has also led to the use of game engines in animation production. Even though it is not as stable as established 3D software like Maya, these two things attract people to continue exploring the various possibilities of game engines like Unreal Engine. This change will gradually have an impact on education. This phenomenon's biggest challenge and opportunity is how educational institutions can synchronize learning quickly. However, the potential for utilizing game engines in making 3D animated films has the opportunity to be a new wave in streamlining the animation pipeline in the future.

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***Textual Analysis of the Publicness in Exploring Indian Hero Films and Democratic Practice of Citizen Participation***

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**Abstract**

South Indian movies bring new public imagination with a variety of plots related to public issues. This study explores how citizens and heroes interact in political thrillers in Tollywood and Sandalwood movies with themes to solve election violence, corruptions, loan defaults and illegal expropriation of land. Textual analysis is conducted for six movies: Sarkaru Vaari Paata, Rangasthalam, K.G.F, K.G.F Chapter 2, Bharat Ane Nenu, and Maharshi. By defining six categories of heroes, this study focuses on public heroes and chaotic heroes by exploring how their backgrounds push them to connect people and turn the victims and truth-seekers to become citizens. The shaping and formation of citizens could become a beacon of hope in a disordered democratic society by uniting people to push for answers for issues. Heroes often resort to violence or utilize their expertise to tackle corrupt governments, local criminal forces, exploitative officials, or replace themselves in corrupt structures. However, this analysis focuses more on the following findings: South Indian movies narrate the potential for class mobility, depicting the relationship among the following people as slaves, lower-class citizens, citizens, and issue participants in political events. From the perspectives of commercial logic, citizen demands, and the significance of issues, the plots about the involvement of elites with people in promoting issue solution is highlighted. Entertainment effects, commercial logic, citizen demands, and issue visibility all have the potential to be addressed through movie-watching rituals. The possibility of enhancing publicness through the combination of popular culture, citizen resistance, and market elements is also discussed.

Keywords: South Indian Movies, Public Imagination, Hero Films, Democratic Practice

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## Introduction

India is rising with the potential to have more oriental impact on the world. This paper discusses publicness in exploring Indian Hero Films as popular culture. The democratic system requires a discursive framework to examine the public domain through the life world and, in the public sphere, to discuss the legitimacy of authoritative institutions, thereby forming a responsible political system. However, in the political process of many developing countries transitioning to developed nations, they often face challenges such as government corruption, the dominance of local warlords challenging the central authority, and the risk of citizens becoming victims of tyranny. In areas beyond the reach of government rule of law, people may fall prey to nefarious forces, gradually becoming modern slaves. The condition of modern slaves even descends to the point of a living hell, making it difficult to imagine. Despite India's rise and the long-standing promotion of a democratic system, it has been consistently criticized for its culture of corruption and has also become a popular theme in Indian films. This study explores how citizens and heroes interact in political thrillers in Tollywood and Sandalwood movies with themes to solve a variety of issues as symbols to explore democracy which depends not only on elections, traditional social or political elites but also how the public interact with the leadership of individual heroes or saviors to take back their power of sovereignty. How citizens and heroes interact in the public issues and themes related to election violence, corruptions, loan defaults, illegal expropriation of land, modern slaves as victims of local loan frauds, encroachment and embezzlement on private land, kidnapped mine workers in this study.

Tollywood and Sandalwood movies bring new public imagination with a variety of plots related to public issues. This study conducts textual analysis for six South India movies: Rangasthalam, K.G.F, K.G.F Chapter 2, Bharat Ane Nenu, Maharshi, Sarkaru Vaari Paata, Popularity of the six movies is analyzed in Table 1.

Table 1: Analysis of popularity of the six movies

Movie	Rank as the highest-grossing South Indian films Worldwide	Year	Gross ₹ Core	Language	Rank as the highest-grossing films in Indian movie market
Rangasthalam	Top 31	2018	210–215.70	Telugu	
K.G.F: Chapter 1	Top 21	2018	250	Kannada	
K.G.F: Chapter 2*	Top 3	2022	1,200–1,250	Kannada	Top 2
Bharat Ane Nenu	Top 37	2018	187.60–230	Telugu	
Maharshi**		2019	149.2	Telugu	
Sarkaru Vaari Paata	Top 25	2022	230	Telugu	

\* K.G.F: Chapter 2 is the highest-grossing Kannada film and the Top 4 India film for Worldwide gross collection

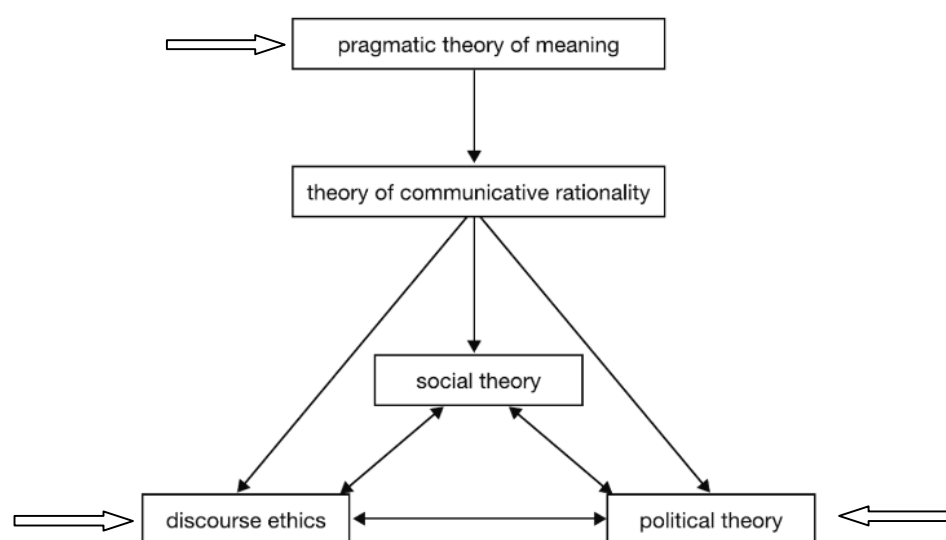
\*\* Films Box Office of Maharshi is considered as a hit.

## Heroes as Agents Search for Answers With the Public for Discourse Ethics, Moral Ethics and Truthfulness

This analysis focuses more on the following findings: how heroes narrate the potential for class mobility and depict the relationship among the following people as slaves, lower-class citizens, citizens, and issue participants in political events. From the perspectives of

commercial logic of popular culture, citizen demands, and the significance of issues, the plots about the involvement of heroes with people in promoting issue solution are highlighted. Entertainment effects, commercial logic, citizen demands, and issue visibility all have the potential to be addressed through movie-watching rituals. Characteristics of popular culture are related to concepts of people, popular, beyond class division, open markets, rules and transparency of market reports, business policy, public discourse. Therefore, it is not easy for consumers to have a local product which can have the genre as public heroes in political thrillers since political and social criticism is seen as taboos in many nations.

Finlayson (2005) describes connection of programs of Habermas for meaning, discourse ethics, communicative rationality with social and political theories (See Figure 1). In the first pragmatic theory of meanings, it explains how speech coordinate the actions of social agents by three kinds of validity claim – to truth, to rightness, and to truthfulness. Speech coordinates actions through validity claims to elicit rational consensus (p.166). Political theory discussed here focuses on whether officials are legitimate for their title. Three programs in Table one help analyze the six movies: political theory, pragmatic theory of meaning and discourse ethics. In these six movies, the reason to connect the public with heroes is not about people with disputed ideologies but about mobilization to change the corruption of political atmosphere. He explains the conception of ethical discourse from Habermas as “where pragmatic discourse takes one’s desired ends as given, and deliberates the best means to achieve them, ethical discourse evaluates those ends” (p.69). If we connect social theory with moral discourse, the purpose is to uncover the conditions under which modern moral agents can successfully answer moral questions for themselves (p.77).



**Figure 1: Connection of programs of Habermas for meaning, discourse ethics, communicative rationality with social and political theories**

Figure adapted from Finlayson, J. G. (2005). Habermas: A very short introduction. p.20, New York, NY: Oxford University Press. Arrows added by the author.

The discourse theory of morality is distinguished from the discourse theory of morality, two of which are included in the program of discourse ethics. The discourse theory of morality explains how moral order rests on the existence of demonstrably valid norms and the fact that most agents are disposed to adhere to them. What makes a norm valid is that it demonstrably embodies a universal interest. In contrast, ethical discourse concerns question of individual

happiness and the good of communities. Ethical discourse involves critical appropriation of traditions and the interpretation of values.

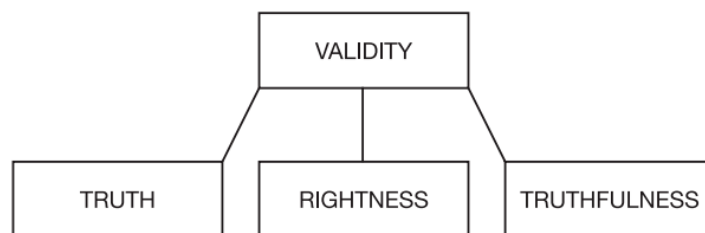


Figure 2 adapted from Finlayson, J. G. (2005). *Habermas: A very short introduction*. p.64, New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

**Figure 2: The three validity dimensions**

### **Nine Steps to Overcome Issues or People's Hardships for Heroes' Interaction With the Public in the Six Movie Context**

Analysis results in this study of organized pattern for heroes and the public to solve issues is described as follows:

First, heroes erupt extreme violent conflicts against corrupt officials or villains. Second, networks of criminal behaviors described; Third, truth found under a specific profession or background; Fourth, Heroes face obstacles but choose to stay with the public or slaves and pursue the truth and ideas to success; Fifth, heroes calling for the participation of the public to end their sufferings; Sixth: Truth is found. Seventh: Justice is served as extreme killings or punishments of officials, business tycoon or local gang leaders. Eighth: solutions of improvement: new leaders, elections, political or policy reform. Ninth: law and order is recovered and the people are prosperous and happier.

Classic American hero stories typically highlight both individualism and heroic character, emphasizing personal perseverance, courage, and sacrifice as core values in constructing American culture. Individualism and hero character are often interwoven in popular culture as movies. In a philosophical level, individualism encompasses hedonism, which emphasizes personal pleasure; humanism, which emphasizes personal dignity; and egoism, which underscores the primacy of personal interests; and existentialism, which emphasizes the creation of personal meaning in life (Leung, 2017). Individualistic behavior tends to be self-referential, measuring personal actions from internal standards, diverging from using others (external reference standard) as reference points by comparing ideas of "the personal and the collective; the public and the common (p.362)." On the political level, individualism signifies that the sole function of the government is to protect the freedom of each individual without infringing upon the freedom of others; applied in political life, it means safeguarding individuals' autonomy from interference by society and the state. He explains that the public represents a collective embodiment of the individualistic concept, while the common represents a synthesis of many individuals, aligning with the concept of the collective self. The characteristics of shared, owned, and common public interests lie in not compromising private interests but individualism still asserts independence and transcending private interests for the sake of comprehensive, collective benefits. The ultimate collective self surpasses specific groups, embodying a universal human conscience and serving as a synthesis of human sensibility and rationality. Therefore, heroes solve issues to save the public rather than wait for the help from government especially when the government itself is

the problem. Basically, heroes are usually senses of morality, ethics or humanitarian approaches to awaken the public when facing issues or themes usually related to major corruption and crime (See Table 2).

Table 2: Synopsis of the difference between ethical and moral discourse

	Ethics	Morality
Basic concept	good/bad right/wrong	just/unjust
Basic unit	values	norms
Basic question	What is good for me or for us?	What is just? What ought I to do, and why? What is right?
Validity	relative and conditional	absolute and unconditional
Aims	prudential	deontological
Type of theory	advice; judgement preference ranking	establishing valid norms; discovering duties

Table 2 adapted from Finlayson, J. G. (2005). *Habermas: A very short introduction*. p.94, New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

When public interests are compromised by government corruption and collusion with business, private interests may be disguised as public interests. Through the historical context, zeitgeist, and actions of public heroes, citizens are called upon to achieve the democratic practice of freedom and human rights. Leung (2017) explains the two sets of cultural genes in the West: Truth and Uniqueness; Humanity and Individuals. Individualism has explained above, concepts about how to practice the truth about pursuit of happiness through values in humanism to expose and solve citizens' miseries are the purposes of this study. Public heroes and chaotic heroes are examined about how their backgrounds push them to connect people and turn the victims to truth-seekers and overturn bad policy or clear bad officials and local villains. As the plots about heroes' struggles are never alone and never give up to reach the goal as to bring well-being for the public. The philosophy of leaders analyzed here bring not only "courage" but also "victory" to the public.

In the movie KGF Chapter 1, the protagonist's mother told him to be a successful leader by standing in front of followers not behind followers when facing war.

*If you gain courage because a thousand people are standing behind you, then you can only win a war. But if a thousand people get courage because you are standing in front of them, you can conquer the world. The breath of a wounded lion is far more terrifying than its roar !!!*

In the movie Maharshi, the protagonist said, "One who seeks victory is a man. One who spreads victory is a 'Maharshi'." He encourages people to be open to the definition of success as "There are no full stops in success. There are just commas. Success is not a destination. Success is a journey" and "If we step into the game with the fear of losing, we can never win."

In addition, the shaping and formation of citizens could become a beacon of hope in a disordered democratic society by uniting people to push for answers for issues. Heroes often resort to violence or utilize their expertise to tackle corrupt governments, local criminal forces, exploitative officials, or replace themselves in corrupt structures. Heroes' views about public reform projects are conducted in a harsh way but doable due to ethical and moral concerns which awaken the people.

Hero types, background of heroes, truth of issues, level of social capital, and results are analyzed and presented for six movies in Table 3. To what degree heroes connect people to which level of social capital are also specified which possibly empower the victims into truth-seekers and escape their public disasters. When examining roles of public heroes or the savior of slaves in these six movies, it is interesting to find out how a protagonist's will can be connected to the public to coordinate them to achieve their goals. Habermas' discourse ethics and meanings help explain how the public evaluate validity through dimensions of truth, rightness, and truthfulness.

Table 3: Analysis of hero types, background, issues, level of social capital for six movies

Movie	Hero types as leaders	Background of heroes	Truth of Issues	Level of social capital to connect people and results
Rangasthalam	Dual heroes with hidden status as pariah	Two brothers united as heroes as their villagers live in a remote and underdeveloped rural areas.	*Exploitation by local gangsters by manipulating elections, loan frauds for 30 years. *Discrimination against Dalits	Bridging: Connecting people in rural areas to state law makers and local administrative authority  Results: new leader of the village and the stop of the exploitation by gangster
K.G.F: Chapter 1	disputed, dark savior for slaves	Following his mother's last words, he transformed from a notorious gangster figure into a wealthy villain. Unexpectedly, he rescued a huge group of slaves and became revered as a god by them	The rule of laws and order as a country are disregarded. The underworld reigns supreme, and the people are reduced to slaves. The state fails to uphold justice, as government officials themselves become wrongdoers. Strangely, it is the wrongdoers who end up resolving the issue of slavery.	Linking: Worldwide connection for illegal gold business  Results: Slaves are liberated.

K.G.F: Chapter 2*	disputed, dark savior for slaves	Revered as a god by his followers with a villain image, the savior of modern slaves make his reputation to a new notorious national level	As the new Prime Minister ushers in reforms in India, how will the controversial liberator of slaves respond to the changes? Or who might be a better national reformer?	Linking: Worldwide connection for illegal gold business  Results: Slaves are liberated and life conditions are improved.
Bharat Ane Nenu	policy reformer as creative thinker and doer	Born as the son of murdered, top- one political leader, the hero witnesses corruption of his political party	As the new Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, the hero solved rigged elections, corruptions, murders, irresponsible mindsets as citizens	Bridging: Connecting people in rural areas to district headquarters of the state capital  Results: successful political reform.
Maharshi**	super genius, CEO of the biggest company worldwide	Born as the son of an ex-public official with financial profession but turned a loser after resisting to corrupt, the hero tries to save his friend's villages from government land expropriation.	Under the guise of false investment, government acquisition of land as a cover for the real theft of people's land	Linking: Connecting people in rural areas to the nation, state and the world  Results: Successful agriculture reform for the village and stop the acquisition of that village
Sarkaru Vaari Paata	Social justice warriors for scandals of collusions between officials and businessmen for bank loans	Born as the son of parents who made suicides to protest unfair and failed bank loan policy	Harsh bank loan policy on people in order to compensate huge bad debt for Collusion between government officials and business for fraudulent loans	Bridging: Connecting people to ask a state government to change the state policy of bank loan  Results: the tycoon finally paid back his bad debts to the state bank and people can have normal bank loan policy

### Heroes and the Public Search for Validity Claims as Truthfulness and Rightness

Finlayson explains that ethical discourse makes the values salient that are related to an individual's life history, tradition or cultural group to which that individual belongs; the concepts of good and of value bear upon a logical feature of ethical discourse. He explains that the value spheres take place in the wake of the transfer of epistemic and practical authority from traditions to validity, and three distinct kinds of validity are truth, rightness, and truthfulness and the three dimensions of validity truth, rightness, and truthfulness correlate in order with the three spheres of discourse: theoretical, moral, and aesthetic. From the approach of pragmatism, truthfulness is more related to ideas and belief to practice in

daily life and through which the world can be improved and enriched and for the purpose of moral norm is to hold across different and competing cultural traditions, values only hold within a particular tradition or cultural group. The public project in the six movies could be regarded as a symbol as the shaping and formation of citizens could become a beacon of hope in a disordered democratic society by uniting people to push for answers for issues. Although heroes often resort to violence or utilize their expertise to tackle corrupt governments, local criminal forces, exploitative officials, or replace themselves in corrupt structures.

With outstanding character in the face of adversity to achieve remarkable feats by overcoming difficulties and challenges, heroic character underscores resilience, bravery and selfless acts and a spirit of consideration for others. Super heroes dominate themes of movie markets worldwide. Capable of using violence as saviors is an ultimate requirement as one of most important characteristics for super heroes which are explored among main protagonists in these six movies.

### **After Extreme Violent Conflicts, Pragmatic Moral Discourse as a Social Mechanism of Conflict Resolution**

To explore how popularity is related to heroes, we can explore cultural spirit in the development of United States' history that esteems the public, hero and individualism may serve as a reference for this topic. In the 19th century, American society developed a set of values based on new Christian ethics, particularly concerning work. It formed a value system where morality and societal interactions shaped the cultural identity and key terms observed in that time period include citizenship, responsibility, democracy, work, glory, reputation, morality, demeanor, dignity, manliness, and more. He explains that the unique feature of the cultural products of that time was the hope for both individual development and the attainment of moral and social harmony (Teng, 1995, p.60). Religions are important cultural elements not only in the six Indian movies examined here but also common backgrounds for Indian movies. In the early 20th century, the notion of self-sacrifice in America had transformed into the idea of self-realization; as he explains that personality became a central aspect of American vocabulary, and standing out in morality, intelligence, physical prowess, and practicality became crucial. Writers advocated for self-fulfillment and self-expression, while cautioning against excessive selfishness and arrogance; Teng describes that the adaptation strategy focused on how to be likable, demonstrating a unique and outstanding performance of oneself. He explains that as sentiments evolved, individuals were required to possess charm and magnetism, meeting society's expectations of playing one's role effectively and this phenomenon not only could be applied to commercial activities but also extended to discussions about distinctive qualities and charismatic personalities in academic works. The key to success without over confidence is to lay in establishing a favorable impression in the minds of the public, with success hinging on the creation of loyal admirers. An individual's outstanding work or self-expression, without the support of the masses, is deemed "meaningless" (p. 63). As the perspectives of commercial logic, citizen demands, and the significance of issues, the plots about the involvement of elites with people in promoting issue solution is highlighted; in addition, entertainment effects, commercial logic, citizen demands, and issue visibility all have the potential to rituals of popular culture as the possibility of enhancing publicness through the combination of popular culture, citizen resistance, and market elements. The changes in the public and social-cultural foundations discussed here might offer a reference to explain how to observe these phenomena in India.



Combing the concepts between citizens and individualism with popular personality help answer the topic about exploring Indian hero films and democratic practice of citizen participation with the emphasis on public heroes, issues and we the people. Especially, when social atmosphere is related to conflicts or issues hard to overcome. Mangone (2020) cited Sorokin to identify how to produce and improve the love energy such as the increase of creative heroes of love as the great creators and thinkers and the heroes or apostles of love; the increase of creative heroes of truth and beauty, thinkers and creators in different fields of science and the arts of the highest value (p.162).

Scholars have debated about the idea that does ethics have a chance in a world of consumers? (Cheng, 2014). Smith (1999) explains that alternative conceptualization of ethics as a consumer value is more accommodating of a greater variety of consumption experiences and ethical concern as motivating factor. From the perspective of ethics as a consumer value, when the individual engages in an affirmative act of goodness, public hero films may promote one or more moral values for the well-being of others and for reasons of enlightened self-interest. Smith explains that Holbrook proposes a framework or typology, classifying consumer value by three dimensions: 1) extrinsic versus intrinsic, 2) self- versus other-oriented, and 3) active versus reactive. For example, esteem value as reactive value for it is derived from the reaction of others. In contrast, ethics such as justice, virtue, and morality is self-oriented, intrinsic, and reactive in the consumption experience.

Table 4: A typology of consumer value

		<b>Extrinsic</b>	<b>Intrinsic</b>
<b>Self-oriented</b>	Active	Efficiency (Output/Input; Convenience)	Play (Fun)
	Reactive	Excellence (Quality)	Aesthetics (Beauty)
<b>Other-oriented</b>	Active	Status (Success, Impression Management)	Ethics (Virtue, Justice, Morality)
	Reactive	Esteem (Reputation,	Spirituality (Faith, Ecstasy, Sacredness, Magic)

Table 4 adopted from "Ethics and the Typology of Customer Value", in Consumer Value: A Framework for Analysis and Research. P.149.

From perspective of pragmatism, William James combines truth with personal practice, viewing knowledge as an exploration of individual practice and he believes that something is true because it is useful, or it is useful because it is true (Yang, 2019). This approach helps explain the validity claim as truthfulness examined by problem-solving ideas presented and explored every day. Yang explains that through the process of cognition, James integrates epistemology as an exploration of personal practice, connecting truth with practice by emphasizing the meaning of behavior through life and practice and he asserts that the existence of tangible objects is not inherently true; instead, ideas and beliefs are related to truth. White indicates that these sentiments of James make it apparent that pragmatism is not so much about scientific truths as it is about ethical truths (2010). James emphasizes that true ideas are those that we can assimilate, validate, corroborate and verify and false ideas are those we cannot; he said that is the practical difference makes us have true ideas; therefore, is the meaning of truth, for it is all that truth is known-as (1928).

James emphasizes a heroic view of history, where great individuals play a crucial role in shaping historical events (Yang, 2019). He explains that building a social historical perspective from human issues and the practical activities of historical figures can underscore the role of individuals in creating history. This perspective focuses on explaining history from the standpoint of the subject, seeking the agency of the actor, and exploring how individuals contribute to the creation and construction of historical events (Yang, 2019). All protagonists presented in the six movies act as supermen physically and spiritually and that reflects the idea that the roles of individuals could possibly create history.

## **Conclusion**

From perspectives of cultural studies, truthfulness as ideas and belief proposed by protagonists are connected people suffering in their public daily life and gradually motivating the public to do ethic discourse and practice connected action for their pursuit of happiness in the six movies analyzed in this study. The possibility of enhancing publicness through the combination of popular culture, citizen resistance, and market elements are discussed. Values, visions, characters could connect people's action with heroes' calling. Values of followers are related to heroes' ideas to find the truth about the pursuit of happiness or ending the hardship of living hell. Wills are circulated through humanistic values as public heroes help maintain order and lead citizens to reform and win victory. Can ethics have a chance in a world of consumers? Maybe these movies can imply some answers.

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***The Prominence of Smart in Smart Tourism Experience:  
A Netnographic Examination of Online Reviews***

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**Abstract**

The purpose of this study is to investigate Jakarta's potential as a smart tourism city from the viewpoint of visitors, specifically from their post-trip experience through online reviews. The study uses a netnography approach and content analysis to examine online reviews. Data were collected based on Google Review from 25 attractions in Jakarta to understand how tourists perceive those aspects and assess the relevance of smart tourism city from tourists' perspectives. All the included reviews were coded using the software ATLAS.ti. The coding process involved three steps: identification of preliminary codes, categorization of code groups, and identification of other categories to develop key themes. Six major themes emerged from the data analysis: experience, facilities, attraction, environment, staff, and accessibility. These themes represent the attributes most frequently identified in the 2500 reviews of 25 attractions included in the study. The findings of this study are anticipated to advance the literature by offering empirical data to demonstrate the significance of smart tourism city traits, particularly in determining tourist experience.

Keywords: Smart Tourism Experience, Smart Tourism Cities, Online Reviews, Tourist Experiences, Jakarta

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## Introduction

Globalization and the development of digital technology have caused changes in the management of the public and private sectors to emphasize real time, connected transportation systems and the use of technology to compete and survive in a globalized world (Mursitama & Lee, 2018). In the last two decades, cities in the world have carried out digital transformation and managed cities with a Smart City approach. A smart city is defined as an urban area that uses electronic data collection sensors located in infrastructure, buildings, vehicles, institutions, and devices (IoT, Internet of Things) to provide real-time information about key city operating systems including energy, transportation, water supply, waste, waste, law enforcement, and information and communications. All censored data is integrated into an information and communications technology (ICT) platform that enables city managers and decision makers to optimize the efficiency, resilience of city operations and services by connecting and managing these systems remotely. The main goal of a smart city is to optimize city functions and encourage economic growth while improving the quality of life of citizens by using smart technology and data analysis. The level of intelligence of a city is usually determined by the availability of technology-based infrastructure, initiatives in environmental management and preservation, progressive city planning, and the ability of people to live and work in the city by utilizing the city's resources. Smart cities create systems that connect urban areas that provide many benefits for world citizens in terms of improving quality of life, ensuring sustainability, and utilizing resources efficiently (Moura & de Abreu e Silva, 2021).

Massive initiatives on smart cities all over the world, makes smart tourism development becomes part of urban and rural development. It is also considered as destination's panacea to gain competitiveness (Pranita, 2023). Digital technology-based smart tourism co-creates experience trough stakeholders' collaborations in the digital platform. Thus, smart tourism becomes a new buzzword to describe the increasing reliance of tourism destinations, their industries and their tourists on emerging forms of ICT that allow for huge amounts of data to be transformed into value propositions (Gretzel et al., 2015). In short, to make destinations smart, experience infostructure and tourist experience platform that improve interconnectivity and interoperability of tourism offerings, as well as digital transformation that directed to process reengineering and data analytics system are employed to optimize all stakeholders' value through service, products, procedures and business model innovation (Pranita et al., 2023).

As the industry is forced to adopt the new and massive smart technologies, somehow the distinctive aspects of tourism experience, unique resources and sense of place, as the most important source of competitive advantage and basis of differentiation, are overlooked (Pranita, 2023). This situation is even more significant in cities and urban areas that have positioned tourim as one of their development focus, the smart tourism cities, but are too busy to pursuit the adoption and transformation of smart technologies for their city governance and tourism value chain connectivity. Smart tourism cities according to Gretzel & Koo (2021) are cities that are able to respond more effectively and dynamically to the needs and desires of both residents and tourists. Optimizing the infrastructure, resources, and spaces shared in everyday life and tourism, and designing and operating the city to create a highly engaging living and playing field, so that the cities accountable to the public who live and work there, rather than focus on the technology alone (Gretzel, U. & Koo, 2021).

Jakarta is currently the capital city of Indonesia, that will soon release its attribute as capital city. While it has already become the barometer for its infrastructure in national level, however Jakarta must reposition and brand itself to be able to maintain and improve its position in global cities. After a long discussion and consideration, Jakarta has determined itself to become a global city that highlight tourism to ensure the attractiveness, convenience and livability of the city. Thus, smart tourism city concept will be relevant with the future development of Jakarta.

As resources to develop smart tourism city are limited, cities must prioritize and pilotage its development. It can start with the most valued tourist attractions and tourism sites by tourists. One of the easiest, ready to use, and available data is through the examination of online reviews to identify the readiness of tourism attraction in term of experience, facilities, attraction, environment, staff, and accessibility. Therefore, this study will focus on the investigation of Jakarta's potential as a smart tourism city from the viewpoint of visitors from their post-trip experience through online reviews. Based on the findings, Jakarta will be able to identify which attractions and tourism sites are ready for initial integrated smart tourism city development in order to strengthen its position in the global markets, while preparing the next development focus as a road map to a global level smart tourism city.

## Literature Review

As tourism industry changes, then massive utilization of digital technology becomes the determinant strategy and the source of competitiveness for either tourism organizations or destinations (Panyadee, 2023). Consequently, smart tourism destination is now become the target of destination mentioned that smart destination can be categorized and assessed by four dimensions: attractiveness, sustainability, accessibility and digitalization readiness (Namho Chung, Juyeon Ham & Chulmo Koo, 2021). Smart tourism destinations "ultimately aim to revolutionizing the creation of tourism experiences as well as tourism business and marketing of the destination (Boes et al., 2016).

Memorable experiences, in this study, refer to enjoyable, unforgettable experiences at smart tourism destinations that are remembered and recall positively (Jeong & Shin, 2019). the experience is built from the traveller's interaction with the destination and its elements (Muniz et al., 2021). An experience must be built to be memorable, therefore, it's reasonable to argue that only when their experiences are much better than their expectation, can they show positive sentiments in their online reviews (Wei et al., 2023). To create the experience of tourists, some factors in destination marketing and tourism management should be focused to manage, the tourists' satisfaction is largely related to their evaluation of attractions (Shaykh-Baygloo, 2021) supported with the accessibility to tourists 'spots is an indicator for tourists to revisit a destination (Mansouri & Ujang, 2016), display environment (Lv et al., 2022), facility service quality is an important service-related attribute linked to amenities, A dirty and poorly maintained room has a negative impact on facility service quality, Some recent studies have indicated that poor facility service quality leads to a negative experience (Sthapit et al., 2022) and for all the management of tourist attraction have to take a good customer engagement have varying effects on customer experience and identification, which in turn affects customer loyalty toward tourist destinations (Kaushal & Yadav, 2023). With the development of the internet and communication technologies, online information from social networks, opinion portals, and independent blogs especially user-generated content (UGC), has become one of the most important sources influencing consumer choice, As

electronic word of mouth, online reviews delivered by past customers contribute information relevant to an item's perceived value (Sun et al., 2023).

As ICT and digital technology becomes an imperative improvement focus, however, there is a tendency that smart tourism initiatives sometimes overlooked destination's unique resources and sense of place, as basic distinctive aspects of tourism experience and the source of competitive advantage (Pranita, 2023).

The current study employed netnography to analyze the internet reviews of post-purchase visitors at 25 attractions in Jakarta. Netnography is a qualitative research method that focuses on observing and analyzing the online behavior and data created by consumers or study participants in an online setting (Mkono, 2012). Netnography is a methodology that shares similarities with ethnography. However, instead of physically observing the subjects of the research, netnography relies on internet data, typically in the form of reviews from online forums and social networking sites that focus on travel and tourism experiences. For this research, we utilize Google to retrieve online reviews as our data source, as it is the predominant review platform among Indonesian residents. All the included reviews were coded using the software ATLAS.ti. The coding process involved three steps: identification of preliminary codes, categorization of code groups, and identification of other categories to develop key themes. Six major themes emerged from the data analysis: experience, facilities, attraction, environment, staff, and accessibility.

## **Conclusion**

Six major themes emerged from the data analysis: experience, facilities, attraction, environment, staff, and accessibility. These themes represent the attributes most frequently identified in the 2500 reviews of 25 attractions included in the study.

### ***Experience***

The first theme, the most frequently discussed amongst the reviews, was about the visitors' experience at the attractions. Most of the reviews are mainly related to the satisfaction that the visitors receive by visiting an attraction, which is in the form of positive feedback or recommendations regarding the visited attractions. The satisfaction of visitors' experience is sometimes also followed by their references to educational or learning experiences encountered during a visit and memorable experiences they get from their visits, which they had expressed through positive emotions such as feeling nostalgic, joy, love and excitement when visiting attractions.

### ***Facilities***

The second most frequently mentioned theme was the facilities. Most of the reviews in this theme focused on the quality of the attraction's facilities, explicitly referring to the description and assessment of facilities' condition and quality on cleanliness, comfort, spaciousness, maintenance and adequacy of facilities provided. Most reviews under this theme often include lengthy descriptions and negative sentiments about particular facilities.



### ***Attraction***

'Attraction' was the next most frequently identified theme, with reviews coded under this theme often including lengthy descriptions about four main aspects of an attraction, which are its cultural and historical values, attractiveness, activities and price. The first aspect regarding the attraction's cultural and historical values often comes with lengthy descriptive comments such as the background story of the attraction. Other reviews related to this theme also mentioned the attraction's appealing qualities, such as its uniqueness, diversity of collections or products, or its visually pleasant design or appearance. References to activities that the attraction offers, such as art activities, events, shopping, and leisure activities, also appeared often. The last one was regarding the description and assessment of the attraction's price, which is sometimes followed by whether the price is reasonable given the value of the experience that visitors receive.

### ***Environment***

This theme shows that the reviews indicated that the ambience of the surrounding environment and the level of the crowd at the attraction are important to determine their experience. Comments relating to weather were also included under this theme, as many visitors tended to evaluate their experience of the attraction based on the impacts of the weather.

### ***Staff***

The interaction with staff was the fifth theme that came up from our analysis. It discussed the friendliness, helpfulness, knowledge and attitudes of the attraction's staff. As tourism encounters more broadly, the influence of staff is pivotal to the overall satisfaction with the experience.

### ***Accessibility***

The last theme that frequently mentioned was the description and assessment of public transport access to the attraction as well as the attraction's location, whether it is strategic or not.

It is evident from the findings that none of the themes are related to the digital components of the attractions. While many reviewers discuss the components of the smart tourism city, these characteristics are only linked to the intrinsic values of the attraction, such as facilities, attractiveness, service, and (physical) accessibility. The findings also show that most reviews serve as a platform for visitors to reflect on their experiences at the attractions. It has the most significant influence on visitors' post-purchase reflections. This satisfaction is shown through their positive feedback and recommendations, sometimes followed by their statement on what components of the attraction determine their satisfaction. Most positive experience is also found regarding the attraction's capacity to provide visitors with learning and memorable experiences. To conclude, while the study's findings encompass part of the 'smart' experience, the experience is limited to the essential tourism components, such as attraction and accessibility, rather than the digitalization and sustainability aspects.

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*The Heart Dharma and Martial Arts of Five Hundred Arhats From an Analysis of  
Grand Master Hunyuan Chanshi's Calligraphy Paintings*

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**Abstract**

In the Arhat Belief that has prevailed since the Tang and Song Dynasties in China, people pray to the Arhats for peace, personal safety and health. Individuals are also able to achieve spiritual lift, good health and longevity through self-cultivation of mind and self-practice of the body. In martial arts, there is also a practice way of cultivating the mind and comprehending the rules of nature and the human body simultaneously, so as to achieve the harmony between the small universe of the human body and the external universe. On the other hand, religious art can convey the practitioner's perception and practice process with visible images. This study attempts to explore the enlightenment and morphology of Arhats' practice expressed in the images of the Venerable Arhats of a new religion in Taiwan. This article is based on the 500 calligraphy paintings of Arhats with the dragon-shaped font as research objects, which painted by Grand Master Hunyuan Chanshi who communed with the sacred during period of "Ritual of Praying for Safety in the Year of Renyin (2023)". By researching the literature and comparing the relationship between the calligraphy of Hunyuan Chanshi and the trend of mountains ranges where the Arhats practiced, this study found that the topography of these mountains, from the perspectives of I Ching and Feng Shui, show the heart dharma of the Arhats and the martial art practiced by the Arhats. Findings of this study intend to provide inspirations of wisdom, health and longevity for readers.

Keywords: Five Hundred Arhats' Calligraphy, I Ching, Feng Shui, Heart Dharma, Health-Preserving Fist Techniques, Practice

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## Introduction

Stated in Buddhist scriptures or ancient books, the Five Hundred Arhats live and practice cultivation in Kunlun Mountain or other high mountains (Figure 1). These statements are in the “Buddha Spoke the Xingqi Xing Jing” (Scroll 1, Translator: Kang Meng Xiang) and in the “Buddhist Records of The Western World” (Scroll 9, Magādhā, Translator: Xuan Zang).

“The so-called Kunlun Mountain is the center of Jambu-dīpa. The mountains are full of precious stones, and there are five hundred caves in the surrounding areas. The caves are all filled with gold, and five hundred Arhats often live in them. There is a big spring Anotatta, surrounded by mountains outside and flat ground inside the mountains, with the spring in it” (Buddha Spoke the Xingqi Xing Jing, Scroll 1; Translator: Kang Meng Xiang).

“Travel northeast for more than a hundred miles from Kukkutapāda-giri Mountain to Buddha-vana Mountain. The peaks and cliffs are lofty, the crags are hidden, and there are stone chambers among the rocks, where the Buddha once came and stopped.... Five hundred Arhats practiced here, and they were encountered or sighted”(Buddhist Records of The Western World, Scroll 9, Magādhā; Translator: Xuan Zang).



Figure 1: Xia, J.S, (n.d.). Arhat in Lingjinyun Mountain [Painting].

Retrieved from <https://xjsarts.com/project/%E7%BE%85%E6%BC%A2-15/>

Bodhidharma, the founder of Zen Buddhism, taught the resident clergy in Shao-lin Temple exercises and self-defense. These evolved into the famous Shao-lin style of martial arts (Keown, 2004). The practice of this martial art not only strengthens the body, but also helps with spiritual practice (Figure 2).



Figure 2: Matthews, J. (2019, May 2) *The Legend behind the Founder of Shaolin Kung Fu* [Painting].

Retrieved from <https://taekwondotimes.com/news/2019/05/the-legend-behind-the-founder-of-shaolin-kung-fu/>

### Main Object of Worship in Arhat Belief

Scholar Liu's (Liu, 2015) study shows that Arhat Belief began to develop in the late Tang Dynasty (618-907 A.D.) in China, and flourished in the Song Dynasty (960- 1279 A.D.) after going through the Five Dynasties (907-960 A.D.). Also, Li's (2009) research shows that the main object of worship in Arhat Belief is the carved or painted Arhat, not the relevant scriptures. Further, since the Five Hundred Arhats Hall was built by Qian Liu, King of Wuyue, during the Five Dynasties period, the Five Hundred Arhats formed a new belief system. The popularity of Arhat Belief is not only worshiped by emperors from the Five Dynasties to the Song Dynasty, but also related to the widespread circulation of various legends of Arhat miracles and the works of literati and portraits of painters (Liu, 2015).

In Buddhism, Arhat is the highest stage of realization achieved by the practice of holy monks, and holy monks are saints who protect the Buddha's Dharma and live in the world to provide services after the Buddha's nirvana (Liu, 2015). In particular, Arhat has escaped life and death and will no longer be reborn. Therefore, in the Song Dynasty when Arhat Belief flourished, people often made "Arhat offerings" on birthdays or made Arhat statues to pray for longer life (Liu, 2015).

Therefore, in the Arhat Belief, there is a wide range of things prayed to Arhat. Especially since the Five Dynasties, the combination of Arhat Belief and local beliefs made the connotations of the Arhat Belief more diverse. The Things to pray to Arhat include: personal safety and health, good weather for the country, calming down of foreign troubles, and peace in the world.

In the contemporary Buddhist offering photos (Figure 3) and Chinese Song Dynasty Arhat offering paintings (Figure 4), it can be observed that great similarities exist in scenes, rituals, and the details of setting offerings.



Figure 3: Zhang, Z.C. (2017, April 19). Monks gives Offerings. *Life News Agency* [Photograph]. Retrieved from <http://www.lnanews.com/news/102016>



Figure 4: Liu, S.F. (2015). The Arhat Cult an Rituals during the Song Dynasty: With an Analysis of the “Five Hundred Arhats Paintings” at Kyoto’s Daitokuji. *Bulletin of Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica*, 86 (4), 752. Retrieved from <https://www2.ihp.sinica.edu.tw/file/2832uXEKsUh.pdf>

### **Arhat Belief Embodies the Integration of Cultures**

The Arhat Belief was developed from the faith of holy monks and also combined with the local beliefs. As Joachim Wach, Gerardus van der Leeuw, Mircea Eliade, and Peter L. Berger respectively expressed, religion is always in dynamic development and in integrating (syncretism) with more diverse connotations to continue and to expand. This not only enriches the connotation of religion, but also has social functions. It is also a crucial factor in the process of human survival and growth, and also a common cultural phenomenon.

As the data of global religious diversity shown by Pew Research Center, Taiwan's society is a religiously pluralistic society (Figure 5). Therefore, the authors have the opportunity to observe this cultural phenomenon of Arhat Belief in Taiwan.



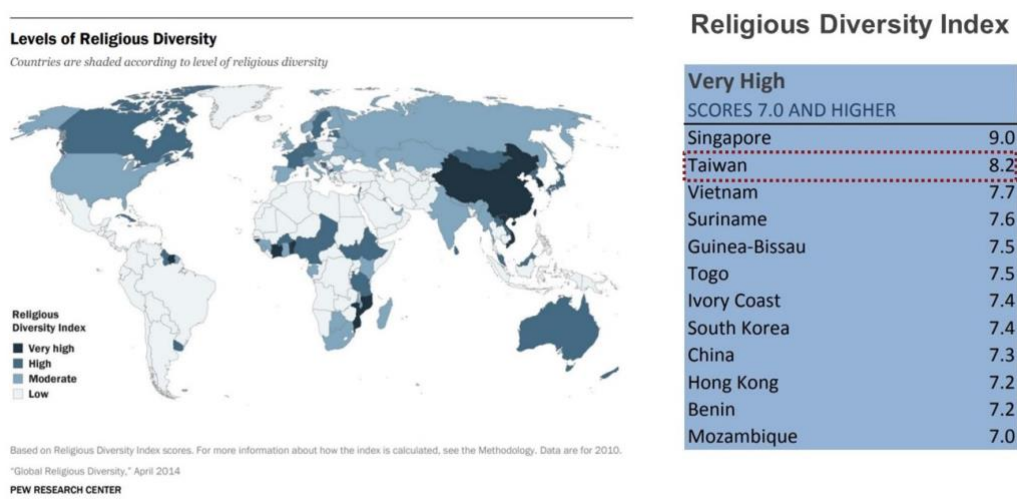


Figure 5: Pew Research Center. (2014, April 4). *Global Religious Diversity: Half of the Most Religiously Diverse Countries are in Asia-Pacific Region*, 6,15. Retrieved from <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2014/04/Religious-Diversity-full-report.pdf>

### Contemporary Calligraphy Art of Five Hundred Arhats

Taiwan's news religion Weixin Shengjiao held the “Ritual of Praying for Safety in the Year of Renyin (2023)”. During this ceremony, its founder, Grand Master Hunyuan Chanshi communed with the sacred and created 500 calligraphy paintings of Arhats with the dragon-shaped font. Each painting represents an image of an Arhat’s practice of the body, martial arts, and the mind (Figure 6).



Figure 6: Chang, C.M. & Hung Y.C (Producer). (2023). The special episode of the calligraphy paintings of “Five Hundred Arhats blessing Taiwan” (4). *Weixin Arts Avenue (86)* [Video]. Taichung, Taiwan. WXTV. Retrieved from [https://wxtv.com.tw/public/web/web0201/video\\_list/12532](https://wxtv.com.tw/public/web/web0201/video_list/12532)

Different from the more realistic methods used by painters of the Song Dynasty to create Arhat religious art (Figure 4), Grand Master Hunyuan Chanshi's "Five Hundred Arhats Calligraphy Paintings" (Figure 6) present an innovative style of abstract visual art. This difference prompted the authors to explore the Chinese cultural context and the meanings behind the Five Hundred Arhats Calligraphy Paintings.

## Methodology

This study attempts to explore the topography of these mountains from the perspective of the I Ching and Feng Shui through the literature discussion and the comparison of the relationship between Grand Master Hunyuan Chanshi's "Five Hundred Arhats Calligraphy Paintings" with the direction of the mountains where Arhats practice. From these perspectives, the morphology of the topography presents the spiritual practice of the Arhats and the fist techniques, which are the Arhats' enlightenment and perception of mountain trends and landscape shapes.

The authors analyzed the brushstroke trajectories of the calligraphy and found elements of forward rotation, counter rotation, 360-degree directional changes in space, a sense of void and solid, as well as a sense of endless change (Figure 7, Figure 8). These are major elements in I Ching Feng Shui Theory and in Marital Arts (Figure 9).



Figure 7: Chang, C.M. & Hung Y.C (Producer). (2023). The special episode of the calligraphy paintings of "Five Hundred Arhats blessing Taiwan" (4). *Weixin Arts Avenue (86)* [Video]. Taichung, Taiwan. WXTV. Retrieved from [https://wxtv.com.tw/public/web/web0201/video\\_list/12532](https://wxtv.com.tw/public/web/web0201/video_list/12532)



Figure 8: Chang, C.M. & Hung Y.C (Producer). (2023). The special episode of the calligraphy paintings of "Five Hundred Arhats blessing Taiwan" (8). *Weixin Arts Avenue (90)* [video]. Taichung, Taiwan. WXTV. Retrieved from [https://wxtv.com.tw/public/web/web0201/video\\_list/12536](https://wxtv.com.tw/public/web/web0201/video_list/12536)

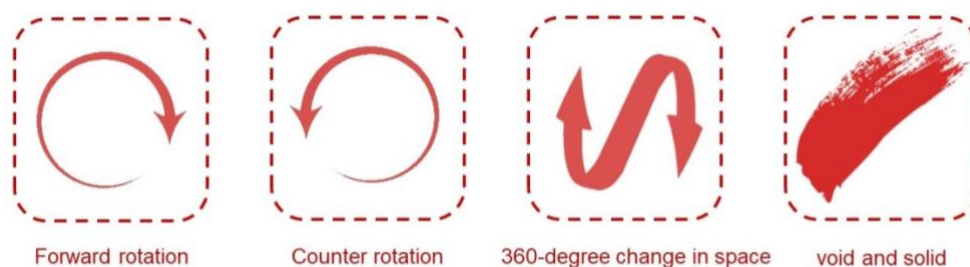


Figure 9: Analysis diagram of the brushstroke trajectories of Calligraphy Paintings

### Yin-Yang Theory

In Chinese Culture, the Ying and Yang Theory is a major concept. It reveals the view of the world has two sides: Ying and Yang (negative and positive), day and night, void and solid, and stillness and movement. These show the flow of Qi, the subtle movement of energy in the Universe. Yang is positive such as a vapor, rising up like heaven. Ying is negative such as condensation, going down like earth (Chen, 2009). Yang's left rotation (counter rotation) and Yin's right rotation (forward rotation) constitute the cycle of the rise and fall of Qi. This is the phenomenon of generation, transformation, and operation of Qi (Figure 10).

As Mou, Zong-San expressed: One thing is Tai-Chi or Tai-Xu, the divine body is round, and the two bodies are day and night, yin (negative) and yang (positive), void and solid, movement and stillness, etc., which belong to Qi (Chen, 2009). Also, as Ge mentioned, the concept of "Yin and Yang" in ancient China runs through everything in nature, society, and people. This is the so-called "things are born in two, and the two are matched" (Ge, 2007).

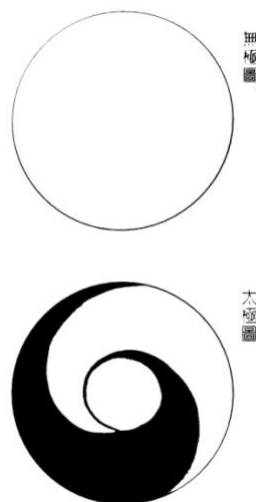


Figure 10: Retrieved from Chen, S. (2016).  
*The Illustrated Canon of Chen Style Taijiquan* (pp.45).  
 Taipei, Taiwan: Dan-Jann Publishing Co., Ltd.

### Heaven, Earth, and Man Theory

In addition, as Ge (2007) stated, in ancient China, there was the so-called theory of the three talents, which is called "heaven, earth, and man" (Figure 11). There are some very subtle correspondences and echoes among these three. There is wind in the sky and water in the ground, and people also have meridians, subtle channels of energy, and blood flow. It is said

that the earth, like humans, has “veins” through which vitality flows. These veins are called the "Dragon Veins” of the earth (Ge, 2007), (Figure 12).



Figure 11: Retrieved from Chen, S. (2016).  
*The Illustrated Canon of Chen Style Taijiquan* (pp.82).  
Taipei, Taiwan: Dan-Jann Publishing Co., Ltd.

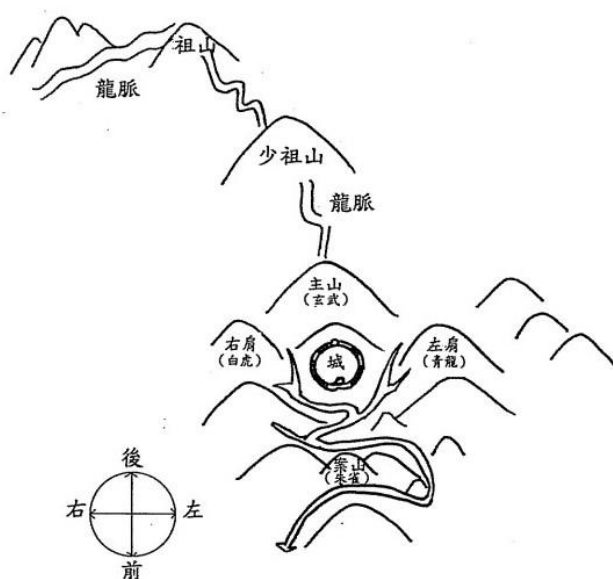


Figure 12: Retrieved from Ge, Z.G. (2007). *Imagine the Earth: From Feng Shui to Yin Yang and Five Elements. Religious Beliefs and Imagination, Lecture Series of Chinese Civilisation Centre* (pp. 41), City University of Hong Kong Press

### Dragon Vein Concept

Furthermore, Wang Zhu (997-1057 A.D.) of the Northern Song Dynasty and others were ordered by the emperor to compile the third volume of the "Dili Xinshu (New Book of Geography)" and included the official book "Gāngyuán jíxiōng tújiě (Good and Bad Hills and Plains Illustrations)", which imagined the peaks as manifestations of various dragon shapes (Yang, 2019, 149-150), (Figure 13).





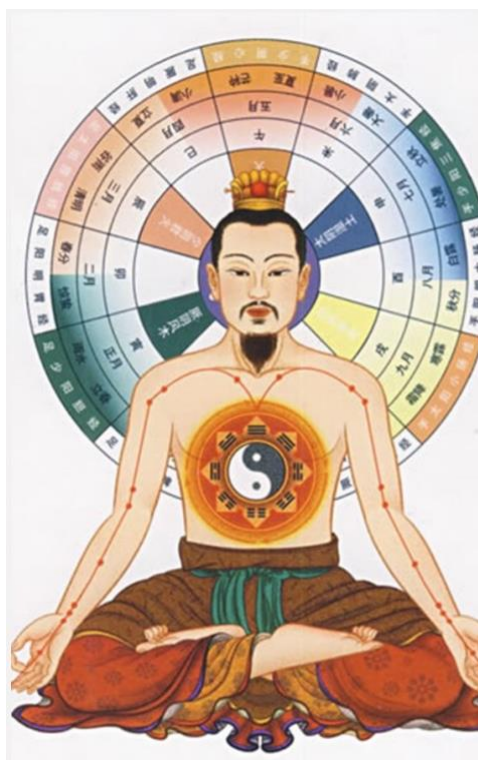


Figure 14: Retrieved from Chen, C.J. (2014). *Illustration of the Yellow Emperor's Internal Classics*. (pp.cover) Taiwan: Xin wen chuang wen hua shi ye you xian gong si

## Research Findings

From the above “Dragon Vein”, “Yin and Yang”, and “Heaven, Earth, and Man” concepts behind the cultural ideology, it can be comprehended that there are relations between the forms of the “Five Hundred Arhats Calligraphy Paintings” and the direction of the mountains.

It was also observed that Grand Master Hunyuan Chanshi has the following oral statement: “The places where the Five Hundred Arhats practice are on the mountains on the earth....They practice martial arts on the top of the mountains to strengthen their bodies” (Chang & Hung, 2023). This statement strongly relates to the cultural context of Feng Shui and prompts the authors to delve deeper into its connotations. This study focuses on a few paintings with a relatively small geographical scope.

Among the 500 calligraphy paintings of Arhats, 74 calligraphy paintings were mentioned by Grand Master Hanyuan Chanshi that Arhats lived and practiced in a specific smaller mountainous area. Currently, from these 74 pieces of calligraphy paintings, the authors found that the brushstroke trajectories of 9 calligraphy paintings have significant similarities with the actual trends of the mountain ranges (Figure 15).

Category	The number of "Five Hundred Arhats Calligraphy Paintings" published publicly	The number of calligraphy paintings with smaller area where Arhats practiced (as Grand Master Hunyuan Chanshi orally described)	This study compares the trends of the mountains in the places where Arhats practiced with the brushstroke trajectories of "Five Hundred Arhats Calligraphy Paintings"
Number	175	74	9

Figure 15: Table of current quantity obtained from calligraphy comparison

### Comparison of Each Calligraphy Painting With the Relative Mountain Trend

From the analysis and comparison of the calligraphy of Patajadeva Arhat, whom Grand Master Hanyuan Chanshi mentioned practices on Mount Everest, with the mountain range aerial photo, it found that the direction of the mountain highly coincides with the brushstroke trajectory (Figure 16).

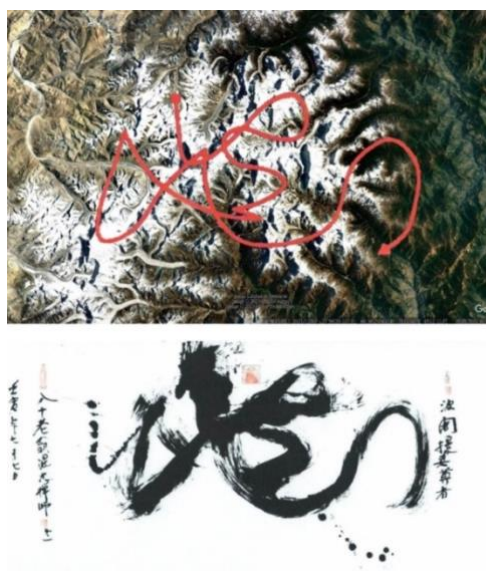


Figure 16: Patajadeva Arhat

Top: Google. (n.d.). [Google Earth Pro, Mount Everest].

Retrieved from <https://www.google.com/earth/>

Bottom: Chang, C.M. & Hung Y.C (Producer). (2023). The special episode of the calligraphy paintings of "Five Hundred Arhats blessing Taiwan" (7).

*Weixin Arts Avenue* (89) [Video]. Taichung, Taiwan. WXTV.

Retrieved from [https://wxtv.com.tw/public/web/web0201/video\\_list/12535](https://wxtv.com.tw/public/web/web0201/video_list/12535)

As for the calligraphy showing the dragon vein of Mount Alps where Puṇyayaśa Arhat practices, it demonstrates the concept of "Forward Rotation" and "Counter Rotation" in the Ying-Yang Theory (Figure 17).



Figure 17: Punyayaśa Arhat

Top: Google. (n.d.). [Google Earth Pro, Mount Alps].

Retrieved from <https://www.google.com/earth/>

Bottom: Chang, C.M. & Hung Y.C (Producer). (2023). The special episode of the calligraphy paintings of “Five Hundred Arhats blessing Taiwan” (8).

*Weixin Arts Avenue (90)* [Video]. Taichung, Taiwan. WXTV.

Retrieved from [https://wxtv.com.tw/public/web/web0201/video\\_list/12536](https://wxtv.com.tw/public/web/web0201/video_list/12536)

The calligraphy represents the dragon vein of Taihang mountain ranges in China, where Fuchénsanmei Arhat practices, and shows the flow of energy and Qi in the dragon veins of the mountain (Figure 18).

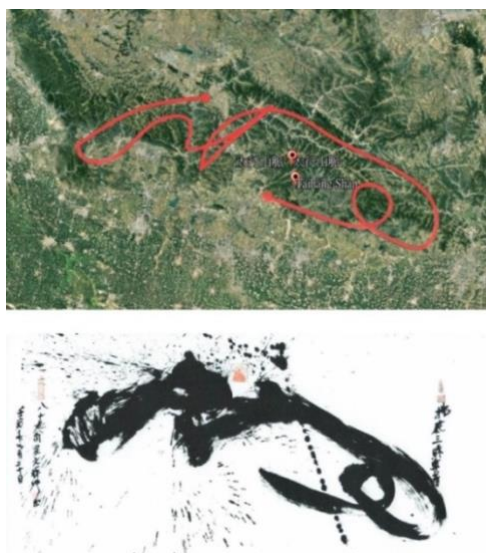


Figure 18: Fuchénsanmei Arhat

Top: Google. (n.d.). [Google Earth Pro, Taihang Shanmai, Wu'an City, Handan City, China].

Retrieved from <https://www.google.com/earth/>

Bottom: Chang, C.M. & Hung Y.C (Producer). (2023). The special episode of the calligraphy paintings of “Five Hundred Arhats blessing Taiwan” (14).

*Weixin Arts Avenue (102)* [Video]. Taichung, Taiwan. WXTV.

Retrieved from [https://wxtv.com.tw/public/web/web0201/video\\_list/12851](https://wxtv.com.tw/public/web/web0201/video_list/12851)



In addition, the calligraphy expresses the dragon vein of Dagang Mountain ranges in Taiwan, where Leide Arhat practices, and reflects the 360-degree directional changes in space (Figure 19).

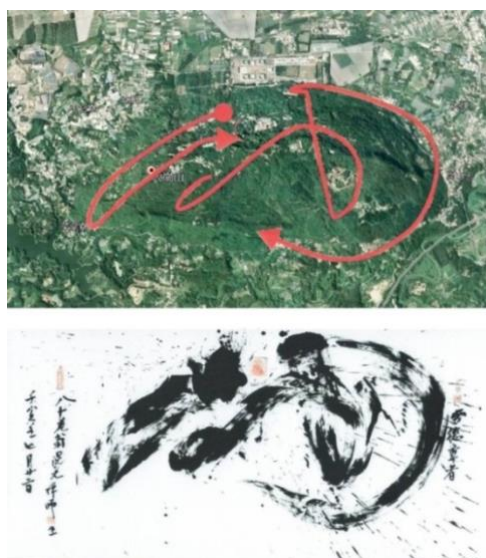


Figure 19: Leide Arhat

Top: Google. (n.d.).[Google Earth Pro, Dagang Mountain, Tianliao District, Kaohsiung]. Retrieved from <https://www.google.com/earth/>

Bottom: Chang, C.M. & Hung Y.C (Producer). (2023). The special episode of the calligraphy paintings of “Five Hundred Arhats blessing Taiwan” (16).

*Weixin Arts Avenue (106)* [Video]. Taichung, Taiwan. WXTV.

Retrieved from [https://wxtv.com.tw/public/web/web0201/video\\_list/12855](https://wxtv.com.tw/public/web/web0201/video_list/12855)

The calligraphy shows the dragon vein of Mount Kuno in Japan, where Zhìjī Arhat practices, and reveals the sense of endless life of I Ching (Figure 20).

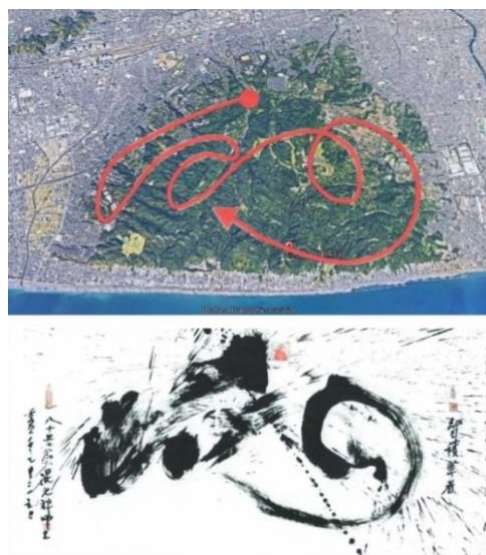


Figure 20: Zhijī Arhat

Top: Google. (n.d.). [Google Earth Pro, Mount Kuno].

Retrieved from <https://www.google.com/earth/>

Bottom: Chang, C.M. & Hung Y.C (Producer). (2023).

The special episode of the calligraphy paintings of “Five Hundred Arhats blessing Taiwan” (20). *Weixin Arts Avenue (111)* [Video]. Taichung, Taiwan. WXTV.

Retrieved from [https://wxtv.com.tw/public/web/web0201/video\\_list/12860](https://wxtv.com.tw/public/web/web0201/video_list/12860)

### The Comparison of Five Hundred Arhats Calligraphy Art and Fist Movement of Martial Arts

Our study found that Grand Master Hunyuan Chanshi's Five Hundred Arhats calligraphy's brushstroke trajectories (Figure 7 & Figure 8) have high similarities to fist movement of martial arts (Figure 21).

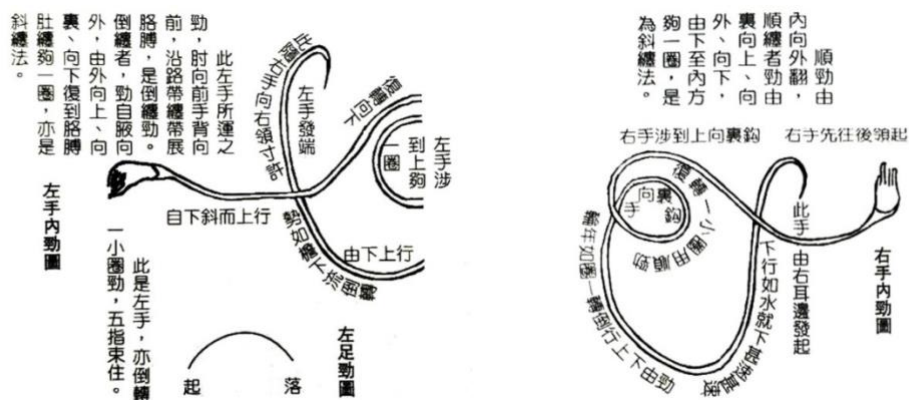


Figure 21: Retrieved from Chen, S. (2016). *The Illustrated Canon of Chen Style Taijiquan* (pp.234). Taipei, Taiwan: Dan-Jann Publishing Co., Ltd.

Through the comparisons, the authors discovered the characteristics of "Five Hundred Arhats Calligraphy Paintings" such as: forward rotation and counter rotation of Yin and Yang, void and solid concepts in the brushstroke trajectories, hardness and softness in the wielding of the pen, and the flow of energy. These attributes embody the key elements of martial arts. In addition, the concepts such as "void and solid ", "far and near", "up and down", "three-dimensional space", and "360-degree directional changes and norms" constituted by the "Five

"Hundred Arhats Calligraphy Paintings" are exactly the spatial structures presented in martial arts performances (Figure 22).



Figure 22: @user-ql6lx2ro5m. (Producer). (2021, November 15).  
 Animated dynamic ink Chinese style martial arts spirit [Video].  
 Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HfEBDc2UANK>

The ultimate commonalities shown in the "Five Hundred Arhats Calligraphy Paintings" and the martial arts are the beauty of dynamic balance and coordination. Moreover, martial arts build on people's observation and sight of nature, and people in harmony with nature. These also coincide with the Feng Shui principles contained in the "Five Hundred Arhats Calligraphy Paintings".

## Conclusion

From the above analysis and exploration, it can be found that Grand Master Hunyuan Chanshi's "Five Hundred Arhats Calligraphy Paintings" demonstrate the birth, transformation, and operation of "Qi". The forms of these paintings have the commonalities of "arc movement and rotation". It can sum up that these paintings are combinations of various "forward rotation" and "counter rotation". These characteristics echo the concept of Yin-Yang and the elements of martial arts.

The unique dragon-shaped font of "Five Hundred Arhats Calligraphy Paintings" cleverly reflects the concept that the earth has "dragon veins," which have vitality flowing through it. This leads to the idea that the calligraphy paintings contain the Zen meanings of the Yin-Yang, I Ching, and Feng Shui theories.

From the views of "achieving the harmony between the small universe of the human body and the external universe", "harmony of Yin and Yang", "back to nature", and "endless life" in Chinese culture, the "Five Hundred Arhats Calligraphy Paintings" convey cultural connotations of I Ching and Feng Shui, and it also reflects the significant elements of martial arts. This study aims to provide a framework for comprehending the Five Hundred Arhats' heart dharma and martial arts from the Chinese cultural connotations, especially from the perspectives of I Ching and Feng Shui.

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## ***Glitch Sounds Based on Image Manipulation***

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The Kyoto Conference on Arts, Media & Culture 2023  
Official Conference Proceedings

### **Abstract**

Glitch art is the art that makes use of image, video, and sound errors (glitches) intentionally generated by destroying digital data or physically manipulating electronic devices. Such glitch art is interesting in that it expresses unpredictable and accidental beauty. As part of our research into glitch sound creation methods and effects, we tried to create glitch sounds based on image manipulation. Specifically, glitches are generated in audio data using Photoshop image editing software. Audio data cannot normally even be loaded into image editing software, but by using RAW as the audio data format, we made this possible and applied audio processing such as copy, cut & paste, and gradation to the audio data to generate glitches. Our goal is to generate glitched sounds not by random methods but by sophisticated methods based on legitimate manipulations of images, which have different dimensions from those of audio. This research enables the user to enjoy the generation and appreciation of glitch sounds from the perspective of images.

Keywords: Glitch Sound, Image Processing, Photoshop

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## Introduction

Glitch art is the art that makes use of image, video, and sound errors (glitches) intentionally generated by destroying digital data or physically manipulating electronic devices. This type of glitch art has been produced along with the emergence of new media. It began with works that utilized glitches in television and video game consoles and gradually developed into a genre of music under the name of "glitch music. Glitch art, which expresses unpredictable and accidental beauty, has an appeal that cannot be found in the beauty of predestined harmony, and this is what attracts many people to it. Glitch art also dares to introduce imperfection into art, and in finding beauty in imperfection, it brings a different perspective from classical artworks that aim for perfect beauty, and it can be said that it expands the range of appreciation of art in general.

As part of our research into glitch sound creation methods and effects, we tried to create glitch sounds based on image manipulation. Specifically, glitches were generated in audio data using the Photoshop image editing software. Audio data cannot normally even be loaded into image editing software, but we made this possible by using RAW as the audio data format and then applying image processing such as copy, cut & paste, and gradation to the audio data to generate the glitching. Our goal is to generate glitched sounds not by random methods but by sophisticated methods based on legitimate manipulations of images, which have different dimensions from those of audio. This research enables glitch sounds to be generated and appreciated from the perspective of images.

The paper is organized as follows: Section 2 describes the background of this study on glitch art. Section 3 describes the goals and basic approach of this study. Section 4 describes the experiments conducted in this study and a discussion of the results, and Section 5 describes related studies. Finally, Section 6 concludes the paper.

## Research Background

### Glitch Art

A glitch is an error (defect) in images, video, sound, etc., caused by destroying digital data or malfunctioning TVs, game consoles, etc. Such accidental beauty brought about by glitches has a charm that cannot be found in the beauty of predestined harmony. The accidental beauty brought about by such glitches has a charm that cannot be found in the beauty of predestined harmony, and pioneers' attempts to utilize it in art have come to be accepted as glitch art over the years. The first pioneering work of glitch art is Nam June Paik's "Magnet TV. This was a work in which the distortion of the TV image was changed by moving a powerful magnet placed on top of the TV (Kellein et al., 1993). Jamie Fenton and Raul Zaritsky's 1978 video work "Digital TV Dinner" is a recorded video of glitches generated by manipulating a Bally Astrocade video game machine from Bally Manufacturing (Betancourt, 2015).

Glitch art is now not limited to works that utilize glitches in TV and video game consoles, but has developed into a genre of music under the name of glitch music. The German electronic music group OVAL (Popp, 2022) is cited as a pioneer in the field of glitch music, and a music festival under the name GLITCH (Festival, 2014) has been held annually since 2014.



Theoretical research on glitch art has also been conducted, with Rosa Menkman proposing to use information theory to understand glitch art as a specific genre of contemporary art (Menkman, 2011). In 2010, Rosa Menkman et al. organized an international conference on glitching, GLI.T/CH (McCormack, 2010), and research on glitch art has been presented at the international conference evomusart, held annually since 2011 (Machado et al., 2013).

### **The Methods of Glitch Art**

Various tutorials on glitch art production are available online (Temkin, 2009; Stearns, 2013). Michael Betancourt categorizes the techniques used to create glitch art as follows (Betancourt, 2016):

- Data Manipulation: Alter the data in a file to cause glitches
- Misalignment: Open a file in another application
- Hardware Failure: Cause a machine to malfunction and produce sound or video
- Misregistration: Physical noise in analog media
- Distortion: Create physical distortion with magnets, etc.

Note that these techniques do not always work. For example, when data is destroyed by data manipulation, glitches may or may not occur depending on the result. Such coincidences are undoubtedly a factor in the appeal of glitch art, but glitches in glitch art are necessarily limited to those that can be recognized by human sensory organs such as sight and sound.

### **Research Goals and Basic Approaches**

#### **Research Goals**

In this study, our goals are as follows:

- Creation of glitch sounds using elegant techniques
- To express art through the cross-disciplinary manipulation of sound and color (light)

We seek not only to create glitches, but also to pursue the beauty of the method itself. Even if we can see accidental beauty in a method that cannot be reproduced, there is no beauty in a method that cannot be created again as a technique. On the other hand, a method that produces the same result no matter when, where, or by whom would deny the beauty of chance, which is the charm of glitch art.

Elegant methods in this study mean a unified method based on a certain form. This is in no way contradictory to the five techniques listed in the previous section. For example, taking data manipulation techniques as an example is achieved by systematically organizing and unifying data manipulation methods. Specifically, rules are defined in advance regarding which parts of data are to be destroyed, how much, etc. However, not all of these rules are completely defined. In this way, the chance nature of glitch art is preserved.

We have also worked on the colorization of sound (Amano, 2018). Drawing on this knowledge, this study aims to create a transversal artistic expression that spans sound and color. Sound and color have something in common. Specifically, both have the property of being waves. Color is a reflection of light, and light and sound are sinusoidal waves with different frequencies. Waves in sound represent timbre, and waves in light represent color. In other words, both can be represented and processed as waveform data. Sounds that cannot be

recognized by the human auditory sense can be visually recognized if they are represented as waveform data.

## Basic Approaches

The basic approach of this study is as follows:

- Glitch technique: A combination of misalignment and data manipulation
- Preprocessing: Transformation of audio data (preparation for misalignment)
- Image processing: Application of image processing operations to the audio data
- Confirmation: Confirmation of glitching effects using audio playback software

First, the glitching technique uses a combination of misalignment and data manipulation. Specifically, audio data is loaded into image processing software and data manipulation is performed. To do this, the audio data must first be converted. This is because audio data usually cannot even be loaded into image editing software. There are several audio data formats, including MP3 (MPEG-1 Audio Layer-3) (Jonathan, 2012), WAV (RIFF waveform Audio Format) (IBM Corp. et al., 1991), and AIFF (Audio Interchange File Format) (Apple Computer Inc, 1989). Audio data in these formats are structured according to a specific data structure and cannot be read by image editing software in their original state. Therefore, the format of these images is converted to RAW (Raw Image Format) (Fraser, 2004) format (Figure 1). RAW format data refers to unprocessed image data from a digital camera, etc., and RAW images are the "raw" image data from which images such as JPEG are generated. This kind of RAW format data is a format that does not strongly depend on specific applications.

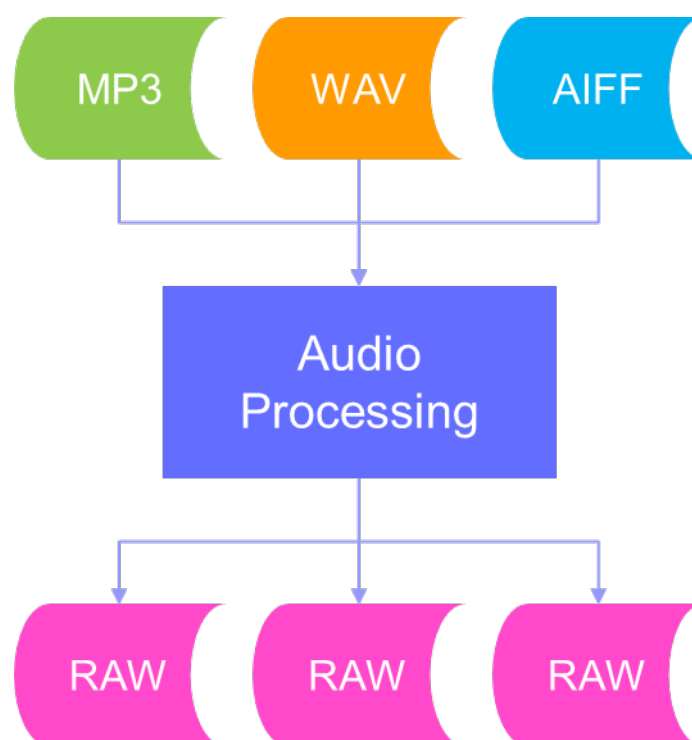


Figure 1: Pre-process: audio file conversion.

Next, the audio data converted to RAW format is loaded into image editing software for data manipulation. Data manipulation here refers to various basic operations and effect operations on image data, such as the following:

- Basic operations: copy, cut, cut & paste, enlargement, reduction, rotation, etc.
- Effect operations: black-and-white conversion, blurring, filtering, gradation, etc.

When audio data converted to RAW format is loaded into image editing software, it is still audio data. At this point, misalignment has already occurred, but if no operation is performed, the original data will remain unchanged and no glitching can be expected to occur.

Therefore, the image processing operations provided by image editing software are applied to the audio data (Figure 2). In other words, applying image processing to audio data that is not image data destroys the audio data and causes glitches. Image editing software cannot recognize whether the loaded data is audio data or image data, but only applies the specified image processing to the data. Although applying color manipulations to audio data is essentially meaningless, it is intended to destroy the audio data and cause glitches to occur. In this study, we consider it an elegant method to treat audio data as if it were image data. This is because image processing operations in image editing software are not random processes, but typical processes for image data that have been refined by many people over many years.

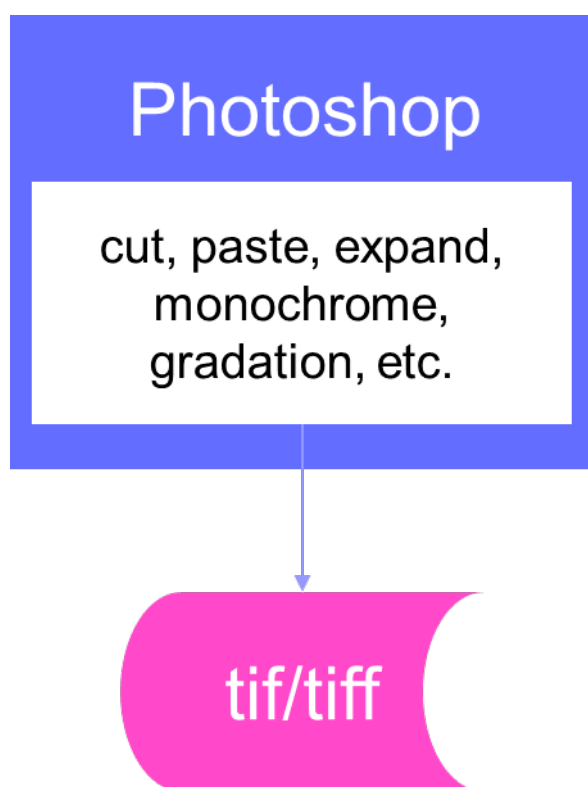


Figure 2: Image processing.

After the image processing operation, the TIFF (Tag Image File Format) (Adobe Developers Association, 1992) format should be specified when saving the file. The extension of a TIFF file is tif or tiff. After the above process, check the occurrence and effect of glitches using audio playback software. This is because image editing software is not an audio playback software and does not have such a function, so it is not possible to check for glitches.

## Experiments and Discussions

In this study, experiments were conducted to create actual glitch sounds based on the approach described in the previous section. The following is a step-by-step description of the experiments and results.

### Pre-process

First, the audio data used in this study was Waltz of the Flowers from Tchaikovsky's The Nutcracker. The following is the waveform data displayed when the audio data is loaded into the audio editing software Audacity (John et al., 2012), (Figure 3).

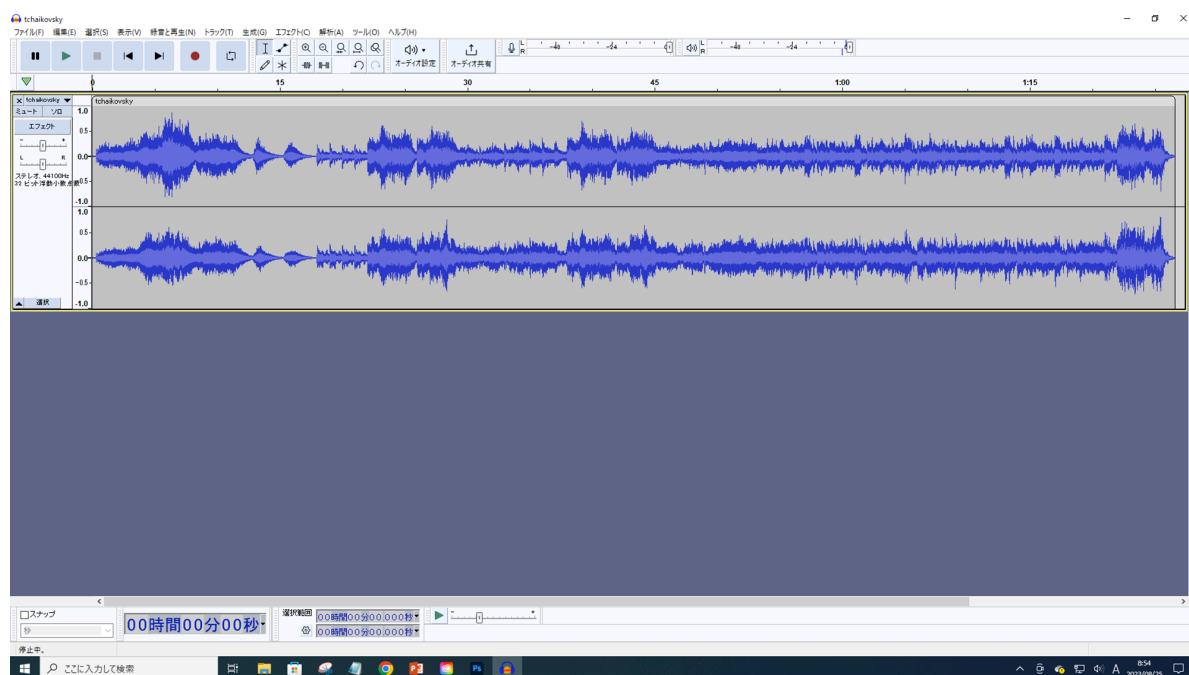


Figure 3: Original audio data.

Because this audio data was in MP3 format, it was saved (exported) as a new RAW format file in Audacity. The following options are specified:

- File extension: .raw
- File type: Other uncompressed file
- Header: RAW (header-less)
- Encoding: U-Law

Next, the audio data converted to RAW format is loaded into image editing software. In this study, Photoshop (Laskevitch, 2023) was used as the image editing software.

Figure 4 shows the image display when the original audio data (Figure 3) is loaded into Photoshop. The image is now ready to be processed.

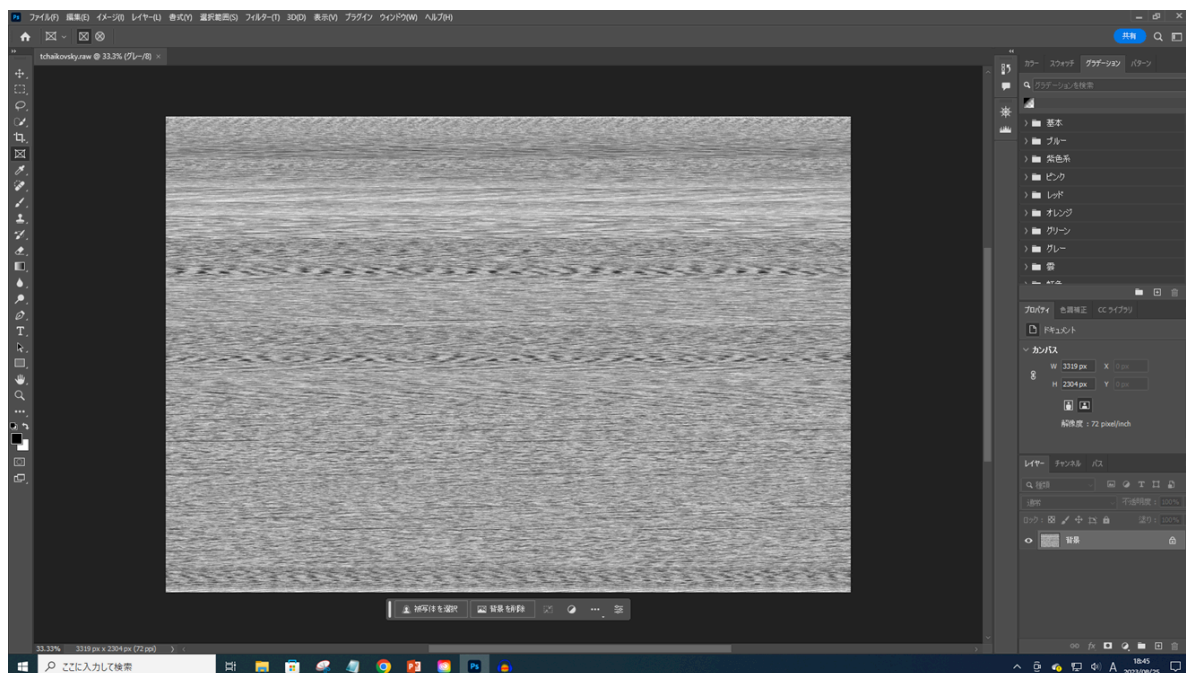


Figure 4: Image of Original Audio Data.

## Image Processing

In this study, we experimented with the application of some image processing techniques, but for reasons of space limitation, we will limit our discussion to the following four typical processes:

- Cut: Cutting out image data
- Cut & Paste: Reduction and pasting of cropped image data
- Gradation: Gradual change of color tones

### *Cut Operation*

Cutting is a basic image processing operation to cut out unnecessary areas. In this study, a rectangular cut operation was intentionally performed on the above image (Figure 4) from the center of the image (Figure 5). Although this operation does not make sense for editing audio data, it is a basic image-processing operation. We verified what kind of glitchy sounds are generated by applying this kind of image processing to audio data.

To check the glitch sound in Figure 5, it is first necessary to save the image data of Figure 5. As mentioned above, TIFF must be specified as the saving format. The following options are required for the TIFF format:

- Image compression: None
- Pixel order: Interleaved
- Byte order: IBM PC
- Layer compression: RLE

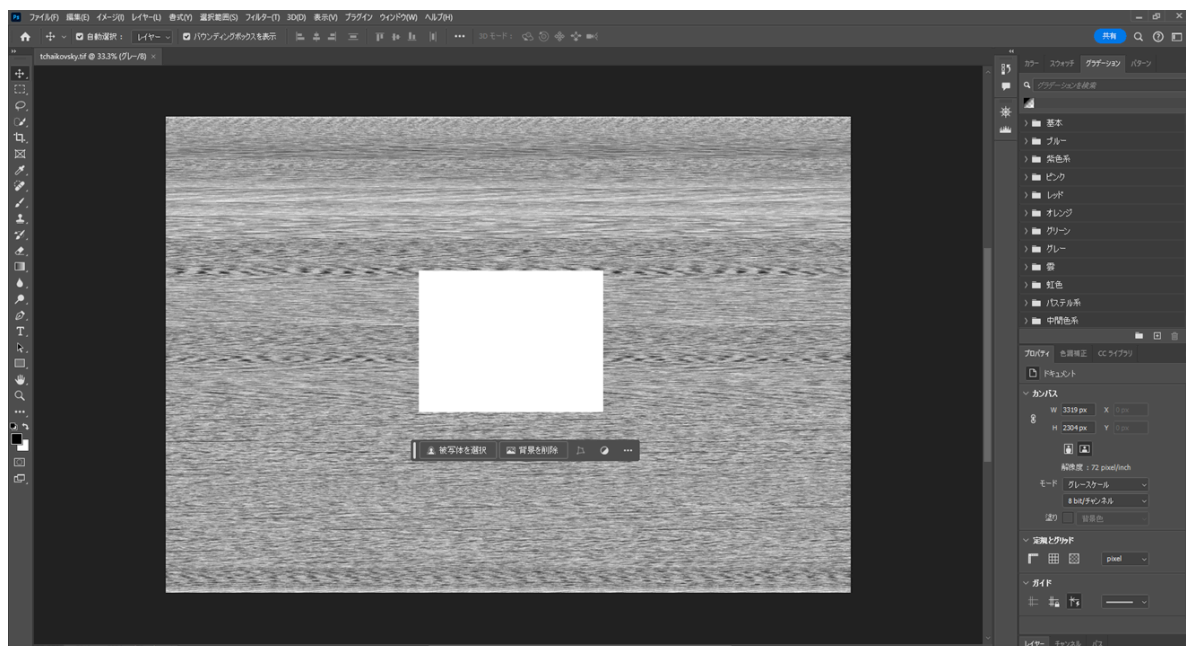


Figure 5: Image Date applied Cut Operation.

The audio data saved in TIFF format as described above is loaded again into Audacity for playback. This data is originally audio data, but because it has been edited in Photoshop, it cannot be loaded into Audacity like normal audio data. Therefore, select "Import" from the File menu and specify "Import Raw Data" when importing to Audacity. In addition, specify the following options:

- Encoding: U-Law
- Byte order: Big Endian
- Channel: 1 channel

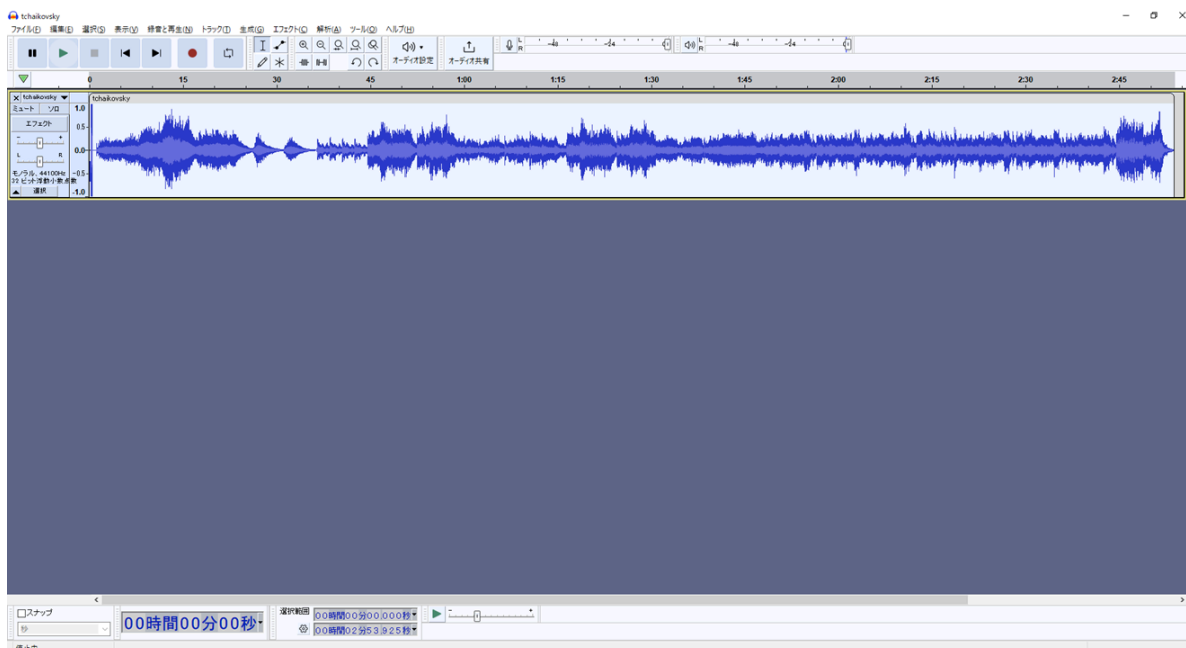


Figure 6: Glitch sound based on the cut operation.

Figure 6 shows the waveform data when the rectangle was cropped from audio data in Photoshop is loaded into Audacity. At first glance, there does not appear to be much

difference from the original audio data (Figure 3), except that the stereo is now mono. However, when this audio data is played back, the location of the glitch becomes aurally apparent. The occurrence of these glitched sounds is localized, reflecting the fact that the cut operation was localized.

### *Cut & Paste Operation*

Cut-and-paste is another basic image-processing operation that cuts a part of an image and pastes it. In this study, the data in Figure 5 was intentionally cut from the center of the image, and the cut rectangle was scaled down and pasted to the cut area (Figure 8). This is also a basic image processing operation, although it does not make sense in terms of editing audio data. We verified what kind of glitchy sounds are generated by applying this kind of image processing to audio data.

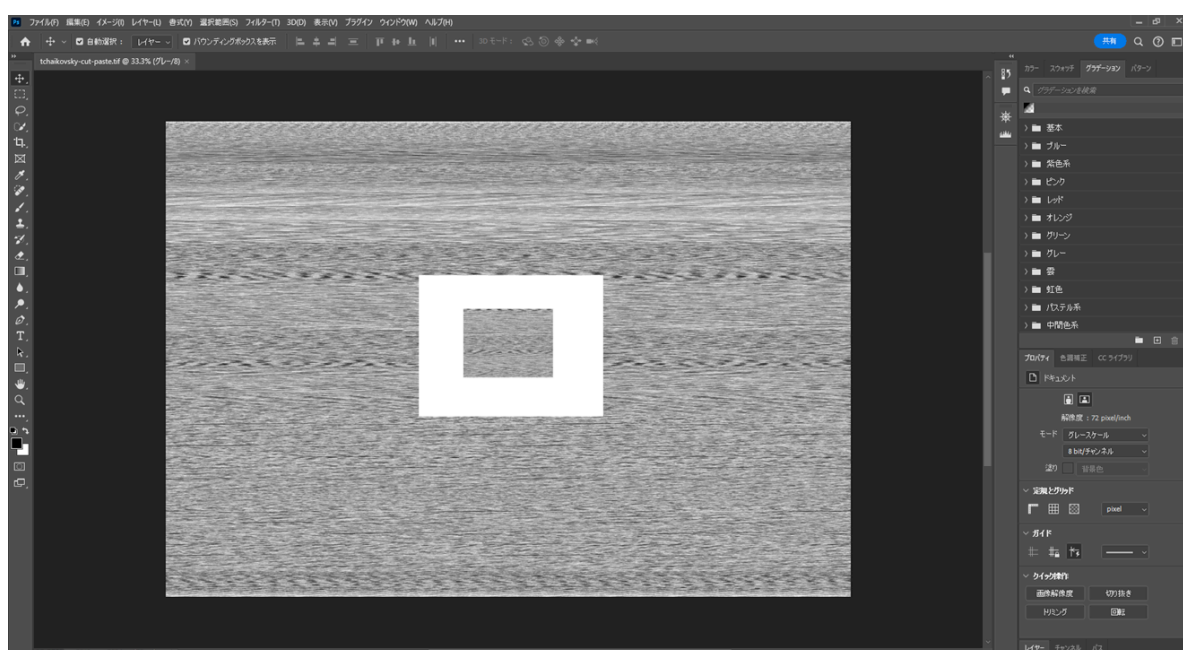


Figure 7: Image data applied cut & paste operation.

The procedure for checking the glitch sound in Figure 7 has been described above and is omitted here. Figure 8 shows the waveform data when audio data that was cut and pasted in Photoshop was loaded into Audacity.

From a visual standpoint, the waveform data in Figure 8 differs significantly from both the original audio data waveform (Figure 3) and the waveform (Figure 6) of the audio data with the cut operation. First, the two parallel tracks are now in series, and the waveform of the cut-only audio data also differs significantly in some areas. When this audio data is played back, glitchy noise-like sounds are present only in some parts, which is the same as in the case of the cut audio data, but the glitchy sounds are clearly different. This is thought to be because the effect of the paste is expressed as glitches.



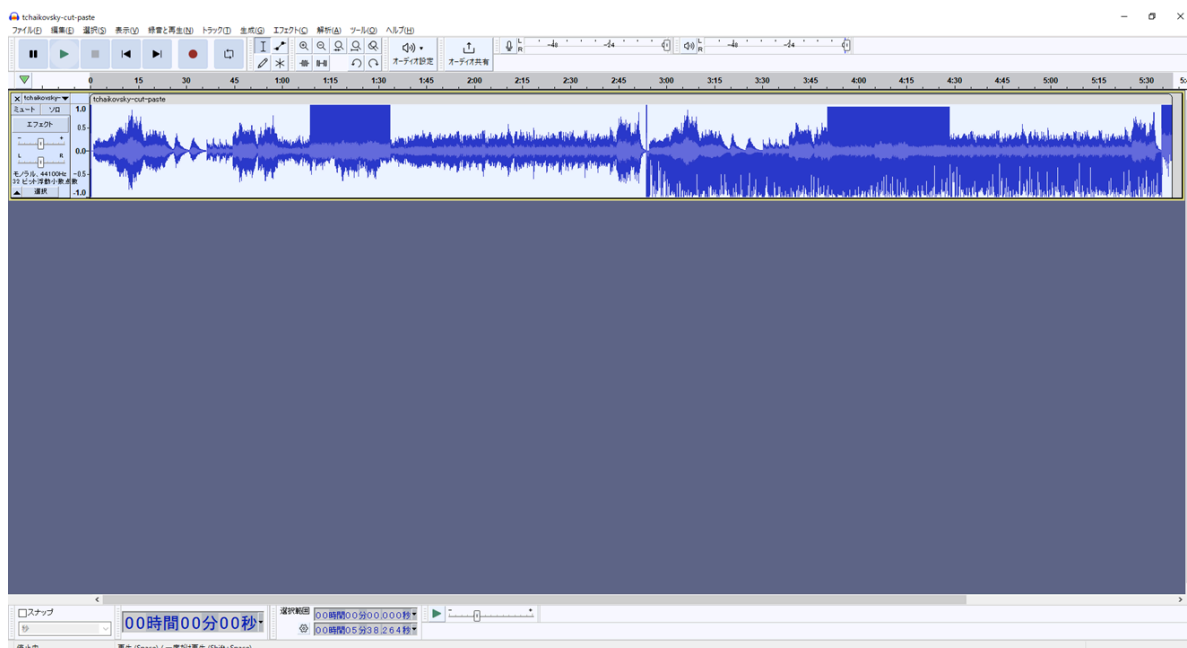


Figure 8: Wave data applied cut & paste operation.

### Gradation Operation

The gradient is an expression in which colors and textures change continuously and step by step in an image and is known as an effect operation in image processing. In this study, gradient operations were applied to the original audio data image (Figure 3) (Figure 9). This is also a common effect operation in image processing, although it does not make sense as an editing of audio data. We verified what kind of glitchy sounds are generated by applying such image processing to the audio data.

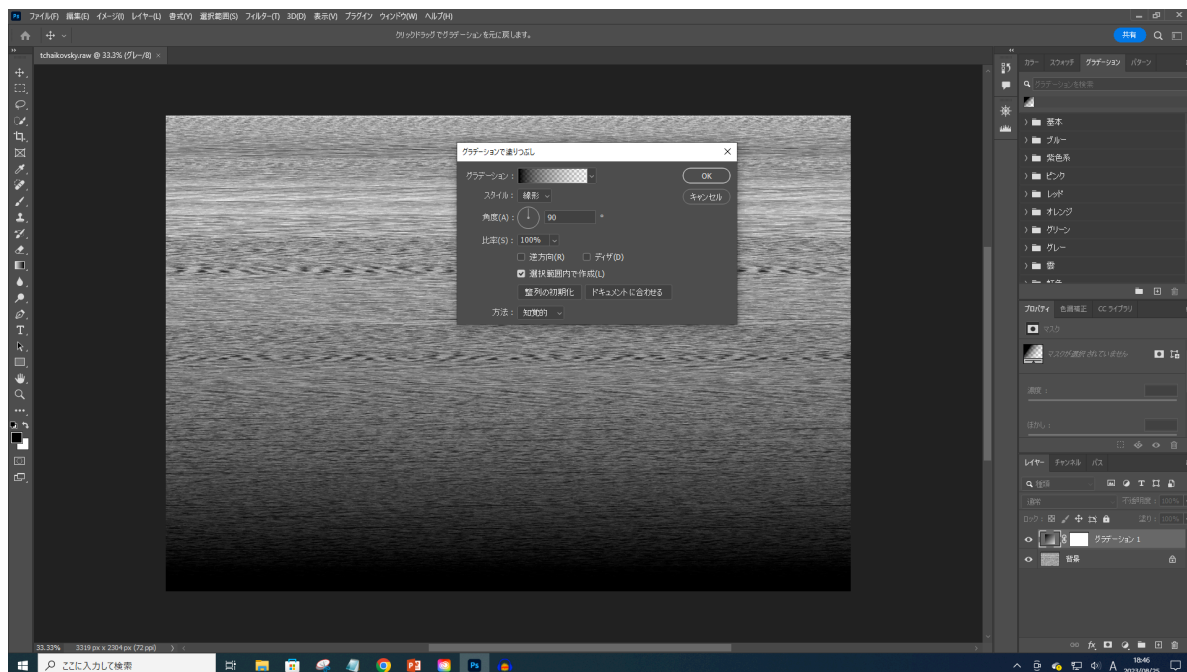


Figure 9: Image data applied gradation operation.



It should be noted that the gradient operation was applied to the entire image, not to local image editing operations such as the cut and cut-and-paste operations described above. Specifically, we specified the following options for gradient operations in Photoshop:

- Gradation pattern: dark to light tone
- Gradation style: linear
- Angle: 90 degrees
- Ratio: 100 percent

Figure 10 shows the waveform data when the gradient-processed audio data is loaded into Audacity.

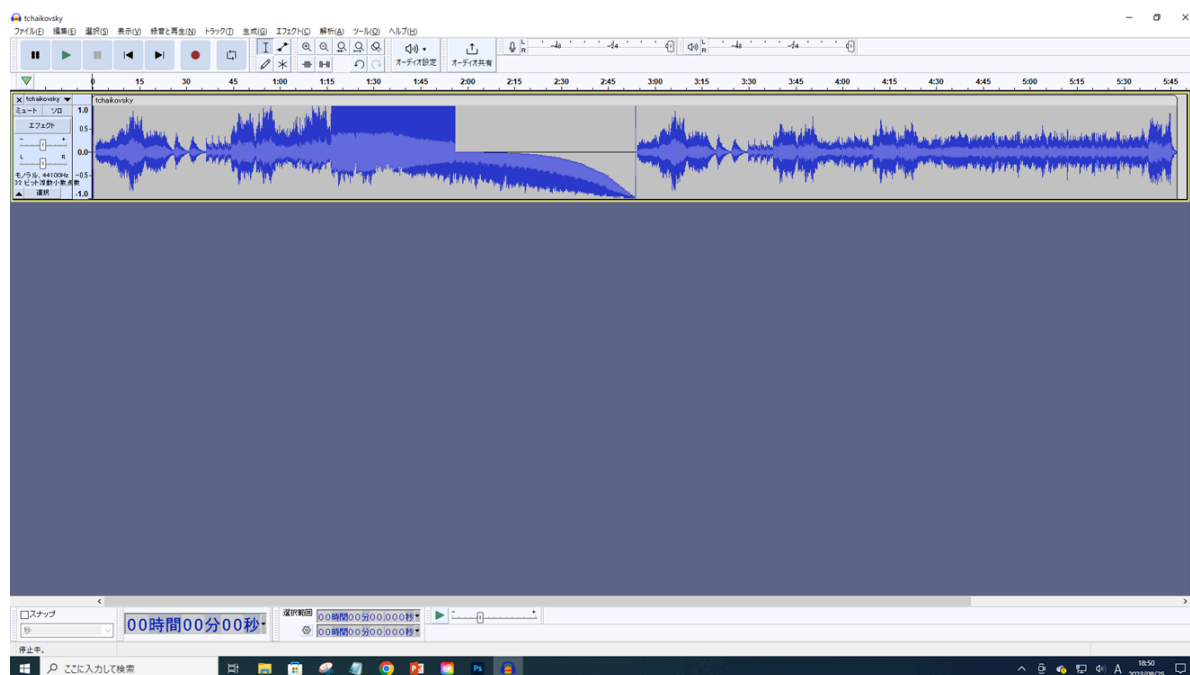


Figure 10: Wave data applied gradation operation.

From a visual standpoint, the waveform data in Figure 10 differs significantly from the original audio data waveform (Figure 3), the cut operation (Figure 6), and the cut-and-paste operation (Figure 8). The waveform of the cut-and-paste operation is similar to that of the cut-and-paste operation in that the two parallel tracks are now in series, but other than that, they differ from each other in every respect. When this audio data is played back, a noisy glitchy sound is heard throughout. The volume was gradually decreased, and the effect of the gradient could be felt aurally. This clearly indicates that the effect of the gradient is manifested in the form of glitches.

## Discussions

Summarizing the results of the experiments described in the previous section, we can insist that the audio data to which image processing was applied produced a glitching effect that reflected the image processing. In the case of the cut operation, a local glitching effect reminiscent of the cut operation was obtained, and in the case of the cut-and-paste operation, a glitching effect reminiscent of paste was obtained in addition to the local glitching effect. In the case of the gradient effect operation, glitching effects were applied to the entire image, including gradual muffling, again reminiscent of gradients. Of course, it is impossible to say whether this is true in all cases without conducting exhaustive experiments, but the results of

the current experiments seem to be generally consistent with such a conclusion. From the above, we can conclude that the method we have tried in this research is the elegant method we have been aiming for, i.e., a method that can generate glitched sounds that reflect the original image processing through an established operation called image processing.

However, this approach is not without its drawbacks. For example, there are the following problems:

- Glitchy sounds are not generated properly depending on the operation's coverage.
- The occurrence of glitches cannot be confirmed in real-time.

First, when applying image processing, it is necessary to pay attention to the scope of the application. Each original audio data has its own unique format, even when converted to RAW or TIF format. If the original audio data is destroyed, it will not be recognized as audio data before the glitch sounds. For example, if the start of a file is deleted by a cut operation, the header information is deleted and is not recognized as audio data. However, when effects are applied to the entire file, such as gradients, some cases work well and others do not, and more exhaustive experimentation is needed to determine what operations to apply and where to apply them. However, since the problem cannot be visually confirmed from an image display of the audio data, this experimentation is a trial-and-error process.

Furthermore, the effects of applying image processing cannot be confirmed in real-time. To check the glitching effect, as described before section, it is necessary to select "Save As" from Photoshop's File menu, specify the options in TIF format, and save the file. Only after these operations can the audio be played back using audio playback or editing software. This is a rather complicated process.

However, we are positive about the fact that the range of applications of image processing has to be determined by visual estimation and trial and error. This is where the beauty of chance, which is the charm of glitch art, can be expected to emerge. In other words, it is up to the user to decide where in the audio data to apply image processing, and we believe that there remains room for the beauty of chance. We believe that it is better to leave this part of the process as it is to make glitch art an art form.

## **Related Work**

The use of glitching in art is not new, and glitching is already recognized as a form of expression in art. There have been attempts to use glitch sounds for quite some time: Luigi Russolo built a mechanical noise generator in the early 1900s (Luciano, 2012); Michael Pinder created glitch sounds through the intentional misuse of the Mellotron (Fabbri, 2017); and the Mellotron (Mellotron) was developed in the 1960s as an analog playback device. Christian Marclay is creating sound collages using damaged vinyl records (Christian, 2023). Yasunao Tone intentionally scratches the surface of CDs to create distortion (Yasunao et al., 2008). The above examples are examples of glitch sound generation using a physical medium.

There are also research and artwork that are completely opposite to this research. That is, they have been researched generating glitch art by applying audio processing to image data using Audacity. We also have been trying to do it, but it is not original to us. However, our goal is to express art by manipulating color (light) and sound in a cross-disciplinary manner,

and our research also includes the reversible interconversion of glitch art images and glitch sounds.

Other techniques include data moshing, which causes errors during video playback, and research has been conducted on its effects and methods (Ito et al., 2014). An installation work of glitches using live coding (Fuego, 2022) has also been produced. This work is very interesting because it includes not only sound and images but also glitches with physical devices. Although not competing with this research, there is an attempt to use glitch art in contemporary dance (Jürgens, 2020). This is very interesting because it uses glitched art based on errors in sensors that acquire dance motions as images for mixed reality.

The differences between these glitch artworks and this research are as follows:

- Manipulating (controlling) audio glitches based on image processing
- Intentionally triggering glitches that match image processing operations or effects

In other words, the trigger for the glitch is the image processing, which generates the glitch in the audio data while enjoying the effect applied to the image.

Another unique aspect of this research is the generation of regular glitches. This is related to the generation of glitches that are matched to image processing. In other words, generating glitches that match a specific image processing can be described as expressing the audibility of the image processing in terms of glitches. This is one of the goals of this research.

## Conclusion

In this study, we tried to apply image manipulation using the Photoshop image processing software to audio data to generate glitch sounds elegantly. From the experimental results, it was confirmed that glitching effects corresponding to image processing can be introduced into audio data.

However, there are many issues to be addressed in this research. The following points will be studied in the future:

- Application of various image-processing operations and complex image-processing operations
- Technical investigation of the relationship between image processing operations and glitching effects
- Identification of the causes of cases where glitch sounds cannot be generated

The experiments conducted in this study were limited to the application of relatively simple image processing operations (cut, cut-and-paste, gradient, etc.). In the future, we plan to experiment with the application of more image processing operations (e.g., enlargement, reduction, rotation, monochrome transformation, blurring, filtering, etc.), as well as their combined application. For example, we will investigate the glitching effect of applying a rotation operation after an enlargement operation, or a blurring operation after a monochrome transformation operation, and so on.

The relationship between image processing operations and glitching effects will also be investigated technically. In this study, we found only sensory similarities between the two. Technical clarification of this issue will be conducted. In addition, we also aim to clarify the causes of cases where glitch sounds cannot be generated from a technical point of view.

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***Redefining Masculinity in Korean Drama, Films and Music:  
Exploration of Dynamics of Fan Culture in Malaysia and Changing Gender Landscapes***

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**Abstract**

As the ‘Hallyu’, or the Korean wave swept across the globe - it came with implications for how consumers of popular culture perceive and engage in the making or remaking of gender norms. It popularized the idea of ‘soft masculinity’, marking a major shift from the filmic hegemonic representations of gender in Hollywood and Bollywood - with significant consequences for women and sexual minorities. The phenomena also ignited heated debates. This paper explores what Hallyu has to offer to a Malaysian audience onboard, across the spectrum of races, ethnic groups and genders. It attempts to build a picture of the effects of Hallyu in Malaysia through interviews conducted with local audiences of Korean content. It also questions how fandom and viewership of Korean content may translate into positive or negative attitudes towards sexual and other minorities in a complex political context and how it may aid in curving out a space for other masculinities. Taking into account the obstacles on the way, it attempts to situate the viewership in a globalized moment - whereby certain local and global forces are coming into contact with each other to shape, construct or deconstruct traditionally perceived gender norms and other traditions.

Keywords: Masculinity, Korea, Malaysia, K-Pop, Gender, Sexual Minority

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## 1. Introduction

*Banyak dikatakan ttg Kpop. Harap gadis2 Msia kembali kpd lelaki tall, dark & hensem. Bukan pale, skinny & pretty. Itu bukan lelaki sejati.*

(A lot has been said about K-pop. I hope Malaysian girls return to tall, dark and handsome men. Not pale, skinny and pretty. Those are not real men).

This was a tweet posted by Malaysia's Youth and Sports minister Khairy Jamaluddin on January 11, 2015, as it was quoted in a study on K-pop and Malaysia. It focused on the construction of gender roles both in tradition and current political spectrums in Malaysia and attempts to trace how it has been manipulated and weaponized by the country's governments and other political actors to secure authority and power (Ainslie, 2017).

Fandom of Korean content in Malaysia, as indicated by several research, has significantly contributed to altering the scenario. It promoted a build-up of 'other masculinities', as Ainslie suggests, becoming "a form of resistance against the religious and racially defined politics".

She elaborates, "Malay men and masculinity become a vehicle through which authorities can control, manipulate and compete" in the country's populist politics, which largely embodies a disposition of conservative policymaking that seeks to utilize the religious faith of the majority.

The *Hallyu* wave, as a global phenomenon, has been studied in different contexts.

One research in the Arab world has emphasized on definitions of fandom in contemporary cultures of global connectivity. It denotes, "fans act as global mediators and facilitators of culture", and they are "cultural ambassadors who spread K-pop among their friends and relatives" (Lyan and Otmazgin as cited in Elaskary, 2018).

Therefore, fandom in contemporary contexts is understood as active agents, rather than passive receivers of social engineering and phenomena.

In Malaysia, it began with the worldwide success of the K-pop album titled "Sorry, Sorry" by the Korean band Super Junior in 2009.

Prior to this, "Winter Sonata", a 2002 Korean drama became a "smash hit" in Malaysia (Kim<sup>2</sup> et al, 2022). Other early hits include "Gangnam Style", a K-pop song released in 2012 in YouTube, Running Man (2010), K-pop Countdown (*Inkigayo*) and several other TV shows, as well as Korean events held in Malaysia, such as Korean Lifestyle Roadshow and K-Food Fair in 2016.

The popularity reached to the extent of Korean music getting translated by Malaysian musicians and being sung in Malay, such as "*Sonata Musim Salju*", the Malay adoption *Winter Sonata*'s title song, performed by local singer Hazami (Betty M., n.d.).

In 2011, Astro Hitz, one of the most prominent of Malaysia's radio channels, broadcasted "K-pop Hitz Talent Show" (Kim et al, 2017; Kim<sup>2</sup> et al).

The *Hallyu* wave and the local Islamic culture are often described as involved in conflicts with each other. Most notably, in instances such as a K-pop band appearing on a video in



2015 with Malay girls and kissing on their foreheads (Kim<sup>2</sup> et al) and Malaysian fans holding a candlelight vigil for Kim Jong-hyun after he was found dead in his Seoul apartment (reported as a suicide) in 2017 (Adlina et al, 2021).

Yet certain similarities between these two distant cultures were also highlighted in different studies. In the words of respondents of a study, notable ones were “their *adab*” (etiquette), as Koreans on screen “prioritise and respect senior citizens and the elders”, “use formal language when with seniors” (honorifics) and “informal with friends”, the “moral values” and the “more realistic” nature of the content, promoting “self-love” and being “not too sexy in dramas; intimate scenes are not being shown too much” (Khalid and Wok, 2020).

Elaskary noted the major attributes which make the Arab audience feel more comfortable watching it in comparison to other Western content, “less/lack of nudity or violence” (2018).

Altogether, the similarities and the differences, often told as working against local and politicized restraints on gender and sexuality, has turned the *Hallyu* wave into a phenomenon predictably “sustaining for a long term” in Malaysia. Not one, but multiple studies have shown findings in support of such predictions.

In contrast, it has also been reported that Hallyu fandom has contributed to the “destruction of masculinity” in the neighboring country, Indonesia. The researchers largely attributed it to a more nuanced version of “toxic masculinity” and the expectation created by Korean contents for its viewers, “meet the criteria like “perfect” men like K-drama” (Husodo and Sethio, 2021).

It is worth noting that in the home country of *Hallyu*, South Korea, the question of masculinity has often been treated differently. The historical records mention that it was “bifurcated along class lines”, with “fighting prowess” reserved for “commoners” and values like “self-control”, “adherence to moral and ritual norms” for the higher class (Tikhonov, 2007).

The 17th century Korea saw a rather earlier wave of “lovesick” male heroes, told in folktales. Studies have attempted to explore “possible political effects” of male characters “being lovesick”, and how they “manage(d) to negotiate with cultural norms while reproducing the significance of the male body” (Lee, 2016).

Tikhonov says, Korea under Japanese colonization saw the arrival of “nationalised masculinity” in communal imagination. The song “Juvenile Man” (*Sonyon Namja*), written during a Tokyo baseball tournament in July, 1909, became an anthem of resistance against Japan’s colonial control and invigorated dreams of masculine Korean warriors liberating them from oppressors. It was published twice in the “fiercely anti-Japanese” newspaper “*Sinhan Minbo*”.

In post-colonial Korea, male domination and patriarchy shaped the society. The head of a Korean family, known as *Hojuje* - takes up the responsibility “for the production of gendered *kungmin* or national subjects”, defined as “father or mother, wife or husband, and daughter or son”, reinforcing the traditional gender roles and binaries (Na et al, 2014).

As of contemporary times, the Korean masculinity has again been divided into two categories: the traditional and the new, “aesthetic androgyny”, largely recognised as the

“flower boy” image branding and characterizing contents for global audiences. The South Korean military is described as a “a primary site for institutionalization and propagation of hegemonic masculinity within Korean male populations” (Tavassoli, 2020).

This “soft masculinity”, largely embodied by BTS and the K-pop bands, has been balanced by more “tough, manly, and beast-like” idol groups appearing on the stage. Researchers have argued that often within the same boy band, the construction of masculinity is ‘performed collectively’, which they chose to call “distributive masculinity” (Manietta, 2010).

Feminist studies also speak of the ‘phallogocentric’ characteristics of Korean nationalism, where ‘planting the Korean flagpole’ becomes a symbolic act of sexual invasion on a foreign land, with the pole becoming the ‘penis’ and the penetrated, non-Korean White woman’s body, standing for the invaded land/territory of conquest. Such male fantasies were shared in certain expressions in Korean language, such as “*taegukirul-gotda* (planting the flag)” and “*baekmarul-tada* (riding a White horse)” (Cheng, 2021).

In contrast, the K-pop culture was perceived in studies as embodying “double marginality” in the American context, “as their fandom is simultaneously both popular culture and a culture of the racial other” (Lyan, Otmagzin and Yoon as cited in Lee et al, 2020). According to scholars, this was coupled with the history of “American society’s tendency to emasculate Asian masculinities”.

In the modern context of *Hallyu* wave, one more term makes its appearance in countries such as India: metrosexuality. It is defined largely as the male urge to beautify themselves, through purchasing and using male beauty products. This new tendency was attributed mostly to the influence of *Hallyu* (Arambam, 2019).

It can be argued that nowhere in the known geography celebration of Korean content was spared from the scrutiny of gender norms, be it India, China, America or other countries. Studies that tried to map the wave in Malaysia reported that it was ‘rather late’ to arrive and initially was not viewed favorably, but soon took a curve of a more ‘aggressive’ acceptance - leading to the upsurge of Korean products entering Malaysia’s market and an eagerness to learn the Korean language in Malaysian young adults (Adis et al, 2018).

It has significant implications for both the reconstructions of gender norms and cultures (as a host country) in Malaysia, too. As a multicultural nation, how it embraces the wave and what is produced in the end remain to be seen. This is, of course, not without questions on foreign policies.

But more specifically, as a driving factor of changes in Malaysian masculinities, both in its majority and minority race groups, it urges and demands to be studied more closely.

## **2. Findings and Discussions**

### **2.1. Contemporary Cultural Background of Malaysia**

With Korean pop culture’s rise to prominence, as with many other audiences from different cultures, Malaysians too have often reacted with culture shocks towards representation of masculinity in the K-pop industry.

In Malaysia, the uptick surge in gender-bending beauty products did not always correspond well with the local populations, as evidenced by several studies. It has put in question certain gender norms and often, the dress codes prescribed in the society. The issue of the fandom, thus, has already been politicized multiple times.

The culture shocks as expressed in Malaysia by certain quarters and fractions of the society, but mostly, the political actors, are however, not always uncontrasted without cultural welcomings. It integrates the *Hallyu* wave through likening it with certain local values while often advocating distance from others (Khalid and Wok).

In a country priding itself as ‘multicultural’, the Korean wave is still often seen as a ‘foreign’ culture, marked with fear at times of losing out ‘our own culture’ to it (Kim et al). In such context, how the much contested ‘soft boy’ image of Korean music, film and drama might have impacted the local convictions of ‘*Lelaki Lembut*’ or ‘soft man’ (Ainslie) and what consequences or outcomes it might carry for women and sexual minorities remains an intriguing question.

It often goes beyond the traditionally upheld regulations of ‘modesty’, perceived as overall affecting only one race - albeit the majority Malays. The demographics of Korean fandom in Malaysia is composed of all races, each with its own norms and traditions.

Altogether, the consumption of Korean content still forms a question on many grounds. It often also signals a generational change in Malaysia.

Lately, the previous hostile attitude from local religious authorities too was partially reversed by overwhelming support from the Muslim world for the performance in Qatar World Cup 2022, by the BTS idol Jungkook.

At the same time, the decision to perform was questioned by many of the Western fans of BTS, on certain ethical grounds of the gulf state’s human rights record and especially reports of crackdowns on LGBT members of the society (Manongdo, 2022).

Yet there is an emerging new generation of Malaysians who feel more comfortable in dressing up in gender-bending ways. Most universities, if not all, are the primary locations where these young students are frequently seen.

One Chinese respondent said, “Makeup gives people confidence, it would be better if it’s not restrained by gender”. As with many other cultures affected by the wave, these young Malaysians too have adopted it as a confidence booster.

However, it is still in stark contrast with the norm, where almost every race, except the Chinese, are expected to dress in certain ways. These dress codes, usually the most manifest expressions of the ‘gender’ construct, are most strictly observed by the Malays, with nearly all Malay women wearing the Tudung (Hijab), just as Indian men and women wearing Pottu (usually a red or black dot known as Bindi in India). While such regulations are always much more relaxed for the male members of every race, they aren’t expected to dress up in ways that might be perceived as too unmanly or surprising.

It might be said that a large share of Malaysia’s populations are heteronormative in their daily cultural practices. As one Chinese respondent puts it, “as a country with lots of rules that we

need to follow, Malaysians need to be more rational and think more about what they can do before following all the Korean trends”.

## **2.2. Research Method**

With this cultural background in mind, students were often approached discreetly, using both convenience sampling and voluntary response sampling methods in order to gather data.

A survey with 10 interview questions (4 close-ended and 6 open-ended) were designed for respondents, and they were free to choose between offering their identity and staying anonymous. They were also free to skip questions which they did not wish to respond to. The survey was posted primarily on social networking applications, in a number of groups with different characteristics, such as dedicated Korean fanbases, sexual minority advocacy groups and student groups in general. With a target of reaching 100 respondents, some were also approached face-to-face in University campuses.

Almost all of the respondents chose to remain anonymous.

## **2.3. Findings**

### **2.3.1. Age Groups**

*I think it did affect some generations but for the older generation I don't think so, because I'll still hear things like, you dressed too boyish, or why are they (males) wearing makeup, they look so girly and stuff like that.*

This is an excerpt from a response from the only female student interviewed during the research who identified as a lesbian herself.

Young students and audiences of Korean content made up the largest share of the respondents, belonging to a predominant age group of 17-25. A strong enthusiasm around Korean content was observed in this group, transcending race, religion, languages and genders.

However, 73% of the respondents who were approached face-to-face declined to proceed further upon knowing the topic.

### **2.3.2. Race**

In a total of 105 respondents, 70 (66.7%) were young Malay students, followed by 28 (26.6%) Chinese and 7 (6.6%) Indian respondents.

36% of the Malay students had a positive attitude towards the image of ‘soft masculinity’ projected in Korean contents. In contrast, 43% of the Chinese and 38% of the Indian respondents said they were more open to the idea of ‘new’ or ‘other masculinities’ and did not object to it.

### **2.3.3. Acceptance**

An overwhelming 83% of the total respondents identified as casual viewers of Korean content, while 17% of them identified as fans. Overall, only 9% of these fans were willing to touch upon the topic of queerness and sexuality.

At least 38% of the respondents identifying as viewers overgeneralized their views on Korean actors, with phrases like ‘all of them are gay’ or often, ‘cute men’. This has shown that fandom and viewership is broader than the openness towards sexual minorities or other masculinities in general and they do not always necessarily translate into acceptance.

The male idols that topped the list of these fans include Jungkook, Suga and Kim Taehyung of BTS, Lee Dong Wok and G-Dragon. In contrast, the top female idols were Lisa of Blackpink, Nayeon, Jeongyeon and Chaeyoung of Twice and Hyunjin of Le Sserafim.

The films and dramas most frequently mentioned by these fans were *Miracle in Cell No. 7* (2013), *Parasite* (2019), *Train to Busan* (2016) and *The Heirs* (2013), *Ugly Alert* (2013), *The Girl Who Sees Smells* (2015), *Strong Girl Bong-Soon* (2017), *Prison Playbook* (2017-18), *Hotel Del Luna* (2019) and *Touch Your Heart* (2019).

Some fans who identified either as queers or feminists often mentioned films like *Two Weddings and a Funeral* (2012), *Night Flight* (2014), *The Handmaiden* (2016) and *Love and Leashes* (2022).

On a larger scale, acceptance towards Korean content itself has often intersected with questions of race, religion and politics with significant implications.

It has been observed that the Malaysian audience tends to interpret their acceptance or fandom of Korean content more through ‘cultural affinity’ and similarities than through questions surrounding genders. This has played a significant role in responses from female Malay students, many of whom said they liked the way Koreans respect their elders and value their families.

### **2.3.4. Metrosexuality**

Perhaps due to voluntary response sampling, 30% of the Malay respondents were amongst the group identifying as members of the queer community. However, only 10 out of 17 male respondents who like to dress differently have actively chosen to identify themselves as metrosexuals. Some of them said that Korean culture serves as a source of encouragement to break some social barriers and overall has a positive effect on their lives. 8 (45%) of them said that Korean content helped set new trends in Malaysia and broaden tolerance towards other masculinities.

### **2.3.5. Advocacy Groups**

As a more informed group, respondents associated with advocacies for sexual minorities often tended to have more negative views towards the assumption that Korean content enhances acceptance of LGBT. And some have also questioned the South Korean society and state on LGBT rights.

One respondent working in a Malaysian LGBT rights organization puts it this way, “Korean society is still not accepting towards LGBT. They are notoriously anti-feminist - an attitude which I think plays a role in their hatred towards LGBT. The gender-bending clothing worn by idols help in tearing down traditional ideas of masculinity but not by much”.

29% of student respondents said it has a positive effect, while others chose not to answer the question.

One of these students said, “I think that the Korean wave did help to broaden the view of masculinity as not defined only by looking strong or having facial hair, but also by having a great mind set and great emotional structure”.

Overall, it has been observed that while a significant share of the respondents did identify as queers or supportive of LGBT community, most of the respondents still did not have much insight into the topic.

Many of the Korean content consumers interviewed could be categorized as laymen, with sometimes a large portion of them familiar with the term ‘LGBT’ but not able to recognize the term ‘queer’. For them, merely consuming Korean songs, films and dramas did not translate into much significant changes in their attitudes or views towards the topic.

### **3. Conclusion**

The primary limitation of the study was a lack of access to local language contents and resources.

The interviews were conducted in English only, and thus had to leave behind respondents more comfortable in Malaysia’s local languages, such as Bahasa Melayu, Chinese, Cantonese, Mandarin or Tamil.

It was also limited to only one city, Cyberjaya, in the state of Selangor - albeit a hub of education for local and international students. The surveys were conducted in Multimedia University (MMU), Limkokwing University of Creative Technology as well as a local LGBT rights group organization.

Except for Korean contents, how the other contents, local or international, may be impacting the same gender landscape was also beyond the scope of this study.

It still received and collected valuable inputs from the youth as consumers and primary subscribers of the *Hallyu* wave, which is hoped to prove beneficial for future studies.

However, it aimed to construct only a fragment of a bigger picture, not a holistic one. It can still be said that Korean content enjoys a widespread popularity in Malaysia, across race, religion or ethnic backgrounds.

For example, in Multimedia University, there is a Korean language club created by the student fans of Korean content. The university also offers a Korean language course as part of extracurricular activities.

However, this fandom does not always necessarily translate into a wider acceptance of sexual minorities or ‘other’ masculinities, while still having an overall positive effect on the audiences and seldom, the society.

In this respect, it can be said that viewership is broader than the agency of fandom or perspectives. It might or might not generate changes in traditionally held views or values in strictly heteronormative societies such as Malaysia, but still opens a window towards a different world.

In the turbulent time of today, where many social norms and regulations are being contested and the term ‘culture’ is losing its monolithic meanings, such windows at least serve as ventilators in the background, often silently. And their roles in it cannot be entirely ignored.

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***Reversing Through the Living Hell – Exploring the Value System of Human Spirituality and Rationality in the Demon Slayer Anime Series***

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**Abstract**

During the severe period of the Covid-19 pandemic, as if a living hell had descended upon us, the Demon Slayer anime and film series broke numerous records in 2020 and became known as a source of solace during the pandemic. Through narrative analysis, this study applies concepts of values, dignity and humanism to explore the core power of the opposition against the Ghost King in the anime series and finds that the protagonists' perseverance of human nature is the key to win. Values uphold the narrative logic of the inherent goodness of being human amidst chaotic times and hardships in the context of Demon Slayer series. This article explores the concepts of life and death, human values, narratives of historical heritage and humanistic equality to explain the practice of the ultimate truth through memory, history, and the realization of a shared sense of goodness in public life to achieve the integration of altruism and self-discovery. The powerful value shift of Demon Slayer Squad turns towards humanism, altruism, human dignity, and innovation and that enables protagonists' realization of the inherent beauty of being human which lead to the success of final battle of Infinity Castle.

Keywords: Value System, Humanism, Living Hell, Dignity, Demon Slayer

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## Introduction

The Demon Slayer anime and film series broke numerous records in 2020 and became known as a source of solace during the pandemic. During the severe period of the Covid-19 pandemic, as if a living hell had descended upon us, Demon Slayer the Movie: Mugen Train, a Japanese anime film based on manga series broke box office records. It not only became the highest-grossing film in 2020 worldwide but also set the all-time box office records for the highest-grossing Japanese film. The plot is related to how humans fight for survival and maintain human values and dignity with almost unconquerable Ghost King. The themes of the Demon Slayer anime and film series is about how victims of killings could possibly regain their happiness and wellbeing through unifications under human heritage and courage. For people living in an almost unchangeable quagmire as a living hell, how value system of human spirituality and rationality help fight the war with the evil for their perseverance of “being humans” is narrated, especially at the crucial moment for huge human loss. The plots of the series are listed as follows. After the family of the protagonist, Kamado Tanjiro, is slain by the demon king, Kibutsuji Muzan, he joins the Demon Slayer Squad with the hope of restoring his sister, who has turned into a demon, back to humanity and seeking revenge for their family. Together with their comrades, they confront the organization "Twelve Kizuki," lead by the demon lord which not only eats humans but also turns humans into powerful demons. The fights of contrasting forces of the good and the evil are not only about individual fighter's force but also about symbols of human altruistic values against evils' lies and distorted persuasion. As members of the Demon Slayer Squad, the protagonist and their leader through unwavering commitment to humanity and life-and-death confrontations finally won the almost impossible task.

Sorokin (1951) had been famous for his studies of values in human society and practice of altruism. Mangone and Dolgov (2020) state that Sorokin had an intuition that synthesizable the idea that the future of humanity and its development lies in the hands of humanity itself. Engaging in historical research on sociological theories with a focus on values, Sorokin points out that, under normal circumstances, moral sentiments are generally consistent. However, during chaotic periods, selfishness and altruism tend to become extreme (Tang, 1995). Demon Slayer Squad's completion of its goal actually arises from protagonists' perseverance to uphold the narrative logic of the inherent goodness of being human even amidst chaotic times and hardships. This connects the idea of practicing truth is about the pursuit of happiness for human values as belief and action. This study argues that plot should be explored by the value systems to empower human to fight evils in our society by exploring the imagination of spiritual liberation and the pursuit of freedom within a fantastical spiritual and reasoning system in the background of modernization of Japan.

### **Pursuit of Happiness in a Society Are Involved Not Only With Materials and Power but Lies in the Moral Values of Altruism and Self-Discovery**

The words “love” or “altruism” by referring to all actions that “produce and maintain the psychological and/or physical well-being of oneself and others through altruism,” Mangone (2020, p.165.) He explained Sorokin's concept of altruistic creative love and argued that Sorokin's idea that “love is the energy (force) through which altruism manifests itself.” Mangone (2020) cited Sorokin's concept of altruistic creative love to diagnose a crisis of his time by identifying steps through which to produce and improve the love energy such as the increase of creative heroes of love as the great creators and thinkers and the heroes or apostles of love; the increase of creative heroes of truth and beauty, thinkers and creators in

different fields of science and the arts of the highest value; the increase of love by the rank and file; an increase in the production of love by groups and institutions; and the increase of love-production by culture and the total culture (p.162). Aristotle discussed that happiness is the end of human endeavor, moral virtue is formed through action and habituation, humans need to practice good action and to discover the human good we must identify the function of a human being and he argues that the human function is rational activity (2009). In short, the happiness he speaks of is an abiding sense of well-being coming from living a virtuous and purposeful life. Values are defined as an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence. Rokeach (1973) identified and defined two sets of values: terminal values and instrumental values. The former refer to desirable and end-state existence and the goals a person would like to achieve during their lifetime and may vary among different groups of people in different cultures. The latter, instrumental values refer to preferable modes of personal behavior and refer to as means of achieving the terminal values. Four categories (Table 1) are divided for further explanation: Terminal values as an end-state dimension of social (focus on others) or personal (self-focused) categories. Instrumental values as a behavioral aspect of moral (focus on morality and relations) or competence (focus on competence).

Demon Slayer Corps have stronger terminal values for social purposes such as a world at peace, a world of beauty, equality, family security, freedom, mature love, national security, social recognition, and true friendship. In addition, Demon Slayer Corps have stronger terminal values for moral purposes such as broadminded, forgiving, helpful, honest, loving, cheerful, obedient, polite, responsible. For example, plots of cooperation with ghosts such as Tamayo, Yushirou, and Nezuko. All of them helped the Corps to defeat the Ghost King. For example, Tomayo, as a doctor, tried to prevent humans to turn into ghosts and successfully reverted Nezuko into human and finally sacrifice herself to inject several doses to kill Muzan. The leader of Demon Slayer Corps, Ubuyashiki Kagaya, organized a strongest team ever by his charisma as empathetic, resolute and strong. In addition, he is willing to take chances to trust and accept the three ghosts to fight together against the Ghost King. Demon Slayer Corps build trust and collaboration with Tamayo, Nezuko, and Yushiro when the three with the intention to turn back to humans or support humanity. In addition, even after engaging in life-and-death battles with these demons, Tanjiro still felt the sadness and remorse of the departed demons. This ability of Tanjiro to bestow respect upon the deceased ghosts reflects his warmth and compassion which draw demons back towards humanity. In the Spider Mountain storyline, there is a poignant moment where the weary ghost, seeking to recover memories but is burdened with sadness, Tanjiro stretches his comforting hand to the shoulders of Rui. This gesture emphasizes the importance of respecting the departed demons with regrets, as ghosts were once human too. Tanjiro said to Tomioka Giyuu demonstrates that his belief in humanism:

*Those who felt pain and regretted their own actions, I won't tread on them. Because demons were once humans. Just like me, they were humans too. Please remove your feet. He wasn't an ugly monster. They are hollow creatures. They are sad creatures. (Tanjiro's quotes from Demon Slayer Season 1, Episode 21)*

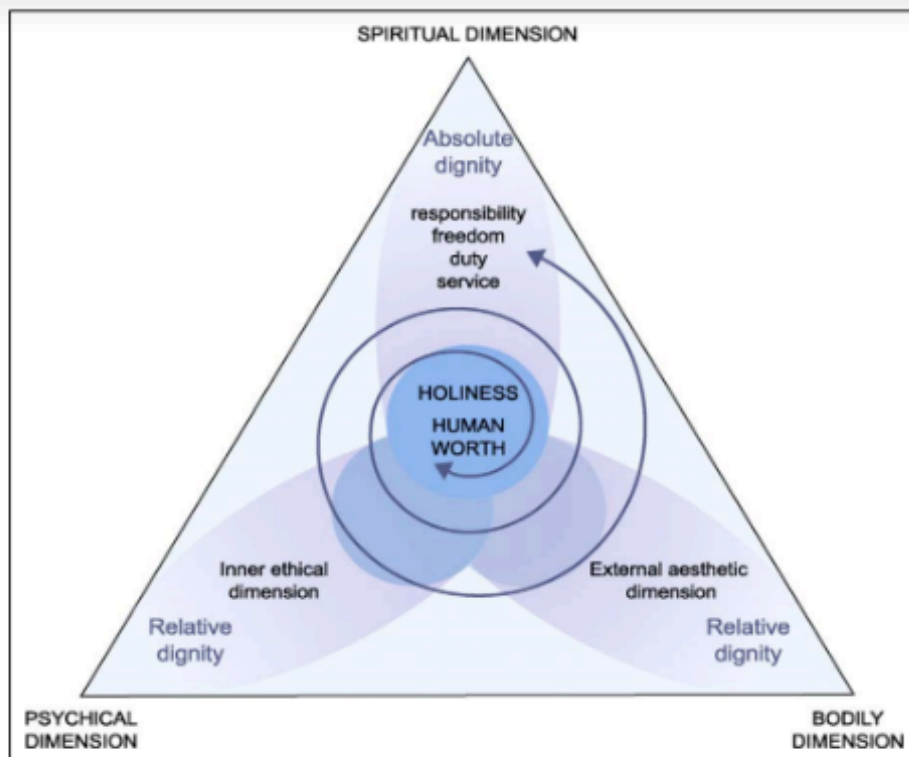
**Table 1**  
*List of Terminal and Instrumental Values (Rokeach, 1973)*

Terminal Values (End-States)	
<i>Social (Focus on Others)</i>	<i>Personal (Self-Focused)</i>
A World at Peace	A Comfortable Life
A World of Beauty	An Exciting Life
Equality	A Sense of Accomplishment
Family Security	Happiness
Freedom	Inner Harmony
Mature Love	Pleasure
National Security	Salvation
Social Recognition	Self-respect
True Friendship	Wisdom
Instrumental Values (Behavioural)	
<i>Moral (Focus on Morality and Relations)</i>	<i>Competence (focus on competence)</i>
Broadminded	Ambitious
Forgiving	Capable
Helpful	Clean
Honest	Courageous
Loving	Imaginative
Cheerful	Independent
Obedient	Intellectual
Polite	Logical
Responsible	Self-Controlled

From Rokeach's Instrumental and Terminal Values as Descriptors of Modern Organization Values, *International Journal of Organizational Leadership* 5(2016) 151–161, P. 154. by Krista Tuulik, et al.

### **Humans' Free Will and Dignity Versus Ghost King's Dictatorship and Ghosts' Loss of Humans' Memories**

Edlund (2013) explains creation, responsibility, freedom, duty, and obligation are related to assumptions about human dignity rooted in European humanistic traditions. He describes that “creation gave human beings a freedom and a responsibility that involves an indestructible holiness and human value” and “Responsibility, a dimension of dignity... is mutual but also asymmetrical and cannot be claimed by the other;” in addition, humans cannot escape their freedom...the inner freedom means that humans always have a choice regarding how they relate to a situation and “The internal duty is something that is a responsibility of the human being, while the outer duty is understood as an obligation” (p. 855).



**Figure 1.** The concept model of dignity.

Concept determination of human dignity. P.857. Edlund, M., Lindwall, L., Post, I. V., & Lindström, U. Å. (2013). *Nursing Ethics*, 20(8), 851-860.

Edlund (2013) explains absolute dignity through which human beings have been given the obligation of serving their fellow-men and a unique position among created beings and its conspicuous categories are obligation, calling, position, and value with their sub-ordinate qualities; An inner ethical stance confers awareness of one's own and others' dignity: pride, nobility, dignity, position, rank, and status related to this category influenced by the culture and the tradition in which the individual human being exists; as to external dignity and aesthetic conducts related to respect, grandiosity, authority, and composure ( p.853).

### **The Value System of Human Spirituality and Rationality for the Good Makes Human Beings Superior Than Might Ghost King in the Demon Slayer Anime Series**

Teng explains that values can be compared, measured, and combined into a system with distinctive characteristics and this system encompasses the impact on institutions and structures, interpersonal relationships, diverse situations, and the complexity of personality (1995). It influences observations of culture; progress, freedom, relativity, and respect for objectivity and rationality are prominent in Western value systems (Teng, 1995).

In Demon Slayer series, values are emphasized very Chrystal clear. "What is the value of a life to you?" when the most talented slayer Yoriichi first met and asked Ghost King, Muzan. The context of plots explores the concepts of life and death, human values, narratives of historical heritage and humanistic equality to explain the practice of the ultimate truth through memory, history, and the realization of a shared sense of goodness in public life to achieve the integration of altruism and self-discovery. This culmination, through the sources of human dignity, confidence, and innovation, enables the realization of the inherent beauty of being human.

As the leader, Kagaya Ubuyashiki, of Demon Slayer Corps said that the immortality of humanity relies on “the transmission of will” which reflects the concept of life and death. After the death of members of Demon Slayer squad, they met with their family members and in Tanjiro’s case, his family members and ancestors help him to win the war. In contrast with demons and the Ghost King in this series works, humans with an aging issue and fleshy bodies seems weak. However, when humans with emphasis on humanism and dignity to pursue a shared sense of goodness in public life to achieve the integration of altruism by self-discovery to achieve these goals, chances of reversing living hell happen. Through memory and history as truth seeking, narratives of love, historical heritage and humanistic equality, all of these help the weak create opportunities for new blood of genius and the turning point of possibility. The squad members are willing to sacrifice themselves to practice the truth as the pursuit of happiness for their love to their leader and comrades. Value systems empower human to fight evils in a society with the imagination of spiritual support and the pursuit of freedom in the background of modernization of Japan.

The narratives of conditions of life and death and historical heritage such as Tanjiro presented as the context for the pursuit of human values, and humanistic equality. As the temper of Muichiro Tokito changed after Tanjiro talked to him how we might save the weak may finally help ourselves later. “Helping Other people also ends up being beneficial for you at the end of the day.’ Life of Muichiro was changed and saved after these words of Tanjiro help him retain his memory of truth.

When Muichiro died and met his beloved family souls in different dimension space, he said as follows:

*“As for the reason I was born, I know that full well. I was born to be happy...When I was alone, there were many hard and painful things, but then... I made friends, and there were good times, so I was able to smile again. There were countless moments when I thought I was happy. Was that not enough? I don’t regret risking my life for my comrades.”*

Demon Slayer Corps are not fascinated with being the strongest. As Rengoku Kyoujurou fought with Akaza, “*Whether through aging or death, both are the beauty of the fleeting nature of humanity.*”

Rengoku’s mom talks to him as follows:

*“Do you know why you were born stronger than the average person?”*

*“Because you are meant to protect the weak.”*

*“People born with greater abilities must use their strength in this world, for the benefit of others.”*

Kokushibou asked his brother Tsugikuni Yoriichi about how possibly there will be no talents to learn from their skills?

*“My brother... we are not that great. We are merely a fragment of humankind’s long, long history. At this moment, those whose talent will surpass ours are uttering their*



*first cries. They may come to reach the same place. There is no need to worry. We can draw the curtain of life closed without unease at any time.”*

### **Lies, Cruelty of Ghost King and Demons as Totalitarian Ruling by Terror in the Demon Slayer Anime Series**

The value system of the tyrannical rule of the Ghost King, involves serving King as their main purpose of life, erasing their memories and history, rendering truth meaningless. From then on, only lies, continuous killing, and the fear of being killed remain. Due to cannibalism killing, elegance and refinement vanish from demons, leaving only the most basic biological needs for demons. Among the Twelve Demon Moons, the Upper Moons retain some semblance of humanity due to their obsessions, but others gradually lose their human appearance, humanity, and human values.

This totalitarian ruling system is not only the result of the Demon King's influence on demons but also stems from the inherent indifference, cruelty, and ruthlessness that demons experienced when they were humans. The psychological crisis leads to the disappearance of virtues, serving as a warning to people. It highlights how a momentary decision, whether to harm or save one, could contribute to the creation of such a different result. For example, Kanahi, one of Nine Pillars, hesitated to harm demon Zerosu, awondering if, had it not been for her sisters' saving her, she might have become Zerosu?

The eight Psychosocial stages of Erikson theory help explain possible demons' early psychosocial struggles. The failure of these struggles contributes to the development of an individual's personality and sense of self. These stages are as follows: Trust vs. Mistrust (infancy), Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt (toddlerhood), Initiative vs. Guilt (preschool), Industry vs. Inferiority (school-age), Identity vs. Role Confusion (adolescence), Intimacy vs. Isolation (young adulthood), Generativity vs. Stagnation (middle adulthood), and Ego Integrity vs. Despair (late adulthood) (Main, P., 2023). Therefore, some demons suffering psychosocial crisis may lose the basic virtues such as hope, will, fidelity, love or care but instead they may suffer from mistrust, shame, guilt, inferiority, role confusion or despair (See Table 2).

**Table 2. Psychosocial Crisis versus Virtue**

Stage	Psychosocial Crisis	Basic Virtue
1.	Trust vs. Mistrust	Hope
2.	Autonomy vs. Shame	Will
3.	Initiative vs. Guilt	Purpose
4.	Industry vs. Inferiority	Competency
5.	Identity vs. Role Confusion	Fidelity
6.	Intimacy vs. Isolation	Love
7.	Generativity vs. Stagnation	Care
8.	Ego Integrity vs. Despair	Wisdom

Retrieved from Erik Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development. McLeod, S. A. (2013). Table is adjusted by the author.

Demons as evil products who worship evil powerful ones without morals and values. Violence and terror as Demons' powerful strength is stronger than average humans but they live without memories, history, truth, love, and friendship; in fact, they turn to be the lower species because of their loss of free will and innocence. Demons in this series usually have traits of selfish, the relentless pursuit of being strongest or focusing only on their lower-level of selfish basic needs for justification of their human-killing. They are rarely shown as life with happiness or joy that should pervade in a good life but they like to show their strength to kill humans at ease to become stronger to please Ghost King. Man may turn demons because their respective inferiority complex, superiority complex (Lan, 2023) or their suffering from a living hell. When demons once were humans, their bad experience of hates shape their twisted personality and made them want to eat humans for revenge. As Aristotle explains when man reaches perfection, he is the best of animals; however, if he departs from law and justice, he becomes the most inferior animals, for unjust power is more perilous (Leung, 2017, p.65). For example, Kokushibou faced with the possibility that losing everything to his younger brother when his brother outperformed him and was once designated to inherit the family. This unhuman custom of handling male twin babies and his father's preferences on selection of heirs solely on swordsmanship above all leads to Kokushibou's distrust of society. In addition, Douma was asked by his parents to deceive followers by making him the cult leader. Years of manipulating fake sympathy toward cult believers in his childhood, he is devoid of genuine emotions and this may lead to a distorted personality which made him believe that consuming followers could liberate them. Tragic past of Akazah, Daki and Gyuutarou in their human era made them like had been living in the hell before they turned into demons. Maybe that is why Gyuutarou said he will always choose to be a ghost. To him, humans' world may be uglier than that of demons or ghosts.

### **The Powerful Shift of Values Turns to Humanism, Human Dignity, and Innovation**

"Fate is about to take a dramatic turn! The consequences will be widespread," Ubuyashiki said." When he gets the death news of Upper Moon Six killed by the Demon Slayers, he knows that it never happened for 100 years. For him, the first time he starts to believe that he can kill Muzan in his generation. At that moment, the powerful shifts of values of Demon Slayer Corps are fast moving toward the highest hierarchical needs described by Maslow which has expanded its model to eight stages. Maslow explains eight stages as "physiological", "safety", "belonging and love", "social needs" or "esteem", "self-actualization" and "transcendence" to specify the pattern through which human needs and motivations change. From a humanistic approach, Maslow explains the stage of self-actualization is to emphasize on fulfilling human potential and self-actualization (Wills, E. & McEwen, M., 2014, p. 308). For the seventh stage of self-actualization, characteristics of a self-actualized person are listed as follows: a realistic orientation, spontaneity, acceptance of self, acceptance of others, close relationships with others, autonomous thinking, appreciation of life, reactivity to others, consideration of others, and respect for others (Wills, E. & McEwen, M., 2014, p.296). In contrast, Abraham Maslow offered his description about needs of transcendence, needs of the eighth stage (Garcia, 2010):

Transcendence refers to the very highest and most inclusive or holistic levels of human consciousness, behaving and relating, as ends rather than means, to oneself, to significant others, to human beings in general... (1971, p. 269)

For the eighth stage as transcendence, persons are more likely to be motivated by values that transcend beyond self-actualization and represent the human desire to connect with a higher

purpose with the emphasis on altruism, spiritual connection, and helping others to achieve their potential or a deep sense of unity; in addition, it also referred to as spiritual needs and when this need are fulfilled, it may lead to integrity and take things to another level of being (Gautum, S., 2007).

Hundreds of years ago before the protagonist's (Tanjiro) time period, the most outstanding swords master, Yoriichi, appeared and initiated the use of the Sun-breathing style (Hono no kokyū), Red Swords, and the Transparent-world eyesight, all of which contribute to enhancing demon-slaying abilities. However, all the Swords masters who turned on stripes, except for Yoriichi, all passed away before the age of twenty-five. They were contemporaries of Yoriichi at that time, and the early demise of sword masters made them unable to forgive him. Even his brother, Michikatsu, who wanted to extend his life and turned into a demon. Additionally, Yoriichi spared life of Tamayo as a ghost. All of these reasons made his teammates so angry as to expel him from the Demon Slayer Corps. In short, the strongest Demon Slayer Corps happened hundred years ago, however, Demon Slayer Squad failed to kill Ghost King. In contrast, with Tanjiro's character and values described above, his Squad members not only develop transcendent values and get united more than those in the age of Yoriichi. Sparing lives of ghosts when they turn humanistic is one of the key factors for the Squad's final victory. As Nezuko's and Tamayo's blood demon art and Tamayo's killing doses help the generation of Tanjiro have a big breakthrough for the war. In addition, many members of Nine Pillars all learn the skills of Red Swords inspired by his ghost sister Nezuko and many of them have the Transparent-world eyesight learned from Tanjiro's father and many of them have stripes on their faces and bodies. This time they are ready to sacrifice with no one complaining about dying before at the age of 25.

## **Conclusion**

This paper discovers that the core power of the opposition against the Ghost King in the anime series actually arises from protagonists' perseverance to uphold the narrative logic of the inherent goodness of being human even amidst chaotic times and hardships.

With the context of globalization, not only virus can be spread rapidly and globally. The Southeast Asian transnational human trafficking cases (also known as Southeast Asian job scam or transnational job scam) refers to the human trafficking industry chain incidents that occurred in 2021, spanning across mainland China, Taiwan, the Philippines, Cambodia, and Myanmar, among other locations. These notorious crimes are also related to massive organ trafficking and kidnapping and murder cases. It turns into a new humanity disaster when people in some nations are worried about the failure of law and order in these areas. It is important to notice that humanity crises happened at several historical moments and mankind in different nations still faces severe sufferings as living hell.

Possibly, the World War III is looming and is warned and discussed by news media after the war between Russia and Ukraine and the war between Israel and Hamas. The living hell describes the existence of human disasters, tortures, pains, sadness, and huge human loss. We can save one soul and increase the spirits of humanism to stop the living hell. It is human value system that may change human beings into demons or save more souls to reverse the living hell as what this study describes "shift of value system."

As Muzan Kibutsuji said, I haven't got any punishments. I have been forgiven for killing hundreds of thousands of humans. I haven't seen God or Buddha for thousand years (Demon

Slayer vol.16). The Demon Slayer Corps have proved Muzan is wrong as Sorokin identified to produce and improve the love energy by increasing creative heroes of love as the increase of creative heroes of truth and beauty, thinkers and creators in different fields of science and the arts of the highest value, an increase in the production of love by groups and institutions. It is possible that a shift of value system is the answer for how to reverse the living hell or to avoid living hell in the future.

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*Concept Character Design of A 360° 2D Animation ‘Maiden Voyage’  
for Fine Dining Virtual Reality*

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**Abstract**

The animation and fine dining world has been changing due to the development of animation and culinary cuisine. The competition between these two worlds is fierce, and companies must strive to survive. Due to increased demand, interest, and competition, the digital art and industrial areas are exploring various technologies and techniques to enhance the immersive experience. This research offers a new combination of fine dining with a 360° 2D animation and virtual reality technique that is expected to give a unique fine dining experience and to border the cutting-edge digital art and industrial areas. Guests can watch the animation utilizing a head-mounted device while waiting for their dishes to be served. This research objective aims to create a concept character design for a 2D animated movie titled ‘Maiden Voyage’ based on an exciting and memorable three-dimensional character, fitting the story tailored to the setting on the cruise ship in 1912. The research method will include a literature study on basic character design, observation of people in 1942, and drawing experiments. The result of this current research will be the characters’ design sheets that will be useful for future research on character movement for a 360° 2D animation, ‘Maiden Voyage.’ This research will impact both the animation and the fine dining fields as it has considerable potential implications for the further study of the 360° animation and fine dining experience.

Keywords: Concept Character Design, 360° Video, 2D Animation, Fine Dining, Virtual Reality

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## Introduction

The competition in culinary cuisine is fierce, and companies must strive to survive. Some utilize technologies to compete. This is an opportunity for animation to present animation in other forms and not just on a flat screen. This is also a chance for the animation field to work with culinary cuisine to create an innovation in the fine dining experience. Advanced technologies keep growing in various ways. Adao, T., Pádua L., Foncesa, M., Agrellos L., Sausa., J. J. & Luis (2018) stated that there is a lot of demand for 360° video in development and research communities, but the tools are not developed yet. According to Choi K. H., Yoon Y. J., Song Y. S. & Choi S. M. (2018), images and videos that are shown in VR lack interactivity. Regarding fine dining, Namkung & Jang (2017) mentioned that the taste and the dish's presentation are crucial to customer satisfaction.

Many restaurants have been using projection mapping for the table, which brought the researchers to create their project called 'Si Dulang' in 2020, working together with Universitas Multimedia Nusantara, MDN, and the hospitality department, which is stated in a journal by Lukmanto, C. M. (2021). Widiastomo, Y. M. (2022) mentioned that choosing the projection mapping technique creates new opportunities for artists. This argument is supported by Shamsuddin, Islam & Islam (2013), who states that the visual design conceptual imagination is displayed through film, video, game, animation, illustration, or animation. Adestya Ayu Armeilia from the hospitality department was in charge of creating the menu. In contrast, Yohanes Merci Widiastomo, Christine Mersiana Lukmanto, and some film department students were on the project's creative side. This project provides an entire animation of about 5 minutes per act with a story about the journey of a 15-year-old boy to learn more about cooking. The researchers' prototype focused on Bali cuisine, serving four different dishes. However, one of the shortcomings of this technique is that one table needs to wait for other tables to be ready because the animation will be played together for every table simultaneously.

After completing the prototype, the team strived to explore how to engage the audiences with a better fine dining experience. With some delicate consideration and added Siti Adlina Rahmiaty, the researchers plan to create 360° 2D animation to give a unique fine dining experience by utilizing a head-mounted device (oculus) to watch the animation while waiting for their dishes to be served. Most works in 360° video are produced by live shooting with a 360° camera or 3D animation. 2D animation is rarely made in this form, as it is hard to find 2D animation on online references. The ones that appeared on YouTube were independent, primarily projects. One video the researcher took as a reference from SpongeBob SquarePants Official YouTube account is "Take a 360° VR Tour of Krusty Krab!" (2021).

'Maiden Voyage' tells a story about a conman who gets caught up in the crime of murder at a respectable family dinner on a cruise ship on his first voyage in 1912. This project is very challenging, considering the innovation of 360° 2D animation and virtual reality techniques. Joining hands with the hospital department, the researchers expect to create a prototype by the end of the year.





Figure 1: Maiden Voyage, 360° 2D animation.

## Research Purpose

Based on the background of 360° projects and a previous project called ‘Si Dulang,’ the research question is how the concept character design of a 360° 2D animation, ‘Maiden Voyage,’ was created for fine dining virtual reality and how effective fine dining with digital animation and innovative concept character design is. The research focuses on the characters in ‘Maiden Voyage’ and how memorable the characters are. ‘Maiden Voyage’ animation aims to give a unique fine dining experience and to boarder the cutting-edge digital art and industrial area, and this paper will discuss how to create a concept character design for 2D animated titled ‘Maiden Voyage,’ setting at the cruise ship in 1912. The researcher aims to get a project result with a prototype and character design artbook by the end of the year.

## Research Method

The research method that the researcher involved the literature study of 360° video character design observation, place visits to some immersive exhibitions and fine dining, a recce, and a survey will also be included in the research method to create the concept of character design for ‘Maiden Voyage,’ a 2D animation in 360° video. The creative production side of this research started with making the visual concept, style guide, and color palette, which were given to the illustrator to create the final character design sheet completed with the gestures and facial expressions. In this paper, the author will focus on creating the characters and how this new technique combines with fine dining.

## Data Analysis

‘Maiden Voyage’ is about a young man called Herbert trapped in the mystery where Richard, the father of the love of his life, died at a respectable family dinner on a cruise ship in 1912. The story is from Herbert’s point of view, where he is introduced to Dorothy’s family. The dinner starts when Richard comes to the table, and everyone else welcomes him warmly. After spending some time at dinner, he suddenly collapsed, and he lost his life right at that moment. Now, it leaves the audience to question who is the one that harmed him, what is the reason behind it, and how that person acted out the murder of Richard. However, the eight people at the table have the motive, alibi, and theory to harm Richard Wright, including Hebert.

The first step of this research is to prepare. Start with preparation by looking at the last project to see what can be improved for the next project. Some of the shortcomings of ‘Si Dulang’ are that the customers have to wait for other customers, and it is not very flexible in changing the menu. The hospitality department has set the menu, and the creative team has made the animated version to give the impression that the food they saw in the animated film came to life. The fare shown in Figure 2 is called Be Pasih Basa Genap, an authentic Indonesian dish from Bali. However, this might not be feasible in the business world, as restaurants typically already have regulations to develop their menu.



Figure 2: The audience's point of view of ‘Si Dulang,’ the projection mapping of the dish and the real version of the food.

The next step of our research was to brainstorm the ideas between the characters in the animation design and the contents of dining products. Focusing on the innovation aspect, the researchers tried to challenge the experiments of fine dining by combining taste and vision with a 360 2D animated video that tells a unique historical context on a cruise ship in 1912. To learn more about the setting and the people, the character design concept had to involve a literature study to develop the characteristics of the people and observation of the outfit from 1912. Comments on real people in 1921 and the illustration in Figure 3 sources gathered from online sources; Thomas, H. (2021)., Utomo S., S. B. (2023), Tim Redaksi RM 1. (2023) and Sessions, D. (2023). The outfits for women are primarily dresses with an empire waistline, and for males, they mostly wear a suit with a matching waistcoat.



Figure 3: Moodboard of concept character design of ‘Maiden Voyage.’

The research team researched places to visit with immersive experiences in Jakarta and Tangerang. The first place that they saw was Immersive Van Gogh in Jakarta. This place was a hit for Indonesians as many people have wanted to visit it and have been looking it up on social media. The author went there two times to collect the data. Surprisingly, the videos projected on each canvas differed between those two times visited. The researchers learned that the image was not high quality, but the sound and the music built up the atmosphere. The

next place was Hublife: Imersifku, which targeted more children by involving storytelling, acting, pop-up books, music, and animation to engage their attention. To learn more about the head-mounted device, the researcher went to Pause & Play, where the guests could play different games in each room. Museum Patah Hati at Chillax Sudirman was an exhibition with fun activities where the staff interacted with the guests. This was another way to have an immersive experience at a show. Imagispace and Under the Sea Experience were very similar to Immersive Van Gogh. However, the guests could interact with the animation with a touch at Imagispace, and there were properties to create the underwater atmosphere at Under the Sea Experience.

Regarding the dining experience, the researcher went to Namaaz Dining, where they used light and activities during the fine dining experience. The guests seemed to have fun and were immersed in the restaurant's performance. The dining experience is very different at Fukuramen, where the tables are divided into a divider for each guest, which is very convenient for single guests or introverts who want less interaction with the staff or any other customers.



Figure 4: Place visited by the researcher for ‘Maiden Voyage.’

When developing the technique of 360°, many trials were done with a process called recce, where the researchers gathered the actors and actresses in a delicate dinner setting. Here is when they will act according to the scripts and the personality of the concept character design. When recce has been done, the video will be injected into the head-mounted device to check what the customers will see. At this time, the researchers must ensure the ratio and the perspective are right so the video can guide the animating process. This process has been done a couple of times by repeating the same process over and over to get the right proportion.



Figure 5: Recce session of ‘Maiden Voyage.’

During the last recce, the actors and actresses were asked to dress like the character design to get themselves into the character and explore nature. Then, the researchers did the pre-test to get a picture of customer satisfaction using 360° videos. Due to time limitations, the animation for the prototype continued to progress for a couple of scenes of the actual animation. The protest of the prototype was to see the customers' thoughts and the different effects by adding animation appreciation to the video.

### **Character Design Concept**

There are nine characters in the story. All of these characters are important to be introduced as the mystery of the story is between these characters. To guess and look for the one who did the crime of murder, it is better to understand the characteristics of the characters, including the victim himself. Here is the character's profile:

1. **Richard Wright**

Richard is a 60-year-old man known as the devil of the ship with his blonde, highlighted white-haired male. His signature features are his yellow-brown eyes and thick beard. He took his job seriously as a captain and owned Richard Maritime & Shipment. He doesn't take care of his family and has an affair with Betty Lopez, his housemaid.

2. **Virginia Wright**

Richard's good wife and Dorothy's good mother is a 62-year-old woman with a chubby, loving face, blonde hair, and brown eyes. She has a mole above the right eyebrow. She was married to Richard by an arrangement from both families. Her love for him grew after the marriage, but she later found out about the affair.

3. **Dorothy Wright**

A 24-year-old female who is slim and pretty who tries always to look fashionista and elegant. Her birthmark is a mole near her left eye. She falls in love with Herbert but later finds out he is a thief but is determined to stay with him. Dorothy is gullible, sincere, full of love, ambitious, and young-spirited.

4. **Herbert Monroe**

Herbert had a tough childhood where his parents abandoned him; he lived with an uncle and started to earn money by stealing and working in labor. He has quite a list of criminal records, including stealing, drugs, and harassment. He is 28 years old, tall and skinny, with brown hair, blue-gray eyes, and a left eyebrow cut.

5. **Robert Wright**

The youngest brother of Richard, a 48-year-old man, is a spoilt one with a tattoo on his right neck. As the youngest of the Wright family, he often gets what he wants without effort. At home, he acts like an innocent child, but on the other hand, he smokes drugs and is a womanizer.

6. **Lilian Davis**

Tall, curvy, dark, long brown hair, dark brown eyes, and freckles between the eyes and nose are the signatures of this 24-year-old female. She is currently studying fashion to have her fashion line. Lilian had been a friend of Dorothy since childhood, often visiting their house. On one occasion, she witnessed Richard having an affair with another woman. The first person to know about Richard's affair.

7. **Lois Davis**

The tiny, cute, and youngest at the dinner table is Lilian Davis's younger sister. Lois is 15 years old and always wears a sky-blue ribbon. Her signature is the mole on the right collarbone. The sisters are very close to each other. She knows almost every



secret that her sister has. Her sister likes to doll her up, which she very much enjoys. She is interested in mysteries, horror, and thriller films.

8. Charles McPherson

Richard's business partner and his right hand, a co-founder of Richard Maritime & Shipment, who is 62 years old, needs a walking stick to help him walk. He has a big birthmark on his left hand. They met while studying at a university and have been working together for years since then. He feels he has never gotten enough credit for what he has done for the company and struggles financially.

9. Barbara McPherson

Barbara is Charles's nurse, a 58-year-old female with a little scar on the right cheek near the ear. A big money spender. She is a shopaholic and likes to treat herself to expensive outfits, jewelry, bags, home appliances, and home decor. She is self-centered and very demanding towards her family, especially her husband. She gets frustrated when her husband can't provide much money.

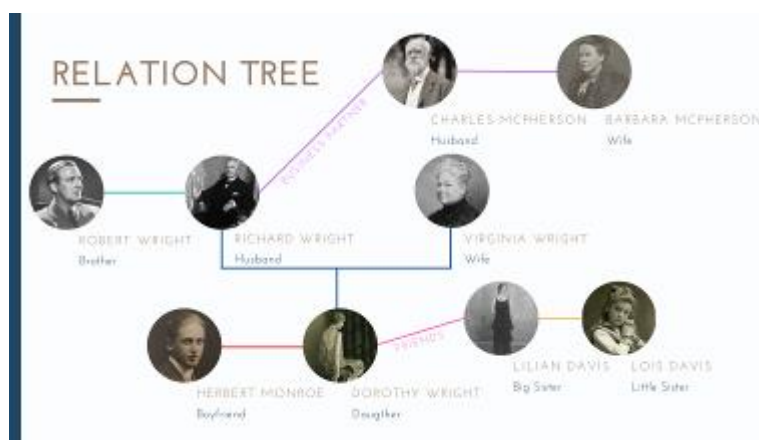


Figure 6: Relation Tree of the characters in Maiden Voyage.

The eight people in 'Maiden Voyage' who sit at the table have the motive, alibi, and theory to harm Richard Wright, including Hebert himself. Figure 6 illustrates the relationship between the characters, while Figure 7 is each character's motive, alibi, and theory chart.



Figure 7: The motive, alibi, and theory breakdown of the characters in Maiden Voyage.

To get a better understanding of the story and also the technical issues. The researchers must understand the table setting of the character projected in Figure 8. This is important to the story itself, as the setting could give a clue or giveaway for the audience to know who is the one who is trying to harm Richard. Therefore, the author created a guide for the story to align with the technical side of research and further research steps. The audience will be Herbert, so that they will sit next to Dorothy and Lilian.



Figure 8: Table seating of the characters in Maiden Voyage.

The illustrator team managed to illustrate the character (Figure 9), adding some personal color to each color according to their personality. For example, Richard is drawn with a square as his basic shape to show how stiff, sturdy, and stubborn he is, and the brown color presents his resilience and the feeling of isolation.



Figure 9: Character Design Illustration for Maiden Voyage.

Once the characters have been illustrated, the characters are placed in a 360° environment that has been done with a 3D medium. This 3D model is a guide and will not be presented in the project's final development. The challenging part of this stage is the distortion of the drawing of the characters. It has to match the 3D model.



Figure 10: Characters positioning for Maiden Voyage.

The project's final development will be looking at all 2D for both characters and the environment, as shown in Figure 11. Most color is in a sepia color scheme to create a vintage look as it matches 1912.



Figure 11: Final look at the development of Maiden Voyage.

### Research Findings

This survey of pre-test and post-test was done after the prototype was taken. Both the pre-test and post-test complicate every graph in this section. It shows how successful the character design is. Based on the questions on how memorable the character design for 'Maiden Voyage,' the result shows that the characters are memorable, with 43.5% of respondents giving a rating of 5 out of 5, 34.8% of respondents giving a rating of 4 out of 5 and 21.7% giving a rating 3 out of 5.

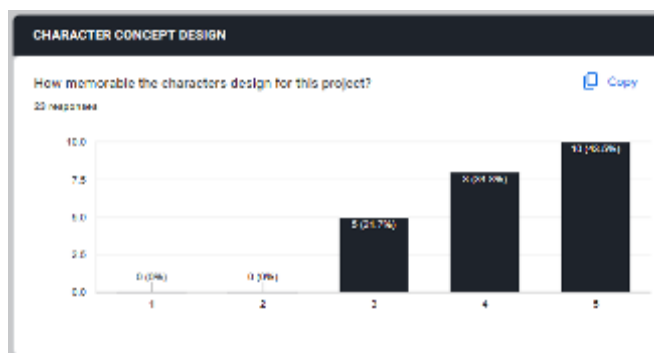


Figure 12: Graphic on how memorable the character design is.

Based on the question about the most and the least appealing, the responders were given the illustration and watched the animation with a head-mounted device. The result illustrates that the most appealing character is Dorothy Wright, and the least appealing character is Herbert Monroe and Charles McPherson.

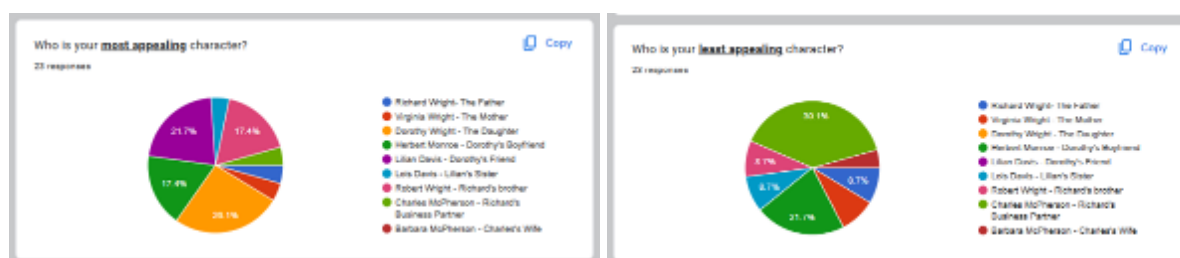


Figure 13: Diagrams of the most appealing and the least appealing character.

The chart below illustrates that most guests like the experience of using 360° techniques and the concept of 360° animations for fine dining. 91.3% of responders claimed that they feel comfortable watching 360° videos. They feel this project has a nice and unique approach between the techniques, story, and characters. However, some argue that the technique might not be as attractive as it is not interactive to the user, gives motion sickness to some viewers, and can give an empty feeling.

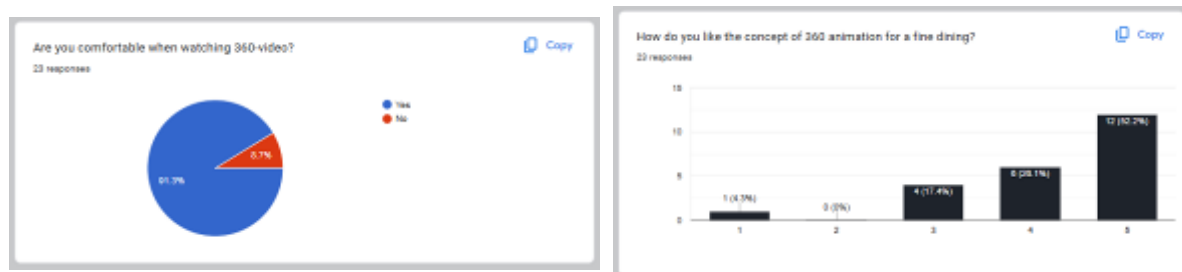


Figure 14: Diagrams of the 360° techniques.

## Conclusion

'Maiden Voyage,' 360° 2D animation, and virtual reality techniques give a unique fine dining experience, which is likable by the guests but also challenging. This research combines fine dining with digital animation and innovative concept character design using a head-mounted device. It is a new and exciting experience. Most responders to the survey liked the idea of combining digital animation and innovative concept character design. These three elements work well for this project; however, some users argue that the 360° video might not be as attractive to some users.

The author must admit that the head-mounted device may not be user-friendly for guests wearing glasses as it might cause dizziness. The integration of fine dining, virtual reality, and 2D animation could be a new form of digital industries and can be further developed in the future. This project will work better with better technology on the 360° device. The character concept design for the 2D animated movie 'Maiden Voyage' is memorable and suits the setting on a cruise ship in 1912. The historical context in the illustration is shown in the film. The survey responders appreciated the project's visual aspects, enhancing the fine dining experience.

Based on this project, the researchers admit that there are some shortcomings. The menu has not been set. The researchers had been expecting to have some clue about the murder, which relates to the story of 'Maiden Voyage'; however, due to time limitations, the team had not set the menu. This year, research focuses on the prototype for the technical issues and has not been doing much research on the dining process, especially the menu. Therefore, for further research, the team will focus on the dining experiences to see how the customers feel and get feedback based on the combination of digital animation and innovative concept character design to see their perceptions of taste and vision of 'Maiden Voyage.' The researchers believe this project can impact animation and the fine dining fields as it has big potential implications for further study on the 360° animation and fine dining experience. Therefore, it will be significant for further research in digital art and industrial applications.



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