

# The 3rd Paris Conference on Arts & Humanities (PCAH2024)

---

The 2024 IAFOR Summer Conference Series in Paris

June 13-17, 2024 | Paris, France, and Online

OFFICIAL CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

ISSN 2758-0970

Organised by The International Academic Forum (IAFOR) in partnership with the IAFOR Research Centre at the Osaka School of International Public Policy (OSIPP) at Osaka University, Japan, and IAFOR's Global Partners



“To Open Minds, To Educate Intelligence, To Inform Decisions”

The International Academic Forum provides new perspectives to the thought-leaders and decision-makers of today and tomorrow by offering constructive environments for dialogue and interchange at the intersections of nation, culture, and discipline. Headquartered in Nagoya, Japan, and registered as a Non-Profit Organization (一般社団法人), IAFOR is an independent think tank committed to the deeper understanding of contemporary geo-political transformation, particularly in the Asia Pacific Region.

INTERNATIONAL

INTERCULTURAL

INTERDISCIPLINARY

**iafor**



# **International Academic Board**

Dr Joseph Haldane, IAFOR and Osaka University, Japan, & University College London, United Kingdom

Professor Jun Arima, President, IAFOR & University of Tokyo, Japan

Professor Anne Boddington, Executive Vice-President and Provost, IAFOR & Middlesex University, United Kingdom

Professor Barbara Lockee, Virginia Tech, United States

Professor Donald E. Hall, Binghamton University, United States

Dr James W. McNally, University of Michigan, United States & NACDA Program on Aging

Professor Grant Black, Chuo University, Japan

Professor Dexter Da Silva, Keisen University, Japan

Professor Baden Offord, Centre for Human Rights Education, Curtin University, Australia & Cultural Studies Association of Australasia

Professor Frank S. Ravitch, Michigan State University College of Law, United States

Professor William Baber, Kyoto University, Japan

# **PCE & PCAH2024 Conference Programme Committee**

Professor Grant Black, Chuo University, Japan

Professor Georges Depeyrot, French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS), France

Dr Joseph Haldane, IAFOR and Osaka University, Japan, & University College London, United Kingdom

Professor Donald E. Hall, Binghamton University, United States

Professor Barbara Lockee, Virginia Tech, United States

Professor Ljiljana Marković, European Center for Peace and Development (ECPD), Serbia



The Paris Conference on Arts & Humanities 2024

Official Conference Proceedings

ISSN: 2758-0970



© The International Academic Forum 2024  
The International Academic Forum (IAFOR)  
Sakae 1-16-26-201  
Naka Ward, Nagoya, Aichi  
Japan 460-0008  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)





## Table of Contents

<i>Discursive Connection: The Constructive Potential of the Digital Public Sphere</i> Qi Zhang Yuhong Li	pp. 1 - 12
<i>Exploring the Ultimate Causes of Migration: A Peace Studies Approach</i> Irina Charlotte Ranaivosoa	pp. 13 - 27
<i>Exploring Exile and Crosscultural Complexities in Yasmine Gooneratne's "A Change of Skies"</i> Mukesh Yadav	pp. 29 - 36
<i>Applying CDA and Vladimir Propp's "Morphology of the Folktale" on Nicholas Sparks's "Safe Haven"</i> Doaa Taher Matrood AL-dihaymawee Yousif Ali Yousif Salman	pp. 37 - 47
<i>Phenomenographic Enhanced Video Analysis</i> Wilfried Swoboda Rolf Laven	pp. 49 - 60
<i>Eclipse Symbolism in Hampi's Sculptural Heritage: A Multidisciplinary Approach</i> Amogh R. Vaidya	pp. 61 - 73
<i>Frontline Narratives: Uncovering Women's Voices in War Journalism</i> Gabriella Jeki	pp. 75 - 84
<i>Cultural Linguistics: Exploring the Dynamic Interplay of Language and Culture in Contemporary Society</i> Adelfa C. Silor Faith Stephanny C. Silor Miguelito B. Emfimo	pp. 85 - 92
<i>Diasporic Vietnamese Literature in the U.S. From the Perspective of Identity, and the Case of Viet Thanh Nguyen</i> Nguyễn Hồng Anh Phan Thu Vân	pp. 93 - 103
<i>Rethinking Resilience, Traversing Trauma: A Study of Sexually Abused Children and Young Adults in Tracey Hoffmann's "Valley of Chaya"</i> Sheetal Kumari	pp. 105 - 112
<i>Digitalization, New Media &amp; OTT: Case Study of Ushering New Perspectives for Gender Issues</i> Chayanika Uniyal Amna Mirza	pp. 113 - 124

- Decolonial Approaches to Teaching Art History*  
Lesley Thornton-Cronin pp. 125 - 132
- Bringing Back Affect: A New Approach to Post-modernist Art Through the Lens of Doris Salcedo's Atrabiliarios*  
Vanessa Schuster pp. 133 - 140
- Promoting Social Innovation With Hybrid Company Forms of Social Enterprises*  
Prapin Nuchpiam pp. 141 - 153
- Metaphoric Thinking on Audiovisual Performance of the "Noches en los Jardines de España"*  
Yudan Wang pp. 155 - 167
- "Zhuó Li Ji Cha" (着力即差) – An Analysis of the Concept of "Integration" in Su Sui's Music and Painting*  
Ling Sayuri Chen pp. 169 - 181
- 'Art is Going to Save Us' – The Self Perception of the Mumbai Art Sphere in Contemporary Art Galleries*  
Elvira Mishra  
Jayesh Pillai pp. 183 - 194

***Discursive Connection:  
The Constructive Potential of the Digital Public Sphere***

Qi Zhang, Nanjing University, China  
Yuhong Li, Nanjing University, China

The Paris Conference on Arts & Humanities 2024  
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

This paper comprehensively investigates the communication landscape in the era of social media; and analyzes the public sphere as a shared space of framing and the power competition in it. Unequal capital distribution undermines the ideal public sphere's growth. In this online landscape, the public sphere has shifted from fragmented to scattered, intensifying elite stratification. New online news citizens emerge, gaining audiences. Network news citizens with large bases sway ordinary audiences, forming "discursive communities". These "discursive communities" show traits like "decentralization", "temporality", "fickleness", and "negotiability", aggregating digitally for negotiation and defense. Their boundaries are ambiguous, breaking communication hierarchy, weakening mainstream media and traditional elites, even fostering populism. Legal action and intellectual growth are barriers against chaotic power collusion and transfer. Accordingly, this paper explores the dynamic public participation patterns, new challenges, and proposes the digital public sphere potentials.

Keywords: Digital Public Sphere, Discursive Community, Hierarchy Mode, Public Participation, Cognition

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

## Introduction

Many classical theories in the field of political communication, such as agenda setting, framing theory, and indexing theory, are mostly based on a common assumption: they are in a political community with a country as the unit, and most citizens are in a common and consistent public sphere. Gamson (1988) noted the discourse struggle in the public sphere is a crucial component of people's everyday public life in a democratic society because the arrival rate of mass media information is extremely high (as cited in Pan, 2006, p. 161-174).<sup>1 2</sup> This paper analyzes the public participation patterns, discourse contest, negotiation, and integration among different power levels in the public sphere. The significance of digital media for the construction of an ideal public sphere is an imaginative topic.

## The Ideal Form of the Public Sphere and the Mode of Public Participation

### *The Ideal Form of the Public Sphere*

Habermas's liberal public sphere model has normative ideas and points out what a public sphere should be in an ideal situation. It should be in a social welfare country, where everybody is part of the public. As a "network for exchanging information and opinions", the expansion of the public sphere and the development of media technology complement each other. A steady flow of mass media can bring people together in modern society. The space in the communication framework is the public sphere. Citizens are free to gather and unite to express their opinions; state power is "public power", which is legalized by the electorate, but the state and its power and practices are not part of the public sphere where opinions are formed (Calhoun, 1993, p. 613).<sup>3</sup>

However, modern democratic countries with developed industries lack this ideal public sphere and idealistic democratic model. That is mainly because of two reasons. First, the realm of rationality and universal politics, separated from the economy and government, has been destroyed by the same forces that originally formed it. The government and capitalists understand the power of the market and information and strengthen the control of mass media through power and capital. Different power relations and resource allocations suppress the identity of the public as citizens and their willingness to participate in civic discussions. For example, as consumers of media and videos, the public's status as participants in political and cultural discussions has been reduced. Second, the wide coverage of mass media has brought a crisis, that is, how to ensure the authenticity of extensive communication and achieve the "undistorted communication" emphasized by Habermas.

Habermas's definition of a public sphere is the first attempt to classify the formation of public opinion and the legalization of the state and democracy in western society. It is also the most basic trigger point. The change in social structure leads to a change in understanding of the public sphere. Therefore, researchers must understand what public opinions are and how they are most recently formed.

---

1 Pan, Z. (2006). Framing Analysis: Toward an Integrative Perspective. *The Chinese Journal of Communication and Society*, 1, 17-46.

2 Gamson, W.A. (1988). A Constructionist Approach to Mass Media and Public Opinion. *Symbolic Interaction*, 11, 161-174.

3 Calhoun, C. (1993). Habermas and the public sphere. *German Studies Review*, 17, 613.

## ***Public Participation and Discourse Contest***

The confrontation between a communication network and the internet is the confrontation of communication power. Lippman (1925) posits that: “the public exists merely as an illusion, myth, and inevitably a phantom, the influence of public opinion on politics is merely a device when one power in an interest group resists another power”.<sup>4</sup> Discourse contest is a power contest. In digital media era, Different power levels rob cognition resources and reconstruct cognition structures in new ways.

Classical theories on the direction of communication include agenda setting, multilevel communication, and framing theory. Nowadays, the internet has developed into the Web 3.0 era. The development of digital media has brought about significant changes in the social background and media environment. Several scholars, such as Bimber (2020) claimed that the technologies of the digital media era make public spheres most vulnerable to epistemic threats. These have examined destabilization, incoherence, fragmentation, disruption, dissonance, commercialization, mediatization, and others (p. 700-715).<sup>5</sup> At the same time, some scholars suggested that no matter whether digital media is making cognitive problems in the public domain move in a better or more problematic direction, in the face of changes, how should the public sphere spawned by digital media overcome the new problems (Hong & Kim, 2018, p. 388-399).<sup>6</sup> My research question is: in the era of digital media, is the connection and dialogue between strong and weak power in the public sphere strengthened? Under this question, we can try to understand: Can the public resist unequal political power? Are the traditional boundaries among different groups broken? Can the public generate common ground and consensus through opinion exchange? This paper looks at discourse struggle and power hierarchy in the digital public sphere, and examines the key factors in the exercise of public power in the public sphere in the era of digital media. The contact and the gap between the ideal public sphere are also discussed here.

### **Hierarchical “Connection” in the Digital Public Sphere**

In the era of digital media, the morphological characteristics of the public sphere have further changed. The public sphere of political communication and whether “distorted communication” has improved are concerns of scholars.

This paper holds that, the development of digital media has increased the connection and dialogue between strong and weak powers. This phenomenon is a resistance to bureaucracy and the inequality of political power. It realizes the potential of the public sphere, that is, it produces common ground and consensus through the selfless exchange of views and weakens the traditional boundaries between groups. In digital media, the goal is to restore a complete and undistorted communication and to reconstruct a connected framework in the public sphere.

---

4 Lippmann, W. (1925). *The Phantom Public*. Transaction Publishers.

5 Bimber, B., & Gil de Zúñiga, H. (2020). The unedited public sphere. *New Media & Society*, 22, 700-715.

6 Hong, S., & Kim, N. (2018). Will the internet promote democracy? Search engines, concentration of online news readership, and e-democracy. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, 15, 388-399.

### ***Integration of Dual Consciousness: “Undistorted” Communication***

First, in the digital media environment, the boundary between private and public “double consciousness” in the public sphere is further blurred.

Second, the knowledge background map of participants in the public sphere has grown rapidly in the context of digital media. It has opened ideological and cultural significance ranges that were previously more unified and narrower.

In the public sphere are professionals and the public at large. To maintain the integrity of the public sphere, rationalizing the dissemination mode of public information and the rationality of the public is necessary. The operation of public reason is essentially a process of public reasoning or public debate on many subjects. Having a space to accommodate and bear is essential for the operation of public affairs. This situation allows citizens to freely discuss public affairs and participate in politics, which is a basic condition of democratic politics.

The questions are as follows: First, do the interlocutors in the public sphere have enough in common in terms of values, expression norms, and persuasion agreements, so that their conversation has the quality of deliberation aimed at reaching an agreement by providing reasons? This question is an empirical problem and not a conceptual one. Second, public discourse needs the support of a knowledge base. However, what everyone can understand within the scope of consciousness is limited, which remarkably restricts the accessible scope of the public domain. In the past, scholars pinned the formation of public opinion for political criticism on an “educated middle class” between aristocratic society and citizen-class intellectuals. This middle class undertakes all political functions in the context of civil society's political liberation from the control of mercantilism and even absolutism.

With the development of digital media, things that can be understood through personal consciousness are infinitely magnified. Meaning, touching, and judging fields that they are not proficient at and cannot understand are easy for people. This scenario is somewhat a kind of extreme confrontation between publicity and authority and political liberation that breaks through their own knowledge barriers. Only when the abstract communication of information to any place in society is established can the public sphere exist. A digital media platform provides a more comprehensive platform where different and infinite public members can have a dialogue across cultural boundaries. This ability enables the public from different regions to communicate as if they were in the same geographical location. Apart from providing opinions and information, it provides a sense of trust and affinity like that of close friends.

### ***Right to Know and Express of the Weak Power***

Expression and debate help people uncover the truth and pursue it. The pursuit of truth can be traced back to ancient civilization, and social constructivism originated from the ancient Greek philosopher Socrates: Absolute truth is the same for all people. Therefore, it has nothing to do with human existence, is independent of everyone, and does not exist for human beings. It is imperative that human beings express their opinions honestly, see the truth in their opinions, and speak to reveal the truth in their opinions (Arendt, 1990, p. 73-74).<sup>7</sup> Since the articulation of Socrates' thought, philosophers have been exploring what

---

<sup>7</sup> Arendt, H. (1990). Philosophy and Politics. *Social Research*, 57, 73–103.

truth is and how to obtain it and believe that politics is not based on absolute truth or an attempt to achieve a consensus but on expressing diverse opinions.

The era of “post-truth”, in which information is complicated, is characterized by a power of expression that can equally affect all sections of society. This paper holds that, the blessing of expression outweighs the harm caused by the undermining of the right to know.

According to the observation and research of Stanley Deetz, attention to election politics makes arranging legal conflicts a process of making resolutions. It is achieved by endowing them with the legitimacy of choice and repression, making certain choices possible, and suppressing others. However, repression is not the same as stifling and eliminating conflicting statements. On the contrary, the power difference in creating meaning, identifying, and obtaining information is considered significant than power itself. Stanley Deetz (1992) claimed that way of thinking about communication can be developed as a focus on communication as a constitutive process rather than an informational one.<sup>8</sup> Politicians use public opinion as a battlefield to decide whether a tax rate should be lowered, and the simplest breaking force is a direct message from the people: we expect a lower/more reasonable tax rate. As Ralph Emerson stated, “The man is only half himself, the other half is his expression” (Goodman, 2008).<sup>9</sup> This paper argues that the right to expression can be classified into information transmission, opinion expression, public debate, and active mobilization.

The media gives the public the right to express themselves in various ways and empowers them to participate in civic affairs in complicated daily life. This scenario is also an idealized institutional background that scholars have been looking for, allowing all citizens to enjoy equal opportunities and rights to speak. Such atmosphere not only supports the development of public opinion but also limits bureaucratic and political control. Gaining the right to speak is a constant priority to trigger consultations and debates. We can establish and maintain a unique democratic communication framework based on citizens so that the latter can break through the constraints of socio-economic conditions and practice their own power of communication, political participation, and national governance. Digital media largely embodies Rousseau’s spirit of “general will” and stimulates the imagination of political activists and scholars affected by the participatory democracy revival.

## **Discursive Community in the Digital Public Sphere**

### ***Discursive Community From Representative System to Discursive Discussion***

The paper argues that, in the early classification and description of the public domain, the word “discursive” combined communication with a more appropriate connotation. In the discussion of the public sphere of modern democracy, public sphere theory is often divided into four models, namely “representative liberal”, “participatory liberal”, “discursive” and “constructionist” (as cited in Ferree et al., 2002, p. 289-324).<sup>10</sup> It is not easy to draw a clear line between “participation freestyle” and “discursive”. Both models advocate equal acceptance of the public into the public sphere. In contrast, “discursive” emphasizes that

---

8 Deetz, S.A. (1992). *Democracy in an Age of Corporate Colonization: Developments in Communication and the Politics of Everyday Life*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

9 Goodman, R. (2008). *Ralph Waldo Emerson*. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

10 Ferree, M.M., Gamson, W.A., Gerhards, J., & Rucht, D. (2002). Four models of the public sphere in modern democracies. *Theory and Society*, 31, 289-324.

daily decisions should be accepted only after extensive public discussion, and independent actors communicate in different ways and respect different views. Therefore, it is found that “discursive” emphasizes the characteristics of “discussion and negotiation” and “argument and struggle”.

When Pan and Kosicki (2001) described the communication competition process, he pointed out that all social members participated in the framework process of public discourse integration. The framework defined boundaries for topics. He used “discursive” to describe the collective sharing these conventions and rules within the border.<sup>11</sup> In framing an issue, each social aggregate “acts out” its discursive as well as sociological binding.

This paper agrees that “discursive” expresses a unit that is not closely linked in a limited geographical area, but a temporary and discursive set, which can take collective action in deliberative politics through “discussion, consultation and defense”.

This paper argues that, In the digital media era, the boundary of the “discursive community” is vague and changeable, the elite is constantly divided into more segments. The emerging online news citizens rise and gain wider audiences, generalizing new opinion leaders. The voice of the mass and the public is amplified. In this process, the forces of mainstream media and traditional political elites are divided, media frames are reconstructed, a “framing cascade spiral” force is formed.

However, as the scholars of the opposition to online democracy put forward, people are challenged by fragmented information, and online forums are more akin to “echo rooms”. People are more willing to look for people with the same ideas, thus strengthening their views rather than challenging themselves by choosing different views. Moreover, the populist riot crisis escalates.

### ***Competition With New Rules: Dynamic Dimension and Overlapping Space***

With “discursive communities”, the speed and scope of its alliance can break traditional communication barriers. On the other hand, the discursive public sphere leads to a divided perception of reality. After adapting to the online environment, elite and mainstream media can enhance framework construction to capture audience preferences. In discourse competition in the digital media era, discourse builders are more diverse, but also more discordant.

Some scholars are on the opposition to online democracy. In 2018, Entman and Nikki (2018) revised the cascading network activation model of frame activation and spread, developed before digital media’s rise. They consider five important, new, digitally enabled “pump-valves” in the flow of socio-political information and frames: platforms, analytics, algorithms, ideological media, and rogue actors (p. 298-308).<sup>12</sup> They argued that the public will accept the upper-level frame setting more easily, rather than improving the public’s framing ability.

---

11 Pan, Z., & Kosicki, G.M. (2001). *Framing as a Strategic Action in Public Deliberation*. Political Science.

12 Entman, R.M., & Usher, N. (2018). Framing in a Fractured Democracy: Impacts of Digital Technology on Ideology, Power and Cascading Network Activation. *Journal of Communication*, 68, 298-308.



Some scholars have challenged the previous vertical framing network mode. They think that the frame-level link mode has shifted from vertical to horizontal and has had a significant impact on the competitive advantages and disadvantages of the communication level. Yuan Xiao (2016) believes that in the digital age, the power of vertical media gradually shifts to horizontal media (p. 67-78).<sup>13</sup> Bennett et al. (2018) believed that: “Emerging ideological preferences on the left for direct or deliberative democracy create organizational preferences for horizontal models of democratic linkage that run counter to the models typically offered by parties” (p. 1655-1680).<sup>14</sup>

This paper holds that, from the perspective of framing competition, the vertical transmission mode is symbiotic with the horizontal transmission mode. The vertical and horizontal overlap triggers different power levels to rob cognitive resources and reconstruct cognitive structure in new ways.

First, the competition landscape is changed. On the one hand, digital platforms lack traditional organizational control and unified boundaries, which help horizontal transmission. This fact has opened the imagination of scholars affected by the participatory democratic revival. On the other hand, the horizontal mode may also cooperate with the vertical mode to strengthen the power competition. For example, the strong level of framing can predict the frame effect and construct vague discourse in the open media field, so that the content can be edited later. In addition, the strong level can take full advantage of opinion surveys, content collection, and emotional stimulation. To conclude, different construction modes can be adopted in a discursive digital media environment to engage all possible and dynamic dimensions of framing competition in the context of discursive digital media.

Second, the situation of public power is changed. It is controversial whether digital media magnifies the power of the elite or the power of the public. This paper proposes that the multi-partisan nature of election culture makes public opinion so critical, significantly improving public expression power in the digital age. In the post-truth society, the right of self-expression is even more critical than the right to know, and it promotes public rights restoration. Opinion surveys, content collection or emotional incitement are not brand-new things. In terms of society's complexity and intellectual status, the elite cannot completely control human emotions. Emotional agitation resistance of people growing up in the digital age increases simultaneously. Many researches support this propose. For example, Uitermark et al. (2016) developed a network method to identify groups forming through discursive contentious interactions as well as relational measures of polarization, leadership, solidarity, and various aspects of discursive power. They found a recurrent pattern: a small yet cohesive group of challengers with strong discursive leaders forces their framing of integration issues upon other participants. They suggest that the pattern may exemplify a more universal network pattern behind discursive contention (p. 107-115).<sup>15</sup>

---

13 Yuan X. (2016). Evolution and Innovation of the ‘Agenda-Setting’ Theory in the Digital Age: Interview with Professor Donald Shaw, one of the co-founders of the ‘Agenda-Setting’ Theory. *Chinese Journal of Journalism & Communication*, 38(4), 67-78.

14 Bennett, W.L., Segerberg, A., Knüpfer, C.B., & Kennedy, J.F. (2017). The democratic interface: technology, political organization, and diverging patterns of electoral representation. *Information, Communication & Society*, 21, 1655-1680.

15 Uitermark, J., Traag, V.A., & Bruggeman, J. (2016). Dissecting discursive contention: A relational analysis of the Dutch debate on minority integration, *Social Networks*, 47, 107-115.

### ***Cognition Improvement and Legal Protection of Framing Sharing***

The paper argues that digital media attempts to touch the ideal public sphere on moral and legal levels. At different hierarchy levels and dimension, the result of wrestling is not absolute.

The digital cognition in this paper is not equal to education or culture but refers to the wisdom and cognitive ability to rationally treat emotional incitement, morally treat different opinions, and grasp and cherish the right of self-representation and speech in the digital age. Moreover, studying how digital media affects and allow “persuasion” is necessary. Persuasive speeches allow the public to make meaningful critical choices.

From a legal point of view, the protection and shaping of the public sphere and public opinion by law have also undergone changes from the traditional media era to the digital media era, and the intensity and mode of operation of power and capital have changed.

When we look into America, the First Amendment to the Constitution safeguards the freedom of the press. In the famous Pentagon document case, Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black stood on the side of the majority and eloquently explained the special and constitutionally protected role of the media: “The press is protected. It can expose government secrets and inform the public that the press is serving the public” (Baughman & Rudenstine, 1997, p. 1263).<sup>16</sup> Over the next few years, many defenses were made by media companies, the Communications Commission, the Federal Court, and the Supreme Court to balance the Constitution with social concerns. These defenses formed a basic legal form in the era of traditional media. Generally, freedom of the press is certainly a relative term.

In the “post-truth” era, the President of the United States and other politicians have transferred most of their communication with the public to the Internet by using digital media. There is widespread debate about whether the First Amendment should extend to government actors’ social media pages and how politicians should structure their approach to online presence (Briggs, 2018, p. 1).<sup>17</sup> In the era of digital media, some restrictive rules applied to traditional media, such as speech screening, providing information sources, and high libel fines, are meaningless. The construction of digital media law is also a development field, including criminal and civil aspects.

In short, whether the legal system protects the idea public sphere can be summarized as follows: 1. If the law allows digital media companies to supervise and control speeches of politicians and the government; 2. If the legislation controls the behavior of digital media companies in participating in government actions or being influenced by them; 3. If the public comments on social networking sites are not malicious rumors, will their criticisms, doubts, inquiries, and statements to public figures are protected by law, even if the authenticity of the comments has not been verified. By providing similar legal provisions, the public can build a framework of communication, break down barriers, create links at different levels, and realize the “cascade spiral”.

---

16 Baughman, J.L., & Rudenstine, D. (1997). The day the presses stopped: a history of the Pentagon papers case. *American Journal of Legal History*, 102, 1263.

17 Briggs, S. (2018). The Freedom of Tweets: The Intersection of Government Use of Social Media and Public Forum Doctrine. *Columbia Journal of Law and Social Problems*, 52, 1.

## Research Conclusion and Prospect

“The magic of digital time makes people, media and society regroup in communication” (Du, 2021, p. 79-87+94).<sup>18</sup> The self-breathing ability, fertility, monitoring power and ecological dimension of network information dissemination are all causing the transformation of overall media power, which leads to the redistribution of cognitive resources and structure and the transformation of cognitive construction subjects. Digital technology can reverse traditional relationship dimensions and reshape space-time dimension.

A major feature of the online world is its rich resources. Nowadays, the whole media system is like an ecosystem with rapidly expanding biodiversity. In this ecosystem, all levels have been endowed with new advantages and potentials while having also created new traps and crises. Unlike the actual ecological environment, human beings are hunted for their consciousness and support, but they never give up the fight. Media ecology is collapsing and reconstructing.

In the discursive media environment, the media framework is constantly modified, restated, and spread at different levels, and the vertical transmission mode is more and more symbiotic with the horizontal transmission mode, which triggers multiple power levels to rob cognitive resources and reconstruct cognitive structure in a new way, which is dynamic and overlapping.

On the one hand, the public can switch between private and public spaces at will, with the speed, width, and flexibility of online group alliances, traditional communication hierarchies can be broken down, and public discourse is more likely to constrain top-level framework construction. Political elites need to adjust their rationality. On the other hand, in the discourse competition in the digital media era, discourse builders are more diverse, but also more discordant.

Media development is a creative process. How to form a multi-link and cooperative media communication spectrum, how to compete at all communication levels, how to realize the natural balance, and how to cultivate a moderate and diverse public, researchers should strike a balance between positive optimism and recognition of political, economic, and cultural inequalities.

---

18 Du, J. (2021). Digital-Association-Theory (1): A Future-Oriented Communication Theory. *Journalism and Mass Communication*, 12, 79-87+94.

## References

- Arendt, H. (1973). *The Origins of Totalitarianism. (1th ed)*. Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich.
- Arendt, H. (1990). Philosophy and Politics. *Social Research*, 57, 73–103.
- Bennett, W.L., Segerberg, A., Knüpfer, C.B., & Kennedy, J.F. (2017). The democratic interface: technology, political organization, and diverging patterns of electoral representation. *Information, Communication & Society*, 21, 1655-1680.
- Bimber, B., & Gil de Zúñiga, H. (2020). The unedited public sphere. *New Media & Society*, 22, 700-715.
- Blumler, J. G. (2016). The fourth age of political communication. *Politiques de Communication*, 6, 19-30.
- Briggs, S. (2018). The Freedom of Tweets: The Intersection of Government Use of Social Media and Public Forum Doctrine. *Columbia Journal of Law and Social Problems*, 52, 1.
- Calhoun, C. (1993). Habermas and the public sphere. *German Studies Review*, 17, 613.
- Canaday, M. (2003). Promising alliances: the critical feminist theory of Nancy Fraser and Seyla Benhabib. *Feminist Review*, 74, 50–69.
- Deetz, S.A. (1992). *Democracy in an Age of Corporate Colonization: Developments in Communication and the Politics of Everyday Life*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Du, J. (2021). Digital-Association-Theory (1): A Future-Oriented Communication Theory. *Journalism and Mass Communication*, 12, 79-87+94.
- Entman, R.M. (2003). Cascading Activation: Contesting the White House's Frame After 9/11. *Political Communication*, 20, 415-432.
- Entman, R.M., & Usher, N. (2018). Framing in a Fractured Democracy: Impacts of Digital Technology on Ideology, Power and Cascading Network Activation. *Journal of Communication*, 68, 298-308.
- Ferree, M.M., Gamson, W.A., Gerhards, J., & Rucht, D. (2002). Four models of the public sphere in modern democracies. *Theory and Society*, 31, 289-324.
- Foxley, B., & Rousseau, J.J. (2020). *Emile: Or On Education*. Dartmouth.
- Frickel, S. & Gross, N. (2005). A general theory of scientific/intellectual movements. *American Social Review*, 70, 204–232.
- Gamson, W. A. (1988). A Constructionist Approach to Mass Media and Public Opinion. *Symbolic Interaction*, 11, 161-174.

- Goodman, R. (2008). *Ralph Waldo Emerson*. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.
- Habermas, J. (1991). *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*. The MIT Press.
- Habermas, J. (1992). Concluding remarks. In Calhoun, C. (Ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, pp. 462–479.
- Heath, R. G., & Borda J. L. (2021). Reclaiming Civility: Towards Discursive Opening in Dialogue and Deliberation. *Journal of Deliberative Democracy*, 17, 9-18.
- Hong, S., & Kim, N. (2018). Will the internet promote democracy? Search Engines, Concentration of Online News Readership, and E-democracy. *Journal of Information Technology & Politics*, 15, 388-399.
- Hu C. (2007). A Review of Discourse Analysis Theory in Communication Studies. *Journal of Southwest Minzu University (Humanities and Social Sciences Edition)*, 05, 152-155.
- Knight First Amendment Institute v. Trump*, 928 F.3d 226 (2d 2019), petition for cert. pending.
- Landers, E. (2017). White House: Trump’s Tweets Are “Official Statements”. *CNN Politics*, 6.
- Lippmann, W. (1925). *The Phantom Public*. Transaction Publishers.
- Neal Mann (@fieldproducer) on verifying information on Twitter, from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jGAE04LcjWM>
- Pan, Z. (2006). Framing Analysis: Toward an Integrative Perspective. *The Chinese Journal of Communication and Society*, 1, 17-46.
- Pan, Z., & Kosicki, G.M. (2001). *Framing as a Strategic Action in Public Deliberation*. Political Science.
- Pinkus, B, M.& Phillips, W. The Limits of Free Speech in Social Media. Retrieved April 26, from <https://accessiblelaw.untDallas.edu/limits-free-speech-social-media>
- Shoemaker, P.J., & Reese, S.D. (1995). *Mediating the Message: Theories of Influences on Mass Media Content*. Longman Trade.
- Straus, J.R. (2016). *Social Media in Congress: The Impact of Electronic Media on Member Communications*. Congressional Research Service.
- Uitermark, J., Traag, V.A., & Bruggeman, J. (2016). Dissecting discursive contention: A relational analysis of the Dutch debate on minority integration. *Social Networks*, 47, 107-115.
- Weaver, D.H. (2007). Thoughts on Agenda Setting, Framing, and Priming. *Journal of Communication*, 57, 142-147.

Wolfsfeld, G. (1997). *Media and political conflict: News from the Middle East*. Cambridge University Press.

Wuthnow, R. (1989). *Communities of discourse*. Harvard University Press.

Yuan X. (2016). Evolution and Innovation of the “Agenda-Setting” Theory in the Digital Age: Interview with Professor Donald Shaw, one of the co-founders of the “Agenda-Setting” Theory. *Chinese Journal of Journalism & Communication*, 38(4), 67-78.

**Contact email:** [carrieqiqi@126.com](mailto:carrieqiqi@126.com)

## *Exploring the Ultimate Causes of Migration: A Peace Studies Approach*

Irina Charlotte Ranaivosoa, Universitat Jaume I, Spain

The Paris Conference on Arts & Humanities 2024  
Official Conference Proceedings

### **Abstract**

This research aims to extend the not so much emphasized but nevertheless direly needed philosophical reflections on the topic of migration. Indeed, this latter is extensively studied from political, economic, socio-cultural, legal, demographical, historical, geographical and psychological approaches but it is quite rare to encounter philosophical dialogues on it. Nevertheless, such philosophical discussion on migration is also another lens that can inform us on the causes and consequences of human mobility, including migration. This paper aims thus to make a profound re-examination of migration causes that would allow to understand and deconstruct its ideological mechanisms in the aim of building fairer political, social, ecological and economical relationships between countries, people and nature. Such re-examination would ultimately help the construction of societies more at peace with themselves and with others. The objective of this paper is to demonstrate the hidden, unspoken and subtly active exercise of the ideologies of colonialism and capitalism - illustrated by the concept of 'development'- as ultimate causes (push factors) and driving forces (pull factors) of international migration movements. This research paper will make a comparative and theoretical analysis of a set of twenty-seven pre-selected academic articles and two institutional reports tackling the topics of migration and development. Peace studies' structural theory of imperialism and decolonial theory of the coloniality of power will be used for the analysis, as well as a philosophy for peace's European-based methodology (Martínez Guzmán, 2001) integrating decolonial studies. Finally, constructive solutions to shifting the current paradigm will be proposed.

Keywords: Migration, Peace, Decolonial, Imperialism, Coloniality, Development

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

## Introduction

Any academic paper, I believe, should state at its beginning the positionality of the author, the situated rationality. Such clarification acknowledges the personal and professional backgrounds that may influence the being, thinking and thus writing of the author. As a committed author to recognizing my personal biases in my writings, I wish to briefly describe my positionality. I am a French-Malagasy citizen who was born in France of two parents of Malagasy descent. I grew up in a middle-class family and had the privilege to never have to worry for my basic needs. I recognize that I belong to a type of social elite. I situate myself as a postcolonial author that is refining her decolonial lens of analysis. In this sense, my motivation to write any academic article is an attempt to deconstruct ideological and hegemonical dominations such as colonialism and capitalism. This paper attempts to do so on the topic of migration.

The ongoing refugee crisis in the world and the increase of human mobility either by sea, in the air or on the ground are all circumstances that have impacted, are still impacting and will impact the migration flows and policies. They are also conjunctures that prompt a reconsideration of the migration movements to its deep underlying causes. Such profound *re-examination* of migration causes would allow to understand and deconstruct its ideological mechanisms in the aim of building fairer political, social, ecological and economical relationships between countries, people and nature. It would ultimately help the construction of societies more at peace with themselves and with others. This paper aims to contribute to such *re-analysis*. Its hypothesis is that:

- *The ideologies of colonialism and capitalism are the hidden and unspoken ultimate causes and driving factors of international migration movements.*

The paper aims to answer the research question:

- *In what ways do the peace studies' structural theory of imperialism and the decolonial concept of coloniality of power inform of the ultimate causes and driving factors of international migration movements?*

By doing so, the research paper will also answer other sub-research questions such as:

- *What are the structural theory of imperialism and the coloniality of power?*
- *How do ideological push and pull factors of international migration operate?*

The objective of this paper is to demonstrate the hidden, unspoken and *subtly* active exercise of the ideologies of colonialism and capitalism as ultimate causes (push factors) and driving forces (pull factors) of international migration movements.

A comparative and theoretical analysis of secondary data content will be undertaken. The secondary data will be constituted of a set of twenty-seven pre-selected<sup>1</sup> academic articles and two institutional reports tackling the topics of migration and development. The philosophy for peace methodology will be used. Philosophy for peace is 'the set of human capacities to ask and give ourselves reasons or express feelings for what we do to ourselves and to nature' (Martínez Guzmán, 2001:16). Miriam Arely Vázquez Vidal proposed to integrate decolonial studies to the line of work of this European-based methodology

---

<sup>1</sup> The set of data emanates from the Migration and Co-Development course of the International Master in Peace Conflict and Development at Universitat Jaume I, Castellon de la Plana (Spain), from October-December 2020.



(Vázquez Vidal, 2019). The methodology emerging from such dialogue uses the philosophical argument to search for meanings, deconstruct the ultimate cause and understand the why (idealism) as well as the how (realism). This paper will embrace interpretivist and humanistic methodologies to apply on literature-based research. The qualitative method analysis will mainly be used. The quantitative method will be used only to support the qualitative findings.

The absence of empirical research is the main limitation of this paper. The focus will be geared toward international migration, as in intercontinental mainly. Intrastate migration will not be the focus as it would require more theoretical and empirical research to demonstrate the hypothesis. Indeed, it is more complicated and *surreptitious* to demonstrate an *indirect* and *invisible* link with colonialism and capitalism for intracontinental migrations. Further historical, psychological and sociological empirical research on the matter could help unravel such connection. Nonetheless, any example of intracontinental migration can hypothetically be traced back to these ideologies. Indeed, if human movements are caused by environmental changes or disasters as in the corridors of Somalian people moving to Kenya (Betts, 2010: 372), an indirect link between capitalism -leading to consumerism and the increase of CO2 emissions- and migration movements could be hypothesized.

The literature of this research compounds of the set of pre-selected twenty-seven academic articles and two reports on migration and development<sup>2</sup>, the peace studies' structural theory of imperialism by the 'father' of peace studies Johan Galtung, the concept of 'coloniality of power' by decolonial theorist Aníbal Quijano's as well as articles on post-development, philosophy and migration. This paper will first briefly outline some definitions on migration. It will then delve into Galtung's structural theory of imperialism and Quijano's coloniality of power in the aim to interpret the migration phenomena. The analysis of the set of pre-selected data will subsequently be examined considering Galtung's and Quijano's theories. A discussion will review the findings and present constructive proposal on the topic. The conclusion will draw lines for further research.

## Definitions

Migration is a broad concept that needs more clarification to further its analysis. The IOM World Migration Report 2020 confirms even the absence of 'universally agreed definition of migration or migrant' (IOM, 2020: 20). This induces that the topic is a very subjective one and depends on the approach and lens one is taking to analyze it. Therefore, the acknowledgement of one's positionality can appear paramount to understand the applicability and consequences of one's analysis. In this regard, migration research has been fragmented between the numerous areas of social sciences. The most 'discernible' pattern within such division is 'the distinction between the causes and effects of migration' (Piché, 2013: 142). This paper aims to shed light on embedded causes of migration that often appear *invisible* and not palpable to readers and writers that are bathing within the 'Modern World-System' (Wallerstein, 1974). Such invisibility (or perhaps denial) of underlying causes of migration is due to it being 'racialized' and reproducing embedded 'racist hierarchies' (Tuley, 2020). This is illustrated by the difference in using the terms 'migrant' for non-white and often non-wealthy person and 'expat' for white or non-white Western person (regardless of wealthiness). It can also respectively apply for the terms 'migration' and 'mobility' (Tuley,

---

<sup>2</sup> They will be referred with an asterisk (\*) within the bibliography.

2020). Next section will examine the peace studies' 1971 structural theory of imperialism which will give insight on the subtle assertion of colonialism and capitalism.

### The Structural Theory of Imperialism

This theory is based on the observed facts of 'tremendous inequality' in the world and 'the resistance of this inequality to change'. Such inequality takes place 'within and between nations' as well as 'in almost all aspects of human living conditions' (Galtung, 1971: 81). Such resistance of inequality to change is indeed the reason to keep understanding better and deeper why such resistance occurs. The ongoing inequalities within the migration phenomena thus may illustrate such theory. Galtung defines imperialism as 'a sophisticated type of dominance relation' (Galtung, 1971: 81). Here, the word *sophisticated* can relate to the hypothesis' 'hidden' and 'unspoken' attributes of colonialism and capitalism, which are two ideologies that affect countries and peoples' relations to create a domination effect of one over another. According to him, imperialism is not only 'an economic relationship under private capitalism' but a 'more general structural relationship between two collectivities' (Galtung, 1971: 81). Therefore, capitalism falls under the imperialism umbrella. I argue that the structural relationship is not only between two collectivities but can be transposed to two or more living and non-living entities, making it even more difficult to discern. However, reducing it to 'collectivities' make the theory easier to grasp. This *sophisticated* dominance relation is more explicitly defined as such:

In our two-nation world, imperialism can be defined as one way in which the Center nation has power over the Periphery nation, so as to bring about a condition of disharmony of interest between them. Concretely, Imperialism is a relation between a Center and a Periphery nation so that:

- (1) there is *harmony of interest* between the *center in the Center* nation and the *center in the Periphery* nation,
- (2) there is more *disharmony of interest* within the Periphery nation than within the Center nations,
- (3) there is *disharmony of interest* between the *periphery in the Center* nation and the *periphery in the Periphery* nation (Galtung, 1971: 83).

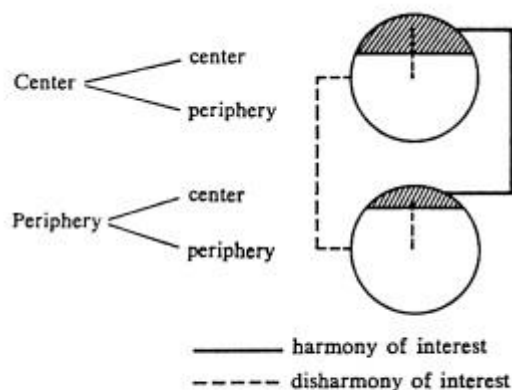


Fig. 1. The structure of imperialism

Figure 1: The structure of imperialism (Galtung, 1971: 84)

The analysis of the structural theory on imperialism also permits to extract and understand the functioning of *internalized* colonialism within structures but as well within people. The harmony found in part (1) of the definition and the disharmonies found in parts (2) and (3) reinforce the dominance of the center parties of the relation in (1) over their own peripheries.

However, since an imperialist relation also bases itself on a bridgehead which the center in the Center nation establishes in the center of the Periphery nation' (Galtung, 1971: 81) when there is 'more *disharmony of interest* within the Periphery nation than within the Center nations' and also disharmony of interest between the two peripheries, it means that a Center nation, entity or person might dominate a Periphery person, entity or nation in *subtle* and, even, *subconscious* terms. This is due to the subtlety of the harmonic 'bridgehead' between elite peoples combined with the *internalized* disharmony of interest or 'conflict of interest' between ordinary people of two nations that are already in a relation of domination. The definition of 'conflict of interest' given in the theory stresses the *sophisticated, subtle, subconscious* and *surreptitious* relation of domination. It is defined as:

A situation where parties are pursuing incompatible goals. In our special case, these goals are stipulated by an outsider as the 'true' interests of the parties, disregarding wholly or completely what the parties themselves say explicitly are the values they pursue. One reason for this is the rejection of the dogma of unlimited rationality: actors do *not* necessarily know, or they are unable to express, what their interest is. Another, more important, reason is that rationality is unevenly distributed, that some may dominate the minds of others, and that this may lead to 'false consciousness'. (Galtung, 1971: 81)

Here, the 'outsider' can be associated to Western elites (centers of Center nations) that stipulated 'development' to be the goal to pursue. Whether it be economic development, human development or any other kinds of development, all actors -both centers and both peripheries- are victims of such 'false consciousness' due to the *internalized* ideologies of, first, colonialism and, second, capitalism that have permeated societies for many years. The presence of 'more inequality in the Periphery than in the Center' combined with the fact that despite disharmony within the Center, the periphery of the Center see themselves 'more as the partners of the center in the Center than as the partners of the periphery in the Periphery' (Galtung, 1971: 84) illustrates the presence of a coloniality of power (Quijano, 2000); where there is a personal voluntary or non-voluntary action of 'othering' or 'idealizing' due to the *internalized* colonialism. Despite the structural theory of imperialism being nearly forty years old, it still can give insight and inform on the *implicit* colonialism ideology present and *invisibly* active within human beings' mind, which Quijano expressed twenty years later as the coloniality of power: a mental construction expressing the basic experience of colonial domination.

### **The Coloniality of Power**

Colonialism is a hegemonic matrix (Quijano, 2000: 533), an ideology from which a *power over* one or more entities and/or concepts is exercised, which Quijano names coloniality of power. Such concept theorizes that the idea of presence of race is 'a naturalization of colonial relations between Europeans and non-Europeans' which legitimizes the superiority/inferiority relation between a dominant and a dominated (Quijano, 2000: 534-535). The naturalization and legitimation of such relation is still visible today. It fuels the political, geopolitical, economical and societal relations between countries but as well between individual peoples themselves. Consequently, it also impacts and provide conditions that foster inequalities between countries and peoples. In the long run, when inequalities are beneficial, they lead countries and people to continue and increase it because they are dominant and (*internally*) feel superior. When they are detrimental, inequalities lead countries and people to attempt to

improve their political, economic or living conditions which are a challenging task as they also are dominated and (*internally*) feel inferior.

To this relationship of domination based on race is added the relationship of control and exploitation based on labor and production. Such ‘capital-market’ relationship in the ‘service of the capital’ is also established with a ‘capitalist character’ (Quijano, 2000: 535-536) that strengthens the colonialist ideology while at the same time asserting capitalism as a historically dominant ideology in the world.

Colonialism preceded capitalism. Indeed, this latter is an economic system where capital is ‘a social relation based on the commodification of the labor force’ that was born around the eleventh or twelfth century (Quijano, 2000: 550). On the contrary, ‘colonialism was not a discovery of the Europeans subsequent to the Great Discoveries’ but could be ‘used to describe great parts of the Roman Empire that through textbooks and traditions of history-writing so successfully has dominated our image of racial and ethnical identity and national pride’ (Galtung, 1971: 94). However, it is undeniable that they both support each other to thrive, especially nowadays:

The new historical identities produced around the foundation of the idea of race in the new global structure of the control of labor were associated with social roles and geohistorical places. In this way, both race and the division of labor remained structurally linked and mutually reinforcing, in spite of the fact that neither of them were necessarily dependent on the other in order to exist or change. (Quijano, 2000: 536)

Coloniality of power includes the ‘colonization of cognitive perspectives, modes of producing and giving meaning, the results of material existence, the imaginary, the universe of intersubjective relations with the world’ (Quijano, 2000: 541). Thus, colonialism and colonization of culture, knowledge and being (or episteme and ontology) precedes and impulses the benefits of global capitalism for the *internalized* dominant entities. This led to the ‘eurocentricity of world capitalism’ (Quijano, 2000) that started in the colonial era.

The Western-centered neoliberal, colonialist and capitalist system with its most famous agenda on the discourse on development illustrates such coloniality of power. Development has been criticized as ‘a genocidal act of control’ representing a contract ‘between the modern nation-state and modern Western science’ (Visvanathan, 1991: 378). Luigi Cazzato’s statement that coloniality is ‘the *invisible* [my emphasis] but constitutive side of the whole of modernity’ (Cazzato, 2016: 3) thus reaffirms the link between development, colonialism and (consequently) capitalism. Development has also been qualified as having a ‘*seductive* logic’ that is ‘widely *internalized*’ [both italics my emphasis] (Escobar et al., 2019), which confirms the *sophisticated* imperialism and *invisible* coloniality of power.

This colonialist (and thus capitalist too) influence can thus also be transposed to the -international- migration phenomena as ‘the present migration movements provide a striking example of the colonial legacy since its direction is South to North, mostly from former colonies [...] to former imperial metropolises’ with ‘the cultural reaction to it’ being an illustration of neocolonialist politics exerting control on source countries under the pretext of limiting “illegal” immigration at disordered continental borders’ (Cazzato, 2016: 7). The next session will review to which extent academic data illustrates such imperialism and coloniality

of power, therefore obviating ideologies of colonialism and capitalism as underlying causes of migration.

### **Analysis of Pre-selected Data on Migration and Development**

In the social sciences, there appears to be a wide gap between the study of migration and the studies of empire, coloniality and racism. There is little research that explicitly brings these areas of knowledge together. (Tuley, 2020)

This statement is the attempting *raison d'être* of this research paper: to help close the gap between migration studies and the studies on colonialism and capitalism by investigating the link between the two. The aim of this paper's analysis is to find out the recognition of the presence or influence of the colonialist and capitalist ideologies in the data articles. Such analysis can indeed be a starting point to attempt to close the gap pointed out above as it allows to make findings on the subject while at the same time examining the academic field in its failure to do so.

The process of analysis of data was as follows: (1) the mentions -or not- of the words 'colonialism' and 'capitalism' were recollected within the data; (2) the explicit -root- causes of migration expressed in the data were also recollected; (3) an analysis of the authors of the articles -not the reports- was undertaken, including their personal and professional background; (4) a classification of the data was drafted in two categories: presence or absence of the ideologies; (5) a classification of the -root- causes found as well as their connection to the two ideologies was drafted; (6) a classification of the authors by their gender and race was drafted to help the overall analysis of the data.

Four tables were drafted to afterwards qualitatively interpret the results. The tables describe articles where the ideologies are present (Table 1), articles where the ideologies are absent (Table 2), classification of causes found (Figure 2) and classification of authors (Table 3).

## Results and Interpretations

	Sources	Presence of ideologies	Mentions of 'colonialism'	Mentions of capitalism	Type of source	Year of source	Author(s) + (Gender)	Main topics
0	World Migration Report 2020	Explicit explanation of colonial ties	0 but extra analysis	1 in bibliography	Report	2020	IOM	MIGRATION
1	The new migration-and-development pessimism	Explicit presence of colonialism and capitalism ideologies	0	2 in text	Theoretical and conceptual analysis	2014	Alan Gamlen (M)	Theories of migration
2	Contemporary migration theories		0	2 in text, 2 in bibliography	Review of theories	2013	Victor Piche (M)	Theories of migration
3	Women, Migration and Care: Explorations of diversity and dynamism in the Global South		3 in text	1 in bibliography	Theoretical analysis	2012	Eleonore Kofman (F) + Parvati Raghuram (F)	Women, care, gender
4	What's wrong with the global migration of health care professionals?		1 in text	0	Theoretical, ethical analysis	2007	James Dwyer (M)	Healthcare, ethics
5	Migration and Development: a theoretical perspective	Implicit presence of colonialism and capitalism ideologies	0 but extra analysis	1 in bibliography + extra analysis	Theoretical analysis	2010	Hein de Haas (M)	Theories of migration
6	Gender in transnational migration: rethinking the human rights framework		0	1 in bibliography + extra analysis	Theoretical analysis	2012	Thanh-Dam Truong (F)	Gender, human rights
7	Gender and migration: historical perspectives		0 but extra analysis	1 in bibliography	historical analysis	2006	Suzanne M Sinke (F)	Gender
8	Global migration and political regime: a democratic disadvantage	Implicit presence of colonialism and capitalism ideologies when interpreted with postcolonial and decolonial lens	0 but extra analysis	0 but extra analysis	Theoretical analysis	2012	Christian Breunig (M) + Xun Cao (F) + Adam Luedtke (M)	Political science
9	Refugees as Peons in Foreign Policy: Turkey, the EU and Reflections of Lasker and		0 but extra interpretation	0 but extra interpretation	Case study	2016	Nicolas Parent (M)	International relations
10	Climate justice and international development: policy and programming		0 but extra interpretation	0 but extra interpretation	Policy brief	2013	Simon Anderson (M)	Environment

Table 1: Pre-selected data having an explicit or implicit expression of the ideologies of colonialism and/or capitalism. Table is the author's elaboration.

Among twenty-nine documents examined, only two academic articles contain the word 'colonialism' in their text; and only two other different academic articles contain the word 'capitalism'. These four articles amount to a total of 13.8% of the data. Three other articles and the IOM World Migration Report 2020 contain the word 'capitalism' in their bibliography. An extra interpretative analysis of these four documents might suggest the recognition of one and/or two of the ideologies as a factor for migration. Three other articles without any mention of the two ideologies may also suggest an implicit challenging position to them, when the interpretation is supposedly made with knowledge by the reader of the above concepts of imperialism, coloniality of power or the structural presence of a dominant/dominated relationship in society.

The two articles that contain paragraphs mentioning the word 'colonialism' in their intext both deal with topics of women, care, healthcare and ethics: with two women and a man as authors. While one of the women is of white descent, the other is of color and specializes in postcolonial theory. The man is of white descent but specializes in social justice and ethics. The two articles that contain paragraphs mentioning the word 'capitalism' in their intext both deal with a deep re-analysis of theories of migrations which seem to allow to take a step back in understanding the bigger picture and searching for the meaning and ultimate cause, in a philosophical way. The two authors of these articles are white men from New-Zealand and Canada and respectively research on diaspora, transnationalism, urban diversity; and rights of migrants' workers for the UNESCO. As such, their personal and professional backgrounds may help inform of their personal and academic trajectories and positioning. It is also interesting to notice that these four articles are all theoretical analysis of an aspect of migration and that gender is an engaging topic to interact with colonialism and capitalism. However, when the modern-influenced political sciences and international relations subjects flirt with migration, it is trickier to discern the presence of the two ideologies.

	Source	Type of source	Year of source	Author(s) + Gender	Topic and other information
0	Migration and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development	Report	2018	ODI, independent, global think tank.+ Swiss Development Agency	Sustainable Development Goals
1	Beyond a Snapshot: Preventing Human Trafficking in the Global Economy	Theoretical and normative analysis	2006	Janie Chuang (F)	Human trafficking
2	The global and European neighbourhood migration systems	Essay	2013	Demetrios G Papademetriou (M)	Global governance, Policies, International relations
3	Toward an international migration regime	Theoretical analysis	2016	Jeffrey Sachs (M)	Political science
4	ENHANCING WOMEN MIGRANT WORKERS' RIGHTS AND MAINSTREAMING GENDER IN GLOBAL MIGRATION GOVERNANCE	Policy brief, legal comparison, case study	2015	Bethlehem Daniel (F) + Michael Gordon (M)	Address effect of migration
5	The Security-Migration-Development Nexus in the Sahel: A Reality Check	Report	2017	Luca Raineri (M) + Alessandro Rossi (M)	Security
6	Climate change, migration and human security in southeast Asia	Theoretical analysis	2012	Lorraine Elliott (F)	Environment, security
7	Security and migration – where strategy meets reality Report Title: The EU's joined-up approach to security	Report Strategic Review	2016	Peter Van Ham (M) [Clingendael Institute (International affairs think tank- secure, sustainable, just)]	Address effect of migration, security, management of migration
8	The EU–Africa migration partnership: the limits of the EU's external dimension of migration in Africa	Theoretical analysis (book chapter)	2013	Tine Van Crielinge (F)	EU Policies with the African continent
9	Environmental migration	Theoretical analysis	2012	Francois Gemenne (M)	Environment
10	Trafficking and Syrian refugee smuggling: Evidence from the Balkan route	Case study	2017	Danilo Mandić (M)	Smuggling
11	A risk and resilience perspective on unaccompanied refugee minors	Case study	2012	Bonnie Carlson (F) + Joanne Cacciatore (F) + Barbara Klimek (F)	Refugee
12	Survival migration: a new protection framework	Legal and normative analysis + Case studies	2010	Alexander Betts (M)	Theories of migration + Complementary protection for gaps in migrants status
13	Gender and migration: The sexual debut of sub-Saharan African migrants in France	Case study	2011	Élise Marsicano (F) + Nathalie Lydie (F) + Nathalie Bajos (F) + Krystyna Horko (F)	Address an effect of migration
14	Mixed migration - a humanitarian counterpoint	Theoretical analysis	2011	Thomas Linde (M)	Address an effect of migration
15	Xenophobia, international migration and development	Theoretical and normative analysis + Case study	2010	Jonathan Crush (M) + Sujata Ramachandran (F)	Address an effect of migration, xenophobia = comes from superiority (colonialism and domination can be deducted)
16	Introduction: International Migration and global governance	Essay	2010	Khalid Koser (M)	Global governance, international relations
17	The globalization of migration: has the world become more migratory	Case study	2014	Mathias Czaika (M) + Hein de Haas (M)	Address an effect of migration

Table 2: Pre-selected data having no explicit or implicit expression of the ideologies of colonialism and/or capitalism. Table is the author's elaboration.

Various commonalities can be found between the types and the topics of the sources as well as the authors of the analyzed data, which present no explicit nor implicit mentions or recognitions of the ideologies of colonialism and capitalism. Regarding the types of data, most of them are reports, case studies, theoretical or normative analysis as well as essays. Thus, the format of reports and case studies may not allow a large space for theoretical analysis since they mainly rely on empirical field data and, often, make quantitative analysis. Reports (as well as policy briefs) also may be influenced by policy agendas and may not have the independence of digging deeper in a philosophical way on the migration phenomena. Theoretical analysis, when combined with normative analysis, may as well 'lose some space' in allowing a philosophical reflection. However, when the theoretical analysis is undertaken alone, interpretations may thereafter be influenced by the authors' personal and academic background as it is the case with essays. As such, it is interesting to note that most of these authors conducted research on policies and governance, security, development or were addressing the effects of migration and not its causes. This reflects the academic and professional ties of most of the authors who often are institutionalist, economist, geopolitician or writing in favor of the sustainable development goals, which are all cognitive areas tainted by imperialism and coloniality of power. Besides, only two authors are considered as non-white, although they both are highly influenced by Western personal and professional backgrounds. It is also interesting to notice that the topic of gender only appears twice, but it was examined under a policy brief or case study within the articles.

M i g r a t i o n  p h e n o m e n a	Theory	Imperialism and Coloniality of Power			
	Ideology	COLONIALISM	CAPITALISM		
	Concept	Development			
	Reason	Socio-political	Economic	Ecologic	
	Cause	colonial boundaries, colonial ties, civil conflict, political instability, persecution, state fragility, xenophobic violence, deprivation of socio-economic rights (due to political situation)	Labour migration, Economic instability	poverty, underdevelopment, economic concern, employment/unemployment, overpopulation, worsening economic conditions, industrial accidents, livelihood failure	Natural diaster, environmental disaster, climate change, environmental degradation, environmental change, environmental facts, environmental conditions
			Smuggling, Human trafficking		Sea level rise, earthquakes, volcano eruptions
	Ideology	Patriarchy ?			

Figure 2: Reframed table of factors leading to migrations, based on the pre-selected data. Table is author’s elaboration.

Various causes of migration have been extracted from the data and have been classified between the socio-political, economic and ecologic reasons for migration. These three reasons all go back up to ‘development’ as the concept fostering such causes. As explained above, ‘development’ has been coined (in 1949 by the then President of the United States Harry Truman) to assert *sophisticatedly* and *subtly* the ideologies of colonialism and capitalism. Sea level rise, earthquakes and volcano eruptions have been located apart the ecologic causes since their connections to capitalism may be trickier to demonstrate. Smuggling and human trafficking have also been separated from other causes, although spatially placed between the two ideologies. Indeed, they are types of migration that remind migration due to slavery in the colonial era, which -to my opinion- needs a further analysis with perhaps an extra ideological framework to consider, such as patriarchy. Finally, the placement of the causes under one or another reason for migration is not definite but is only done to demonstrate which ideology would mainly be the push and pull factor for such cause of migration to happen.

Man	Woman	White	Non-white	White man	White woman	Non-white woman	Non-white man
20	14	28	6	19	9	5	1
58.80%	41.20%	82.30%	17.70%	55.90%	26.40%	14.70%	3%

Table 3: Gender and race overview of pre-selected data authors. Table is the author’s elaboration.

An analysis of the overall repartition of gender within the authorship of the pre-selected data shows that women remain less represented (41.2%) than men (58.8%) in this set of articles. On the contrary, the race analysis shows that white authors (82.3%) tremendously surpass the number of non-white ones (17.7%). This finding shows that the migration academic field confirms Quijano’s above statement on the coloniality of power being a ‘colonization of cognitive perspectives, modes of producing and giving meaning’ (Quijano, 2000: 541). This begs the question of profoundly reconsidering the way migration institutions, policies and studies are conducted, as well as their own episteme and ontology. This however supposes



the acknowledgement of hidden and unspoken biases, privileges and prejudices from these entities to open an honest dialogue on the migration topic. The next section will discuss this paper's findings and elaborate proposals for further research on migration.

## Discussions

The main findings of this paper are that (1) colonialism historically and conceptually precedes capitalism, but they afterwards subsequently feed on each other to thrive. (2) Both ideologies function because of a *sophisticated, subtle, subconscious, surreptitious and seductive* ( $S^5$ ) domination characteristic that became gradually and powerfully *internalized and invisible* ( $I^2$ ) to both dominant and dominated people, which are *both -but not respectively-* the perpetrators and victims of such relation. This dominant relation functions because of the bridgehead allowed by both dominant and dominated entities which permits a colonization of cultures, knowledges and beings. (3) The practical concept of care and the philosophical and moral aspect of ethics are leading areas that challenge the ideologies of colonialism and capitalism. Indeed, both concepts embody a form of recognition -and love- of the other (and nature) from a relationship position of horizontality and equality. The consideration of gender and women also supports the challenging of the two ideologies, as well as challenging patriarchy. (4) The fields of study that mainly rely on and support theories involving the modern nation-state (such as political science, international relations and affairs, security, international law, humanitarian field) are products of colonialism and capitalism and as such do not (*re*)consider the two ideologies as having any causal link to the (international) migration phenomena.

According to the above findings, colonialism and capitalism are ideologies, epistemological and ontological systems deeply embedded (Tuley, 2020) in society. They are *internalized, invisible* ( $I^2$ ) and transcending all areas of social sciences (and of life in general) in an  $S^5$  way. In this sense, these two ideologies are embedded in the migration phenomena and sustain the causes and reasons for people to migrate. I would like to elaborate few constructive proposals to shift from colonialism and capitalism ideologies fueling current (human) migration towards one that is born from peaceful attributes.

First, I would recommend anyone writing, speaking or expressing any thoughts (on migration) to acknowledge their positionality. This would allow the readership or audience to reflect and be critical on the content expressed. Second, giving more tools for an audience to be critical can lead to more *review, reconsideration, re-examination and re-analysis* of the state of our current world and, consequently, of migration. Indeed, taking a philosophical or ethical approach only to the topic does not automatically challenge it, especially if authors are part of the dominant side of the current Modern World-System as are Julian Nida-Rümelin (2016), James Ryerson (2016) or David Miller (2016). Third, to do so -to *re-imagine* the status quo (*re—inc*, 2020)<sup>3</sup> regarding colonialism and capitalism- more care, ethics and philosophy *for peace* must be introduced into academic articles, policies, laws, morals and popular wisdom in general. How would this look like? Perhaps in dismantling the term migration itself to change 'the way we teach "migration"' so that the next generation of

---

<sup>3</sup> This reference is a clothes brand which US Women's soccer team star Megan Rapinoe started with three other teammates to attempt to induce criticality in popular culture to challenge the status quo. Although it is a brand, and aims to make profit, it also gives back some of the profit to community organization. I aimed to include this reference to acknowledge that despite wanting and proposing alternatives, we often -if not always- also have to work within Wallerstein's Modern World-System to transform it.

scholars, activists, policymakers and politicians have different frameworks to talk about people moving' (Tuley, 2020).

## **Conclusion**

This research paper is a very theoretical and philosophical one. It did not have the space to dig as deep and fully the depth and breadth of the hypothesis stated at the beginning of the paper. However, it allows to deepen the pathway of research that tackles the hegemonic ideologies fueling migration and its large field of studies. Indeed, the limitation of analysis to a certain number of articles permitted to draw a pattern in the mentioning and recognition -or not- of colonialism and capitalism as underlying push *and* pull factors for migration movements. The choice of two theories and concepts for framework analysis was also an important limitation to the research. However, it permits to review them and *re*-confirm their own applicability to the present day. Besides it also permitted to build a bridge between a peace studies theory and a decolonial one, using the decolonial-philosophy for peace methodology. Building horizontal bridges (and not imperial bridgeheads) between entities towards peace, equity and equality is perhaps the ideology that would need to flourish in human beings' minds. It is thus in the minds of men and women that a peaceful ideology must be built to transform the imperialistic one, for peace to be lasting and anchored in each of us, as the UNESCO states it so well.

## **Statement**

This paper was written as part of the author's master's studies in Peace, Conflict and Development.

## References

- \*Anderson, Simon (2013). 'Climate justice and international development: policy and programming'. *International Institute for Environment and Development*.
- \*Betts, A. (2010). Survival migration: A new protection framework. *Global Governance*, 16 (3), 361-382.
- \*Breunig, C., Cao, X. & Luedtke, A. (2012). Global Migration and Political Regime Type: A Democratic Disadvantage. *British Journal of Political Science*, 42 (4), 825-854.
- \*Carlson, B E., Cacciatore, J. & Klimek, B. (2012). A risk and resilience perspective on unaccompanied refugee minors' *Social Work*, 57 (3), 259-269.
- Cazzato, L. (2016). Mediterranean: Coloniality, Migration and Decolonial Practices. *Politics.Rivista di Studi Politici*, (5) 1/2016, 1-17. Retrieved from: [https://rivistapolitics.files.wordpress.com/2016/07/01\\_politics\\_5\\_cazzato2.pdf](https://rivistapolitics.files.wordpress.com/2016/07/01_politics_5_cazzato2.pdf)
- \*Chuang, J. (2006). Beyond a Snapshot: Preventing Human Trafficking in the Global Economy. *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies*, 13 (1), 137-163.
- \*Crush, J. and Ramachandran, S. (2010). Xenophobia, international migration and development. *Journal of Human Development and Capabilities*, 11 (2), 209-228.
- \*Czaika, M. & De Haas, H. (2014). The Globalization of Migration: Has the World Become More Migratory?. *The International Migration Review*, 48 (2), 283-323.
- \*Daniel, B. & Gordon, M. (2015). Enhancing Women Migrant Workers' Rights and Mainstreaming Gender in Global Migration Governance. *Centre for International Governance Innovation*, Series: CIGI Graduate Fellows Policy Brief Series, 1-7.
- \*de Haas, H. (2010). Migration and development: A theoretical perspective. *The International Migration Review*, 44 (1), 227-264.
- \*Dwyer, J. (2007). What's Wrong with the Global Migration of Health Care Professionals?: Individual Rights and International Justice. *The Hastings Center Report*, 37 (5), 36-43.
- \*Elliott, L. (2012). Human Security, Climate Change and Migration in Southeast Asia. In Elliott, L. (Ed) *Climate Change, migration and human security in Southeast Asia* (pp. 1-12). Singapore: Rajaratnam School of International Studies.
- Escobar, A., Kothari., A., Salleh, A., Demaria, F & Acosta, A. (2019). 'Development' is colonialism in disguise. OpenDemocracy [online] Available at: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/oureconomy/development-colonialism-disguise/> [Accessed 4 December 2020].
- Galtung, J. (1971). A Structural Theory of Imperialism. *Journal of Peace Research*, 8 (2), 81-117.

Galtung, J. (1989). Basic Human Needs and Ecological Balance. *Prout Journal*, 4 (1), 16-20.

\*Gemenne, F. (2012). Environmental Migration. In Martiniello M. & Rath J. (Eds.), *An Introduction to International Migration Studies: European Perspectives* (pp. 237-258). Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

\*Gamlen, A. (2014). The new migration-and-development pessimism. *Progress in Human Geography*, 38 (4), 581-597.

\*IOM - International Organization for Migration. *World Migration Report 2020*. [online] Available at: [https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr\\_2020.pdf](https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr_2020.pdf) [Accessed 15 November 2020]

\*Kofman, E. & Raghuram, P. (2012). Women, Migration, and Care: Explorations of Diversity and Dynamism in the Global South. *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State and Society*, 19 (3), 408-432.

\*Koser, K. (2010). Introduction: International Migration and Global Governance. *Global Governance*, 16 (3), 301-315.

\*Linde, T. (2011). Mixed Migration – A Humanitarian Counterpoint. *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 30 (1), 89-99.

\*Mandić, D. (2017). Trafficking and Syrian refugee smuggling: Evidence from the Balkan Route. *Social Inclusion*, 5 (2), 28-38.

\*Marsicano, É., Lydie, N., Bajos, N. & Horko, K. (2011). Gender and Migration: The Sexual Debut of Sub-Saharan African Migrants in France. *Population (English Edition, 2002-)*, 66 (2), 275-301.

Martínez Guzmán, V. (2001). *Filosofía para hacer las paces*. Barcelona: Icaria.

Miller, D. (2016). *Strangers in Our Midst: The Political Philosophy of Immigration*. Harvard University Press.

Nida-Rümelin, J. (2016). *Philosophy and migration*. Your link to Germany [online] Available at: <https://www.deutschland.de/en/topic/politics/philosophy-and-migration> [Accessed 27 November 2020].

\*Papademetriou, D G. (2013). The Global And European Neighbourhood Migration Systems: Trends, Policy Choices, Governance Challenges And A Look Ahead. In Holtslag J., Kremer M., & Schrijvers E. (Eds.) *Making Migration Work: The Future of Labour Migration in the European Union* (pp. 39-50). Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

\*Parent, N. (2016). Refugees as Peons in Foreign Policy: Turkey, the EU and Reflections of Lasker and Nimzowitsch. *In/Words Magazine and Press*, 15 (3), 99-104.

\*Piché, V. (2013). Contemporary Migration Theories as Reflected in their Founding Texts. *Population*, 68 (1), 141-164.

Quijano, A. (2000). Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America. *Nepantla*, 1 (3), 533-580.

\*Raineri, L. & Rossi, A. (2017). Security-Migration in the Sahel. *Istituto Affari Internazionali*, IAI Working Papers 17/26, 1-20.

re—inc (2020) [online] Available at: <https://re-website.com/>.

Ryerson, J. (2016). *Deep Thinking About Immigration*. The New York Times [online] Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/31/books/review/immigration-strangers-in-our-midst-david-miller.html> [Accessed 27 November 2020].

\*Sachs, J. (2016). Toward an International Migration Regime. *The American Economic Review*, 106 (5), 451-455.

\*Sinke, S. (2006). Gender and Migration: Historical Perspectives. *The International Migration Review*, 40 (1), 82-103.

\*Swiss Development Agency (Agency). *Migration and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. [online] Available at <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resourcedocuments/12422.pdf> [Accessed 15 November 2020].

\*Thanh-Dam Truong (2012). Gender in transnational migration: rethinking the human rights framework. *Migration and Development*, 1 (1), 72-86.

Tuley, M. (2020). *Taking decolonising seriously – the problem with migration studies*. IMISCOE. [online] Available at: <https://www.imiscoe.org/news-and-blog/phd-blog/1121-taking-decolonising-seriously-the-problem-with-migration-studies> [Accessed 7 December 2020].

\*Van Crieking, T. (2013). The EU–Africa Migration Partnership: the Limits of the EU’s External Dimension of Migration in Africa. In Carbone, M. (Ed.) *The European Union in Africa: Incoherent Policies, Asymmetrical Partnership, Declining Relevance?* (pp. 258–282). Manchester: Manchester University Press.

\*Van Ham, P. (2016). The EU’s joined-up approach to security: Between robust external action and coordinated compromise. *Clingendael Institute*, 9-13.

Vázquez Vidal, M A (2019). *Una propuesta de construcción de paz desde las resistencias indígenas del sureste mexicano*. PhD Thesis. Universitat Jaume I, Castellón de la Plana.

Visvanathan, S. (1991). Mrs. Brundtland’s Disenchanted Cosmos. *Alternatives*, 16, 377- 384.

Wallerstein, I. (1974). *The Modern World-System I: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century*. New York: Academic Press.



***Exploring Exile and Crosscultural Complexities in  
Yasmine Gooneratne's "A Change of Skies"***

Mukesh Yadav, University of Engineering and Management, Jaipur, India

The Paris Conference on Arts & Humanities 2024  
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

The paper explores how the past affects the future in Yasmine Gooneratne's *A Change of Skies*. The vital aspects of immigration, adjustment to new lands, expatriation and complexities of cross-cultural negotiation with specific issues of cultural identity and authenticity are dealt in the paper. The paper highlights the experiences of Asian immigrants and how they adjust to living in the new environment of Australia. The major characters, Barry and Jean are subjected to tremendous pressures in Australia. The couple relishes the challenge and ultimately prospers in the environment. However, the couples were disillusioned with the first experience of being forced to see themselves as a generic subject in the gaze of the 'Other'. In the novel, *A Change of Skies*, Gooneratne recognizes the complex sources of the present, she realizes the hope that these can generate a future freed of the limitations of the past, but not free of the universal absurdities of the human condition. People, do, she suggests, change their souls when they change their skies. More importantly, when they change their skies, they do not abandon the past, but produce a new future and new possibilities.

Keywords: Diaspora, Immigration, Crosscultural, Otherness, Identity

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

## Introduction

One subject that constantly shows up in Yasmine Gooneratne's works is a reflection upon how the past influences what's to come. She relates her own personal memories to come to meaningful conclusions which are more genuine to audience. An example of this is "Relative Merits," a personal diary that draws on interviews with the author's relatives and her own recollections of her family's history. In it, she intertwines her family's past with the broader historical context, showcasing how her distinguished relatives have influenced Sri Lanka's history.

Another recurring theme in the works of Goonaratne is the exploration of migration, adjustment to new environments, exile, and the complexities of diverse interactions, particularly regarding cultural attributes and political hegemony. These aspects of migration are exemplified in "A Change of Skies," which depicts a Sri Lankan family's move to Australia. This work narrates the experiences of Asian immigrants as they adapt to life in their new Australian surroundings. The study of historical changes is a central theme in her writings.

In today's era of globalization, the work of migrant writers deserves to be highly recognized and acclaimed. Elleke Boehmer has noted that the "status of migrant writers like Rushdie, Walcott, Timothy Mo, and Bharati Mukherjee has defined postcolonial literature as essentially cosmopolitan, transplanted, trilingual, and familiar with the cultural codes of the West" (2001). However, these definitions, while theoretically sound, are often abstract and detached from individual experiences. This is evidenced by ongoing discussions about the relative losses and gains for authors in their transcultural experiences, such as feelings of disillusionment and alienation, or liberation.

## Discussion

*A Change of Skies* was an instant success, winning several literary awards. A review characterized it as a novel typical of the 90s, "when language and loyalties tend to spill over national boundaries, and when histories and identities do not always remain contained within small geographic boundaries" (1992). Like much migrant writing, Gooneratne's novel addresses the experience of migration, expatriation, and transculturation. Drawing on personal experience and intertwining family legends with historical reality, Gooneratne, in *A Change of Skies* describes a couple's migration from Sri Lanka to Australia, using their cross-cultural experience to explore broader questions of cultural knowledge.

*A Change of Skies* revolves around four main characters: Edward, who migrates to Australia in 1882 and returns to his homeland in 1887; his grandson Bharat and Bharat's wife Navaranjini, who come to Australia in 1964 as expatriates and take up permanent residence in the country eight years later; and Bharat and Navaranjini's daughter, Edwina, who is born and named in Australia. Bharat and Navaranjini, who adopt the names Barry and Jean after spending several years in Australia, initially leave for the Antipodes on a short-term assignment. To Edward, Barry's grandfather, who had run from home; thanks to a dispute along with his father, this sojourn is a crucial learning experience, however as he discovers eventually, "I have seen enough and learned enough to myself too to grasp that a life here isn't forme" (pp.166). Initially, Barry and Jean are subjected to tremendous pressures in Australia. They need to address and answer biases and prejudices against expatriates from the East; within the same period, they conjointly endeavor to keep up a Sri Lankan identity



whereas assimilate those aspects of culture which are necessary to survive in Australia. The couple relishes the challenge and ultimately prospers within the surroundings. Also they're higher equipped than Edward to address Australian condition, what prompts them to form their keep permanent residence in contrast to the deteriorating sociopolitical conditions in their country of origin, that they discovered during their vacation. The senseless violence, the commonness of the nouveau riche, and also the realization that they'll now not "relate" to even their closet friends influence their thinking. Recognizing travails faced by less fortune expatriates, Barry resigns from his university position to deliver English classes to refugees. Jean, on the other hand, enriches the culture of her adopted country by introducing Sri Lankan cuisine to Australian. The novel ends with Edwina, their female offspring, who combines Australian pragmatism with Eastern attribute, returning to her roots to complete associate social science project. She has traveled on the far side of expatriation and become a "citizen of the world."

Bharat's feeling of self when he leaves Sri Lanka is in reality that of a "privileged white" and can best be clarified through "a doggy dedication to Britain" and the "accumulated experience of a significantly Anglicize family" (12). And he holds on for him his esteemed genealogical legacy, as symbolized by his name, Bharat Mangala Davasinghe. His issues of mindfulness start when he understands that his character isn't perceived by white Australians. "Look", he lashes out at his significant other, "We're Asians. They're Australians. At the point when Australians meet us, that is the thing that they notice first Difference". (118) Then he hears Ronald Blackstone (1992) a humanism teacher from the University of Woop - Woop who "nicknamed a Sydney suburb "Vietnamatta" in light of the fact that it was full [...] of Asians," lash out on the radio that:

*Asians [...] pollute the air with the fumes of roasting meat. And we Australians must be alert to the dangers involved for our society if we allow Asians in who cannot assimilate and accept our customs. (120)*

Bharat's reaction to Australia's stereotyping of Asians mirrors Frantz Fanon's analysis of colonial stereotyping of Africans. Bharat withdraws "from his personality and his race in his complete identification with the ideal of whiteness." In an effort to erase the perceived strangeness within him, Bharat anglicizes his name to Barry Mundy, following the Australian tradition of name changing—a practice that the author explains dates back to 1939 when many German immigrants anglicized their names almost overnight after war was declared. This statement is laced with irony and echoes the grim underlying truth of what might have happened to German immigrants had they not changed their names and assimilated into the majority culture.

Bharat's new surname, Mundy, carries complex semantic implications. In Latin, it signifies 'world citizen,' a connection to a dead language in terms of effective verbal communication. However, in the more dynamic indigenous language, Sinhala, 'Barry Mundy' takes on a negative connotation: 'barri' means 'weak' and 'mundi' means 'leftovers' or 'residue.' Despite changing his name, in the Sri Lankan context, he is reduced to 'leftovers,' a dramatic fall for someone whose class had once been considered the 'cream of the crop.' For his wife, who understands the cultural and personal history tied to his original name, the name change is something to mourn. She realizes that their new 'nice Aussie' name is merely a practical means of surviving daily interactions, not a true signifier of self-worth or genuine identity.

Paul Carter's analysis of migrant names and their significance for identity can be applied to Bharat. For instance, the surname of R.A. Baggio, born in Victoria, Australia, to an Italian immigrant, was subjected to so many distortions by white Australians that it, and consequently his identity, became "unstable [like] one's place; his name was a swag he shouldered, a means of traveling from one human situation to another, but it no longer provided him with a house of his own, a place from which he could speak" (1992).

In a much more prominent exertion to converge with white Australia, Bharat, as Barry Mundy, starts to copy the cliché sense of self projection of the Americanized Australian. Contact focal points (improving his delightful long eyelashes) clear his approach to TV distinction as an Asia Expert. While he is perceived by the scholarly community for his genuine research, his show up for the normal Australian watcher lies less in his scholarly ability than in his extraordinary sexuality. He gets packs of mail from female fans. Inebriated by his attractive open picture, he starts to disregard his pledge to his scholastic profession and his understudies at the college. He appears to be well while in transit to forming into a prominent generalization: an "attractive item" (146). Yet, his better half understands the threat and sees his character declining practically fix past, his "very substance being tossed into disarray."

Detecting something of his internal weakness, and looking to "reorient" himself, Bharat comes back to Sri Lanka eight years after first leaving it. He understands that he has changed and that he can't fit into the familial or public activity there anymore. Colombo isn't what he recollects that; it appears to have gotten unbridled and dependent on TV, with the universally adored program being the cleanser "Tradition". There are likewise darker substances: ethnic emergencies, and agitators disturbing the framework and murdering honest individuals. Like Rushdie, Bharat finds that "the past is [the] nation from which [he has] emigrated." His Sri Lanka is currently a nonexistent country; he can recover it just in his memory. He has the feeling that his "present being [is] in a better place from before, of his being 'somewhere else'." Bharat chooses to come back to Australia.

Like White, Gooneratne investigates Australian culture by depicting the suburbs as a far reaching and void space. White's case that 'every which way extended the Great Australian Emptiness, wherein the psyche is the least of assets' (38) is resounded by loved ones who regret that the Davasinas are 'doomed' to go through five years in a 'social desert'. Gooneratne disparages even the all the more engaging parts of an 'unfilled' Australia envisioned by Bharat and Navrajini—Bharat at least starts to believe that he 'rather enjoyed the sound of those sheep and kangaroos and wombats' – in her depiction of their first experience with the scene while in quite a while on an interstate (34). Her depiction of Australia as innately void is bolstered further by Srilanka legends about 'the Great South Land'. In one legend, sailors are cautioned to be careful with wandering excessively near 'the Great Southern Land' 'in case they sucked into an extraordinary vacancy, and have their spirits depleted away' (57). This legend turns into a heartbreaking prediction that hints Bharat and Navrajini's destiny as Bary and Jean Mundy. After a real existence in the void of Australian the suburbs, they are truly sucked into the extraordinary empty space when their plane accidents while they are on a household trip among Coolangatta and Sydney.

Gooneratne portrays the Asian characters as "honestly separate, unknowingly supremacist" (1994). While in Australia, Bharat writes to his mother, commenting on the bluntness and harshness of Australian society, which he feels shows little interest in people like themselves who "originate from old cultures and traditional lifestyles" (98). From a colleague's

perspective, "he has succumbed to the stereotyped idea of OZ and the Aussie, i.e., that we are a nation of tasteless alcoholics with the intellectual standards of a TV drama and the social benchmarks of a football scrum" (134). Navaranjini believes that "prejudice is obscure in India and Sri Lanka. Race and caste and color just have their named places there in a divine scheme of things, where everything moves in a perfectly regulated order," though she admits that Westerners might find this concept hard to grasp (119). She sees herself as part of "real Asia," with India at its center, dismissing Far Eastern people, such as the Chinese, as "Ching-Chongs" and not true Asians (119). Grandfather Edward, finally, believes that racial prejudices among his own people exist only among "ignorant and poorly educated women" (75). Racial partialities appear to exist even among the Asians themselves. Gooneratne has taken extraordinary consideration to clarify that there is nothing of the sort as an Asian character. The characters of her Asian strict stratification, Bharat and Edward are Christian Sinhalese, Navaranjini is Hindu Tamil, and the Koyakos, another worker family, are Buddhist Sinhalese, Navaranjini at one point in the novel concedes that Tamils will in general think about the Sinhalese as all similar; and when ethnic aggravations in Sri Lanka cast their shadow on the couple's marriage, Bharat voices the Sinhalese sentiment that Tamils are interminably ascertaining how to jump on in life to the detriment of the Sinhalese.

These distinctions don't exist according to the Australians; as Bharat puts it: "We're Asians. They're Australians. At the point when Australians meet us, that is the thing that they notice first. Contrast. [...] And Australians can't make fine differentiations between one sort of Asian and another" (118). The main individuals they become familiar with, their neighbors and later companions, the Trevallys, double-cross a constrained and stereotyped picture of Asians which, as though on the side of Edward Said's outstanding contentions about the development of the Orient in Western workmanship and Literature, was to a great extent passed on through movies and craftsmanship. Maureen Trevally, making surmises about the fascinating newcomers' set-up, says: "Perhaps they have their tea leaning back on divans and learning against decorated pads like Marlene Dietrich and the Sultan in *The Garden of Allah*" (99), and, to her better half, Navaranjini playing the zither looks "a carbon copy of a composition in [his wife's] library book, 'A princess Waiting For Her Absent Lover'" (100). Maureen Trevally's Asia "is unadulterated dream land," it says toward the finish of the novel: "To her it's as yet a universe of Maharajas and marble castles and enchantment covers, an intriguing fantasy wherein even the homeless people are pleasant" (318).

Moreover, and still as per the cliché Western picture of the Orient, the Sri Lankan couple are viewed as not just colorful but likewise sexual. Navaranjini in her conventional dress of an Indian lady is considered by Bruce Trevally "lovely as an image. [...] Got those large oriental eyes that have all the riddle of the East in them" (99). "Ever observed a sari [...] on a gorgeous young lady?" he asks a companion: "Well, let me reveal to you child, there's an uncovered mid section on it that is God's blessing to a meriting male" (101). Bharat, as well, with his dull skin and "amazingly long eye-lashes" is seen as an agent of the "spiritualist Orient," a 'genuine oriental' whom his female associates consider "dishy." After his significant other showed their duplicate of the *Kama Sutra* at the college's book show, he gets the notoriety of being sex master: while his male associates counsel him as a specialist on affection, sex, and marriage, he is horrified to find that the office spouses harbor firm feelings about his sexual ability. The picture of Navaranjini and Bharat as fascinating and suggestive Orientals denies their human and scholarly characteristics, and diminishes them to the cliché thought of the oriental as an object of sexual want. Remarking on this persistent juxtaposition of generalizations, Gooneratne has called attention to that when composing the short story she felt that, if her "bigot Asian characters were to face anecdotal Australians, supremacist

themselves, to a great extent because of their own pioneer hang-ups, possibly they'd counterbalance one another" (1994). They don't, however the novel doesn't favor one side.

The risk to vagrants, the dangerous capability of culturally diverse contact for a person's feeling of self, is recorded most noticeably in the English names, and it tends to be completely seen just if the authentic setting is considered. From Edward's diary we discover that the Aborigines were insolently names by early European pilgrim vegetables and other trivializing objects. Suggestive of this custom, the Western characters in the novel are named after Australian fish: Kingsley Fysshie, Maud Crabbe, Ann Chovey and John Dory, Likewise, the unfortunate characteristics of certain vagrants are featured in their Sri Lankan names and are very clear to Sri Lankan perusers. Along these lines, the long name of the pioneer of Sri Lankan people group in Australia, Mekaboru Kiyannahati Balapan Koyako, which, as the novel records, recounts to its very own account implies (1995): "Look, mate, at the manner in which this current rescal's laying his head off" (327).

## **Conclusion**

Gooneratne writes from a perspective where the imperial pretensions of her characters can only appear absurd. Her irony operates as a lens through which historical reality is examined at a personal level. Her achievement lies in transforming this perspective into an affirmation of human possibility. While her awareness of the contradictions between culture and individual ambition is postmodern, her exploration of potential within these contradictions is postcolonial. By recognizing the complex sources of the present, she holds hope that these can generate a future free from the constraints of the past, though not devoid of the inherent absurdities of the human condition.

Gooneratne suggests that people change their inner selves when they change their environments. More importantly, in changing their surroundings, they do not abandon the past but create new futures and possibilities.

## References

- Appiah, Kwame Anthony (1996). Race, culture, identity: Misunderstood connections. 'In Kwame Anthony Appiah and Amy Gutman (eds) *Color Conscious: The Political Morality of Race* (PP. 30-105). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Bhabha, Homi K. (1998). *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994. Bourne, Randolph. "Trans-National America." 1916. *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*. Ed. Paul Lauter. New York: Houghton Mifflin.
- Bleich, David. (1975). *Readings and Feelings: An Introduction to Subjective Criticism*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Bredella, Lothear. (1995). Nightmares of misrecognition in multicultural texts. In Carin Freywald and Micheal (eds) *The American Dream. Festschrift für Preter Freese* (PP. 79-96). Essen: Die Blue Eule.
- Clifford, James. (1986). Introduction: Partial truths. In James Clifford and George E. Marcus (eds) *Writing Culture. The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (PP. 1-26). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Finkelkraut, Alain. (1995). *The Defeat of the Mind*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Fish, Stanley. (1980). *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Gooneratne, Yasmine. (1986). *Relative Merits: A Personal Memoir of the Bandarmaike Family of Sri Lanka*. London: C. Hurst.
- Gooneratne, Yasmine. (1990). *A Change of Skies*. Sydney: Picador.
- Gunew, Sneja. (1993). "Feminism and the Politics of Irreducible differences: Multiculturalism/ Ethnicity/ Race," in *Feminism and the Politics of Difference*, ed. Sneja Gunew & Anna Yeatman. Sydney: Allen & Unwin.
- Hall, Stuart. (1991). Old and New identities, old and new ethnicities. In Anthony D. King (ed) *Culture, Globalization and the World System* (PP. 41-68). New York: Macmillan.
- Harden, Theo. (2000). The limits of understanding. In Theo Harden and Arnd Witte (eds) *The Notion of Intercultural Understanding in the Context of German as a Foreign Language*. Oxford: Lang.
- Ignatieff, Michael. (1993). *Blood and Belonging. Journeys into the New Nationalism*. London: BBC Books.
- Liu, Eric. (1998). *The Accidental Asian*. New York: Vintage.

- Lokuge, Chandani. (2000). “‘We Must Laugh at One Another or Die’: Yasmine Gooneratne’s *A Change of Skies* and South Asian Migrant Identities,” *Shifting Continents, Colliding Cultures: Diaspora Writing of the Indian Subcontinent*. Ed. Ralph J. Crane and Radhika Manoharan. Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- MacIntyre, Ernest. (1981). *Let’s Give Them Curry: An Austral-Asian Comedy in Three Acts*. Victoria: Heinemann Educational Australia.
- Morrisom, Toni. (1988). *Beloved*. New York: Plume.
- Naipaul, V.S. (1967). *The Mimic Men*. London: Andre Deutsch.
- Nityanandam, Indra. (1994). “Yasmine Gooneratne’s *A Change of Skies* and Bharti Mukherjee’s *Jasmine*.” *The Immigrant Experience in Australia and the USA*. Ed. R.K. Dhawan and L.S.R. Krishna Sastry. New Delhi: Prestige.
- Rushdie, Salman. (1994). “Imaginary Homelands” *Essays and Criticism 1981-1991*. London: Penguin.
- Stoddard, Martin. (1992). *The Great Expatriate Writers*. London: Macmillan.
- Taylor, Charles. (1994). The politics of recognition. In Charles Taylor *et al.* (eds) *Multiculturalism: Examining the Politics of Recognition*. Princeton University Press, Princeton.

***Applying CDA and Vladimir Propp's "Morphology of the Folktale" on  
Nicholas Sparks's "Safe Haven"***

Doaa Taher Matrood AL-dihaymawee, Jabir ibn Hayyan Medical University, Iraq  
Yousif Ali Yousif Salman, Diyala University, Iraq

The Paris Conference on Arts & Humanities 2024  
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

"Safe Haven" is one of Nicholas Sparks excellent novels. It was published in 2010. It is basically about women's abuse. According to Vladimir Propp's "Morphology of the Folktale," no researcher has studied this novel. Propp's theory was formerly found to analyze Russian folktales. However, some researchers apply it to English fairytales and stories, such as Sundari (2014), who used it to "Sleeping Beauty"; Nursantia (2003) to Joseph Conrad's novel "Heart of Darkness"; and Salmah (2004) to Charles Dickens's "Our Mutual Friend". Thus, the gap of not applying Propp's "Morphology of the Folktale" to novels in general and modern text in specific with Wodak's (2001; 2009) *discourse-historical approach* inspires researchers inspire the researchers to fulfill this gap by addressing the following academic questions: 1) Is it possible to apply Vladimir Propp's "Morphology of the Folktale" (1968) to Nicholas Spark's novel "Safe Haven"? 2) What good and bad morals are portrayed by the main characters in "Safe Haven"? 3) How many features of Propp's thirty-one features can be found in Nickola Spark's "Safe Haven"? 4) What are the main macro-topics in the novel? After a deep analysis of the entire novel, the researchers find that Sparks uses twenty-five features in this novel among Propp's thirty-one features. Propp did not state that all the thirty-one features should exist in a single text. Additionally, the researchers conclude that in Sparks's "Safe Haven," Alex represents good morals, while Kevin depicts bad ones. Accordingly, even though Propp's theory is comparatively old and intended to be applied to Russian fairytales. The researchers find that it can be used on modern English novels.

Keywords: "Morphology of the Folktale", Nickola Spark, "Safe Haven", Vladimir Propp

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

## 1. Introduction

Literature is divided into three areas: Drama, Poetry, and Prose. Poetry and drama go back to the Greek Classical Period. The prose is synonyms to the novel, which appeared much later. Even though it is the newest genre, prose fiction is the most popular (Nnyagu, 2017, p.78). Novels flourished in the eighteenth century. Boccaccio, Sterne, Fielding, Behn, Richardson, Bunyan, Cervantes, Chaucer, Malory, and Defoe contributed significantly to the expansion of the English novel. They influenced the novelists who came after them (Choeda, 2019, p.1099).

Sanders (1994) defines the novel as "a fictitious prose narrative of considerable length in which characters and actions representative of real life are portrayed in a plot of more or less complexity." Even the story of the novel is frequently based on imagination. The novel reflects people and society. Accordingly, it is said that the "novel is a mirror of the author's society" (Nnyagu, 2017, p.79). The novel has many features; it is written in prose, has at least 30,000 words, and is intended by the author to narrate a story. A novel should have a plot, a particular setting, and one or more main characters (Aliyev, 2021, p.24).

Moreover, Many factors helped the subsequent development and growth of novels, such as the decline of romance and drama, the Industrial Revolution, the coming up of libraries, and the rise in the middle class (Choeda, 2019, p.1101).

## 2. Methodology

The researchers apply Vladimir Yakovlevich Propp's thirty-one functions to Nicholas Sparks's (2010) "Safe Haven." To examine whether applying this old theory to a modern text is possible. The researchers apply Wodak's (2001; 2009) *discourse-historical approach* to see which of Wodak's topoi can be found in the text.

### 3. Applying Propp's "Morphology of the Folktale" on Spark's "Safe Haven"

#### 3.1 Absentation

The novel opens with the absentation of the heroin Erin, who named herself Katie, to start a new life away from her husband, Kevin. Kevin goes for two days outside Boston on business, and when he comes, he does not find his wife.

#### 3.2 Reconnaissance

Aside from the flashbacks, there are highlights of why Katie runs away. In the entire novel, Kevin is looking for Katie. He is only a step away from her in Philadelphia, yet Katie successfully runs from Philadelphia to New York and Southport.

#### 3.3 Delivery

Delivery is when the villain receives information about his victim (Propp, 1968, p.28).

Accordingly, months after Katie's disappearance, Kevin tries to find her till he gives up. One day after Kevin was dismissed from his job, he sat in the garden watching his neighbor Feldman's funeral. A woman crosses the stairs and introduces herself as "I'm Karen



Feldman." She asks him about his wife, Erin, and whether she is attending the funeral. Erin used to visit the Feldmans and help them cleaning and cooking: "She came by to visit. She used to make them pies, and sometimes she helped them clean up" (Spark, 2010, p.260).

Indirectly, Karen states that Erin looks like her dead sister Katie: "My younger sister. She passed away six years ago" (Spark, 2010, p.261). "They even looked alike. Same age and Same everything" (Spark, 2010, p.261). Therefore, Kevin knows he cannot find Erin because she uses Katie's ID. She looked for the name through a friend in the police office, who assured him that she had just got a driver's license in Southport under the name Katie Feldman.

### **3.4 Trickery**

Kevin pretends to be a gentleman when he first meets Katie. There was a gang trying to rape her. He protects her, helps her to get up, and walks her home. The next day, he invited her for coffee. "He was kind and treated her like a princess, right up until she was on her honeymoon" (Spark, 2010, p.71).

Later, he starts beating her for the silliest reasons, such as forgetting her sunglasses, food stains in the refrigerator, increasing the heat to get the house warm, going to the salon, etc. Sometimes, Kevin beats her only because he is drunk: "didn't see the slap coming until she felt the sting against her cheek. It burned, hot and red. Sharp. Bee stings" (Spark, 2010, p.154). In that fight, he runs beyond her. When she escapes, he catches her and "strikes fast and hard" (Spark, 2010, p.155) at her lower back. She gasped for air, and suddenly, her vision went black; she felt as though "she'd been pierced with a knife" and "her kidney on fire, the pain shooting through her legs and up her spine" (Spark, 2010, p.155). With all this trouble and pain, Katie could not call the police because Kevin was a detective with the Boston Police Department. "She couldn't call the police because he was the police" (Spark, 2010, p.197). Another reason for trickery is using his job to treat his wife in this troubled manner.

In time, when she knew he was crazy, it was too late because she was already trapped. Kevin was not giving her any money; he did not allow her to leave home or have friends. "He used to drive by the house when he was supposed to be working, just to make sure she was there" (Spark, 2010, p.71). She thinks of leaving him now: "She had to go someplace where he would never find her" (Spark, 2010, p.72).

Throughout the novel, Kevin appears to memorize many lines from the Bible, indicating that he is religious. However, he beats his wife, being drunk all the time and committing adultery. This shows that he is hypocritical and trying to trick everyone, even himself. "He knew that was wrong because the Bible says..." (Spark, 2010, p.210). "For he destroys his soul" (Spark, 2010, p.234).

Despite he admits that he used to beat Katie, and she does not deserve it. However, Kevin contradicts himself believing that he offered her a good life by not allowing her to work: "She didn't understand the sacrifices he made for her." "She didn't understand how easy her life was" (Spark, 2010, p.217). Thus, this demonstrates that he is a psychopath.

Kevin even tries to track his boss and colleagues in the Boston Police Department by coming to his job drunk. He drinks Vodka by putting it in a water bottle, pretending it is water and

because it does not leave an alcoholic smell like other drinks. “You’ve been drinking on the job and you’ve been lying to me” (Spark, 2010, p.250).

### 3.5 *Complicity*

Kevin controls Katie’s life because he knows she has no one to turn to. She has no family, no friends, no job, no degree, and no money. Thus, she submits to him completely.

Additionally, she has already run away twice: "She had run away twice before, and Kate wanted to think she'd learned from her mistakes" (Spark, 2010, p.200). The first time, she called him after a couple of hours because she had nowhere to go. Kate called him, asking him to pick her up from the station. She took money from his wallet the second time and ran to her hometown. Kevin found her after an hour of her arrival. He handcuffed her to the backseat of his car. Later, Kevin pulls over and beats her, brutally threatening her with his gun. "She knew that he would go to extraordinary lengths to find her. As crazy as he was, he was persistent and diligent, and his instincts were usually right." "He would find out where she'd gone, she knew" (Spark, 2010, p.201).

### 3.6 *Villainy*

According to Propp (1968, p.31-34), one of the most essential functions of Villainy is that the villain causes injury and harm to the hero or one of his family members.

Kevin Tierney “was a good detective” (Spark, 2010, p.171). Yet, he used to beat his wife brutally. As in the following examples:

- a. “The bruise on her wrist was shaped like fingers. Branches of hell” (Spark, 2010, p.156).
- b. “Couldn’t say anything. Couldn’t breathe” (Spark, 2010, p.155).
- c. “She wouldn’t cry because that only made him angrier” (Spark, 2010, p.156).
- d. “Erin’s screams and the way her head had sounded when it had hit the edge of the table after he had thrown her across the kitchen” (Spark, 2010, p.170).
- e. “He’d been slapping and kicking her because there were food stains in the refrigerator” (Spark, 2010, p.170).

He reaches the level of threatening her by putting the gun on her head even though he knows that she is terrified of guns: "he'd placed the Glock to her head and threatened to kill her" (Spark, 2010, p.173). Another fight; he did not even remember why he was beating her. Kevin held her by the hair as he punched her heartlessly in the kitchen. In that fight, she broke two of her fingers. For weeks, he did not allow her to go to the hospital till all the bruises on her face and body “could be covered by makeup.” “she’d had to cook and clean one-handed” (Spark, 2010, p.175). Accordingly, Katie decides to escape for the third time because “she was tired of getting kicked and punched and thrown down the cellar stairs” (Spark, 2010, p.173).

Even Kevin knows he treats Katie harshly, and she does not deserve that: "she was sweet and kind and gentle and she didn't deserve to be punched or kicked". However, while he is alone in the empty house, he misses her, yet he describes her as selfish and wishes to slap, kick, hit, and kill her for leaving him. “A wife didn’t just leave. A wife didn’t just walk away from marriage. He wanted to hit and kick and slap her and pull her hair for being so stupid. For being so damn selfish” (Spark, 2010, p.174). “He couldn’t stop crying because he missed her

and wanted her to come home and he hated to be alone” “How selfish she was and all he wanted to do was kill her” (Spark, 2010, p.228).

### **3.7 Lack**

A family member either desires or lacks something. For example, the hero is unmarried and looking for a bride (Propp, 1968, p.35).

#### **3.7.1 Alex and His Kids**

Alex lost his wife to a brain tumor, leaving Kristen and Josh beyond. Alex found he should care for two kids, one still an infant, and the store. Both his children started having nightmares for a year after Clary's death. “When they woke up in the middle of the night, sobbing inconsolably, he would hold them in his arms and whisper that everything was going to be all right” (Spark, 2010, p.19).

They grow up missing their mom: "The kids need a mom" (Spark, 2010, p.179). Sometimes, Kristen expresses that “in a babyish, trembling voice... When she did so with the tears running down her cheeks, Alex can hear his heartbreaking” (Spark, 2010, p.19). Alex misses her as well. He ignores their friendship and companionship: "He was lonely" (Spark, 2010, p.21).

When Josh drowns, Kristen panics, and she starts crying. Katie is there holding her close in her arms. “he saw that his little girl was crying and afraid and needed him, too, even though she was nested in Katie’s arms” (Spark, 2010, p.32). Alex starts blaming himself for not being a good father to his kids, especially his terrified daughter. Katie assures him that he is a perfect father: "you're a pretty good father" (Spark, 2010, p.49). He does not prevent Josh from going fishing. Instead, he forces him to wear a life vest. In that situation, Alex notices how his girl reached for Katie “like a child reaching for her mother”. That situation moved him as he missed "having a wife, his children missed having a mother” (Spark, 2010, p.51). Katie starts to fulfill Alex's lack of friends and companionship and the kids' lack of a mother, as “Katie was a natural with children” (Spark, 2010, p.178).

Katie is a good listener when Alex talks about Clary, even when he apologizes for talking a lot about his dead wife. Katie explains beautifully that it is okay: "It's okay to talk about her ... You should talk about her. She's part of who you are” (Spark, 2010, p.85). Shortly, Alex falls for Katie: “he was falling hard for this woman, and he could only pray that she was feeling the same way” (Spark, 2010, p.128), “realizing that he was in love with her. He loved the Katie he’d come to know and the Katie he’d never had the chance to meet” (Spark, 2010, p.138).

#### **3.7.2 Katie**

Katie has lived a harsh life since her childhood. Both her parents had alcoholism. And she spends her childhood in constant movement. “Her mind flashed to her father and the empty cans of Pabst Blue Ribbon that usually littered the floor next to the recliner where he sat” (Spark, 2010, p.90), “the constant moves, her parents’ alcoholism, the fact that she’d been on her own since she’d turned eighteen” (Spark, 2010, p.138). She was really on her own from an early age. When she met Kevin, she thought she had found the love and safety. However, she was mistaken.

When she runs away to Southport, Alex starts showing interest in her by providing her with things she needs, such as an umbrella during the storm, organic vegetables, or wine when Katie is there for Kristen during the drowning accident. When Alex notices that Katie is walking from her cottage to her work, he gives her a bike. Aggressively, Katie returns the cycle, assuring him that she does not need anything from him: "I don't need an umbrella or vegetables or wine. And I don't need a bike" (Spark, 2010, p.76). She knew Alex was "interested in her" (Spark, 2010, p.82).

When she starts to know him more, she realizes that "he was the kind of man who tried to find the best in people" (Spark, 2010, p.93). Even though he passes through a lot of drama in his job and with the sickness and death of his mother, Katie understands that Alex does not like to complain. "He was different, she thought, from the men she'd met in her past, different from anyone she'd met before" (Spark, 2010, p.94).

He was there for his wife during her illness, and he was not in any relationship for years after Clary's death. He solely focuses on his kids. Kristen tells Katie that her dad never yelled at them: "He doesn't get mad" (Spark, 2010, p.97). Expressing that Alex is a perfect father.

Katie starts to love him as she knows that even if she tells him about her past, "he would support her. That he would guard her secrets and never use what he knew to hurt her" (Spark, 2010, p.112).

"It was then she realized that she loved him, too" (Spark, 2010, p.140), "it feels like to love someone, she thought, and to be loved in return" (Spark, 2010, p.140). Part of her love for him is that she wants him to know her past: "She wanted him to love the real her, with all her flaws and secrets. She wanted him to know the whole truth" (Spark, 2010, p.140). Katie started to feel safe with him and could not help but trust him: "She couldn't help it: she trusted him" (Spark, 2010, p.180). He understands and treats her gently: "he treated her with a gentleness that astonished and touched her" (Spark, 2010, p.220). Alex is her friend before becoming her lover. Accordingly, he fulfilled Katie's needs to be loved and understood and to rely on someone, knowing he would be there for her. He also finds in her the woman that he was waiting for: "they were somehow saving themselves for each other. He hadn't slept with anyone since his wife had died, and now he felt that in some way he had unknowingly been waiting for Katie" (Spark, 2010, p.177).

Additionally, Katie finds in Jo the good friends and the listener that Katie needs "so long since she'd experienced something so easy and natural" (Spark, 2010, p.68). Their chat flows spontaneously. They share coffee daily and heartily chat about their routines. This kind of friendship is something that Katie has never experienced in her past because Kevin does not allow her to have any friends. Thus, with Jo, Alex, and the kids, Southport seems like a safe place to settle. "Southport is starting to feel like home, I guess. I figured I should start making this house into something more permanent" (Spark, 2010, p.123).

### **3.8 Mediation**

According to Propp (1968, p.36), Katie is a victimized hero who suffers a lot, and the plot is about her adventure. Even though the novel opens in Southport, Sparks uses flashbacks a few months after her arrival to tell Katie's story. Highlighting the great struggles that she went through to start a new life. She takes this huge step of moving and leaving everything behind

at age twenty-seven. She has no money or friends to support her. "She'd moved here with almost nothing" (Spark, 2010, p.5).

### **3.9 *Departure***

After her long-suffering with Kevin, Katie decided to escape for the third time, but she found a good plan this time. First, she collects small amounts, such as one or two dollars from Kevin's wallet, in addition to the coins she finds under the sofa or in the washing machine. Katie buys a cell phone and forwards the landline calls to her cell phone. She steals dark brown hair from the supermarket to change her hair color. She starts to cut her hair, "With scissors, she began to chop savagely at her hair" (Spark, 2010, p.192) and cries while she remembers all the hits she got from Kevin: "Her kidney still throbbed, radiating pain from her shoulder blades to the backs of her legs" "it had kept her up for hours as Kevin snored beside her" (Spark, 2010, p.183). "Hit me because I had to go shopping!" "Hit me so hard that I vomit" (Spark, 2010, p.193). She changes her style, collects all the necessary items she needs, and runs away to Philadelphia, where she works as a bartender for a couple of days, to collect more money before heading to Southport.

### **3.10 *Donnor***

Alex is the Donnor. He worked in the Marian in Criminal Investigation Division (CID) and posted in Georgia and Germany. Due to his experience, Alex can sense that Katie is in trouble: "he'd sensed she was in trouble" (Spark, 2010, p.51). They become close because both of them are alone and need each other. "There was a loneliness within him that couldn't disguise, and she knew that in some way it matched her own" (Spark, 2010, p.82). Alex is ready to do anything to protect Katie from Kevin. Alex is prepared even to shout at Kevin if he tries to hurt Katie anymore. "Alex had pulled the trigger without hesitation." "He knew that if Kevin ever showed up, Alex would protect Katie, no matter what". "She wasn't simply a victim; she was his friend, the woman he'd come to love" (Spark, 2010, p.160).

### **3.11 *The Hero's Reaction***

The hero's Reaction to the Donor's action. The response can be positive or negative.

When Alex tries to help Katie, she is aggressive and tells him she does not need his help. However, Alex was patient and gentle with her. Katie started to get to know his kids and spend time with them on the beach. Later, they visited her in the restaurant while she was working. Step by step, Katie starts loving Alex. "She was attracted to him more than she wanted to admit" (Spark, 2010, p.126).

### **3.12 *Provision or Receipt of a Magical Agent***

The hero becomes able to use a magical agent. The supernatural agents include animals, such as a horse, an eagle, etc., or objects like swords, rings, balls, cudgels, guslas, etc. Another form of magical agent is the power of transformation into animals (Propp, 1968, p.43-44).

The magical power is represented at the novel's end when Kevin sets Alex's house and store on fire. Katie said Jo told her, "*He's here*" (Spark, 2010, p.328). Jo indicated that Kevin had reached Southport and was looking for her. When Katie wakes up, this time in reality, she

hears Jo's voice whispering, "*Can you smell it?*" (Spark, 2010, p.329), warning her about the fire.

Jo is Clary's soul. She tries to be there for Katie as a friend. Meanwhile, she is looking after her kids, Josh and Kristin. As she mentioned in her letter, "I dream that I'll find a way to come back, that I can find a way to ensure they're going to be all right" and "I'll watch over them from heaven" (Spark, 2010, p.363).

### ***3.13 Spatial Transference Between Two Kingdoms, Guidance***

Katie runs away from her Kevin twice. One is from Boston to Atlantic City. Later, she moved from Boston to Philadelphia and then to Southport. She loves Southport's simple and pleasant weather. "She likes it here" (Spark, 2010, p.7). In Boston, Philadelphia, and Atlantic City, traffic noises, bad smells, and people rushing along the sidewalks. However, Southport is a small historic town at the mouth of Cape Fear River, with only a few thousand citizens. The children riding their bikes and playing football in the streets. There are a lot of churches. The climate during the sunset is magical: "She loved watching the sky turning from blue to grey to orange and yellow at the western rim of the world" (Spark, 2010, p.5). The sun also reflects on the lack of "the water sparkled". The boats move slowly with the breeze. The edges of the trees' branches seem to shimmer, with the frogs and crickets sound in the evening. Now, she has her own home, even a small cottage in the forest. However, it is enough for her, and she feels safe there. She is grateful that she ended up in Southport: "This place had felt right" (Spark, 2010, p.14).

### ***3.14 Struggle***

Katie struggles with Kevin, so she unconsciously starts crying when she tells Alex about her past. "She'd spoken through her tears, though he doubted she knew she was crying" (Spark, 2010, p.160). However, the last fight between them is when Kevin burns Alex's house while Katie, Josh, and Kristin sleep. On this horrible night, Katie acts bravely. She wakes up the kids, and even "the roaring of the fire was so loud" (Spark, 2010, p.330). And she can barely hear her voice. Katie dragged the crying kids out of the bedroom window on the second floor and helped them get out. She is throwing them in a comforter. Katie "twisting as they fell so that the kids would land on top of her" (Spark, 2010, p.331). To find Kevin waiting for them with a gun, Katie fights him courageously to allow the kids to run away.

### ***3.15 Branding/Marking***

Branding is all about the hero getting a particular body mark in their body. Katie represents that when she changed her style from long hair blonde to short dark hair, "A dark, short-haired stranger looked back at her" (Spark, 2010, p.193). Giving some tan to her skin and pretending to be pregnant: "Short, dark hair, Skin the color of copper" (Spark, 2010, p.194). Generally, she was "a ghost in human form" (Spark, 2010, p.22). She even changed her id from Erin Tierney to Katie Feldman "the identification she needed to start a new life" (Spark, 2010, p.194).

### ***3.16 Victory***

The novel ends with the hero's (Katie's) victory by gaining her freedom and the villain's death.

### ***3.17 Pursuit/ Chase***

The entire story is about Kevin Tierney chasing Katie. Katie is pursuing a new life away from her awful husband till she finds refuge in Southport.

### ***3.18 Rescue***

Knowing Kevin would chase her, Katie tried to hide, first in China town in Philadelphia and then Southport. She even changed her appearance and ID, as we mentioned before.

### ***3.19 Unrecognized Arrival***

As mentioned, Katie reached Southport to hide from her husband and tried to start over, away from all her past.

### ***3.20 Unfounded Claims***

When Katie first met Kevin, she thought that he was the one, the real hero for her, significantly after he rescued her from the raping accident. We soon know he is a false hero when he hits her during their honeymoon. Later, when Katie told him she wanted to be a mother, Kevin asked her to shut up. "He married her because he wanted a wife, not a mother. But she kept bringing it up...until he finally slapped her and told her to shut up" (Spark, 2010, p.274).

### ***3.21 Difficult Task***

Another challenging task is presented to the hero (Propp, 1968, p.60) when Kevin comes to Southport and threatens Katie and the kids' lives. Again, Katie proves she is brave enough to face Kevin and save the kid's life.

### ***3.22 Recognition***

Before Clary's (Jo) death, she gave Alex two letters, one addressed to him and the second to the woman he will marry. Handing the letter to Katie indicates that she will be a great mom to the kids and an excellent wife to Alex. Thus, she is the hero of their story: "You'll become the wife who grows old with Alex, and you'll become the only mother my children will ever know" (Spark, 2010, p.364).

### ***3.23 Exposure***

Kevin is exposed when he has been dismissed from his job for drinking alcohol during working hours: "You've been drinking on the job" (Spark, 2010, p.250). In addition, it encourages a woman to take revenge for the death of her son. "She claims you were talking about God and told her, quote "The man was a sinner and deserved to be punished" (Spark, 2010, p.249). Kevin declines, saying so. However, his boss ensures everyone hears him: "Your partner, the medical examiner, the crime scene investigators, the boyfriend" (Spark, 2010, p.251).

Moreover, looking for Katie in Southport while he is drunk, making his way between people, some boys make fun of him. He points his gun at them, using his weapon against innocent is another prove that Kevin is the villain. Thus, all the above represents Kevin as a false hero.

### **3.24 Punishment**

Katie fights Kevin after she helps the kids to run away from the fire. However, Kevin follows them to Katie's cottage. There, Katie shoots him using his gun. He falls on his feet in front of her: "he tried to stay upright, but his body was no longer his own. He collapsed on the porch" (Spark, 2010, p.346).

### **3.25 Wedding**

There is no actual wedding, but Alex's letter to Katie proves he selected her as his wife and the mother of his children.

## **4. Conclusion**

In this paper, the researcher studies Nicholas Sparks's novel "Safe Haven" (2010) according to Vladimir Propp's "Morphology of the Folktale" to fill the study gap. No study has applied Propp's "Morphology of the Folktale" to a modern fictional text. The researcher finds that Sparks uses twenty-five features in this novel among Propp's thirty-one features. Propp did not state that all the thirty-one features should exist in a single text.

The third research question is "What are the good and bad morals portrayed by the main characters in 'Safe Haven'?" In Nicholas Sparks's novel "Safe Haven", the good morals are represented by Alex, while Kevin depicts the terrible morals. Accordingly, even though Propp's theory is comparatively old and intended to be applied to Russian fairytales. The researchers find that it can be used in modern English novels. Lastly, according to Wodak (2001; 2009) discourse-historical approach, the main topics are: topoi of Struggle, topoi of love, and topoi of abuse.



## References

- Aliyev, A. (2021). 'What Is a Novel?' *Estetika: The European Journal of Aesthetics* LVIII/XIV, no. 1: pp. 19–34. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33134/eeja.215>
- Choeda, S. (2019). The Origin and Development of English Novel: A Descriptive Literature Review, *International Journal of English, Literature and Social Science (IJELS)*,(4), Issue-4, pp.1099-1104.
- Nnyagu, U. (2017). ISSN: 2394 - 2703 [www.internationaljournals.org](http://www.internationaljournals.org) Page 78 The Novel: Genres, Concepts Introduction and Appreciation. *SSRG International Journal of Humanities and Social Science (SSRG - IJHSS) Volume 4 Issue 5 Sep to Oct 2017*.
- Nursantia (2003). *The Moral Aspect in Joseph Conrad's "Heart of Darkness"*. Indonesia: Alauddin Islamic State University.
- Propp, V. (1968). *Morphology of the Folktale*. Texas: University of Texas Press.
- Salmah (2004). *Moral forms in Charles Dickens's "Our Mutual Friend."* Indonesia: State University Makassar.
- Sanders, A. (1994). *The short Oxford History of English Literature* (3rd ed.). New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Spark, N. (2010). *Safe Haven*. UK: Sphere.
- Sundari, T. (2014). *An Analysis of Sleeping Beauty based on Vladimir Propp's theory*. Indonesia: University Negeri Surabaya.
- Wodak, R. (2001). What CDA is about \_a summary of its history, important concepts and developments. In Wodak, R. & Meyer M. (2001). *Method of critical discourse analysis*. London: SAGE Publication.
- Wodak, R. (2009). *Methods of critical discourse analysis* (2nd ed). London: Sage Publication.

**Contact emails:** [duaataher1994@gmail.com](mailto:duaataher1994@gmail.com)  
[josephali836@gmail.com](mailto:josephali836@gmail.com)



## *Phenomenographic Enhanced Video Analysis*

Wilfried Swoboda, University College for Teacher Training Vienna, Austria  
Rolf Laven, University College for Teacher Training Vienna, Austria

The Paris Conference on Arts & Humanities 2024  
Official Conference Proceedings

### **Abstract**

The Phenomenographically Enhanced Video Analysis (PEV) aims to identify framework conditions and situational aspects of a learning atmosphere in the context of school teaching. The starting point of PEV is always the contextual investigation of contingent teaching sequences with regard to the characteristics of interactions as the basis of a specific learning atmosphere. The method evaluates videotaped lessons in three steps. (1) The video sequences are narrowed down according to the answers to the "Quicktest" (QT), in which the learners are briefly asked about the topic at the end of the teaching unit. In the next step (2), an extended research team reduces the generated video artefacts into a data pool according to a predefined question profile. This forms the core of the final data interpretation and reflection (3). In the final analysis process of the PEV, special attention is paid to the immersion in the video material during the reduction process using the immersion-crystallisation analysis method.

Keywords: Learning Atmosphere, Phenomenography, Video Analysis, Immersion Theory

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

## Introduction

A learning atmosphere experienced in a classroom influences the learning, actions and behaviour of learners and can have an inhibiting or stimulating effect on learning processes such as cooperation and communication (Pfrang, 2020). The term classroom climate is limited to the learning environment and school characteristics, while the classroom atmosphere, conceptually derived from phenomenology, includes extended dimensions such as interpersonal relationships, interactions or room design (Eder, 2002). The learning atmosphere has an inclusive status, refers to a holistic orientation, and is addressed to the learning of *all* students (Pfrang, 2020). In order to understand the learning atmosphere, the authors developed the *Phenomenographically Enhanced Videomethod* (PEV), which analyses video recorded lessons to detect the framework and situational requirements of a certain learning atmosphere. PEV was developed within the European project ACIIS (Hoffelner & Laven, 2024) in the context of the Laboratory for Aesthetic Education. The use of the qualitative research approach for PEV is based on the avoidance of an artificial laboratory conditions, and focuses on the active participation of the observers in the events (elimination of the subject-object separation). It promotes a holistic view of behavioural patterns instead of measuring individual variables, and thus advocates openness to new insights and observations in the course of the research process (Adler & Adler, 1994).

## Phenomenography

Schmitz (2014) understands atmosphere as the extended filling of an arealess space in the realm of experienced presence. Böhme (2001) speaks in a dualistic sense of an ego pole, the subjective component and an object of perception as the basis of sensing, which in turn is the basis of atmospherics. The more perception is dedicated to the "presence of something" in the meaning of a certain object, the more it distances itself from the atmospheric. According to Böhme, the objective experience of atmospheres takes place on the one hand, on a spatial approach (*ingression*) and, on the other hand, on the deviation of the personal mood being introduced (*discrepancy*). The PEV approach is thus linked to the philosophical understanding of phenomenology, whereby the experiential structures of the subject's perception are always embedded in the context of their relationship to the world. Perception is to be conceptualised as it is experienced by the perceivers and their world, a distinction is to be made within its appearance, by the phenomenon within the world in which we live. (Gallager & Zahavi, 2021) Instead of concentrating purely on the objects of cognition, the experiential dimension is described and analysed in order to be able to include the cognitive contribution of the perceiving subject. (Husserl 1984) Although a phenomenological description decidedly encompasses the perspective of first person, it has intersubjective validation and objective validity as basic rules of scientific quality (Alloa, et al., 2023).

*Bodiliness* ("Leiblichkeit") is one of the most important basic concepts of phenomenology, especially with regard to interdisciplinarity in effect and application, it covers an important area of research as a body-body difference. (Wehrle, 2023) Schmitz (1990) distinguishes between the physical body ("Körper"), which is experienced indirectly through the senses, and the embodied body ("Leib"), which is experienced through sensing. Embodied sensing is an interplay of contraction and expansion, representing inhalation and exhalation as a sounding board. It absorbs external elements such as looks, gestures, moods, atmospheres and feelings in an antagonistic (non-symmetrical) and solidary (communal) way. Feelings are described by Schmitz (2014) as quasi-spatially extended atmospheres in which several subjects can participate equally. Böhme (2001) defines atmosphere as something that cannot

be completely distanced from without, as we have already said, collapsing or contracting into one thing. The perception of atmosphere is linked to presence as a sense of the presence of others or of something else. It is therefore something that is difficult to encode, difficult to categorise and not critically defined in the process of image interpretation.

*Phenomenography* is about the different meanings of the same things or ways of seeing, experiencing and conceptualising, where "things" refer to anything that can have different meanings. (Marton & Booth, 2014) Observations are used as qualitative research methods to study human experiences. (Lo, 2015) The central element of phenomenographic research is thus the internal relationship between the experiencing person and what is being experienced, as opposed to research on human behaviour, mental states or neural representations (Marton & Booth, 2014). The aim of many phenomenological studies is to work on the variation of the experience of the phenomenon of interest in terms of qualitatively different categories. (Marton & Booth, 2014) Phenomenography attempts to describe "how the world appears to others" (Marton, 2014, 113), how the world might be seen or experienced by others. This can concern a whole group as well as individuals and relate to a group via a single experience variation. A complex of different description categories of the different experience variations then forms the domain of findings. Phenomenography and phenomenology share the common object of exploring human experience and consciousness, and differ in the way they approach the subject. In phenomenography, the structure and meaning of a phenomenon can be investigated both in pre-reflective experience and in conceptual thinking; the focus is on variations of living and experiencing, variations between perspectives and the resulting competencies of action (Marton & Booth, 2014).

A phenomenological theory is characterised by the fact that it dispenses with investigations into deductive deductions or inductive empiricism and describes the view as structural features (Staiti, 2023). In its research into the learning atmosphere, PEV draws on Čížek's findings on the free learning space (Laven, 2006) and the definition of an immergent learning environment where learners can immerse themselves and indulge in deep learning (Swoboda, 2019). The "Vienna Youth Art Class", founded around 1920 in Vienna by Franz Čížek, was intended to be a place of astonishment; the class atmosphere was of particular importance, the space was free from corrections and possible resulting disappointments as well as frustrations. In contrast to school life at the time, the children were allowed to move around freely (Laven, 2006). The learning environment of the immergence theory according to Swoboda (2019) consists of an atmosphere in trusted surroundings as the *Gate of Familiarity* to enable a mental immersion process. The Gate of Familiarity is a mental experience space filled with positive impressions that radiates safety and familiarity. *Synchronous Conversation* is the consolidation of many individuals into one commonality, *perspective Transmission* is the establishment of relationships and relations in this space. The individual perspective comes to the fore, forming a subjective approach to the immediacy of human vulnerability and social need for one another (Swoboda, 2023).

## **Videography**

PEV focuses on the analysis of video recordings, a sequentially ordered representation of interactions, in order to find out how individuals orientate themselves towards each other and coordinate with each other. The technical possibilities of a video analysis offer the advantage that it can be carried out in real time, but also in slow motion and in repetition (Brinkmann & Sales Rödel, 2019). A fundamental distinction must be made between standardising and interpretative video analysis. In standardising video analysis, the recordings are subjected to

an evaluation based on predefined coding plans. Interpretative video analysis, which is used in this research method, supports the inductive approach in order to understand the recorded interaction between the actors.

*Videography* aims to analyse social situations that are recorded on video. The collected video data allows the preservation of aspects in their temporal sequence and gives researchers repeated access to past events (Tuma & Schnettler, 2014). Videography does not claim to be documentation, but instead stands for a paradoxical documentation (Fankhausen, 2013) as an oscillation between proximity and distance or between field and science. What is special about videography is the combination of field research with subsequent extensive material analysis of the recorded interaction sequences (Tuma & Schnettler, 2014). The combination of both approaches in the research process makes it possible to systematically consider and evaluate factual contexts from interactions of acting subjects, from events of the learning space and from contingencies of events in microanalysis. The PEV follows the videographic data collection within an iterative procedure (Tuma & Schnettler, 2014) without using a completely fixed research plan in advance. An initial interest serves as the starting point for a step-by-step narrowing of the research question with a simultaneously growing data corpus. The videography itself does not serve as a case analysis, but as a comparative procedure within a body of material for the investigation of limiting phenomena and structural repetitions (Tuma & Schnettler, 2014).

When setting up the technical equipment, a *limitation on the first order* of data recording arises, as the researchers already determine the direction of view of the research field by aligning the camera in the triangle of line of sight, camera section and perspective focus. Showing on the basis of the recording therefore also includes not-showing based on those lines of view, sections and focalisations in which the other is excluded (Fankhausen, 2013). The problem of the *invasiveness* of the camera means a *limitation on second order*; the technical aids used should be rendered invisible by making them as transparent as possible (Borck, 2001), thereby avoiding situational disturbance effects. This invisibility is a priority; the invasiveness should be contained on the ethical side by thoroughly informing the participants about the aspect of the research as well as the handling of the data, and technically by the scientific core team carefully choosing the appropriate place for the camera.

### **Triadic Structure**

The "Phenomenographically Enhanced Video Analysis" PEV follows the following triad:

- 1) Subject-Sighted data marking
- 2) Sequenced video artefacts
- 3) Immersion-Crystallisation analysis

The first triad, subject-sighted data marking, is based on the Quicktest (QT), a short (online) questionnaire for learners at the end of the teaching unit. Here, participants indicate the situations in which they perceived a specific atmospheric situation. The QT captures subjective atmospheric perceptions in the teaching situation along a particular research question; these form the markers of the second triad. The aim is to record the participants' fresh, 'unfalsified' learner's impressions of the atmosphere, because a directed thinking about atmospheres in a specific way always creates a different ego standpoint relative to the initial atmosphere. In the perception of atmospheres, the subject is initially absorbed by the atmosphere and gets emotionally affected by its distance (Böhme, 2001). The aim of the

Quicktest is to capture the first 'fresh' subjective impressions: in the subsequent directed, reflective thinking, a transition from a subjective impression to an objective fact takes place. The questioning must therefore be carried out individually shortly after the respective lesson. The aim is to describe the situation in terms of the mood experienced by the participants. The situation depictions obtained by the QT subsequently become selective markers and form the basis of the second triad, the "sequenced video artefacts". In this step of the triadic investigation, individual video sequences from the collected video material are marked and highlighted as *video artefacts* (Seidel, 2022); they form the data material of the investigation. The situation depictions obtained by the QT subsequently become selective markers and form the basis of the second triad. In this step of the triadic investigation, individual video sequences are marked from the collected video material and highlighted as video artefacts (Seidel, 2022); they form the data material of the investigation. The video artefacts are searched for along the selective markers; the places specified in the QT must be identified and prepared for a detailed inspection. A detailed lesson plan helps to find the right place in the video. The timestamp of the point that was specified as a selective marker can be noted in it so that this marked video sequence can also be correctly labelled for the final triad. In this step, the sequences are entered into the *Immersion-Crystallisation* analysis according to Borkan (1999) and bundled into headings.

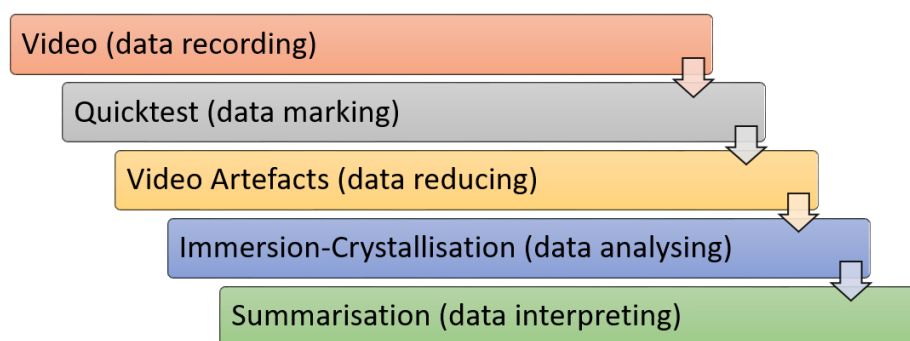


Figure 1: Step-by-step structure of the inductive, iterative process of PEV. In the first stage, the lesson is videotaped, marked using the Quicktest and then reduced to artefacts. The analysis via Immersion-Crystallisation leads to a summary and interpretation.

Essentially, this method is an inductive, iterative process of identifying themes, categories and patterns in the data. Inductive means that generalisations are drawn from specific observations, while iterative refers to a systematic, repetitive and recursive process.

### Course of Action

Since the study is not aimed at the lesson content per se, i.e. it is not intended to evaluate its realisation or content preparation, the research approach is that of field research (Bortz & Döring, 2003). Rather, the natural constellations within the teaching situations are observed. The PEV approach is therefore inspired by field research in the stages of "planning and preparation", "acting in the research field" and "selection, analysis and evaluation".

#### *A) Planning and Preparation*

The starting point for planning the PEV method is a lesson plan for the course unit drawn up by the teacher. The templates used in teacher training are suitable for this, which usually include a planned content and time schedule. These two fields are often supplemented by the areas of "social form", as a learning setting for the group, and of "learning output", as a

definition of reflection and consolidation. The sequencing of selected video sections is carried out in the second triad with the help of this pre-planned schedule.

Based on the research question, the Quicktest of the first triad must now be formulated and set up. After a brief general explanation of the investigation, the query comprises the definition of the specific atmospheric phenomenon (along the research question) and two subsequent questions. The first question opens or closes the atmospheric perception in a decision question. In the case of a positive decision, the respondent is asked to describe the exact situation of the first sensory entry; in the case of a negative decision, the survey ends. The aim is to obtain a *yes/no declaration* on the atmospheric perception and a *determination* of the situation from the participants, so *when* they experienced the specific sensation within the teaching unit.

The stage of preparation at last concerns the nomination of the extended research team. Since the subsequent analysis via Immersion-Crystallization in the iterative process requires a multiple procedure to comply with the quality criteria in the research process, it is recommended to nominate an extended team in advance to extend the core team.

### ***B) Acting in the Research Field***

The camera script for recording (class) events includes at least one still camera in the room, which is mounted frontally from a slightly elevated "cavalier perspective". The aim is to capture as much of the action as possible. Depending on the technical possibilities, the recording process can be time-cyclical or full-time.



Figure 2: Example of camera placement considering the problem of invasiveness

The group of participants is once again reminded of the fact of the scientific recording, with special reference to the focus of the investigation, in order to avoid a possible interpretation as an examination situation, for example.



As far as possible, the researchers are actively involved in the classroom activities, in the best case they are part of the group and take part in the exercises. Active participation should make it easier to sequence the video artefacts later on. The more precisely the core team knows about the teaching process, the easier it will be to allocate the data from the data markers. Monitoring of the recording function should take place at regular intervals, at least during breaks. This should prevent the recording from being interrupted or even cancelled for technical reasons. In any case, attention must be paid to the problem of *invasiveness*; monitoring should be carried out in the background wherever possible and the flow of the lessons should never be interrupted, stopped or even repeated in the case of technical problems.

The Quicktest can be carried out via QR code as a query on the learner's own smartphone. The survey should be kept at a level where participants can complete it in a few minutes. As they are asked to record their impressions, the first subjective experience should be captured - almost purely, without any reflective "background noise". The Quicktest should therefore be carried out in the same room and immediately after the end of the session.

Once the questionnaire has been completed, the technical dismantling should begin and, if possible, the data should be backed up immediately.

### ***C) Selection, Analysis and Evaluation***

The detailed study of the video artefacts is based on a *global evaluation* (Legewie, 1994) in the levels of selection, analysis and evaluation. The first level, *selection*, involves viewing and organising the material as well as the important step of video sequencing of the second triad "sequenced video artefacts". The second level *analysis* follows the immersion-crystallisation method according to Borkan (1999) in iterative loops along the marked sequences. An inductive approach is used to collect keywords, comments and themes from individual patterns and themes. The final level *evaluation* involves the bundling, categorisation and documentation of the findings.

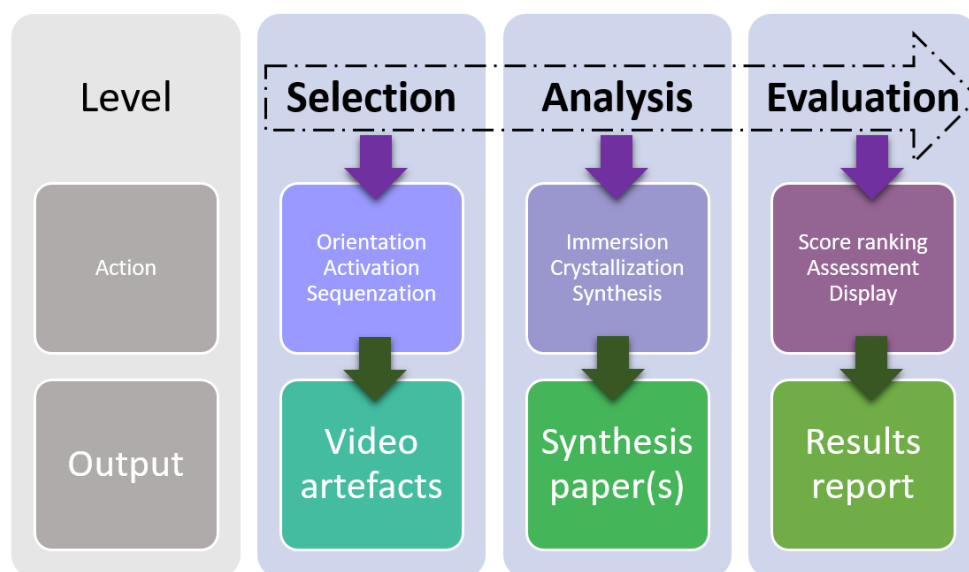


Figure 3: Setting up the PEV global evaluation

## ***Selection***

The selection process is organised by the core research team and consists of three steps:

1. Orientation: The video artefact is displayed on the existing lesson plan in order to obtain an initial overview and a rough structure.
2. Activating contextual knowledge: The existing material is further broken down and bundled according to the lesson plan. By visualising the plot constellation, structure and action, irrelevant parts of the material (pauses, interruptions) can be eliminated.
3. Sequencing: From the single artefacts, those sequences are marked on the lesson plan which were described as particularly significant or relevant in the first triad. These passages are edited into a video sequence out of the artefact material (e.g. by editing them into a separate video) or highlighted by annotating the time stamp on the lesson plan.

## ***Analysis***

The analysis is carried out by the extended research team using the immersion-crystallisation method: in an iterative process of immersion and reflection, a kind of intersubjective experience is created between the object of research and the researcher through the medium of data (Borkan, 2022). Although the method is a rational, analytical investigation, as a holistic approach similar to the experience of music or visual art, it means a *deep experiencing* of the data (Borkan, 2022, 787).

The analysis procedure is carried out in three steps, the first two of which are repeated in a loop until data saturation is reached in the third step:

- 1) Immersion (Borkan, 2022)  
This is the part of the process where the researchers immerse themselves in the data they have collected. The systematically selected sequences are minutely analysed. The research question is focused by documenting the temporal sequence and the orchestration of the actions as action sequences. According to Tuma & Schnettler (2014), the evaluation is not based on a predetermined scheme, but on precise observation and its increasing systematisation. When carefully reviewing the marked sequences, ideas and questions should be noted and labelled with the respective video timestamp. Any interesting idea should be captured in a visual or written auditing trail and labelled with concise headings and references to relevant parts of the sequence.
- 2) Crystallisation (Borkan, 2022)  
This is the step in the process where the immersion of the data is (temporarily) interrupted in order to reflect on the analysis session and attempt to identify and articulate patterns or themes noted during the immersion process. The artefact is screened to identify which tags or labels are being primarily expressed. Approximately 3 to 5 important tags per artefact are listed as keywords in an index (noting timestamp references). A summary of the artefact is written in 30 to 50 lines, with the most important content presented either in logical order (analytically) or in chronological order (sequentially). A motto or a concise tag serves as a heading. It is also possible to work with guiding questions instead: Is a further detailed analysis of the specific sequence to be undertaken promising? What questions does it raise? With what other artefacts might it be compared? All these considerations should be documented in writing.

### 3) Creative synthesis

In the synthesis paper, data saturation is achieved through iterative loops of immersion and crystallisation steps. After initial patterns and interpretations have been recognised, at least one further loop is required to confirm the results or to seek alternative interpretations. The procedure is that of induction, in which a separate category scheme is created for each sequence. The findings are recorded in the synthesis paper, which forms the basic element for deductive interpretation at the final level of global evaluation.

## ***Evaluation***

The evaluation level is the final summarisation of the video artefacts and synthesis papers by the core research team and consists of the following parts:

- 1) Score ranking: Each video artefact will be ranked in terms of its relevance to the research question (peripheral/average/main) and considered according to the facts it reveals that go beyond the central topic of the study (2-5 evaluation keywords).
- 2) Overall assessment of the synthesis papers: In a short statement (approx. 20 lines), the scientific communication situation (credibility, comprehensibility, role allocation, gaps, distortions, ambiguities) will be assessed.
- 3) Display of results: The results of the work can be compiled into a small results report containing the following elements: Summary of the video sequences, presentation of the analysis procedure, statement on the overall investigation and any applicable evaluation plans.

## **Conclusion**

The aim of the PEV method is to develop a tool for the phenomenographic investigation of specific teaching situations in which students experience a certain learning atmosphere. This will allow conclusions to be drawn about the setting of framework conditions and interactive activities for the learning atmosphere. The method is based on a philosophical understanding of phenomenology. The experiential structures of the subject's perception are always taken into account in the way they relate to the world. This involves the use of videographic recording methods; the use of technical equipment should not lead us to regard video data as objective representations. These data always correspond with the researchers' constructive achievements, such as the image section, the position of the camera and the reactions to the camera in the field.

The criterion of objectivity is prevented by the need for interpersonal consensus. The most important source-critical factor is consensual validity (Bortz & Döring, 2003) in the sense of interpersonal consensus building in the research team. As an indication of data validity, several participating researchers must agree on the credibility and significance of the material. PEV is based on the definition of an immergent learning environment in which learners can immerse themselves and engage in *deep learning* (Swoboda, 2019). Meseth, et al. (2012) refer to the collective experience of communication in the classroom the "social memory" of a school class as a teaching-learning community. An *immergent* learning environment as a particular learning atmosphere is a contingency-restricting enabling condition for factual learning *and* social control, as it establishes a social order through formal roles and makes the behaviour of individual participants expectable. Individual communication events can therefore be remembered and repeated in the social memory of the class community.

## References

- Adler, P., & Adler, P. (1994). Observational Techniques. In No. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 377-392). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Alloa, E., Breyer, T., & Caminada, E. (2023). Einleitung. In E. Alloa, T. Breyer, & E. Caminada, (Eds.). *Handbuch Phänomenologie*. (pp. 1 -16). Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Böhme, G. (2001). *Asthetik. Vorlesungen über Ästhetik als allgemeine Wahrnehmungslehre*. München: Suhrkamp.
- Borck, C. (2001). Die Unhintergebarkeit des Bildschirms: Beobachtungen zur Rolle von Bildtechniken in den präsentierten Wissenschaften. In B. Heintz, & J. Huber (Eds.), *Mit dem Auge denken. Strategien der Sichtbarmachung in wissenschaftlichen und virtuellen Welten* (pp. 383-396). Zürich: Edition Voldemeer.
- Borkan, J. M. (1999). "Immersion/Crystallization." In B. F. Crabtree & W. L. Miller (Eds.), *Doing Qualitative Research* (pp. 179-194). London: Sage.
- Borkan, J. M. (2022). Immersion–Crystallization: a valuable analytic tool for healthcare research. *Family Practice* 39(4), 785–789. <https://doi.org/10.1093/fampra/cmab158>
- Bortz, J. & Döring, N. (2003). *Forschungsmethoden und Evaluation für Human- und Sozialwissenschaftler*. Wiesbaden: Springer.
- Brinkmann, M., & Sales Rödel S. (2019). Pädagogisch-phänomenologische Videographie Zeigen, Aufmerken, Interattentionalität. In C. Moritz & M. Corsten (Eds.). *Handbuch Qualitative Videoanalyse*. (pp. 521-548). Wiesbaden: Springer.
- Eder, F. (2002). Unterrichtsklima und Unterrichtsqualität. *Unterrichtswissenschaft* 30. 3. 213-229. DOI: 10.25656/01:7686
- Fankhauser, R. (2013). Videobasierte Unterrichtsbeobachtung: die Quadratur des Zirkels? *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 14(1), Art. 24, <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs1301241>
- Gsellmann-Rath, H. (2016). Lernatmosphäre. Die Fackel der Begeisterung zum Lodern bringen. In N. Bilowas, & W. Vogel (Eds.). *Professionalisierung von Pädagoginnen und Pädagogen*. (pp. 129–148). Norderstedt: Book on Demand.
- Hoffelner, A. & Laven R. (2024). An der Schnittstelle von bildender Kunst und Theater - eine interdisziplinäre didaktische Annäherung zwischen Theorie und Praxis. *Pädagogische Horizonte* 8 (1). 135-148. <https://doi.org/10.17883/pa-ho-2024-01-10>
- Husserl, E. (1984). *Logische Untersuchungen. Zweiter Band: Untersuchungen zur Phänomenologie und Theorie der Erkenntnis*, hrsg. von Ursula Panzer. Den Haag: Nijhoff.
- Laven, R. (2006). *Franz Čižek und die Wiener Jugendkunst*. Wien: Schlebrügge.

- Legewie, H. (1994). Globalauswertung von Dokumenten. In A. Boehm, A. Mengel, & T. Muhr (Eds.), *Texte verstehen. Konzepte, Methoden, Werkzeuge* (pp. 177-182). Konstanz: Universitätsverlag.
- Lo, M. L. (2015). *Lernen durch Variation. Implementierung der Variationstheorie in Schule und Bildungsforschung. aus dem Englischen von Gabriele Isak und Peter Posch*. Münster: Waxmann.
- Marton, F. (2014). *Necessary Conditions of Learning*. London: Routledge.
- Marton, F., & Booth, S. (2014). *Lernen und Verstehen. Learning and Awareness*. Berlin: Logos.
- Meseth, W., Proske, M., & Radtke, F.-O. (2012). Kontrolliertes Laissez-faire. Auf dem Weg zu einer kontingenzgewärtigen Unterrichtstheorie. *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik*, 58(2), 223-241.
- Pfrang, A. (2020). Lernatmosphären und ihre Bedeutung für das Lernen in heterogenen Grundschulklassen. In N. Skorsetz, M. Bonanati, & D. Kucharz, (Eds.). *Diversität und soziale Ungleichheit. Jahrbuch Grundschulforschung* (pp. 174-178). Wiesbaden: Springer.
- Schmitz, H. (1990). *Der unerschöpfliche Gegenstand*. Bonn: Bouvier.
- Schmitz, H. (2014). *Atmosphären*. Freiburg: Alber.
- Seidel, T. (2022). Professionelle Unterrichtswahrnehmung als Teil von Expertise im Lehrberuf. Weiterentwicklungsperspektiven für die videobasierte Lehrerforschung. In R. Junker, V. Zucker, M. Oellers, T. Rauterberg, S. Konjer, N. Meschede, & M. Holodyski (Eds.), *Lehren und Forschen mit Videos in der Lehrkräftebildung* (pp. 17-36). Münster: Waxmann.
- Senior, R. M. (2006). *The Experience of Language Teaching*. Cambridge: University Press.
- Staiti, A. (2023). Deskription. In E. Alloa, T. Breyer, & E. Caminada, (Eds.). *Handbuch Phänomenologie* (pp. 222-228). Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.
- Swoboda, W. (2019). *Immergenz. Immersion im didaktischen Spiegel*. [Doctoral dissertation, Universität Jena]. <https://doi.org/10.22032/dbt.40428>
- Swoboda, W. (2023). Immergenz und Variation: zwei Lerntheorien im Schnittpunkt von Perspektive und Ganzheit. In A. Schuster, F. Rauch, C. Lechner, C. Mewald, S. Oyrer, R. Zanin, C. Schweiger, L. Stieger, & S. Zehetmeier (Eds.), *Aktionsforschung: Vergangenheit – Gegenwart – »neue« Zukunft*, (pp. 73–86). Wien: Praesens.
- Tuma, R., & Schnettler, B. (2014). Videographie. In N. Baur, & J. Blasius (Eds.). *Handbuch Methoden der Empirischen Sozialforschung* (pp. 875 - 886). Wiesbaden: Springer.

Wehrle, M. (2023). Leiblichkeit: Orientierung und Bewegung. In E. Alloa, T. Breyer, & E. Caminada, (Eds.). *Handbuch Phänomenologie* (pp. 192-198). Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.

*Eclipse Symbolism in Hampi's Sculptural Heritage:  
A Multidisciplinary Approach*

Amogh R. Vaidya, TVAM Foundation, India

The Paris Conference on Arts & Humanities 2024  
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

This research paper delves into Hampi's enigmatic eclipse sculptures, using a multidisciplinary approach to uncover the celestial narratives embedded in stone. The study aims to provide a comprehensive interpretation of the symbolic significance attached to these unique representations by drawing insights through archeoastronomy, art history, and cultural anthropology. Eclipses have profound significance in Hindu astrology, intricately woven into the cosmic drama, in which the nebulous elements known as Rahu and Ketu play an important role in their interpretation. Eclipses are fascinating phenomena in which celestial bodies align to cast shadows on each other. Our research sheds light on the cultural, religious, and astronomical implications of these eclipse sculptures through meticulous analysis of the iconography, alignment, and historical context, providing new insights into the spiritual worldview of the Vijayanagara Empire. The paper concludes by discussing the implications for a broader understanding of ancient cosmologies and the artistic representation of celestial events.

Keywords: Hampi, Eclipse, Sculpture

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

## Introduction

Hampi (15.3350° N, 76.4600° E) The UNESCO World Heritage Site of Karnataka, India has a rich architecture of ancient temples that echo Hindu mythology through its intricate sculptures.

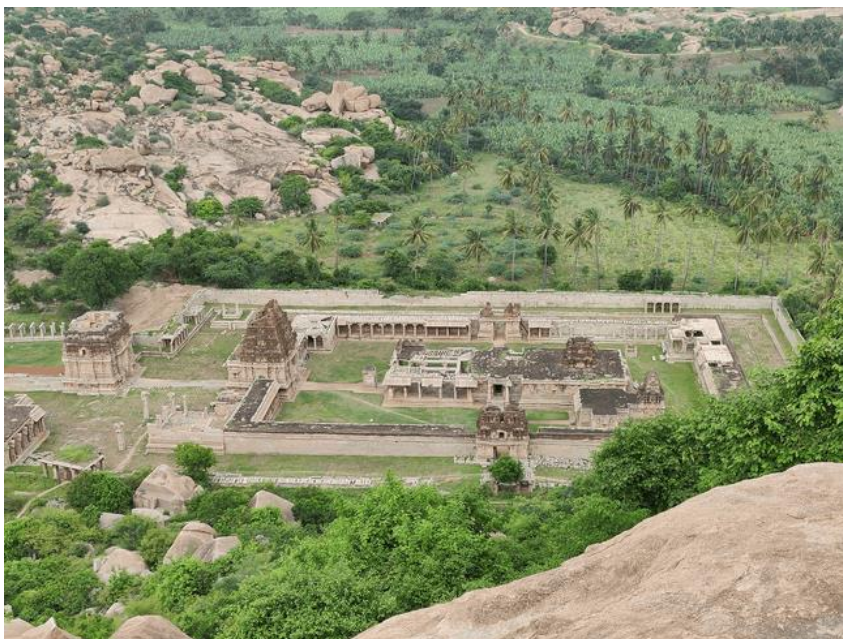


Figure 1. Achyut Devraya Temple, Hampi (Karnataka)  
(Image credits - Mr. Anurag Vaidya)

Located in the remains of the Vijayanagara Empire, Hampi's archaeological significance stems from its historical significance and architectural magnificence. The aim of this study is to interpret the unique eclipse sculptures of the temple in the history of Hampi. With distinct sacred and royal centers, Hampi's urban planning reflects a sophisticated understanding of spatial organization. Architectural highlights include Virupaksha Temple, Vitthal Temple, Hazar Ram Temple, Lotus Mahal, Elephant Stables and Vitthal Complex. This section examines the fusion of Dravidian and Indo-Islamic architectural styles of the city's monuments. This section illuminates the cultural diversity of the Vijayanagara Empire through an examination of the inscriptions and artistic representations found throughout Hampi. The inclusion of multiple languages, depictions of Hindu epics and scenes of daily life provide a nuanced understanding of the city's cultural milieu. Despite its archaeological importance, Hampi faces modern challenges such as environmental degradation, encroachment and inadequate conservation efforts. This section critically assesses the current state of conservation initiatives led by the Archaeological Survey of India, highlighting the complexities of conserving a large archaeological site in the face of modern pressures.

Among the numerous carvings, some of the temples in Hampi, such as the Krishna Temple, the Virupaksha Temple and the Varaha Temple, are believed to depict celestial phenomena such as eclipses.



## What Is Eclipse Significance in India?

Eclipses, those celestial phenomena that have inspired awe and fascination across cultures and ages, hold a special place in the diversity of human curiosity. Eclipses have profound significance in Hindu astrology, intricately woven into the cosmic drama, in which the nebulous elements known as Rahu and Ketu play an important role in their interpretation. Eclipses are fascinating phenomena in which celestial bodies align to cast shadows on each other. There are two types of eclipses: solar and lunar. When the Moon passes between the Sun and the Earth, it temporarily obscures the Sun's brightness. On the other hand, a lunar eclipse occurs when the Earth passes between the Sun and the Moon and casts a mysterious glow on the surface of the Moon. Eclipses have influenced mythologies, rituals, and astrological frameworks across cultures, evidenced by their abundance throughout the history of human civilization.

### Rahu, Ketu and Eclipse

Some of the most elaborate understandings of eclipses can be found in India. In ancient Indian religious architecture, the universe exists on the basis of a tripartite agreement between gods, ancestors and humans. Everyone should favor each other by giving gifts etc. Because at the time of eclipse the Sun God is in trouble, the deities are threatened by the Asuras.



Figure 2. Ketu, Buffalo AKG Art Museum, New York



Figure 3. Rahu

Humans should donate generously to help cope. This practice continues even today. Therefore, an eclipse is a time of giving and these donations are recorded.

According to a more popular story, the gods and demons gain immortality by drinking nectar found beneath the sea. Devas and Asuras join forces to churn the ocean to remove it. When Amrita finally appears, the gods send a beautiful woman named Mohini to distract the Asuras. She is mostly successful, but Rahu realizes what is going on. As a result, he disguises himself as a god and tries to get the nectar. Surya and Chandra realize what is going on that he is about to consume it and they try to stop him by cutting off his head. However, it is too late. An angry, disorganized Rahu seeks revenge on the Sun and the Moon, causing an eclipse. On the other hand, a Brahmin named Mini takes the severed body and raises it as his

own son. Lord Vishnu bestowed the head of a snake on this body, which eventually became a revered seer. Rahu is further continuous and subdivided.

Rahu festival. Rahu, as Nitya, constantly pulls towards the Moon, causing it to wax and wane, while the other day Rahu swallows the Moon, resulting in a lunar eclipse. Solar eclipse is caused by Ketu. However, in the modern version, Rahu eclipses and Ketu is associated with a comet.

Rahu and Ketu are given significant importance in Hindu astrology, which is based on the Vedic tradition, and are said to have the power to influence fate and karma. Eclipses on nodal points are believed to increase the influence of these shadow planets. During a solar eclipse, Rahu is said to swallow the Sun, causing temporary darkness with astrological implications. Similarly, during a lunar eclipse, Ketu is believed to influence the powers of the moon. Since eclipses are considered inauspicious, they are considered auspicious occasions for making donations to the deities, and records of these donations are found all over the country.

Ecliptic image on the roof in front of the naga or serpent chasing the moon and solar disc, various types of fish, makar can be seen from their combined depiction.

We find eclipse images typically on ceilings, but also on pillars, walls, and even floors:

1. Covered prakaras, temple corridors and courtyards
2. There by designing a separate pavilion in the temple premises
3. Ardhamandapa of main and subsidiary shrines
4. High, exterior walls (inside or outside)
5. On the roof, walls or in the vestibules of gopurams (temple entrances)

Eclipse-related sculptures are found in temples of the Vijayanagara Empire and the Nayak and Maratha periods, the Chola period.

**Hampi, Virupaksha Temple:** In the pavilion on the left after entering the main/first gopura, a serpent on the roof and in front of it a disc of the moon with a rabbit in it.

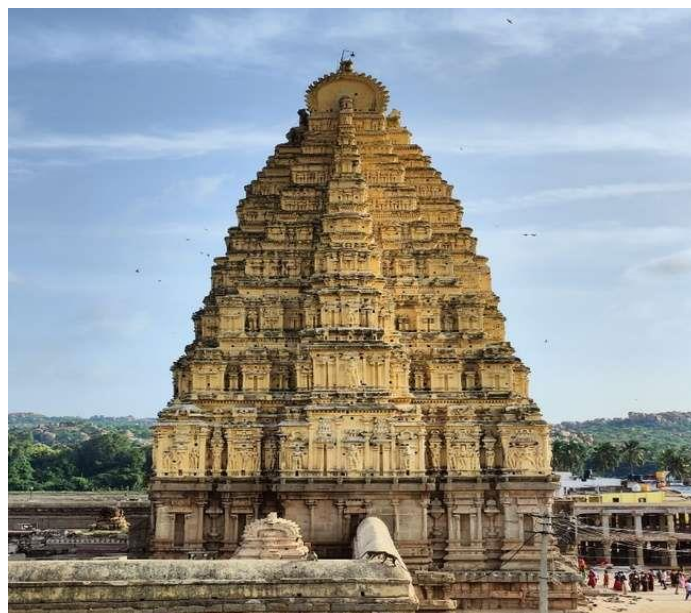


Figure 4. Virupaksha Temple , Hampi (Karnataka)  
(Image credits- Mr. Anurag Vaidya)



Figure 5. On the roof of the Mandapam in Virupaksha Temple, Hampi (Karnataka)  
(Image credits- Mr. Amogh Vaidya)

The above sculpture shows the moon with a rabbit in it. This rabbit is seen looking fearfully at the snake that is leaping towards the moon. And seen in the sanctity of jumping from the moon.

**Hampi, Varaha Temple:** Gopuram Threshold Ceiling Two crossbeams of gopuram (temple gate) with naga or cobra approaching lotus medallions and discs.



Figure 6. Varaha Temple, Hampi

(Image credits -

<https://lh3.googleusercontent.com/p/AF1QipPXpsTggeQrwkTZRMfBezCVKi2xg0xflyksIeo=s1360-w1360-h1020>)



Figure 7. Varaha Temple Gopura Ceiling, Hampi (Karnataka)

(Image credits – Mr. Anurag Vaidya)

In the above sculpture we see two serpents on either side of a blossoming flower. But in front of both the serpents is seen around disc which symbolizes the moon.



Figure 8. Varaha Temple Sculpture  
(Image credits - Mr. Anurag Vaidya)

In the above Varaha temple sculpture, we see snakes on both sides but nowhere in the picture do we see the moon. Instead, we see a blossoming flower.

**Hampi, Sri Krishna Temple:** Gopuram threshold crossbeam, depicting two giant cobras approaching a disc.

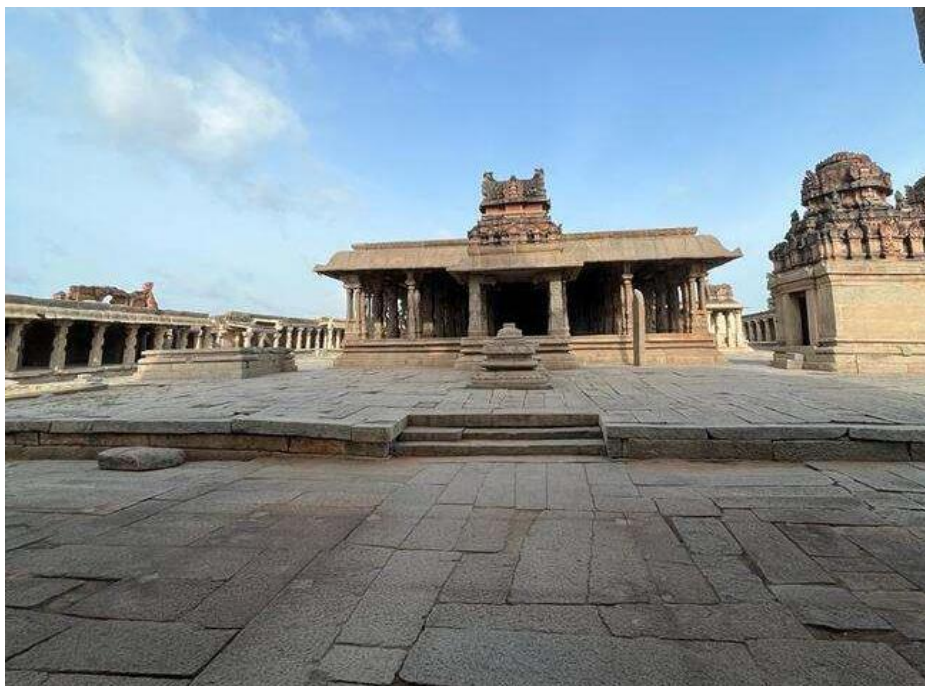


Figure 9. Sri Krishna Temple, Hampi (Karnataka)  
(Image credits- Mr. Amogh Vaidya)



Figure 10. Shri Krishna Temple Gopura, Hampi (Karnataka)  
(Image credits - Mr. Anurag Vaidya)



Figure 11. Sculpture  
(Image credits - Mr. Anurag Vaidya)



Figure 12. Sculpture  
(Image credits - Mr. Amogh Vaidya)

In the above sculpture, right in the middle we see a lunar disc with a rabbit on it and on the sides two serpents seem to be approaching the disc. The rabbit looks scared.

A rabbit appears between the two discs, meaning it is a full moon. Craters on the Moon appear rabbit-shaped from Earth and are depicted very accurately. The rabbit between the two moons is looking at the snake with fear. It means that now is the time of eclipse and the serpent seems to swallow us along with the moon. We see this moon rabbit in the leaping sanctity. The serpent is in reality and is in the posture of leaping down to the earth to save himself when he says that he is coming to swallow the moon.



Figure 13. Eclipse  
(Image credits - Mr. Anurag Vaidya)

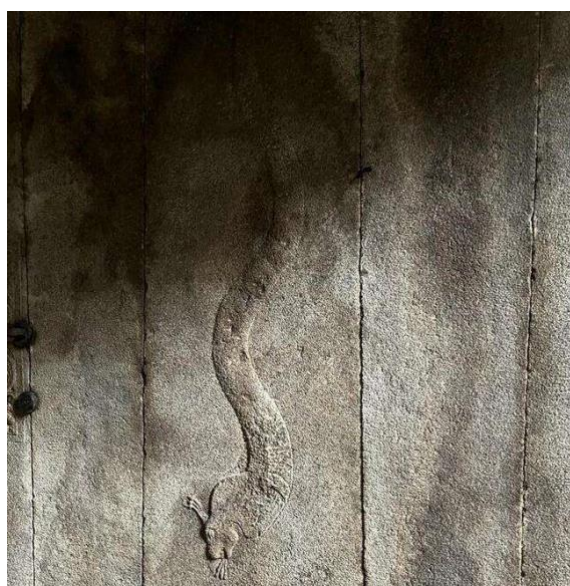


Figure 14. Eclipse  
(Image credits - Mr. Amogh Vaidya)

If we think about the eclipse, we see the snake as the symbol of Rahu. A snake is seen leaping towards the moon at a very fast speed as it is supposed to appear that Rahu is swallowing the moon when there is a lunar eclipse.



Figure 15. Snakes  
(Image credits - Mr. Anurag Vaidya)

As snakes are seen moving towards the moon, so are snakes moving towards a blossoming flower. The researcher speculates that this flower is a symbol of the sun.

Once by showing the art of the full moon, and once by showing the people of India a rabbit seen on the face of the moon. The other two nagas standing in front of the world can be interpreted as eclipses of the moon. Two more serpents are included in this elaborate

sculptural program on this roof. Two cobras approach each other, each with something in its mouth but no ball. This relief may or may not be related to eclipse.

## Conclusion

The eclipse depiction is the main key to understanding this sculptural event and with it the donation. "Dana" plays an important role in Indian culture. The ideal of being freed from suffering and achieving one's goals in life - both material and spiritual - through donation has long been valued in society. It is generally considered the best way to achieve social goals.

Charity has always been given importance in Indian society. The Sanskrit word "Daan" is derived from the combination of the root "Da" and the suffix "Lute", which means "Diyate Yat Tat Danam" or "Whatever is given is charity." Donations were traditionally made for the benefit of both the giver and the recipient. 'Da' in Sanskrit means to give, to bestow, to present, to reward. Danameva Grihasthanam' Yama (Hemadri. Dankhanda p. 6). Depriving the sovereignty of a thing and giving it to someone else is called charity. The word 'Ishtapurta' has been used in the Vedas since ancient times, meaning 'the accumulated fruit of one's acts of sacrifice and generosity'. Whatever is offered in grhya and shrauta fire and donated inside the altar in shrautayagya is known as istha and actions like maintenance of wells, ponds, temples, food donation and maintenance of public parks are known as purta in Mahabharata. Manu has said that desirable and desirable actions should always be done diligently and if such actions are done faithfully and with the means of righteously acquired wealth, they become inexhaustible (Dharmashastra). Kings were expected to do this to acquire religious virtues for their prosperity and longevity.

Various forms are mentioned in Puranas like Tuludanam, Mahapurushadanam, Suvarnamaru danam, Asvadanam, Gajadanam, Godanam, Bhudanam, Brahmapratisthanam, Bhudanam. "Tulapurushdana means weighing the king in gold and it was done on special days, Sankranti etc. in holy places like temples, gardens, etc. The area of the river etc. was also done here. Almost all the kings participated in this ceremony.

All these rituals are found either according to the Puranas in which many of the gifts mentioned in the Matsya Purana are given. Or it used to happen as Hemadri told. Danasagara, an early text of about the eleventh century of the Christian era, states that "Tulapurushdana should be performed.

A yuga, lunar or solar eclipse day, solstice or new moon day should be given on auspicious occasions such as equinox day, solstice, end or beginning.

Dancers, musicians, warriors, mendicants, sportsmen received liberal patronage from the rulers. He, in particular, encouraged learning and the reigns of Bukka, Devaraya, Krishnadevaraya and Venkatapati in particular were crowned with literary activity.

Eclipses were and still are considered spiritually significant events. We see this as an auspicious time to make special vows and especially to give ritual gifts. Epigraphic records contain many references to donations made by kings and others on the occasion of lunar and solar eclipses. Some kings are known to pay special attention to eclipses by giving large gifts to temples, individuals or groups. Tribhuvanamalla Vikramaditya VI of the Western Chalukyas (1076–1126 from Kalyani) gave gifts to at least eight eclipses during his reign. Other notable adopters include the Yadava Simhan II (1200–1247 from Devagiri) and



several kings of the Hoysala and Vijayanagara dynasties. Since sacred time is one of the most important aspects of Vedic and Agamic rites, all rituals are organized and guided by Panchanga. Almanac accurately predicts eclipses.

Such representations are also found in temples. Both lunar and solar eclipses occur only twice a year and are governed by strict natural laws. Eclipses occur only rarely and appear irregularly at any point on the planet. Sometimes a region will not see a total lunar or solar eclipse for several years. A total solar eclipse is rarer because the area where it can be seen is always a very narrow band on the planet's surface. Sometimes several events happen at the same time. Such times are considered of high and auspicious significance in the context of Indian spiritual practices. We focus on total solar eclipses because they are a rare occurrence, especially when compared to total lunar eclipses, which are always visible over a large area. When we examine the solar eclipse data of South India, several such periods stand out. Several clusters of solar eclipses occurred in the 12th and 13th centuries, most of which are also recorded in epigraphy. Solar eclipses were much less common in South India during the 14th and 15th centuries.

What is the iconography associated with eclipses? It is clear that the ceiling is a symbol of heaven or sky. In contrast to the pillars, the pavilion canopy has a distinct representation and an iconographic scheme. Depictions of cobras with discs, sometimes showing a lunar sickle to represent the moon, or a hare or rabbit known as the lunar symbol, serve as unifying and central symbols of the roof. Thus, simple discs often indicate solar eclipses. On occasion the walls of the temples are home to disc-shaped serpents. and are associated with historical eclipses according to oral tradition. It is definitely seen that the practice of donating during eclipses was from that time.

The Vijayanagara Empire was constantly under threat of invasion. As a result, the Vijayanagara rulers kept the concern of protecting the state at the forefront of their minds at all times. As a result, almost all rulers focused on the problem of assembling a trained and efficient army. Another issue that the Vijayanagara rulers dealt with thoughtfully was the formulation of economic policies, such as the promotion of merchants, traders and even farmers, as this provided the necessary revenue to maintain a large army, the establishment of palaces, and court shows and pageantry., is also remembered as a patron of painters etc. Due to their generous court patronage, the emperors attracted large numbers of fortune seekers to their kingdoms. The Vijayanagara rulers recognized and amply rewarded all valuable services rendered by court patronage, regardless of the nature of the services rendered or the caste of the persons rendering such services. Their policy of inducting people into the state services was based entirely on merit. His respect for his merits was also reflected in his allocation of judicial protection. It is to the credit of the Crown that their religious beliefs did not adversely affect them to the point of discriminating against them in court patronage. Court patronage included grants of land and villages, gifts of wealth and valuables, honors and rewards, and privileges of various kinds. Religious sects, social groups, individuals, generals, merchants, scholars, philosophers, poets, singers, musicians, dancers, painters and others received judicial protection in one of the ways mentioned above. However, given their age and the circumstances surrounding the birth of the Vijayanagara state, Hindu religious institutions and those associated with them were bound to have a large share of court patronage. Temple establishments were patronized in two ways. Kings made various donations and charitable contributions to temples and other religious institutions from time to time, as epigraphical records attest.

Apart from 'donations of charity', kings made many lands and village grants to temple establishments. Land grants were made in the name of religion and charity without expecting any service from the donee. The grants were beneficial in nature and were usually made in 'general' tenure, i.e. land free from taxation, and in 'manya' tenure, i.e. land subject to the payment of a small interest. Temples were granted 'Devdana' grants for daily worship. Kings granted grants to 'Shiva' and 'Vishnu' temples, as well as to Jain temples. The early Vijayanagara rulers showered several grants on the Sringeri Math. In 1346, the five Sangama brothers made a joint grant which included the villages of Headse, Honnedoli, Babbi, Harwadi, Belluru, Ambalaru, Bellanduru, Holke, Hosavaru and others. 10 Bukka gave land worth three hundred dollars as a gift.

When there was a question about the relationship between this sculpture on the gopur and roof of the mandap of the temple in Hampi, Vijayanagar, then it can be said for sure that this sculpture represents the giving of donation in the gopura i.e. below the eclipse sculpture in the mahadwara of the temple. At the end of a special program or ceremony in the mandap, donations should be made standing under the sculpture.

Sribalkrishna Mandir or Krishna Mandir. Virupaksha temple and Varaha temple are the three temples built by the king for his subjects. That the kings of the Vijayanagara Empire were basically philanthropists can be seen from their inscriptions and copperplate donations. Therefore, all the duties of donating should be done standing under these sculptures. Therefore, even if there is no eclipse for a holy place like a temple, the purpose behind it is to get the merit of donating in the eclipse in the form of sculpture.

## References

- Balachandra Rao S and Venugopal P. (2008). Eclipses in Indian astronomy, Bhavan Gandhi Centre of Science and Human Values, Bangalore, India.
- Dallapiccola, A.L. and A. Verghese. (1998). Sculpture at Vijayanagara: Iconography and Style. New Delhi: Manohar and American Institute of Indian Studies.
- Epigraphia Carnatica Volumes, Vol.V.
- Epigraphia Indica. Published by Director General, Archaeological Survey of India, Janpath, New Delhi, 1983. XXIV.
- K, Krishnaswami Ayyangar, A Little-Known Chapter of Vijayanagar History. S.P.C.K. Press Madras, 1966.
- Kivudanavar, Jagadeesh G. Festivals in Vijayanagara empire, Department of History and Archaeology Karnataka University, Dharwad-580 003. India 2000.
- Kochhar, R. (1993). in Astronomy in India: Past, Present and Future, Kochhar, R. and Narlikar, J. (eds) (Pune: IUCAA).
- Longhurst A.H.-Hampi Ruins, New Delhi. (1999).
- M N Vahia, Saurabh Singh and B V Subbarayappa, Ancient eclipse records in India.
- Rana N C. (2011). Myths and Legends related to eclipses, Vigyan Prasar, New Delhi, India, ISBN no 81-7480-006-9.
- Ratnam, A V Venkata, Local Government in the Vijayanagara Empire, Karnatak University, Dharwar, 1970.
- Ratnam, L Venkata, The Vijaynagar Polity, Banaras Hindu University.  
<https://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in:8443/jspui/handle/10603/483909>
- Robert Sewell, Forgotten Empire, London. (1924).
- Vaman, History of Dharmashastra Part Volume (1941). Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona.
- Yadav Aniruddha Kumar, Dan Eak Adhyayan in Prachin Bharat, Deen Dayal Upadhyay Gorakhpur University.
- Yashwant abaji bhat, Bharat Ratna m. m. Dr. History of Kanekrita Dharmashastra (Summary Text) Purvadhya, Maharashtra State Board of Literature and Culture.

**Contact email:** [vaidya.amogh27@gmail.com](mailto:vaidya.amogh27@gmail.com)



## *Frontline Narratives: Uncovering Women's Voices in War Journalism*

Gabriella Jeki, Károli Gaspar University of the Reformed Church in Hungary, Hungary

The Paris Conference on Arts & Humanities 2024  
Official Conference Proceedings

### **Abstract**

In the shadows of the First World War, amidst a landscape dominated by male narratives, emerged a corps of women war correspondents whose stories and perspectives brought a unique lens to the horrors and heroism of the time. This study zeroes in on Margit Vészi, a pioneering Hungarian journalist and the only female member of the Austro-Hungarian War Correspondents' Corps. Through her, we explore not only the significant yet underrecognized contribution of women to war journalism but also the broader implications for our understanding of liberty and equality during the era. By navigating the trenches of a male-dominated field, Vészi and her contemporaries challenged the traditional roles of women, offering insights into the battlefield that blended emotional depth with critical observations. This research, grounded in a thorough analysis of over a hundred articles and two travelogues authored by Vészi, seeks to answer critical questions: How did these women secure their positions on the front lines? What drove them to embrace such peril? And most importantly, how did their narratives diverge from and enrich the existing historical record? Employing an interdisciplinary approach, this study draws upon history, journalism, gender studies, and European studies to illuminate the unique contributions of women war correspondents. By doing so, it not only enriches our understanding of the First World War but also underscores the evolving role of women in the public sphere. Margit Vészi's experiences offer a compelling case study for examining the intersection of gender, war, and journalism.

Keywords: War Journalism, Women Correspondent, History, Narratives, Communication

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum

[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

## Introduction

It is no exaggeration to say that reports of war are almost as old as humanity itself. However, the art of war reporting only started to emerge at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, when 'professional' journalists began to send their war stories to the mother country. It is important to note that the development of the profession was also fuelled by a number of social, technological and economic developments, including the invention and spread of the telegraph, which allowed for the rapid exchange of information over long distances. The development of war reporting as a profession was thus the result of a number of factors, and at the turn of the century 'everything was in place'. It is worth mentioning the Crimean War of 1853-1856, which was one of the first conflicts to be covered in detail and on a regular basis, and where journalists' reports had already had a significant influence on public opinion and political decisions. In another important example, the American Civil War, which lasted from 1861 to 1865, saw many journalists and photographers<sup>1</sup> working on the front lines; but the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871 also had a major impact on public opinion and, not least, contributed to the development of war reporting.

In fact, the journalistic profession has changed considerably over its long history. The first journalists initially used leaflets, pamphlets and manuscripts to spread information, but industrialisation and the development of newspaper technology made cheaper and faster printing possible, which revolutionised the profession. By disseminating news more quickly and reaching a wider readership, journalists were able to increase their influence throughout the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. Their role gradually became one of conveying information, maintaining objectivity and critically assessing society. It is important to note, however, that the journalistic profession has constantly changed and evolved as a result of new technologies and social changes in the media, and has faced and continues to face challenges and opportunities. And this is still the case today.

During the First World War, journalists played a major role in covering events and spreading the news. However, content journalists faced many challenges in a wartime environment, made more difficult by technological limitations and divergent political, economic and cultural interests: censorship, dangerous working environments, physical difficulties, communication barriers, psychological burdens, propaganda and manipulation, linguistic and cultural challenges, and the fatigue of accessing information. These are just some of the more significant examples of the difficulties faced by journalists working in the First World War.

It was then, at the end of the 19th century, that some women began to break out of the so-called traditional social roles of wife, mother and housewife, and more and more of them began to challenge themselves in new roles.

As we know, in this historical era, women at European level had relatively few opportunities to participate in public life or to play any role (other than as factory workers or in certain professions such as saleswoman, nanny, governess, etc.) in the male-dominated civil labour market. However, a few bold and unconventional women recognised the potential of literature, drama, the visual arts and later journalism, among others, as early as the second

---

<sup>1</sup> Photographs by Matthew Brady (1822-1896) and Alexander Gardner (1821-1882) documented the horrific events of the war in detail, and had a major impact on public opinion. As some of the best-known photographers of the era, their work was devoted to chronicling the war. Gardner is credited with the publication of Gardner's Photographic Sketch Book of the War, the first major collection of photographs of the Civil War. They both contributed to the development of photography as a recognized documentary tool.

half of the 19th century. I would have to say, that these women<sup>2</sup> were able to create financial independence or financial security.

The female journalists who first appeared in the second half of the 19th century often had to fight against the social expectations and preconceptions of the time, but their diligence and talent (determination and perhaps daring) eventually brought about a major breakthrough not only in the journalistic profession but also in the way women were perceived. Soon they were able to write on subjects that had previously been the exclusive domain of men: first on cultural and artistic issues, then on politics and social problems. In any case, the role and importance of women journalists gradually increased alongside women writers at the turn of the century, which greatly increased the diversity of cultural and press life.

### Who Was the First Female War Correspondent?

If we were to name the first female war correspondent, we would have a difficult task. More than one would "run for the honour". We don't know for sure. In fact, several women have played a significant role in establishing the profession of war correspondent at different times and places in history. And these brave and often bold women have also contributed for example to social change and the promotion of women's equality.<sup>3</sup>

The pioneering role of women war correspondents is significant in many ways:

- **Promoting gender equality:** the presence and work of women war correspondents has fundamentally changed traditional gender roles and prejudices. At the turn of the century, the majority of women had a triple role: housewife, wife and mother.<sup>4</sup> But women war correspondents proved that they could perform (almost) as dangerous and challenging tasks as men.
- **Women showed new perspectives:** women journalists often approached war events from a different angle than their male counterparts. Women's narratives put more emphasis on the human suffering, the situation of the civilian population and the social consequences of war.<sup>5</sup>
- **Nursing and humanitarian assistance:** in the context of Florence Nightingale<sup>6</sup> and other nurses, the reports focused not only on the war, but also on health care and the physical and mental health of soldiers, thus increasing the recognition of humanitarian assistance.

<sup>2</sup> Nash, R., & McNamara, J. (2018). American Women and World War I. *Teaching Literacy Through History*, 4.

<sup>3</sup> Andersen, K. (2017). Female War Correspondents and their Effect on Female Military Positions. *Journal of Undergraduate Research and Scholarly Excellence, Volume VIII*. Retrieved from <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57e07645e6f2e1f209bad8f9/t/58e2df3f03596e1e82b06dc3/1491263437638/Female+War+Correspondents.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Jeki, G. (2023). Újságírók az első világháborúban - a női haditudósítók megjelenése. *Somogy*, 106-115.

<sup>5</sup> Buonanno, M. (2012). Women war correspondents: does gender make a difference on the front line? In *Libro de Actas del I Congreso Internacional de Comunicación y Género*. Sevilla, 18-19. Published in: Libro de Actas del I Congreso Internacional de Comunicación y Género. Sevilla, 5, 6 y 7 de Marzo de 2012. Dir. Juan Carlos Suárez Villegas; comité organizador Irene Liberia Vayá y Belén Zurbano Berenguer (pp. 800-816). Sevilla: Facultad de Comunicación. Universidad de Sevilla

<sup>6</sup> Florence Nightingale (1820-1910), British nurse and statistician, founder of modern nursing. She is best known for her work during the Crimean War, where she revolutionized hospital hygiene and nursing practices, significantly reducing mortality rates. Additionally, by applying statistical methods, she promoted healthcare reforms and the development of health policy. Nightingale remained actively involved in advancing health education and women's rights throughout her life.

- **Relations with the local population:** several women war correspondents were good at establishing contacts with the local population and communities affected by the war. In many cases, their empathy<sup>7</sup> and communication skills helped them to produce reports from the field, which often contained more detailed and accurate information than a 'general' report.
- **Using new style in the journalism:** Margaret Bourke-White,<sup>8</sup> for example, was a pioneer in war photography, setting new standards in photojournalism and contributing to the development of visual storytelling.
- **Courage and determination:** female war correspondents (like their male counterparts, of course) were often put in life-threatening situations, where they showed courage by example. Martha Gellhorn,<sup>9</sup> for instance, was committed to reporting first-hand on the war and often broke the rules to get to the front line.
- **A pioneering role in the journalism profession:** by creating a pathway for women in war reporting, they created opportunities for later generations. The first women war correspondents contributed to the growing role of women in journalism and war reporting<sup>10</sup> and related professions.

We don't know who was the first female war correspondent. However, we should definitely talk about these some ladies. I have already mentioned some of them above, but in the following I would like to go into a little more detail about these pioneering women who could "aspire" to the imaginary title of the first female war correspondent.

**Margaret Fuller** (1810-1850): the American Margaret Fuller worked in the mid-19th century, and many literatures consider her (and Jane Cazneau, mentioned later) to be among the first female war correspondents. Fuller was an American philosopher, writer and journalist who was a quick learner, had an excellent memory and an extraordinary talent for language. She was constantly training and improving her skills, which later enabled her to become a successful editor, writer, journalist, war correspondent and philosopher. She was the first woman to have access to the Harvard College library. She wrote for many newspapers and reported for the New York Tribune (later becoming its first woman editor) from England and Italy, but was also sent to cover the Italian Revolution and War of Independence of 1848-49.<sup>11</sup> She interviewed many prominent writers, including George Sand and Thomas Carlyle. Her seminal work, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, was published in

---

<sup>7</sup> Fowler-Watt, K. (2018). Women War Correspondents: From the Frontline, with Empathy. *BSA Auto/Biography Yearbook*, 9-10.

<sup>8</sup> Margaret Bourke-White (1904-1971) was an American photographer and documentary filmmaker, one of the first female war correspondents and the first woman to work for Life magazine. During her career, she took many iconic photographs, including images taken during the Great Depression and on the front lines of the Second World War. He is particularly well known for his documentaries on the Soviet Union, the struggle for independence in India and the life of Mahatma Gandhi. Bourke-White's style and courage revolutionised photojournalism.

<sup>9</sup> Martha Gellhorn (1908-1998), American journalist, war correspondent and author, considered one of the most important war correspondents of the 20th century. During her career she covered many major conflicts, including the Spanish Civil War, World War II, the Vietnam War and the Six Day War. Gellhorn's work was notable for its insight and human-centred approach, with a particular focus on civilian suffering.

<sup>10</sup> Glassler Nobert, & Mód, L. B. (Eds.). (2018). *A Nagy Háború hatása a mindennapok kultúrájának változására*. A Vallási Kultúrakutatás Könyvei 35. Szeged: MTA-SZTE Vallási Kultúrakutató Csoport, SZTE BTK Néprajzi és Kulturális Antropológiai Tanszék, 116-128.

<sup>11</sup> Szymkowska-Bartyzel, J. (2018). Successful Against All Odds? – Margaret Fuller: The Self-Made Woman in the Nineteenth Century. *Journal of American Studies*, 19, 143-154.



1845; after its publication, she wrote to a friend: "I had put a good deal of my true self in it, as if, I suppose I went away now, the measure of my footprint would be left on earth."<sup>12</sup>

It is important to note that, although women's war reporting as a relatively accepted profession and concept can perhaps only be discussed from the late 1930s, many female journalists, editors and correspondents could have been in the running for the imaginary title of "first female war correspondent."

**Florence Nightingale** (1820-1910): although known primarily as a nurse, Florence Nightingale also covered the Crimean War in the 1850s: she arrived in Turkey with a group of thirty-eight British nurses when Britain was at war with Russia during the Crimean War (1854-1856). She saw that patients were not given adequate food and medicine, and that the appalling conditions meant that more men died of illnesses 'contracted' in hospital than of their injuries.<sup>13</sup> Nightingale's writings contributed to the development of nursing and health reforms.

**Mary Livermore** (1820-1905): wrote for the Chicago Tribune newspaper during the American Civil War, while volunteering for the Sanitary Commission,<sup>14</sup> an organisation dedicated to improving health care. She and her husband edited the Unitarian newspaper *New Covenant*. Throughout her work on the commission, she worked on the belief that women needed the right to vote or to be eligible to vote in order to bring about social reform.<sup>15</sup>

**Jane Cazneau** (1807-1878): the first American woman to cover the Mexican-American War for the *New York Sun*. She is often called the most prolific female journalist on US foreign policy during the antebellum period. Cazneau has worked as a journalist, lobbyist and publicist, and has been contracted by several newspapers. She was sent by President Polk on a secret peace mission to Mexico in 1845 and wrote about the war under the pseudonym "Cora Montgomery."<sup>16</sup> She is known as the first woman war correspondent in the American history.

**Elizabeth Southerden Thompson** (as known, Lady Butler) (1846-1933): primarily known as a painter, she not only painted but also wrote reports during the Crimean and Afghan wars that had a major impact on British public opinion. She was recognised as a painter of the period, and her historical paintings were exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1874 - she was later elected a Fellow of the prestigious organisation. Her paintings and writings remained generally realistic, but she tried to portray the heroism of soldiers.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Slater, A. (1978). *In search of Margaret Fuller*. New York: Delacorte Press, 89.

<sup>13</sup> Skeet, M. (1988). Florence Nightingale – A women of vision and drive. *World Health Forum*, Vol. 9, 175-177.

<sup>14</sup> The United States Sanitary Commission (USSC) was a private relief agency created by federal legislation on June 18, 1861, to support sick and wounded soldiers of the United States Army (Federal / Northern / Union Army) during the American Civil War. 1-22. p. See the details: Robertson, Elisabeth: The Union's "Other Army": The Women of the United States Sanitary Commission. Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, accessed May 11, 2023,

[https://www.gilderlehrman.org/sites/default/files/inline-pdfs/Elizabeth%20Robertson\\_0.pdf](https://www.gilderlehrman.org/sites/default/files/inline-pdfs/Elizabeth%20Robertson_0.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> Ulysses S. Grant: Mary Livermore. Retrieved

from <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/grant-livermore/>

<sup>16</sup> Hudson, L. S. (2001). *Mistress of Manifest Destiny: A Biography of Jane McManus Storm Cazneau, 1807-1878*. Texas State Historical Association, 34-96.

<sup>17</sup> Butler, E., Lady (1907). *Who's Who*. Vol. 59, 264.

**Martha Gellhorn** (1908-1998): one of the best-known American women war correspondents, she covered a wide range of conflicts from the Spanish Civil War to the Vietnam War. Although she was the third wife of Ernest Hemingway, who also fought in the wars, her career remained entirely independent of her husband. During her lifetime, she published no fewer than six novels, six collections of short stories, one co-written play, and more than 140 articles and short stories in magazines and newspapers.<sup>18</sup>

Although they are not the first female war correspondents, as they represented the female journalists of the later era, I believe it is important to mention **Margaret Bourke-White** and **Clare Hollingworth**, both pioneers in their fields. Margaret Bourke-White (1904-1971) was the first female photographer for Life magazine and one of the first female photojournalists to cover the front lines of the Second World War, from which she photographed iconic images.<sup>19</sup> Clare Hollingworth (1911-2017) was the first war correspondent to cover the outbreak of the Second World War for The Daily Telegraph.<sup>20</sup> Her coverage of the 1939 German invasion caused a sensation. She reported from many countries after the outbreak of the war and. After the war broke out, she reported from many countries and – according to many accounts – her work was respected by her male colleagues and she was seen as an expert on the strategic and political background to the conflicts she covered.<sup>21</sup>

### Women in the First World War

During the First World War, few women were accredited to the Imperial and Royal War Press Headquarters,<sup>22</sup> which was directly subordinate to the army.<sup>23</sup> War news was therefore often reported from the place where they lived, worked or visited for one reason or another. Some were allowed to visit the front lines with official permission, others stayed away from the actual war sites but were able to report on the fighting as eyewitnesses. Nurses who worked in field hospitals during the First World War often wrote about their experiences. Others focused on the home front and the impact of the war on civilians. Although they were a kind of amateur and casual observers, their notes and reports proved essential to understanding the war narrative. During the war, the Press Headquarters grew into a larger and more important institution, employing hundreds of artists and journalists.<sup>24</sup>

But we must not forget the skilled women journalists who worked as journalists before the war broke out and then went to the front with the men. Women war correspondents from warring and neutral countries were present in the main theatres of war in Europe and the Middle East from 1914 to 1918.<sup>25</sup> Although the Allies and the central powers strongly

<sup>18</sup> Salamon, H. L. (2003). Martha Gellhorn and Ernest Hemingway: A Literary Relationship. (Master's thesis). University of North Texas, 1-55.

<sup>19</sup> Gaze, D. (Ed.). (1997). *Dictionary of Artists, Volume 1*. Taylor & Francis, 1512.

<sup>20</sup> She was in Poland on 1 September 1939 when the Third Reich launched an attack on the country. She informed the embassy in Warsaw, but nobody didn't believe her.

<sup>21</sup> Sebba, A. (2017). Clare Hollingworth obituary. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2017/jan/10/clare-hollingworth-obituary>

<sup>22</sup> Its original name, in German Das kaiserliche und königliche Kriegspressequartier, KPQ for short.

<sup>23</sup> KRIEGSARCHIVE AOK-KPQU Box 1, Geschichte

<sup>24</sup> Andrea, S. (2014). Ein Raum, dessen Zugang nur den dort Unbeschäftigten gestattet ist“. Die Schriftsteller im Kriegspressequartier. In *Der Erste Weltkrieg*. Retrieved from <https://ww1.habsburger.net/de/kapitel/ein-raum-dessen-zugang-nur-den-dort-unbeschaeftigten-gestattet-ist>

<sup>25</sup> Grayzel, S. R. (2017). *Women's Identities at War: Gender, Motherhood, and Politics in Britain and France during the First World War*. W. Ross MacDonald School Resource Services Library.

restricted the entry of journalists into the war zones, a significant number of women managed to enter the front lines or their surroundings.

But who were these women war correspondents who did such a wide range of work in the First World War? Without wishing to be exhaustive, I mention the neutral Spanish journalist Sofía Casanova, who reported from the Eastern Front for the Spanish newspaper ABC; and American journalists Nellie Bly, Peggy Hull, Louise Bryant, Bessie Beatty, Rheta Childe Dorr and Helen Johns Kirtland, who covered events in Russia and sent news back home from the Western Front. On the Allied side, Louise Mack reported on the German invasion of Belgium for the British newspapers, while Flavia Steno wrote war stories in Italy for *Il Secolo XIX*.<sup>26</sup>

The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy granted official accreditation to women war correspondents in a unique way. In addition to a total of 271 male journalists during the First World War, seven women were accredited by the military's central press service. Among them stand out the Austrian Alice Schalek, the German Maria Magda Rumbold, the German Thea von Puttkamer and the Hungarian Margit Vészi.<sup>27</sup>

### **The Hungarian Voice: Margit Vészi**

During the four years of World War I, Margit Vészi travelled to a total of fourteen countries, where she published over a hundred articles, took photographs, conducted exclusive interviews (for example, with Pope Benedict XV), and created caricatures.<sup>28</sup> Her articles were not only picked up by Hungarian newspapers but also by foreign publications. I have to say, Margit was proficient in four languages: Hungarian, German, Italian, and French.

“I also photographed many of the horrors of the First World War, including the trenches, the wounded, and the villages blown to ruins” – wrote Margit Vészi in her report.<sup>29</sup>

Vészi wrote over a hundred articles during the terrible period of the First World War, including numerous front-page stories and exceptional editorials. She conducted interviews, gathered information at press headquarters, travelled extensively, talked to locals, but also wrote about her impressions and feelings.

By her own admission, both in her articles and in her book of reports, she was constantly “contemplating the terrible, destructive senselessness of war”. She reflects this mood in all her writings, which are both subjective and reportorial in nature, but also imbued with emotion while recreating the mood of the time and place, providing a real-time experience of contemporary events, but not neglecting the specificity of the female narrative. These writings reveal the mind of the war correspondent Margit Vészi, focusing on her attention, her techniques of information gathering, her journalistic attitudes, and both the difficulties and the beauty of her work. They also present the views and dominant ideas of the time, the

---

<sup>26</sup> Seul, S. (2019). Women War Reporters. In U. Daniel, P. Gatrell, O. Janz, H. Jones, J. Keene, A. Kramer, & B. Nasson (Eds.), *1914-1918 Online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War*. Berlin: Freie Universität Berlin.

<sup>27</sup> Margit Vészi is the central figure of my research and doctoral thesis.

<sup>28</sup> Based on research for my own PhD thesis, and on a map I made myself based on two volumes of reports by Margit Vészi, *The Burning Europe* and *On the Road*. (Vészi, M. (1915), *Az égő Európa*. Budapest: Dick Manó; and Vészi, M. (1918), *Útközben*. Budapest: Singer és Wolfner

<sup>29</sup> Sárközi, M. (2019). *Margit*. Budapest: Kortárs Könyvkiadó. 56.

political and social ideals that guided them. We can read about the soldiers' initial expectations, enthusiasm, and optimism entering into the First World War. We can observe the clear belief in victory held by the Central Powers initially.

It is evident that the multilingual war correspondent skilfully immersed herself in the social and political milieu she was reporting from. Thanks to her, we can meet real people, experience the daily life of the time, sometimes devastating, sometimes more peaceful, follow the historical events of the war, and observe the ever-changing narrative. Moreover, Margit Vészi used numerous adjectives, literary descriptions, and dialogues in her reports.

## **Conclusion**

Women war correspondents can provide a new, female perspective on the interpretation of historical events, which is not only interesting from a historical but also from an interdisciplinary point of view. They can represent the changing role of women in this challenging period while offering a broader framework for understanding a particular historical era. I believe that it will be worthwhile in the future to further explore the life histories of women who covered the First World War and the diversity of their writings, even from a comparative and transnational perspective.

Margit Vészi used numerous adjectives, literary descriptions, and dialogues in her reports. However, these literary formulations are often almost entirely interspersed with the sounds of machine guns in action, the devastation caused by shells, the failure of peace negotiations, and the horror of bombing. Her writings capture the prevailing mood of the times, enabling readers to witness the different perspectives on the war expressed by belligerents, politicians, diplomats, soldiers, the wounded, prisoners, and journalists.

## **Acknowledgments**

I thank my supervisor, Dr. Peter Bertalan for his strong support. To Dr. Róbert Hermann and Dr. Miklós Horváth, who always believed in me. To all of my teachers, mentors, my mother and friends.

## References

- Andersen, K. (2017). Female War Correspondents and their Effect on Female Military Positions. *Journal of Undergraduate Research and Scholarly Excellence, Volume VIII*. Retrieved from <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57e07645e6f2e1f209bad8f9/t/58e2df3f03596e1e82b06dc3/1491263437638/Female+War+Correspondents.pdf>
- Andrea, S. (2014). „Ein Raum, dessen Zugang nur den dort Unbeschäftigten gestattet ist“. Die Schriftsteller im Kriegspressequartier. In *Der Erste Weltkrieg*. Retrieved from <https://ww1.habsburger.net/de/kapitel/ein-raum-dessen-zugang-nur-den-dort-unbeschaeftigten-gestattet-ist>
- Buonanno, M. (2012). Women war correspondents: does gender make a difference on the front line? In *Libro de Actas del I Congreso Internacional de Comunicación y Género*. Sevilla, 18-19.
- Butler, E., Lady (1907). *Who's Who*. Vol. 59, 264.
- Fowler-Watt, K. (2018). Women War Correspondents: From the Frontline, with Empathy. *BSA Auto/Biography Yearbook*, 9-10.
- Gaze, D. (Ed.). (1997). *Dictionary of Artists, Volume 1*. Taylor & Francis, 1512.
- Glassler Nobert, & Mód, L. B. (Eds.). (2018). *A Nagy Háború hatása a mindennapok kultúrájának változására*. A Vallási Kultúrakutatás Könyvei 35. Szeged: MTA-SZTE Vallási Kultúrakutató Csoport, SZTE BTK Néprajzi és Kulturális Antropológiai Tanszék, 116-128.
- Grayzel, S. R. (2017). *Women's Identities at War: Gender, Motherhood, and Politics in Britain and France during the First World War*. W. Ross MacDonald School Resource Services Library.
- Hudson, L. S. (2001). *Mistress of Manifest Destiny: A Biography of Jane McManus Storm Cazneau, 1807–1878*. Texas State Historical Association, 34-96.
- Jeki, G. (2023). Újságírók az első világháborúban - a női haditudósítók megjelenése. *Somogy*, 106-115.
- KRIEGSARCHIVE AOK-KPQU Box 1, Geschichte.
- Nash, R., & McNamara, J. (2018). American Women and World War I. *Teaching Literacy Through History*, 4.
- Salamon, H. L. (2003). Martha Gellhorn and Ernest Hemingway: A Literary Relationship. (Master's thesis). University of North Texas, 1-55.
- Sárközi, M. (2019). *Margit*. Budapest: Kortárs Könyvkiadó.

- Sebba, A. (2017). Clare Hollingworth obituary. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/media/2017/jan/10/clare-hollingworth-obituary>
- Seul, S. (2019). Women War Reporters. In U. Daniel, P. Gatrell, O. Janz, H. Jones, J. Keene, A. Kramer, & B. Nasson (Eds.), *1914-1918 Online. International Encyclopedia of the First World War*. Berlin: Freie Universität Berlin.
- Skeet, M. (1988). Florence Nightingale – A women of vision and drive. *World Health Forum*, Vol. 9, 175-177.
- Slater, A. (1978). *In search of Margaret Fuller*. New York: Delacorte Press, 89.
- Szymkowska-Bartyzel, J. (2018). Successful Against All Odds? – Margaret Fuller: The Self-Made Woman in the Nineteenth Century. *Journal of American Studies*, 19, 143-154.
- Ulysses S. Grant: Mary Livermore. Retrieved from <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/grant-livermore/>
- Vészi, M. (1915). *Az égő Európa*. Budapest: Dick Manó.
- Vészi, M. (1918). *Útközben*. Budapest: Singer és Wolfner.

***Cultural Linguistics:  
Exploring the Dynamic Interplay of Language and Culture in Contemporary Society***

Adelfa C. Silor, Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology, Philippines

Faith Stephanny C. Silor, Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology,  
Philippines

Miguelito B. Emfimo, Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology, Philippines

The Paris Conference on Arts & Humanities 2024  
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

After a meticulous exploration of the intricate relationship between language and culture, this research, conducted through the lens of Cultural Linguistics, has unearthed valuable insights into their dynamic interplay within contemporary society. The systematic review, guided by the PRISMA methodology, enabled a thorough examination of existing literature, ensuring a methodical identification, evaluation, and synthesis of diverse scholarly works. The findings underscore the profound impact language exerts on cultural expressions and vice versa, emphasizing their reciprocal influences. Language, as a cultural artifact, is a powerful medium for transmitting and shaping cultural norms, values, and identity. Simultaneously, culture molds language, influencing linguistic nuances, expressions, and even the development of linguistic structures. This symbiotic relationship manifests in various domains, from everyday communication to broader cultural phenomena. In the ever-evolving societal landscape, the implications of this interplay are far-reaching. Understanding the dynamic nature of language and culture enriches our comprehension of cultural diversity, fostering cross-cultural communication and appreciation. Moreover, insights from this research can inform educational practices, policy development, and intercultural relations, contributing to the creation of more inclusive and culturally sensitive societies. In conclusion, this study not only illuminates the reciprocal influences between language and culture but also underscores the significance of acknowledging and embracing this interplay for fostering a harmonious coexistence in our diverse global community.

Keywords: Intercultural Relations, Dynamic Nature of Language, Linguistic Structures

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum

[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

## **Introduction**

The research gap in the study "Cultural Linguistics: Exploring the Dynamic Interplay of Language and Culture in Contemporary Society" lies in several key areas, as highlighted by comparisons with other research studies.

### ***Interdisciplinary Integration***

Cultural Linguistics, as outlined by Sharifian (2017), emphasizes the multidisciplinary roots of the field and how culturally created conceptualizations are encoded in language. This theoretical and analytical framework is crucial but still requires a more comprehensive integration of findings from related disciplines like cognitive psychology, cultural psychology, and social psychology (Imai, Kanero, & Masuda, 2016). There is a need for more interdisciplinary studies that bridge these gaps to provide a holistic understanding of how language, culture, and thought interact.

### ***Practical Applications in Education***

Sun (2023) demonstrated the practical benefits of fostering critical intercultural competence through children's literature in teacher preparation programs. This study highlights a gap in the practical application of Cultural Linguistics theories. There is a need for more empirical research on how theoretical frameworks in Cultural Linguistics can be translated into effective educational practices and curriculum development to enhance intercultural competence in various educational settings.

### ***Power Dynamics and Language***

Saaida (2023) discusses the significant influence of cultural norms on communication patterns and the impact of language power dynamics. This study indicates a gap in Cultural Linguistics regarding the exploration of power relations in language use. Further research could investigate how cultural conceptualizations in language perpetuate power imbalances and how these can be addressed to promote more equitable communication.

### ***Language and Cognition***

Theories of linguistic relativity and the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, discussed by Altarriba and Basnight-Brown (2022), suggest that language shapes worldview and perception. However, there is a gap in understanding the bidirectional influence of culture and language on thought processes. Future research should explore how cultural norms and values modify linguistic influences on cognition and vice versa, to provide a more nuanced understanding of this dynamic interplay.

### ***Bilingualism and Cultural Contexts***

Studies like those by Leung and Chiu (2010) and Altarriba and Basnight-Brown (2022) indicate that bilingualism enhances cognitive flexibility and cultural understanding. However, there is a gap in research focusing on how bilingual individuals navigate and integrate multiple cultural conceptualizations through language. More studies are needed to explore the cognitive and cultural benefits of bilingualism and how it influences communication and thought processes.



### ***Application in Specific Contexts***

The influence of cultural conceptualizations on consumer behavior, as explored by Keh et al. (2016) and Altarriba and Basnight-Brown (2022), suggests practical applications in marketing and consumer research. There is a gap in applying Cultural Linguistics to other specific contexts, such as clinical psychology, legal settings, and mental health, to understand how cultural conceptualizations in language affect behavior and decision-making in these areas (Ertl et al., 2019; Marmolejo et al., 2009).

### ***Divergent Definitions and Research Goals***

Imai, Kanero, and Masuda (2016) highlight the lack of communication across disciplines due to divergent definitions of key terms and research goals. This highlights a fundamental gap in the field where a unified framework or terminology is needed to facilitate interdisciplinary research and collaboration. Establishing common definitions and goals could advance the field by creating a more cohesive body of research.

While Cultural Linguistics provides a robust theoretical framework for understanding the interplay of language and culture, there are significant research gaps in interdisciplinary integration, practical applications, power dynamics, the bidirectional influence of language and cognition, the benefits of bilingualism, specific contextual applications, and the need for unified definitions and research goals. Addressing these gaps through targeted research could advance the field and enhance our understanding of the complex relationship between language, culture, and thought.

Language and culture are deeply intertwined aspects of human society, shaping our perceptions, interactions, and identities. Through the lens of Cultural Linguistics, this research embarks on a meticulous exploration of their intricate relationship, unearthing valuable insights into their dynamic interplay within contemporary society. Guided by the rigorous PRISMA methodology, our systematic review delves into existing literature, facilitating a comprehensive examination that ensures methodical identification, evaluation, and synthesis of diverse scholarly works. The findings of this endeavor underscore the profound impact language exerts on cultural expressions and vice versa, emphasizing their reciprocal influences.

Indeed, language serves as a potent medium for transmitting and shaping cultural norms, values, and identity, while culture, in turn, molds language, influencing linguistic nuances, expressions, and even the development of linguistic structures. This symbiotic relationship manifests across various domains, from everyday communication to broader cultural phenomena, profoundly shaping the fabric of society. In the ever-evolving societal landscape, the implications of this interplay are far-reaching. Understanding the dynamic nature of language and culture enriches our comprehension of cultural diversity, fostering cross-cultural communication and appreciation. Moreover, the insights gleaned from this research hold significant implications for educational practices, policy development, and intercultural relations, contributing to the creation of more inclusive and culturally sensitive societies.

Hence, this study not only illuminates the reciprocal influences between language and culture but also underscores the significance of acknowledging and embracing this interplay for fostering harmonious coexistence in our diverse global community. Through a Cultural

Linguistics perspective, we navigate the complexities of language and culture, unveiling pathways towards a more interconnected and understanding world.

### **Methodology**

This study's methodology, which takes a cultural linguistics perspective, provides a methodical and thorough way to investigate the complex interaction between language and culture. The application of the PRISMA approach, a recognized framework for carrying out systematic reviews in academic research, is essential to our project.

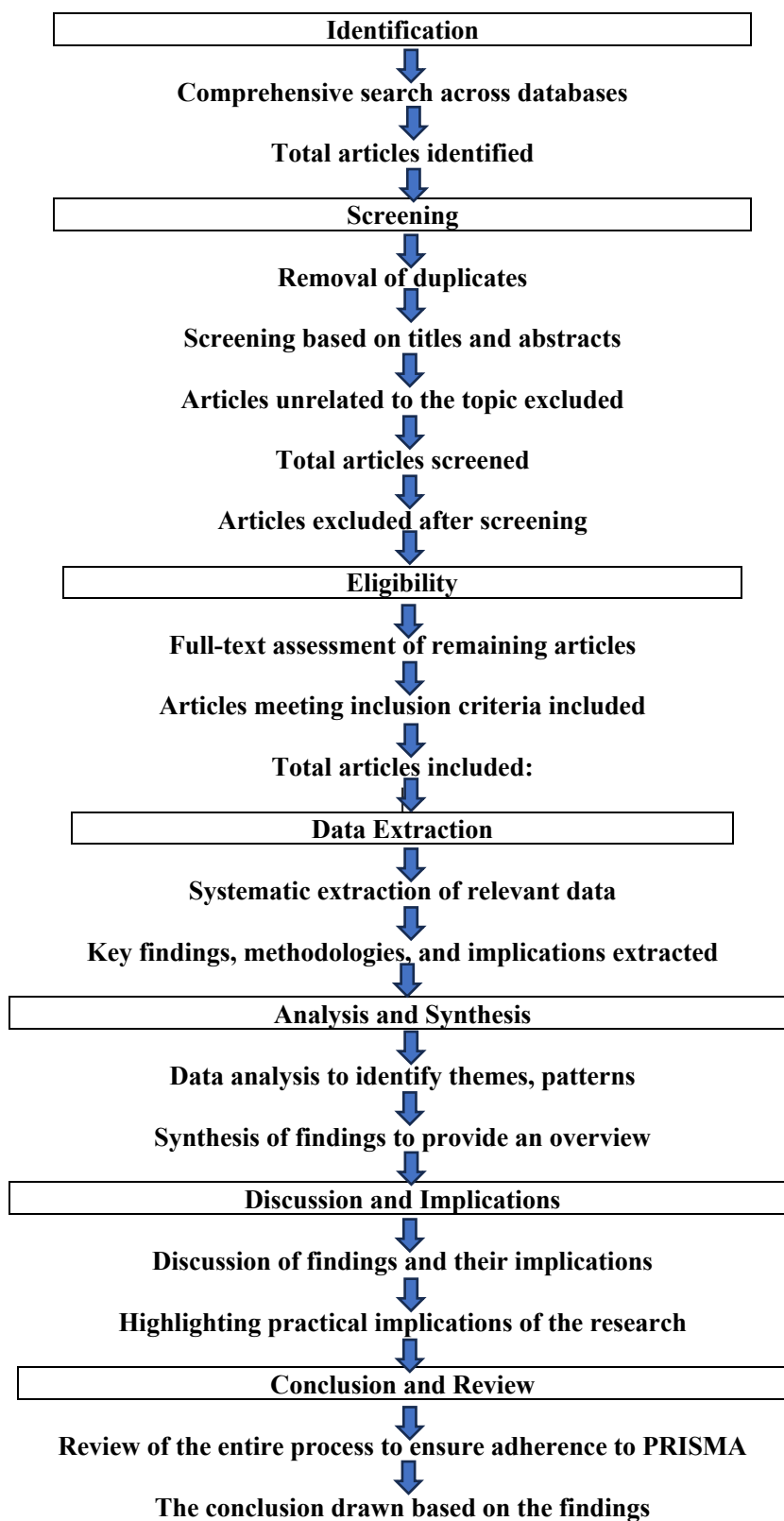
A thorough analysis of the body of literature was made possible by the systematic review approach, which also made it possible to identify, assess, and synthesize a variety of academic works that are pertinent to the dynamic interactions between language and culture. The research team used a clear and organized methodology, reducing bias and increasing the trustworthiness of the results, by following the PRISMA standards.

Using this thorough analysis, the study uncovered important insights into the mutual effects of language and culture, highlighting the significant influence each has on the other. As a means of transferring and forming cultural norms, values, and identity, language has become increasingly significant when viewed as a cultural artifact. On the other hand, it has been discovered that culture shapes language, affecting its subtleties, idioms, and even the way it develops.

This symbiotic link was seen in a variety of contexts, from everyday communication to more general cultural issues, highlighting its widespread influence in modern society. Furthermore, the study emphasizes how profoundly this interaction affects the constantly changing social environment. Knowing how language and culture are dynamic, as this study has shown, improves our understanding of cultural variety and promotes cross-cultural communication.

This study's methodology made it possible to conduct a thorough investigation of the dynamic interactions between language and culture, highlighting how important it is to recognize and value these relationships to promote peaceful coexistence in our multicultural society.

**Figure 1: Schematic diagram of the PRISMA flowchart for your systematic review of the relationship between language and culture**



## The Conclusion Drawn Based on the Findings

This schematic diagram provides a visual representation of the systematic process outlined in the PRISMA flowchart for your systematic review of the relationship between language and culture.

## Results and Discussions

**Table 1: Theme and Key Findings**

Theme	Key Findings
Using Language as a Cultural Relic	Cultures convey and shape identity, values, and conventions through language.
	The values and ideas of a specific civilization are reflected in the cultural expressions that are ingrained in language.
Effects of Language Reciprocity and Culture	Cultural expressions are greatly impacted by language, which has an impact on how people communicate and express their cultural identities.
	The evolution of linguistic structures, on the other hand, as well as nuances and expressions within language are all shaped by culture.
Impact on Everyday Communication	Social dynamics and everyday communication are shaped by the mutually beneficial link between language and culture.
	Cultural environment shapes linguistic decisions that impact how communications are understood and communicated in a variety of cultural contexts.
Implications for Cultural Diversity	Knowing how language and culture are dynamic enhances our understanding of cultural variety and promotes intercultural dialogue.
	In varied civilizations, accepting one another's language and cultural variances fosters inclusivity and respect.
Contributions to Education and Policy Development	By encouraging language and cultural variety in curriculum building, the research's findings help improve educational practices.

## Discussion

The systematic review's findings emphasize the complex interrelationships between language and culture and how they both impact modern society. Language develops into more than just a means of communication; it takes on the form of cultural norms, values, and identities, influencing people's perceptions of and interactions with their environment.

The results also highlight how dynamic this interaction is, showing up in a variety of contexts from ordinary communication to more general societal events. Comprehending these processes enhances our understanding of cultural variety and promotes mutual understanding and appreciation of culture.

This research has applications in the fields of education and policy formation. Teachers can use these insights to design inclusive classrooms that celebrate linguistic and cultural diversity, and legislators can use them to develop legislation that advances inclusion and equity.

Finally, this research highlights how important it is to recognize and value the interaction between language and culture to promote peaceful cohabitation in our multicultural world. By acknowledging that language has a significant influence on cultural manifestations and vice versa, we may work to build societies that are more inclusive and culturally aware.

## **Conclusion**

Conclusively, the present systematic review has furnished an all-encompassing investigation of the complex correlation between language and culture, unveiling their substantial mutual influence in modern society. The main conclusions emphasize the critical role that language plays as a cultural artifact and how effective it is at transmitting and forming cultural norms, values, and identity. On the other hand, language is influenced by culture, which shapes linguistic expressions and nuances.

Moreover, language and culture are mutually reinforcing in daily communication, influencing social dynamics and interactions. Comprehending this mutually beneficial interaction enhances our understanding of cultural variety and promotes intercultural understanding and communication.

This research holds great practical significance, especially in the areas of policy formulation and education. Teachers can create inclusive learning environments by incorporating cultural and linguistic diversity into curriculum development through the use of insights. In a similar vein, legislators can create culturally aware laws that support fairness and inclusivity, helping to build societies that are both inclusive and sensitive to cultural differences.

This study emphasizes how crucial it is to recognize and value the interaction between language and culture to promote peaceful cohabitation in our multicultural world. We may work to create a society that is more inclusive and richer in culture by acknowledging the reciprocal influences that exist between language and culture.

## References

- Altarriba, J., & Basnight-Brown, D. (2022). The Psychology of Communication: The Interplay Between Language and Culture Through Time. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 53(7-8), 860-874. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00220221221114046>
- Ertl, M. M., Mann-Saumier, M., Martin, R. A., Graves, D. F., & Altarriba, J. (2019). The impossibility of client–therapist “match”: Implications and future directions for multicultural competency. *Journal of Mental Health Counseling*, 41, 312–326.
- Imai, M., Kanero, J., & Masuda, T. (2016). The relation between language, culture, and thought. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 8, 70-77. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2015.10.011>
- Keh, H. T., Torelli, C. J., Chiu, C.-Y., & Hao, J. (2016). Integrative responses to culture mixing in brand name translations: The roles of product self-expressiveness and self-relevance of values among bicultural Chinese consumers. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 47, 1345–1360.
- Leung, A. K. Y., & Chiu, C.-Y. (2008). Interactive effects of multicultural experiences and openness to experience on creative potential. *Creativity Research Journal*, 20(4), 376–382.
- Marmolejo, G., Diliberto-Macaluso, K. A., & Altarriba, J. E. (2009). False memory in bilinguals: Does switching languages increase false memories? *The American Journal of Psychology*, 122, 1–16.
- Saaida, M. (2023). *Language, Culture, and Power: Exploring the Dynamics of Communication Across Differences*. Retrieved: 6-9-2024. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372559237\\_Language\\_Culture\\_and\\_Power\\_Exploring\\_the\\_Dynamics\\_of\\_Communication\\_Across\\_Differences](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372559237_Language_Culture_and_Power_Exploring_the_Dynamics_of_Communication_Across_Differences)
- Sharifian, F. (2017). Cultural Linguistics: The State of the Art. In: Sharifian, F. (eds) *Advances in Cultural Linguistics*. Cultural Linguistics. Springer, Singapore. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-4056-6\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-4056-6_1)
- Sun, L. (2023). Developing and sustaining critical intercultural competence through confronting hidden bias in children’s literature in EFL preservice teacher education. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14708477.2023.2291476>

*Diasporic Vietnamese Literature in the U.S. From the Perspective of Identity,  
and the Case of Viet Thanh Nguyen*

Nguyễn Hồng Anh, Ho Chi Minh City University of Education, Vietnam  
Phan Thu Vân, Ho Chi Minh City University of Education, Vietnam

The Paris Conference on Arts & Humanities 2024  
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

The paper inherits the views of Kevin Kenny, Isabelle Thuy Pelaud, Michelle Janette, and Viet Thanh Nguyen to analyze the development of diasporic Vietnamese literature written in English in the U.S. based on expressions of identity. Firstly, from generation 1 (writers who came to the U.S. when they were adults and predominantly wrote in Vietnamese) to generations 1.5 and 2 (writers who came to the U.S. as young ages or were born in the U.S., primarily wrote in English), their works covered subjects ranging from collective identity to personal identity. Secondly, the paper emphasizes that traumatic identity is characteristic of diasporic literature, regardless of the generation of their authors. Thirdly, it examines the way establishing hybrid identity became a discourse of resistance from American racial prejudice. In the case of Viet Thanh Nguyen, belonging to generation 1.5, he can be considered the most famous Vietnamese diasporic writer in the U.S. to date, further evidenced by his winning the 2016 Pulitzer Prize. In that context, the paper analyzes his ideological contributions in two aspects: Firstly, the writer redefines the ethnic identity and nationalism of the Vietnamese immigrant community; secondly, the writer provides new perspectives on Vietnam War. The research results are: clarifying the role of diasporic Vietnamese literature in English in the U.S., and affirming the way the writings of Viet Thanh Nguyen set a development milestone for this minority literature in general and for the topic of the Vietnam War in particular in the history of world literature.

Keywords: Diasporic Vietnamese Literature, Viet Thanh Nguyen, Identity

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

## Introduction

Researchers of diasporic Vietnamese American literature agree that this literature only emerges after 1975, following the end of the Vietnam War and the arrival of many Vietnamese refugees in the United States. It begins with the first generation of writers, who primarily write in Vietnamese, with a few writing in English (see Nguyễn Văn Trung, 1995, p. 4; Nguyễn Vy Khanh, 2005, p. 3; Sokolov, 2017). The works written in Vietnamese have a readership and social impact limited to the Vietnamese expatriate community. According to Isabelle Thuy Pelaud, a significant milestone indicating the American literary market's interest in diasporic Vietnamese literature is when major publishers begin to publish English-language works by first-generation Vietnamese immigrant writers. Two of the most notable works are the memoirs *A Vietcong Memoir* (1985) by Truong Nhu Tang, published by Vintage, and *When Heaven and Earth Changed Places* (1989) by Le Ly Hayslip, published by Doubleday (Pelaud, 2011, pp. 26-27). However, in general, “it has remained difficult to find Vietnamese American texts, especially those written before 1995” (Janette, 2011, p. x).

In the subsequent generations, diasporic Vietnamese American literature truly makes its mark on American literature. This includes the 1.5 generation, consisting of Vietnamese immigrant writers who arrive in the United States during or after their childhood or adolescence, and the second generation, who are the children of immigrants, born and raised in the United States (according to the classification agreed upon by most researchers, see Pelaud, 2011, pp. 33-40 and Janette, 2011, p. xxii). A common characteristic of these two generations of writers is that most of them write in English – a significant advantage that allows Vietnamese voices to be heard, primarily within the scope of American literature. The 1995 milestone mentioned by Janette refers to the emergence of the first prose and poetry anthology featuring entirely Vietnamese American authors from the 1.5 generation: *Once upon a Dream* (1995) published by Andrews & McMeel.

Viet Thanh Nguyen belongs to the 1.5 generation, born in Buon Ma Thuot, Vietnam, in 1971, and moving to the United States with his family in 1975 at the age of four. He has published a short story collection *The Refugees* (2017), two novels *The Sympathizer* (2015) and *The Committed* (2021), and a memoir *A Man of Two Faces* (2023). He is also the editor of a collection of 17 essays by authors writing from a “displaced” perspective, *The Displaced: Refugee Writers on Refugee Lives* (2018). The work that established him as a professional writer and represents the pinnacle of his creative output so far is *The Sympathizer*, which has garnered numerous awards, most notably the 2016 Pulitzer Prize. Viet Thanh Nguyen also researches Asian American race and the Vietnam War in two important books: *Race and Resistance: Literature and Politics in Asian America* (2002) and *Nothing Ever Dies: Vietnam and the Memory of War* (2016).

This paper aims to achieve two objectives: to outline the diasporic Vietnamese American literature written in English from an identity perspective and to examine Viet Thanh Nguyen’s role in this literature, primarily in terms of his ideological contributions.



## 1. Identity Characteristics of Diasporic Vietnamese Literature Written in English in the U.S.

### 1.1. From Collective Identity to Personal Identity – Examining the Evolution of Genres and Themes

There is a noticeable shift in genres and themes from the first generation to the 1.5 and second generations. While the majority of first generation works belong to the memoir or autobiography genre (such as *The Land I Lost* (1982) by Huynh Quang Nhuong, *Miles from Home* (1984) by Anna Kim-Lan McCauley, *A Vietcong Memoir* (1985) by Truong Nhu Tang, *When Heaven and Earth Changed Places* (1989) by Le Ly Hayslip, *Fallen Leaves* (1989) by Nguyen Thi Thu-Lam), the subsequent generations develop a diversity of genres. In addition to memoirs, there are novel (e.g., *Monkey Bridge* (1997) by Lan Cao, *The Book of Salt* (2003) by Monique Truong), poetry (e.g., *Song of the Cicadas* (2001) by Mông-Lan, *Night Sky with Exit Wounds* (2016) by Ocean Vuong), short story (e.g., *Fake House* (2000) by Linh Dinh, *Quiet As They Come* (2010) by Angie Chau), novella (e.g., *The Gentle Order of Girls and Boys* (2006) by Dao Strom), and graphic novel (e.g., *Vietamerica* (2010) by GB Tran, *The Best We Could Do* (2017) by Thi Bui). If the early works predominantly focused on the history of war, the later ones increasingly explore personal narratives.

For the first generation (and transitioning into the 1.5 generation) writing in English, the primary audience is American readers. Consequently, their main purpose is to narrate the correct story of the Vietnam War in contrast to the discourse prevalent in the United States, shaped by American literature and cinema. The American discourse portrays the Vietnam War as a conflict between the United States and North Vietnam, neglecting or erasing the role of South Vietnam, which is an ally of the United States. As a result, the predominant image of Vietnamese people in the eyes of Americans is that of the enemy on the opposing side. Therefore, when Vietnamese immigrants arrive in the U.S. from 1975 onwards, regardless of their political stance, they are often perceived as those whom America had fought against, rather than as refugee allies. Writing memoirs or autobiographies serves a dual purpose: to tell their own story and to present a more accurate history of their community. Michelle Janette refers to such writings as “tales of witness,” where the author is also the witness of the story (Janette, 2011, p. xix).

Alongside “tales of witness” is “tales of imagination,” predominantly narrated by the 1.5 and second generations. According to Janette, while the former type “have a preservational and didactic imperative” about traditional, historical, and cultural aspects of the community, the latter type tends to be more “adventurous” and focused on “introspective impulse” (Janette, 2011, p. xxiii). This indicates a shift from collective historical themes towards more personal and individual narratives. For example, conflicts within families between spouses or between parents and children (as seen in Lan Cao’s *Monkey Bridge* or Lê Thi Diem Thúy’s *The Gangster We Are All Looking For*), the journeys to Vietnam by diasporic individuals (Andrew X. Pham’s *Catfish and Mandala: A Two-Wheeled Voyage Through the Landscape and Memory of Vietnam*), culinary stories (Bich Minh Nguyen’s *Stealing Buddha’s Dinner*, Monique Truong’s *Bitter in the Mouth*), LGBTQ+ love stories (poetry by Kim-An Lieberman, Hieu Minh Nguyen, Ocean Vuong). Despite the diversity of topics, these works share a common goal of defining and constructing personal identities amidst cultural, ethnic, and historical conflicts.

## 1.2. Traumatic Identity

One of the most characteristic types of inherent identity within diasporic communities is traumatic identity. Trauma can become a person's identity when it occurs in harsh circumstances (such as war, colonization, or refugee situations) (see Berntsen & Rubin, 2006, p. 22; Becker, 2021, p. 566). According to David Becker, a traumatic social context can damage psychological, belief, and hope systems, or even physical aspects — qualities that constitute a person's identity — and establish new value systems, psychological and spiritual outlooks, through a new perspective on life and oneself, and through how others perceive oneself in new circumstances (Becker, 2021, p. 566). In this turmoil, self-identification becomes more critical for these individuals.

The traumatic identity of the diasporic Vietnamese American community stems from central events such as war and refuge. The term “boat people” emerges post-Vietnam War, referring to those who flee their homeland in fragile boats across the sea. Consequently, refugees become a common character type in diasporic Vietnamese American literature, depicted on the seas, in refugee camps, or in the United States, as seen in works like Nguyễn Quí Đức's *Where the Ashes Are*, Andrew Lam's *Perfume Dreams*, Viet Thanh Nguyen's *The Refugees*, Angie Chau's *Quiet As They Come*, Vu Tran's *Dragonfish*.

Speaking of the dead is a way for the diasporic community to remember the past, lost loved ones, and resist forgetting. According to Viet Thanh Nguyen, “the problem of war and memory is therefore first and foremost about how to remember the dead” (Nguyen, 2016, p. 4). Forgetting the dead means erasing the memories of war and trauma, which also means erasing the identity of refugees — a discourse that the United States seeks to create, using the “American Dream” narrative with the “model minority” or the success of typical immigrants to cover up the consequences of the wars caused by the United States. Therefore, speaking or writing about the dead becomes a form of resistance by refugees against the intentional forgetting of the United States. The boat person girl in *The Gangster We Are All Looking For* chooses to leave her family and pursue a career in writing as she grows up. The character in the short story *Black-Eyed Women* (from the collection *The Refugees*) by Viet Thanh Nguyen becomes a writer specializing in ghost stories. The storyteller in the short story *Love and Honor and Pity and Pride and Compassion and Sacrifice* (from the collection *The Boat*) by Nam Lê chooses to write about his father's past linked to the My Lai massacre for the final assignment of a young writers' workshop.

Hence, traumatic identity is also the identity of the diasporic community, which is something that needs to be affirmed, not denied. The statement by Yen Le Espiritu, a renowned Vietnamese American scholar, “we [Vietnamese American writers] have to be willing to become tellers of ghost stories” (Espiritu, 2005, p. xix), aims to emphasize this point.

## 1.3. Hybrid and Ethnic Identity

In addition to trauma, hybridity is the most distinctive type of identity among immigrants. While trauma transitions from profound (in first and 1.5 generations) to fading (in 1.5 and second generations) as the impact of central traumatic events recedes further into the past, hybridity develops from faint (in the first generation) to pronounced (in 1.5 and second generations) due to deepening integration and conflicts regarding ethnicity and culture between the home country and the host country. In other words, hybridity emerges when immigrants are influenced by both their homeland's factors and the environment in which

they currently reside, combining ethnic and traditional elements from their minority community with the foreign and international aspects of the majority community. As the 1.5 and second generations come of age, they are forced to assimilate into the majority community, leading to conflicts and questioning of their own identity (Pelaud, 2011, p. 31).

However, this hybridity cannot be simply understood as multiculturalism or a bridge between two countries, two harmonized cultures. Instead, in the context of immigrants and refugees, hybrid identity is formed from the tense struggle and inequality between dominant discourse (of the majority community) and the marginalized characteristics of the subject (belonging to the minority community), most evident in issues of ethnicity. For example, in the verse novel *Inside Out & Back Again*, Thanhha Lai describes the experience of a Vietnamese American girl who, as a fourth-grader, must daily confront struggles with her native classmates. The Vietnamese identity stems from the ethnic characteristics of the girl being mocked and associated with cultural stereotypes (such as eating dog meat, being wild, uncivilized), which forces her to learn how to resist by striving to excel in English and seeking martial arts training from her brother, while also attempting to gain acceptance in the new community by attending church with her family every Sunday and joining the Christian faith. English and Christianity inevitably become the girl's American identity, imposed upon her for survival in the host country.

In *Race and Resistance*, Viet Thanh Nguyen explains that Asian American writers tend to resist the stereotypical view of race in the host country. These stereotype often categorizes Asians into two groups: the "bad subject," representing immigrants who cannot assimilate well into American society, becoming burdens or even threats to native culture and economy, and the "model minority," exemplifying successful integration and community development (Nguyen, 2002, p. 7). The "model minority" serves as evidence for a democratic, egalitarian America, always providing opportunities for everyone, regardless of their background, in contrast to the "bad subject" who fails due to their individual shortcomings. Consequently, the "model minority" becomes the representative voice for the entire diasporic community.

Asian American writers strive to counteract this discourse. In reality, the diasporic community is diverse (Kenny, 2013, pp. 13-14). The voices of the successful and the unsuccessful, the rich and the poor, the politician from the immigrant group and the unemployed relying on social welfare—all are equally important. Specifically in Vietnamese American literature and Asian American literature in general, it is crucial to depict this diversity to truly reflect the identity of the community, rather than accepting a uniform identity of model minority as perceived by the United States. This orientation leads critics of Asian American literature to highly appreciate works that express the voices of the "bad subject." From this perspective, works such as *The Book of Salt* by Monique Truong, *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous* by Ocean Vuong, and *The Sympathizer* by Viet Thanh Nguyen succeed in portraying non-stereotypical Vietnamese characters. The main characters in the former two novels are homosexual, while the narrator in *The Sympathizer* is a bastard who embodies "a man of two minds" (Nguyen, 2015, p. 1) as he views the Vietnam War from both sides.

## 2. Viet Thanh Nguyen and Diasporic Vietnamese Literature Written in English in the U.S.

### 2.1. Viet Thanh Nguyen's Perspective on Ethnic Identity and Nationalism in the Diasporic Community

In agreement with Kevin Kenny on the diversity of diasporic communities, however, Nguyen emphasizes a different focal point: diversity lies not only in the backgrounds and statuses of individuals within the community but primarily in ideology. A community does not possess a singular unified ideology; describing the conflict or diversity of ideology among members of the same community reveals the vitality and existence of that community. Nguyen pursues this idea in his works, such as *The Refugees* and *The Sympathizer*, where he depicts conflicts of political ideology within the Vietnamese community. Similarly, in *The Committed*, the conflict between Vietnamese and Algerians within French society demonstrates the complexity of the post-colonial issue, not just between the colonizer and the colonized but also among colonial communities themselves. This represents the diversity of ethnic identity.

The inevitable reaction of minority communities to the dominance of the majority group is to assert their own ethnic identity. However, this also means falling into the prejudice attributed by the dominant discourse, that the minority community is homogenous, lacking diversity. This is the trap of nationalism. Therefore, Viet Thanh Nguyen advocates for a different perspective: hybridity is fundamentally inherent to the ethnic identity (Nguyen, 2002, p. 12). In section 1.3, we discussed the hybrid nature of the diasporic community, primarily expressed in racial and cultural hybridity. With Viet Thanh Nguyen, he emphasizes even more the hybridity in terms of ideology. This approach, shared by Nguyen and like-minded authors, resists nationalism within their diasporic community and combats racial discrimination in the discourse of dominant culture. This perspective becomes how Nguyen creates the main character in *The Sympathizer* and *The Committed* with “two minds,” standing on both sides: as an ally of America and as a communist. Through his writings, Nguyen seeks to transcend the position of an “ethnic writer,” erasing boundaries, especially those concerning history and race.

To further elaborate on the case of Vietnamese ethnic identity, Viet Thanh Nguyen is candid in expressing his viewpoint about “authentic” Vietnamese person through the concept of “home”:

Home was a comforting place, where people always welcomed you, made sure you had enough to eat, knew how to say your name. Home was also the place where people knew you enough to put you in your place, dislike you, hate you, have enough of you, take out their frustrations and rage on you [...] This was the other side of authenticity. (Nguyen, 2011)

The dual nature of “home” — both a safe haven and a place of harm — is also the dual nature of ethnic identity. The short story *War Years* by Viet Thanh Nguyen (in the collection *The Refugees*) is encapsulated within the space of the Vietnamese community revolving around the New Saigon grocery store (hinting at Little Saigon in reality), but this community space becomes tense and divided by Mrs. Hoa's political activism. Mrs. Hoa regularly engages in political campaigns and fundraises for the fight against communism within her community, and anyone who does not contribute is accused of being sympathetic to communism, not an “authentic” refugee Vietnamese (originating from the prejudice of extreme nationalism, that

anyone who fled Vietnam after 1975 must hate communism). Meanwhile, the owner of New Saigon store opposes this viewpoint: “I’m not giving you any money” – “I work hard for my money. What do you do? You’re nothing but a thief and an extortionist, making people think they can still fight this war” (Nguyen, 2017, p.65). Despite narrating the story of Vietnamese people in post-war America, the story is titled *War Years*; although they have resettled in a place they can call “home” surrounded by their own people, peace does not come.

To transcend the identification of being authentically or inauthentically Vietnamese, according to Nguyen, requires a transnational perspective with other communities:

These people are a part of the Vietnamese American community, but there are so many more people with so many more ideas, feelings, and ways of seeing the world [...] So let’s forget the word “community” and replace it with “communities.” There isn’t one Vietnamese American community, there are many Vietnamese American communities, just as there isn’t one America, but fifty United States and multitudes upon multitudes of American communities whose stories need to be told. (Nguyen, 2009)

Therefore, unlike most first generation writers and some 1.5 generation writers who often emphasize ethnic identity and establish authenticity for Vietnamese identity in their works through cultural traditions and conflicts with American identity, Viet Thanh Nguyen advocates for a more universal approach, transcending the narrow concept of “ethnic” and “racial” identity, by portraying both the bright and dark sides of the community, and by depicting solidarity with other communities, rather than solely narrating stories within the internal space of the community. On the other hand, unlike some 1.5 and second generation writers who lean towards American identity or advocate for “not writing about Vietnam,” Viet Thanh Nguyen still affirms his Vietnamese identity in a familiar topic but with a new perspective: the topic of the Vietnam War.

## **2.2. Viet Thanh Nguyen’s Perspective on the Vietnam War**

Regardless of whether it is about Vietnam or the United States, or whether it concerns refugees or their descendants, diasporic Vietnamese literature, in Viet Thanh Nguyen’s view, is often intertwined with war (Nguyen, 2016, p. 200). That is why all of Viet Thanh Nguyen’s fictional works revolve around war. At least until now, when the voice from Vietnam regarding the war issue has not been sufficiently heard worldwide<sup>1</sup>, the Vietnam war remains the main theme of diasporic Vietnamese literature in general.

In section 1.1, we discussed the movement of themes in diasporic Vietnamese American literature, from the history of war in the works of the first generation to personal stories and deeper exploration of inner thoughts in the 1.5 and 2 generations. However, Viet Thanh Nguyen’s works show a reverse flow: Although belonging to the 1.5 generation and leaving his homeland at the age of four, the writer chooses to directly confront Vietnamese history, exploiting the theme of war to clarify the identity of his community. But unlike the first generation, Nguyen writes to reimagine the identity of the community beyond nationalist perspectives.

---

<sup>1</sup> Even though losing the war, the United States succeeded in imposing its perspective on this war into world history, primarily due to the power of language, and secondly due to economic power, both of which Vietnam is weaker in comparison to the U.S.

### **2.2.1. The Vietnam War Through the Portrayal of Characters**

To accomplish this dual task of portraying collective identity while transcending narrow ethnic boundaries, Nguyen constructs the image of the bad subject as opposed to the model minority.

Firstly, there is a distinction drawn between “refugees” and “immigrants.” In an interview with *The Nation*, Nguyen asserts: “Call me a refugee, not an immigrant” (Wiener, 2018). This statement arises from a clear stance: According to Nguyen, Americans seek to transform the stories of refugees (from war) into success or failure narratives of immigrants; because “refugees” pose a threat to American culture and economy, while “immigrants” embody assimilation and seamless integration into native culture. Conversely, stories of “refugees” always serve as a reminder to Americans of the traumas of the Vietnam War that they caused (Nguyen, 2019, pp.13-14). When recounting the “refugee” narratives, Viet Thanh Nguyen delves deep into what America wishes to forget: the Vietnam War (Nguyen, 2016, p.220). Through such resistance and perspective, the diasporic Vietnamese community finally finds its voice. The title of Nguyen’s short story collection, *The Refugees*, along with stories of memory, ghosts, refugees, is the writer’s response to America, asserting that the refugee community has its own identity and must be remembered for the wounds inflicted by the war caused by America.

Secondly, to resist the discourse of the model minority imposed by the host country, Nguyen’s refugees are depicted as bad subjects. Like the protagonist in *The Committed*, who voluntarily becomes a gangster specializing in drug trafficking and prostitution brokerage, with the aim of terrorizing French politicians, as an allegory for post-colonial resistance. By choosing this kind of character, the writer not only resists the dominant discourses from the U.S. and France but also resists the common discourse within the diasporic Vietnamese community: Instead of discussing the “authenticity” of the community, it presents “ugly” portraits that are not representative.

### **2.2.2. The Vietnam War Through Perspective and Tone**

In addition to the works on the Vietnam War theme written by both Vietnamese and American authors, Nguyen’s works bring a hybrid perspective — both insider and outsider both Vietnamese and American — which makes the wars in *The Sympathizer* and *The Committed* different from the classic war works in Vietnam and America, which only have a one-sided perspective (such as *The Sorrow of War* by Bảo Ninh and *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien). For instance, the main character in *The Sympathizer* and *The Committed* is excluded from his own people for being a bastard who has a French father, a priest, and a Vietnamese mother, a servant. This forbidden love serves as a metaphor for Vietnam as a victim, being physically and mentally oppressed by the French, who were the perpetrators, during French occupation. Later, he is further alienated from his communist comrades due to suspicions of his sympathizing with America. The hybridization of bloodlines has naturally become a hybridization of ideology, making both novels a journey for the character to discover his identity. After experiencing all the historical events associated with modern Vietnam wars, the character ultimately realizes that his identity is a “sympathizer,” transcending all factions and hatred. This perspective, emphasizing a personal history of each individual, contradicts the trend of seeking a single, most common and authentic collective identity.

Regarding tone, Viet Thanh Nguyen also chooses a unique tone. According to Janette, Vietnamese American literature in English adopts a tone of “empathy” and “reconciliation” when discussing about American issues (Janette, 2011, pp. xvii-xviii). However, Viet Thanh Nguyen chooses a tone of “anger” directly aimed at the United States, as he stated in the interview “Viet Thanh Nguyen: Anger in the Asian American Novel”:

There’s not a lot of rage, at least not in the past few decades. And if there is anger or rage, it has to be directed at the ignorant: the Asian country of origin or Asian families or Asian patriarchs. While all that is important, I sensed a reluctance to be angry at American culture or at the United States for what it has done. (Tran, 2015)

Alongside this perspective and tone, the writer delineates the role and impact of the Vietnam War on modern America, asserting that America has not yet moved past the war after the Vietnam war. War is not merely about the brutal past on the battlefield or the post-war traumas. America has created an enormous war machine that permeates almost every social sphere: from sculpture, arrangement, architecture, film, forming an “industry of war” (Nguyen, 2016, p.106). Nurturing what the writer calls the “identity of war” in Americans has led the country to be consistently involved in wars: from the Vietnam War, American youth have again found themselves in the Iraq war. Though different battlefields, the U.S.’s approach to these wars with the mindset of a superpower and heroic ideals seem hardly different. From an American perspective, this can be seen as the message that Viet Thanh Nguyen wants to convey to America in general and Americans in particular, through his works.

## **Conclusion**

Through the method of historical criticism, we delineate the development of diasporic Vietnamese literature written in English in the U.S. from the first generation to the second generation from the perspective of identity. The issue of identity is particularly significant in diasporic Vietnamese literature as it intertwines with the history of the Vietnam War, shaping refugee community, ethnic community, model minority, and bad subject in post-war America. Within the diasporic Vietnamese literature written in English, the perspectives of Viet Thanh Nguyen on issues of ethnic identity, nationalism, and the Vietnam War further contribute to asserting the identity of the diasporic community in both aspects. The first aspect is outward-facing, aimed at resisting the imposition of imperial and colonial discourses. The second aspect is inward-facing, aimed at transcending the narrow, racialized perspective within the community itself. These contents provide the groundwork for a profound understanding of the writer’s works. In this paper, we only mention about Viet Thanh Nguyen’s contribution to the ideological aspect, while detailed analysis of the writer’s works will be reserved for another study.

## References

- Becker, D. (2021). Political Psychology: Identity Development in a Traumatic Environment. In M. Bamberg, C. Demuth, & M. Watzlawik (Eds.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Identity* (pp. 564-585). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.  
doi:10.1017/9781108755146.029
- Berntsen, D., & Rubin, D. C. (2006). The Centrality of Event Scale: A Measure of Integrating a Trauma into One's Identity And Its Relation to Post-traumatic Stress Disorder Symptoms. *Behaviour Research And Therapy*, 44(2), 219-231.
- Espiritu, Y. L. (2005). Thirty Years AfterWARD: The Endings That are not Over. *Amerasia Journal*, vol. 31, no. 2, xiii-xxiv.
- Janette, M. (ed.) (2011). *Mỹ Việt, Vietnamese American Literature in English, 1962-Present*. University of Hawai'i Press.
- Kenny, K. (2013). *Diaspora: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Nguyen, V. T. (2002). *Race and Resistance: Literature and Politics in Asian America*. Oxford University Press.
- Nguyen, V. T. (2015). *The Sympathizer*. New York: Grove Press.
- Nguyen, V. T. (2016). *Nothing Ever Dies: Vietnam and the Memory of War*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
- Nguyen, V. T. (2017). *The Refugees*. London: Corsair.
- Nguyen, V. T. (Ed.) (2019). *Kẻ ly hương (The Displaced: Refugee Writers on Refugee Lives)*. Ho Chi Minh City: Vietnam Writers' Association Publishing House.
- Nguyen, V. T. (2021). *The Committed*. New York: Grove Press.
- Nguyễn, Văn Trung (1995). Văn học Hải ngoại? (What is Vietnamese Literature Abroad?). *Tạp chí Văn học (Literature Journal, California)* (112), 3-22.
- Nguyễn, Vy Khanh (2005). Nhìn lại 30 năm văn học hải ngoại (Looking Back at 30 Years of Vietnamese Literature Abroad). *Tạp chí Văn học (Literature Journal, California)* (225), 3-27.
- Pelaud, I. T. (2011). *This Is All I Choose to Tell: History and Hybridity in Vietnamese American Literature* (Vol. 231). Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

## Resources

- “‘Call Me a Refugee, Not an Immigrant’: Viet Thanh Nguyen” by Jon Wiener (2018):  
<https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/call-refugee-not-immigrant-viet-thanh-nguyen/>



“Let’s Talk: On Art, Communism and Controversy” by Viet Thanh Nguyen (2009):  
<https://vietnguyen.info/2009/lets-talk>

“On (Not) Being Vietnamese” by Viet Thanh Nguyen (2011):  
<https://vietnguyen.info/2011/on-not-being-vietnamese>

“Văn học Việt Nam ở hải ngoại: những vấn đề của sự phát triển hiện nay” (Vietnamese Literature Abroad: Current Development Issues) by Anatoly Sokolov (2017):  
<http://khoavanhoc-ngonngu.edu.vn/nguyen-cuu/ket-noi-van-hoa-viet/6567-van-h%E1%BB%8Dc-viet-nam-o-hai-ngoai-nhung-van-de-cua-su-phat-trien-hien-nay.html>

“Viet Thanh Nguyen: Anger in the Asian American Novel” by Paul Tran (2015):  
<https://aaww.org/viet-thanh-nguyen-anger-asian-american-novel/>

**Contact email:** [anhnh@hcmue.edu.vn](mailto:anhnh@hcmue.edu.vn)



***Rethinking Resilience, Traversing Trauma: A Study of Sexually Abused Children and Young Adults in Tracey Hoffmann's "Valley of Chaya"***

Sheetal Kumari, Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee, India

The Paris Conference on Arts & Humanities 2024  
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

In *Valley of Chaya*, Tracey Hoffmann depicts a harrowing global community where young adults and children are abducted and sold into brothels. The survivors of sexual violence at these brothels endure unimaginable conditions. Their resilience is inspiring, yet it is chilling to contemplate what they have suffered. These survivors face ongoing trauma, including symptoms such as anxiety, depression, nightmares, sleep disturbances, hypervigilance, and memory issues. Unlike trauma, which brings recurrent and unpredictable consequences, resilience involves confronting significant hardship and adapting constructively. Survivors of such atrocities become more resilient and better equipped to handle trauma. Understanding the trauma experienced by these survivors and how they cope is crucial. In *Valley of Chaya*, survivors come from diverse age groups, religious backgrounds, and cultures, complicating their ability to support each other through shared experiences. This research delves into trauma and resilience theory, exploring the impact of spatiality and religious faith on the coping strategies of Hoffmann's Indian and Australian characters who have endured sexual abuse.

Keywords: Sexual Violence, Abduction, Trauma, Resilience, Survival

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

## Introduction

The Australian author Tracey Hoffmann, who wrote *Valley of Chaya*, has experience counselling traumatized and crisis-stricken individuals as a therapist. The narrative explores the murky realm of the commercial sex trade as well as the kidnapping of young girls and children from the streets. Two street children introduced in the story are 10-year-old Ashok and his younger sister Shanti, who used to pick up trash in Mumbai's slums. One day, Shanti is abducted by some men, shattering the lives of both Shanti and Ashok. Unaware of the grim reality of sexual slavery, she finds herself in a brothel, experiencing abuse and sexual violence. Shanti suffers continuous mental and sexual violations, which traumatises her, leading to her murder by one of her customers. Charlotte Turner is a teenage Australian from a wealthy family. Against her parents' wishes, she travels to India and volunteers with Hope Mumbai, an NGO that assists street children. During her time there, she works with Dr. Philip Mangan and falls in love with him. However, on her way to her hotel room, she is followed and eventually kidnapped by a man who takes her to a brothel where she meets Shanti, Gargi, Padma, and many other victims of sexual slavery. The horrifying experiences of these women highlight the importance of sharing emotions, building community, claiming space, and preserving identity as a way to cope with trauma.

The experience of trauma can be the result of a complex interplay of social, psychological, and biological factors, leading to long-lasting emotional problems. Even if traumatic experiences do not immediately cause physical or psychological harm, they can still profoundly impact the emotions of the victims. Hence, the concept of psychological trauma is broad and encompasses reactions to events and their aftermath (Alayarian 2015, p. 135). In addition to enduring the trauma of sexual abuse and rape, female children and young adults also have to cope with the psychological consequences of severe personal violations. Across the world, child and young adult female victims endure unimaginable suffering and abuse—physical, psychological, and emotional—often without proper treatment. In cases of sex trafficking, children and young adults may have traumatic memories that are unrelated to their present circumstances because of their past experiences. These victims not only have to deal with the challenges of migration due to trafficking but also struggle with the memories of the assault and trauma they endured. For victims of human trafficking, stress comes in various forms and intensities. While each victim's experience is unique, they all have to cope with being uprooted from familiar surroundings and disrupting their normal lives. The common thread in these diverse experiences is the loss of the victim's home, friends, community, and comfortable way of life. Until genuine integration is achieved, this experience often leads to feelings of anxiety, uncertainty, and alienation at all levels (Alayarian 2015, p. 133). The paper delves into the trauma and suffering experienced by the victims, prioritising their shared experiences and distinct differences such as age, religious background, and culture. It examines how these commonalities and differences both facilitate and complicate their resilient behaviour. The paper analyses the characters of Hoffmann's *Valley of Chaya* to establish the concept of resilience among child and young adult victims of sex trafficking.

## Abduction, Sexual Violence and Trauma

Trauma is typically experienced as a result of subjectively perceived objective events. Our susceptibility to trauma increases with the degree to which we see and feel threatened. In cases of abduction, 58% of incidents are likely to be carried out by someone other than the victims' friends and relatives (CTDC, n.d.), resulting in a heightened sense of fear and the

threat of serious harm or death. Sexual exploitation, which accounts for nearly 70% of the abducted victims (CTDC, n.d.), is unexpected for the victims and intensifies their fear and trauma. Consequently, determining whether an incident is traumatic and to what extent is subjective and relies on resilience. Accordingly, any experience or contact that leads to intense feelings of powerlessness and emotion might be considered psychological trauma. An inability to distinguish between one's body and mind can stem from psychological issues or physical injuries (Alayarian, 2015, p. 135). Therefore, before the actual act of sexual violence occurs—that is, after the abduction and subsequent arrival at a brothel—the victim of sexual slavery may experience trauma. Hoffmann tries to depict the fear and impending threat before Shanti and Charlotte are sexually abused. The malevolent individuals who kidnap Charlotte from her hotel room and take Shanti from Ashok pose a direct threat to them. The stress is intensified by Scarface, the brothel owner, and his men's unpredictable behaviour and intentions. The mental danger of the brothel has a harmful effect on both Shanti and Charlotte, causing them to become increasingly anxious, paranoid, and afraid of death. Even before they are sent to customers, this psychological aspect worsens and causes distress for them. Padma, the caretaker of the brothel and Scarface's wife, takes Shanti to get ready for customers. The treatment of Padma frightens Shanti even more as she is unaware of the looming threat. Hoffmann writes, "The slap across her face stunned Shanti, and she staggered back. Her hand went to her cheek as fresh tears stung her eyes. Fear gripped her stomach, and Shanti curled up into a tight ball on the floor" (Hoffmann, 2011, p. 80). Shanti and Charlotte both show typical physical symptoms of fear, such as shaking, perspiration, and rapid breathing, when they see other victims and the environment of the brothel. The initial trauma that Shanti and Charlotte are going through before the act of sexual exploitation is shown by these visceral emotions and tangible terror.

Children and young adults see very violent, repetitive, prolonged, and explosive acts of sexual violence at brothels. Additionally, they frequently get worse after seeing potentially fatal acts of sexual violence. The newly recruited victims face isolation in the brothel, which adds to the sense of fear and represents their vulnerability. The victims are forced to face threats alone because of their seclusion from the outside world. Crimes against the vulnerable, including abduction, incarceration, torture, and domestic abuse, are generally linked to feelings of impotence and terror of harm or death. Shanti is more vulnerable to abuse due to her difficult past, which includes growing up in poverty as an orphan. Shanti often recalls her brother and fantasises about Ashok teaching her to count while men are exploiting her. Hoffmann uses this to highlight the lasting impact of trauma caused by sexual assault and the ongoing cycle of exploitation in brothels. To effectively convey the long-term effects of sexual abuse, the story portrays Shanti dissociating during instances of exploitation (both verbal and physical) and experiencing triggers while sleeping. These scenes depict Shanti entering a mental void and struggling with thoughts of death in vivid detail, demonstrating how seemingly ordinary objects or sounds can unexpectedly trigger her trauma. This illustrates the harsh reality of being trapped in a soul-destroying prison.

Through a series of terrifying occurrences that put Charlotte's fortitude and will to survive, the narrative explores resilient behaviour amongst the victims. The horrific reality of the physical, mental, and psychological torture that occurs in the brothel is depicted through the victims of various age groups and religious and cultural backgrounds. Charlotte's journey from Australia to a brothel in Mumbai highlights the subtle ways in which abuse may permeate and upend a person's life, undermining their sense of autonomy and self-worth. "Her body felt alien to her. Every inch ached and was sensitive to touch. The deep bruising covered large areas" (Hoffmann, 2011, p. 142). Charlotte has never been naked in front of the

unknown, and after being repeatedly beaten and sexually harassed, she feels shattered. Caruth also acknowledges the potential of sharing one's own experiences, highlighting how trauma is intertwined with the pain of others and how it can result in unexpected connections with others through hearing about someone else's journey (Caruth, 1996, p. 8). Hoffman explores the mechanisms of resilience and control that form the basis of relationships established on shared trauma through Charlotte's interactions with different characters. Charlotte's determination to help Shanti, Gargi, Padma, and herself escape the brothel encompasses emotional support, care, cultural ambivalence, and religious faith. However, despite their best efforts, sexual assault victims frequently struggle to get over their horrific experiences as Gargi and Padma continuously refuse to escape the brothel. This might be the case because accepting that other people have experienced torture or death would entail disregarding their own history. The accounts of victims, however, portray the challenges faced by Charlotte in reclaiming her identity, the process of overcoming trauma, and the prolonged journey to recovery. A ray of hope shines in the darkness as Charlotte's resilience and determination to overcome her experiences of sexual violence testify to the human spirit's capacity for healing and renewal.

### **The Trauma of Sexual Violence and Resilience**

Since trauma is a highly subjective experience, what one person experiences as traumatic may not have the same impact on another (Alayarian, 2004; 2011). Experiences from the past, especially unpleasant ones, might influence a victim's reaction to current atrocities. The way trauma is perceived and processed can be influenced by cultural background and societal norms. When it comes to grieving and accepting their losses, some children and young adults go through it fast, while others battle intensely with feelings of guilt and sadness stemming from distressing events (Alayarian, 2015, p. 137). Even if children and young people are trafficked into the sex trade or places where they are exposed to extreme human suffering, they emerge from these situations with severe physical and psychological wounds that trigger painful memories from their time in the brothel. Hoffmann's nuanced depiction of Charlotte, Shanti, and Gargi emphasises how each character's experience and reaction to their hardships are shaped by their distinctive traits, cultural background, and personal past. The diversity of their experiences underscores the intricate nature of human resilience and the different ways in which individuals confront and overcome challenging situations. Charlotte's trauma is shaped by her subjective experience of sexual exploitation. It is influenced by her personal history and emotional vulnerabilities. Her Australian cultural upbringing shapes her expectations of safety and trust. Her feelings of anxiety and loneliness are heightened by being distant from home. She feels ashamed of being sexually violated when Scarface makes her walk naked in front of him. As she navigates linguistic and cultural difficulties, in addition to physical and emotional dangers, the foreign setting exacerbates her trauma. Charlotte's resilience is tested and developed throughout the narrative as she learns to reclaim her autonomy. Shanti is a garbage picker who lives on the streets of Mumbai and is reliant on her brother; hence, her socioeconomic status also has an aspect in her abduction. Her early reaction to trauma was formed by the severe sufferings of starvation and orphanhood that she had previously experienced before men snatched her from Ashok. In the brothel, she is constantly abused physically and sexually by men. As a child, she struggles with her emotions, hopelessness, fear, and despair, and her body becomes a site of constant violation. While seeing defecated flies across the surface, she thinks, "My life is like that, ... dirty. She imagined her blood turning black, ... Even the worms she had seen on some people's skin would not want to live on her body" (Hoffmann, 2011, p. 133). Though she was murdered by one of her customers just before escaping the brothel, her journey oscillates between hope

and despair, influenced by bonds of empathy with Charlotte. Gargi's trauma is kept hidden in the mask of her cold attitude. She is pregnant and hiding it from the brothel owner due to the fear that they might kill her child, which they eventually do. Charlotte is shown as her godmother, who not only rescues her from the brothel but also helps her to get over her past traumatic memories. It is impossible to undo the horrific atrocities that Shanti, Charlotte, Gargi and Padma as well have experienced. Nonetheless, therapeutic interventions such as care, support, and empathy make such victims resilient.

Resilience is the ability to adapt to adversity and trauma positively. It is not a fixed trait but a concept that involves facing hardship and achieving positive life changes (Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000, p. 858). Mlambo asserts that resilience focuses on people's strengths rather than their vulnerabilities by highlighting their coping strategies. It demonstrates how individuals navigate and adapt to challenges and showcases their ability to maintain or regain well-being despite adversity. This perspective shifts attention from what makes people vulnerable to what empowers them, exploring how they effectively manage and overcome difficult situations (Mlambo, 2014, p. 39). A child's lasting impressions of themselves and their surroundings may alter as a result of traumatising experiences of torture, sexual assault, and violation. For a child victim to feel in control of such atrocities, they might not yet be able to adjust to them or change their radical ideas about themselves and the world (Alayarian, 2015, p. 141). This might lead to a child victim who has experienced sexual assault to believe that everyone around them is possibly a rapist or offender and that no one can be trusted. Shanti finds herself in a strange and unfamiliar setting, a brothel that she had never heard of, without her brother. Shanti feels dreadful and tries to remove the invisible dirt from her body by scratching the skin. It is challenging for her to trust anyone. She becomes acquainted with Charlotte after spending some time at the brothel. She has opened up to Charlotte about her worries, uncertainties, and estrangement, giving them room to become resilient. Charlotte brings smiles, laughter, and light to Shanti's miserable life by playing with knuckle bones and conversing with her. They were deprived of sunlight and fresh air since men brought them to the brothel, and when they found little beams, it felt like a revival for them.

“She cranked her head back to look at the sky and squinted at the sun. As a light breeze fanned her cheeks, she opened her mouth. Her gaze swept the small area, and she ran her hand over the bark of the tree. The rough surface caught at the fingers, but she didn't care. Warmth filled her and she felt a sob catch in her throat.” (Hoffmann, 2011, p. 212)

For a young adult who has experienced extreme trauma—such as being trafficked or sexually enslaved and losing their home, family, and trust—the therapy objective is to assist them in regaining confidence in humanity. This entails fusing their painful memories of sexual violence with their prior pleasant experiences in life (Alayarian, 2015, p. 142). In her book *Aftermath*, sexual assault victim Susan Brison highlights this process, pointing out that discussing horrific events is both an outward and an internal process that helps to change the suffering (2002, p. 56). Through talking about their experiences of brutality and physical abuse, trauma survivors may change the way their trauma affects them and keep it from taking over their lives (Soderstrom, 2017, p. 72). Trauma is not a universal experience for all sexually abused children and women. For some, it is a constant, lifelong experience that is often intensified and less obvious (Pain, 2022, p. 1796). Trauma survivors from the brothels can rebuild their resilient behaviour and sense of self and start the healing process by testifying about their experiences and creating a narrative about them. Although the trauma of

sexual violence in a brothel (sexual slavery) is a cyclic incident, telling one's experience is necessary for the healing process, even if it can be difficult and unpleasant. Charlotte is depicted as an embodiment of resilience as she tries to rescue Shanti, Gargi, and Padma, along with herself, despite all hurdles and threats. She also loses hope to survive, which leads her to thoughts of death, but her faith in God keeps her alive, and she endures pain and trauma. She is seen to convince Padma and Gargi to escape the brothel and eventually succeeds in getting Gargi out of the soul-destroying prison. Charlotte's faith in God becomes a driving force to cope with the dark reality and trauma of what she could not be able to change. While convincing Shanti that they will soon be free from this trauma, Charlotte says, "This place is so full of darkness, Shanti. We need to pray together so God can hear us" (Hoffmann 214). They pray for strength, hope, survival and especially for Shanti to cope with the brutality she endures every night.

"Lord Jesus, we know you're here with us. Lord this is a dark, evil place. We cannot survive without your help. Please give Shanti strength to endure what happens to her. Help her feel your presence, when she is taken where she doesn't want to go. Lord Jesus, please help us to hold onto the hope of rescue, to trust that you will lift us out of this prison and restore us stronger and better than before. Amen." (Hoffmann, 2011, p. 214-5)

Padma, being Scarface's wife, could not let Charlotte and others escape from the brothel, but Charlotte's positive, resilient behaviour could not stop her. She, along with Philip and her brother Eli, helps rescue Gargi. She also helps Gargi to overcome her trauma and to help others who go through such a traumatic journey. Shanti always has nightmares that she is approaching Ashok from a filthy place but fails, and she wakes up dazed and breathless. Charlotte nearly retrieved Shanti from her mental void and planned to get her to Ashok, but just one day before they planned to escape, one of the customers, who calls himself the devil, brutally killed her.

## Conclusion

Tracey Hoffmann's *Valley of Chaya* offers a harrowing yet insightful exploration into the world of abduction, sexual slavery and its devastating impact on young girls and women. Hoffmann skilfully illustrates the severe suffering endured by victims of sexual slavery through the characters of Shanti, Charlotte, and Gargi. The narrative explores the emotional wounds that these encounters leave behind, as well as the severe physical and psychological violence. It draws attention to the complexity of trauma and how a variety of social, psychological, and bodily components interact to shape it. Hoffmann's portrayal of her characters demonstrates that trauma is deeply subjective, influenced by past experiences, cultural backgrounds, and individual vulnerabilities. This underscores the complexity of psychological trauma and the varied responses of individuals to similar traumatic events. Moreover, the narrative poignantly illustrates the concept of resilience. Characters like Charlotte and Shanti show glimpses of hope, resilience, and persistence despite the victims' extreme physical, mental, and emotional torture. The human spirit is shown to be resilient through its relationships with one another and attempts to regain its autonomy and individuality in the face of horrific circumstances. The narrative also sheds light on the importance of community, empathy, and faith in coping with trauma. Charlotte's endeavours to assist Shanti and other victims in escaping, her dependence on faith, and the connections forged among the victims serve as compelling reminders that even under the direst circumstances, healing and rejuvenation are possible. Hoffmann's portrayal of resilience is



not one of unwavering fortitude but rather an indication of the ability to heal and the continuous battle against trauma. *Valley of Chaya* is a compelling narrative that exposes the grim realities of sex trafficking while celebrating the resilience and enduring hope of its victims. Hoffmann's work highlights the possibilities for healing and the human spirit's ability to overcome even the most horrific situations, underscoring the importance of empathy, support, and understanding in confronting the complicated and very personal experiences of trauma.

### **Acknowledgements**

I want to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Sarbani Banerjee, for making this work possible. Her support and recommendations helped me a lot to get through every level of my writing. I want to thank my committee members for their intelligent thoughts and ideas at every stage of my research work. Thanks to you. I want to give special thanks to my family and friends for their unwavering support and understanding. Finally, I want to convey my honour to God for allowing me to persist in facing adversity. I will continue to put my faith in you for my future.

## References

- Alayarian, A. (2004). Working with Refugees by the Refugee Therapy Centre. *Self and Society*.
- Alayarian, A. (2011). *Trauma, Torture and Dissociation: A Psychoanalytic View* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429484308>
- Alayarian, A. (2015). *Handbook of Working with Children, Trauma, and Resilience: An Intercultural Psychoanalytic View* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429475429>
- Brison, S. J. (2002). Outliving Oneself. In *Aftermath: Violence and the Remaking of a Self* (pp. 37–66). Princeton University Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt7rvsb.6>
- Caruth, C. (1996). *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*. Johns Hopkins University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1353/book.20656>
- CTDC. (n.d.). *Abducted victims*. <https://www.ctdatacollaborative.org/story/abducted-victims>
- Hoffmann, T. (2011). *Valley of Chaya*. Dawn Esmond Publishing.
- Luthar, S. S., & Cicchetti, D. (2000). The Construct of Resilience: Implications for Interventions and Social Policies. *Development and Psychopathology*, 12(4), 857–885.
- Mlambo, N. (2014). *Trauma, Resilience and Survival Strategies in Crisis Times: An Afrocentric Literary Approach*. Scholar's Press.
- Pain, R. (2022). Collective Trauma? Isolating and Commoning Gender-based Violence. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 29(12), 1788-1809. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2021.1975103>
- Soderstrom, D. N. (2017). *From Trauma to Testimony: Resilience in Four Contemporary Novels: The Farming of Bones, In The Time of The Butterflies, The Poisonwood Bible, and The Rapture of Canaan* (Doctoral dissertation, Auburn University).

**Contact email:** [sheetal\\_k@hs.iitr.ac.in](mailto:sheetal_k@hs.iitr.ac.in)

***Digitalization, New Media & OTT:  
Case Study of Ushering New Perspectives for Gender Issues***

Chayanika Uniyal, University of Delhi, India  
Amna Mirza, University of Delhi, India

The Paris Conference on Arts & Humanities 2024  
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

Technological and digital innovations are of huge significance in contemporary scenarios. From the digitalization of business models and governance to its impact on the everyday lives of common people, digital is also the driver of the fourth industrial revolution. The rise of virtual realities, Web3, and artificial intelligence has led to new challenges and opportunities. The way the masses consume entertainment and the rise of over-the-top (OTT) platforms are hallmarks of it. Further, media forms an integral part of portrayal, depiction, and features, which leads to stereotypes, biases, and exclusion. A boom in smartphones and high-speed internet also raises concerns about regulatory requirements for OTT platforms. OTT platforms navigate exponential growth and create an entertainment ecosystem, leading to innovative ideas. Debates on social norms and identities have often arisen from OTT content. This becomes a counternarrative to the follies of mainstream perspectives. OTT content is driven by the idea of a strong woman, challenging stereotypes, and calling out the social gendered dynamics. OTT adds heterogeneity to our understanding of gender. In a demand-driven world, this creates new forms of presentation and representation, adding a tenor of empowerment for women and gender issues at large. The paper attempts to discuss how, amidst the evolving nature of OTT platforms, they have been able to garner new perspectives on gender issues. It also discusses case studies from OTT platforms to highlight the significance of consistent engagement with gender issues, which is beneficial for holistic development too.

Keywords: Digitalization, New Media, OTT, Gender Issues

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

## Introduction

In the rapidly evolving landscape of communication and media, the evolution of new media platforms has transformed the way we disseminate, consume and interact with information. The advent of digital technologies has revolutionised communication channels, facilitating instantaneous and widespread dissemination of content across the globe. One significant development in this digital era is the rise of Over-the-Top (OTT) platforms, which have reshaped the media and entertainment industry by offering on-demand content delivery directly to consumers over the internet, bypassing traditional distribution channels.

The proliferation of OTT platforms marks a significant paradigm shift in the world of digitalization, presenting new opportunities and challenges for media producers, consumers, and regulators alike. OTT platforms encompass a diverse array of services, ranging from streaming media services like Netflix, Hulu, Prime Video, and Disney+ to audio streaming platforms such as Spotify and Apple Music. These platforms leverage the ubiquity of internet connectivity and the increasing prevalence of smart devices to provide users with unprecedented access to a vast library of content anytime, anywhere.

The significance of OTT platforms lies in their ability to democratise content creation and distribution, empowering content creators with a direct route to global audiences without the need for traditional intermediaries. By circumventing traditional gatekeepers such as television networks, film studios, or any kind of censorship, OTT platforms offer a level playing field for independent filmmakers, artists, and storytellers to showcase their work and connect with audiences on a global scale. This democratization of content creation has led to the amplification of diverse voices and narratives, fostering creativity, innovation and cultural exchange in the digital media landscape.

## Gender Issues in Traditional Media

Gender representation in traditional media (TV, radio, newspapers, Movies and Theatre) is often underrepresented. In movies, female characters are frequently portrayed in stereotypical roles, such as caregivers or in romantic subplots, while male characters often occupy positions of power and action. IBM Research, India, Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology (IIIT) Delhi, and Delhi Technological University (DTU) wrote a research paper by analysing 4000 Bollywood Films. The paper refers to the fact that Bollywood never portrayed women as independent entities and they have always been associated with successful men. But in the case of men the approach is different as they are portrayed independent and to be successful (Madaan et al., 2018). It is not like that Bollywood has never made films on women-centric subjects in the past. But whenever they were made, they were either seen fostering the stereotype or whenever they tried to break this stereotype, they had to face strong opposition and obstacles. For example, in the 90s, the first Indian film made on a homosexual relationship, Deepa Mehta's *Fire*, was very controversial. *Water* is another Deepa Mehta film which created a lot of controversy due to its deep insight on the life of an Indian widow. The screenplay of the film, centred in an ashram in Varanasi, was written by none other than Anurag Kashyap and it raised controversial issues like exclusion and misogyny, which were alien to the Indian Censor Board at that time. No wonder that in 2000, protestors widely opposed when Deepa Mehta started to shoot her film *Water* in Varanasi. The film set was destroyed and the city was shut down in protest against the misrepresentation of widows. Under these circumstances, Mehta was forced to leave the shooting in Varanasi. Later, she secretly shot her film in Sri Lanka (Razdan, 2007).

Even statistics of Hollywood show no much different results. For example, the University of Southern California (USC) report, Feb 2023, discovered that 34.6 percent speaking roles of the top 100 box-office hits of 2022 were female (Neff, Smith, & Pieper, 2023). The report 'The Celluloid Ceiling' published by the Centre for the Study of Women in Television & Films of San Diego State University and written by Dr. Martha M. Lauzen investigated the actual state of women in the top-grossing US films in 2023, and reported that the percentage of women working in the top 100 films dropped by 1% point, from 22% in 2022 to 21% in 2023. It said that 14% of the directors of the top 100 films of 2022 were women, which dropped by 3% point to 11% in 2023 (Lauzen, 2024). The gender pay gap persists in Hollywood. It is revealed by data examined from 1980 to 2015, that between male and female actors there is an unexplained wage difference of 25% (Park, 2022).

### Shift With New Media and OTT

OTT platforms have catalysed new developments in media consumption habits, challenging the dominance of linear television and traditional cinema. As reported by the Times of India in its news report, India's OTT market has grown by 20% in recent years due to high-speed internet access and affordable subscription prices. As a result, India currently has over 42 crore viewers and 12 crore active paid OTT subscriptions (Masand, 2023). Similarly, in the USA according to Nielsen July 2023 data, the high volume of viewing overall increased streaming's proportion of TV to 38.7%, setting a new record. Prime Video, Netflix, and YouTube all reached record highs. At 20% of TV viewing for the month, total broadcast viewing was down 3.6% overall, setting a record low. The use of broadcasts decreased by 5.4% every year, the survey found (Neilson survey data, 2023).

The rise of on-demand streaming has given viewers unprecedented control over their viewing experience, enabling binge-watching of entire seasons, personalised content recommendations, and flexible viewing schedules. This shift towards on-demand viewing has reshaped audience expectations and preferences, prompting traditional media companies to adapt their business models and content strategies to remain competitive in the digital age.

**Table 1: Subscription OTT Video Viewer Penetration, by Region, 2024**  
(Cramer-Flood, 2023).

Country	% of Internet Users
North America	73.6%
Western Europe	56.1%
Asia Pacific	47.7%
Latin America	41.8%
Central and Eastern Europe	27.6%
Middle East and Africa	20.6%
World Wide	44.9%

Furthermore, OTT platforms have disrupted the traditional economics of the media industry, posing both opportunities and challenges for content creators and distributors. On one hand, OTT platforms offer new revenue streams and monetization opportunities for content creators through subscription-based models, advertising, and licensing deals. On the other hand, the proliferation of OTT platforms has led to the fragmentation of audiences and increased competition for viewership, making it challenging for content creators to stand out amidst the crowded digital marketplace. In addition to transforming the entertainment industry, OTT

platforms have also had a profound impact on the way news and information are consumed and disseminated. With the rise of digital news outlets and streaming services, consumers have access to a diverse array of sources and perspectives, enabling them to customise their news consumption experience based on their interests and preferences. However, the proliferation of unverified information and misleading information on digital platforms has also raised concerns about the authenticity and credibility of online news sources, highlighting the necessity for literacy of media and responsible journalism in the digital age.

## Review of Literature

Significant changes in information systems through the digitisation of media have led to changes in social perceptions and behaviours. This analysis delves deeply into the interrelationship of gender issues with digitisation, with a focus on the representation of women and gender minorities in new media and over-the-top (OTT) platforms. Drawing insights from a selection of key books, journals and reports, this paper aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics at play in the digital media landscape.

"Gender & Digital Security: Results from a Scoping Study" by Maya Ganesh (2020), Ganesh critically examines the gendered dimensions of digital media, highlighting the importance of inclusive and feminist approaches to technology design and content creation. She argues for the need to address structural inequalities in digital spaces and amplify marginalised voices to create a more equitable media ecosystem.

"Big Digital Humanities: Imagining a meeting place for the humanities and the digital" by Patrik Svensson (2016), this interdisciplinary volume explores the intersections of gender, technology, and culture in the digital age, featuring contributions from scholars across various fields. The book delves into issues such as online harassment, gender representation in gaming, and the politics of digital activism, offering nuanced insights into the complexities of gender dynamics in digital spaces.

"Women and Media: A Critical Introduction" by Carolyn M. Byerly and Karen Ross (2006), provides a comprehensive overview of women's representation and participation in media industries, examining the impact of digitalization on gender equality and diversity. They analyse the ways in which women are portrayed in traditional and digital media, the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles, and the challenges faced by female content creators and journalists.

"Gendered Media: Women, Men, and Identity Politics" by Karen Ross (2010), explores how gender identities are constructed and negotiated through media representations, with a focus on the digital mediation of gendered experiences. She discusses the role of social media platforms, online communities, and digital storytelling in shaping gender norms, stereotypes, and expectations in contemporary society.

"Who Makes the News?" by the Global Media Monitoring Project (2020), This report provides a comprehensive analysis of gender representation in news media worldwide, highlighting persistent gender biases and stereotypes in news coverage. It examines the underrepresentation of women as news sources, experts, and decision-makers, as well as the marginalisation of gender minorities in media discourse.

## Developments in Information and Communication Technology

Developments in information and communication technology (ICT) have revolutionised the landscape of gender discourse by providing innovative platforms for marginalised voices, fostering global dialogue, and challenging entrenched stereotypes. Social media platforms, like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, have arisen as influential catalysts for social change, enabling individuals to share their experiences of gender-based discrimination, harassment, and violence on a global scale. Hashtags like #MeToo and #TimesUp have galvanised movements for gender equality, empowering survivors to speak out and mobilise collective action against systemic injustices (Dasgupta, 2020). These digital spaces have democratised the narrative surrounding gender issues, amplifying the voices of those traditionally marginalised by mainstream media. Moreover, online communities and forums have become vital hubs for engaging in discussions, seeking support, and sharing resources on gender-related topics. Platforms like Reddit, Tumblr, and Medium host diverse forums and blogs dedicated to feminist discourse, gender studies, and activism. These digital communities provide a safe and inclusive space for individuals to explore intersectional perspectives on gender, acknowledging the complex interplay of factors such as race, class, and sexuality in shaping lived experiences (Nakamura, 2018). By facilitating dialogue and solidarity among diverse groups, online platforms contribute to a more nuanced understanding of gender issues and promote collective advocacy for social change.

Advancements in digital storytelling and multimedia technologies have further enriched the presentation of new perspectives on gender issues, allowing individuals to creatively express their lived experiences and challenge prevailing stereotypes. Projects like "Everyday Sexism" and "Humans of New York" leverage photography, video, and narrative storytelling to humanise the experiences of women and gender minorities. Through personal stories and visual imagery, these digital platforms provide a poignant depiction of the everyday struggles and triumphs faced by individuals navigating gendered spaces (Gray et al., 2017). By offering alternative narratives that defy conventional norms and expectations, digital storytelling fosters empathy, understanding, and solidarity among diverse audiences.

Furthermore, the democratisation of knowledge through open-access publishing has facilitated greater access to scholarly research on gender issues, making academic knowledge more accessible and inclusive. Open-access journals, such as *Gender & Society* and *Feminist Media Studies*, publish interdisciplinary research that examines various dimensions of gender inequality, representation, and empowerment. By disseminating critical perspectives on gender-related topics, open-access publishing platforms contribute to broader public discourse and inform policy debates on issues ranging from reproductive rights to media representation (Bayne & Ross, 2019). Through collaborative efforts between researchers, activists, and policymakers, open-access publishing promotes evidence-based advocacy and advances the agenda for gender justice and equality.

Over-the-top (OTT) platforms have emerged as influential mediums in challenging gender stereotypes by providing avenues for diverse and inclusive content creation. Leveraging advancements in digitalization, these platforms have revolutionised the media landscape, enabling creators to present authentic and nuanced stories that reflect the complexity of gender identities and experiences. Unlike traditional media outlets, OTT platforms offer greater flexibility and creative freedom to content creators, by allowing them to explore themes and narratives that challenge traditional gender norms. This departure from conventional storytelling has paved the way for more inclusive representations of gender,

empowering marginalised voices and fostering greater diversity in media content (Roy, 2019).

Digitalization has facilitated direct engagement between OTT platforms and their audiences, leading to a more personalised and responsive viewing experience. By harnessing user data and algorithms, OTT platforms can tailor content recommendations to individual preferences, thereby promoting greater diversity and inclusivity in media consumption habits. Through interactive features and feedback mechanisms, viewers can also actively participate in shaping the content landscape, providing valuable insights and perspectives that inform the creation of more inclusive narratives. This collaborative approach to content creation not only strengthens audience engagement but also ensures that diverse voices are heard and represented in the digital media space (myfrenzi, 2023).

OTT platforms have capitalised on digitalization to expand their global reach and impact, transcending geographical and linguistic barriers to foster cross-cultural dialogue on gender issues. With the proliferation of high-speed internet and mobile devices, viewers from diverse backgrounds can access content that challenges traditional gender norms and promotes social change. Initiatives such as Amazon Prime Video's "All Voices Film Festival" exemplify the platform's commitment to empowering underrepresented voices, including women, LGBTQ+, and minority creators, by providing resources and distribution opportunities. This global outreach not only amplifies diverse perspectives on gender equality but also fosters solidarity and collaboration among activists and content creators worldwide (Ghosh, 2023).

### **Case Studies**

Over-the-Top (OTT) platforms have emerged as pivotal players in challenging gender stereotypes through a diverse range of content offerings. One notable case study is the *Indian web series "Made in Heaven,"* available on *Amazon Prime Video*. Made by Zoya Akhtar and Reema Kagti, this series follows the journey of two wedding planners in Delhi as they navigate the intricacies of love, marriage, and societal expectations. "Made in Heaven" confronts gender-related issues such as arranged marriages, patriarchal traditions, and societal pressures faced by women. By portraying its female characters as multifaceted individuals with agency and ambition, the series challenges traditional gender roles and contributes to a more inclusive representation of gender in Indian media (Ghosh, 2020).

#### ***India's "Delhi Crime" (Netflix)***

"Delhi Crime" is an Indian web series on Netflix, which is based on the 2012 Delhi Nirbhaya gang rape case. The series, which showcases the investigation led by the Delhi Police, illustrates how OTT platforms have given creators a new level of creative freedom. Unlike traditional TV networks or censorship boards, platforms like Netflix allow for the exploration of sensitive and complex subjects. This freedom enabled "Delhi Crime" to provide a nuanced and realistic portrayal of the incident and its aftermath. Moreover, the global reach of Netflix brought international attention to issues of gender-based violence in India, highlighting the plight of the victim and societal attitudes towards gender violence. The series also portrays a strong female protagonist, DCP Vartika Chaturvedi, emphasising women's leadership roles in a male-dominated field and challenging traditional gender stereotypes.



### ***America's "The Handmaid's Tale" (Hulu)***

"The Handmaid's Tale," based on Margaret Atwood's novel, depicts a dystopian future where women are subjugated in a theocratic society. Hulu's platform provided the show with the opportunity to stay true to the novel's dark and intense themes, which might have been diluted on conventional networks. The long-form storytelling format enabled by OTT platforms allowed for an in-depth exploration of characters and themes over multiple seasons. The series critically examines the erosion of women's rights and bodily autonomy in a patriarchal society, portraying a chilling vision of what happens when women's freedoms are stripped away. Additionally, it highlights themes of resistance and empowerment, focusing on the fight for freedom and justice. This series underscores the significant impact OTT platforms can have in bringing bold and thought-provoking content to a broader audience.

### ***Korea's "Sky Castle" (JTBC, Netflix)***

"Sky Castle" is a South Korean drama series that initially aired on JTBC and is available on Netflix. The show explores the lives of wealthy families and the intense pressures of academic success. The presence of Netflix as a global platform allowed "Sky Castle" to gain international recognition, contributing to the rising global popularity of Korean dramas. This extended reach meant that the series could engage audiences who might not typically watch Korean television. "Sky Castle" delves into the sacrifices women make for their children's success and the societal expectations placed upon them. It also addresses the gender dynamics in education, examining the different pressures and expectations placed on male and female students within a highly competitive academic environment.

### ***Brazilian Context: "Coisa Mais Linda" (Most Beautiful Thing) (Netflix)***

In Brazil, "Coisa Mais Linda" (Most Beautiful Thing), available on Netflix, addresses gender issues within the historical context of the late 1950s and early 1960s. The series follows the lives of four women who navigate personal and professional challenges in a male-dominated society. It explores themes of female empowerment, friendship, and the struggle for independence and equality. The historical setting allows the series to highlight the progress and setbacks in the fight for gender equality. By focusing on the experiences of women from different backgrounds, "Coisa Mais Linda" provides a multifaceted perspective on gender issues in Brazil. The global platform of Netflix has enabled this story to reach a wide audience, sparking conversations about gender roles, feminism, and social change. The series sheds light on the resilience and solidarity among women, emphasizing their roles as trailblazers in a patriarchal society. This narrative not only resonates with Brazilian audiences but also offers universal themes of empowerment and resistance that inspire viewers worldwide.

### ***Nigerian Context: "King of Boys" (Netflix)***

"King of Boys," a Nigerian film available on Netflix, showcases how OTT platforms can address gender issues within the context of power dynamics and societal expectations. The film centers around Eniola Salami, a powerful businesswoman and political figure who navigates the treacherous world of Nigerian politics. Her character challenges the traditional roles assigned to women in Nigerian society, portraying a woman who wields significant power and influence. The success of "King of Boys" on Netflix has highlighted the potential of African cinema to reach a global audience and address important social issues. The film's

portrayal of a strong female protagonist who defies societal norms has resonated with viewers both in Nigeria and internationally, promoting discussions regarding gender equality and empowerment of women. Eniola's journey through the labyrinth of power, corruption, and personal ambition exemplifies the complexities faced by women in leadership, inspiring debates on gender roles within political and business arenas across different cultures.

### ***Japanese Context: "Followers" (Netflix)***

In Japan, the series "Followers," available on Netflix, addresses contemporary gender issues within the context of social media and digital culture. The show follows the lives of women navigating the pressures and opportunities of modern Tokyo, highlighting the impact of social media on their personal and professional lives. "Followers" explores themes of identity, self-expression, and the challenges faced by women in a rapidly changing society. The global reach of Netflix has allowed "Followers" to bring Japanese perspectives on gender issues to a wide audience. The series provides a nuanced portrayal of the complexities of modern womanhood in Japan, addressing issues such as career ambitions, relationships, and societal expectations. By presenting these stories on a global platform, "Followers" contributes to a broader understanding of gender dynamics in contemporary Japan. The show's exploration of the interplay between traditional gender roles and modern aspirations offers a reflective look at the evolving status of women in Japanese society, resonating with global audiences facing similar cultural shifts.

### ***Swedish Context: "Quicksand" (Netflix)***

In Sweden, "Quicksand," available on Netflix, delves into gender issues within the context of a gripping courtroom drama. The series, based on the best-selling novel, follows Maja Norberg, a teenager accused of involvement in a school shooting. As the story unfolds, it addresses themes of victimhood, power, and societal expectations of young women. "Quicksand" challenges stereotypes about femininity and criminality, providing a platform for discussing the pressures faced by young women in modern society. The series' international distribution through Netflix has brought Swedish perspectives on gender and justice to a global audience. "Quicksand" highlights the complexities of navigating gender norms while facing extreme societal scrutiny, offering a critical look at how gender influences perceptions of guilt and innocence. By engaging with these themes, the series fosters a global dialogue about the intersection of gender, justice, and media representation.

### ***Australian Context: "Stateless" (Netflix)***

Australia's "Stateless," available on Netflix, tackles gender issues within the context of immigration and human rights. The series, inspired by true events, follows four strangers whose lives intersect in an immigration detention centre. Among these characters is Sofie Werner, a woman escaping a traumatic cult experience, highlighting the vulnerabilities and resilience of women in extreme circumstances. The global platform of Netflix has enabled "Stateless" to reach an international audience, drawing attention to the gender-specific challenges faced by refugees and asylum seekers. The series underscores the intersectionality of gender, trauma, and displacement, prompting viewers to consider the unique struggles of women in such situations. By providing a nuanced portrayal of these issues, "Stateless" contributes to a broader understanding of gender dynamics within global migration contexts and encourages empathy and action on behalf of vulnerable populations.

### ***Turkish Context: "Ethos" (Bir Başkadır) (Netflix)***

In Turkey, "Ethos" (Bir Başkadır), available on Netflix, addresses gender issues through the lens of diverse cultural and social backgrounds. The series follows Meryem, a part-time cleaner from a conservative background, as she navigates the complexities of modern Istanbul. "Ethos" explores themes of identity, class, and gender, highlighting the diverse experiences of women in Turkey. The global reach of Netflix has allowed "Ethos" to bring Turkish perspectives on gender issues to a wide audience. The series provides a nuanced portrayal of the intersection between traditional values and contemporary life, offering insight into the challenges faced by women in a rapidly changing society. By presenting these stories on a global platform, "Ethos" fosters a deeper understanding of gender dynamics in Turkey and encourages cross-cultural dialogue about women's roles and rights.

### **Conclusion**

The global reach of OTT platforms has facilitated the cross-cultural exchange of ideas and perspectives on gender issues. By breaking down geographical barriers, these platforms allow diverse voices and stories to be heard, fostering a more inclusive and comprehensive understanding of gender dynamics. For instance, the Indian series "Delhi Crime" challenges traditional gender roles, while Brazil's "Coisa Mais Linda" highlights the historical struggles for gender equality. Nigeria's "King of Boys" presents a powerful woman defying societal norms, and Japan's "Followers" explores modern gender dynamics influenced by digital culture.

Furthermore, Swedish series like "Quicksand" offers critical perspectives on gender and justice, while Australia's "Stateless" sheds light on the gender-specific challenges of immigration. Turkey's "Ethos" provides a window into the intersection of traditional and contemporary gender roles. These narratives, made accessible through global OTT platforms, foster a richer and more diverse dialogue on gender issues.

Distribution, creation and consumption of content have been transformed in the digital age, with OTT platforms leading the charge. OTT platforms such as Netflix, Hulu, Amazon Prime Video, and others have not only democratised access to content but also revolutionised how stories are told, particularly those concerning gender issues. The confluence of digitalization and new media has provided creators with unprecedented freedom, enabling them to explore complex and often controversial themes without the constraints traditionally imposed by broadcast networks and censorship boards. This democratisation is crucial for gender issues, as it ensures that stories of women, LGBTQ+ individuals, and other marginalised groups are represented authentically and accurately. For example, the Indian series "Made in Heaven" on Amazon Prime Video addresses themes such as LGBTQ+ rights, female autonomy, and societal norms within the context of Indian weddings, contributing to the global discourse on these issues.

Moreover, digital platforms facilitate interactive and participatory engagement. Viewers can share their thoughts and discussions on social media, creating a dynamic and interactive dialogue around the content they consume. This interaction not only extends the life of the content but also deepens its impact by fostering a community of engaged viewers who discuss and advocate for gender equality.

The success of these case studies underscores the transformative potential of OTT platforms in reshaping cultural narratives and promoting social change. By prioritising diverse representation and amplifying underrepresented voices, OTT platforms have become instrumental in challenging gender stereotypes and fostering greater inclusivity in media content. Moving forward, continued efforts to promote diversity and representation on digital platforms will be essential in advancing gender equality and creating a more inclusive media landscape.

### **Acknowledgment**

We would like to acknowledge and extend our sincere thanks to Ms. Huma Parveen, PhD in International Studies from Jamia Millia Islamia New Delhi, for her insightful suggestions and for proofreading the article. We would also like to thank Ms. Tushita Bhandari, MA History University of Delhi for proofreading the article.

## References

- Bayne, S., & Ross, J. (2019). The politics of open access: How open access publishing affects the development of feminist knowledge. *Feminist Media Studies*, 19(4), 573-589.
- Cramer-Flood, E. (2023). (rep.). Worldwide OTT Video Viewers Forecast 2024. *Emarketer*. Retrieved from <https://www.emarketer.com/content/worldwide-ott-video-viewers-forecast-2024>
- Dasgupta, D. (2020). Gender Portrayal in Age of Social Networking Sites: An Analytical Discussion. *Amity Journal of Media & Communication Studies*, 8(1). Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343415926\\_Gender\\_Portrayal\\_in\\_Age\\_of\\_Social\\_Networking\\_Sites\\_An\\_Analytical\\_Discussion](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/343415926_Gender_Portrayal_in_Age_of_Social_Networking_Sites_An_Analytical_Discussion)
- Ganesh, M. I. (2020). *Gender & Digital Security*. The Citizen Lab. Retrieved from <https://citizenlab.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/gender-report-v3.pdf>
- Ghosh, D. (2020). The Politics of Marriage: Women and Gender in Made in Heaven. *Indian Media Studies Journal*, 4(2), 132-144.
- Ghosh, S. (2023, June 28). Raima Sen: OTT contents now celebrate and amplify the voices of women from all walks of life. *The Times of India*. Retrieved from <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/entertainment/bengali/movies/news/raima-sen-ott-contents-now-celebrate-and-amplify-the-voices-of-women-from-all-walks-of-life/articleshow/101341971.cms>
- Global Media Monitoring Project. (2020). *Who Makes the News?* Retrieved from [https://whomakesthenews.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/GMMP2020.ENG\\_.FINAL20210713.pdf](https://whomakesthenews.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/GMMP2020.ENG_.FINAL20210713.pdf)
- Gray, J., Sandvoss, C., & Harrington, C. L. (Eds.). (2017). *Fandom: Identities and communities in a mediated world*. NYU Press.
- Hartman, R. (2018). The Women's Prison in Orange Is the New Black: Intersectionality, Identity, and Correctional Control. *Women & Criminal Justice*, 28(5), 334-350.
- Johnson, R. L. (Ed.). (2018). *Feminist Media Studies*. NYU Press.
- Klein, A. (2021). Unorthodox: The Representation of Female Agency and Religious Identity. *Feminist Media Studies*, 21(3), 489-506.
- Lauzen, Dr. M. M. (2024). (rep.). *The Celluloid Ceiling: Employment of Behind-the-Scenes Women on Top Grossing U.S. Films in 2023*. San Diego State University. Retrieved from <https://womenintvfilm.sdsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/2023-Celluloid-Ceiling-Report.pdf>
- M. Byerly, C., & Ross, K. (2006). *Women and Media: A Critical Introduction*. Wiley online library.

- Madaan, N., Mehta, S., Agrawaal, T. S., Malhotra, V., Aggarwal, A., & Saxena, M. (2018). *Analyzing gender stereotyping in Bollywood movies*. Retrieved from <https://arxiv.org/pdf/1710.04117>
- Masand, J. (2023). The impact of streaming services on traditional TV and the future of the industry. *Times of India Blog*. Retrieved from <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/voices/the-impact-of-streaming-services-on-traditional-tv-and-the-future-of-the-industry/>
- myfrenzi. (2023, September 21). Inclusive Representation in OTT Content. Retrieved from Medium website: <https://medium.com/@getcatalyzedseo/inclusive-representation-in-ott-content-2cf63c316eb4>
- Nakamura, L. (2018). The digital humanities and intersectionality. *Intersectional Pedagogy*, 1(1), 1-18.
- Neff, K. L., Smith, Dr. S. L., & Pieper, Dr. K. (2023). (rep.). *Inequality Across 1,600 Popular Films: Examining Gender, Race/Ethnicity & Age of Leads/Co Leads From 2007 to 2022*. Annenberg Inclusion Initiative. Retrieved from <https://assets.uscannenberg.org/docs/aii-inequality-1600-films-20230216.pdf>
- Neilson survey data. (2023). Streaming grabs a record 38.7% of total TV usage in July, with acquired titles outpacing New Originals. Retrieved from <https://www.nielsen.com/insights/2023/streaming-grabs-a-record-38-7-of-total-tv-usage-in-july-with-acquired-titles-outpacing-new-originals/>
- O'Reilly, C. (2020). The Marvellous Mrs. Maisel: Comedy and Feminism in the 1950s. *Journal of Popular Culture*, 53(4), 987-1003.
- Park, J. (2022, October 12). Uncovering Hollywood's Contribution to the Gender Pay Gap. *Berkeley Political Review*. Retrieved from <https://bpr.studentorg.berkeley.edu/2022/10/12/uncovering-hollywoods-contribution-to-the-gender-pay-gap/>
- Razdan, Prabhu (Feb 07, 2007), Water on the boil again in Varanasi. *Hindustan Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india/water-on-the-boil-again-in-varanasi/story-853YqGy3v4LSAk4TMvqAGI.html>
- Ross, K. (2010). *Gendered media: women, men, and identity politics*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Roy, T. (2019). *OTT platforms a boon for women-centric content*. Retrieved from exchange4media website: <https://www.exchange4media.com/digital-news/ott-platforms-a-boon-for-women-centric-content-95199.html>
- Svensson, P. (2016). *Big Digital Humanities: Imagining a meeting place for the humanities and the digital*. University of Michigan Press.

**Contact email:** [dr.chayanika@gmail.com](mailto:dr.chayanika@gmail.com)

## *Decolonial Approaches to Teaching Art History*

Lesley Thornton-Cronin, Humber College, Canada

The Paris Conference on Arts & Humanities 2024  
Official Conference Proceedings

### **Abstract**

Originally presented virtually, this paper introduces pedagogies, strategies, and topics that facilitate the decolonized teaching and learning of art history and aesthetics. The presentation draws on the author's experience as an educator in Canada, in both traditional academic and polytechnic institutions. Topics to be discussed include decolonizing the classroom and the museum. As we work towards 'decolonizing the classroom,' we consider the responsibility that educators have to the curation of their materials. After all, the history of visual culture is so vast, one cannot teach everything. In the presentation, we are invited to consider whose voices are we elevating when we teach. Whose art are we sharing? Which authors are we assigning in our reading lists? We also consider how we teach, the pedagogical choices that we make, and how we can emphasize community building and discussion in the teaching of art history.

Keywords: Decolonizing, Art History, Pedagogy

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum

[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

## Introduction

Originally presented virtually at the Paris Conference on Arts and Humanities in June 2024, this paper identifies decolonial approaches to the teaching of art history and aesthetics. I argue that the to *decolonize*, or at least, to employ effective decolonial practices in the fields of art history and aesthetics, educators must embrace both practical pedagogical changes as well as the broader paradigm shift required to question the limitations and harm perpetuated by certain subject matter and practices. The practical and structural approaches outlined in this paper are drawn, in part, from the author's experiences as an educator in Canada—namely in the Ontario public college system—and are partly guided by such frameworks as the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*. However, the aim of this paper is to present decolonial strategies, including crafting effective acknowledgements, best practices for including and speaking about indigenous material culture, and becoming culturally-responsive educators by employing Indigenous ways of knowing, doing, and being to an international audience of arts educators from all institutional backgrounds.

## Land Acknowledgement

As this paper was presented virtually from Canada, it begins with a territorial acknowledgement from Humber College in Toronto:

*Humber College is located within the traditional and treaty lands of the Mississaugas of the Credit. Known as Adoobiigok, “the place of the Alders” in Michi Saagiig language, the Humber River watershed has historically provided an integral connection for Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, and Wendat peoples. Now home to people of numerous nations, Adoobiigok continues to provide a vital source of interconnection for all. (Humber College, n.d.)*

## What is Decolonization? Frameworks for Educators

To begin, let us establish what is meant by *decolonization*, particularly when applied to education. The Keele University Manifesto for Decolonizing the Curriculum, defines decolonization thusly:

*Decolonization involves identifying colonial systems, structures and relationships, and working to challenge those systems. It is not “integration” or simply the token inclusion of the intellectual achievements of non-white cultures. Rather, it involves a paradigm shift from a culture of exclusion and denial to making space for other political philosophies and knowledge systems. It’s a culture shift to think more widely about why common knowledge is what it is, and in so doing adjusting cultural perceptions and power relations in real and significant ways. (Gokay, 2018)*

Just like colonialism is a *structure* rather than an *event* (Wolfe, 2006), decolonization is not a single action, but a process of unlearning. In the Canadian context, there remains a significant work to do in reconciliation with atrocities committed against Indigenous peoples and the continual harm of colonial policy. There are however, national frameworks here to help guide educators (including those outside of Canada) in the process of decolonizing. The best known is the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report and Calls to Action, created as part of the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. This agreement began the process of validating the trauma experienced by Indigenous students, brought financial compensation to



survivors, created a national research centre, and laid out 94 calls to action for the Canadian government to guide the process of reconciliation. Several of these calls to action specifically address museums, libraries archives, and other researchers on topics including archival best practices and accessibility to the public as well as the importance of art and martial culture to commemorate reconciliation (Government of Canada, 2024). Another essential framework is the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, particularly Articles 11—16, which address the rights to protect and preserve culture and cultural expressions, media and languages, the right to education, and the teaching of indigenous art and culture (United Nations, 2007).

In adopting a commitment to truth and reconciliation as educators, our classes can confront colonial truths and can work towards reconciling some of the harm perpetuated by Eurocentric curriculums. While increasing the representation of writers, artists, and scholars from equity-deserving groups in our courses is an important first step, this act alone does not amount to decolonization. Instead, decolonization involves an ongoing commitment to pedagogical change. It is the active process of identifying and challenging the colonial attitudes and practices that have historically shaped, and continue to shape, academia. We will establish specific actions we can take as educators to improve our cultural sensitivity *and*, we will think as well about the broader paradigm shift that is required to prompt a reconciliation of power imbalances, in our field, classrooms, and in our education systems.

### **Land Acknowledgements & Other Acknowledgements**

The inclusion of certain kinds of acknowledgements relating to your educational instruction, nation, or subject matter can signal to your learners that you are a culturally-sensitive educator. In addition to being important acts of reconciliation, when used effectively, these acknowledgements can spark discussion, encourage students to consider their positionality, and highlight knowledge gaps. Firstly, we will explore land acknowledgements for those teaching in colonized or formerly colonized parts of the world. This will be followed by alternative acknowledgements for those living in countries whose histories and institutions have been, or continue to be, complicit in colonial systems.

As a first step towards reconciliation, many institutions across Turtle Island—North America—have created land acknowledgements. They are often read aloud before meetings or appear in email signatures, and are sometimes even read aloud at the beginning of some sporting and cultural events. Shared at the beginning of this paper was the author's institutional land. Shared now is the rationale for the inclusion of that statement:

*Beneath the contemporary surface of any territory, histories of belonging have been erased, overlooked, contested and forgotten. Land acknowledgments provide a simple, yet powerful way of recognizing histories that reach beyond colonization and the establishment of the Canadian state. Additionally, they increase awareness about the unique and enduring relationship that exists between Indigenous peoples and traditional territories, including practices and spiritualities that continue to develop in relationship with place today. (Humber College, n.d.)*

While I lead a territorial acknowledgement at the start of each class, simply reading the institutional statement quickly becomes automatic, robotic, which in turn becomes tokenistic or performative. In addition to my institution's rationale, shared above, land acknowledgements are important pedagogical opportunities. When used effectively, they

signal to learners a commitment to the cultural shift required for decolonial teaching and learning. In looking at this Humber College's best practices for crafting land acknowledgements (shared below), one sees that effective acknowledgements should be grounded in truth, relationship building, and importantly, *action*. The engagement should be authentic, reflective, and demonstrative of a commitment to meaningful action.

*Acknowledgment - and the relationship development required to do it with integrity - should be an invitation to deeper analysis, relationship, and action. Indeed, due to their nature, land acknowledgments should be grounded in authentic reflection, presence, and awareness of the territories, peoples, and histories being named. They should build relationships centred in action, so that we ask ourselves: How can I move from acknowledgment into relationship? What can I do to ensure that my work represents a commitment to Indigenous voices, stories, and perspectives, now and in the future? (Humber College, n.d.)*

In the virtual presentation, the author shared an example slide of a land acknowledgement from an introduction to aesthetics course. On it, one could see the institutional land acknowledgement, in addition to three other resources meant to stimulate a more meaningful conversation with learners. Firstly, the slide includes a link to Native Land Digital, an app that maps the history of Indigenous lands (Native Land Digital, 2024). This nonprofit organization also has a teacher's guide which should be consulted prior to using this resource, since mapmaking and the drawing of borders have been essential colonialist tools. A second link is a resource to educate students on the thousands of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in Canada and the United States, which a national report describes as a "multigenerational genocide." (National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 2019). It is important as educators to emphasize the ongoing violence and trauma caused by settler colonialism.

Finally, the land acknowledgement slide includes an image by the contemporary Cree painter, Kent Monkman, entitled *Clouds in the Canyon* (2008, private collection). It depicts a white male artist painting the Grand Canyon, his composition ignoring the three "dandies" (the name given by the painter George Catlin to *Two-Spirit* people, non-binary individuals honoured in many Indigenous societies in North America). In this painting, Monkman illustrates how the histories of indigenous peoples, and specifically queer and Two-Spirit peoples, are excluded, literally painted out of art history. Through the inclusion of an example by a living artist, we reinforce that indigenous cultures continue to thrive, despite attempted genocide and forced assimilation, and connects the acknowledgement back to visual art and segues into our class topic.

Another approach to territorial acknowledgements would be to discuss your own positionality and relationship to the land, to state whether you are a settler and to acknowledge your privilege. As part of your acknowledgement, share your actions, for instance your decolonial perspective and pedagogy, and acknowledge how cultural hegemony and our own positionality affect our ways of seeing. Below is an example of such an approach from Amnesty International.

*I would like to acknowledge the traditional, ancestral, unceded territory of the Musqueam, Tsleil-Waututh and Squamish First Nations on which we are learning, working and organizing today. I think it's important to acknowledge the land because growing up as an immigrant here, I never heard the traditional names of the*

*territories. Indigenous people were talked about in the past tense and all the struggles they faced were in the past tense as well. It is easier to deny Indigenous people their rights if we historicize their struggles and simply pretend they don't exist. As an activist, I would like to take this opportunity to commit myself to the struggle against the systems of oppression that have dispossessed Indigenous people of their lands and denied their rights to self-determination, work that is essential to human rights work across the world. (Amnesty International, 2017)*

For educators whose institutions are not on traditional, treaty, or unceded Indigenous lands, there are other forms of acknowledgements that can be incorporated into the classroom as acts of reconciliation. These would include, for instance, acknowledgements of your institutions' financial and material investment in colonialism, slavery, and genocide in both the past and present. A subject-matter specific acknowledgement could include a discussion of how your institution may choose to celebrate or commemorate—for instance in paintings or public art—the achievements of individuals complicit in colonialism, slavery, apartheid, and genocide. One can also educate students on the Indigenous art and material culture that may be a part of your institution's, or related institutions', holdings. What is the provenance: were these objects looted, seized, or otherwise unethically acquired under colonialist policy or cultural genocide?

A case study would include First Nation totem poles conspicuous in UK and European museums and universities. These poles were 'acquired' during a genocide and there are ongoing demands for them to be re-matriated to their communities of origin. The Museum of Ethnography in Stockholm and National Museum of Scotland have been the only institutions to return their poles. The unwillingness by many institutions to return not just totem poles, but the myriad looted culture in institutional holdings exemplifies how so many of our educational and cultural institutions have a living legacy of colonialism from which they have not yet fully divested. Frameworks such as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (particularly Article 12, relating to human remains as well as cultural and religious sites, objects, and practices) as well as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action (particularly Calls 67—70, relating to museums and archives) can be used here to integrate discussions of repatriation and material culture into your existing curriculum and acknowledgements.

Importantly, in having these conversations with learners, ensure that Indigenous people and other equity-seeking groups are included in meaningful ways and as living cultures. There is a tendency, for example, to speak about and include indigenous peoples only in the past tense, rather than as resilient, surviving, and varied communities with distinct and sophisticated material cultures. Remember as you craft your acknowledgement that it should be grounded in both authentic reflection and in a call to action.

### **Culturally-Responsive Education**

In approaching decolonization as a paradigm shift, one should think more fundamentally about pedagogical approaches and becoming a culturally-responsive educators. Starting broadly, one should consider the powerful ways in which schools, museums, and educational systems have perpetuated and benefitted from colonial systems, policies, and attitudes, and participated in cultural genocide. Returning to the Canadian context, we can examine the case study of the Canadian Indian Residential School System, which operated from the 1880s to the 1990s. This government and church run system of boarding schools was designed for the

purpose of assimilating indigenous children by removing them from their communities and thereby depriving them of their languages, cultures, and families. Children were physically and sexually abused and suffered from starvation and disease while at these boarding schools. The schools have death tolls potentially into the tens of thousands.

Today, colonialism in education is more subtle, but insidious in curriculum, power dynamics, and institutional structures. To be culturally responsive is to consider how education is not neutral, but selected, curated and compartmentalized. As educators we should consider how *cognitive imperialism* affect the knowledge-sharing in your classroom and how the Euro-centric curriculum relies on assumptions about the learners' lived experiences and prior knowledge, often to the detriment of equity-seeking learners.

As arts educators, we should look specifically at the fields of art history, archaeology, and aesthetics to consider *whose* art, knowledge, views, experiences, and standards we are perpetuating, and *how*. We should acknowledge the racist, sexist, homophobic, and ableist attitudes held by certain foundational figures in our field and invite students to consider how such attitudes may inform their writings on art or beauty. Moreover, students should be educated on the living legacies of racism and sexism in art history, and how some of the artworks they study are still used by white supremacist groups today.

Finally, to be culturally responsive requires a re-consideration of one's teaching methods. Indigenous ways of knowing, doing, and being provide pedagogical alternatives or supplements to the lecture format. There are many groups offering micro-credentials or other training in this approach. One can think about this pedagogical approach through the Ojibway principle *Naawsidoong Mino Nawendiwin*, translated as 'building good relationships.' Indigenous pedagogical approaches are learner-centered, holistic, and acknowledge the power dynamic between teacher and student. This approach favours discussion, learning by doing, and can include practices like un-grading.

In recognizing the power imbalance between instructor and learner, instructors promote culturally sensitive learning spaces. Here, instructors value student's opinions and interpretations, and are open and accepting of our ability to learn from students. A culturally-responsive instructor has awareness of the diverse positionalities, obligations, and experiences of their learners, is compassionate in their course policies such as granting extensions or accommodations, and is proactive in identifying religious and cultural obligations outside of the academic calendar so as to support all learners, without their having to ask. For example, at Humber College, over 70% of learners in my classrooms are racialized, and approximately 35% hold beliefs other than Christian or non-religious (Humber College, 2023). Consider the demographics of your own classroom, and ask how your demographics might affect, among other factors, prior knowledge, absences, and obligations.

### **Reflection Questions**

To encourage the practice of decolonization as a continual process, I conclude today with a series of reflection questions to support your journey. As you work to decolonize, ask yourself:

- Am I decolonizing or just diversifying? Whose knowledge and ways of knowing are given priority?
- How do I assess knowledge? Frame my own knowledge? Which experts do I draw on?

- Does my material acknowledge contemporary Indigenous/colonized/formerly colonized groups as living cultures?
- In what ways can my material help to restore lost or stolen cultural knowledge? What actions towards reconciliation am I taking in my classroom?
- Does my curriculum consider my discipline holistically, placing it within the context of the Western European academy, settler colonialism, racism, sexism, classism, etc.?
- Do I understand how educational systems have been used as a method in attempted cultural genocides? In what ways might my discipline, institution, or my own materials still hail back to colonialist policy?

## **Conclusion**

Decolonizing the fields of art history and aesthetics requires not a one-time action, but an ongoing pedagogical commitment. By creating more inclusive course materials and crafting effective territorial acknowledgements, educators can signal a commitment to a decolonized approach to teaching these subjects. To more robustly reconcile the colonial harms perpetrated by the Eurocentric educational model, and in appreciation for the responsibility that educators have as knowledge-sharers, we must also commit to a broader paradigm shift. Educators can improve their cultural sensitivity by incorporating Indigenous pedagogy, by understanding the demographics and circumstances of our learners, and by incorporating frameworks such as the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* calls to action to guide the decolonization of subject matter.

## **Acknowledgements**

The author thanks the peer-reviewers for their valuable feedback.

## References

- Amnesty International. (2017). A Meaningful Land Acknowledgement. *Amnesty International Activism Guide*.
- Bulent Gokay et al. (2018). *Keel's Manifesto for Decolonizing the Curriculum*. Keele University.  
<https://www.keele.ac.uk/equalitydiversity/equalityframeworksandactivities/equalityawardsandreports/equalityawards/raceequalitycharter/keeledecolonisingthecurriculumnetwork/#keele-manifesto-for-decolonising-the-curriculum>
- Government of Canada. April (2024). *Delivering on Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action: Museums and Archives*. <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1524504831027/1557513782811>
- Humber College. (n.d.). *Humber Land Acknowledgement*. <https://humber.ca/brand/humber-land-acknowledgment>
- Humber College. (2023). *Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: A Faculty Toolkit*. <https://humber.ca/innovativelearning/wp-content/uploads/edi-toolkit/mod03/mod03-06.html>
- National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. (2019). *Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls*. <https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/>
- Native Land Digital, (2004). <https://native-land.ca>
- Patrick Wolfem (2006). Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native. *Journal of Genocidal Research*, 8 (4), 387–409.
- United Nations. (2007). *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. [https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP\\_E\\_web.pdf](https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf)

**Contact email:** [lesley.thornton-cronin@humber.ca](mailto:lesley.thornton-cronin@humber.ca)

***Bringing Back Affect:  
A New Approach to Post-modernist Art Through the Lens of Doris Salcedo's Atrabiliarios***

Vanessa Schuster, The Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts, United States

The Paris Conference on Arts & Humanities 2024  
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

In this paper, I propose that bringing back affect into the work of art can provide a new reading of postmodernism. In agreement with Fredric Jameson, I suggest that postmodernist art, influenced by a response to capitalism, amongst other things, evolved to the point where individuality, alienation and the self-affect were replaced by commodification and estrangement from the individual. For the purpose of this paper, I will use Jameson's approach to postmodernism as the end of the bourgeois ego that brings with it a liberation from any kind of feeling since there is no longer a self present to do the feeling. I will use Rosalind Krauss's concept of the grid, Fredric Jameson's concept of the 'waning affect' and Craig Owens's reference to allegory to provide a theoretical perspective from which to support my argument. Furthermore, I will incorporate Andy Warhol's Dust Diamond Shoes and Doris Salcedo's Atrabiliarios as visual examples of postmodern artworks. Through the latter work, I seek to bring light to the postmodern characteristic of flatness and impersonality, and through the former, an example of an artwork that brings back affect into the postmodernist structure. Lastly, I conclude by suggesting that Atrabiliarios presents a space from which to question postmodernism's dissociative approach to art, as it brings back affect into the conversation.

Keywords: Affect, Postmodernism, Grid, Allegory, Shoes

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

## Introduction

In this paper, I propose that bringing back affect into the work of art can provide a new reading of postmodernism. In agreement with Fredric Jameson, I suggest that postmodernist art, influenced by a response to capitalism, amongst other things, evolved to the point where individuality, alienation and the self-affect were replaced by commodification and estrangement from the individual. For the purpose of this paper, I will use Jameson's approach to postmodernism as the end of the bourgeois ego that brings with it a liberation from any kind of feeling since there is no longer a self present to do the feeling (Jameson, 1982). I will use Rosalind Krauss's concept of the grid, Fredric Jameson's concept of the 'waning affect' and Craig Owens's reference to allegory to provide a theoretical perspective from which to support my argument. Furthermore, I will incorporate Andy Warhol's *Dust Diamond Shoes* and Doris Salcedo's *Atrabiliarios* as visual examples of postmodern artworks. Through the latter work, I seek to bring light to the postmodern characteristic of flatness and impersonality, and through the former, an example of an artwork that brings back affect into the postmodernist structure. Lastly, I conclude by suggesting that *Atrabiliarios* presents a space from which to question postmodernism's dissociative approach to art, as it brings back affect into the conversation.

Shoes hold a very particular place in our wardrobe. Like clothes, they protect our body, show aesthetic self-expression and represent freedom or the lack of it. I have chosen to analyze two artworks about shoes as a means to visually illustrate how one represents postmodernism's emphasis on decentering of the individual subject through "the end of psychopathologies of the ego" (Jameson, 1982, p.1051), while the other questions that proposal as it presents a work that highlights singularity in order to bring back affect into the work (Jameson, 1982). Warhol's *Dust Diamond Shoes* can be viewed as a critique of the society of production and the emergence of capitalism while Salcedo's *Atrabiliarios* can be read as a vehicle to bring back affect into awareness and consideration. *Dust Diamond Shoes* started out as an advertising assignment, and as such, led the artist to reflect on the changes that brought about the displacement of high art by the divertissements of comic books, movies, television and advertising. His work echoes a critique to capitalism and how it started to destabilized conventional hierarchies of wealth and status, as well as how the rise of mass production led to the homogenization of society in general. By portraying shoes in a context without singularity, postmodernism illustrated through the work of Warhol, puts an end to the ego or the individual by decentering the emphasis from the subject-psyche. This is what Jameson calls the 'waning affect,' a liberation from all kind of feeling up to the point where there is no longer a self to feel (Jameson, 1982).

I propose that Salcedo comes and dismantles their structure by bringing back the concept of affect that had been lost along with the self. Using her artwork as a critique of Colombia's long lasting social violence, Salcedo 'rehumanizes' art by bringing back sensitivity into the conversation. In *Atrabiliarios*, she seeks to rescue from obliteration the various forms death and silence take, when she presents an artwork made by objects filled with meaning, such as old shoes. In this particular case, she uses the shoes that belonged to women who had disappeared in different rural areas of Colombia. Salcedo's art is intimately connected with tragedy, as she adjudicates an intemperate and violent personality to the work by using the shoes that still maintain the imprint of the women to whom these shoes belonged to. Furthermore, by placing the shoes inside a box that is covered with an opaque translucent fabric, which can be related to the structure of the grid, she creates an allegory of hidden or silenced content which is a clear metaphor for the lives of the women who had worn and



shaped these shoes. The singularity of her work opens up a space where affect and sensitivity can be brought back into the frame of reference of postmodernism which had previously dissociated from this emphasis. I argue that *Atrabiliarios* presents a critique to postmodernism by suggesting that postmodern art can no longer not integrate affect into the artwork. This brings up the question: Should postmodernism be re-evaluated to take affect back into consideration?

### Post-modernist Approaches

In his article, 'Deconstruction of Expression,' Jameson (1982) proposes that postmodernism emerges in response to the conditions of the stage of capitalism that have been absorbed as the official culture. In this context, postmodernism emerges as the succeeding 'cultural dominant,' characterized by "the emergence of a new kind of flatness or depthlessness, a new kind of superficiality" (Jameson, 1982, p.1048). He brings into the discussion the idea of the waning of affect in postmodern culture to suggest that there is a shift in "the dynamics of cultural pathology in which the alienation of the subject is displaced by the fragmentation of the subject" (Jameson, 1982, p.1050). In summary, according to him, postmodernism refers to a context that counteracts the individuality and expressiveness that was characteristic of modernity. In response, this new angle that defines postmodern art evolves around the idea of the emancipation of the individual within the context of the work, and as such, the abolition of any kind of feeling or affect.

I bring up Krauss's article, 'The Originality of the Avant-Garde,' to integrate the idea of the grid into this discussion of postmodernism, since it references the surface or surfaces that replace the profoundness and singularity of the artwork. Krauss uses the grid to argue "that 'originality' is a working assumption that itself emerges from a ground of repetition and recurrence" (Krauss, 1981, p.1033). The grid represents silence, a refusal of speech that does not permit projection of language into the domain of visual. Through silence, the grid becomes a barrier that protects against all intrusions from outside embracing the sheer disinterestedness of the work of art and its absolute purposelessness (Krauss, 1981). Since the grid refers to a system of reproductions without an original, it can be used to support Jameson's idea that postmodern art is characterized, amongst other things, by the loss of individuality and affect. Krauss refers to the grid as the "originary status of a picture surface" where "the putative opacity of the pictorial field must be maintained as a fundamental concept" (Krauss, 1981). *Atrabiliarios* contests Krauss's concept of the grid by providing profoundness both visually and allegorically that extends beyond the opaque and translucent fabric that covers it. As a critique to postmodernism, the grid in this context, can evolve to become a substratum from which a structure that integrates singularity, authenticity, uniqueness and originality can be built upon (Krauss, 1981).

According to Owens, allegory "is conceived as a *supplement*, an 'expression externally added to another expression'" (Owens, 1980, p.1031) and as such, "the allegorical supplement is not only an addition, but also a replacement. It takes the place of an earlier meaning, which is thereby either effaced or obscured" (1032). Similarly, Heidegger suggests that allegory refers to the new thing that results when the work makes public something other than itself (Owens, 1980). Both Heidegger and Owens can be integrated into the conversation of postmodernist art, since they both support the idea that the works' purpose is no longer to proclaim its autonomy, but rather to narrate its own contingency and lack of transcendence (Owens, 1980). In this context, allegory can further illustrate how by bringing in affect back into the

artwork, *Atrabiliarios* provides a new perspective that supplants postmodernism's emphasis on the loss of individuality.

By intertextualizing the theoretical concepts of Jameson, Krauss and Owens it is possible to suggest that a breach in postmodernism emerges when Salcedo's *Atrabiliarios* is taken as an example of a postmodern artwork. This is particularly so when referring to the fact that postmodernism focuses primarily in decontextualizing the artwork from any individual or sensible context, since it seeks to establish a difference from the expressiveness characteristic of modernist art. Therefore, by integrating *Atrabiliarios* into the equation, a contradiction emerges, one where the emphasis is on the singularity and the affect that characterize the artwork. This is illustrated by the fact that the work is made with unique pieces that have a heavy emotional content, pieces that had actually belonged to and had been used by specific persons. Furthermore, this breach can also be illustrated when taking into account Warhol's *Dust Diamond Shoes*, which is characterized by the lack of specificity and sensibility within its structure and content. On the one hand, Krauss's concept of the grid and Jameson's argument of the waning of affect, further reiterates the idea that postmodernist art is characterized by a lack of affect; on the other hand, Owens's perspective complements Salcedo's work by integrating the concept of allegory as a variable that enables a new interpretation of postmodern art, one that takes sensibility into account.

### Limitations

For the purpose of this paper, I will only focus on the postmodernist aspect of Warhol's work, that is, the loss of individuality and affect in response to the homogeneity brought about by the emerging society of commodification. My reading of Salcedo's work is limited to exemplify a postmodernist work that emphasizes the role of affect and individuality. Furthermore, I will not take into account the historical timeframes under which each artwork was produced. I will also leave aside the difference in form and style of both works, as the emphasis is on the contrast of Salcedo's integration of affect and singularity in the work with the uniformity and stagnation characteristic of Warhol's *Dust Diamond Shoes*. Structural characteristics such as shape, medium, color, size, etc. will also not be taken into account since these particularities are not inherent to the analysis of this paper.

It can be argued that Salcedo's work cannot be used to critique postmodernist art, since it is influenced by a specific historical and geographical context, that is based on an allegory that refers to the social violence of Colombia, while Warhol's work refers to a concept not explicit to a particular geographical territory, but more to a global historical transformation. However, I reassert my position that in *Atrabiliarios*, Salcedo extends beyond the specificity of the Colombian context. Rather, it approaches the conversation from a universal standpoint as she questions the shift in the dynamics of cultural pathology, where the alienation of the individual is displaced by the fragmentation of the subject, thus losing its uniqueness. Postmodernism illustrated through the work of Warhol puts an end to the ego or the individual by the "decentering of the formerly centred subject or psyche" (Jameson, 1982, p.1050). In *Dust Diamond Shoes*, Warhol has taken individuality away by presenting an image that lacks particularity and uniqueness. As a result, there is a shift in culture, where the alienation of the subject is displaced by its obliteration; as Jameson suggests, "the 'death' of the subject itself = the end of the autonomous bourgeois monad or ego individual" (Jameson, 1982, p.1050). In contrast, Salcedo's work *Atrabiliarios* comes and dismantles their structure by bringing back the concept of affect that had been lost along with the self. Salcedo's work

can be used as an example to present a critique to postmodernism as it ‘rehumanizes’ art by bringing back affect into the conversation.

### **Conclusion**

I have shown that Salcedo’s *Atrabiliarios* can be used as an example of a postmodernist artwork that does take into account singularity and affect into the conversation. It presents an alternative approach to Warhol’s *Dust Diamond Shoes*, one that emphasizes the roles of sensibility and the individual. This angle opens up the possibility to revise modern aesthetics’ approach to the work of art as pure presence through the use of allegory as a representation of unity of form and substance (Owens, 1980). In this context, individuality, autonomy and affect can be integrated into the rhetoric of postmodernism thus creating a space for a new reading of a postmodern artwork, one that dismantles its focus on the loss of individuality and affect.

## Appendix



1980-1981 | Andy Warhol | Diamond Dust Shoes

Source: [The Independent](#)



1980 | Andy Warhol | Diamond Dust Shoes

Source: [Phillips Auction](#)



## References

Jameson, Fredric (1982). The Deconstruction of Expression. In Harrison & Wood (Eds.), *Art in Theory 1900-2000* (pp. 1046-51). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002.

Krauss, Rosalind (1981). The Originality of the Avant-Garde. In Harrison & Wood (Eds.), *Art in Theory 1900-2000* (pp. 1032-37). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002.

Owens, Craig (1980). The Allegorical Impulse. In Harrison & Wood (Eds.), *Art in Theory 1900-2000* (pp. 1025-32). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002.

**Contact email:** [vaneschus@gmail.com](mailto:vaneschus@gmail.com)

## ***Promoting Social Innovation With Hybrid Company Forms of Social Enterprises***

Prapin Nuchpam, National Institute of Development Administration, Thailand

The Paris Conference on Arts & Humanities 2024  
Official Conference Proceedings

### **Abstract**

Social innovation provides a way to solve social problems through innovative products/solutions, processes and empowerment strategies. Social enterprise could be considered as a hybrid organization adopting various social innovation measures to achieve social benefits. Putting it this way, social innovation thus happens through social enterprise. Nonetheless, social enterprises do not always involve social innovation. Then, an issue has been raised whether any organization which has some degree of social innovation (through either products, process or empowerment) could be called a social enterprise. No matter whether the concepts of social innovation and social enterprise are differentiated or intertwined, there is currently no consensus on the universally accepted definition of social innovation and social enterprise. This paper aims to see how law can facilitate social innovation through social enterprise. The focus is on analyzing hybrid company forms, the US's Low-Profit Limited Liability Company (L3C) in particular. It relies on a documentary research method following a qualitative analytic mode making use of various types of documents obtained from many sources.

Keywords: Social Innovation, Social Enterprise, Hybrid Company, Low-Profit Limited Liability Company (L3C)

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

## **Introduction**

Social innovation is an important social policy many countries have been trying to promote as an effective problem-solving tool. It has also been meant to serve as a mechanism to create common perceptions, which will serve as a basis for cooperation among the state, private and civil society sectors. The goal is to achieve a better quality of life of the people. Social enterprise is closely related to social innovation: it can itself be regarded as a type or form of social innovation. More precisely, social enterprise has emerged from an innovative combination of social benefit and the need for financial sustainability.

The concept 'social innovation' represents a new problem-solving mode characterized, as the term implies, by innovativeness. The idea is for the people to reduce their dependence on the state sector by forming themselves into groups to enhance their potential for competition with the private sector and build their strong and sustainable community and society. Law is an important component of the ecosystem of both social innovation and social enterprise. Therefore, the law needs to adjust itself to the changing socio-economic conditions.

The adjustment of law, which may be referred to as 'legal innovation', is still being debated, especially in terms of what this really means. In view of the general idea of innovation, we might ask whether this could mean the adaptation of law with regard to its form and methods, as well as the people who are involved in the legal framework or process. Therefore, if we regard social enterprise as a form of social innovation, can the law developed specifically to regulate it be considered as legal innovation to solve social problems? At present, many countries have developed hybrid legal entities specifically for social enterprises. The United States is one of the countries which have made significant progress in the development of such legal entities, notably its Low-Profit Limited Liability Company (L3C). Some scholars regard such legal entities as a form of social innovation. Thailand attaches much importance to both social innovation and social enterprise; hence, learning from such foreign hybrid legal entities can be expected to be beneficial to its social innovation goal and effort to develop social enterprise.

The objectives of this research paper are set forth as follows: (1) to explore the concept and practical forms of social enterprise and social innovation, as well as their development in Thailand; (2) to study the concept of legal innovation for the purpose of solving social problems through an analysis of the U.S. L3C, which has been designed as a special company form to promote social enterprise and social innovation; and (3) to propose possible ways of developing hybrid legal forms that are well-suited to social enterprise as a type of social innovation, and that contribute to the solution of social problems in Thailand.

## **Research Methodology**

This research paper relies on a documentary enquiry, paying particular attention to the exploration of hybrid legal forms for social enterprise, especially the U.S. Low-Profit Limited Liability Company (L3C). This hybrid legal entity is taken here as a practical form of social innovation to solve social problems. Covering the issues set out in the objectives above, the paper has followed a qualitative analytic mode making use of various types of documents obtained from many sources.



## **Research Results and Critical Appraisal**

The issues being explored under this section include (1) the relationship between the social enterprise concept and the idea of social innovation; (2) the legal development to promote social enterprise and social innovation, with the U.S. L3C being taken as a form of social innovation; and (3) the study of the role of law in promoting social enterprise and social innovation in Thailand, and how the legal development for this purpose amounts to legal innovation to tackle social problems.

### ***Social Enterprise and Social Innovation Nexus***

Social enterprise or social entrepreneurship and social innovation are new terms, which have gained currency during the past 10 or 20 years. Despite the newness of the terms, however, both social enterprise and social innovation are not really new: as ideas, they are closely associated with the main pillars of the economic and social systems of the modern world (Pearce, 2003, pp. 24-26), namely, the public sector and the private sector. The ideas of social enterprise and social innovation are recognized to have emerged from within the third sector, which represents another pillar of society – one which is affiliated with the civil society sector (Laville, 2011, p. 4) and the non-profit sector (Anheier, 2004, pp. 38-532). The relationship between the three main pillars is not hierarchical in nature but rather complementary to one another. Nor are the three sectors separated from one another; they rather share aspirations and goals directed towards the people's well-being and the strong and sustainable growth of society and the economy (Nyssens, 2006, pp. 7-9).

Even though the aspirations and goals of social enterprise and social innovation actually represent a new hope for systemic and sustainable social change, the study and understanding of these two concepts remain limited. Empirical evidence and scientific enquiry to enhance further understanding are still scarce. There are even no universally accepted definitions (Schmitz, 2015, p. 17), and this state of affairs has resulted in conceptual confusion, making further development of the social enterprise and social innovation concepts into 'paradigms' not an easy task (Nicholls, 2010). Nonetheless, despite this lack of clear understanding about social enterprise and social innovation, especially the lack of clear answers to the question how social enterprise and social innovation could solve social problems, these ideas at least represent innovative efforts to search the ways and means of making our society better.

This paper does not aim to prove which idea is better, or which idea is better conducive to the solution of social problems. Its purpose is rather to identify connections between the two concepts – especially in terms of the extent to which they are similar and/or different – so that they can be most beneficially and effectively implemented. The purpose of better understanding of the two concepts is not to determine which is right or which is wrong. Today's social problems are numerous, presenting themselves in various forms; hence, no one idea or approach would be able to tackle all these problems. For example, social enterprise might aim principally to promote economic development at the grassroots level, enabling the people to stand on their own feet, rather than depend on the state sector. Social innovation, on the other hand, might concentrate on developing new tools or processes to solve social problems, such as making use of technological advancements to solve environmental problems. Whatever concept or approach is adopted can be expected to benefit society. Therefore, clearer understanding of the two concepts, as well as how they are interrelated, can be expected to contribute to their further development, including legal development to solve social problems. This issue will later be further addressed.

As pointed out earlier, the social enterprise and social innovation concepts originated from the effort to find new ways of developing social cooperation for the purpose of solving social problems and empowering the people in society. One of the main motivations behind this effort was the influence of neo-liberalism, which put a premium on entrepreneurship and technological innovation. This, in turn, led to the opening up of markets and the expansion of free trade all over the world. The rapid economic growth brought with it numerous forms of business organizations and a wide range of technological advancements. At the same time, however, these developments were the causes of many problems in the economic system, such as the market failure, which eventually resulted in financial crises, or the failure of the state sector to sufficiently, justly and efficiently provide public services in response to the people's needs. Poverty rates increased and social disparities widened, together with the rise in corruption and worsening degradation of the environment and natural resources (Monbiot, 2016).

All these problems have become issues for a global agenda, for which all countries share responsibility (United Nations, 2019). The social enterprise and social innovation concepts have been looked upon as tools, methods, development strategies, or even a hope for success in addressing these global issues (Millard et al, 2016; Littlewood & Holt, 2018). Hence, to put it simply, the social enterprise and social innovation concepts represent an effort to incorporate social components into research on business and technology, which are the main fields of study. However, some scholars contend that social enterprise and social innovation are not just branches of such main fields but have their own origins and development, such that they have become, in and of themselves, distinct approaches, which are nonetheless not entirely separate from those major fields. This is because business studies and innovation are closely related, resulting in a nexus of the development paths of social enterprise and social innovation. We will next consider how these two concepts are similar and/or different so that legal development can be shaped to suit both of them.

### ***Social Entrepreneurship.***

As has been indicated, social enterprise or social entrepreneurship has developed from the main field of business, more precisely it can be said that social entrepreneurship has evolved from the idea of corporate social responsibility (CSR), which is closely affiliated with the private sector. At the same time, social entrepreneurship is also an integral part of the third sector (Defourny, Hulgard & Pestoff, 2014, pp. 17-28), which is comprised of organizations of various forms. Social enterprise is thus sometimes referred to as a hybrid organization, since it involves the two main pillars in the economic system, resulting in the blurring of sector boundaries. The hybridity of social enterprise may be divided into two aspects explicable in terms of the earned income school of thought. On the one hand, the fact that non-profit organizations such as foundations and NGOs have tried to reduce their dependence on donations by resorting to greater reliance on revenue generated from their trade in goods and services has transformed them into entrepreneurial non-profits (Defourny & Nyssens, 2017, pp. 2480-2481). On the other hand, one has witnessed for-profit organizations such as companies and partnerships, becoming oriented not towards maximizing profit for shareholders or partners but towards returning part of the profit as benefit to society. We call such organizations social businesses (ibid, pp. 2483-2484).

Schnitz (2015, p. 18) has defined social enterprise as an organization whose principal aim is to promote social benefit, for example, by solving social problems or filling social service gaps left by the state sector. Profit-making is simply its secondary goal, since the profit is mostly returned to society. The social enterprise concept also involves social entrepreneurs,

who assume an important role, particularly as change agents. The difference between the social enterprise and CSR concepts lies in the existence of these social entrepreneurs. CSR does not involve these people; it is simply corporate policy to cater to society without any intention to effect any social change in the way aspired to by social entrepreneurs. It is social change that is the essential part of social entrepreneurship.

Dees (1996) has explained the differences between entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs in terms of their 'social mission'. That is, social entrepreneurs are primarily committed to their social objectives, while, at the same time, not abandoning the need to generate income. Clearly, without stable revenue, it is difficult to provide benefit to society on a sustainable basis. Given the unreliability of the dependence on donations or financial support from the state, a large number of non-profit organizations have had to cease operation. However, the assessment of social impacts, or the determination of the extent of social benefits contributed by social enterprises, remains debatable. This is mainly because social impacts are not readily amenable to precise evaluation as financial impacts.

In addition to the social objectives of social entrepreneurs, Leadbeater (1997, p. 3) has also taken account of the social value they create. Such a value arises from their search for innovations to solve social problems. This means that social entrepreneurs are not simply those who form social enterprises; they also need to create new modes or methods of solving social problems. This is indicative of a crucial aspect of social entrepreneurship, i.e. its innovativeness. Moreover, social entrepreneurship also has other components, especially its social goals, financial viability, attention to the environment, participation of the civil society sector, and democratic-style management, among others. Needless to say, it is generally impossible for every social enterprise to be endowed with all these attributes (Teasdale, 2012, p. 107).

The meaning of social entrepreneurship sometimes includes innovation as one of its features. For example, Jackson & Harrison (2011) see that social entrepreneurship explains the effort of individuals or organizations as highly motivated by the intention to solve economic and social problems for the overall benefit of society through 'business methods' and 'innovative strategies'. Leadbeater (1997), on his part, has the view that social entrepreneurs represent one source of innovation, because they do not want to be constrained by the existing resources. They rather seek new opportunities and are ready to face risks and participate in the process of social innovation, adjustment, and continued learning.

A question arises: does social entrepreneurship require the creation of new modes, which might become social innovation, or does this simply require social goals? This writer is of the opinion that in some cases social entrepreneurs might be able to create innovative problem-solving approaches, but that does not necessarily mean that all social entrepreneurs must achieve the same level of innovativeness. We need also to consider the outcomes; though an approach might not be particularly innovative, if it produces expected outcomes, the social entrepreneur who has created it can certainly be regarded as such. Innovativeness is thus not an indispensable aspect of social entrepreneurship. It is generally accepted that the essential components of social enterprise – i.e. those representing its bottom-line features – are its social mission and financial viability. Sometimes a third component is added – namely, environmental responsibility, according to the triple bottom-line approach (Elkington, 1998).

### ***Social Innovation.***

Social innovation may be regarded as representing a social movement, whose goal is, like that of social entrepreneurship, is to solve social problems. Attempts to understand social innovation have also resulted in no less conceptual confusion than in the case of social entrepreneurship. Even though both social entrepreneurship and social innovation have emerged from within the third sector, they have different focuses. The main focus of social innovation is on the process to be used in social problem-solving – especially one that is new, creative and highly effective in producing satisfactory results. Social entrepreneurship, on the other hand, emphasizes the social mission of business enterprises.

There has been no generally accepted definition of social innovation. The definition provided by German sociologist Wolfgang Zapf represents one of the early attempts to grapple with this concept. He has defined social innovation as involving new methods of attaining goals especially in the form of new organizations, rules and regulations and new modes of living a life, all of which have the important effect of instigating social change and solving problems in a way better than those in the past. The point is that such new modes or methods could be ‘imitated’ and ‘institutionalized’ (Zapf, 1989, cited in *ibid*, pp. 25-26). The definitions of social innovation later proliferated. For example, a definition has been offered, which sees social innovation in terms of ability to meet new demands and needs that have arisen in society, and that the state and private sectors are unable to satisfy. Moreover, some scholars offer the view that social innovation is actually the technological innovation that has been used in solving social problems (Cunha, Benneworth & Oliveira, 2015, p. 7). Such a view focuses on the components of social innovation but does not see that social innovation involves an enquiry unique in orientation and approach. In other words, social innovation is simply a branch of the discipline of innovation.

However, a question arises in this connection: do the social components of social innovation emerge from its process or outcome, or from both? Some scholars contend that social outcomes of innovation do not amount to social innovation or social entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurship or innovation in general is capable of creating benefit to society, for example, in the form of job creation or economic growth. Therefore, for entrepreneurship or innovation to be social entrepreneurship or social innovation, their social components are essential, and these must form part of their whole process. Nonetheless, one difference between social entrepreneurship and social innovation should be noted here: this is the difference in their focus. Whereas social entrepreneurship focuses on aspects like democratic participation – which is intangible in nature – social innovation emphasizes what is more tangible, such as the search for new products or services.

Although the meanings of social entrepreneurship and social innovation are indicative of their interconnectedness, a question still remains: are social entrepreneurship and social innovation part and parcel of each other? If this is the case, each concept could not be a stand-alone one. For instance, social entrepreneurship must always rely on a social innovation for its problem-solving effort. On its part, social innovation would arise only within organizations of the social enterprise type. This is not always the case in reality. Indeed, from one point of view, social entrepreneurship and social innovation might not be part and parcel of each other, because both have their own way of solving social problems. Some of their aspects might simply overlap or be interconnected. Explaining the relationship between the two concepts in this way seems more feasible. Some social enterprises might be able to develop their problem-solving approaches that attain the level of social

innovativeness, whereas social innovation need not always arise within social enterprises: it may come out from business entrepreneurship in general.

In conclusion, we can say that social entrepreneurship and social innovation are closely interrelated, while at the same time having their own specific principles. Social entrepreneurship focuses on organizational forms, i.e. not-profit organizations and business organizations. Its two main features are social mission and financial viability (sometimes the environmental component is added as a third feature). On the other hand, social innovation concentrates on new, tangible, creative and effective processes and methods to solve social problems. Though both concepts aim to achieve the same goal of benefiting society, their different focuses actually amount to the widening of the coverage of problem-solving efforts. However, both concepts suffer from one important weakness – the inability to precisely assess social impacts. This has resulted in debate on the claim that social entrepreneurship and social innovation could create social change. Nonetheless, making efforts to solve social problems in whatever way is surely better than doing nothing. The next sub-section considers the development of law to suit changing socio-economic conditions, especially insofar as this involves legal development to suit social change in view of the two concepts.

### **Legal Development in Accordance With the Social Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation Concepts: The Case of Low-Profit Limited Liability Company (L3C)**

Law has a crucial role in effecting social change. It can be regarded as an important factor in the social change ecosystem. To put it more precisely, if we consider that social entrepreneurship and social innovation can induce social change, we must develop and design laws that would support the implementation of these two concepts. In this respect, law is a tool for such implementation. Insofar as social entrepreneurship and social innovation are new concepts (despite their emergence from an existing sector in society), the law that has been designed to accommodate them should be regarded as new – or even innovative in character – though this is not always the case. Nevertheless, this sub-section considers a new legal entity, which may be taken to represent legal innovation to solve social problems. This is the ‘Low-Profit Limited Liability Company (L3C)’, which was formulated in the United States. The new or special aspect of this legal entity is that it is a company that does not seek to maximize profit for shareholders but aims to create social benefits. The law specifically designed for the L3C may be taken as a law specifically developed for social enterprise. In other words, it is a law devising a legal form for this type of business.

The author considers this law as a form or aspect of social innovation in the form of legal innovation. However, legal research to promote social innovation is still limited, and it might be argued that legal development does not amount to an innovation but rather adjustment to the changing socio-economic conditions. The writer is nevertheless of an opinion that the company law challenging what has been in practice (and in compliance with the mainstream law) for a long time, particularly challenging the owners and investors, clearly represents not simply something new but rather revolutionary.

Certainly, law has both its facilitative and limitative rules – the latter type of rules are normally aimed to protect outsiders (Ogus, 2004, pp. 29-30). Introducing new legal forms to solve social problems does not guarantee that they would achieve what has been expected of them. An argument has thus been put forward that if issuing new legal forms does not always contribute to the solution of social problems but rather gives rise to conceptual and practical confusion, what is the point of doing this. However, in this writer’s view, such new legal

entities actually serve as alternatives for some groups of social entrepreneurs: they are not imposed on all entrepreneurs. The availability of such legal forms is clearly better than the absence of any new alternative legal entity. The adoption of the L3C is not mandatory, and its existence does not imply that other countries should develop similar legal entities, The purpose of studying the L3C is simply to give an example of the hybrid legal forms which the countries in both Europe and North America have tried to develop and promote.

It has already been pointed out that the L3C is a legal form specifically designed for social enterprises. If we go back to consider the social enterprise concept, we will see that it represents a form of hybridity resulting from a combination of not-profit and for-profit entities. Hence, the L3C is a hybrid legal entity in this sense – i.e. is not a combination of the social mission of non-profits and the generation of stable revenue of for-profit organizations (Smiddy, 2010, pp. 3-4).

The L3C is not founded on a federal law by which all states have to abide. Vermont was the first state to introduce this legal entity only as an alternative among other existing legal forms: the L3C is not mandatory for social enterprises to adopt. One important reason for the introduction of this hybrid legal entity is that the existing legal forms (not-profit organizations and business organizations) could not accommodate the needs and nature of social enterprises, which are hybrid entities characterized by their double bottom-line requirements – social mission and financial viability.

The L3C is in the form of limited liability company (LLC). It has been designed to help the company operators to achieve their social and educational goals. At the same time, it enables them to generate income from trading in goods and services. Incorporated as an LLC, the L3C benefits from the company law in various respects, including the limited liability of shareholders, the ease with which it could be set up, the generation of revenue, and the flexible management of profit and loss. It is attractive to investors, given its universally recognized organizational form. The difference between traditional LLCs and the L3C involves the company objectives. The mainstream company law, including the one in use in Thailand, usually specifies that the main objective of a company is only to seek profit. However, the L3C permits a company to promote its social mission. This social mission is actually a requirement for the formation of an L3C; in certain states, it is even clearly stipulated that the social mission must come before the financial objective (Thompson, 2012, pp. 141-142).

A principal advantage of the L3C is that it allows social entrepreneurs to set forth their social objectives, while at the same time enabling them to rely on its company form to mobilize capital from various sources, including investors, donations, and loans from commercial banks, among others. The L3C is thus different from non-profit organizations, which remain principally dependent on donations and government grants. These sources of financial support are uncertain. The main requirement for the L3C is its social mission; therefore, the mandatory duty of its directors (the directors' duties are clearly set forth in the company's articles of association) is to ensure that social benefits be created all through its operation. If any L3C cannot verify that it is providing such benefits, its form will immediately be changed to that of a traditional LLC. Nevertheless, the change in the L3C's social mission can be accomplished simply by changing its articles of association without notification to the public (ibid, p. 143). This raises debate on whether there could be some L3Cs deceiving the public in this way. However, the change in the company's objectives is regarded as an essential change, which must be registered. This act of registration amounts to public

notification, but a problem still remains that not all members of the public regularly scrutinize company articles of association. This writer sees that even though the change in the articles of association of an L3C is allowed to facilitate its operation, if the change can be undertaken too easily, or too often, it would affect the credibility of this special legal form, and this might lead, in turn, to the perception by members of the public that social entrepreneurs are not really sincere in their effort to solve social problems.

Needless to say, neither any legal form nor any law can meet the requirements and needs of all the people. In other words, there is ‘no one size that fits all’. The L3C itself suffers from certain shortcomings, which are not really its limitations. These are rather the result of miscalculations at the time of its development regarding the possible involvement of private foundations. Without going into detail about this issue, we can say that the issue is indicative of the importance of both the role of law and how to design a law; that is, while designing a law for a specific purpose, it is important that attention be paid to other related laws.

A question might be raised following this brief consideration of the L3C: can we refer to it as a legal innovation to solve social problems? The L3C has certainly only recently been introduced. Though a growing number of states have adopted it, it still remains at its initial stage, and some of its shortcomings have only begun to be discovered. It is thus still too early to say that it could really help to solve social problems. However, in the writer’s view, the L3C is without doubt a legal innovation to solve social problems, though it still remains in its early phase. As such, it still needs to be improved to make it suitable for social enterprises in the different states. The decision to adopt this legal entity, the trial and error in its implementation, and its assessment (this might not yet have been undertaken at this stage) clearly reflect the effort of law to adjust itself, seeking new modes and approaches, or attempting to facilitate the operation of social entrepreneurs. This evidently shows that law is an integral part of social change.

### **Promoting Social Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation in Thailand**

The social entrepreneurship and social innovation concepts have attracted growing attention in Thailand, though this growing interest also shows the conceptual confusion that has been earlier referred to. The meanings of the concepts overlap each other, and sometimes they are used interchangeably. Any connections they have normally involve the private sector (business entrepreneurship and technological advancements). Of course, the social problem-solving goals are also present, with social entrepreneurship being viewed as a tool (organizational form) and social innovation as a method (Thailand Development Research Institute, 2016). This sub-section considers the state-sector policy to promote social entrepreneurship, together with the legal development to accommodate its growth.

Social enterprise has substantially benefited from the state sector’s promotion effort in terms of both policy and legal support. A Thailand Social Enterprise Office (TSEO) was set up in 2010, together with the introduction of a *Master Plan for Social Enterprise Promotion 2010-2014* (TSEO, 2010). One important feature of the *Mater Plan* is the definition it has provided: “Social enterprise is an enterprise that gains its revenue from the sale and production of goods and/or services, and that is set up with clear objectives at the very beginning of solving the problems of, and developing, the community, society, and/or the environment, and not maximizing profits for its shareholders or owner. New objectives may be added to the original ones, or the latter may be modified [but only in keeping with this non-private profit principle]” (ibid, p. 4).

Still another important document is the 2011 Regulations of the Office of the Prime Minister on Social Enterprise Promotion (Royal Gazette, 2011), which more precisely restate the definition of social enterprise and its characteristics as proposed in *Master Plan*: (Reg. 3): (1) relying on the production process and operation in providing goods and services that do not cause any permanent or long-term damage to popular well-being, society and the environment; (2) making use of the philosophy of sufficiency economy; (3) having a potential for financial viability; (4) re-investing most of the profits in expanding the business to achieve its objectives of solving the problems of, and developing, the community, society, or the environment, or returning those profits to society; (5) being able to operate in various organizational structures; (6) and having good corporate governance.

The formulation of social enterprise definition reflects efforts to provide the meaning of this type of business that is extensive enough to cover its essential features, especially its social objectives and sustainable revenue generation. However, while recognizing it as an enterprise, the definition does not clearly specify any organizational form it would take. Under Thai law, there are two main forms – the non-profit organizations such as foundations and associations, and the for-profit organizations like partnerships and limited companies. Other definitions exist, including informal ones. The most important definition is, of course, the one adopted in the Social Enterprise Promotion Act 2019. The whole decade prior to the promulgation of this Act was a crucial formative stage of social enterprise development in Thailand. Much progress has been made during this time, especially insofar as public-policy and legal development is concerned. The question the writer wishes to raise is: can the country's social enterprise law be taken as a legal innovation to solve social problems?

There is no doubt that the highest aspiration of this law is to solve social problems and to further develop to the level of social innovation as the L3C has done. Though it is certainly not easy to achieve this goal, this does not mean that this achievement is not possible. The law has just been passed, and the regulations for its implementation still remain at the preparatory stage. Therefore, it is too early to say anything about its further development. At this stage the writer will only consider some relevant points.

Thailand's social enterprise law has not been designed in the same manner as the U.S. L3C. As we have seen, the L3C has been developed as a legal entity in the form of a company. The Thai law, however, has been designed to serve as a legal basis to promote social enterprise by providing 'benefits' contributing to its growth, such as tax benefits or subsidies for its formation. Whatever type of organization a social enterprise would take as its organizational form is not a principal issue. What is at the heart of the Thai social enterprise law is the determination of clear conditions and criteria for the state-sector support. The main reason for clear specification of such conditions and criteria involves a concern about the possibility of providing support for entrepreneurs who do not have any real intention to contribute any benefit to society. Determining workable conditions and criteria is surely not an easy task. If these are too flexible, they would not effectively screen out those seeking personal benefits. If they are too stringent, they would not be attractive to investors or entrepreneurs.

The point is not which is better – the L3C or the Thai social enterprise law. The two laws operate in totally different social, economic and cultural contexts. The L3C serves as an alternative legal entity for social entrepreneurs; it does not focus on benefits to be provided in the form of financial support. The benefit social entrepreneurs can expect comes from its organizational form – which is a unique hybrid one. Its unique aspects include the ability to incorporate a social mission into its articles of association, which a traditional LLC cannot



normally do. On the other hand, the Thai social enterprise law primarily aims to promote the growth of, and attract investors to, the social enterprise sector. The law thus focuses on various types of support by the state sector. A clear disadvantage is that social entrepreneurs would have to significantly depend on the state – a situation incompatible with the social enterprise concept, whose purpose is to encourage self-reliance, given the unsustainability of such support. This type of law can serve as a tool of populist policy.

The development of social innovation in Thailand is not as prominent as that of social enterprise, particularly insofar as the policy and legal development is concerned. At present there is no legal definition of social innovation. Even though the National Innovation Agency (NIA) was set up in 2003, its main focus is on innovation in science and technology, not social innovation. Its 2016 annual report, for example, mentioned the benefits to be derived from the development of innovation, but it did not see society as an indispensable component of innovation. However, several Thai universities have begun to attach increasing importance to social innovation.

## **Conclusion**

Present-day social development is a highly complex process. It has been evident for quite sometime that the main pillars of society, namely, the state sector and the market, have failed to live up to expectations. In particular, they have failed to achieve the expected social progress, to solve numerous accumulating social problems, including the growing inequalities, and to meet the needs of the majority of the people. It is this situation that has enhanced the role of the third sector in ‘filling the gaps’ in the provision of public services resulting from the failures of the other two sectors. The third sector’s enhanced role has contributed to its further development, particularly in the way that has made it more innovative in its orientation. Social enterprise, which has emerged and thrived during the past two decades, may be regarded as representing such innovativeness of the sector – that is, its innovative development from comprising mainly traditional non-profit organizations and entities such as cooperatives to adjusting to the need for new hybrid forms such as social enterprise. Nonetheless, in view of the foregoing exploration, the crucial question remains: to what extent has this innovative enterprise contributed to social innovation? In addition, even though the L3C may be taken as a law specifically developed for social enterprises, social innovators are encouraged to set up as a hybrid company which could help facilitate their social and financial goals. In addition, a special legal form for social innovation might not be needed, but rather a legal status of social innovation prescribing ‘innovation’ as one of its defining features could help promote the sector.

## References

- Anheier, H.K. (2005). *Nonprofit Organizations: Theory, Management, Policy*. Oxon and New York: Routledge.
- Cunha, J., Benneworth, P., and Oliveira, P. (2015). Social Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation: A Conceptual Distinction. In L.M. Carmo Farinha, J.J.M. Ferreira, H.L. Smith, and S. Bagchi- Sen, *Handbook of Research on Global Competitive Advantage through Innovation and Entrepreneurship* (pp. 616-639). Pennsylvania: IGI Global.
- Dees, G. (1998). The Meaning of ‘Social Entrepreneurship’. Duke Innovation and Entrepreneurship. <https://entrepreneurship.duke.edu/news-item/the-meaning-of-social-entrepreneurship/>
- Defourny, J., Hulgård, L. and Pestoff, V. (Eds.). (2014). *Social Enterprise and the Third Sector – Changing European Landscapes in a Comparative Perspective*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Defourny, J. and Nyssens, M. (2017). Fundamentals for an International Typology of Social Enterprise Models. *ISTR Voluntas*, 28, 2469-2497.
- Elkington, J. (1998). *Cannibals with Forks: The Triple Bottom Line of 21st Century Business*. Gabriola Island, BC: New Society Publishers.
- Jackson, S.J., and Harrison, G.J. (2011). Social Entrepreneurship: Concepts and Implications for Problem Solving. *Social Entrepreneurship*, 1-24.
- Laville, J-L. (2011). What is the Third Sector? From the Non-Profit Sector to the Social and Solidarity Economy Theoretical Debate and European Reality. EMES European Research Network Working Paper 11/01. <https://emes.net/publications/working-papers/what-is-the-third-sector-from-the-non-profit-sector-to-the-social-and-solidarity-economy-theoretical-debate-and-european-reality/>
- Leadbeater, C. (1997). *The Rise of Social Entrepreneur*. London: Demos.
- Littlewood, D.C. and Holt, D. (2018). How Social Enterprises Can Contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – A Conceptual Framework. In N. Apostolopoulos, H. Al-Dajani, D. Holt, P. Jones and R. Newbery (Eds.), *Entrepreneurship and the Sustainable Development Goals. Contemporary Issues in Entrepreneurship Research* (pp. 33-46). Bingley: Emerald.
- Millard, J., Weerakkody, V., Missi, F., Kapoor, K. & Fernando, G. (2016). Social Innovation for Poverty Reduction and Sustainable Development: Some Governance and Policy Perspectives. In the *Proceedings of the 9<sup>th</sup> International Conference on the Theory and Practice of Electronic Governance (ICEGOV2015-16)*, the ACM Press, March 1-3, 2016, Montevideo.
- Monbiot, G. (2016, April 15). Neoliberalism – The Ideology at the Root of All our Problems. *The Guardian*, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/apr/15/neoliberalism-ideology-problem-george-Monbiot>

- Murray, J.H., and Hwang, E.I. (2011). Purpose with Profit: Governance, Enforcement, Capital-Raising and Capital-Locking in Low-Profit Limited Liability Companies. *University of Miami Law Review*, 66(1), 1-52.
- Nicholls, A. (2010). The Legitimacy of Social Entrepreneurship: Reflexive Isomorphism in a Pre-paradigmatic Field. *Entrepreneurship. Theory and Practice*, 34(4), 611-633.
- Nyssens, M. (Ed.). (2006). *Social Enterprise: At the Crossroads of Market, Public Policies and Civil Society*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Ogus, A. (2004). *Regulation: Legal Form and Economic Theory*. Oxford: Hart Publishing.
- Pearce, J. (2003). *Social Enterprise in Anytown*. London: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.
- Schmitz, B. (2015). Social Entrepreneurship, Social Innovation, and Social Mission Organizations Toward a Conceptualization. In R.A. Cnaan & D. Vinokur-Kaplan (Eds.). *Cases in Innovative Nonprofits: Organizations That Make a Difference* (pp. 17-42). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Smiddy, L.O. (2010). Corporate Creativity: The Vermont L3C & Other Developments in Social Entrepreneurship. *Vermont Law Review*, 35(3), 3-14.
- Teasdale, S. (2012). What's in a Name? Making Senses of Social Enterprise Discourses. *Public Policy and Administration*, 27(2), 99-119.
- Thailand Development Research Institute. (2016). EF in Thailand Shares Experiences in Solving Problems with Social Innovation Ventures. <https://tdri.or.th/2016/12/2016-12-22/>. [in Thai]
- Thailand National Innovation Agency. (2016). Annual Report 2016. Bangkok: Ministry of Science and Technology. [in Thai]
- Thailand Social Enterprise Promotion Office (TSEO). (2010). *Master Plan of Social Enterprise Promotion 2010-2013*. Bangkok. [in Thai]
- Thompson, D. (2012). L3Cs: An Innovative Choice for Urban Entrepreneurs and Urban Revitalization. *American University Business Law Review*, 2(1), 115-152.
- United Nations. (2019). About the Sustainable Development Goals. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>
- Zapf, W. (1989). Über soziale Innovationen. *Soziale Welt*, 40(1/2), 170-183.



***Metaphoric Thinking on Audiovisual Performance of  
the “Noches en los Jardines de España”***

Yudan Wang, Universidade de Aveiro, Portugal

The Paris Conference on Arts & Humanities 2024  
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

This article takes Manuel de Falla's *Noches en los jardines de España* as an object of study, exploring the visual and musical metaphors embedded within the motifs and movements behind the score, and proposing a sonic design for piano performance. First, the socio-historical context of this masterpiece's creation will be examined, along with the relationship between its musical language and other artistic and literary fields. Within this contextualization, the focus will shift to a semiotic musical analysis, seeking to uncover the visual and musical metaphors hidden within the motives and movements of the composition. Based on this, a sonic design will be proposed for piano performance, including interpretive suggestions regarding touch, timbre-dynamics, melodic, harmonic and rhythmic contours, as well as expressive gestures, which will then be applied in a performative realization. Through an in-depth exploration of Nights in the Gardens of Spain, this article aims to unveil the visual and musical metaphors imbued within the work, and to provide a novel sonic design approach for piano performance, enriching the interpretations of this masterpiece.

Keywords: Manuel de Falla, Noches en los jardines de España, Metaphor, Audiovisual Performance, Granada. Guia Emotional, Jardins d'Espanya

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

## Introduction

Noches en los Jardines de España composed by Manuel de Falla in the beginning of the 20th century, while, still regarded as very picturesque in nature due to the apparent attempt of the piece to combine music with pictures derived from the scenic beauty of Spanish gardens. Scholars like Nancy Lee Harper (2005), Francisco J. Giménez-Rodríguez (2022), and Ivan Nommick (1997) notice the composition's link to Gregorio Martínez Sierra's *Granada. Guía Emocional*.<sup>1</sup> and Santiago Rusiñol's *Jardins d'Espanya*.<sup>2</sup> Very probably, these works influenced a great deal the way in which Falla portrayed these walls of the Alhambra and Generalife in sound, as if they were realms having a heavy emotional and symbolical meaning.

Falla close relations with Martínez Sierra and Rusiñol are at least well documented through the key compositional periods.

Their friendships, starting about 1913,<sup>3</sup> continued during Falla's travels through Spain with the Sierras, affording deep artistic exchanges, particularly noted in Rusiñol's Cau Ferrat studio in Sitges, 1915.<sup>4</sup> Here, in an artistic milieu at Rusiñol's Cau Ferrat studio in Sitges, he came into contact with the piano, and it strongly commanded his musical interests. The work once more transcends musical interpretation to bring to life themes from Rusiñol's paintings and Martínez Sierra's text, which evoke the Spanish gardens through sensual detail of the flora and natural decor.

The interplay of visual and aural elements in the composition creates a polychronic experience, conveying the atmosphere and mystery of the Spanish gardens rather than merely describing them. This interdisciplinary approach allows Falla and Rusiñol's gardens to be projected literally while also transmitting a deeper emotional characteristic to their respective arts. Consequently, the perception of Falla's music is transformed into a narrative that encompasses both aesthetic and emotionally vivid worlds.

As a programmatic work, *Night in the Spanish Garden* reveals its imagery and narrative content through the titles of its three movements. This article first helps explore metaphorical expressions in *Noches en los Jardines de España* based on the interpretation of imagery in Martínez Sierra's *Granada. Guía Emocional* and Rusiñol's *Jardins d'Espanya*. Following this contextualization, the study conducted a semiotic musical analysis to reveal the visual and musical metaphors hidden within the themes and movements of the score. Based on this analysis, a sound design for piano performance is proposed, incorporating suggestions for interpretation of touch, timbral dynamics, melodic, harmonic and rhythmic contours, and expressive gestures. These elements are then applied to performative actions, demonstrating the practical implementation of the proposed sound design.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Granada. Guía Emocional*, a travel guidebook authored by Gregorio Martínez Sierra, was first published in 1910 by París Garnier.

<sup>2</sup> *Jardins d'Espanya* is an album of paintings focusing on Spanish gardens, created by the artist Santiago Rusiñol. Comprising 40 pieces, this work was published in 1903 by Casa Thomàs in Barcelona.

<sup>3</sup> París (1908-1914), <https://www.manueldefalla.com/es/paris-1908-1914> [accessed on 10th May 2024]

<sup>4</sup> Madrid (1915-1919), <https://www.manueldefalla.com/es/madrid-1915-1919> [accessed on 10th May 2024]

## The Pictorial Figures in Falla's "Noches en los Jardines de Espana"

In *Noches en los Jardines de España*, Falla's first two movements depict the Moorish palace of Granada from both near and distant perspectives. The first movement, *En el Generalife*, is a musical portrayal of Alhambra and the Generalife gardens in Granada. Known as part of the Alhambra complex, the Generalife served as the summer palace of the Moorish dynasty (Aben and Wit, 1999). The second movement of Falla's *Noches en los Jardines de España* is titled *Danza lejana*. According to Manuel Orozco, part of the inspiration for this movement comes from the views at San Nicolás, the highest point of Albaicín. Under the moonlight of Granada, the swirling dances of the gypsies on the sacred mountain come to life, accompanied by the murmuring waters of the Alhambra Palace, eventually converging into the rivers deep within the forests (Orozco, 1968).

The third movement of Falla's *Noches en los Jardines de España*, titled *En los jardines de la Sierra de Córdoba*, depicts the gardens of Córdoba. Regarding the precise location, Orozco (1968) provides a specific musical scene: dawn in the mountain passes of Cordoba, in the Sierra Morena. This vivid scene description immerses us in a space where passionate dance is interwoven with the tranquility of nature. When combined with Clemente's (2009) view that the music might express the gardens of the mysterious Medina Azahara, we find that *Noches en los Jardines de España* creates a musical landscape that deeply integrates real and imagined geographical spaces.

*Granada. Guía Emotional* and *Jardins d'Espanya* provide key insights for understanding the imagery presented by Manuel de Falla in *Noches en los Jardines de Espana*. These art works, employing symbolic techniques, sketch vivid images particularly through detailed depictions of the garden's natural ecology, such as water elements and plant imagery, alongside the portrayal of related characters. Sierra and Rusiñol encapsulate complex emotions of mysticism, melancholy, oppression, and yearning through these pictorial figures. This resonates subtly with Falla's modern representation of Spanish musical motifs in *Noches en los Jardines de España*, creating a nuanced symphony (Chase, 1960).

In the movement *En el Generalife*, the metaphoric portrayal of water elements and plant imagery is particularly prominent. Water, symbolizing mercy and the source of life, holds a central place in Islamic garden design. Ruggles, a scholar in the history of Islamic art and architecture, notes that in Islamic culture, water represents purity and the source of life (Ruggles, 2000). Sierra describes the various states of water in fountains, such as "quiet, silent, monotonous, restless, noisy, changing" (Martínez Sierra, 1911, pp. 132-133), hinting at the complex emotions carried by the water element. Rusiñol, through poetry, accentuates the multidimensionality of water as an emotional metaphor with lines like "And the water alone, throbbing, the heart of water, breaks the silent anguish with its romance" (Machado in Rusiñol, 1914, p. 13).

Regarding plant imagery, Sierra compares the osmanthus to "mortification in the bitter aroma" (Martínez Sierra, 1911, p. 126), symbolizing mystery and emotional entanglement; Ayala refers to it as a spiritual refuge akin to "hidden weaknesses" (Ayala in Rusiñol, 1914, p. 20). The irregular shape of the cypress tree is interpreted by Sierra as an "unsettling geometry" (Martínez Sierra, 1911, p. 128) that represents spiritual unease. These images have been considered by scholar Ivan Nommick as subtly echoing Falla's artistic portrayal of the soundscape of the Alhambra in his music (Nommick, 2005).

In the movement *Danza lejana*, the depiction of the Gypsy dancer Lucía by Sierra and the portrayal of a Gypsy girl<sup>5</sup> by Rusiñol closely relate to the emotional core of Flamenco dance. Sierra describes Lucia with “a cinnamon-colored face, a pair of black eyes that have absorbed all the deep light of a sunny day” (Martínez Sierra, 1911, p. 168), capturing her unique charm, while Rusiñol’s painting reveals a melancholic and introspective expression. These artistic images vividly embody the spirit of Flamenco as a medium for intense emotional expression (Papenbrok, 1990; Carmer, 1994), which resonates with the somber tones in Falla's music.

The movement *En los jardines de la Sierra de Córdoba* builds a complex emotional atmosphere through images of Córdoba street scenes and courtyards. The streets are depicted as “oppressive, where each citizen is as content as a guard at the door of a barracks” (Martínez Sierra, 1911, p. 208), and the courtyards as “places where in some, the water from a fountain falls on marble and splashes the greenery of the pots; in all, there is a pleasant dreamy peace” (ibid., p.208) that evokes a longing for freedom. Sierra also portrays the Moors as “stuff of legend, mysterious people” (ibid., p.215), adding a layer of mystique; while Rusiñol uses poetic personification to praise the unique charm of the gardens of Cordoba and Granada:

“En Córdoba, en Granada, entre las series de columnas blancas que rodean en parejas los patios, los sembró tan hermosos y tan íntimos que aun los frisos de la Alhambra los echan de menos en sus leyendas encantadas, y los llora el llanto de los surtidores.” (Rusiñol, 1914, pp. 1-2)

### **Musical and Visual Metaphors in “Noches en los jardines de España”**

“Nationalities, social customs and different aesthetic concepts evoke different artistic creations in which metaphors express the attributes of music through descriptions of experiences that evoke kinesthetics, aural or visual images.” (Gumm, 2003, p.80)

---Alan Gumm

Many works with metaphorical representations, when studied and analysed by the performers, make new interpretations. Therefore, “those of us who have learned to play a musical instrument might recall how effectively a simile or metaphor could strike our imaginations, thereby changing our performance of a phrase or entire piece almost instantaneously” (Shephard and Leonard, 2013, p.191).

Metaphor of the opus also provides the performer an immense imaginary space, where the design for the sound could be created with renewed insights. Paraphrase in Brown's words, in *Noches en los jardines de España*, the elements of Night and the garden correspond to a wide range of meanings as one of the most recurring symbols in art. Like every symbol, the garden and the night have different national styles or aesthetic meanings in different regions. Therefore, in the composition of musical Works, composer or designer’s manipulations and transformations of sound and space are intentional, clearly articulated and independent of one connoisseur’s sensibilities or interpretation (Brown, 2016).

---

<sup>5</sup> Although Santiago Rusiñol did not depict any human figures in his *Jardins d'España*, a statement from the Sitges Museum reveals that, concurrently with the creation of his first garden painting “*Xiprers vells*”, a piece titled “*Woman from Granada*” also known as “*Gitana del Albaycín*” or “*Granadina*” came into existence.



In *Noches en los Jardines de España*, the undulating melodic lines and the dynamic modulation of harmonies conjure a vivid synesthetic experience, mirroring my visual perceptions. The insights gleaned from *Granada. Guía Emotional* and *Jardins d'Espanya* illuminate that this musical movement transcends mere auditory representation; it captures garden's unique ambiance, and the character and mood evoked by the characters' dance and sing.

Leveraging my synesthesia I can almost perceive the distinct visual images in Falla's music from *Granada. Guía Emotional*, *Jardins d'Espanya* and the Alhambra Palace. This includes the varying forms and sounds of water in the Moorish gardens, as well as the colors, scents, and personalities of the plants. These audiovisual sensations and perceptions are powerful metaphors that underscore the deeply emotions in the music.

For instance, in describing the Generalife, Martínez Sierra's prose not only captures the visual beauty of this garden but also imparts deep emotional connotations to it by interweaving the landscape with words that evoke character traits. He compared life and spirit to a garden, particularly emphasizing the emptiness of the soul and the symbolism of water: the sound of the fountain and the restless static of the flowing water represent people's inner desires and vitality (Martínez Sierra, 1911).

In *Jardins d'Espanya*, Rusiñol personifies the various elements of the garden, endowing them with human-like qualities and emotions. This enhances the vividness of the images and emotional resonance. He mentions that ancient cypress tree symbolizes steadfast love and brings a sense of solemnity to the garden; the sound of dripping water from the windmill brings a melancholic atmosphere; the white walls and flowers covered by rain reflect rebirth and purity; the maze of willow trees and dark walls creates a mood for the mansion. Provides protection and a sense of privacy (Rusiñol, 1914).

Sierra and Rusiñol's symbolic descriptions of various garden images allow performers to perceive them through a synesthetic perspective, involving not just sound, but also colors and shapes. This content finds corresponding auditory experiences in Falla's music, as in the examples of the auditory of water and plants felt by musicians.

In the musical scores examples, the sound of water droplets is mimicked through melodies played on the piano and the harp. The harp is particularly effective at mimicking natural sounds, especially those of water. In the notes marked for piano and harp, we can see the theme melody evoking the granular rhythm of water elements through different instruments. This approach effectively bridges the visual and auditory realms, bringing the garden's sensory experiences to life within the context of Falla's compositions.

Example 1 (1): *Noches en los Jardines de España*, En el Generalife, m.21.



Example 1 (2): *Noches en los Jardines de España*, En el Generalife, mm.1-4.

The sense of oppression and pain that is inescapable in the metaphor of plants finds release in the auditory perception of the performer, achieved through the utilization of instrumental timbre differences and the progression and resolution of harmonies. In Example 2, mm. 14-22, the orchestral ensemble ceases its tutti play from measures 14 to 20, and the columnar harmony disappears, leaving only the French horn and strings. As the piece moves from mm.17-19, a minor 3rd is repeatedly imitated, creating a tension for the listener. Entering measure 20, the composition returns to a full ensemble and subsequently transitions into a piano solo. Throughout this segment, the sound's complexity simplifies, especially as it segues into the piano theme. This shift from tension to release embodies the emotional resonance of the plant metaphor.



Example 2: *Noches en los Jardines de España*, En el Generalife, mm.14-22.

Under synesthesia, a performer's visual production must align with auditory sensations and emotional guidelines akin to the emotive metaphors found in Spanish paintings. This formulaic approach to the performer's visual creation is articulated as follows:

Auditory elements (tonality, timbre, rhythm, melody) + Pictorial Figures (color, texture, shape) = Visual representation crafted by the performer.

This framework integrates the sensory experiences and artistic expressions, enabling performers to translate auditory stimuli into corresponding visual elements that reflect the nuanced emotions and thematic depth of the music.

In the artworks of Sierra and Rusiñol, abstract concepts such as a hollow soul, the restlessness of a fountain, and the melancholic drip of water from a windmill are mentioned. Synesthetes might envision specific colors or shapes, lending tangible sensory experiences to these abstract ideas of the soul. Audibly, these themes are often conveyed through the sonorities associated with water elements.

To visually represent the forms of water elements that resonate with the music, a comprehensive application of various filming and post-production techniques is necessary. Initially, the selection of video materials should focus on Patio de los Leones and Generalife, capturing the pools at night and the water channels during the day to capture the diversity and emotional metaphors of water under different conditions and scenes.

In post-production, techniques such as masking, picture-in-picture, filters, and keyframes can be utilized to emphasize the dynamic nature and emotional expression of the water flow.

In the Figures, the focus is on the flowing water in pools and channels. Given that the visual background is set in a garden, the visuals are divided into close-up and wide-angle shots to facilitate transitions within the video. Once the appropriate footage is secured, to further enhance the depiction of flowing water, adjustments will be made using masks, picture-in-picture, and filters to refine the visual texture of the water flow in the video.

This approach not only captures the physical beauty of the water but also aligns with the emotional and metaphorical content conveyed by the music, creating a holistic sensory experience.



Figure 1: Water in the fountain



Figure 2: Water in the channel

In figures 3 and 4, after the adjustments, the visual enhancement of the water channels is achieved by overlaying white or black picture-in-picture on the video material, then applying a circular mask to emphasize the localized details of the water flow, highlighting the textural visual effects of the water. The use of multiple layers of picture-in-picture enhances the depth and dynamic beauty of the image.

During the color grading process, adjustments are made to brightness, contrast, luminance, and fade parameters to create tones suitable for different atmospheres, particularly by enhancing the blue components to resonate with the melancholic emotional tone in the music. Throughout the video, keyframes are added to smoothly transition between different shots, making the water's movement more fluid and natural. This synchronization with the music's rhythm and emotional fluctuations provides a coherent and immersive viewing experience that visually echoes the auditory elements, thereby enhancing the overall sensory impact of the piece.

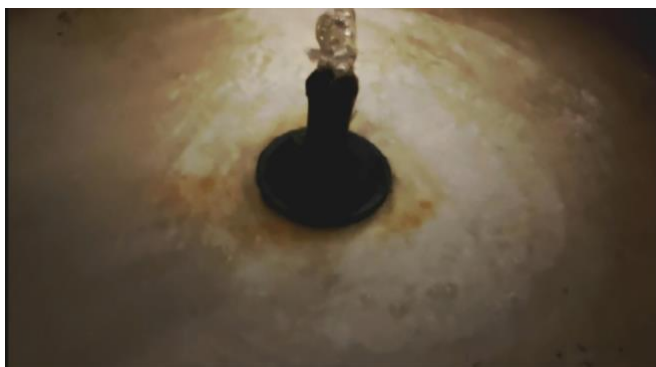


Figure 3: Water in the fountain (Adjust)

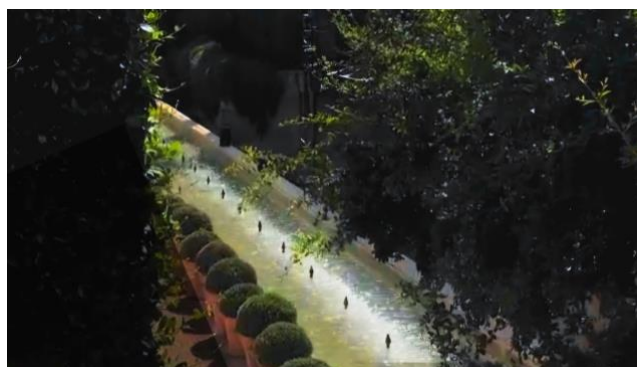


Figure 4: Water in the channel (Adjust)

The visual production of water droplets differs from flowing water and must align with the crystalline and detailed textures found in the music. In imagery, the water droplets must appear transparent and granular. By utilizing light-shaping techniques, both natural and artificial light sources are cleverly used to highlight the transparency and three-dimensionality of the droplets.

When filming under sunlight, the light refracts and reflects through the droplets, casting vibrant colors and enchanting halos on the screen, creating a visually stunning effect of crystal-clear and dazzling water droplets. In backlighting conditions, the outlines of the droplets are more sharply defined, presenting a translucent and graceful texture. Furthermore, by blurring the background, the water droplets become the absolute focus of the frame, their crystalline clarity maximally enhanced. This perfectly resonates with the clear and bright timbres in the music, together creating the effect of light dancing on water surfaces. Additionally, to maintain a consistent emotional tone in the metaphor, the color tonality is kept consistent with earlier segments. This integrated approach ensures that the visual elements complement the musical elements, enhancing the overall sensory experience.

### **Gesture and Audio-Visual Permeation in Performance**

For artists, musicians, and their critics, metaphors not only establish extensive similarities across different disciplines but more importantly, they catalyze transformations in style and technique, propelling the mutual influence and fusion among various media. In the realm of music research, human motion is often intimately connected with the concept of gesture. Many musical activities, such as playing, conducting, and dancing, involve bodily movements that evoke specific meanings, hence these movements are termed ‘gestures’ (Jenselius, Wanderley, Godøy & Leman, 2010).

Gesture plays a pivotal role in musical performance. Firstly, the variability in performers' physical movements leads to a complex array of sonic effects. It is essential for performers to be acutely aware of the desired sound effects and to achieve these through the selection of appropriate physical actions (Xue, 2020). Secondly, when musicians communicate through music-related auxiliary body movements, particularly gestures, it constitutes a vital component of the interaction between live performers and the audience (Aroso, 2020). Lastly, the majority of gesture utilized by musicians in performance often embody metaphors and exert specific psychological and emotional impacts on the audience (Nusseck & Wanderley, 2009; Psaila, 2007).

In his article, scholar P.J. Psaila proposes two directions for the study of gestures in musical performances. He notes that musicians convey conceptual and emotional information to the audience through the use of gestures during performances (Psaila, 2007). Nusseck and Wanderley further elaborate that “expressive performer movements in musical performances represent implied levels of communication and can contain certain characteristics and meanings of embodied human expressivity” (Nusseck & Wanderley, 2009, p. 335). Thus, musical gestures should be regarded as carriers of emotional information, capable of influencing the audience’s perception and impression of the performance. As scholars Alan Cienki and Cornelia Müller articulate, the dual representation of musical gestures signifies that “In a way, gesture attests to the metaphor passing from (a) something concrete to (b) the physical representation of something abstract”(Cienki & Müller, 2008, p. 485).

In addition to gestures, the narrative elements within a musical composition also merit attention. In the study of *Noches en los Jardines de España* presented in this article, the description in the initial section confirms that it is a narrative piece rich with metaphors. Scholar M. Fludernik suggests that employing semiotic and narratological approaches can aid our understanding of narrative concepts within a musical context (Fludernik, 2012). Both language and music rely on their own systems of signs, which serve as the starting point for content creation. Musical performance is realized through physical actions, and these actions also facilitate our production of music. Therefore, the narrative presented in a musical work during a performance often depends on the performer's understanding of the piece, or the message the performer wishes to convey. Performers make corresponding gestural actions based on their perception of factors such as tone, rhythm, harmony, and cultural background.

Thus, under the support of the above theories, performers can perceive or shape the gestural movements in performance through interactive listening content. For instance, in the first movement of Manuel de Falla's *Noches en los Jardines de España*, the piano texture is flowing, akin to the imagery of flowing water. However, as noted in the score, this texture is not monolithic but layered. Beyond the notes of the melody line, the remaining notes in the piano part serve to fill the flow of the melody and provide some background. This arrangement allows for clarity in the melodic points and a moderate blurring of the background notes. The sound effect aims to match the visual content: a Spanish garden at night, the sound of flowing water, and the hues of water droplets under moonlight.

To achieve soft melodic points, the performer should not strike the keys from a height, as this would produce a sharp sound. Instead, the fingers should stay very close to the keys, touching the keyboard with the fingertips to avoid the loud hammer strikes inside the piano. Then, by moving the elbow downward while keeping the entire arm relaxed, one leverages gravity to extend the arm downwards. This approach allows the sound of the melodic points to be soft yet sparkling. The background notes, besides producing a low touch sensation on the fingers, should be integrated with the use of the pedal. Harmonically, the first and second velocities share the same harmony. Considering the melodic points and the dynamics moving from forte to piano, the pedal at the rhythmic points can be engaged more, approximately two-thirds of the total pedal use. As the notes progress, the foot should slowly lift, enhancing the clarity of the overall harmony. This method distinguishes both the melody and background notes and also prepares for the next sequence of melody and background.

In contrast to the theme of the first movement, the primary visual imagery in the second and third movements of *Noches en los Jardines de España* revolves around figures and dance, with the nocturnal garden serving merely as a backdrop. From the introductory passage by the orchestra alone, one can sense the mood of the Gypsies gathering around a campfire, preparing to dance. Taking the piano part as an example, both hands perform the rhythm of a zapateado, yet there are three levels of intensity, and we must use the dynamic marking 'p' to differentiate between the parts. The keystrokes must be swift and low because a dance rhythm is desired. The remaining sounds depict the nocturnal atmosphere, yet clarity in keystroke is essential as we are sonically sketching a clear, dark night in the valley. Finally, in conjunction with the orchestra, we see a group of people dancing under the stars, around a campfire set against the backdrop of the Alhambra.

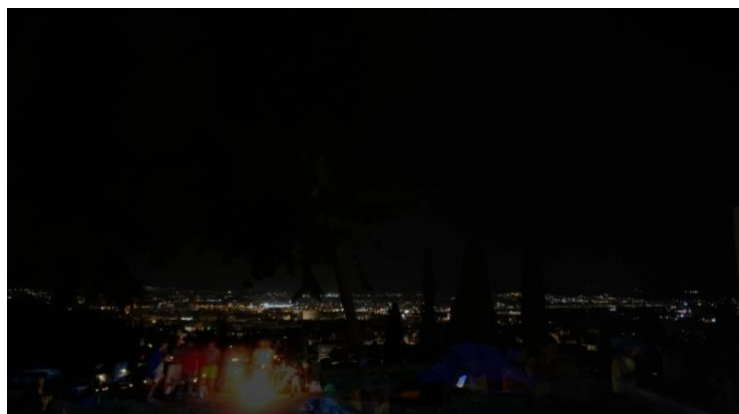


Figure 5: Panoramic view of a crowd dancing at the Alhambra

## Conclusion

This article explores the rich metaphors contained within *Noches en los Jardines de España* from an interdisciplinary perspective. By examining the socio-historical context of the work's creation, alongside literary and artistic works such as Gregorio Martínez Sierra's *Granada. Guía Emocional* and Santiago Rusiñol's *Jardins d'Espanya*, the uniqueness of Manuel de Falla's musical language is revealed.

Music semiotics analysis demonstrates that the musical themes and structural design of *Noches en los Jardines de España* are intricately linked with the imagery of Spanish natural landscapes and folk culture. The rhythmic patterns of flowing water elements echo the variations in piano timbre, while the dance of the Gypsies vividly comes to life in the melodies and rhythms of the second and third movements. These musical metaphors, carrying emotions of mystery, melancholy, oppression, and longing, intertwine with the imagery depicted by Sierra and Rusiñol, together creating the unique atmosphere of Spanish garden nightscapes as envisioned by Falla.

Therefore, the paper proposes a sound design for piano performance, integrating considerations of touch, timbre, melody, harmony, rhythm, and expressive gestures, aiming to provide performers with a more comprehensive and dimensional interpretative perspective. In musical performance, gestures are not merely physical movements but are crucial carriers of musical metaphors. The gestures of performers often embody specific emotional connotations, significantly influencing the aesthetic experience of the listener.

In summary, the metaphorical content of *Noches en los Jardines de España* opens new avenues for music performance practice. The dialogue between music, painting, and literature from an interdisciplinary perspective, and the enhancement and extension of musical moods through body language and gestures in performance, all underscore a profound understanding of the work's intrinsic meanings. This research perspective also offers new possibilities for future studies in music performance.

## References

- Aben, R. & Wit, S. De. (1999). *The Enclosed Garden*. Netherlands: 010 Uitgeverij.
- Aroso, N. (2020). *The Role of Movement and Gesture in Communicating Music Expressiveness to an Audience - An experiment on dynamics perception after a contemporary percussion performance*. Minho: Universidade do Minho.
- Brown, B. J. (2016). *Gardens and music: an initial survey, probing potentials*. Landscape Research Record, 3, 54-66.
- Chase, G. (1960). *The Music Of Spain*. (2th, ed.). New York: Dover.
- Cienki, A., & Müller, C. (2008). Metaphor, gesture, and thought. In R. W. Gibbs, Jr. (Ed.), *The Cambridge handbook of metaphor and thought* (pp. 483–501). Cambridge University Press.
- Clemente, E. Torres. (2009). *Biografía de Manuel de Falla*. Granada: Archivo Manuel de Falla.
- Cramer, B.Thiel. (1994). *Flamenco: The Art Of Flamenco, Its History And Development Until Our Days* .UK: Dance Books.
- Fludernik, M. (2012). *How Natural Is “Unnatural Narratology”; or What Is Unnatural about Unnatural Narratology?* Ohio: Ohio State University.
- Giménez-Rodríguez, Francisco J. (2022). Who Killed Granada? From “the Beautiful” to “the Wounded” City of Falla and Lorca. *Journal of Urban History*, 50, 1–13.
- Gumm, Alan. (2003). *Music Teaching Style: Moving Beyond Tradition*. Chicago: Meredith Music.
- Harper, N. Lee. (2005). *Manuel de Falla: His Life and Music*. Lanham: Scarecrow.
- Jensenius, A. R., Wanderley, M. M., Godøy, R. I., & Leman, M. (2010). Musical gestures: Concepts and methods in research. In R. I. Godøy & M. Leman (Eds.), *Musical gestures: Sound, movement, and meaning* (pp. 12–35). New York: Routledge.
- Martínez Sierra, G. (1911). *Granada. Guía Emotional*. (2th ed.) Madrid: Estrella.
- Nommick, Y. (1997). *Jardines De España De Santiago Rusiñol A Manuel De Falla*. Granada: Archivo Manuel de Falla.
- Nommick, Y. (2005). *Manuel De Falla And Visions Of Spanish Music*. Granada: Archivo Manuel De Falla.
- Nusseck, M., & Wanderley, M.M. (2009). *Music and Motion – How Music-Related Ancillary Body Movements Contribute to the Experience of Music*. *Music Perception*, 26, 335-353.



- Orozco, M. (1968). *Falla. Biografía ilustrada*. Barcelona: Destino.
- Papenbrok, M. (1990). *The Spiritual World Of Flamenco, In Flamenco: Gypsy Dance And Music From Andalusia*, Ed. Claus Schreiner. Portland: Or Amadeus.
- Psaila, P. J. (2007). *Body talk – mastering the power of body language*. Retrieved from <http://www.workassist.eu/images/bodytalk-mastering.pdf>
- Ruggles, D. Fairchild. (2000). *Gardens, Landscape, And Vision In The Palaces Of Islamic Spain*. Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University.
- Rusiñol, S. (1914). *Jardins d'Espanya*. Barcelona: Can Thomas.
- Shepherd T. & Leonard, A. (2013). *The Routledge Companion to Music and Visual Culture*. New York: Routledge.
- Xue, J. (2020). *Travelling with Tan Dun's Music: The Banquet Concerto for Piano, Chorus and Orchestra*. Aveiro: Universidade de Aveiro.



***"Zhuó Li Ji Cha" (着力即差) –  
An Analysis of the Concept of "Integration" in Su Sui's Music and Painting***

Ling Sayuri Chen, Independent Scholar, Japan

The Paris Conference on Arts & Humanities 2024  
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

The term "Zhuó Li Ji Cha" (着力即差), which means "Efforts Leading to Failures" was coined by Chinese artist and philosopher Su Sui (蘇軾 or Su Dongpo 苏東坡, 1037-1101). Song Dynasty (960-1279), the era in which Su Shi lived, referred as "The Chinese Renaissance" by American art historian Ernest F. Fenollosa, was a time of great achievements in Chinese culture. During this period, Chan (禪) Buddhism which had appeared during the Tang Dynasty (618-907), became a mainstream ideology. Chan (禪) was, in turn, introduced as Zen to Japan by Myōan Eisai (明菴栄西 1141-1215) and other Buddhist priests, flourished under the Shogunate of Ashikaga Yoshimizu (足川義満 1358–1408) and profoundly impacted Japanese arts and aesthetics. Su Shi's philosophy is closely connected to his belief in "Shan Jiao He Yi" (三教合一), unity of the three teachings, the synthesis of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism) which has been explored in the context of research on his poetry and artworks. This essay will explore the concept of "Zhuó Li Ji Cha" through his musical piece "Crane Dance in Dongtian" (鶴舞洞天) and his painting "Withered Trees and Strange Rocks" (枯木怪石圖) in the context of the Zen and the Taoism music text "Xianchi Music Theory" (咸池樂論). Furthermore, aiming to take as a departure point to understanding the concept of "Integration" in connection with "Zhuó Li Ji Cha" an analysis shall be carried out regarding the 20th-century avant-garde movements, which called into question Western logic and knowledge-based paradigms from the perspective of Eastern thought.

Keywords: Su Shi, "Zhuó Li Ji Cha", Yue (樂), "Xianchi Music Theory" (咸池樂論), Guqin (古琴), "Wu Xin" (無心), Zen (禪), D. T. Suzuki, Wabi-Sabi (侘び寂び), Freedom, Unconscious, Integration, Avant Garde, Jackson Pollock

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

## Introduction

Su Shi (蘇軾, 1037–1101), also known as Su Dongpo (蘇東坡), was among the most notable intellectuals (文人) in Chinese history. His contributions on poetry, calligraphy, and other fields of arts have been explored from diverse perspectives. This article shall focus on Su's concept of "Zhuo Li Ji Cha" (着力即差), translated in English as "Efforts Leading to Failures" with the aim of exploring its importance in Su Shi's approach to artistic creation.

In 1101, when Su Shi was in a critically ill state, a Buddhist monk and a friend told him "you have always believed in the Buddha, and now you should work hard." Su replied "Zhuo Li Ji Cha" and, after saying this, he passed away at the age of 66.

Su Shi's philosophical views were connected to his syncretic belief in "Shan Jiao He Yi" (三教合一, unity of the three teachings, the synthesis of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism). However, Su Shi always regarded himself as a Buddhist foremost. He developed his interest in Buddhism since a young age, due to the influence of his mother. Around 1071, while living in the city of Hangzhou (杭州)<sup>1</sup>, Su began visiting Buddhist temples with several monks from different sects (such as Yunmen, 雲門宗; Rinzai, 臨濟宗; and Cao Tong, 曹洞宗). During his exile Huangzhou (黃州), between 1079 and 1086, Su's understanding of Buddhism further deepened.

An anecdote which took place during Su Shi's time in Hangzhou illustrates his Buddhist beliefs. During a visit to Shouxing Temple (寿星寺), he said to monk Canliao (參寥) that this is my first visit to this temple, but what I am seeing here seemed very familiar like I have been before. There should be 92 steps to the Chan Hall (忏堂). According to existing records, the number of steps was exactly what Su had said. He summed this experience in the following poem: "I have been to Hangzhou in my past life, and everywhere is like visiting places seen in an old trip" (前生我已到杭州，到处长如到旧游).

Beyond these anecdotes, understanding Su Shi's concept of "Zhuo Li Ji Cha" requires taking into account the cultural and ideological context in which this author lived. In that regard, Chan Buddhism (禪), more widely known in the West by its Japanese denomination of Zen (禪), was an especially significant influence over Su's views and aesthetics. For this reason, a brief reference shall be made in the following lines to the historical circumstances in which Chan, emerged as a leading Buddhist current.

Chan (禪), emerged in China during the Tang Dynasty (唐朝, 618-907) and reached the peak of its influence in Chinese culture during the Song Dynasty (宋朝, 960-1279). American art historian Ernest Fenollosa(1853-1908), whose remains rest at the Mii-dera (三井寺) near Kyoto, has referred to this period as "The Golden Age of Chinese Culture" and "The Chinese Renaissance". In turn, Japanese scholar and monk, Kaiten Nukariya (忽滑谷快天, 1867-1934), when studying the stages of development of Chan doctrines, regarded the form they took during the Southern Song Dynasty (1127-1279) as "Pure Zen" (純粹禪).

---

<sup>1</sup> Hangzhou is the capital and most populous city of Zhejiang, China. It was the capital of the Southern Song Dynasty. Hangzhou is famous for West Lake, a UNESCO World Heritage Site that has been praised by numerous poets and painters. Marco Polo made a detailed record of Hangzhou in "The Travels of Marco Polo."

Chan Buddhism was introduced to Japan in 1167 by Japanese monk Myōan Eisai/Yōsai (明菴栄西, 1141 –1215), the founder of the Rinzai school of Buddhism (臨濟宗). At the same time, Chan gained a notable influence over Chinese aesthetics, being reflected in the ink paintings of Mayuan (马遠, 1160-1225) and Muqi (牧谿, 1210-1270), whom, along with Song Emperor Huizong (宋徽宗, 1082-1136), were among the most prominent artists of their time. The concepts of "Ma Yi Jiao" (马一角)<sup>2</sup> and the unique sensibility of Muqi's ink paintings reflected the influence of Chan ideas, would have a decisive influence in the development of Eastern aesthetics and arts. As it was also the case of Chan Buddhism, Mayuan and Muqi's artwork, exerted its greatest influence over Japanese aesthetics, due to the active support by the Ashikaga shogunal clan (足利將軍), who ruled Japan during the Muromachi Period (室町時代, 1336-1573). Thus, from that time, Chan had a huge influence over Japanese influential traditions and cultural manifestations, such as the Tea Ceremony, gardening, painting and poetry.

During the 20th century, Zen, in turn, influenced Western culture. A decisive role in its diffusion was played by Japanese Buddhist monk Soyen Shaku (釈宗演, 1860–1919). In 1893 Soyen gave a speech at the Universal Conference of Religions in Chicago as a representative of Buddhism from Japan. During the conference, Soyen established a close friendship with religious scholar Paul Carus<sup>3</sup>. In turn, Soyen introduced D. T. Suzuki (鈴木大拙 貞太郎, 1870–1966) to Carus, and to assist with the translation of Laozi's Daodejing (道德經) from classical Chinese to English, and Daisetsu moved to America to carry out this work in 1897. During the following 11 years, Daisetsu worked with Carus's publishing company and translated and edited classical Chinese Buddhist texts. This experience expanded Daisetsu's global perspective and laid the groundwork for his future efforts in introducing Zen to the world.

Zen has conceited interest in contemporary Western societies and had significant influence over its arts and culture since the early XXth century through the contributions of D. T. Suzuki along with Inazō Nitobe (新渡戸 稻造, 1862 – 1933) and Okakura Tenshin (岡倉 覚三, 1863–1913). Arguably, Zen represents the Eastern thought which has had greatest influence over Western thought and arts during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Since Zen's roots date back to Su Shi's lifetime during the Song Dynasty, it can be argued that Chan Buddhism establishes a notable cultural link between the work of this classical Chinese sages and Western contemporary Avant Garde cultural movements.

### **"Wu Xin" (無心) and "Wu Yi" (無意) in Su Shi's Arts**

Su Shi is regarded as one of the greatest classical Chinese authors. Beyond his influence in China, in modern times his poetry and calligraphy works have garnered worldwide attention. Notwithstanding, understanding of the conceptions underlying his works has been limited, particularly beyond the Chinese cultural sphere. In that regard, it's important to clarify the meaning of concepts that inspired Su's work, such as that of "Zhuo Li Ji Cha".

<sup>2</sup> A style in Chinese painting created by a Song Dynasty painter Mayuan, who left most of the blank in painting, with images only in the corners (Yijiao in Chinese). The style of painting was influenced by Zen at that time and formed an important aesthetic in arts.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Carus (1852–1919), German-American author, editor, religious scholar and philosopher.

It is well known that Su 's frankness brought him grave problems throughout his life, since he was vanished to distant locations in three occasions. Despite these experiences, throughout his life he remained as a humanist who expressed a deep concern for the public good. This is exemplified by his efforts to rescue orphan babies in Huangzhou (黃洲), and by his commitment as a magistrate in Hangzhou to re-move the long-term accumulation of silt in the West Lake, which culminated in the construction of the Su Causeway (蘇堤), named in his honor, which later became one of the Ten Scenic Spots of West Lake (西湖十景)<sup>4</sup>; and a paradigmatic example of Chinese landscaping, captured by Su's poem "Drinking at the lake in the sunlight and then under the rain" (飲湖上初晴後雨)<sup>5</sup>, which in turn influenced a famous haiku written by Japanese poet Matsuo Bashō (松尾 芭蕉, 1644-1694), during a visit to Matsushima (松島): "Kisakata—Seishi sleeping in the rain, Wet mimosa blossoms" (象潟や雨に西施がねぶの花).

With regard to the aesthetic features of Su Shi's poetry, and particularly to its musical aspects, Prof. Naka Junko, based on an analysis of the poems written by Su during his exile in Huangzhou, has made the following remark: "the place where Su Shi prepared to die, sharpened his sensibility as a poet and led him to pay attention to all kind of sounds as materials for his poetry". A character, Yuè (樂), may give us further clues about Su Shi's "Zhuó Li Ji Cha" with the influence from one of his best friends, Ou Yang Xiu 歐陽修 (1007 – 1072), Ouyang makes several mentions to the character Yuè in "Records of the Zuiong Pavilion." (醉翁亭記), such as "The Yuè of Mountains and Waters" (山水之樂), "The Yuè of Four Seasons" (四時之樂) and "The Yuè of Infinity" (無窮之樂). The pleasure of Yuè for Su Shi relates to his notion "Zhuo Li Ji Cha", insofar as it evokes the sense of non-worldliness of the author, who, in his own words, regarded himself as "a man who enjoys non-worldly pleasures", adding in turn: "In my heart there is nothing. That is, everything in the heavens and earth. Mountains, rivers, grass, trees, insects, fish, and all other things are my pleasures." (所謂自娛者 亦非世俗之樂者 但胸中廓然無一物, 即天壤之內山川草木虫魚之類 皆吾作樂事也). Here he emphasized the importance of the statement "in my heart there is nothing" (胸中廓然無一) which stems from Zen's teaching, in Su Shi's "Wu Xin" (無心, nothing in the heart). Aside from "Wu Xin", Prof. Fukumitsu Yu (福光由布) has emphasized the significance of the concept "Wu Yi" (無意, no intention) in Su Shi's artistic creation. "Wu Yi" 無意 originated from Su Shi's essay about calligraphy as 初無意於嘉, Su regarded the lack of intentions as the best state of mind, calling it "Jia" (嘉 good), which is the antonyms of "Cha" (差, Failure) in his quote "Zhuo Li Ji Cha".

Zen deeply rooted in Japanese culture and has formed Japan's unique aesthetics of "Wabi-Sabi"(詫び寂び). Wabi meaning rough and simple. The essential element of Wabi is 貧 (poverty), in negative terms, which implies one not being part of what is trendy or

<sup>4</sup> People named the Ten Scenes of West Lake with a poetic name by four-characters, including 苏堤春晓、曲院风荷、平湖秋月、断桥残雪、花港观鱼、南屏晚钟、双峰插云、雷峰夕照、三潭印月以及柳浪闻莺. The tradition of naming landscapes began with the Eight Views of Xiaoxiang (瀟湘八景: 瀟湘夜雨, 平沙落雁, 烟寺晚钟, 渔村夕照, 山市晴嵐, 江天暮雪, 远浦归帆, 洞庭秋月) in the Northern Song Dynasty(960-1127), and later became a form of literati culture gained a great popular in Asia, especially in Japan.

<sup>5</sup> The most famous poem praising the nature beauty of West Lake, Su Shi used the name of Xi Shi (西施 or Xizi 西子) to praise the four seasons scenery of West Lake: The brimming waves delight the eye on sunny days; (水光潑灑晴方好) The dimming hills give a rare view in rainy haze. (山色空蒙雨亦奇), compare West Lake to Xi ZI (欲把西湖比西子), Whether she is richly adorned or plainly dressed" (淡妝濃抹總相宜).

popularity. Here the poverty means that one should not focus on wealth, power and fame, but should instead seek something internal that has supreme value and transcends time and society. Meanwhile, Sabi (さび) is a noun derived from the verb sabu (さぶ) to describe the state of silence when no people and things around. According to D.T. Suzuki, "Sabi" originally means that things deteriorate over time. Sabi connect with the exquisite skill of Japanese artists to transform imperfect and ugly or strange shapes into embodiments of beauty as see in Ki-Seto Chawan from the Momoyama period (Figure 1). This derives from a set of elements of Sabi, which include simplicity, ancient-style imperfection, and unforced structure.

The images shown below illustrate the common ground between Song Dynasty Chan and Japanese aesthetic of Wabi-Sabi, as well as with Su Shi's ink painting "Withered Trees and Strange Rocks" (枯木怪石圖) (Figure 2).



Figure 1: Ki-Seto Chawan from the Momoyama period (1573-1603)



Figure 2: "Withered Trees and Strange Rocks" (枯木怪石圖) by Su Shi (1077)

American art collector and historian, James Francis Cahill (1926-2014) has interpreted the tree and rock in Su Shi's painting as "queerly twisted like the sorrowss" and the subjects like bamboos in Su's another painting from the perspective of Confucian personality and morality. He consider Su Shi as an ideal example of the reclusive gentleman-official in ancient China, a type that later became highly idealized by many artists afterwards.

James Cahill also compared Su Shi's work with the paintings of Zhu Xi (朱熹, 1130-1200), another Confucianist from the Song Dynasty. Zhu Xi's paintings also depicted bamboo and rock. However, it is noted that what we can see in Su Shi's painting is the "Tao" by a abstract image rather than technique. On the other hand, Zhu Xi, a powerful literati official, his painting shows the appearance of these subjects which can be a good example illustrate how Zhu Xi has misunderstood and misinterpreted of Confucius and Mencius for over thousands of years, which is not the subject of this article.

It should be noted that when discussing Su Shi's ink paintings, the following comment by his contemporary Mi Fu (米芾, 1051-1107) has often been quoted: "In his mind, everything is a sign of chaos and confusion." In fact, some researchers even think that the ink itself represents chaos and confusion. This argument, in turn, brings up a key concept of "Chaos". Fukunaga Mitsuji (福永光司, 1918-2001), a renowned Japanese scholar in Taoist studies, has pointed out that ink is the color of "Tao", and it was embodied in the thoughts and works of ancient Chinese artist.

Regarding the concept of chaos itself, it is worth to note here the following quote by Belgian chemist and philosopher Ilya Prigogine (1917-2003): "chaos is a such misunderstood word, for many people chaos means disorder, curiously chaos studied in modern science has explanation that chaos is a kind of order, it's a type of unstable order in which a temporal sequences are complex". While Prigogine pointed out the misunderstanding about "Chaos" from the stand of new science, it's worth noting that American physicist, Fritjof Capra's in his book "The Tao of Physics", has explored the similarities between modern physics and Eastern philosophy. This discussion about chaos is relevant, insofar as it provides key for the analysis of Su Shi's approach to music, which shall be discussed in the following section.

### "The Enlightenment Through the Crane" (因鶴悟道) in Su Shi's Guqin (古琴) Music

The analysis carried about in the prior section regarding the underlying aspects of Su Shi's notion of "Zhuo Li Ji Cha" brings us observe carefully to Su Shi's music. Su was a passionate cultivator of music and a composer himself, although very little is preserved of his output in that field. According to Stuart H. Sargent, that 13% of Su's 2,586 poems were about music. Su was especially passionate about the guqin (古琴), having wrote over 80 poems about the Guqin music during his exile in Huangzhou. Su Shi's conception of music embraced intuition sensibility and even chaos. His approach to musical composition and the element should be instead understood in light of existing Taoist conceptions of music.

Fukunaga Mitsuji, who, from a Taoist perspective, defined art as the "the movement of life" (生命の感動), has pointed out that Chinese music symbolically expresses the rhythm of nature, and that humans establish order in their life in accordance with that rhythm, being guided by that rhythm to return to their own origin -the "Tao" (道). These conceptions were represented by the "Xianchi Music Theory" (咸池樂論)<sup>6</sup>, which stood in contrast to Confucian approaches to music, under the denomination of "Yue Ji" (樂記). While "Yue Ji" emphasized that music was a reflection of the natural order, "Xianchi Music Theory" regarded "chaos" (混濁) as a vital aspect, insofar as it reflects human efforts to affirm the existence of life in nature. At the same time, unlike the Confucian notion of "Yue Ji", which deems music as important for preserving the harmony of social and political relations, the Taoist view of "Xianchi Music Theory" regards the process of realizing the "Tao"(道) of music as a process for humans to expand themselves in the universe, purify their souls and realize themselves. Moreover, they relate the notion of "Tao" with three distinct states of mind: "Fear" (懼), "Neglect" (怠) and "Confusion" (惑) as the process of the embodiment of "Tao".

This metaphysical approach to music represented by the "Xianchi Music Theory" took root in Chinese intellectual tradition with the works of the "Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove" (竹林七賢), particularly Ji Kang (嵇康, 223-263) and Ruan Ji (阮籍, 210-263), and was further developed by Tao Yuanming (陶淵明, 365-427). Despite the overall ideological dominance of Confucianism, Taoist approaches became arguably more influential when it comes to conceptions of music in Chinese culture.

<sup>6</sup> "Xianchi Music Theory" (咸池樂論) is a story included in Zhuangzi' (莊子)'s "Outer Chapters: the way of heaven" (外篇天道). It uses a musical allegory to explain the idea of the operation of the universe and the form of the "Tao" in music through the emperor playing Xianchi music and the dialogue with Beimen Cheng (北門成).



In that regard, Fukunaga Mitsuji has pointed out that the concept of "Tian Di Zhao Hua"(天地照化, the Tao of universe) in the classic "Yue Ji", which regards musical expression as a symbol of nature, as well as of the four seasons, Ying and Yang as the harmony of heaven and earth in music, as well as the understanding of the root of self-existence by those who play and listen to music. In fact, according Fukunaga, the concept of "Tian Di Zhao Hua" didn't stem from Confucianism, but originated instead and developed from Taoist thought. This Taoist approach to music became especially influential insofar as musical composition and interpretation, along with calligraphy, poetry and painting, became a key component of the education of the Chinese elites since the time of the Wei and Jin Dynasties (420-589).

The intuitive approach to music embedded in the "Xianchi Music Theory" is reflected by Su Shi's only preserved musical composition "Crane Dances in the Cave Heaven" (鶴舞洞天). In that regard, instead of resorting to the general musical pattern for Guqin compositions of starting and ending with the sound "Fanyin"(泛音), symbolizing heaven, Su used instead the sound "Shanyin" (散音), symbolizing earth as the main melody of the whole piece to express the momentum of the crane soaring into the sky. The begins of the composition can be interpreted as representing the first stage of "Tao" form and the meaning of "Xianchi Music Theory". This approach, according to the emperor: "all great music first instills a sense of fear (惧) to the hearts of the listener. When the mind becomes emotional state of anxious. When the spirit that has been forgotten in the routine of everyday life awakens to the "Tao".

At the same time, the execution techniques employed in Su Shi's composition, aimed at achieving cooperation between the left and right hand on the basis of the concepts of Ying and Yang (as they have been interpreted from the Yi Ching), express both vivid human emotions and the postures of the crane circling heaven and earth. This could be interpreted as "Neglect" (怠), as the second stage of the "Tao". According to the emperor "Xianchi Music Theory", the constant change of rhythms relieves the tensions in the listener's heart. That is, an escape from the self - conventions, narrow-values, and worldly delusions that have supported one's life. This emotional state is represented here in musical terms by the intermittent but continuous (余白)<sup>7</sup> due to intervals of silence in the execution of the piece, The latter seems to evoke thoughts generated by the dialogue with the crane, with the chaotic rhythm together as the response to the third movement. This aligns with the notion of "Confusion" (惑) in "Xianchi Music Theory", as all common sense and judgment are turned into chaotic state of "Wu Wei"(無為, non-discrimination) which leading people into a state of confusion known as "Wu Zhi" (無知, ignorance) and "Wu Yu" (無欲 selflessness), in which one becomes an ignorant, desireless fool as described by the ancients. By becoming so, one can finally merges with the "Tao", the unconscious of nature. and embody the "Tao" in their life, thus realizing a state of being. Finally, in the ending of "Crane Dances in the Cave Heaven", expresses the feeling of quietness and satisfaction ("Dangdang Mo Mo, Nai Bu Zi De", "蕩蕩默默, 乃不自得"), symbolizing by the state of the water surface silently and aimlessly expanding to infinity.

Su's "Zhuo Li Ji Chae" unfolds in the analyzed musical piece as a complex synthesis of compositional dexterity, intuition, and an underlying syncretic philosophy. It aligns with Zhuangzi's idea that the Tao transcends technique, and that those who are aware of the Tao—philosophers—are true artists. In turn, the guqin, a musical instrument that ancient

<sup>7</sup> Chiang Kui (姜夔 1155-1221), a writer and musician in Southern Song Dynasty, who discussed the importance of "blank"(余白) in paintings first time at "Theory of Calligraphy" (續書譜).

Chinese literati always had around, is the most representative instrument of the "Tao" as we can see in Su Shi's life and arts.

### **“Breathing” and “Action” As Elements of “Integration” in East and West**

The final section of this paper explores Su Shi's idea of "Zhuo Li Ji Cha" from the perspective of nature, intuition and unconsciousness presented in the works of Western avant-garde artists in the 20th century. A further analysis shall be carried out regarding similarities and differences between the East and the West in concepts such as freedom and nature based on the difference of "breathing" and "action", as well as the modern significance of integration, from the works of artists such as American visual artist Jackson Pollock (1912-1956).

Pollock use of the ground as a canvas and of unconventional tools for painting recalls the cursive writing on the ground by Chinese calligraphers. However, Pollock himself wasn't significantly influenced by Eastern art but rather by Native American cultural expressions, and by "sand painting"<sup>8</sup>. The influence of Native American Indian culture can be perceived in the rhythmicity and ritual-like activities and mystery in his works. With this unconventional spirits, Pollock challenged the themes, forms and techniques of traditional Western painting, employing freely his body as a creative tool. In turn, music also played a significant role in Pollock's creations, insofar as his painting activities resembled free dancing, with his body moving in an aimless rhythm to form the shapes that were spontaneously drawn on the ground to give form to his artworks. In a broad sense, Pollock's work displays a critical, anxiety and challenging attitude towards Western culture, in light of which his embrace of Native American traditions can be interpreted.<sup>9</sup> While, in contrast to other artists of his generation such as John Cage(1912-1994), Pollock didn't display a deep interest in Eastern culture, the latter's critical stance towards Western rationality display commonalities with schools of thought such as Taoism and Zen which vindicate intuition as a creative vehicle.

Pollock's works reflect that of several modern Western artists who have experienced the loss of prior certainties, which led to questioning the notion of reason. For example Irish novelist Samuel Beckett's (1906-1989) ideas on "stream of consciousness" and Russian Avant Garde artist, Daniil Kharms's (1905–1942) challenges to rationality in his poems. Pollock's painting can be conceived as a volcanic release of instincts, although his works simultaneously convey feelings of anxiety. Pollock's approach towards art and life is captured by his phrase "I am nature itself", where nature can be interpreted as liberating oneself to enter into a state of absolute freedom.

---

<sup>8</sup> "Sand painting" was practiced for ritual purposes among the Navajo ethnicity Native American peoples living in South Western United States. Pollock came in contact with the Navajo during his youth following his stepfather, who was a land surveyor. Pollock developed a great interest in Native American culture and re-signified the ritual practice of "Sand painting" as a creative technique.

<sup>9</sup> After a comparison of the European, Chinese and American Indian versions of Shindelala, Japanese anthropologist Shinichi Nakazawa (中沢新一) believed that he Ancient Mikmaq India had a sharp critical spirit. They see Europeans Cinderella as embodying the frivolousness of European culture and the passivity of women, they see it as lacking in spirituality. In response to this spirit, Ancient Mikmaq India created their own version of Cinderella, the "Invisible Men" in opposition to the culture of "showing and been seen" in European culture. In the Mikmaq India's view, a beautiful soul has a high level of spirituality, and because of this, a beautiful soul is able to escape the deception of appearances.

It is relevant to note here that, from an Eastern perspective, the concept of "Freedom" is interpreted differently than in the West. According to Zen master D.T. Suzuki, when reflecting on the legacy of the French Revolution in modern political culture, he stated that the Western view of freedom focuses on self-control and includes negativity and passivity in terms of escaping and being liberated from that focus. The characters for freedom "自由"<sup>10</sup> imply a natural emergence from oneself and embody a positive connotation, and doesn't carry the meaning of escaping from oppression or political implications.

Taking this notion of "Freedom" as a point of departure, according to D. T. Suzuki, the object of Zen is human nature, and within each individual sleeps an awakening which is waiting for its moment to emerge. This awakening is not captured through words or reasoning, but rather experienced and intuitive, and this is, the essence of enlightenment. Zen rejects all efforts such as human calculation and conscious exertion. Just as birds fly in the sky and fish swim in the water, when signs of effort become evident, one loses freedom.

The art of Pollock's abstract painting, inherits the spirit Native Americans has the color of primitive and oriental thinking. The pursuit of free expression in Pollock's painting can be understood as a pursuit to deconstruct what is "visible" in Western traditional visual arts as well as in the culture. D.T. Suzuki gives a vivid account of the Zen concept of freedom by quoting the following haiku by Matsuo Bashō: "Eventually people die, no sign of scene, the cicada's cry" (やがて死ぬ けしきは見えず 蝉の声). According to Daisetsu, this should not be understood as a cicada that is loud and foolish, but rather as stating that, as long as the cicada is singing, it has eternal life. Thus, when a cicada forgets about death and continues to cry wholeheartedly, it transcending the distinction between life and death, and becoming one with nature. Such capacity of becoming one with nature is, according to Zen teachings, the highest manifestation of freedom.

Life is an art, and as a perfect art, it requires self-forgetfulness. There should be no trace of effort or feelings of hardship. Su's notion of "Zhuo Li Ji Cha" elates closely to this view rather than to what in contemporary Western eyes, would seem as a nihilistic vindication of inaction. Thus, Su doesn't reject effort in itself, but rather its futile or unnatural manifestations. This connects to a reflection by Simon Weil (1909-1943), stating that what workers need is not bread or butter, but beauty and poetry, as well as to Suzuki's view that that if people can find poetry in works (even if they seem apparently monotonous), their lives will change. These thoughts by Eastern and Western thinkers can be seen as a wake-up call both for contemporary "Workaholics", who glorify work for its own sake, and "Hedonists" who shun any effort.

## Conclusion

During the first half of the 20th century, Western culture witnessed a shift of paradigms. Classical modern thinking, represented by Galileo and Newton's ideas, reached the limit of dualism of Western thought—rational and irrational, spirit and matter, visible and invisible, life and death, and two cognitive cataclysms took place: the relativist and quantum revolutions, whose leading expressions were Einstein's theory of relativity and Heisenberg's principle of uncertainty. At the same time, the development of communication technology

---

<sup>10</sup> When the concept of "Freedom" was introduced to Japan during the Meiji Era (1868-1912), Japanese scholars could not find an equivalent term in Japanese and they chose the Buddhist term of "自由" (jiyū, freedom).

enabled greater contact between people from different cultures. Moreover, secularization in the West and the simultaneous erosion of positivism and faith in progress in the West after the traumatic experience of the two World Wars led intellectuals to seek new explanations regarding art, philosophy and religion, and looking in turn to Eastern thought for new sources of ideas.

D. T. Suzuki's idea is that the East and West is not a geographical distinction, but the status of one's "heart-set", while pointing out the importance of "Integration" between East and West to which he devoted his life. As we can see from the activities of the 20th century artists mentioned in this paper, the journey toward the "Integration" between Eastern and Western full of difficulties and challenges.

When study Chinese literati paintings, some Western scholars usually take a Confucian perspective to compared with the Western tradition, they believe that Chinese artists were seek philosophy through art activities. In fact, as Fukunaga Mitsuji points out in his book "Chinese Civilization," that I Ching, which was the source of all ancient Chinese art, it has been represented in various forms such as "Xu" (虚) and "Shi" (实), and "You" (有) and "Wu" (无) in painting, as well as "Tian" (天) and "Di" (地) as Yin (阴) and Yang (阳) in guqin music. He also point out that the great artists of ancient times were first philosophers, and art is that which awakens one to the roots of human existence, and art must naturally express the "Zao Hua" (造化, Tao) from one's heart. Fukunaga has make the most profound explaination why ancient Chinese artists, like Su Shi mentioned in this paper, was both poets, painters, and musicians. From this perspective, the challenge of Jackson Pollock's abstract expressionism from the view of unconsciousness by "action" demonstrate a common sense with Eastern culture.

At the same time, Fukunaga Mitsuji strongly criticized what he perceived as the "opportunistic" and "formalistic" appropriation of Taoist thoughts by 20th century artists and intellectuals, pointing out in particular de-contextualized interpretations of passages of the Taoism (道) and the "Book of Changes" (易经, I Ching). Fukunaga also states that he regards contemporary distorted interpretations of Taoist teachings as akin to eating the leftovers of the classics. Arguably, the spread of new digital technologies and the apparent trend toward intellectual superficialism and immediatism that they have encouraged may have strengthened the tendency in recent times towards simplistic and distorted interpretations, such as those that Eastern Thought has often experienced from Western audiences.

As a great example mentioned in this paper by the concept of "Zhuo Li Ji Cha" in Su Shi's music and ink painting. In this paper, I made an initial exploration of the different present forms, contexts and cultural backgrounds in Eastern and Western culture and art and I believe that a continued studies from this perspective will reveal the extraordinary meaning of integration between the East and the West.

## Acknowledgments

I am grateful to American Shakuhachi player, Ralph Samuelson for his encouragement and the topics we have discussed on music. Additionally, Junko Naka, Professor at Tenri University's research on music and sound in Su Shi's poetry has greatly inspired me. The meaningful exchanges on 20th-century arts from the perspective of New Science with Takashi Serizawa, the director of P3 and Environment have given me confidence in this topic.

A new type of scholar, Esteban Poole-Fuller, his broad knowledge, and efforts on review my English are important.

## References

- Cahill James Francis. (2010). Pictures for Use and Pleasure: Vernacular Painting in High Qing China James Cahill, University of Hawai'i Press, University of California Press.
- David Bohm, Dalai Lama, Robert Rauschenberg, Ilya Prigogine, John Cage, Huston Smith, Francisco Varela, Mother Tessa Bielecki, Rupert Sheldrake, Sogyal Rinpoche, Lawrence Weiner, Marina Abramovic, Fritjof Capra, Raimon Panikkar. (1990). Art meets Science and Spirituality in a changing Economy. SDU publishers, s-Gravenhage.
- Ernest F. Fenollosa. (2000). Epochs of Chinese and Japanese Art, Volume II: An Outline of East Asiatic Design, ICG Muse.
- Farzeen Baldrian-Hussein. (1996). ALCHEMY AND SELF-CULTIVATION IN LITERARY CIRCLES OF THE NORTHERN SONG DYNASTY – SU SHI 蘇軾 (1037-1101) AND HIS TECHNIQUES OF SURVIVAL –, École française d'Extrême-Orient.
- Jan Greenberg and Sandra Jordan. (2002). Action Jackson. 1st ed. Roaring Brook Press.
- Stuart H. Sargent. (2002). MUSIC IN THE WORLD OF SU SHI (1037-1101): TERMINOLOGY, Journal of Sung-Yuan Studies 32.
- 東坡全集 - 中國哲學書電子化計劃 (ctext.org).
- 馬一民. (2021). 《杭州宋韻話東坡》，杭州出版社.
- 余耀華. (2016). 北宋史，中國書籍出版社.
- 小澤裕之. (2019). 理知のむこう: ダニエル・ハルムスの手法と詩学, 未知谷. 藤枝晃雄.(2007). ジャクソン・ポロック新版, 東信堂.
- ジャクソン・ポロック新版, 東信堂.
- ジョン・ハスケル [著], 越川芳明 訳. (2005). 僕はジャクソン・ポロックじゃない。白水社.
- 鈴木大拙, 北川桃雄 訳. (1940). 禅と日本文化, 岩波新書.
- 鈴木大拙, E.フロム, R.デマルティーノ 小堀宗柏 等訳. (1960). 禅と精神分析 (現代社会科学叢書), 創元社.
- 鈴木大拙著. (1963). 続禅選集 第5巻 (東洋的な見方), 春秋社.
- 中沢新一. (2002). 人類最古の哲学 カイエ・ソバージュ 1, 講談社.
- 中純子. (2020). 唐宋音楽文化論: 詩文が織り成す音の世界, 知泉書館.

福永光司. (2005). 魏晉思想史研究, 岩波書店.

福永光司. (1971). 芸術論集 中国文明選 14, 朝日新聞社.

福光由布. (2013). 蘇軾における「樂」 (1): 宗教的経験と創作との関連をめぐって, 文芸学研究会.

横手裕. (2021). 蘇軾の内丹説：その特徴と意義, 伊東貴之編『東アジアの王権と秩序: 思想・宗教・儀礼を中心として』, 汲古書院.

**Contact email:** [clsayuri96@gmail.com](mailto:clsayuri96@gmail.com)





*'Art is Going to Save Us' -  
The Self Perception of the Mumbai Art Sphere in Contemporary Art Galleries*

Elvira Mishra, Indian Institute of Technology Bombay, India  
Jayesh Pillai, Indian Institute of Technology Bombay, India

The Paris Conference on Arts & Humanities 2024  
Official Conference Proceedings

**Abstract**

The definition and overall perception of contemporary art remains a point of discussion and debate in the current age. It is imperative to contextualize the same in developing countries as this perception varies vastly in different socio-economic groups and therefore for this study, we focus on examining it for India. Foremost, this paper attempts to find an objective definition for contemporary art for this study to be based upon. Subsequently, we conducted a brief qualitative study on the perception of contemporary art in Mumbai, India, from the perspective of three different primary groups associated with the art sphere. These include the art gallery personnel (curators, overseers, and owners), the exhibiting artists, and the gallery visitors. The overall result of this study shows that most of the participants are open and understanding of contemporary art. However, many art galleries we visited were not welcoming to the common public, as they were physically closed off. This leads to a divide between the common public and the people in the art sphere. A few potential new media routes are considered to improve the engagement of the larger Indian population with contemporary art. Further insights in relation to the preferences of Indian audience are noted and discussed.

Keywords: Art, Exhibitions, Sociology, Contemporary Art, Perception

**iafor**

The International Academic Forum  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)

## 1. Introduction

This paper deals with two main concepts - 'contemporary art' and the 'art sphere.' Before exploring how these two concepts correlate, we believe it is imperative to establish their definitions, which will thus contextualize our point of view and the study to come. Interestingly, contemporary art, as a definition, is still debated, with academia not married to what it concretely stands for. This therefore seeps into the nonacademic crowd and most individuals use contemporary art synonymously with 'modern art', 'post-modern art' and 'post-colonial art' (Karlholm, 2017; T. Smith, 2009). After examination of several academic sources, we felt that the available literature in an attempt to clear this confusion, has alienated us more, and has been unsuccessful in presenting a holistic definition due to constant contradictions. Therefore, to break out of this vague paradigm, we would like to define it by summarizing the literature based on our secondary research. This definition attempts to be objective and concise, and while it might not cover all the possible outlooks of the paradigm, we try to encapsulate the overall essence of the same.

### Defining Contemporary Art

For Terry Smith, a richly cited researcher for his exploration on the meaning of contemporary art, the global condition of *contemporaine* in art is defined by four concerns, which he briefly notes as 'time, place, mediation, and mood' (T. Smith, 2009, 2011). However, Andrew McNamara raises an interesting argument, while explaining Terry Smith's exploration; the argument states, that based on Smith's own classification process of art history, hasn't contemporary art at any particular moment in time, been contemporary, and consequently, is it possible to have a permanent condition of the contemporary? (T. E. Smith, 2009) To answer such musings, Terry defines contemporary art as 'The World's art'; consequently, what makes contemporary - contemporary, are issues wider than art. On a similar note, P. Osborne defines contemporary art as post-conceptual art. Here, 'post-conceptual art', is an art theory which states that the concept or idea is superior to traditional aesthetics or the selected medium (Osborne, 2010; *Post-Conceptual and Neo-Conceptual art Explained — CAI*, 2022). From these two prominent notions, it can be discerned that contemporary art as a whole, is just a presentation of a current concept, without relying on the superficial visual quality of the art piece. *Therefore, we define contemporary art as a unique technique of presentation of concepts or ideas that are relevant to the current moment in time.*

Another notion that this paper focuses upon is 'the art sphere'. This is used to refer to anyone who is related to art curation, artwork creation or production, art sales and auctions, and art collectors. Furthermore, this also constitutes professionals and academicians who have been researching or studying fine art, design, or similar disciplines. This definition is important, as in this paper, this 'art sphere' will be contrasted with the 'layman,' which we refer to anyone who is not in the art sphere and is not in any capacity involved with fine art or design. It is important to note that art enthusiasts or people who enjoy going to art galleries also are considered as 'layman' for the purpose of this research.

## 2. Literature Review

This literature review details an interpretation of the current database available for the perception of contemporary art and art Galleries in Modern India. This is important, as our research deals with studying how such perception can be changed and improved; how can the

art world be expanded to be more inclusive and intriguing for people outside the art world and the self-defined 'art sphere.'

### **Review Methodology**

The examined timeline was of the recent decade (2013 to 2023), as this research deals with the perception of contemporary art and we believe publications older than a decade would be outdated for this topic. For the purpose of this study, popular research databases were examined for results. Most of the results were irrelevant and returned literature in regard to perception of contemporary art and art galleries for nations excluding the Indian sub-continent. This signifies that this kind of research has not been well explored in India. In addition, when we tried narrowing down the research results to include 'India', many of the results started referring to Native American Indians. Consequently, we can infer that there is not much literature defining and understanding the perception of contemporary art by the Indian people. Out of the limited relevant results, most of the results were pure anthropological studies that dealt with the perception of the upper class and the exclusivity of art galleries, and no solutions or alternatives were proposed for this perception. Therefore, a research gap was clear, wherein, very little research is done on the perception of a lay man about Indian contemporary art.

### **Review of Relevant Literature**

From the relevant literature that was shortlisted, this review mainly focuses on relevant papers as well as a book by Thorstein Veblen - 'The Theory of the Leisure Class's (Veblen, 1994). The article by Savia Viegas (Viegas, 2001) does not touch upon art galleries, but details a very interesting interpretation of the perception of museums by common people, specifically the Prince of Wales Museums in Mumbai which does contain art, albeit not contemporary. Viegas explains that most of the visitors (about 60%) of such museums are people from lower socio-economic strata traveling from villages and rural localities in big groups to experience the museums. This is contrary to the West, wherein, as according to Vergos's survey, museums and art galleries are usually populated with educated, 'high-status' visitors. (Vergo, 1989) Viegas hypothesized that being present in such a building and being a part of an establishment that doesn't discriminate on the basis of caste and religion (something that they are used to in their local area's establishments), makes them feel included. Furthermore, it allows them to 'role play' as the upper class, as these places belong to the urban elite areas, and are usually associated with an upper-class pastime (Viegas, 2001).

*"Reactions to the exhibits are often generally very positive. Since the very idea of a museum has a class context attached to it, rural visitors dare not exclaim anything otherwise and prefix and suffix their visit/experience with very positive exclamations."* - (Viegas, 2001)

This argument proposed by Viegas translates into but also contradicts the statements made by Sooudi (2012). In her article, she discusses the perception and the inner thoughts of the populace of the South Mumbai art scene. According to her research, the galleries she attended were closed off small spaces that did not advertise themselves at all, thus separating themselves from the general public. They were meant for a closed circle, a club of sorts, wherein everyone knew everyone and newcomers were not welcome. However, she discusses that despite the art sphere's distaste for outsiders, they rely on them to drive the art valuation, hence coming up with the concept of a 'businessman scapegoat'. According to her hypothesis,

the small art sphere in India likes to remain purist and unadulterated by monetary valuation for art. They like to judge each other's creations based on the notion of 'good taste', which they believe is acquired from art education, class, and social high standing (Veblen, 1994). However, it is the people that come from new money that drive art sales for contemporary art - the outsiders. The perception of the Mumbai circle for them is negative and vain. They believe them having 'no taste', taints the Indian contemporary art sphere. The notion of 'taste' and 'no taste' is interesting and is discussed in detail by Veblen. He introduces the concept of "conspicuous consumption," where individuals engage in extravagant and wasteful spending to display their social status and wealth. Therefore, this signifies that art is a sign of wealth, and of status. But how did it become that way, isn't art, especially contemporary art, supposed to be about expression and identity? Isn't art supposed to be an autonomous body? (Mignolo, 2009).

These arguments are somewhat explored by Nataliya Komarova, in her study of emerging art markets in the world - India and Russia (Komarova, 2017, 2018). This comparison really shines light on the outlook of Indian contemporary artists when it comes to being a successful, as compared to Russia, where public and government institutions are on the forefront of art education, art display and sale. In India, these are driven and governed by private entities, with the Indian government having close to no regulations when it comes to contemporary art curating. This forces Indian artists to make art 'for-profit', or to cater to what buyers demand, thus 'tainting' the integrity of art, which Sooudi's article outlined as something Indian art sphere is revolted by (Sooudi, 2012). But the causes and consequences are linked to one another and unless a public intervention happens, these private establishments will continue to cater to the 'businessmen scapegoat' despite their aversion to it.

### **Knowledge Gap**

The perception of the general Indian public of Indian contemporary art seems largely unexplored. However, the general rural public of India is interested and open to be a part of cultural spheres, as it makes them feel included with the urban public. However, it is the upper class in the art sphere that enjoys their exclusivity and likes to keep out of the general public's eye. They deeply rely on the outsiders to sell art and sustain their societies. Therefore, the potential for change and inclusion exists, but realizing this potential will necessitate substantial efforts. These efforts must focus on dismantling exclusive norms and raising awareness among the Indian general public, alongside introducing them to art.

### **3. Study Methodology**

For the purpose of this study, 23 art Galleries were shortlisted in the Mumbai metropolitan area (Table 1), which were known to exhibit primarily of contemporary artists. The study was conducted over the period of two months and galleries situated in the art districts of South Mumbai (Kala Ghoda and Colaba) were visited. Out of the 23 galleries, we visited 8, out of which, only 4 of them agreed for interviews (Fig1). Many of the shortlisted galleries were closed for renovation, and some were closed as they were in the process of putting up new exhibitions. Additionally, we also attended public art events - 'Run as Slow as you Can' at the NMACC center, (*Toiletpaper Magazine*, 2023) and 'art Mumbai' at Mahalaxmi Racecourse in Mumbai.

The study involved visiting the gallery, noting and observing its ambience, presentation and the number of exhibits and visitors they have. A set of qualitative questionnaires was

prepared for the 3 participant groups – the art gallery personnel, artists and the visitors, and with informed consent, the participants were interviewed, and audio recorded. If the participant expressed hesitation with the audio recording, notes were taken. The recorded interviews were then transcribed and coded, and common themes were identified between same and different participant groups.

#	Gallery Name	Locality
1	'Effection' by Hansika Mangwani at Method gallery, Kala Ghoda	Kala Ghoda
2	Institute of contemporary Indian arts - Kala Ghoda	Kala Ghoda
3	Jehangir art gallery	South Mumbai
4	Piramal Museum of art	Lower Parel
5	Jehangir Nicholson art Foundation	Fort
6	The National gallery of Modern art	South Mumbai
7	gallery Chemould	Fort, Colaba
8	Project 88	Colaba
9	DAG	Colaba
10	Gallerie Mirchandani	Fort
11	AKARA Modern and AKARA contemporary	Colaba
12	Chaterjee and Lal	Colaba
13	art and Soul	Worli
14	Jhaveri contemporary	Colaba
15	Sakshi gallery	Colaba
16	Tao	Worli
17	Cymroza art gallery	South Mumbai
18	gallery 7	Kala Ghoda
19	Dr. Bhau Daji Lad	Byculla
20	gallery Maskara	Colaba
22	The Designera	Parel
23	The Museum of Living History by Mahindra	Worli

*Table 1. Shortlisted art Galleries*

#### **4. Art Galleries in Mumbai and the Barriers of Elitism**

Most of the galleries were situated in the South district of Mumbai. Coincidentally (or not), South of Mumbai, and especially the area that the art district is concentrated in, is one of the most expensive areas of Mumbai (Figure 1) (*Kala Ghoda Association, 2023*). It is an interesting point to note, as mentioned in the literature, the art sphere likes to associate with

the notion of ‘good taste’, and hence this shallow correlation with old money and the good taste is perhaps the reason why the galleries are established in this space. Even the art events were attended, which were broadly advertised on social media and other streams of media, were situated in richer areas of Mumbai, despite ‘Ran as slow as you can’, having a relatively affordable ticket price. Even more appalling was the location of DAG gallery. The gallery, although open to the public, is located inside an expensive 5-star hotel - ‘Hotel Taj’. To enter the gallery, one must enter the hotel from the lobby, walk through a passage lined with designer outlets and then reach DAG, which is situated at the very end of the passage. Setting up the gallery in this space, is effectively identifying that an art gallery is for the rich. We believe location-based segregation is extremely prevalent in cities like Mumbai with large economic disparity, and setting up of these public institutions in these areas will continuously ensure this divide. As mentioned in the literature, most of these galleries are privately owned, either by an individual or a trust. However, even the publicly owned art gallery - National gallery of Modern art, is situated in the South of Mumbai.



*Figure 1: The Kala Ghoda art district. This area has a concentration of contemporary art galleries of Mumbai, and hosts an annual art Festival since 1999*

The locational barrier is just one of the obstacles that an individual might encounter when trying to enter the art sphere in the city. During our study, it was noted that most of these privately owned galleries were small sections of buildings, without any obvious signage. That is - if one is not specifically looking for a specific establishment, they are not going to find it. To add to that, most of these galleries had no windows and had locked doors. To enter these, one would need to ring a bell, call an intercom or knock. We walked past a few galleries thinking they were shut, realizing in the aftermath that this is just the nature of these establishments. This is the antithesis of a gallery - which is supposed to be open to the public. The owners are not willing for people who are outside the sphere to even realize about the existence of the space, and hence the divide between the lay man and contemporary art is bound to only grow.

The galleries that were visited were all small privately owned spaces. Almost all of the participants asked not to be mentioned or associate the name of the gallery with their interview, which is why the names of the galleries visited are identified separately. Hansika

Mangwani, (*Experience*, 2023) one of the exhibiting artists at Method gallery, consented to be quoted in the context of her exhibition 'Effection'. Some of the galleries had active exhibitions by solo artists, while some displayed a collection of curated pieces. Two of the galleries had immersive experiences on display, one being Method with the 'Effections immersive experience' and the other being Toilet Paper studio with 'Run as Slow as you can'. Immersive exhibits are an emerging medium for contemporary art, and it was interesting to observe, how the Indian audience reacts to it. Furthermore, it was also noted that gallery curators despite being advocates for freedom of expression and innovation, had mixed feelings about immersive media in the art sphere.

## 5. Immersive Exhibits

Immersive in this context refers to any experience that evokes a sense of presence inside the experience. It refers to the state of the audience wherein they forget their reality and perceive themselves to be a part of the experience. The standalone galleries usually had close to no visitors when visited. The two galleries with the immersive experience were quite popular, and the fact that they were immersive was the main advertising point of the exhibits. One of these exhibits was present at 'Run as Slow as you can', (Figure 2) in the form of a Virtual Reality experience. It consisted of a 3D visualization of the space and the exhibit, and the viewer would be taken on a visual tour of the said space. The headset used was Meta Quest 2. It was not interactive. The exhibit was extremely sought after, with people queuing for it in long lines. When the overseers were asked why they think this is the case, they mentioned that the audience really liked the novelty of Virtual Reality. Minors were not allowed to view the experience, despite it having no explicit content. A lot of minors seemed interested however and came up to the overseers trying to persuade them to let them view the experience, a few times.

'Effections' consisted of a live-sized audio-visual installation, with the participant having to experience it one on one, by wearing a heart tracking device (in my case it was a fit bit) and sitting inside it. The installation was interactive, with it being responsive to the participants breath and heartbeat. After the experience, the participants were emailed a detailed heart chart. The overseer mentioned that one of the participants got back to her saying that she caught a heart abnormality after looking at her heart charts. When speaking to the artist about the audience's overall reaction to the exhibition, the artist said it was overwhelmingly positive and the group was surprisingly diverse. Interestingly, since the exhibition turned out to be much more popular than anticipated, a lot of the viewers were not from the art field. The artist expressed that although she is pleased by this outcome, she noticed that some individuals just came to take photographs for their social media, using her artwork as a backdrop, and not even experiencing the immersive aspect of the piece. This aligns with an article published by Anastasi, which discusses contemporary art as being used as a spectacle, or a backdrop, completely stripping all meaning from the piece. (Anastasi, 2020) However, the large attendance exhibited the avid interest of the Indian audience for immersive experiences.

An interesting exhibition to note was the 'Baad Me Aana' by Imtiyaz Ali, at Method gallery Kala Ghoda. In theory, this was a non-immersive fine art exhibition, as all the art displayed were paintings and craft pieces. However, what made this exhibit 'interactive', was the nature of viewing the space. All the participants were given a lit candle. The whole space was dark with no natural or artificial illumination. The only light source were the candles given to the visitors. Therefore, the visitors formed somewhat of a 'candle march', walking around in

groups holding the candles. What makes it compelling was that the nature of the art, as it was deeply inflammatory and controversial, given meaning to this whole procession. Consequently, the audience became a part of this performance. They were immersed and they were interacting with the exhibit to add more meaning to it. This is important to establish, as the notion of interactiveness and immersion is usually used in the context of digital media, but it could apply to an array of scenarios, thus its definition can be a point of discussion.



Figure 2: Promotional Poster for 'Run as Slow as You Can' exhibition

### The Self-Perception of Art Galleries - A Thematic Analysis

The thematic analysis was carried out by conducting in person qualitative interviews to the three user groups identified. The participants were screened merely based on their association with art and art galleries, that is - they should have been associated or a part of the art sphere in some capacity. A total of 8 interviews were taken, (Table 2) out of which 4 were gallery staff that comprised curators, owners and overseers; art visitors and one artist. The recorded interviews were then transcribed and coded. About 50 common codes were created which outline the ideas the participants wanted to share. Based on these codes, sub themes and overarching themes were identified (Figure 3).

Participant Group	Number of Participants	Mode of Data Collection
art gallery Staff	4	Audio Recording
art gallery Visitors	3	Audio Recording and Notes
Exhibiting artists	1	Audio Recording
Total Interviews	8	

Table 2. Details of the Participants

One of the main themes that arose was what was also discussed in the literature- the fact that elitism is prevalent in the art spheres of Mumbai. Most of the participants agreed that exclusivity adds to the appeal of art. They also discussed that lay people of India might have



a feeling of exclusion due to physical (discussed above) as well as mental barriers. Most identified the mental barrier to be the feeling of being out of place or fear of looking/sounding unaware due to lack of knowledge of art. Interestingly, although this statement was prevalent, one participant disagreed and said common people will also find aspects of contemporary art appealing, especially the ones that high class people might not even notice. Furthermore, the interviewed artist, although acknowledging the possible divide in awareness about art, eluded that she as an artist feels that the Indian art scene is becoming more welcoming and accessible both for the artists and the audience.

One of the curators was very adamant about the fact is the essence and value of art comes from its inaccessibility, and that a collection of art is majorly a status symbol:

*“... Not everybody can drive a Volkswagen. Not everybody can have a Lamborghini. You have to make yourself or build yourself to the point where you can understand and appreciate that. So, art definitely is a differentiator in that manner. You can't... You can't compare a Rolls-Royce to a Maruti, right? Maruti is for everyone. A Rolls-Royce is for a select few. Right. So, 100% there is an exclusivity in that manner. And unless and until it is not exclusive, the price of that art will not have a value.”*

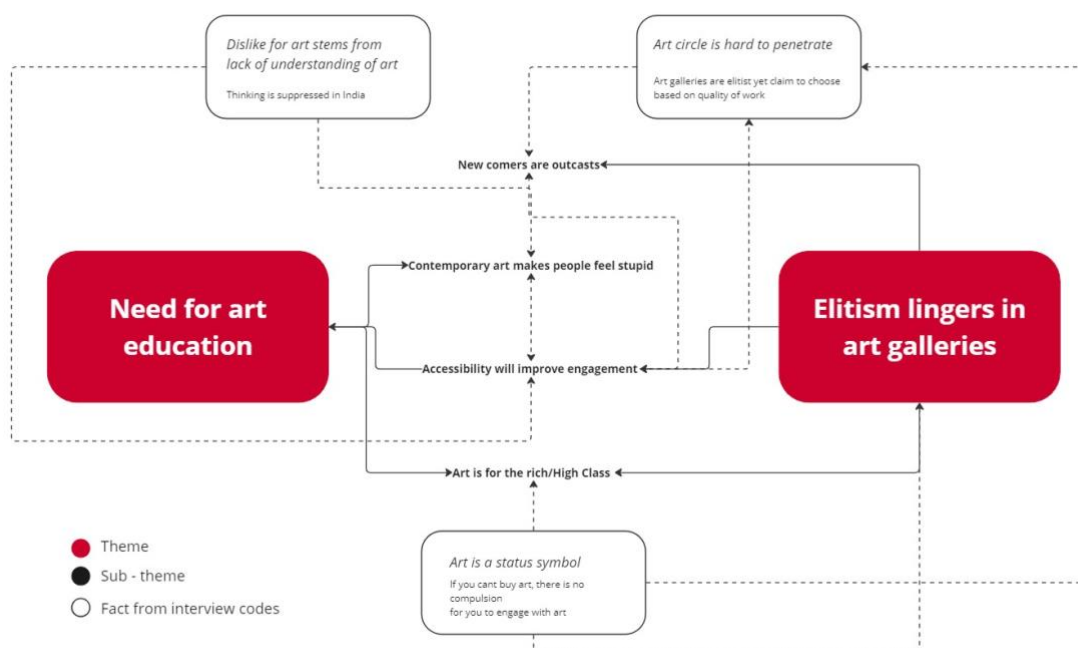


Figure 3: Thematic Map of Self Perception of contemporary art Galleries

However, another curator disagreed with this take, mentioning that they are frustrated with art being treated like a status symbol, and that she wishes buyers would buy art because they really liked it instead just because they have money and for the sake of having it. This correlated to the ‘businessman scapegoat’ phenomenon by Viegas. (Viegas, 2001)The other 3 curators were not as clear about their take on exclusivity and seemed illusive when talking about it and its significance in the art world. They did outline that most of their visitors are people with intent to purchase art, or are avid art collectors/enthusiasts, thus implying they are mostly higher-class individuals. This was further confirmed by interviewing the art gallery visitors, who were all older individuals, signifying that perhaps younger people might feel out of place much like people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

When asked about what would engage the larger Indian population with contemporary art, all participants stated that allowing the art events, art exhibitions and galleries to be more open and accessible for the public will improve the situation. Quoting lack of education and knowledge as a force shooing away newcomers, allowing exhibitions to be open spaces wherein people can exist and be exposed to art might eventually improve the layman's perception. Furthermore, art education from an early age might alleviate the feeling of alienation and lack of knowledge, according to the participants. To them currently, art can only be enjoyed if it's easily interpretable and aesthetically pleasing, which is always what art is. Lastly, a few of the curators mentioned that the Indian public shies away from contemporary art as it raises issues, and promotes thinking, and in our current society, thinking is suppressed and inherently looked down upon. Hence, when the audience is faced with something that forces them to think, their first response is repulsion, confusion, and contempt.

*Interviewer: "...The argument is that why should we do that (care about art). Why would people care about art when they have so many more issues to care about in a country like India?"*

*Participant: "What are these issues? Who is creating these issues? I think art is going to save us. art is going to save us because the fact of the matter is, why are people struggling to put food on the table? Late stage capitalism. Where is the messaging that tells people that we're in late stage capitalism? It's in art. That's why art is being kept away from people. art is systematically being kept away from people. Because it will save them."*

## 6. Conclusion

From this brief study, it can be understood that the nature of the Mumbai art sphere remains strongly closed off and exclusive. Most of the smaller privately owned galleries prefer to allow a select few to partake and admire the art they exhibit. However, speaking to the people involved, revealed promising interest in making art spaces more open and welcoming, with the condition that those who enter come with prior knowledge of art, or acquire 'good taste'. The art sphere is still very apprehensive about people whose only motivation to be in the space is mere interest in art, as they do not add any value to the space, be it in terms of buying it, admiring it or creating it. This is where the notion of the Viegas' 'Businessman scapegoat' manifests. The only reason this notion is tolerated over the former 'bad taste' individual, is in this world of art where the notion of good taste matters, the businessman is let in, as he has something to offer - money, value and progress. However, in this context someone who has 'no good taste' as well as doesn't outwardly seem to add any value to the sphere, is simply excluded. They are not even made aware of the sphere, and even if they would like to be a part, their entrance would be extremely tumultuous. Thus, this exclusivity is only limited to shallow notions of value and familiarity. Another notable outcome is the rise of immersive experiences in the contemporary art Sphere in Mumbai. Three immersive exhibitions were examined, and all three of them had a significantly larger footfall as compared to the fine art galleries. Furthermore, these spaces also appeared to be more inclusive, with open doors and more affordable ticket prices. These exhibitions seem more impactful and meaningful for the viewer. However, what could be classified as an immersive experience, is broad and undefined.

Lastly, in this study, the groups examined were a part of the art sphere. Very few people agreed to participate and for a more conclusive outcome a larger level study is needed. However it was observed that galleries in South Mumbai are illusive and it is hard to communicate with them without a strong internal network. Additionally, a few questions dealt with the opinion of the interviewees of how the perception of contemporary art is of the Indian layman. Those are speculative, and an in-depth qualitative study of the interviews of people not associated with the art field can be done for future work, the results of which can be compared with the results of this paper.

## **7. Acknowledgements**

We extend our gratitude to all the establishments there were available to converse with us throughout the study. Special thanks to Hansika Mangwani for engaging with us and sharing her expertise and experience via a virtual interview.

## References

- Anastasi, E. H. (2020). *The Experiential Museum: Immersive Installation art in the Age of Social Media*.
- Experience*. (2023). Effectation. <https://www.effectation.info>
- Kala Ghoda Association*. (2023). <https://kalaghodaassociation.com/>
- Karlholm, D. (2017). After contemporary art: Actualization and Anachrony. *The Nordic Journal of Aesthetics*, 25. <https://doi.org/10.7146/nja.v25i51.25155>
- Komarova, N. (2017). Ups and downs of art commerce: Narratives of “crisis” in the contemporary art markets of Russia and India. *Theory and Society*, 46(4), 319–352. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11186-017-9295-1>
- Komarova, N. (2018). Between the market and noncommercial art institutions: Early career strategies of contemporary artists in emerging art scenes. *Poetics*, 71, 33–42. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2018.11.004>
- Mignolo, W. D. (2009). Epistemic Disobedience, Independent Thought and Decolonial Freedom. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 26(7–8), 159–181. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276409349275>
- Osborne, P. (2010). *contemporary art is post-conceptual art*.
- Post-Conceptual and Neo-Conceptual art Explained—CAI*. (2022, March 9). <https://www.contemporaryartissue.com/post-conceptual-and-neo-conceptual-art-a-complete-overview/>
- Smith, T. (2009). *What Is contemporary art?* The University of Chicago Press.
- Smith, T. (2011). *What Is contemporary art?*
- Sooudi, O. K. (2012). art Patron as “Taste Scapegoat”? Complicity and Disavowal in Mumbai’s contemporary art World. *Etnofoor*, 24(2), 123–143.
- Toiletpaper Magazine*. (2023). <https://www.toiletpapermagazine.org/mumbai.php>
- Veblen, T., 1857-1929. (1994). *The theory of the leisure class*. New York, N.Y., U.S.A. : Penguin Books, 1994. <https://search.library.wisc.edu/catalog/999750315702121>
- Vergo, P. (1989). *The New museology*. Reaktion Books London; WorldCat.
- Viegas, S. (2001). *Rich Men’s Collections, A Nation’s Heritage, and Poor Men’s Perceptions*.

**Contact email:** [elvira.mishra@iitb.ac.in](mailto:elvira.mishra@iitb.ac.in)





©The International Academic Forum 2024  
The International Academic Forum (IAFOR)  
Sakae 1-16-26-201  
Naka Ward, Nagoya, Aichi  
Japan 460-0008  
[www.iafor.org](http://www.iafor.org)