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***The Visual Storytelling as a Way to Create Knowledge and Empathy Between
Generations in Academic Institutions***

Rui Vitorino Santos, University of Porto, Portugal

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Abstract

How can academic institutions value and promote the knowledge of retired professors and researchers in the field of design and art? The answer to this question induces a plurality of possibilities that share a common conclusion - Institutions could and should do more. This paper focuses on a pedagogical experience that explored the approach of a new generation of students to a group of retired professors and researchers from the Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Porto (Portugal), through the construction of graphic narrative artefacts. We started working from an archive made by interviews, visual and sound documents that collect the pedagogical, scientific, artistic and biographical knowledge and legacy of each professor or researcher. It was from these materials that each student worked, first bringing together elements that enabled the construction of the universe and particularities of each interviewee and, finally, producing narratives that offer a critical vision of a retired generation. We used the visual storytelling, for its ability to combine different signs in the representation of the real and symbolic and for its creative and communicational potential. The final publications proved that the knowledge of the retired generation is dynamic and useful for the new generations. Its legacy is fundamental for the understanding of the future of academic institutions and must be worked, visible and celebrated.

Keywords: Visual Storytelling, Graphic Narratives, Wisdom Transfer, Institutional Memory, Individual and Collective Memory

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Introduction

The result of the pedagogical practice that we will describe happened within the project *Wisdom Transfer / Transfer of Wisdom: Towards the scientific inscription of individual legacies in contexts of retirement from art and design higher education and research* (WT), under development at ID + – Research Institute for Design, Media and Culture, at the University of Porto (Portugal). This activity is one of several actions that materialized the aims of the WT project. The results obtained illustrate a practical example of the use of this legacy by a new generation of students of design and illustration within an academic institution of public higher education - The Faculty of Fine Arts of the University of Porto (FBAUP).

The material produced identifies, rethinks and values a material and immaterial heritage of some of the retired teaching members and researchers at FBAUP, which the WT project intended to archive, optimize and streamline, once

"[...] stems from the evidence that there is insufficient inscription and use of individual knowledge and experience of ageing and retired art and design professors and researchers. It hypothesizes that the legitimization of practice-led wisdom in art and design research will greatly contribute to the scope and depth of the discipline, as well as inform its role as a multi-disciplinary interface" (Alvelos & Barreto, 2019).

A scientific, artistic and human knowledge constituted by different types of dispersed material such as pedagogical, scientific, artistic and graphic practices or stories of the interviewed, about the institution, city, country, among others, which, when brought together in an archive, enabled new exploratory approaches to the investigation of this legacy – which is intended to be dynamic.

It is from this living archive of knowledge that different possibilities have been built for the use of this heritage and in particular where the focus of this article is inscribed, which contextualizes and reflects on a set of graphic narratives that propose and materialize the dialogue between a new generation of students with this group of retired FBAUP professors and researchers. To this end, we use visual storytelling as a catalyst for the transfer of transgenerational knowledge and the enhancement of transversal skills between the different interlocutors.

From one image to a sequential graphic narrative

Visual and graphic storytelling was chosen as a medium both for the historical tradition of the illustrated narratives in the context of FBAUP, visible already in some of the legacy of the elements of this retired generation and continued in several curricular plans of the study cycles at FBAUP, as well as for the capacity that the graphic narratives offer in the translation of the diversity of material and immaterial information from the WT archive. We are interested in thinking that the characteristics of multimodality, narrative polygraphism and polyphony (Groensteen, 2013:410) that this new generation of students use in the production of images and texts are ideal to approach the plurality of contexts and materials in the archive, through the creation of new visual repertoires that are based on affinity, knowledge sharing, identity and heritage.

A territory of dialogue and intergenerational empathy that graphic narratives can offer, when used in the interpretation and representation of the real and symbolic world that exist on the archive interviews, which, being fed by the intersection between partial and particular memories of the universe of each of the interviewees and students, allows a creative act where translation processes, plural and multidirectional reinterpretation are favoured.

What we intend to obtain is not only a quote from the real world that is represented by the image and sound of the video interview but representations that oscillate between the image that each student/illustrator builds of that world and what he adds from his own. In this way, the final result is always a sum between the Self (author) and the Other (interviewee), which results in a fictionalized and informed narrative that is built by the interconnection of these two poles. In turn, the final message or its multiple meanings are dependent on the decoding process of those who observe and interpret the final graphic narrative. A process that gives rise to a new meaning for these images, since it happens through the interpretation and reconstruction of different worlds that are implicit in a narrative composed mostly by images. As Thierry Groensteen tells us, "The image was defined as utterable, describable, interpretable and, ultimately, appreciable—all adjectives that put the accent on the active participation of the reader in the construction of meaning and in the assessment of the work" (Groensteen, 2013:20).

A type of participation that can happen in a single image, but when combined in a book format that explores the sequencing of images in combination with text, – the basic structure of comics or graphic narratives – becomes fundamental for its decoding. It is, in reality, the juxtaposition, sequencing and the gaps generated between images (text and image) and the turn over the pages that creates the narrative and defines the medium nature of graphic narratives. A multimodality space where different narrative and semiotic mechanisms are related and interconnected, that brings together "different semantic systems (figural, textual, symbolic) into a crowded field where meaning is both collaborative and competitive – between images, between frames, and between reader and writer" (Gardner, 2012: xi).

A rich ecosystem in connections where different signs interact and create gaps between themselves, whose decoding is largely dependent on the reader's skills. "As a result, there are several kinds of gaps [...]: texts and their elisions, images and their ellipses, and the divergence between the codes, all concurring in demanding active participation from the reader" (Ahmed & Crucifix, 2018:21).

It is important to point out other features of the graphic narratives that led to its choice as a form of communication and as a repository of the cultural memory of an institution, that is built by the confluence of individual and collective memories. The material produced, as mentioned, arises from a previous collection with clear objectives that went through to archive the legacy of a retired generation of FBAUP and its availability to the community inside and outside the institution. It is this cultural memory that the WT archive emanates that guided this pedagogical practice, that revisits, applies and reconstructs it in other contexts. In this case, we resort to the graphic narrative again for its singularities, namely the use of text, image and support - a space where reading the text and images happen at the same time and on the same surface.

Reading is an act that incorporates several socio-cultural and contextual dimensions that are conditioned to the cognitive, affective and visual skills of the reader. It is these dimensions that promoted the reading of the text as an essential competence of human evolution, a characteristic that educational systems have valued in detriment of the image. This promotion of the verbal dimension ends up influencing the way we deal with images which, although they are visual signs with narrative potential for description and communication, when we orient ourselves towards their understanding, this is mostly accomplished through verbalization. Although the text is a monosemic language - in which there is an articulation of specific and unambiguous meanings, according to a pattern of reading signs that are learned - it is not reduced to a simplified or mechanical translation process. But the text is also an aesthetic experience, they are also images, with a body, expression and a dimension on the page, they have a history, a distant and nuclear family that sometimes becomes visible. It is important to understand that words count, that there is a speech, an author, a register, a vocabulary, grammar, intertextuality, among others.

Unlike text monosemy, an image is polysemic. Therefore, achieving a single interpretation is difficult. The images are always ambiguous, with a wide range of possibilities for meaning, and are usually explicit in the way they approach the viewer. Reading images is a form of generative reading (Rose 2001), personal and collective, often according to empathic standards in its decoding with something that is not completely mastered, but which, in turn, does not stop us from continuing to seek a sense (Rogoff, 1998), since an image leads to other images in a form of intertextuality of the image that is built from the repertoire of previous individual and collective experiences and narratives. A form of storytelling that like Monika Schmitz-Emans says "[...] is rooted in a basic and transcultural human inclination to give narrative form to experiences and imaginations. In the course of human history, this inclination has manifested itself in changing medial forms and languages" (Schmitz-Emans, 2013: 385).

When looking at the graphic narratives we find the use of various signs, in different forms of combination in the construction of the narrative, in which the visual and the verbal are affirmed as a bimodal or hybrid text also characteristic of comics, picture books or graphic novels. In these contexts, each sign tends to be used according to its particularities and giving the other the information it best transmits, in an indirect transaction where both are limited, compete and interact in the same medium.

It is the exchanges between signs that best characterize the graphic narratives and the complexity in decoding them. In many of the examples developed by the students, the interanimation of the verbal and visual signs and the narrative sequencing are created not by the lived knowledge of what is expressed by the interviewed, but by information mediated through video, which adds complexity both in the act of creation and in decoding by the reader of the graphic narrative. In this way, they use visual and verbal intertextuality, where metaphors, analogies or paratexts offer other narrative possibilities to the legacy and story of each interviewee, which in turn contribute to making the final reader motivated to look at the text and image and start reading it. An invitation that gives to the reader a central role in determining the meaning of the content, a characteristic of graphic narratives that finds parallelism with the definition of transmedium and transmediatic proposed for W.J.T. Mitchell (2014), for the comics.

Transmedium because it's " [...] moving across all boundaries of performance, representation, reproduction, and inscription to find new audiences, new subjects, and new forms of expression." (Mitchell, 2014: 1476), a notion that is corroborated by Marie-Laure Ryan when she proposes the concept of the medium as a " channel of communication or material means of expression" (Ryan, 2014: 20). On the other hand, the graphic narrative is "transmediatic because it is translatable and transitional, mutating before our eyes into unexpected new forms. [...] it opens audiences onto a deep history that goes back before mass media [...] its openness to multiple alternative frameworks in terms of style, form, structure, material support and technical platform" (Mitchell, 2014: 1479).

We started by briefly identifying the differences between reading text and images apart so that we can better understand the graphic narrative possibilities when both signs are incorporated and coexist in the same medium, which originates a multiplicity of possibilities of combination. The relationships between text, image and support thus find in graphic narratives a perfect ecosystem to experience and communicate stories, for which we, as readers/observers, have a decisive role in their legitimation. In the particular case of these graphic narratives, it is up to us to manage and recognize the human and artistic heritage in the form of sequences made by text and image and created by a generation of young students (19 to 25 years old) from memories archived in the form of video and sound, where the retired interviewee builds a narrative path about his life as a teacher, researcher and individual. It is through a simple graphic narrative composed in most cases by only eight panels, that we are invited to relive moments of our collective and individual history as members of an academic community.

Cultural memory: Reshaping and revisualization of individual lives into graphic narratives

Before describing the objectives and methodology underlying the project of graphic narratives, it will be important to reaffirm their role in the construction of what we can call cultural memory on the form of a publication. We can think of a memory as a way to access our apprehended or previous experiences that are *reborn* in the present when they are remembered or reused. The archive created by the WT project is not just an archive of memories told in the first person or by the objects and *memorabilia* that illustrate the professional and private lives of these people, it is a dynamic and plural repository that amplifies others experiences and meanings that are reconstructed in living memories when remembered and shared.

The publications generated by the students are a result of the revival of these memories, in which the authors retrieve and recontextualize them in new narratives that although they start from real documents and present biographical elements of those portrayed in the final object, they are in reality metanarratives that deal with real information in which is attached different meanings that arise from mediation, empathy or affection between the author and the interviewee. A memory that "travel between disciplines, between historical periods and between geographically dispersed academic communities (Bal, *cit. by* Gibson, 2018:41).

A confluence of intergenerational signs that take place in an editorial artefact that welcomes these reconstructed memories, through creative processes that always

involve translation and construction and not the transparent and redundant duplication of reality or facts transcribed and recorded in the WT archive. The process of translation and reconstruction is an exercise that, triggered by factual information, by the individual's voice, but is also an exercise of fictionalized memory, "[...] It is rare, especially today, to read a memoir that does not also betray a fictive intent. Not only do memoirs openly adopt many recognizable authenticating strategies, but they also draw attention to gaps and omissions, to doubt and invention" (Pedri, 2013:128).

These processes indicate that memory and in particular cultural memory must be understood "as an effect of a variety of institutionalized discourses and cultural practices" (Plate & Smelik, 2013:3). An effect with multiple actors and where individual and collective factors give rise to different ways of processing and manifesting that are characterized by their plurality and complexity between a past that is reactivated in the present and that informs a future or as the authors tell us – a memory "is always a re-call and re-collection (the terms are frequently used as synonyms), and, consequently, it implies re-tur, re-vision, re-enactment, re-presentation: making experiences form the past present again in the form of narratives, images, sensations, performances " (Plate & Smelik, 2013:6).

A process in which the cultural memory is related at two levels, the individual biological memory (Erll, 2008) and the collective context. It's in the interaction between these levels that is summarily constructed the cultural memory, that "refers to the symbolic order, the media, institutions, and practices by which social groups construct a shared past " (Erll, 2008:5).

In short, the "engagement with cultural memory is therefore not only what comes after the making and distribution of cultural texts [and images], it also now often precedes that making, or occurs at every step throughout the process of making. So many digital works begin as acts of memory, with a user remembering a loved (or hated) mass culture text [image] and isolating, then manipulating, revising, and reworking, specific elements of that text [image]" (de Kosnik, 2016:3). A *modus operandi* that we recognize in the graphic narratives carried out by the students.

Graphic narratives: Empathic processes

The pedagogical practice included a set of collective (workshops) and individual (archive analysis and creation) actions and was carried out during the school year 2019/2020, in different stages throughout the year, only the final phase which corresponded to the printing and production of publications in a week risograph workshop did not happen due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although it was possible to implement the project, 27 graphic narratives were made, in three colours (blue, red and black), in A5 format, with 8 pages each (figure 1).



Figure 1: All graphic narratives covers

All actions were designed and carried out outside the context of a specific FBAUP course or study cycle. The extra-curricular option proved to be important since it made it possible to overcome the possible constraints of a curricular exercise, which could be subject to evaluation and also eliminated the potential demotivation of students without much interest in the practice of graphic narratives. The working model created a multidisciplinary and informal working group that in one year developed two projects and found specific meeting moments to discuss, produce and present final solutions with the different participants and researchers of the WT project.

As mentioned earlier, the focus of the project was to explore the possibilities of graphic narrative in transgenerational dialogue, taking as a starting point the archive of material collected by WT researchers. This project took place after a first one developed in the previous semester where the same group dedicated themselves to making illustrated portraits for each retired professor or researcher, an action that ended in a public presentation "You Look Familiar" (figure 2), at the FBAUP Cozinha gallery. This exhibition, in addition to presenting the WT project to the community, marks also the return of professors and researchers portrayed to FBAUP and the sharing of experiences and stories with current students.



Figure 2: Opening of “You Look Familiar” Exhibition at FBAUP Cozinha Gallery.
ph @claúdia Lima

The main group of participants in the illustrated portraits project and the coordinating professor at FBAUP (Rui Vitorino Santos) moved on to the graphic narratives project. The selection of students was based on the interest and skills demonstrated in the field of illustration and graphic narratives, both in previous courses of illustration and in extracurricular illustration work. It was sought that the participants were representative of the teaching of illustration in the different study cycles at FBAUP. In the end, the group was made up of 16 students from the Degree in Communication Design, the Specialization Course in Illustration and the Master in Graphic Design and Editorial Projects.

Since there was already empathy between the group and the students sense of belonging to a larger team of researchers from previous experience, it has facilitated the scheduling of tasks to be developed. At first, the audiovisual material produced by the WT team of researchers was distributed, namely the video interviews. The information collected by the students was mainly made of scientific, pedagogical and artistic experiences and knowledge (stories from the academy, former students, colleagues, among others) and revealed in the first person by the voice and image of the intervenient and the interviewer, and by the place of the interview (atelier, garden, college, among others) or the works displayed or cited.

The video-interviews proved to be crucial for the production of the graphic narratives, although there was a biographical concern in the message of each narrative, since each publication is dedicated to an individual, it was not intended to be a mere biographical record. Students were encouraged to explore and produce narratives for these individual stories, proposing other ways of thinking, recording and referencing their legacy, contributing to fixing it through new imagery and textual repertoires that emanate both from the experiences of each retiree and the students themselves. A discourse and ways of seeing in which past individual memory is reorganized and reconstructed in other ways that update these repertoires and contribute to the cultural

memory of FBAUP. The guiding lines that we explore in the methodology and objectives also intend to meet the expectations of the WT project archive, since this

"[...] reveals a potential for the recovery of (and a renewed interest in) skills and mechanics that, in particular instances, stem from decades or Centuries of practice and know-how. Filtered through past contextual application and value, they may find renewed viability and relevance at a time when analogue technologies and local/regional challenges act as a dynamic and constructive counterpoint to the pervasiveness of digital media and globalisation." (Alvelos & Barreto, 2019).

Results

As we suspected and in continuity with the objectives proposed, the results were quite diverse and proved that despite the structure of the video interviews being common among interviewees, the way to reconstruct the information they transmit by the students was quite plural.

We chose not to analyse the graphic narratives individually, but we tried to find affinities in the different discourses. In this way, we started by mapping close narratives and we built three large groups, which although presented individually can be found in the same publication or even double-page:

1. Individual and Collective Biographical Narratives

Where the student's interest is in creating a sequence of images that communicate information from the interviewee's personal history using different degrees of representation.

2. Metaphorical Narratives

On these narratives, it's difficult to know exactly the starting point. The action and characters are metaphorically explored with verbal and visual features that offers possible connections with the interviewee.

3. Visual References Narratives

In these narratives, there is a clear interest in the artistic or graphic work and it is from there that the sequential images are made in which the pictorial referent, expressiveness of work or artistic production is quoted.

Starting from these three broad categories, we subdivided each category into specific narrative contents. It is in this more detailed reading that we find the dialogue between author and subject portrayed more visibly, whether in the personal choice of the story, metaphor worked or in the inclusion of the student's personal experiences in what was illustrated.

In the first category, we highlight the presence of what we can understand as the cultural memory of FBAUP, namely through direct citation or induction of the following narrative features:

1. *Individual and Collective Biographical Narratives*

1.1. *FBAUP – Architecture and Gardens*

The importance given to the architectural and landscape space is not a surprise, since one of the faculty's hallmarks is precisely its implementation in an old palace from the 19th century, surrounded by an extensive garden. The 1950s marked the beginning of the construction of different buildings to support classes and the reduction of the green area. As we can see in the image on the left (figure 3), the garden was and is remembered as an iconic place in the faculty experience. However, we also find multiple visual and verbal references to the interior and exterior of campus buildings.



Figure 3: Left: Maria José Valente by Cláudia Alves. Center: Leonilde Princepelina by Francisca Ramos. Right: Antero Ferreira by Joana Pintor

1.2. *FBAUP – Students, Professors, Pedagogies and other Academies*

In this subcategory, the one most represented by students, we can find individual and collective episodes and stories reported by the interviewees, as students or professors. It is important to note that the majority of students ended up showing in these stories some references to pedagogical practices that they considered innovative at the time (in contrast to other academies) and that echo today in many of the faculty's workshops, namely teaching directed to the student interests and the appreciation of empathy between teacher and student in the learning processes.

1.3. *FBAUP – Cross Biographies*

This subcategory is related to cross stories between interviewees who remember the faculty, sometimes as the maturing of a relationship that still exists (e.g. Rodrigo and Isabel Cabral), or the reliving of certain affective episodes that were built and lasted until the present (figure 4).



Figure 4: Left: Helena Almeida Santos and Helena Abreu e Lima by Helena Luz. Center: Rodrigo Cabral by Aurora Peixoto. Right: Isabel Cabral by Aurora Peixoto

1.4. FBAUP - Social and Political Activism

The generation interviewed experienced the end of the dictatorship in Portugal (April 25, 1974) and the beginning of democracy. Thus, it is not surprising that many students have worked on themes related to democracy, the *carnation revolution* or social issues, such as the artistic education democratization for the entire population, among others.

1.5. FBAUP - Women Against Patriarchy

Although related to political and social activism, we decided to highlight the feminist struggle against patriarchy, since its activism and presence is mentioned by all-female interviewees. On the other hand, we consider relevant to find issues that, although they start with reports from the 20th century, are updated by students, for example by accentuating the need for gender balance in the teaching community or the Art and Design world (figure 5).

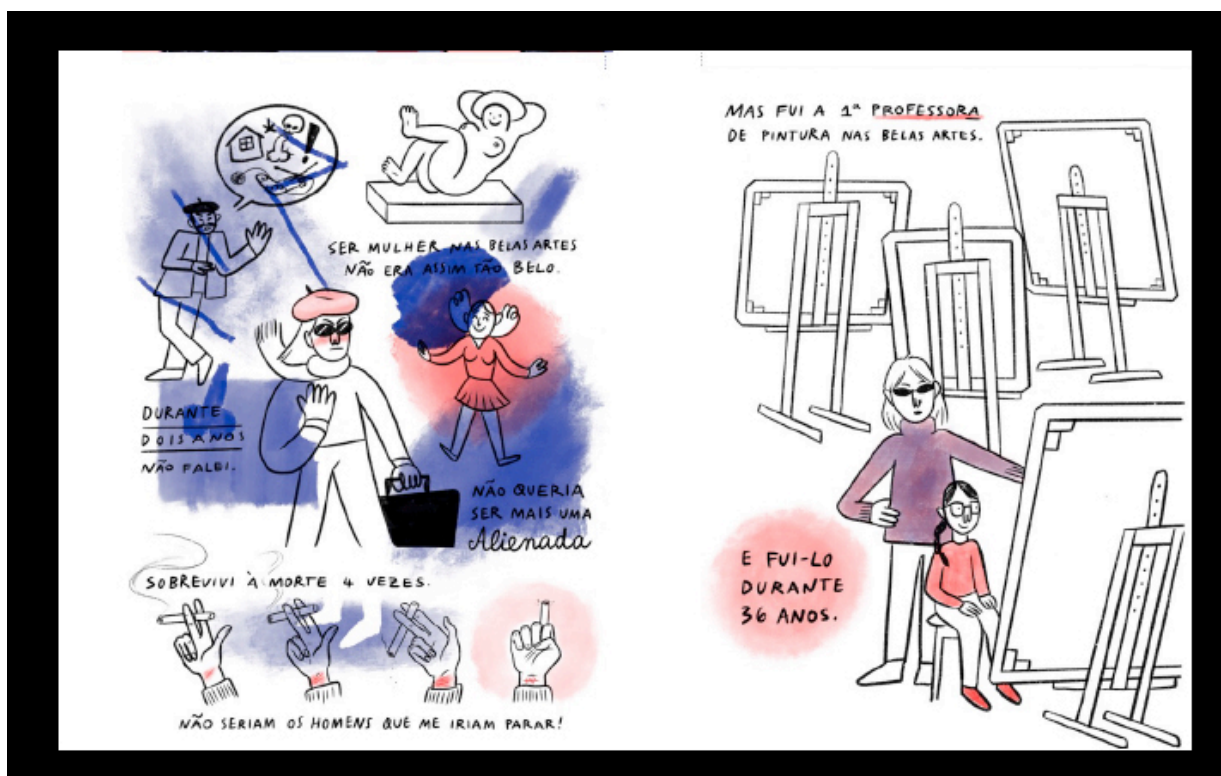


Figure 5: Maria José Aguiar by Biakosta

2. *Metaphorical Narratives*

2.1. *Freedom and Self-knowledge*

In this category, we can find solutions that use metaphor or euphemisms to convey concepts that are not personalized, but collective, such as the relationship between freedom and its promotion at FBAUP or experiences of self-knowledge that marked the interviewees.

3. *Visual References Narratives*

Finally, concerning this last category, we can see its subdivision into three groups that correspond to the historical courses offered at FBAUP: Painting, Sculpture and Communication Design. In these narratives, we see the student's interest in the interviewee's work. We find different forms of citation: the visual reference of the original work and in other examples, where we realize that the interest lies in the representation of the author's vocabulary or its artistic practice evolution. In both cases, the student tends to mimic and translate the language or narrative elements that characterize the artist's work (figure 6).

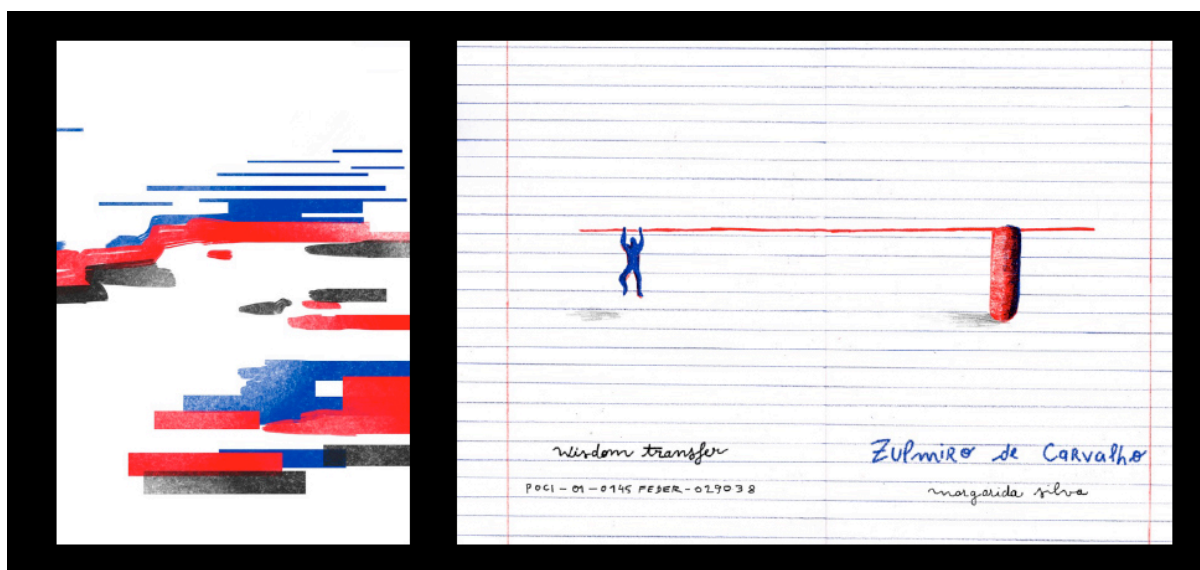


Figure 6: Left: António Quadros Ferreira by Cheila Mendes. Right: Zulmiro de Carvalho
by Margarida Ferreira

Although these subcategories were presented individually in reality, they can be found or parts in a single publication. In the same way, we believe that in an even more detailed reading we could still identify other features or intergenerational micro-narratives.

Conclusion

The proposed pedagogical practice, The visual storytelling and the graphic narratives as a way to create knowledge and empathy between generations in academic institutions, although it had an atypical ending, due to the COVID-19, not allowing the full return of professors and researchers to FBAUP or the collective production of publications in risograph, it confirmed, however, the pertinence and urgency of retaining and using in the universe of higher education the scientific, pedagogical, artistic and human capital of its reformed teaching and research community.

When analyzing the plurality of materials and information collected on the WT project, we easily understand that archiving - although fundamental - is only the first action to enhance this heritage. What we described in this pedagogical practice is evidence to the usefulness of this heritage. These graphic narratives reinforce our belief that sharing and exchanging knowledge between generations is fundamental for the future of academic institutions and for building a sense of belonging, identity and empathy.

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Death of the Enemy: The Spectacularity of War and a Zombie Enemy

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Abstract

The constructedness of the notion of ‘enemy’ specially during war times often includes demonization and propagandist characterization bordering on depicting inhumanity in ‘them’. But in this paper, the move is from a human enemy to a nonhuman one - a zombie. Keeping in mind its nonhuman characteristics and inhumanity, the argument is carried on to how the ideological constructedness, the creation and destruction of the enemy is handled in the two South Korean Netflix drama series ‘Kingdom’ and ‘Kingdom 2’. Further this paper attempts to study the event called ‘death’ as a posthumanising event. The ‘creation’ of the zombies who were meant to play the role of experimental ‘subjects’ to kill human-enemies, in turn became enemies threatening the survival of the very humans who created them. The main question is how the putting to death of the zombies, which was meant to redeem the ‘human’ in them from ‘death’, in fact itself becomes a moment when the non-/in-human asserts its precedence over the human. Finally, the concepts of ‘enemy’, ‘death’, ‘human’ and ‘posthuman’ are questioned in relation to each other to understand the ideology necessitated by wars. The above discussion is extrapolated to the historical situation of war in the Joseon dynasty during the reign of King Seonjo in the years between 1575-1592 A.D. The spectacularity of both – the human-deaths and the zombie-deaths – will be read as a tool to induce fear, suspicion and hatred for the ‘enemy’ among participating soldiers.

Keywords: Posthumanity of Death, Undead Enemy, Posthuman Gothic, Horror Cinema, Zombie, Enemy, Monster, Posthumanization through War, Identity Construction

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Introduction

“... Yet the dread
Of dying, and being dead,
Flashes afresh to hold and horrify. . . .”

- Philip Larkin, ‘Aubade’ (1993)

In this paper, it is argued that the ‘undeath’ of the zombies is a nomenclature serving, not merely to delineate the threat of the end of the human species from its possible human and nonhuman ‘others’, but also to define the imminent confrontation with the ‘other’ under a war ideology. At first, it explains the position that during the urgencies of a war, the idea of the enemy is radicalised as a monstrous ‘other’ and constructed to meet the criterion of the *Diablo*. Then, it discusses how the screen depictions develop upon a negative portrayal of the enemy as the zombie and disseminate the war ideology. It particularly examines the state of *Joseon* Korea (1392-1910) as the dramatic site where this ideological play takes place, in the web series *Kingdom* and its sequel *Kingdom 2*. The posthumanism of the zombie deaths as events is a conclusion that is hypothesised.

Zombie-body as Other

The death of humans, according to the Platonic doctrine in ‘Georgias’ (Plato, 1997a) and ‘Phaedo’ (Plato, 1997b), occurs when the immaterial soul sheds the ‘tomb’ of the body to return to its original state (Masao & Dilworth, 1986). In positing the soul’s immateriality, there is an assumption about the body’s temporality and otherness, and the ‘self’-hood of the soul. The creation of zombie monsters imagined the resurrection (Garcia, 2014) of the ‘dead’ body minus the soul; as literal figures of death. As they come into ‘being’ after the human ‘dies’, temporally they are the *post*-human animations of the rejected carcass (Lauro & Embry, 2017). Their resurrection may be explained as prolonged Lazarus reflexes; but this paper focuses on the death and possession of a body (own and/or another’s) and so, takes the cause of zombification to be an occupation by a subhuman, often microbial, specie. So, the first question that arises is whether they can be considered the fearsome ‘undead’.

As Micheal Sean Bolton (2014) points out, the dread of the posthuman Gothic is caused by the fear of what ‘we’ will *become* and what will be *left* of ‘us’ *after* ‘our’ demise. It is a fact taken up uncritically that the human faces a threat. The basic premise of human superiority would be challenged when the body, rejected by the ‘soul’ in hope of decomposition, gets usurped instead, thus raising the ‘dead’ from their graves. A ‘death’ of the human is a loss of the soul that represents selfhood. So, a necessary presumption for the creation of a zombie is their becoming *supra*human. Accordingly, the exploited, defiled and zombie body ultimately must decompose to a state of non-existence with the ‘death’ of the zombies to end this possibility of potential extinction. There is no fault line that allows the super-(post)human to *be*, except with an ‘end’ of the human. Death then marks the transition from being human to becoming a new entity – either spiritually divine and immaterial or monstrously physical.

Zombies in different legends and films have different origins but the most common narrative development seen is that the affliction first hits the ‘other’ humans who have

already been placed nearer the monster and, therefore, cannot be included in 'civilisation'. Here, it is contended that the *posthuman* in the zombie is only possible when the human person, whose material body is the basic constituent of the zombie, is already an alterity or approaching an alterity. That aspect of the human in the zombie, who is already outside the borders of normal and acceptable humanhood, therefore is the monstrous. The human 'other' is just removed from its kindred species and counted as part of the zombie which is the actualisation of that 'other'. The *posthuman* in the zombie is then, according to the contention, an actualisation of this alterity to its maximum, imaginable potential. This actualisation takes place by the posthumanising event called 'death'.

Zombie-Enemy in War

War ideology attempts to create a binary between the idealised group defined against another. The self must, by self-description, consider itself as the manifestation of ultimate order, sacredness of action and righteousness of purpose; and who is pitted against an enemy – the 'other' representing chaos, disorder and all monstrosity - who must be defeated or suppressed. From a Freudian viewpoint, the *heimlich* (homely, familiar) may be said to be warring against the *unheimlich* (unhomely, uncanny). This binary is ideologically propagated like a negative reinforcement and instils fear and thereby solidarity among the group members against the enemy to ensure the community's mobilisation and cohesion during an actual socio-military crisis (Xiaofei 2011).

Thus, by portraying qualities of otherness and uncanniness in the enemy, the group's fear and preparedness is meant to be weaponised to prevent the *unheimlich* from crossing over into the boundary of the 'home' space; including the idea of what it is to be *human*. Creed (1993) observed that anything "which crosses or threatens to cross the 'border' is abject" and this idea potentially demonises such social groups which have been seen as threats to civilization and order (Kristeva, 2018; Cole, 2006; Vint, 2017). In view of this, Freud's statement can be proffered, that a human too can become uncanny "when we credit him with evil intent" under the condition that "this intent to harm is realized with the help of special powers" (Cole, 2006). The zombie in being the *posthuman* already is placed in the position of the abject.

The enemy is seen as a collective entity (Tally, 2010) capable of overpowering the group with its swarm-like progress in attacks. Under a war ideology, the collective and institutionalised body of the actual enemy-army coincides with the idea of the body; that is, the bodily other of the Platonic soul-self. The latter is assumed to be prone to hijacking, exploitation and possible conversion into a monstrous, re-animated entity. Similarly, the army body also is capable of self-definition by qualities of loyalties for the 'self' yet it can be prone to betrayals and disloyalties. As part of international politics, an ideology constructs the enemy as a deviant in the hierarchical order of civilization; thus, placing them completely outside of civilization and nearer the devil, wherefrom they attain or get attributed by association the aspects of the fiendish. From a theological point, this binary can be seen in terms of followers of the divine law poised against the diabolic army who follow Satan's chaos. The army which also is at the socio-political border of the society can be prone therefore to going astray.

The negative labelling and cultural depiction of enemies as monsters work oppositely to the reification of heroes (Ducharme & Fine, 1995). It obfuscates them into evil par excellence, condemns them irredeemably and denies causal, moral and spiritual legitimacy to their cause (Dovi, 2001). Placed on the boundary that separates the human from the animal and also from a cyborg-automaton (Haraway, 1985), the enemy is denied 'humanity' and given the uncanniness of an abject, human-animal hybrid; cinematically transformed into the zombie army. The enemy becomes the living 'dead', a zombie-enemy, who in their state of being dead keep intact their 'life' as persisting and persistent threats. So, the zombies who were seen as enemies as well as representations of enemies will now be seen as the posthuman selves with potential for underlining the otherness latent in the human as well as the societal and the military self.

The spectacularity of war in these narratives plays this very role of allowing the cultural assumptions of otherness to be enacted and confronted. The most vulnerable group, the army, is put through rigorous trials of showcasing inclusion into the group-self either by killing or by sacrificing. The deaths include gory dismemberments of the physical human body and the more gothic re-memberment of the dismembered body into a mock-human entity in the material form of the zombie. This enactment of the enemy's cultural reimagining over history, through processes of distortion of memory and of remembering of the anecdotal histories, highlights the negative cultural reinforcements passed as cultural memory that construct the ideology of fear around the enemy.

On the Screen

Televised dramas and cinema as cultural artefacts have contributed covertly to perpetrating violence against rival groups and cultures on behalf of a willing audience (Shaw, 2001; Xiaofei, 2011). International politics and rivalries are common themes around which some media representations are built revealing underlying socio-political signification. Zombies as the enemy and the enemy as the zombie are common tropes in war-themed, historical fiction genre of film narratives. The classic zombie film *The Night of the Living Dead* (1968) (and its sequels) by George Romero, gives what Bishop (2010) calls the 'primal narratives.' Dani Cavallaro (2002) argues that other films take their inspiration from it either to deviate or to inverse or to further the idea.

The zombie representations, in dramas and movies alike, can be also seen as metaphorical allegories of the socio-military onslaughts by the enemy. The zombie menace narratives can be read as offering some prominent ideological stances which the target audience – who by virtue of belonging to the culture or group which considers itself under threat – must be familiarised with. By dramatizing the uncanniness of the monstrous enemy and the monster-enemy, these narratives echo Mary Shelley's prophetic reminder about "the dangers of playing God and making monsters" from her 1818 book *Frankenstein* (Lippe, 2019).

They question the safety of 'our' homes and even its boundaries, where 'home' would refer to the defined space of safety and privacy. It may be individual, social, cultural, national or even planetary in scope, which is opened to the unfamiliar and the alien - the unheimlich - the zombies. As these creatures of defilement are brought so close and into the 'sacred' space, these films ironically judge the audience's privileged relation with both, death and its mediated image (Cameron, 2012). Placed within the war

ideology, it becomes a comment on the instability of feelings of purity - of body, identity and space - and also of comfort.

Depicting the mass conversion of humans into zombies by bites and infections, it sexualises the zombie-enemy as regressively, orally gratifying its repressed desires despite its asexuality. Through such representations, the potential for reproductivity and multiplicity by the enemy is magnified and the terror of the imagined threat among the victim/audience is peaked. The entry of the zombie-enemies into homes is filmed as equalling in terror with the attempts of 'dishonouring' the bodies of the living, and the deserted homes are given a dishevelled look which is often associated with the loss of 'purity' of the body after a rape.

The narratives work also as a warning that allows nothing except unbridled loyalty to the group, almost approving "atrocious retaliation" (Xiaofei, 2011). Falling prey to the enemy entails being forsaken or killed by the group. Showing early symptoms of 'turning into' a zombie brings death at the hands of the allies, who preserve the purity of the group from the dangers of infiltration, betrayals and treason, even when these are unintended or unavoidable. On the other hand, sacrifices for the group's safety are idealised.

These narratives secure the belief in the potential strength and intended (even if unethically executed) uprightness of the existent social, political, military and medical institutions. Hardly ever responsibility – ethical or otherwise – is deemed due for scenes where failed experiments while searching for cures or the mass murders of the humans-turned-zombies are shown. These get portrayed as necessary evils to strengthen group security. The erasure of the monstrosity and savagery with the death of the zombie-enemies is called upon without establishing the causal explanation of their subhuman actions, merely because their subhumanity is presumed to be 'natural' to them. The necessity of their 'deaths' is normalised and looked forward to (Sigurdson, 2017), for the wellbeing and continuance of 'civilisation.' Simultaneously, it confounds the culturally established notion of the 'humane.' The killing spree occurs on both ends of humans and zombies, blurring their distinction.

They reinforce the ideology in projecting the necessity of the war efforts at the societal level, and the individual efforts required of the group members. It encourages cohesion and members believe in their inclusion when leaders plan strategic methods of war. The dramatization of the sacrifices and valour needed of members highlights the validity of the war against the imaginary enemies – imaginary because of their portrayal as monsters, and imaginary also because the threat from the real enemy is always potentially present rather than actually compromising border security. The challenging of the potential breach of security of the 'home'-space makes the war on the human 'other' and also the non-human 'other' necessary. Furthermore, the 'divine' retribution offered by the director-writer-god purges the group of its vengeance.

The dismemberment of the enemy on-screen provides catharsis - fear and pleasure - to the audience. The spectacle of dismemberment and disembowelment, which has been compared to pornographic presentation by Mcglotten and Vangundy (2013), of a monstrous enemy by a substitute actor rather than the 'actors' who would be in immediate harm – soldiers and civilians – provides cathartic effect on the audience by identification (Mulvey, 2010). Achieving effects of dismemberment is now a matter of

media technology (Cameron, 2012) but as quick death without trials is deemed to be the only way to end the evil that threatened civilization, it is unquestioningly accepted as ethical. The performance of control exertion by the state power reveals the formation of power-wielding institutions of modern society. Their control over the body by way of its definition, whether it be deemed a zombie or not, nearly explains Foucauldian 'biopower' (Orpana, 2017; Thacker, 2017).

The *re*-memberment of the zombie out of the broken, wounded and battered human body forms the cultural representation of the enemy, to form the patched, stitched and grotesque image. Also, in *re-membering* the enemy image as the venomous yet inseparable part of the cultural 'body' of the group, it remembers the enemy even generations later. Contrarily to the above, it also works to override the novelty of the unnaturalness of the enemy into a naturalisation of its unfamiliarity. The zombie-enemy is already known to be gory; yet each time the threat is brought out in the open, the fear lurks in the present with bare connection to the past knowledge of the same threat. This renewed fear highlights the Freudian 'return of the repressed' at individual, social or often even cosmic levels.

The acquaintance-yet-strangeness of the enemy, and its position as simultaneously dead and undead, puts it in an instable situation like of Schrodinger's cat. The war ideology places the enemy within the unknown only so far that to be still identified. Thus, the zombie-enemy becomes a major construction out of a war ideology that drives a group to maintain a constant surveillance of its border purity. In the narrative of the recent Netflix-hosted South Korean drama series *Kingdom* and its sequel *Kingdom 2* which is discussed in detail in the last section, the *Joseon* dynasty (1392-1910) of Korea during the rule of King Seon-jo (1567-1608) is the historical setting and the Japanese Invasion (*Imjin waeran*) of 1592-98 is the highlighted war situation.

Analysis of *Kingdom* and *Kingdom 2*

The Netflix-hosted web-series *Kingdom* and its sequel, *Kingdom 2*, re-enact global rivalries and enmities to keep them afresh in the memory of a people. The drama relives the ancient rivalry that still exists between the Japanese and the Koreans in subtler forms. In this web series, the crucial years and their importance to Korean historical development have been brought back into present commemoration. A journalistic comment from Renaldo Matadeen of CBR in 2019 after the first season of the drama was that it made "even bolder socio-political statements than *The Walking Dead*."

The series dramatizes the understanding that was constructed and prevalent about the invading Japanese forces, about their ruthlessness and war-hardened nature. The Japanese forces are ousted by a zombie army thus celebrating the memory of the military stalemate of the forces and their withdrawal in the historical times. The politically mindless, egotistical and undignified attack by Toyotomi Hideyoshi (Turnbull, 2008), daimyo of Japan, is demonised into non-humanity when contrasted with the civilised, peace-loving and organised Joseon with its Ming heritage.

The depiction of the Japanese soldiers as zombies reflects the cultural construction used to demonise the enemy in a war context. The political schemes and military strategies also run parallel to the biologically forced change. The question is whether to term it as evolution or devolution. As devolution, it underscores the conversion down the 'chain

of being' into zombiehood which is similar in its position to bestiality. As evolution, it can be said to highlight the rising up of a specie into the supra-humans who have crossed the fact of death and a possible end into a specie which can never be extinct.

The demonisation of the enemy is literal through zombification. The process is defined and weaponised by way of gaining political, cultural and historical retribution. The conversion of own soldiers in a kind of socio-biological experiment or an experimental bio-war underlines an equalisation of the demonic power held by it to counter the other's monstrosity. But it also reveals the extent to which a group is self-haunted by the process and remains constantly under threat of completely converting into its own other. In the death of the enemy, there is a thrill of self-definition but it also pulls in magnetically its own members. That moment is when the deaths of own people become either sacrifice for or treason to the cause. In dying at the hands of the zombies, the conversion into zombies is a form of that betrayal to the cause of the group, which would in a 'real' war situation be akin to a situation of desertion of post or surrendering to the enemy or becoming prisoners of war.

In the blurring of the boundary between the actual enemy, the zombie-enemy and the self-turned-other emerges a space for the war ideology to dissipate into its own counter. The killing of all these enemies in a war situation questions the boundaries drawn between the self and the other, the group and the enemy, and the normalised human and the monster. Death which makes possible the conversion of the soul-self into the realm of its bodily other, the ideal group self into the savage group other, and the human self into the monstrous other, also can bring about a reverse conversion. But the death of the zombie-enemy-other to bring into life the human-normal-self posthumanises the former and decentres the latter into its own other. Under a war context this conversion is radical in its upturning of the very ideology in which it is played out.

The scars can prove useful evidence. The scars from the zombie-bites become the signifying marks of the decentred human, placed among all the other species as one *among* them, and not superior to them. The human gets liminally placed somewhere as a cinematic hybrid and a biological hybrid too. One who is human yet not quite defines the otherness in the selfhood of the de-zombified human or as he can be called the 'dead zombie' returned to the realm of the living. The scars leave open-ended the questions and the doubts regarding the position occupied by the zombie-enemy in relation to the human-self, sociologically, culturally as well as militarily.

Conclusion

This paper discussed that the creation of zombie monsters as personifications of the terror of the enemy group reflects the urgencies of war. This multiplied horror of the real enemy justifies the later cultural actions taken against them. It discussed the reasons that lead to the imagination of the enemy as a monster and how enmities beguile the cultural notion of the other group pitted against them. The death of the 'other' group results out of a concern for survival of the self. The overlapping images of a monster and an enemy are therefore to be seen as cultural practices meant for the preparedness of a people against their internal fears as well as external foes. Zombification of the enemy and the thrill in their deaths therefore also play an important part in the creation of a group identity.

The conclusion meant to be derived from the present discussion was the posthumanism of the death of the zombies. In the image of the zombie, there is an intersection of the enemy-other and the self, which is brought together and placed in equality. The death of the human body blurs the boundary which 'others' the monster. The diabolical representation of the enemy places it at par with the monster too. So, zombification makes both otherness in selfhood and selfhood in otherness possible in the same physical (bodily) or collective (military) entity. The death of the zombie becomes the actual posthumanising moment, where and when the humans-turned-zombies regain human-hood but cannot return to it completely. It is then that the self becomes its other and the other becomes the self. The evidence of it is given by the scars from the zombie-bites. In the posthumanisation made possible by the event called 'death,' there is a vast possibility of intervention and discussion still possible.

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***Professional Photographers of Instagram: The Meaning of Visual Communication
Through Modern Photography in Digital Society***

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to study the modern forms of visual communication of people, through Instagram. In order to study the way in which the visual message is transmitted between individuals, and then how this transmission of information affects its final content, determining the creation of aesthetic experience and perception in the individual, the study of online portraits was divided in three parts: a) the poses that prevail in online portraits, b) the structure of the photographic/cinematic frame, and finally, c) the color and color harmony of the portraits. To study this, two types of research were conducted. First of all, primary data were collected regarding the most popular Instagram portrait photographers and their photographic portraits that received the most reactions with likes. Then, an experiment was conducted with participation of the students of a university department and the content included the most popular portraits, professional Instagram photographers and the official names of online photography and photography poses. The result of the experiment shows that, despite the fact that the portraits of each photographer are separated and the participants are not informed about the owner of each photograph, the only four portraits supported by the same number of people, both for being worth a "like" and for the attractiveness of their colors, were four of the five portraits of the same photographer. This means that only one photographer managed to make a strong impression on the participants through his technique.

Keywords: Instagram, Visual Communication, Photographic Portraits, Color Harmony

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Introduction

In this day and age, observing the evolution of ideas, notions and practices that people in a social group develop is facilitated by the fact that a large amount of them occur on the worldwide web. The internet functions as a channel of expression, as well as an information source for the modern person. According to Solomon Negash (as he is quoted by Isaris & Pourkos, 2015), social reality and thus political and cultural structures are reflected through art and perhaps nowadays through the internet, too.

The social medium “Instagram” began its operations on 6th October 2010 with twenty-five thousand (25,000) users registering on the platform on its first day alone. Instagram is a free application where users post photographs and videos. Today it is available in twenty-five languages, has one billion users and more than five hundred million posts per day. Instagram is one of the most popular social media platforms worldwide, which, in addition to its nature as a medium that in turn is almost entirely based on visual content via pictures (either static or animated), renders its contribution to the way people are trained to interpret and react to pictures and their messages (Instagram - Instagram Data Center) particularly important.

The purpose of this research is to analyze the way that people receive and approach visual messages from the art of photography on Instagram. Therefore, the factors of these approaches have been determined as follows: a) poses online, b) the photographic/cinematic frame, and c) the color and color harmony of photographic portraits based on photos that have been posted on Instagram by professional photographers.

Literature review

Characteristics under study: poses, frame, color and color harmony

A portrait in photography refers to the depiction of facial characteristics - according to the definition of the term - and is perhaps the most popular type of photograph, especially the artistic type, either professional or amateur. The concept of the portrait suddenly came into people's lives after the emergence of photography, since the resulting product was particularly realistic, cheaper and more time-efficient than the portrait painting that most people used until then. When taking a photograph two living factors are in the works: the model (the person in the photograph) and the photographer.

The most popular type of photograph that has emerged through the use of social media and has been mostly favored in them, is the “selfie” or “the portrait of the photographer” or “self-portrait”. It involves the photograph taken by the person depicted in it. In our day they are taken primarily with a mobile phone, which even led to the addition of the front camera, and more rarely with a camera, where the selfie originally started.

The selfie as a trend reached its peak in popularity through Instagram, while it was used on Facebook and Twitter as well. In 2013 the word “selfie” was declared “word of the year” by the Oxford English Dictionary, while in August 2014 the word was added in the well-known board game “Scrabble”. Despite the fact that the selfie does

not inherently pose a threat, like all new technology does not, the removal of the mediator in the photography procedure led to excessive practice of it. People often cannot comprehend they are being led to overuse, because their desire for approval outweighs the negatives, which causes the overexposure of one's life resulting in coming close to narcissism. In the US, pharmaceutical companies are already talking about "selfie syndrome" (Simos, 2017). Gradually the selfie started to evolve, resulting now to the birth of several derivative aspects and other recognizable poses in the online portrait, as will be demonstrated in detail below:

1. Telfie: Tongue-out + selfie. This type is a selfie in which the person takes a photo of themselves demonstrating their tongue.
2. The body as the limit and a platform: This refers to the case when the person risks their safety in order to successfully shift the focus to their impressive or extreme environment.
3. Reverse Photo-bombing: The term photo-bombing describes the interference of an element (person, animal or item) in the photo, which usually grants a comical effect to it and invades either in front of or behind the main element of the photo. In the case of Reverse Photo-bombing these roles are reversed, meaning the comical element that the person wants to capture is photographed after they have set themselves to the role of the unnecessary element so as to have a picture with it.
4. Foreground Photo-bombing: This type of Photo-bombing refers to the unnecessary element entering the frame of the photo in front of its main subject.
5. Background Photo-bombing: In this case the Photo-bombing happens behind the main subject of the photo.
6. Nelfie: Nails + Selfie. With this term we describe photos which depict the nails of a person and they are the ones having taken it.
7. Lefie: Legs + Selfie. This type refers to the capture of the person's legs by themselves.
8. Melfie: Mirror + Selfie. This is a photo of the reflection of a person in the mirror. The capturing of the photo happens by the depicted person themselves.
9. Followmeto: This kind of photo includes a person with their back to the camera and the photographer behind the lens holding their hand, with only the photographer's hand in frame.
10. Felfie: Funeral + Selfie. This term describes selfies during a funeral.
11. Duck selfie: This type of photo is a selfie where the person has the "duck face" expression, meaning puckering their lips to make a kissing face.
12. Delfie: Dog + Selfie. This is a selfie with a dog.
13. Deictic arms: In this case, the photo includes the person's arms at the bottom of the frame; they create mental arrows that point to the subject of the photo, meaning the person.
14. Composition: This type refers to a group selfie.
15. Athletic reflexivity: In this selfie the person's stance demonstrates their fitness and flexibility.
16. Alfie: Animal + Selfie. This term includes all selfies in which a person poses with an animal (Di Sia1; Forsh, 2015).

The concept of the frame originates from the cinema and refers to the projected rectangular frame of the cinematographer, which is determined by the proportions of width to length required for each scene, so as to achieve the ideal structure of visual information for the best delivery of meaning (Kalampakas & Kyriakoulakos, 2015).

us the types and compositions of the frames will be analyzed, in order for us to understand the reasoning behind the framing selections.

The kinds of frame can be categorized in seven general categories:

- i) Very general - From far away: This is a frame taken from a long distance whose goal is showing the place in its entirety, either that is natural or man-made, with people or without.
- ii) General - From far away: This type is more specific than the Very General one, as it is closer to the unfolding scene so that the people or items are visible.
- iii) Middle: In this case the entirety of the person/people or the item/items are in frame, though without outshining the information of the background.
- iv) American: This type originated from western films and frames people from the knees up to the head.
- v) Close-Up (*Rapproché*): This type frames the person from the middle of the chest so as to put emphasis on the face, but without missing hand movements and information from the background.
- vi) Close-Up (*Gros Plan*): This type frames from the head to the shoulders or is a close-up of another part of the body.
- vii) Big Close-Up (*Très Gros Plan*): This type focuses on a specific part of the face (i.e. framing the eye), the body or the item to make use of it (Kalampakas & Kyriakoulakos, 2015).

Considering that color is part of one of the five human senses caused by the sensitivity of our retinas to light, we can draw the conclusion that it is a subjective experience. The importance of color for the knowledge, traditions and experiences of a person can be easily noted based on the number of stimuli and information that the average person gets visually. In order to describe and recreate color, people coded and organized it mathematically, resulting in creating color models/systems and color spaces. Color models relate to precise descriptions of colors using natural illustrations and numerals in order to make their processing in digital media possible. As a result, all the pixels forming a picture were homogenized. The color spaces refer to a (sub)group of colors which can be described based on a color system. Every color space describes the environment of one, two or three dimensions whose components represent intensity values. In this environment colors are represented, classified, compared or calculated. These spaces are often represented visually in the form of solid objects like cones, cubes, etc. A color space is created from the colors of the (color) range that is described based on a color model. Color spaces are classified in five categories:

1. Grey: The colors in this category are a tone scale from black to white and are differentiated based on lightness. Their use is restricted to black-and-white depictions and printed works.
2. Device dependent: This category includes the color spaces RGB and CMYK and refers to colors which might appear different on different devices, like for example on screen and printed out.
3. Device independent: This category refers to the graticule of colors in order for them to appear the same on every device. The color space CIE LAB belongs in this category, as it's used primarily in order to compare or alter color.
4. Named color spaces: This category refers to colors which are perceived to have equal distance between them and are mentioned in a catalog without corresponding to

numeral values. Designers and graphic artists select colors from the sample book and printing companies recreate with precision the specifically chosen color.

5. HiFi: This category refers to spaces that are applied to newer printing procedures, where more than the four aforementioned inks are used, in order to extend the color range that can be used in a printing work. In these printing works, red, orange, green, blue, gold and silver inks are used. An example of this kind of color space is the hexachrome system PANTONE, which provides six inks (modified versions of CMYK inks and two new inks, orange and green) for the production of a broader color range.

Finally, color harmony is defined as the evaluation of the simultaneous effect of two or more colors, so that a “pleasant” result is produced, which demonstrates the subjectivity of the term (Sougioultzi as mentioned in the Lamprou, 2015). Despite the fact that the basic terms of color harmony were formulated by artists, from a scientific point of view and from the standpoint of modern color and light perception the color harmony theory dates back to Newton's era, who explored the color spectrum at the end of the 1660s (Gage as mentioned in Odabaşıoğlu, & Olguntürk, 2015).

Methodology

In order to study the way in which the visual message is transmitted between individuals and then, how this transmission of information affects its final content, determining the creation of aesthetic experience and perception in the individual, three sectors of study of portraits of online photography were separated. These sectors concern: a) the poses that prevail in online portraits, b) the structure of the photographic/cinematic frame and finally, c) the color and color harmony of the portraits. To study this, two types of research were conducted. First of all, primary data were collected regarding the most popular Instagram portrait photographers and their photographic portraits that received the most reactions with likes. Then, an experiment was conducted, with participation of the students of a University department and the most popular portraits, professional Instagram photographers and the official names of online photography and photography poses as content.

The first research refers to the first hypothesis and is performed through the collection of primary data. During the conduct of the research, initially the professional union “Professional Photographers of America” (PPA) (<https://www.instagram.com/ourppa>) was selected, so that the ten most popular (based on followers) professional portrait photographers with a public account for the promotion of their works on Instagram were found. The collection of data was conducted in the time period 04/11/2018 to 11/11/2018. Photography studio owners that did not practice photography, people who did not mention they were professional photographers in their account bio and did not run a blog or site, and photographers that had posted less than 5 portraits among their 500 most recent posts on Instagram were rejected. Then, the 5 portraits with the most likes from each of these accounts were collected. Mass posts (Carousel), collages and cases of double posting were rejected. In the next stage, these portraits were downloaded via the page <http://insta-downloader.net/download> and then, the 10 most dominant colors were determined in HEX code as well as the percentage in which they appear in the photo, using the tool http://www.coolphptools.com/color_extract. In the next stage, the colors were converted from HEX to RGB through the page <https://www.webfx.com/web->

design/hex-to-rgb/ and then were classified with the percentage in which they appear in the photo, in order to be visualized in the form of a doughnut chart. Afterwards, the equivalent procedure followed so as to create the same chart for the visualization of the percentage of appearance of every color among the most popular photographic portraits of each account. Finally, using the tool <https://color.adobe.com/create> a color harmony scheme for each portrait was created, in order to be able to place them in the correct type of color harmony, having the selection of color range of each photographer as a dependent variable.

Finally, an experiment was conducted using a questionnaire where students of the Digital and Communication Media department of the Ionian University participated. A set of photographs was provided to them and they had to match the frame or pose with the term that described it and then, state if they have ever used a frame or pose like that in their own photos. The participants were sixty-one (61), but the valid answers that the results and percentages were based on were thirty-eight (38).

Below follow the results of the first research.

In figure 1, the relation between the followers of the professional accounts taken into account and the amount of their posts. It is worth noting that a connection between these two variables does not seem to exist.

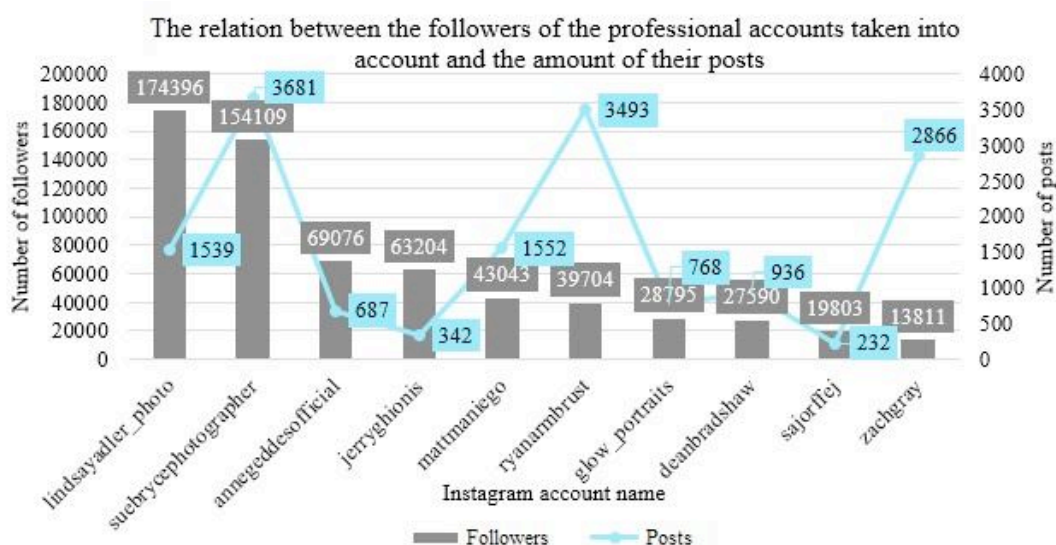


Figure 1: The relation between the followers of the professional accounts taken into account and the amount of their posts

In figure 2, we can see the analogy between the followers of each photographer and the percentage of use of a uniform color harmony scheme.

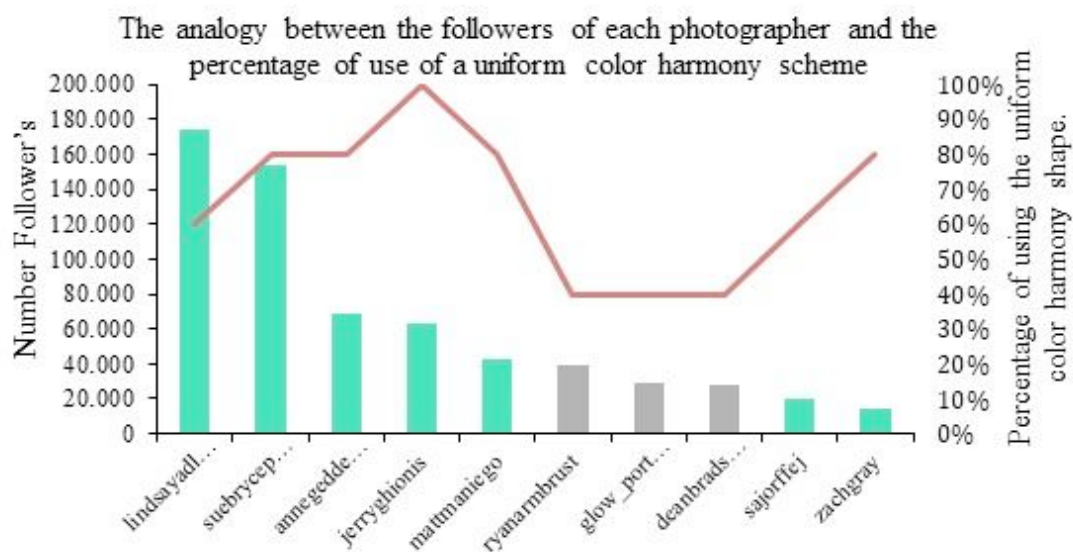


Figure 2: The analogy between the followers of each photographer and the percentage of use of a uniform color harmony scheme

The conclusion drawn from the first research is that seven out of ten photographers use a specific color harmony scheme in the majority of their most popular portraits of their accounts. Despite the fact that there does not seem to be a correlation between this percentage and the number of followers of an account, we can note a decline in followers where the percentage of a specific scheme is low, as is depicted in the following graph.

In Figure 3, we can see the percentage of use of each color harmony scheme among the 50 portraits.

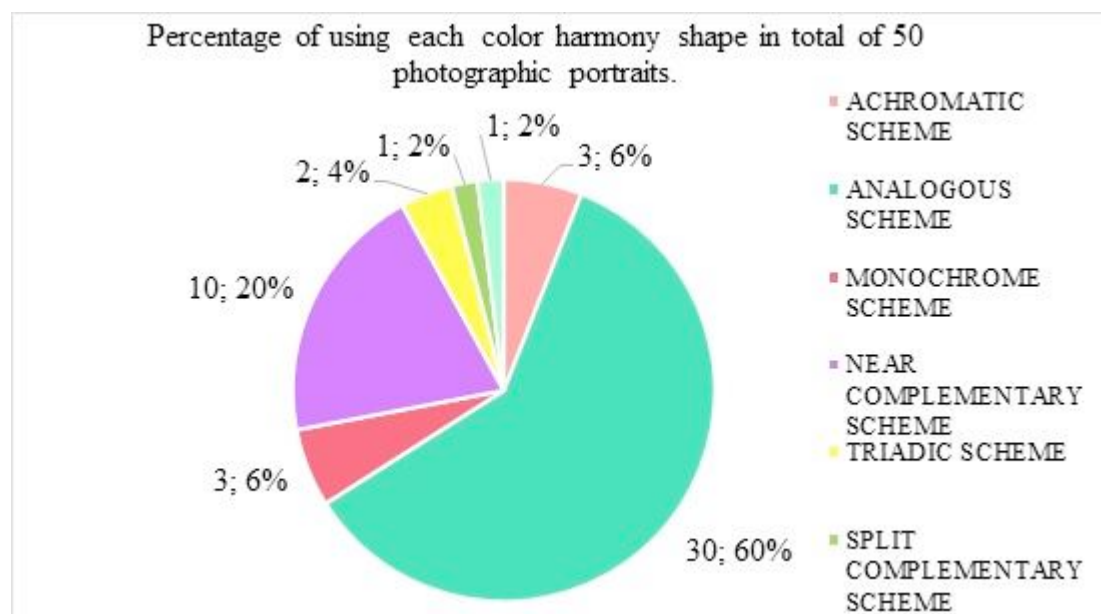


Figure 3: Percentage of using each color harmony shape in total of 50 photographic portraits

More specifically, the color harmony scheme that was most used among photographers is the analogous one, which appears in 30 out of the 50 portraits.

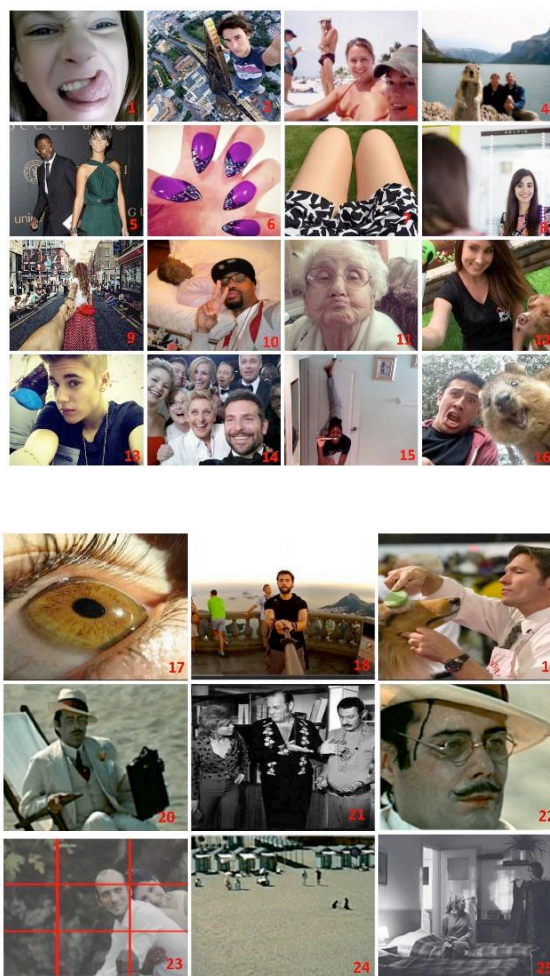
The analogous scheme refers to the use of neighboring colors in the color disk, which usually occupy one fourth of it, as we can see in Picture 4. The colors of this scheme cause little contrast and can be considered the same with the color combinations of nature. This is why it exudes feelings of comfort and harmony.



As for the questionnaire research, 66% of the participants were female, 31% were male and 3% stated "another/do not wish to specify". Out of the participants, 31% were born in 1998, 24% in 1997, 10% in 1999, while 16% were born before 1990. The majority of the participants (39%) were in the third semester of their studies, while 29% were in the fifth, 24% in the seventh and 8% in the ninth. During their high school studies most participants lived in Athens (16%) and in Kefalonia (16%), while the next highest percentage can be found in Piraeus (8%) and Thessaloniki and Patras follow with 5% each. Furthermore, all valid answers refer to people that had stated they filled the questionnaire with honesty. Finally, 63% of people that participated claimed their monthly personal income, regardless of origin, was in the range of 100€ to 680€.

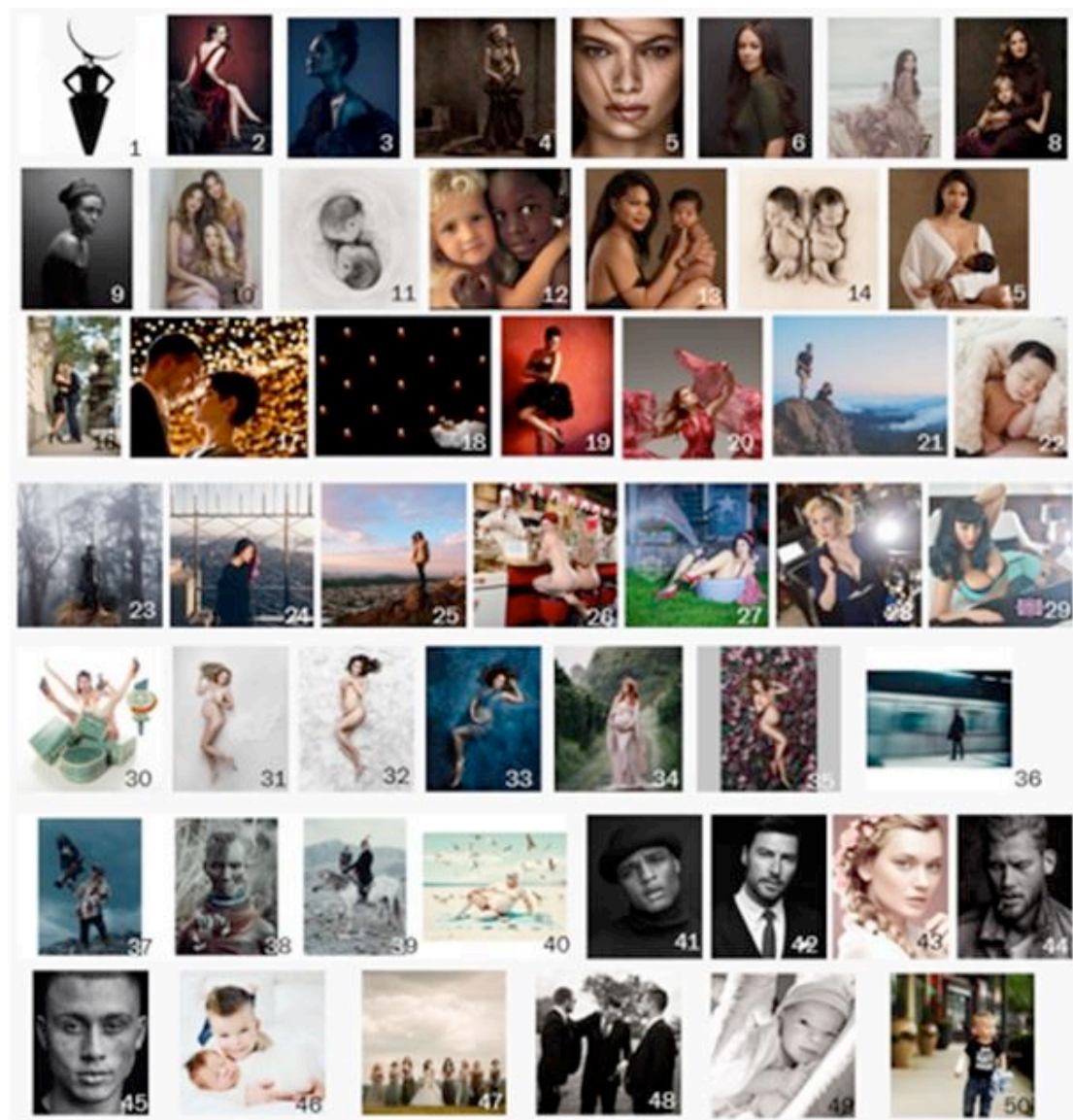
This research is divided in two thematic units. The first thematic unit referred to the investigation of possible use of modern poses and photographic/cinematic frames in the portraits of the chosen Instagram users, mostly without knowing their formal name.

From this research, we have drawn the conclusion that the majority of participants (79%) in the experiment recognized and had used the poses of the photographs through the respective photographs provided (Figure 5). This proves their familiarity with their visual recreation, while just 33% of answers about the formal names of poses were correct. Respectively in the case of photographic/cinematic frames, 71% of participants stated they know and have used these frames, while just 49% of them matched the photos (Figure 6) correctly to their formal names, even though the terms are quite self-descriptive.

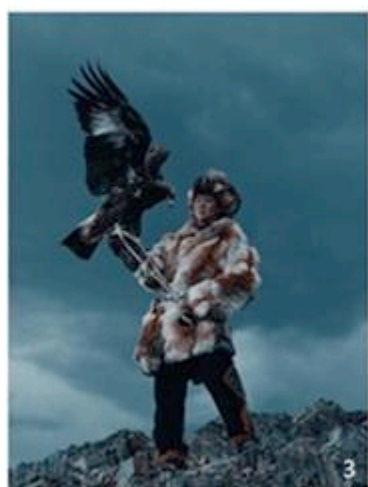
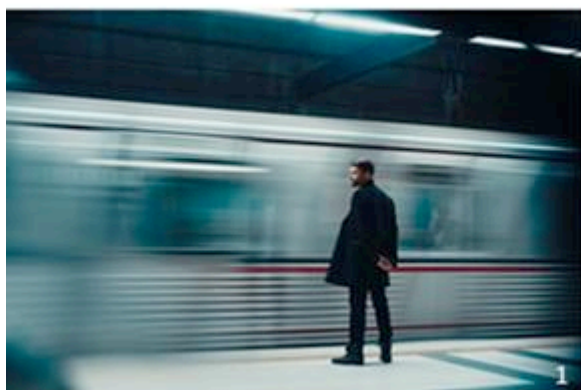


In the second and last part of the research, the participants were called to choose 10 out of the 50 most popular portraits by the most popular Instagram photographers, first based on whether they would react with a like on Instagram and then on whose colors they found most attractive. The result from this research was that only four of the portraits maintained the same amount of likes for both scenarios, which proves that 92% of portraits were not chosen by the same amount of people in both scenarios; therefore, we can confirm the lack of conscious attraction to color that results in users 'liking' the post. At this stage, it would be worth mentioning that all four portraits belonged to the same photographer, which the participants were not aware of, since the photos were set in random order in both scenarios.

Below you can see the 50 photographic portraits (Figure 7) and the four photographs that maintained the same amount of choices (Figure 8).



More specifically the first portrait was chosen in both scenarios by 15 people, the



second one by 10 people, the third one by 7 and the fourth one by 6.

Conclusion

According to the analysis of the colors of the fifty most popular photographic portraits of professional photographers on Instagram, it is concluded that Instagram users are attracted, in a percentage of 60%, to portraits that use an analogous scheme of color harmony. According to the scheme theory, the analogous scheme pertains to the use of neighboring colors, which derive from the blending of the previous color to the next one.

For example, every color that exists between blue and green contains in different percentages both colors in its composition. By mixing different hues of one color to the other, a new “relation” is created between each color, which tends to increase when these colors are combined together. It is usually three colors of the same intensity, which compose at least 1/4th of the color wheel. Despite the fact that the analogous scheme shows similarities with the monochromatic, it offers a wider range of hues from the latter, and as a result, it doesn’t contain any distinctive contrasts. The specific scheme emits harmony and creates positive feelings to a person. Additionally, it belongs to the color schemes that prevail in nature, a fact that justifies the familiarity that the human eye feels.

It is important to mention the fact that, the next preferable color scheme that follows, at a percentage of 20%, is the almost complementary scheme of color harmony, which, in contrast with the analogous, is characterized by the existence of contrasts. Despite the fact that it might very easily induce, due to wrong use, unpleasant feelings, in this case, it resulted in being the second, in preference, color scheme. It refers to the coexistence of warm and cold colors, and more specifically, in the supplementation of the central color with the color that exists one position left or right from its supplementary one. According to Drew and Meyer (Raftopoulos, 2012; Lamprou, 2017), this specific combination is mismatched and is usually characterized by minimum or even no harmony at all, and is applied mostly to the asymmetric design, where the colors seem more vibrant.

In the third position of preference stand the monochromatic and achromatic schemes, with a percentage of 6% each. These two models, along with the analogous, don't contain any specific contrasts, and lead to a soothing, balanced and attractive, since it is clear and defined, result. At this point, it is important to mention that both these schemes can be implemented in black and white photographs. The achromatic scheme, on the one hand, because it refers to shadows and tints of white, black and grey, and on the other hand, the monochromatic, since it may contain a very dark hue (for example, a very dark blue or bordeaux) that the human eye might mistake it for black. In all of the fifty portraits, only three out of the ten color harmony schemes don't appear. The analogous and complementary, the double complementary, and the square scheme. A commonality of these three models is the use of hues of four colors, with one of them poised as the primary color so that it prevails in quantity and the other three function as ancillary.

Common difficulty in all three of these schemes is the prioritization of the percentage of the color use so that peace can be endured. In conclusion, the hypothesis that the most popular photographic portraits of the most famous professional photographers on Instagram use -intentionally or not- a specific/uniform color harmony scheme proves to be true, since 7 out of 10 adopt - in the majority of their most popular portraits - a uniform scheme of color harmony. The scheme, in 6 out of 7 cases, was the analogous scheme of color harmony. This proves that the human eye is attracted by color combinations that are most familiar to it, through its environment, and by extension its optical experience.

Additionally, by a psychological view, the selection of this particular model from the users, proves their preference in soothing, without too much intensity, color combinations, that exhume tranquility, harmony, and pleasure. Regarding the range of the hues, the colors that were used in the majority of the portraits pertain to dark and dull hues, reduce the contrast to each other, and according to the psychology of the colors, they create unpleasant feelings.

As a result, from this experiment, despite the fact that 79% of the participating students state that they use the poses of the online photographs that were shown above, only 33% of the whole seem to know the official name of these poses. This fact proves the hypothesis of the unawareness of the official name of the poses that are used by people in their photographs. Which means that these poses have accelerated their use solely through their optical representation, that unconsciously, is

recorded to the memory of these people and take shape by them the moment they are in similar condition.

In other words, the human eye can memorize the way other people pose in their portraits on the internet, and the moment of the shot of their own portrait, imitates the same pose, according to the sociocognitive theory, as Albert Bandura mentions, that defines an interactive relationship between the human and the society they are confined in, resulting in a mutual influence.

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Images 1, 2 & 3: Made on MS Excel

Image 4: Made on Adobe Color (<https://color.adobe.com/create/color-wheel>)

Image 5: Di Sia1, P. (2017). The "selfie" phenomenon between psychology, normality and extremisms, Free University of Bolzano-Bozen. [Online] Available at:
http://yadda.icm.edu.pl/yadda/element/bwmeta1.element.psjd-e3dcb955-155d-4a78-b768-48885f48ed88/c/WSN_80__2017__88-100.pdf [Recovery date: 17/02/2020] &

Forsh, P. (2015). The Gestural Image: The Selfie, Photography Theory and Kinesthetic Sociability, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem-Israel. [Online]

Available at: <http://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/download/3146/1388> [Recovery date: 17/02/2020]

Image 6: Kalampakas, V. & Kyriakoulakos, P., (2015). I Optikoakoustiki kataskevi. [Online] Available at: https://repository.kallipos.gr/pdfviewer/web/viewer.html?file=/bitstream/11419/5712/3/02_chapter_2.pdf [Recovery dates: 08/01/2020] &

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Image 7:

1-5: lindsayadler_photo (https://www.instagram.com/lindsayadler_photo/)
 26-30: ryanarmbrust (<https://www.instagram.com/ryanarmbrust/>)
 6-10: suebrycephotographer (<https://www.instagram.com/suebrycephotographer/>)
 31-35: glow_portraits (https://www.instagram.com/glow_portraits/)
 11-15: annegeddesofficial (<https://www.instagram.com/annegeddesofficial/>)
 36-40: deanbradshaw (<https://www.instagram.com/deanbradshaw/>)
 16-20: jerryghionis (<https://www.instagram.com/jerryghionis/>)
 41-45: sajorffej (<https://www.instagram.com/sajorffej/>)
 21-25: mattmaniego (<https://www.instagram.com/mattmaniego/>)
 46-50: zachgray (<https://www.instagram.com/zachgray/>)

Image 8: Photoshoot by deanbradshaw. Available at: <https://www.instagram.com/deanbradshaw/>

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*A Shifting Gender Regime in Contemporary China?
Fans' Queer Readings of the Film Ne Zha*

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Abstract

The animation film *Ne Zha* was a hit in the summer of 2019 in Chinese cyberspace. The film generated a lot discussion and user generated content from online fans. This is due largely to the film's nuanced depiction of the relationship between its protagonist *Ne Zha* and his friend/enemy, *Ao Bing*. The homosocial/homoerotic undertone in their interactions had provoked the production and distribution of various forms of gay-themed fan arts (drawings, remixed short videos, photo-shopped pictures, etc.) regarding the two characters across the internet. This phenomenon is all the more thought-provoking when situated in China's particular cultural environment, where depictions of non-heterosexualities or behaviors online are officially prohibited, inviting thorough scholarly scrutiny. Taking a post-modern feminist and queer perspective, this study examines fan-produced drawings and pictures of the film *Ne Zha* on Douban.com, one of the top rating websites in China. By interpreting selected fan works through content analysis, the study argues that while gay fan works of the film bridge together the disconnected relations of male homosociality and homosexuality between the two main characters, they nonetheless reproduce the patriarchal, hetero-sexist gender norms of a post-socialist China.

Keywords: Chinese Queer Fandom, Gender, Sexuality, Homosociality, Content Analysis

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Introduction

The screening of *Nezha: birth of the demon child* in China in the summer of 2019 was phenomenal. Having beaten the world-renowned *Zootopia*, it climbed on top in China's box office record for animations within the first week of screening. Indeed, the exquisite storyline and refined portrayal of characters in the film had largely restored public's confidence in domestic animation industry, which has long been dominated by imported works from Japan and the US (Xinhuanet, 2020).

Along with discussions of the film itself was a rising online queer fandom. This is due largely to the film's nuanced depiction of the relationship between its protagonist Ne Zha and his friend/enemy, Ao Bing. The homosocial and homoerotic undertone in their interactions had provoked the production and distribution of various forms of queer fan arts depicting the two characters as a gay 'couple' across the internet (Cheng, 2019). On Weibo, Chinese twitter, the hashtag Oubing, a neologism for fans' coupling of the two characters, has gathered more than 400,000 fans with approximately 1.5 billion views (Cheng, 2019; Weibo, 2020). This phenomenon is all the more thought-provoking when situated in China's particular cultural environment, where depictions of non-heterosexualities or behaviors online are officially prohibited, inviting thorough scholarly scrutiny (Zhao, 2020).

In this paper I will explore fans' queer reading of the animation film Ne Zha as indicated in their fan works, and their roles in contemporary Chinese gender culture. I will first briefly introduce queer fandom in contemporary China where queer readings of Ne Zha have been produced and circulated. Then, I will outline the plot of the film, and why and how it has provoked fans' queer reading. Having done so, I will examine fan-produced drawings and pictures of Ne Zha on Douban.com, one of the top rating websites in China through content analysis (Douban.com, 2020). Taking a post-modernist feminist and queer perspective, I argue that while queer fan works of the film bridge together the disconnected male homosociality and homosexuality between the two main characters, thereby challenge the regime of gender and sexuality, they nonetheless reproduce the hetero-sexist and dualist gender norms of a post-socialist China. I'll also point out directions for future research at the end.

(Online) queer fandom in a post-socialist China

Post-socialist China: the cultural landscape

The reform and opening up policy since the late 1970s has seen great social, economic and political transformations in Chinese society. On the one hand, international investments have shifted the former socialist economic system towards a state-capitalist one; on the other hand, marketization and the nation's aging population render the promotion of nuclear family urgent, resulting in a resurgence of gender inequalities compared to the former socialist era, when women were depicted as 'holding up half the sky'. Many scholars consider China's contemporary political economy as 'post-socialist', in which neoliberal agenda promoting individualism is accompanied by a rising patriarchy of sexual difference and labor segregation (Glasser, 1997; Fincher, 2016; Yu, 2015; Santos & Harrell, 2017; Feldshuh, 2018; Chen, 2018).

Queer fandom in China

It is out of these circumstances that a queer fandom has arisen in China. With the intra-Asian and global cultural flow, and the facilitation of new media, fans produce, distribute, and consume often ‘norm-defying genders, sexualities, personhood and relationships’ (Zhao & Wong, 2020, p. 1). Among various social and economic forces, scholars have highlighted the significant influences of Japanese Boy’s Love (BL) culture and Western slash fandom in contemporary China’s queer fandom (Yang & Xu, 2017; Zhang, 2016).

BL fandom is a subculture originated in Japan at around late 1970s. It originally signified a specific genre of manga depicting homosexual relationships between androgynous young men, whose main target audience were young, heterosexual women. First imported to Hong Kong and Taiwan in the 1990s, together with the facilitation of the internet, BL culture has subsequently gained its momentum in mainland China (Martin, 2017; Zhang, 2016). Similarly, slash fandom in the Euro-American pop culture is known for its heterosexual female fans’ pairing up of (usually heterosexual) male characters in movies and/or TV series. Originated in the 1960s Star Trek series, slash culture has only recently become popular in China along with the import of American superhero movies and BBC Sherlock since the 2010s. The inflow of western slash culture has added diversity to China’s queer fandom, which until then has followed an East-Asian tradition (Jenkins, 1992; Wei, 2014; Gu, 2017). Queer fandom in China today takes on a multi-faceted manner, in which fans not only compose fictional and/or audiovisual derivative works from both domestic and international media productions, but also produce their own original works (McLelland et al., 2015; Wei, 2014; Lavin, Yang & Zhao, 2017).

Dynamism of China’s queer fandom has attracted increasing amount of scholarly attention, discussing its potentiality or incompetence in transforming China’s gender norms and ideology (Xu & Yang, 2013; Zhou, 2014; Zhang, 2016; Zhang, 2017; Xu & Tan, 2019). Some argue that the subculture, with its diversified portrayals of desires and sexualities, constructs a contrasting force against China’s patriarchal traditions stigmatizing women and the sexual minorities (Xu & Yang, 2013; Zhou, 2014; Zhang, 2017; Xu & Tan, 2019). Meanwhile, concerns have been raised on queer works’ reiteration and therefore solidification of existing gender ideology, as content producers carry out their signifying practices from a ‘neoliberal’, often ‘heteronormative’ worldview consistent with the socio-economic paradigm of the post-socialist China in the first place (Zhang, 2017, pp. 125, 136).

It is exactly in this dynamic context that fan works on the film *Ne Zha* are produced and consumed. Indeed, popularity of *Ne Zha*’s queer fandom and fan works have been believed to be the largest contributor to the film’s success (Cheng, 2019). In these works fans provides their own readings of the relations between *Ne Zha* and *Ao Bing*, and in so doing negotiate with the dominating gender norms.

Ne Zha and Ao Bing: From Taoist myth to coming-of-age story

Ne Zha is originally a character in *The Investiture of the Gods* (《封神演义》), a Taoist myth in the 16th century China about the overturn of the corrupt Shang dynasty by Zhou. *Ne Zha* is a general’s son and an incarnation of a sacred bead, who facilitates the

King of Zhou in defeating the Shang empire. On the other hand, Ao Bing is the third son of Ao Guang, Dragon King of the East Sea. In the original story, Ao Bing is a secondary character symbolizing evil and patriarchal law and order, who has been 'skinned and pulled out a tendon' by the adolescent Ne Zha. In the 2019 *Nezha* film, however, Ao Bing has become a major character, who resonates to, but at times also confronts with Ne Zha. Through their interactions, the two come to terms with their identities (Sun, 2019; Jiang, 2020, p. 58; Liu, Wei, & Yang, 2019).

In the film, the original sacred bead in the Taoist myth becomes a chaos pearl born out of the energy of heaven and earth, absorbing both the divine and the demonic energies, which later on has been divided into the spirit pearl and the demon pill. The divided chaos pearl is then incarnated by Ne Zha and Ao Bing respectively, indicating the complementary and entwined relationship between the two characters.

To be more specific, Ne Zha is the incarnation of the demon pill. Though he tries hard to blend in, his nature as the demon child renders him naughty and isolated by his peers. Ao Bing, by contrast, is the incarnation of the spirit pearl. Although injected with the sacred spirit, his identity as a dragon is still considered 'evil' by the human society (Liu et al., 2019, 1:18:30). The two met each other and, having experienced similar discrimination, became each other's best and the only friend immediately. However, they were later told each other's true identity, and their relation as 'sworn rivals' (Liu et al., 2019, 0:58:11). They fought against each other. During the process, Ne Zha, though controlled by demonic spirit, decided to take his own responsibility and to fight against his fate. On the other hand, Ao Bing, while determined to defeat Ne Zha so as to claim his 'birthright as the spirit pearl' and to reverse people's stereotypes, was inspired by Ne Zha and therefore decided to fight against his fate as a demonic dragon as well (Liu et al., 2019, 0:58:31). Together, the two shoulder a coming lightening curse and saved the civilians of their hometown in spite of the injustice they have received.

This film can be seen as a narration of a coming-of-age story through the shifting bonding between Ne Zha and Ao Bing. The relationship went through a friend-rival-friend transition. Though differently experienced, this bonding is continuous throughout the story. By first finding consolation in, then rivaling against, and finally inspired by each other, both Ne Zha and Ao Bing come to terms with their own agency to fight against stereotypes and 'fate', and thereby establishing their identities (Liu et al., 2019, 1:35:51).

Eve Sedgwick defines this relationship between men as 'male homosocial desire' (Sedgwick, 1985, p. 1). The term 'desire' is used as analogous to the psychoanalytic libido, signifying 'the affective or social force, the glue' that maintains the male bonds, which can take the forms of either alliance or rivalry (Sedgwick, 1985, p. 2). This can be seen in the smooth transition from friendship to rivalry and back again in Ne Zha and Ao Bing's relationship in the film. Libido in essence, male homosocial desire is in theory consistent with male homosexual desire (Sedgwick, 1985). It is exactly this continuum that has provoked fans' multiple readings of Ne Zha and Ao Bing's relations, some of which explicitly sexual. However, when asked how he feels about fans' coupling of Ne Zha and Ao Bing in an interview with *The Beijing News*, a mainstream party-owned newspaper, Yang Yu, the director of the film claimed that he was impressed by fans' creativity:

'We just wanted to portray their pure friendship and their resonance with each other in a more nuanced way. I was surprised by how people received it. You're all so talented' (The Beijing News, 2019).

This explicit disassociation of homosociality from homosexuality poses an interesting contrast. Examining modern English literature, Sedgwick detects a similar radical disruption between the two. In fact, male homosocial desires are always accompanied by misogyny and homophobia. To be more specific, by excluding both women and gay men, i.e., those not qualified as 'real men', heterosexual men affirm their masculinities, and therefore their hegemonic positions in the patriarchal system of production. This structure of gender relations may vary when intersecting with other forces such as ethnicity or class that are prominent in different societies and across different historical moments, but its role of maintaining patriarchal order remains consistent (Sedgwick, 1985; Ueno, 2015). In this session my aim is not to disclose the particular forces that have defined the homosocial, but not homosexual bonding between Ne Zha and Ao Bing, although this line of request would be beneficial in understanding contemporary Chinese gender and pop culture. Rather, by conducting a content analysis of 50 fan-produced drawings and pictures on Douban.com, I would like to find out the impacts of fans' multiple readings of Ne Zha and Ao Bing's relationships on the supposedly disruption between male homosocial and homosexual desire in the film, and the extent to which these works comply with, or contrast to, China's contemporary gender norms.

Methodology and method

My aim of analyzing fan works so as to disclose their relations to China's gender norms is in line with the traditions of textual analysis. As a methodology, textual analysis gives equal (if not more) weight to 'the mechanism of making-sense', i.e., 'how' meanings have been constructed out of the specific contexts in which the media texts concerned are situated, compared to 'what' the meanings actually are (McKee, 2001). With the post-structuralist 'shift' to 'discourse' since Foucault in the academy, textual analysis has been increasingly dedicated to the specific power structure, hegemony and ideology in which the texts are produced and consumed (Hall, 1997, p. 44). As such, it is competent in digging out the gender relations underpinning in my selected fan works. Specifically, content analysis is used in this study, for its competence in directly and quantitatively counting certain 'phenomena in texts', in this case the relations between Ne Zha and Ao Bing, and how the two characters have been displayed (Stokes, 2003, p. 56).

Based on former research on queer fandom's competence and shortcomings in negotiating with China's gender discourses, two hypotheses have been made:

H1: Fans' queer readings of Ne Zha and Ao Bing bridge together the homosocial and the homosexual male bonds, thereby de-stabilize gender hegemony.

H2: Fans' depictions of the two characters resonate with a dualist logic underpinning the regime of heterosexuality.

Homosocial, but not homosexual? Queer readings of Ne Zha and Ao Bing

While queer fanworks about Ne Zha and Ao Bing can be found on a variety of new media platforms, I chose Douban as it is one of the top rating websites dedicated to books, movies and music in China providing exclusively user-generated content (Douban.com, 2020). An album is attached to each film entry, in which a ‘fan pictures’ category could be found. Pictures in each category are ranked according to ‘popularity’, ‘size’ or ‘time uploaded’. Opting out the repetitive pictures, and those without the co-presence of the film’s two characters, the top 50 most popular fan works featuring Ne Zha and Ao Bing under the category ‘fan pictures’ were collected and coded (Douban.com, 2020).

I first look at the relationship between Ne Zha and Ao Bing in the selected fan works. Studies on men and masculinities have been dedicated to the boundaries of interactions between men (Arxer, 2011; Bridges, 2013; Robinson, Anderson & White, 2018; Munsch & Gruys, 2018). While the boundary between male homosociality and homosexuality is itself ambiguous, varying across different time periods and against different socio-cultural backdrops, sexual desire is perceived as an indicator for homosexuality (Robinson, Anderson & White, 2018).

Drawn from these literature, the relationships between the two characters have been depicted in a variety of ways, ranging from homosocial to homosexual. As can be seen from Table 1, while most of the fan works portray Ne Zha and Ao Bing in homosocial terms as friends or rivals, some of them are explicitly sexual, involving the two characters touching, kissing, hugging, exchanging romantic or erotic gazes, and even engaging in S&M. These readings indicate the ultimate continuous nature of homosocial and homosexual desires in the male bonds between Ne Zha and Ao Bing. In her study on the male homosocial bonding in Chinese BL fictions, Ning (2014) argues that by bridging together the social and the sexual in male bonds, BL fictions destabilize the mechanism for maintenance of gender hierarchy, i.e., the strengthening of male homosocial relations through misogyny and homophobia (Ning, 2014; Sedgwick, 1985). By the similar token, fans’ multiple readings of the relations between Ne Zha and Ao Bing have challenged the dominating patriarchal logic of exclusion.

Relationship	Display	Percentage
Homosocial	Friends	30%
	Rivals	12%
	Other	32%
	Total	74%
Homosexual	Touching	6%
	Hugging/holding	4%
	Kissing	4%
	Romantic or erotic eye-contact	10%
	S&M	4%
	Total	26%

Table 1: Relationship between Ne Zha and Ao Bing

On the other hand, although fan works of Ne Zha and Ao Bing indicate a continuum between male homosocial and homosexual bonding, the gender displays of the two characters take on a rather bipolar manner.

Bem (1974) identifies 20 characteristics that are perceived by people as desirable for men, and 20 desirable for women in American society in her phenomenal Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI). These characteristics, 'on the basis of sex-typed social desirability' instead of 'differential endorsement by males and females', are then allocated as 'masculine' and 'feminine' respectively (Bem, 1974, p. 155). In so doing, Bem (1974) emphasizes the constructive and productive nature of gender characteristics, i.e., men and women adjust their behaviors according to what is deemed appropriate for their sexes in society.

While original BSRI provides a perception of gender traits in the American society in the 1970s, Zhang, Norvilitis and Jin (2001) test the validity of the inventory against contemporary Chinese society, and thereupon develop a short form of the original BSRI for measuring Chinese gender orientation. To be more specific, the scholars identify 'independent, assertive, strong personality, forceful, has leader abilities, willing to take risks, willing to take a stand' and 'aggressive' as desirable concepts of masculinity, while 'affectionate, sympathetic, sensitive to other's needs, understanding, compassionate, warm, tender' and 'gentle' define what a legitimate and respectable female social member should be like (Zhang, Norvilitis & Jin, 2001, p. 247).

By the similar token, Goffman (1979, p. 1) perceives human behaviors as 'displays' in accordance with social situations and rules, but which appears as natural and taken-for-granted. In terms of gender, displays are often exhibited in 'a very systematic "opposite number" arrangement', given the seemingly un-diminishable differences between male and female (Goffman, 1979, p. 2).

Examining gender displays in various commercials, Goffman (1979, p.5) discloses an asymmetrical 'parent-child complex' in the representations of men and women, in which women are constantly being cared for, but at the expense of their total subordination to men. The slavery status of women in regard to men are displayed through the techniques termed by Goffman (1979, pp. 28-83) as 'relative size', 'the feminine touch', 'function ranking', 'the ritualization of subordination', and 'licensed withdrawal'. These norms facilitate our understanding of ideal femininities and masculinities, our acceptable interactions with the opposite sex, and the way in which we come to terms with ourselves for sake of maintaining social order (Goffman, 1979).

Drawn from Bem's Sex Role Inventory and Erving Goffman's analysis of gender display, several themes stand out in the portrayal of the gender relations between the two characters. As can be seen from Table 2, Ne Zha tends to occupy the elevated or the central position of the picture, and a posture of domination. He embodies stronger personalities such as aggressiveness, assertiveness etc. These characters are perceived by Bem and Goffman as typical masculine traits (Bem, 1974; Goffman, 1979). On the other hand, Ao Bing tends to occupy the periphery position in the pictures, with a dominated posture. In these works he tends to be portrayed as affectionate, sympathetic, sensitive to other's needs, compassionate, and gentle, all of which

indicate his status as the more feminine role. These portrayals reiterate a heterosexist logic of dualism, i.e., the masculine vs. the feminine; the dominating vs. the dominated, hindering their abilities in negotiating with existing gender norms and hegemony.

Gender display		Nezha	Aobing
Elevation		32%	10%
Centrality		22%	4%
Domination		22%	2%
Subordination		2%	24%
Strong personality	Aggressive	12%	0
	Attacking movement/posture	10%	2%
	Assertive	22%	0
	Demonstrating emotions	18%	0
	Leading/making (first) moves	16%	2%
	Wicked/untamed	10%	0
	Naughty	28%	2%
	Total	70%	4%
Soft personality	Meek	0	12%
	Quiet	2%	8%
	Affectionate	0	20%
	Sympathetic	0	8%
	Shy	6%	4%
	Sensitive to others' feelings	0	4%
	Gentle	2%	24%
	Tamed/following the lead	0	4%
	Total	6%	46%

Table 2: Gender display of Ne Zha and Ao Bing

Conclusion

In this paper I examine the homosocial bonding between the two major characters in the film *Ne Zha*, and the influence of fans' queer readings of the male bonds in China's contemporary gender culture. That being said, two relevant issues stand out, inviting further exploration.

First, as elaborated above, we might want to consider the forces that have defined the homosocial, yet not homosexual bonds between Ne Zha and Ao Bing. This line of request will provide us a better understanding of the social and cultural landscape and discourses of a post-socialist China in which the film is produced.

On the other hand, aside from the analysis of media content, we need to consider the perspective of fans themselves. Why they engage in the queer fandom and fan activities? What have they gotten out of them? What are the relations between their fan activities and their negotiation of identities in contemporary China? These questions would add nuances to our understanding of queer fans as a community.

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Charlie King, Chinese Music, and Media Representation in a New Zealand Gold-Mining Setting

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Abstract

Charlie King (Li Kee Hing), as he was known, spent most of his life in the southern New Zealand gold-mining settlement of Waikaia. Arriving there in the mid 1870s, he was one of many Chinese miners in New Zealand, and he worked closely with other miners from his village in China who had also travelled to New Zealand. Unlike many Chinese who eventually returned to China, Charlie King remained in New Zealand. Parts of his life story are remembered at the Switzers Museum in Waikaia, and he is particularly remembered for performing Chinese music as entertainment for locals. While some objects of material culture from the gold-mining era are displayed in the museum, Charlie King is also celebrated as a personality through image and text. These media representations display a historical narrative about his life, and feature a photograph of him playing a Chinese musical instrument. This paper explores Charlie King and Chinese music as it is represented through media – both representation through historical newspaper reports and through the media imagery found in the Switzers Museum display. Drawing on literature from the fields of migration studies, museology, musical biography, and cultural representation, this new research examines not only the sounds of the past through social history and media texts, but also ideas of difference, which in the case of this particular Chinese miner were negotiated in the colonial New Zealand setting through cultural identity and sound.

Keywords: Chinese, Diaspora, Museum, Music, Representation

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Introduction

Extensive Chinese migration to Aotearoa New Zealand was initiated in 1865 following the discovery of gold and an invitation sent to Chinese miners already working Australian mines to travel to New Zealand to work areas in the Otago province (“Shipping”, 1865). At first, the miners, who were all male, were especially from Siyi (“Four Districts” in south-west Canton) and Sanyi (“Three Districts”, close to Canton), with others later coming from Panyu (north of Canton) (Beattie, 2015, p. 112). Migration of Chinese was dealt a setback with the introduction of a Poll Tax in 1881, which followed similar anti-Chinese prejudice in Canada and Australia (New Zealand History, 2020), but it flourished again from the late 1980s with the introduction of the Immigration Act 1987, which “discarded source country criteria” (New Zealand Parliament, 2020). As such, self-identifying Chinese currently make up 4.9 percent of the population and are the largest Asian ethnic group in New Zealand (Statistics New Zealand, 2018).

Two interrelated research questions underpin this study: (1) What role did music play in the lives of early Chinese in New Zealand?; and (2) How is music represented in contemporary touristic heritage culture? The discussion focuses on one museum display of goldfield heritage, that of the Switzers Museum in Waikaia in southern New Zealand, and a single Chinese resident, Li Kee Hing, or Charlie King as he was known, whose music-making is given prominence in the display. The research is faced with many difficulties, such as only having the briefest of information about the main subject, but approaches the topic critically in terms of a contemporary postcolonial perspective on the past.

Drawing on literature from the fields of migration studies, museology, musical biography, and cultural representation, this new research examines not only music-making of the past through social history and media texts, but also ideas of difference, which, in the case of Charlie King, were negotiated in the colonial New Zealand setting through cultural identity and sound. Musical biography can offer insight into the importance of the individual in music-making (Stock, 2001), but with contemporary museum displays, postcolonial attention needs to be given to power structures embedded in modes of representation (Chakrabarty, 2000; Simpson, 1996). Indeed, “[i]n the post-colonial era, a self-reflective museology has emerged from the critique of hegemonic practices of cultural representation” (Varutti, 2012, p. 298).

Following this introduction, the main part of the paper divides into two sections: the first briefly examines goldfield tourism and Switzers Museum, and the second focuses on Charlie King and musicking in Waikaia, to borrow Christopher Small’s (1998) term that highlights music as a social process.

Goldfield Tourism and Switzers Museum

Contemporary goldfield tourism in the Otago and Southland regions of New Zealand is a reflection of the “tsunami” of goldrush workers to the colony from the mid 1860s (Belich, 1996, p. 346). Throughout these regions, which have the first history of gold mining in New Zealand, there are a number of modern-day touristic sites that

celebrate the gold-mining era, and in Otago there is now an Otago Goldfields Heritage Trail that collectively recognizes over 20 such locations.

Gold was discovered at Waikaia in 1862 and this had a massive impact on the area. As such, in contemporary touristic culture, gold-mining is at the heart of Waikaia's cultural heritage. The main objects housed in the Switzers Museum in the township were collected primarily for the 125th Centennial Jubilee of Waikaia in 1988. As noted in the museum, Chinese were known in the Waikaia area from 1866, numbering around 1000 at their peak, although by 1921 there were just 21 Chinese in the area. In this township, the Chinese population was such that there was an area known as Chinatown, which was next to Welshman's Gulley ("Local Mining Industry", 1888). Charlie King was the last full-blooded Chinese in the township from this era (Ng, 1993a, p. 309). Overall, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, the number of Chinese miners in New Zealand was comparatively large, reaching its peak of 5,004 in 1881, with 3,715 in Otago in 1871 (Beattie, 2015, p. 114).

Charlie King and Waikaia Musicking

Knowledge about the Waikaia Chinese community consists mostly of fragments of information from diverse sources, such as newspaper reports, diaries, photographs, church reports, oral history, funeral records and artefacts. At the Switzers Museum, a short biography and photo of Charlie King is given prominence on one of several display boards. Based on local oral history, we know that Charlie King was from Panyu, where his family name would be pronounced Lai, and that he was a well-known local (Ng, 1993a, pp. 309–310; Weatherall, 1971). Visitors who read the information are told that he spent most of his life in Waikaia. Arriving there in the mid 1870s, he worked closely with other miners from his home region in China who had also travelled to New Zealand. Unlike many Chinese who eventually returned to China, Charlie King remained in New Zealand. Parts of his life story are remembered at the Switzers Museum, and he is particularly remembered for playing Chinese music to locals. Along with various objects of material culture from the gold-mining era, Charlie King is celebrated as a local personality through image and text. These media representations display a historical narrative about his life, and feature a photograph of him playing a Chinese musical instrument known as *sanxian*, which is a three-string plucked lute.

By the 1930s, Charlie King was the last Chinese in Waikaia, and in older age he moved to the Old Men's Home in Invercargill. However, this move was short-lived and he returned to Waikaia, although because of ill-health the police took him back to Invercargill, where he died in 1939.

At the museum, the display board identifies Charlie King using a transliteration of his name along with his English name. The name Charlie was often used for Chinese in New Zealand, sometimes with derogatory connotations. On the display board, visitors are told that he came from Shek Ma, which is close to Guangzhou. Regarding music, the display board notes: "Known by the locals as 'Charlie', he was remembered fondly around the village. He loved to host people and entertain them playing the Chinese two-string fiddle – his favourite song was reputedly 'Jesus loves me'." Such information is both useful and at the same time puzzling because while noting local musicking, and therefore the importance of music making among Chinese migrants,

the instrument identified in the text is quite different from the one in the photo. Further, his favourite song reveals a connection with Christianity, although no further details are known, except for his name appearing in the Reverend Alexander Don's roll of Chinese in the region, which is transliterated as Lai Kee Hung (Ng, 1993b, pp. 126–127, 263).

In a book marking Waikaia's centenary, Charlie King is noted as a well-known and liked member of the local community, and the text offers further information about his life:

He lived in the willows in the centre of the valley on the foothills. His hut was a frontal shelter to a tunnel and it was an experience to visit him in his beloved gloom. A gentleman at all times, he was a kindly, courteous host who knew every member of every family in Waikaia and was interested in them. He loved music and played a one-stringed violin. (Miller, 1966, p. 114)

Here, we see a further complication with the description of his instrument, which is reported as a one-stringed violin. While the *erhu* (two-string upright fiddle) was known amongst the Chinese community, a single-string variety was not and this is probably an error. The photo in the display offers a more accurate depiction of the instrument he actually played, although he may have played other instruments too, which were known in the township.

As a developing gold-mining settlement, Waikaia was reported much in the local media. As well as mining news, accounts of the township often mentioned social and cultural activities, and Chinese celebrations were sometimes included. For local Chinese, one prominent annual event was the Lunar (Chinese) New Year. The celebration also included intercultural relations, with one report noting that a local Chinese storekeeper, Mr Chow Yoke, "kept open house for Europeans, and regaled all with cakes and liquors of various sorts" ("Waikaia", 1888, February 23). At the same celebration, another newspaper reported on Chinese music-making. While commentary is within a discriminatory discourse, we do hear of Chow Yoke's premises as a focal point. As noted, the Chinese:

in their best toggery are chatting amongst themselves, but all seeming bent on having a good time. On a sofa is seated Loo Muc, playing a fiddle, to the evident satisfaction of his country-men. Another artist, bearing the name of Ah Bun, is prevailed on to accompany him on an instrument resembling a banjo, and the twain produced some fairly passable music. ("Waikaia", 1888, February 17).

The identification of instruments at this event is important, with a fiddle (presumably an *erhu*) and a banjo (presumably a *sanxian*).

A newspaper report of another local Chinese New Year celebration, this time in 1892, also mentions music making, but with Europeans present: "In a stifling smoke-laden atmosphere, we Europeans had the pleasure (?) of listening to some of the musical talents of the 'Heathen Chinese.' Three instruments were in use. In appearance they we[re] something like a banjo or guitar" ("Waikaia", 1892). These instruments were possibly *sanxian*, the same type of instrument that Charlie King is seen playing in the

photo in the museum's display. A further local newspaper report comments that at one Chinese dwelling in Welshman's Gully in Waikaia "some twenty or thirty celestials were passing the happy hours away by smoking opium, playing the fiddle (a hollow wooden mallet, with two pieces of catgut attached), and amusing themselves generally" ("Through Our Exchanges", 1882). This short report is especially helpful in that it offers some specific detail about the construction of the instrument, and from it we can be sure that it is a type of *erhu* (two-string upright fiddle).

Conclusion

From nineteenth-century media reports, there are distinct examples of members of the Waikaia Chinese community making music. While only limited knowledge is available, the Chinese New Year celebration stood out as an annual event, along with music-making that included *erhu* and *sanxian*. The information available shows that while the idea of difference was evident in media reports of Chinese cultural activities, there was a concerted effort to bring communities together.

As a touristic site of Chinese cultural heritage, the display in Switzers Museum reveals a distinct celebration of Chinese migrants in the early years of settlement. This is extended to recognise the community importance of Li Kee Hing/Charlie King, whose cultural identity is now very much a part of New Zealand's gold-mining heritage. Even though a critical postcolonial lens shows an interpretation of musicking where colonial power structures are at the core, contemporary museum media representation in Waikaia has offered its own narrative on local cultural heritage, which includes foregrounding Chinese and Chinese music-making as a way of bringing cultures together.

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