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Volume 10
Encounters

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Editorial: "Encounters"

Natasha Dukelow and Shruti Rajgopal
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The present volume of *Aigne* marks a significant milestone in the journal's development. As the tenth volume of *Aigne*, it stands as a testament to the dedication of the postgraduate editors from the College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences (CACSSS), as well as the support from the college itself. The journal highlights the cumulative achievements of all those who have contributed to date, as well as the postgraduate students who founded and sustained it. Since its revival in 2014, *Aigne* has continued to grow in prominence, showcasing the research and writing of scholars, including postgraduate and early-career researchers, from University College Cork and beyond.

While our previous volume explored experiences of liminality and transition—the in-between spaces—this volume proceeds forward to identify the source and the ultimate destination. As a result, the theme "Encounters" was chosen to recognise historic, socio-political, utopian and dystopian exchanges between groups or individuals. Encounters serve as pivotal moments of connection, conflict and transformation, shaping our understanding of the world and ourselves. Whether through cultural, historical, or personal lenses, encounters challenge established norms, ignite new ideas and reveal underlying power dynamics. This volume explores the rich and varied dimensions of encounters, examining how they disrupt, redefine, or reinforce boundaries in literature, film, history, music and everyday life. Each contributor engages with the theme of "Encounters" in unique ways, and from diverse scholarly backgrounds, resulting in the rich array of topics presented in the current volume. In addition to the peer-reviewed articles, book reviews and event reports, this volume continues the tradition established by the journal's 2014 revivers (Caroline Schroeter and Loretta Goff), by featuring a selection of creative pieces, allowing for submissions that extend beyond purely academic contributions.

A recurrent theme that emerges across the six featured articles is the encounter between tradition and change—the tension between the past and present, and the power struggles inherent in that dynamic. These articles collectively explore the subversion of societal expectations and the challenge to traditional norms caused by different kinds of encounters. In the first article, Rachel Gough explores how the presence of ghosts in narratives can disrupt power structures, assessing the extent of this disruption and whether these structures recover

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by the end of the story. Gough effectively applies this approach to Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, Pablo Larraín's film *Spencer* and the BBC's mockumentary *Ghostwatch*, offering a compelling piece. This is followed by Sandra Costello's consideration of melodrama in *The Magdalene Sisters* (2002) and *Sinners* (2002), which seeks to establish whether these films effectively challenge the historical narrative through which we encounter the past. Costello provides valuable insight into the genre's role in fostering a productive discourse on Ireland's Magdalene institutions and the complicity of the Irish state.

The third and fourth articles explore encounters within the framework of ethnic and racial dynamics, while also addressing the tension between power and oppression that arises within these interactions. In the third article, Beth Aherne provides a thoughtful examination of how apocalyptic encounters in Cherie Dimaline's *The Marrow Thieves* (2017) and Waubgeshig Rice's *Moon of the Crusted Snow* (2018) decolonise Indigenous family structures. Aherne also expands the study of family within the science fiction genre, moving beyond traditional Western narratives and the nuclear family model to incorporate alternative family forms. This is followed by Marija Laugalyte's investigation of the concept of racebending in JAY-Z's music video for "Moonlight" (2017), to explore how race-difference recastings can challenge whiteness beyond superficial diversity. It argues that while racebending does not fully decolonise the entertainment industry, it serves as an important practice for addressing racial politics and offering reparative readings of culturally significant works.

This volume's theme is further developed in the fifth article, where the encounter between modernity and tradition—particularly the threat that modernity poses to the established order—is explored. Luke O'Brien analyses Korean director Kim Ki-young's *The Housemaid* (1960), situating the film within the broader societal concerns of mid-twentieth-century Korea, a period marked by rapid modernisation and Westernisation. He focuses particularly on the anxieties surrounding the destabilisation of the patriarchal Korean family and the social ills associated with modernisation, as reflected in Kim Ki-young's film. Following this, in the sixth article, Mengwei Zhang explores the idea of "Encounters" through the interaction between two prominent Chinese musicians during China's Republican era: Nie Er (1912–1935) and Xiao Youmei (1884–1940). Zhang examines the ideological tension between these figures, reflecting broader debates about modernity and tradition in China's music culture. While both musicians aimed to modernise the nation, they differed significantly in their approaches. The article reconstructs their encounter, revealing Nie's nuanced stance on Western music and Xiao's advocacy for progressive change. The piece illustrates how encounters between modernity and tradition can simultaneously challenge and uphold power

structures, contributing to the broader themes of resistance and transformation examined in this volume.

The books reviewed focus on recently published academic texts, which engage to varying extents with the theme of "Encounters". The reviewed publications cover topics such as philosophy, morality and mobility:

- Andrew Kettler reviews Hiroki Azumi's *Philosophy of the Tourist*, translated by John Person (2023), published by Urbanomic.
- John Twomey reviews Trevor Mowchun's *Metaphysics and the Moving Image: "Paradise Exposed"* (2022), published by Edinburgh University Press.
- Charlotte Waltz reviews Bryan Fanning's *Public Morality and the Culture Wars: The Triple Divide* (2023), published by Emerald publishing.
- Brian de Ruiter reviews *Connected Mobilities in the Early Modern World: The Practice and Experience of Modernity*, edited by Paul Nelles and Rosa Salzberg (2023), published by Amsterdam University Press.
- Chara Charalambous reviews *Memory, Mobility, and Material Culture*, edited by Chiara Giuliani and Kate Hodgson (2022), published by Routledge.

In addition to the articles and book-reviews, two event reports are featured, both contributed by authors who attended international events in 2023. Dilek Öztürk Yağcı discusses the "Urban Imaginary — Exploring Our Urban Futures" summer school in Lisbon, which encouraged participants to envision sustainable urban landscapes. Ellen O Sullivan reports on the 16th Annual Feminist Theory Workshop held at Duke University, where scholars engaged in critical discussions on feminist theories and their applications. These events exemplify the theme of "Encounters" by fostering meaningful exchanges across diverse academic communities.

Finally, the last section of this volume showcases a diverse array of creative pieces that respond to the theme of "Encounters" in unique ways. These submissions explore the theme through various mediums, including visual art, poetry and prose. Each piece invites readers to engage with the concept of "Encounters" from different perspectives. The creative section opens with the description of the image that has been selected for the cover of this volume. This cover image was created by one of our editors, Richard Keyes McDonnell, to whom we are extremely grateful. The poems featured are: 'Mac Fheidhlimidh' by Cáit Pléimionn, 'Rain' by Niamh Meaney, 'One Winter in Genova, I was Somebody Else' by Lucy Holme and 'Figure' by Marie O'Brien. The prose contributions are 'Grace in Motion' by Janie Schipper

and ‘In Through the Ears’ by Josh Wagner. Together, these works offer a rich exploration of encounters through diverse voices and forms.

As a parting note, we would like to take this opportunity to thank our editors and contributing editors, who are listed on the colophon above. Our sincere thanks go to everyone who leant their time and expertise to the creation of this volume—authors, peer reviewers and our entire team!

The Radical Ghost and Narrative Time

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Abstract
This article proposes to consider ghostly encounters and their relationship to narrative and time. It argues that the presence of the ghost within a narrative signals the potential for social and ideological change within the diegesis by its problematising of socio-cultural expectations of the ubiquity of linear time. The ghost can be understood as contradictory to linear time given its unique temporality. Within Western narrative fiction, linearity is often central to the progression and internal logic of narrative. Even if the elements of the narrative are presented 'out of order' in the diegesis, the audience is conditioned to reassemble them and interpret them linearly. The ghostly encounter, and its subversion of this cultural expectation by its existence within several timelines concurrently, draws attention to the construction and manipulation of time in the narrative. By existing contrary to this linear system, the encounter challenges traditional perceptions of temporal order. The ghost's explicit rejection of systems of linearity often serves as an implicit rejection of systems of oppression within the diegesis. The following article explores the degree to which the ghostly encounter in narrative fiction, film and television might be read as radical, or whether they champion individual freedoms and personal change, ultimately reaffirming systems of oppression. This article will consider this reading of the ghostly encounter with reference to Charles Dickens's A Christmas Carol *(1843), Pablo Larraín's film* Spencer *(2021) and the BBC television programme* Ghostwatch *(1992).*

Ghosts within a narrative signal the potential for profound social and ideological change by challenging established socio-cultural expectations of linear time. Their unique temporality, existing simultaneously within multiple timelines, contradicts the prevalent linearity often central to Western narrative fiction. By examining Charles Dickens's novella *A Christmas Carol* (1843), Pablo Larraín's film *Spencer* (2021) and the BBC television programme *Ghostwatch* (1992) as case studies, this article determines the extent to which ghostly encounters can be read as radical or if they primarily champion individual freedoms, thus upholding systems of oppression.

Linear time in this article is understood not only as how time is structured, that is, past present and future, but also in terms of the metanarrative as outlined by Jean Francois Lyotard. According to Lyotard, human history and culture are dominated by metanarratives, which are constructed through social and cultural legitimation. This process "confers legitimacy upon history" (Lyotard, 1979, p. 35) and suggests a continuous advancement in the material and spiritual state of humanity. Lyotard does not suggest that there is any truth to the idea of the metanarrative, only that its persistent recurrence cements it within the socio-cultural landscape. He claims that society is instead "haunted by the paradisaic representation of a lost 'organic' society" united by a shared "social bond" (Lyotard, 1979, p. 15). That the metanarrative is only

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an idea, which haunts society, renders it no less potent. Lyotard (1979, p. 26) addresses the link between knowledge legitimation and oppression, writing that "a person does not have to know how to be what knowledge says he is". Disparity of access to knowledge is central to the construction of metanarratives that bolster systems of oppression.

Francis Fukuyama, in *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992), outlines a metanarrative that might be considered in the context of knowledge and oppression. He argues that human history might be viewed as a linear evolutionary process, with the ascendency of neoliberal democracy at the end of the twentieth century signifying its superiority over other forms of government. Fukuyama's theory was criticised, most notably by Jacques Derrida in *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International* (1994)[1] where he rejects the idea of the metanarrative and posits that there can be no end to history. Derrida (1994, p. 127) describes the impossibility of "singing the advent of the ideal of liberal democracy and the capitalist market" when society is composed of "innumerable singular sites of suffering". He asserts that irrespective of progress made, ignoring this suffering, perceiving it as warranted within a wider context or even beneath consideration cannot be justified (Derrida, 1994, p. 127). In disputing Fukuyama's view that Marxism has been superseded by neoliberal democracy, Derrida (1994, p. 14) emphatically states that "There will be no future […] without Marx, no future without the memory and inheritance of Marx". Derrida's (1994) central thesis is that Marx's legacy will continue to inflect the world Fukuyama describes. According to Derrida, all history extends past the vanishing point of its temporal moment, echoing through time. He considers history to be "multiple and recurrent" (Derrida, 1994, p. 92), mirroring the nature of the events it comprises. Consequently, human history is populated with ghosts, who Derrida (1994, p. 220) understands as exhorting people to call for justice across time. He argues that these ghosts "are always there, […] even if they do not exist, even if they are no longer, even if they are not yet" (Derrida, 1994, p. 221). One of Derrida's primary criticisms of Fukuyama is that history cannot be defined in terms of epochs. For Derrida's ghosts, linear time does not exist. They are present and absent, here, and not here, always arriving and departing. Despite this fluidity, their demand for justice is unwavering, persisting amidst various forms of inequity such as "violence, inequality, exclusion, famine, and [...] economic oppression" (Derrida, 1994, p. 108). Derrida's ghosts represent those marginalised or victimised by the metanarrative of history, the revenants whose

[1] The original publication is Derrida, J. (1993) *Spectres de Marx: l'État de la Dette, le Travail du Deuil et la Nouvelle Internationale*. Paris: Galilée.

returns are assured (Derrida, 1994, p. 2). This notion of return is central to Derrida's (1994, p. 82) critique of Fukuyama's theory, which considers the neoliberal ideal as an event in linear time. Derrida (1994, p. 101) contends that if this ideal, this supposed pinnacle of human progress, emerges solely through the process of linear time, then the ghost, existing beyond linear constraints is ideally placed to disrupt this notion.

The ghost complicates linear time by its impossibility; it is the past invading the present, often intending to transform, dictate or herald the future. Western narrative fiction typically adheres to cultural expectations of temporal linearity, where audiences anticipate a clear beginning, middle and end. Even when these elements are presented 'out of order', audiences are conditioned to reassemble them in a linear fashion. This article contends that the ghostly encounter presents a subversion of this cultural expectation, highlighting the construction and manipulation of time in the narrative, by existing contrary to this system. The ghost's explicit rejection of linearity often serves as an implicit rejection of systems of oppression. However, the complete rejection of linearity can only occur if the hegemony of linear time is not restored after it has been undermined and if the power structures that relied upon its existence are destabilised. That is, if the metanarrative of forward progress, with all its attendant diegetic and extradiegetic mythos, is not re-adopted. The degree to which a text reverts to linearity might be taken as an indication of the radicality of the text and its capacity to subvert dominant systems of hierarchy and oppression. This article views the metanarrative as central to oppressive systems and argues that the rejection of linear time serves to disrupt them. Accordingly, this article explores the extent to which the ghost, representing ideological opposition to linear time, is synonymous with institutional critique. It also evaluates how this critique is undermined or upheld by the text's revaluation of temporal constructs by its conclusion. To illustrate the thesis, this article offers three examples: Charles Dickens's novella *A Christmas Carol*, Pablo Larraín's film *Spencer* and, finally, the BBC's mockumentary *Ghostwatch*. The selection of these particular texts is based on an attempt to demonstrate that this phenomenon is not isolated to any specific medium, such as literature, film or television, but more presciently, to highlight how it manifests in the different mediums of each text. This is not to advocate for the efficacy of one medium over another, but rather to highlight how non-linearity as a form of subversion is approached in each. Additionally, comparing the texts provides useful counterpoints to illustrate the varying degrees of subversive potency in each.

A Christmas Carol

Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*, first published in 1843, is in itself a kind of haunting, returning as it does every year at Christmastime. As Brandon Chitwood articulates:

> We can view the Carol as not so much a cultural artefact but as an ongoing cultural process, one in which social pleasure is generated and reified via a curiously repetitive narrative of metaphysical despair. (Chitwood, 2015, p. 675)

The work has had a profound cultural impact, endlessly adapted and retransmitted across film, television, stage and literature. The text is situated within a familiar cultural dialogue of the cosy and quaint; a piece to be revisited during the Christmas season with the promise of reaffirming the potential for good in all people through the familiar touchstones of 'bah humbug' and Victoriana. Dickens did not popularise the Christmas ghost story, but he did write the most ubiquitous one. Ebenezer Scrooge, a wealthy businessman, has been selected for festive reconditioning and is visited by four ghosts: his former business partner Jacob Marley and the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Yet to Come. Scrooge's refusal to donate to charity, celebrate Christmas and his mistreatment of his employee Bob Cratchit are entirely at odds with the values of the Ghosts of Christmas, given their focus on kindness and community. Furthermore, in the case of the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come and the ghost of Jacob Marley, they also emphasise the social and metaphysical disadvantages of leading a sinful life, and as such, the necessity of repentance. But Scrooge is not so dissimilar from his supernatural visitors. Arguably, Scrooge is well-placed to hear the spirits' message, because he is not unlike a ghost himself.

Scrooge's physical presence embodies traits commonly associated with ghosts. As Dickens describes:

> [Scrooge] carried his low temperature always about with him; he iced his office in the dogdays; and didn't thaw it one degree at Christmas […]. External heat and cold had little influence on Scrooge […]. Even the blind men's dogs appeared to know him, and when they saw him coming on would tug their owners into doorways and up courts […]. It was the very thing he liked. To edge his way along the crowded paths of life, warning all human sympathy to keep its distance. (2017, p. 2)

Paranormal investigators frequently describe temperature changes caused by supernatural entities, especially extreme cold. In an interview with *North Wales Live* (2018), paranormal experts Barri Ghai, Sandy Lakdar and Chris Fleming claim that "feeling a sudden, inexplicable change in temperature" can be indicative of a ghostly presence. Investigator Greg Newkirk, speaking with *Reader's Digest* (2023), reports the alleged effect of ghostly presences on animals, which causes them to behave erratically, reacting to stimuli their owners cannot see. One might consider the character of Spider, the small, loyal terrier who accompanies Kipps in

Susan Hill's *The Woman in Black* (1983), or the black labrador Gyp in Sarah Waters's *The Little Stranger* (2009). Both animals react to ghostly presences long before the central human characters begin to comprehend them. In addition to these parallels, the reader is informed that Scrooge often answers to the name 'Marley'. Dickens explains that:

> Scrooge never painted out Old Marley's name. Sometimes people new to the business called him Scrooge, and sometimes Marley, but he answered to both names. It was all the same to him. (2017, p. 2)

Scrooge also resides in Marley's old home, and as Dickens (2017, p. 7) notes, Scrooge and Marley were "two kindred spirits". The opening of the text, with its firm iteration of Marley's death, challenges the fixity of the past, by calling the finality of death into question. Marley is dead and yet re-animated as Scrooge, while Scrooge, in turn, lives as Marley, suspended in a state of half-life. Indeed, it is Scrooge's similarity to Marley in his ethics and conduct that summons the ghosts.

The ghosts in *A Christmas Carol* are predominantly associated with time, appearing to Scrooge as the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Yet to Come. Scrooge's instruction relies upon the manipulation and distortion of time. As Chitwood (2015, p. 676) explains, "it is their lessons and their ability to give Scrooge the semblance of a life lived multiply and simultaneously" that resonate most deeply. When viewed in this light, the spirits' lessons echo Derrida's (1994, p. 92) "multiple and recurrent" sites of suffering. The ghosts offer Scrooge a chance to engage with time and the nature of human suffering in a non-linear context, suggesting the potential of this perspective in destabilising hegemonic metanarratives about power and class.

A Christmas Carol actively promotes charity, kindness and forgiveness, particularly towards the working class. Scrooge's assertion that the poor should take themselves to prisons and workhouses is rebuked by the Ghost of Christmas Present, who places blame for the poverty endured by the Cratchit family on Scrooge, as an irresponsible and unethical employer. The spirit, when insinuating that this will be Bob Cratchit's son Tiny Tim's last Christmas and seeing Scrooge's horror at this presentiment, reminds Scrooge of his pronouncement about the poor: "If [they] be like to die, [they] had better do it and decrease the surplus population" (2017, p. 52). At which point Scrooge is "overcome with penitence and grief" (2017, p. 52). *A Christmas Carol* is an unabashed reproof of the view of poverty and criminality as symptomatic of moral or intellectual inferiority. It warns against the dangers of Ignorance and Want, in the form of two children, who are introduced to Scrooge by the Ghost of Christmas Present. The spirit cautions that Ignorance, the sin that Scrooge has been most guilty of, is the greater threat

of the two. The spirit exhorts Scrooge to "Deny it! […] Slander those who tell it ye! Admit it for your factious purposes and make it worse" (2017, p. 64). The inclination to critique the institutions of wealth and individuals, like Scrooge, who exploit ignorance for their "factious purposes" and perpetuate poverty is inherent to the ghosts and is directly tied to their ability to enable Scrooge to step outside his current place in time. The spirits are the custodians and representatives of time. They contain the past, present and future multitudes of themselves, as well as the lives lived within them. The ghosts embody the entirety of human experience (or at the very least, a white Victorian one) at Christmastime and the diversity of experiences that this accommodates. Some are affluent and comfortable, exemplified by Scrooge's nephew Fred, while others are bleak and impoverished, like the residents of the mining village. As containers of this collective experience, the ghosts can destabilise hegemonic narratives by revealing extremes of wealth and poverty, thus disrupting Scrooge's limited understanding of Christmas celebrations with a more nuanced perspective.

It is worth noting, however, two caveats. The first is the ghosts that are not included in the Christmas family tree, i.e. The Ghost of Christmas that Would Have Been or The Ghost of Christmas that Never Was. The ghosts in *A Christmas Carol* deal only in fixed temporalities. While the role of Christmas Yet to Come might be read ambiguously, given that Scrooge may be able to "sponge away" (2017, p. 82) his past misdeeds, the reader is given to understand by the novella's conclusion that any change that has occurred is a direct result of Scrooge's actions in the present. The second point to consider is the tripartite nature of the ghosts. The most obvious association is with the Christian Trinity, but comparisons can also be drawn to the Norns of Norse mythology or the Fates of Greek mythology. When viewed in these contexts this tripartite quality often signifies omniscience. In Christian doctrine, for example, God is understood to have a view of time which extends from the beginning to the end of time. Emily Paul, writing on divine atemporality, explains that:

> the classical view of God's relation to time […] deems Him to be atemporal: He exists 'outside' of time and views all events in time as if in one 'simultaneous present'. (Paul, 2019, p. 2)

Despite their religious associations, including their threefold nature, focus on Christian values and redemptive mission, the ghosts of *A Christmas Carol* do not embody this omniscient capability. When Marley informs Scrooge that he will be visited by three ghosts in succession, Scrooge asks "Couldn't I take 'em, all at once and have it over, Jacob?" (2017, p. 20) However, the ghosts' timelines do not overlap, and when their lessons have been taught, they place Scrooge back at Christmas morning in his present time. Even with Scrooge's assertion that he

will live "in the Past, the Present, and the Future" (2017, p. 82) the reader still understands these temporalities as distinct. They form the basis of a narrative of progress—a metanarrative; the sinner's salvation hinges on the existence of a fixed past from which he must be redeemed. This fixed narrative time is further expanded upon in the novella's conclusion, and it is this rigidity and the resulting metanarrative that reduces the radical potentiality of *A Christmas Carol*'s ghosts.

A Christmas Carol begins by establishing Scrooge's marginality within his society. He elects not to take part in the institutions of family, community and even Christmas celebrations. However, by the end of the story, Scrooge enthusiastically embraces all three and becomes a philanthropist. As Audrey Jaffe writes:

> The culture from which Scrooge has been absent is, of course, commodity culture; his failure to participate in human fellowship is signaled by his refusal of, and need to learn, a gift-giving defined as the purchase and exchange of commodities. (Jaffe, 1994, p. 261)

After waking on Christmas morning and praying, Scrooge engages in a series of capitalist activities, many aimed at enriching the Cratchit family. Ultimately, Scrooge begins "furthering the enfranchisement of the middle class" (Chitwood, 2015, p. 683). Hugh Cunningham notes a shift in attitudes towards philanthropy in the mid-Victorian era, where the concept became less associated with evangelism and its connection to capitalism became more prominent (2020, p. 131). The reader is encouraged to interpret Scrooge's behaviour as overwhelmingly positive: he alleviates the material wants of the Cratchit family and, by implication, saves Tiny Tim, from an untimely and avoidable death. While Scrooge's actions affect beneficial change, they remain limited in scope and do not address systemic societal issues. Mary Beth Raddon (2008, p. 38) observes that philanthropic actions are dominated by "private visions of the public good" and tend to reflect the social class of the donors. Scrooge does not disavow the social structure that enabled him to amass wealth or exploit the Cratchits through debt and low wages. Although the reader is led to believe that Scrooge continues his charitable behaviour for life (2017, p. 89), he simply improves the conditions of capitalism, thereby reinforcing its legitimacy and perpetuation. While *A Christmas Carol* challenges linear time, it ultimately upholds the metanarrative of linear time as essential to the Victorian ideal of middle-class progress. The text proposes that escaping poverty does not necessitate the dismantling of the systems that engender it. Instead, it involves integrating into a continuum of human experience moving towards an idealised future, without poverty, under those same systems. Thus, although linear time is undermined within the diegesis, it is reaffirmed at the story's conclusion. The text favours the idea that the ghosts only needed to enlighten Scrooge on how he could become

a more efficient part of the capitalist system. In this way, his past becomes a fixed event from which he progresses, and the institutions that enabled his wealth to remain intact, securing his present and future as a man who is "as good a master [...] as the good old city knew" (2017, p. 89).

Spencer

The 2021 film *Spencer*, directed by Pablo Larraín, is a fictionalised account of Lady Diana Spencer (1961–1997), portrayed by Kristin Stewart, during a royal family Christmas at Sandringham in 1991. The film details Diana's personal struggles, including her husband Prince Charles's infidelity, her co-dependent relationship with her young sons and her strained interactions with both the royal family and their staff. *Spencer* is less a biopic than a psychological portrait, detailing Diana's fractured mental state in scenes depicting both ideation of and actualised self-harm. The fact that *Spencer*, like *A Christmas Carol*, is also set at Christmas deserves consideration. Christmas is "multiple and recurrent" (Derrida, 1994, p. 92), a haunting where familiar figures, traditions and events reappear annually and demand acknowledgement. In *Spencer*, the implication that this will be Diana's last Christmas as wife to the future king and her last with the royal family challenges the supposedly cyclical nature of Christmas. Diana's attempts to break from tradition extends to challenging history itself, as exemplified by the central ghostly encounter of the film. Diana is visited several times by the ghost of Anne Boleyn (c. 1500–1536), whose involvement in breaking with tradition (specifically, with the Church of Rome) had profound and lasting consequences on the future of Europe.

Diana's haunting by Anne Boleyn is compelled by two factors. Firstly, Diana claims a distant familial connection to the Boleyns. Secondly, she acknowledges a parallel between her own life and Anne's, as both women were sidelined by British monarchs in favour of other women. Anne's appearances become increasingly involved as the film progresses. She initially appears as a silent spectator sitting across from Diana at the dinner table. Later, she speaks to Diana, calling her by name. In one scene, as Diana escapes Christmas dinner, Anne is shown rushing through Sandringham House. These shots are intercut with scenes of Diana doing the same, blurring the visual and temporal barriers between the women. Both say—"tell them I'm not well"—before Diana is seen dressed as Anne, standing where Anne had been moments before. The final exchange between the women occurs in Diana's childhood home, Althorp House, where Diana, contemplating suicide, is confronted by Anne, who tells her:

> You know he gave her a picture of himself, a miniature painting. She wore it around her neck. Same as the one that I wore around my neck. So, I just tore it off.

Anne is speaking about Jane Seymour (c. 1508–1537), who replaced her as Henry VIII's (1491–1547) wife. Anne tearfully urges Diana to "Go. Run." Diana then rips off a pearl necklace, a Christmas gift from Charles, which he has also given to his mistress, Camilla Parker-Bowles.

As mentioned earlier, the connection between Anne and Diana portrayed in the diegesis is rooted in both a familial tie and material similarities in their lives. However, they are also linked by the systems of oppression that they experienced. Both were tasked with maintaining the monarchy's stability through childbirth, and both were ultimately deemed expendable. Larraín's depiction of these two women, who lived some four centuries apart, highlights a failure to view women as anything beyond commodities, which reflects shortcomings not only within the British royal family but society at large. Diana poignant remark in the film, "its currency, that's all we are," underscores the thematic correlation of wealth and suffering in *Spencer*. Currency becomes synonymous with trauma, particularly the trauma inflicted on female bodies and the generational wealth that it secures. This trauma in turn is closely tied to concepts of failure.

The opulence of Sandringham House provides a stark backdrop to Diana's inner struggles. Larraín presents wide shots of rooms filled with antique furniture, gilded mirrors and floor-to-ceiling windows. Despite the meticulously prepared meals consisting of organic vegetables and game from the royal family's estates, Diana's experience with food is tainted by her struggle with bulimia, revealing how the façade of wealth and privilege can mask profound personal turmoil, in Diana's case her desire to remove herself from an oppressive system. This portrayal aligns with Derrida's theory, where he explores the need to keep death localised following trauma. His invocation of the cadaver serves as a metaphor for societal attempts to suppress and contain failures (Derrida, 1994, p. 120), Diana's failure to eat, to arrive to events on time, to accept her husband's infidelity. This aligns with Derrida's wider critique of Fukuyama (1992), who champions Western liberal democracy while ignoring historic and contemporary failures. As stated earlier, Derrida (1994, p. 106) contends that historical atrocities cannot be overlooked regardless of progress, and that suffering persists. Fukuyama, in Derrida's view, clings to the promises of a future that have never materialised. The role of the ghost, both according to Derrida and in *Spencer*, is to repeatedly confront society with the failure of the hegemonic metanarrative until it is acknowledged. Anne becomes the unlocalised cadaver, defying containment and posing a threat to the institution by virtue of her

manifestation and her continued influence on history despite the monarchy's attempts to remove her from it. Her presence exposes the myth of succession and the false promise of continuity associated with monarchistic rule attendant to exploitation particularly of female bodies. This system requires female obedience, both in behaviour and in the perceived obedience of their bodies in giving birth to sons. Both Anne and Diana attempt to fulfil this prescribed role. Where Anne fails, Diana succeeds, but Anne's presence speaks to the cost of that success. The price Diana paid was steep, impacting her freedom, mental health, relationship with her children and self-identity. In essence her role curtailed her humanity and reduced her to a tool. To fit the mould of 'correct' womanhood demanded by the regime, Diana's "innumerable sites of suffering" (Derrida, 1994, p. 127) her dissatisfaction with her marriage, her bulimia, even her personhood must be ignored, to protect the futurity of the royal family, her failure, must be overlooked.

Diana's death in 1997, along with the ensuing global outpouring of grief and enduring fascination with her life, could also be said to haunt the narrative. After her interrupted suicide attempt Diana runs, as Anne suggests, but the viewer is conscious that any freedom she attains will be short-lived. Time emerges then as a central tension of the narrative. One interaction between Diana and her sons makes explicit reference to this. Diana says:

> You know at school you do tenses? Well, here, there is only one tense. There is no future. The past and the present are the same thing.

Spencer is set at Christmas 1991, prior to the royal family's '*annus horribilis*' of 1992.[2] Similar to Ebenezer Scrooge, the royal family faced a bleak future symbolised by the Spirit of Christmas Yet to Come. Their implicit rejection of the future, evident in their adherence to archaic traditions and hierarchical structures of inheritance, may be interpreted as an attempt conceal historic violence and abuse inflicted upon the exploited peoples who secured the family's status. Considering this, Anne Boleyn's presence within the diegesis goes beyond indicating similarities with Diana's life; it underscores a system of oppression upheld by linear time. Monarchy persists by virtue of its ability to progress through time. Anne's intrusion disrupts accepted monarchistic notions of succession by highlighting one of its most enduring martyrs. Anne is a woman from the British monarchy's past, invading its present in an attempt to dictate its future. The real disruption, however, is achieved within Larraín's characterisation of Diana, who through an extended montage scene following her suicide attempt, where she

[2] Queen Elizabeth II (1952–2022) famously dubbed 1992 an '*annus horribilis*' due to three of her four children, Prince Charles, Prince Andrew and Princess Anne, separating from their spouses, along with scandalous tabloid reports and a devastating fire at Windsor Castle.

appears and reappears on screen in multiples of herself; as a child, a teenager, a bride and a mother, comes to be seen as fractured by, and composed of, time. By the end of the sequence, she is not simply Diana, Princess of Wales, but all her past and future selves too. To paraphrase Dickens (2017, p. 83), the Past, the Present and the Future all strive within her.

Spencer subscribes to an anti-royalist ideology that critiques inherited wealth and extreme privilege. However, the film's implicit and explicit acceptance of class structure undermines the efficacy of this argument. While effective in dismantling linear time, the film confines Diana's potential liberation within the container of privilege. Despite Diana's meaningful relationships with her dresser Maggie and the chef Darren, they can only offer her comfort. Darren reassures an increasingly paranoid Diana of the staff's wishes for her happiness. Diana hardly listens, asking him if he has read the *Vogue* article about her. His efforts to connect with her are flatly ignored as he becomes a vessel for Diana's moribund musings. The dynamics in Diana's relationship with Maggie are similarly weighed in Diana's favour. Maggie confesses her love for Diana during a trip to the beach, admitting that she does not expect Diana to reciprocate these feelings. Diana Taylor observes that:

> Diana's life, death, funeral, and afterlife as a quasi-sacred relic on display illuminates the way that multiple, intersecting social dramas encapsulate many of the tensions of our time. All sorts of issues-ranging from eating disorders to unhappy marriages, to AIDS, to the workings of the media, to neocolonialism, to globalism- seem magically incarnated in her image. The tragic employment of the events surrounding Diana, and the theatricality of the staging, transmitted internationally, create the illusion of a cohesive, "universal" audience. (Taylor, 1999, p. 62)

In *Spencer*, Diana's multifaceted public image contrasts with the personal cost borne by individuals, particularly those whose labour sustains her lifestyle. Despite Diana's support for LGBT communities, the film depicts her personal reaction to Maggie's confession as one of light-hearted uninterest, disregarding the power imbalance in their relationship. This portrayal obscures the labour contributed by individuals like Maggie, both emotionally and practically, despite the unequal dynamics at play.

The most prescient example of this concealed labour is Major Alistair Gregory, the Queen's equerry, whose relationship with Diana is antagonistic. He insists that she be weighed upon arrival at Sandringham, a Christmas tradition that Diana finds uncomfortable. Gregory monitors her movements, even interrupting her late-night binge. If the central conflict of *Spencer* is time, then it is in the drastically different perceptions of time as held by Gregory and Diana where this tension is most evident. Gregory is charged with managing the royal household and that influences the flow of time within it. Notably, Gregory is instrumental in drawing Anne into the narrative. When Diana arrives at Sandringham, she finds a biography

of Anne Boleyn in her room. Shortly after beginning to read it, she encounters Anne for the first time. Diana accuses Gregory of leaving the book as a warning, though he denies any knowledge of it. However, it is strongly implied that Gregory placed the book in Diana's room, as he is later shown returning it to a bookshelf. Willingly or unwillingly then, he is partly responsible for her liberation. In one exchange between Gregory and Diana, it is learned that Gregory served in Northern Ireland during the Troubles where he witnessed his friend being fatally shot. He professes that his belief in the idea of the crown, rather than the people, sustained him during that period. Diana's emancipation from the burden of embodying an idea is facilitated by Gregory's labour. However, this liberation speaks to a continuation of class hegemony, as it comes at the expense of those who labour within hierarchical structures. Therefore, the metanarrative that supports inherited wealth and hierarchical institutions is maintained.

Taylor, reflecting on Diana's death, notes the shift in public perception towards her. While many felt an emotional connection with Diana, upon her death:

> her sudden uniqueness, her tragic magnitude, allowed us to forget for a moment that she was also very much the product of a long history of collective imaginings that have normalised heterosexuality, glorified maternity, fetishized youth and femininity, glamorized whiteness. (Taylor, 1999, p. 62)

Diana remains a symbol of the hierarchical class structure, which she participated in. The haunting of *Spencer* offers Diana an escape because of her princess title, not despite it. The narrative's normalisation of class structures, which is evident in the marginalisation of the working-class narratives, suggests that Diana is perceived as worthy of salvation due to societal perceptions of her superiority. Anne Boleyn, the ghost acting as a guardian angel, saves Diana but leaves the monarchy unharmed. In an exchange which is most indicative of *Spencer*'s defence of the *status quo*, Maggie says to Diana "They can't change. *You* have to change". The message is clear: Diana may change but the system will plough on regardless.

Ghostwatch

In June 1992, Stephen Volk, the writer of *Ghostwatch*, submitted his final script for the programme to the BBC. The script opened with a statement spoken by a cousin of Terry Waite, a hostage victim of the Islamic Jihad Organisation, released after four years in 1991: "I'll only believe it [news of Terry's release] when I see it on TV". In an interview with Kate Mossman (2017), Volk describes the choice to include that quote as ironic. He baulks at the idea of "TV being the font of truth, and trusted implicitly, particularly the BBC". When *Ghostwatch* aired

on TV for the first and only time on Halloween night in 1992, there was nothing on the BBC, or indeed the wider TV landscape, that could truly have primed viewers for what they saw. To describe *Ghostwatch* as a mockumentary is potentially misleading. Rather than playing with form to highlight the unreality of the diegesis, *Ghostwatch* attempts believability throughout. The programme presents itself as a live broadcast from a haunted house in London, where the Early family, consisting of mother Pamela and daughters Suzanne and Kim, are purportedly terrorised by a ghost named Pipes. The narrative unfolds across two primary settings: the live broadcast from the Early's residence in the Foxhill Drive housing estate in London, led by former *Blue Peter Presenter* Sarah Greene, with Craig Charles stationed outside collecting interviews, and a studio segment hosted by Michael Parkinson at the BBC studio. In the studio, Michael Parkinson is joined by parapsychologist Dr Lin Pascoe (played by Gillian Bevan), while Sarah Greene's husband, Mike Smith, presides over a 'live phone-in', although these calls were pre-recorded, like the rest of the programme. *Ghostwatch* also features 'archive' footage, captured by Pascoe and her team of parapsychologists, which she presents as evidence of the veracity of the Early family's claims that they are facing a supernatural threat. As the broadcast progresses, the supernatural occurrences intensify and culminate in a complete takeover by Pipes, who gains control of the cameras and broadcasting equipment to transmit his message directly into homes across the country—a literal ghost in the machine.

Kate Mossman underscores the extent to which *Ghostwatch* was believed to be a genuine documentary broadcast and its impact:

> Many of the 11 million who saw *Ghostwatch* were children. Sarah Greene went on Blue Peter the following week to reassure young viewers that she was unharmed. Five days after the program's transmission, an 18-year-old boy with learning difficulties, Martin Denham, hanged himself, having fallen into what his stepfather described as a trance. He had become obsessed with *Ghostwatch* and was convinced that there were ghosts in the water pipes of his Nottingham home. (Mossman, 2017)

One might consider the programme's believability to be secondary to how it subverted the notion of belief itself. This is exemplified less in the tragic death of Martin Denham and the cases of post-traumatic stress disorders in children ascribed to the show (Mossman, 2017) but rather in the wider negative public reaction to the programme. Following the airing of *Ghostwatch*, its producers, Ruth Baumgarten and Richard Broke, appeared on BBC One's *Biteback*, a consumer watchdog show, to defend the programme and themselves and to apologise to the nation for the distress the programme caused. Additionally, Will Wyat, the BBC's then managing director, initiated an inquiry and commissioned a report, which has

subsequently disappeared (Mossman, 2017). The backlash against *Ghostwatch* reflects a response to a novel style of broadcasting. Mossman points out that:

> After Ghostwatch, found footage, infrared camerawork and surveillance became staples of the horror genre: the makers of the 1999 film The Blair Witch Project claim it as an inspiration. (Mossman, 2017)

However, when the programme aired, these techniques were just emerging. Mossman (2017) observes that the infrared cameras, used to film chaotic scenes inside the Early home, had recently been introduced for the BBC's coverage of the Gulf War (1990–1991). They gave the impression of absolute veracity, by virtue of their visual connection with the institutions seen as purveyors of objective truth. This aligns with Lyotard's concept of legitimation (1979, p. 26). The BBC had access to knowledge and their role as a public institution was to disseminate it for the public good. However, its Gulf War coverage revealed inconsistencies in information sharing in accordance with public interests This tension between perceived truth and the reality of media coverage is central to *Ghostwatch*'s interrogation of institutional power. Indeed, director Lesley Manning was drawn to the project by her dissatisfaction with the triumphant portrayal of the Gulf War by the BBC the previous year (Mossman, 2017). Manning's disgust at this portrayal influenced her presentation of the fallibility of media apparatus in *Ghostwatch*.

There are other notable parallels between *Ghostwatch* and the BBC's coverage of the Gulf War. One interesting comparison is that between Sarah Greene and Kate Adie, a BBC war correspondent who reported from Iraq in 1991. Though there are some visual similarities between the women (both are white and have blonde hair), their professional backgrounds differ significantly. Adie was known for her on-the-ground coverage of various conflicts, including the 1980 siege of the Iranian Embassy in London, the Troubles in Northern Ireland and the Tiananmen Square Protests in China in 1989. Conversely, Greene was best known as a presenter on *Blue Peter* and other daytime television programmes. Despite this contrast, Greene's "live from Foxhill Drive" segment in *Ghostwatch* frequently recalls Adie's war reporting. In their analysis of one of Adie's broadcasts from 1991 Angela Smith and Michael Higgins (2021, p. 210) describe the focus that the BBC placed on Adie's "well-being and professional subjectivity" in interviews with the studio hosts. Additionally, they note that Adie's broadcasts featured "explicit discussion of the apparatus" (Smith and Higgins, 2012, p. 210) emphasising infrared and satellite technologies, which connected to the BBC's studio. Smith and Higgins articulate that:

> the processes and limits of technology continue to be a recurring theme in all of the live broadcasts, including indirect references to the dependency of the dialogue on satellite radio. (Smith and Higgins, 2012, p. 210)

These observations echo scenes from *Ghostwatch*, particularly the initial 'live' broadcast where Greene introduces the team and demonstrates the infrared camera and ghost detection equipment. Smith and Higgins (2012, p. 212) also note the "emphasis on immediacy" created by the live broadcast. They argue that the nature of this broadcast, which would seem to place the reporter at the heart of the events as they unfold, reveals "discursive strategies of emotionality and revelation at play" (Smith and Higgins, 2012, p. 212). This choreographed emotionality is part of what so "appalled" Manning about the BBC's coverage of the Gulf War (Mossman, 2017). The emphasis that the broadcaster placed on entertainment in the face of conflict, loss of life and human suffering is mirrored in *Ghostwatch*, where this same focus on entertainment value leads to disastrous effects for the Early family. When the *Ghostwatch* team reveals 'live on air' that Suzanne Early is creating some of the phenomena, it holds the power to shock and enrage, diverting attention away from the family's peril and prompting Parkinson to dismiss the events as a hoax. This shift highlights the conflict between sensationalism and genuine concern for those involved.

After this revelation Suzanne tearfully protests that they were giving the viewers "what they wanted". The production crew assembled at Foxhill Drive, as well as the presenters in the studio, fail to grasp that the directive to fake an event came from Pipes himself. Enraged by Parkinson's suggestion that the programme will have to end, Pipes escalates his own, far more sinister process of discursive revelation, which the viewer begins to realise he has been engaged in since the beginning of the broadcast. Pipes increases his violence against the family, the film crew and Greene, using the apparatus of the BBC against it until his existence can no longer be denied. This act underscores the vulnerability of media itself, demonstrating how it can be co-opted to serve a personal agenda. If *Ghostwatch* is to be considered as a response to BBC coverage of the Gulf War, then Pipes's actions serves as a scathing critique of media influence. They expose how metanarratives about war are legitimised through the choices made by individuals with privileged access to information, resulting in selective disclosure to the public. In relation to the work of John Simpson, a BBC journalist who covered the war, David Willcox commented that:

> A significant consideration for his continued reporting of the conflict concerned his desire to write a book about events. Simpson's revelation illuminates the existence of external motives for journalists covering a conflict. These motives introduce a number of questions about the role of the war reporter. Having been based in Iraq during the Gulf War, he may have felt the need to explain events after conflict when the direct influence of enemy censorship was removed. (Wilcox, 2005, p. 30)

This tension between the known and unknown propels *Ghostwatch* forward. The audience begins to question the presented information and the true locus of power. Pipes becomes even more terrifying by the end of the broadcast, when he becomes the director of a mass séance conducted through the nation's television sets. As Volk intended, this conclusion serves as a damning statement against uncritical relationships with media and the lack of awareness that he believed the public held regarding the private agendas of institutions.

The representation of Pipes remains chilling even after thirty-two years. His history is unveiled during the programme by his former probation officer, who contacts the show through the 'live phone-in' system. In life, he had been Raymond Tunstall, a mentally disturbed man who molested several children before being committed to a psychiatric unit. After his release he lived in Foxhill Drive, subletting a room from his aunt and uncle. This revelation undermines the expertise of Dr Pascoe, who claims to have record of the site of the Early house dating back to pre-history. However, since Pipes was subletting the room, he does not appear in any official records, underlining his marginality in society and the gaps in official state narratives. Pipes's former probation officer asserts that Tunstall was extremely unwell and "should never have been released", a fact made evident in the broadcast through his frequent attacks and attempts to assault Suzanne, the eldest Early daughter. Pipes, whom the audience never truly 'sees' but rather glimpses reflected in glass or the drawings of Kim, the younger Early daughter, had most of his face eaten off by his pet cats, which he locked in the cupboard under the stairs with him when he committed suicide. The sound of cats and the cupboard under the stairs are central to Pipes's manifestations. The probation officer also reveals that Tunstall believed that he was possessed by the ghost of Mother Seddons, a notorious Victorian baby farmer, charged with murdering the children in her care. Pipes's story is an unabashedly grim tale and while there is little sympathy afforded to him, there is an attempt to contextualise his life and death within the parameters of a healthcare system that failed to protect both him and his potential victims. Inherent in Pipes's narrative is the tacit implication that he is a victim of Thatcherite social care policies,[3] which led to the closure of mental health institutions and the release of individuals like Tunstall. This was part of a reform effort to transition to 'care in the community;' but adequate care never materialised. He is undoubtedly a criminal, but he is also a product of the institutions that allowed his criminality to go unchecked.

Pipes stands apart from the ghosts of *A Christmas Carol* and Anne Boleyn's ghost in *Spencer*. His presence brings no comfort, yet his encounters with the Early family, the

[3] Margaret Thatcher served as Prime Minister of the Conservative Party Government 1979–1990.

Ghostwatch team and viewers are no less efficacious as a staging ground for social change. Like Mother Seddons, whom he believed haunted him, Tunstall operated on the fringes of society, committing crimes against a backdrop of entrenched class divisions and economic instability. Want, as depicted in *A Christmas Carol*, is here transformed into Raymond Tunstall, a mentally disturbed individual lacking access to professional help due to social and economic policies. This ghostly encounter represents the worst of society's failures returning to trouble the institutions of the present. Pipes serves as the focal point for critiquing the Thatcherite metanarrative of progress, and it is Pipes's manipulation of time that imbues *Ghostwatch* with its critical potency.

In both *A Christmas Carol* and *Spencer*, linear time is disrupted through supernatural encounters, only to be restored by the conclusion. Scrooge and Diana experience time linearly until their supernatural encounters, after which the linear progression of time is invariably restored. *Ghostwatch* contests the very idea of time as linear, by disrupting the viewers' implicit trust in the concept. This is exemplified in one of the programme's most harrowing scenes. After a spate of horrific attacks by Pipes, which culminates in Suzanne's possession, the 'live' studio link to the house is lost. When it is re-established, Suzanne and Kim, are seen calmly playing a board game with Sarah Greene, while Michael Parkinson and Dr Pascoe watch the feed with confusion. Dr Pascoe realises that "This picture we're seeing now isn't live". What Parkinson and Pascoe have been watching was filmed earlier and the real-time scenes in the house—those from the 'present' time—are lost to them. Pipes has gained control of the apparatus and with it control of time.

The programme acknowledges the relationship between the apparatus and time from the outset. The live broadcast, the viewer is assured, is the best way to find the truth. Greene highlights the infrared camera's ability to reveal everything. In this sense the live broadcast is presented initially as existing outside time, beyond the personal and political biases that have been constructed prior to the cameras rolling. However, *Ghostwatch* constantly challenges the notion of the camera as an objective, omniscient presence, particularly through its manipulation of the viewers with 'archive' footage. The first glimpse of Foxhill Drive is 'archive' footage, shot by Dr Pascoe and her team, of Suzanne and Kim's bedroom at night. The sleeping girls are awoken by banging and objects flying around the room. As they scream, Pipes begins to grab Suzanne as Mrs Early rushes in and drags the girls out of the room. During the 'live phone-ins,' a viewer reports seeing a man standing by the bedroom window during the incident. The video clip is played again and there is now a dark figure visible in the shot. However, when it is played for a third time the figure is no longer visible and Pascoe and Parkinson dismiss the

sighting. Pascoe states that she has seen the footage many times and never noticed this, before using an electronic pen to highlight the area in front of the curtains to explain how the viewer may have been confused, mistaking how the shadow cast by the curtains could have seemed like a figure. Despite this explanation, calls continue to come in from viewers who claim to have seen a similar figure. The objectivity of the camera, placed in the children's bedroom for research, is called into question. Has the audience truly seen something, or have they all been mistaken? The archive 'footage' casts doubt over the opinions of the experts and disrupts the fixity of the past.

As Manning expressed in her interview with Mossman (2017) "we had broken the contract between Auntie [i.e. the BBC] and the public". *Ghostwatch* undermined the implicit notion that the BBC, as a public institution was unbiased and trustworthy. The programme drew on the apparatus of the institution, including famous and 'trustworthy' personalities such as Michael Parkinson and Sarah Greene, as well as innovative technologies typically reserved for the transmission of factual information, such as infrared, phone-ins and *vox pop*s. The contract was undeniably broken and the power of the institution to influence the public was critiqued. More significantly, *Ghostwatch* dismantled linear time to the extent that the viewer cannot confidently conceive of its restoration by the narrative's conclusion. In the final moments of the broadcast, Pipes has gained total control of the studio and as a figure of the past, has returned to play with time, segmenting it, presenting it, and reconfiguring it as he sees fit. Pipes dismantles the process of legitimation constructed by the production team. He uses the apparatus of truth against them, to expose a history of trauma, pain, terror, and negligence within state institutions. Pipes's control of the BBC and infiltration of the systems of truth and information demonstrates the inevitability of the past invading the present and the future. It affirms that Pipes is part of a long history of "multiple and recurrent" (Derrida, 1994, p. 92) abuse, which has been occluded within the hegemonic metanarrative of late twentieth-century Britain. While Pipes bears sole responsibility for his violence against children, he is also a product of neoliberal, classist Thatcherite policies that allowed his criminality and violence to go unchecked. *Ghostwatch* reveals how these policies led to his release into a community that is still critically threatened by his ability to harm. To read Pipes as an avenging figure of the working class, akin to Anne Boleyn in *Spencer* as the avenger of commodified women, would be reductive. Pipes is as much of a threat to the working-class community he came from as he is a part of it. *Ghostwatch* instead prompts the viewer to read Pipes as the ghost of ignored histories and failed promises of neoliberal hegemony that Fukuyama exalts. Pipes is an abuser of children, who after his death exists outside of the law and beyond time, he can no longer be

contained by the institutions of power. Derrida (1994, p. 221), urges scholars to heed such ghosts as it is their role to "learn […] from the ghost" and to listen to it if they "love justice". Pipes has been marginalised, both as Raymond Tunstall, and now as a spectral entity and embodies this neglect. Driven by a desire for twisted justice, he calls attention to the legacy of institutional failures. *Ghostwatch* is emphatic, the ghost cannot, and must not, be ignored. In an address at the 1975 Conservative Party conference, Margaret Thatcher (1925–2013) claimed that "The spirit of envy can destroy. It can never build". *Ghostwatch* proves Thatcher's assertion to be false. Raymond Tunstall, a man banished to the margins of Thatcherite Britain returns as Pipes in an attack on time itself, destroying the metanarrative of progress and rebuilding the world in his own violent image.

Conclusion

The word ghost is derived from the Old English word 'gast', meaning:

> the animating or vital principle in humans and animals; that which gives life to the body, in contrast to its purely material being; the life force, the breath of life (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 2023).

In this context, there is nothing that suggests terror. Rather, it indicates ubiquity, a shared trait common to all living creatures. In its modern context, the word seems equally fascinated with this shared trait, but its fascination focuses on its absence. The horror of the ghost is that it shows absence where there should be presence (life force) and presence where there should be absence (the supernatural manifestation of the dead). This disruptive staging of presence and absence is also the locus of the ghost's power. The ghost's animation, despite the absence of life force, denotes a source of power outside of our understanding or control. Moreover, their presence in our linear configuration of time reveals the fallibility of linear time.

The ghosts in the texts discussed vary in how much they are facilitated to access this power and to the degree they are enabled to enact social change. The ghosts of *A Christmas Carol* repair time and with it uphold the social order of Victorian Britain, enshrining the importance of capitalist values by ensuring Scrooge will empower the (now upwardly mobile) Cratchit family. The ghost of Anne Boleyn in *Spencer* has the potential to radically alter the future of the British monarchy and indeed, British society, by recasting their treatment of women as a history of abuse. However, her power can only be exerted as far as Diana is willing to see herself as part of a wider narrative of female subjugation. Diana's choice to seek personal freedom is a private victory, which sidelines those who help her to achieve it. Anne's escape from linear time allows Diana to escape the timeline of power transference which she was part

of, but this system will continue without her. The Early family, the mock BBC team and by extension the British public's encounter with *Ghostwatch*'s Pipes, proves the most radical of any of the ghostly encounters discussed. Pipes succeeds in infiltrating the systems of narrative production and uses them to reorder time. Diegetically, the world he creates is one of horror and violence; extradiegetically, his actions reveal the horror and violence which the institutions of the British government and the BBC had attempted to elide.

Derrida (1991, p. 117) describes his enduring faith in Marxism as stemming not from doctrine or dogma, but from what he believes Marxism represents, which is "to produce events, new effective forms of action, practice, organisation". The ghosts considered here might be regarded in the same light. They enter the diegesis with the potential to produce events outside of the expected social norms, events that hold inherent radical potential because they exist beyond those norms. Despite their differences and the failure of the ghosts in *A Christmas Carol* and *Spencer* to truly destabilise the dominant narrative, each of these texts share a determined belief in the commonality implied by the word 'gast'. The ghosts of *A Christmas Carol*, *Spencer* and *Ghostwatch* are part of the human experience that Derrida might count among "the innumerable sites of suffering". They are variously subjugated, ignored, vilified, victimised and exalted, but the attention that they demand within the diegesis draws focus not only to the suffering they highlight but that of humanity as a whole. This shared experience serves as a source of empowerment to effect change, take action and dismantle the barriers between generations present, past and yet to come.

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Encounters with the Past through Melodrama: Ireland's Magdalene Laundries on Screen and the Question of 'Countervisuality'

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Abstract

This article analyses two Magdalene Laundry themed films: The Magdalene Sisters *(2002) and* Sinners *(2002). Both are examples of melodrama, which gives each film a definite structure and imposes certain formal and narrative restrictions.* The Magdalene Sisters *verges into the territory of the Gothic with its dark and excessive elements. In terms of representing Ireland's Magdalene Laundries onscreen, it is important to consider whether the use of melodramatic conventions can truly be successful in furthering the discourse around these issues and helping the nation to deal with its traumatic past in a way that is healing for survivors and avoids reoccurrence of these abuses. A presentation of history that can challenge the power of authority is what Nicholas Mirzoeff calls 'countervisuality'. This article evaluates the countervisual success of both films as valuable visual texts that give viewers an insight into these institutions and the abuses that happened within them. It assesses their ability to challenge the Irish State's wish to suppress knowledge about the Magdalene Laundries, particularly the State's own involvement. Magdalene survivors continue to seek recognition from the State for the abuses perpetrated against them, asserting their right to redress and striving to be acknowledged as survivors of wrongful institutional incarceration. Though there are countervisual moments to be witnessed in* The Magdalene Sisters *and* Sinners*, the mechanisms of melodrama dilute the intended message of both directors*, *impacting the potential for extended countervisuality.*

The Magdalene Laundries and the Need for 'Countervisuality'

Ireland remains haunted by the legacy of the Magdalene Laundries, also known as Magdalene asylums, primarily because the Irish State "seek[s] to bury this history in the present and thereby render survivors' truth unknown" (McGettrick *et al.*, 2021, p. 3). The Irish State have tried to control the discourse around the laundries to avoid accountability and minimise the experiences of Magdalene survivors. The State, however, are responsible for the laundries because they were State-funded institutions (McGettrick *et al.*, 2021, p. 102). This article focuses on the Magdalene Laundries within the Republic of Ireland, while also acknowledging the existence of those institutions in Northern Ireland and recognises that the Magdalene Laundry phenomenon was "cross-border in nature" (Coen *et al.*, 2023, p. 2). Specifically, this article examines the context of the Republic of Ireland and its relationship with the Catholic Church as part of a nation building process post-independence.

In his work on visual culture, Nicholas Mirzoeff (2009) discusses how governments or those in power deliberately authorise and legitimise certain versions of the past towards the creation of what he calls 'visuality'. Mirzoeff (2009, p. 5) asserts that 'visuality' is "that which

renders the processes of History visible to power". This means that those in power have the agency to construct their own historical and political narratives and therefore protect their own power. A presentation of history that has the ability to challenge authority is what Mirzoeff (2011) calls 'countervisuality'. Countervisuality is about claiming "the right to look" (Mirzoeff, 2011, p. 1) or seeking alternative truths to those endorsed by the powerful. In the context of the government-sanctioned visualities that obscure and deny full knowledge of the Magdalene abuses and the State's culpability, Magdalene survivors bear the burden of claiming "the right to look". Therefore, the onus is on them to seek recognition of their suffering by the State and society. Despite political platitudes, the Irish government avoids confronting this aspect of Irish history as it really was. Instead, it projects a selective version of history that protects its own power. In this version, the Church and society at large are held responsible for the laundries, while the involvement of the State is downplayed, even though the State funded and inspected these institutions (McGettrick *et al.*, 2021, p. 102). The State also wishes to designate the Magdalene Laundries to the past and for the Irish public to forget about them. As Mirzoeff (2011, p. 2) clarifies, "the autonomy claimed by the right to look is thus opposed by the authority of visuality", which leads to the concealment of the stories of institutional survivors to some extent.

Representation of the Magdalene Laundries through Melodrama

Cinema is the cultural operation for regimes of watching and the visual *par excellence*. Ruth Barton notes in relation to cinema that

> Irish history came to be widely understood as the locus for the depiction of trauma, not for the reasons of postcoloniality alone or the lengthy tradition of forced immigration, but because of the more recent revelations of abusive Church power. (Barton, 2019, p. 118)

In terms of representing Ireland's Magdalene Laundries through film, it is important to consider whether the genre of melodrama—which is the one most often deployed—can be successful in furthering the discourse around these issues, rather than merely perpetuating trauma, to help the country process its past in a way that is healing for survivors and avoids reoccurrence of these abuses. To further the discourse in this way, it is necessary to present a countervisual perspective on screen; specifically, one that does not subscribe to a State-sanctioned visuality where the full picture of these institutions is suppressed or diminished and where the blame is disproportionately placed on the Catholic Church without any acknowledgement of State responsibility. As case studies, two films from 2002 that centre on the Magdalene Laundries,

The Magdalene Sisters and *Sinners*, are considered here. These are valuable visual texts that give viewers an insight into these institutions and the abuses that occurred within them. The countervisual success of both films and therefore, their ability to challenge State-sanctioned visualities on the Magdalene Laundries are evaluated. Both films are set in the 1960s, a period during which the laundries were a thriving force in Ireland. Additionally, they are both examples of melodrama, which gives each film a very definite structure and imposes specific restrictions, as will be explored in detail. It is therefore essential to examine the notion of melodrama as a genre and investigate its ability to be countervisual as it deals with essential and unavoidable components of the State-affirmed national narrative. Before doing so, this article examines the origins of the laundries.

Foundations of the Magdalene Laundries and Contemporary State Response

The history of Ireland's Magdalene institutions stretches back to 1767. These institutions changed drastically in nature between the time of their conception and the twentieth century (Smith, 2007, p. 25). They began as Christian (both Catholic and Protestant) places of shelter and refuge run by laywomen to teach and help "fallen women" rather than places to imprison them or hide them away (Smith, 2007, p. 25). The British Victorian idealisation of women had a strong influence on Ireland and so Magdalene asylums became part of what was deemed a "rescue movement" happening throughout the British Empire (McGettrick *et al.*, 2021, p. 3). James M. Smith (2007, p. 25) states that although these institutions were "founded with a philanthropic mission," they became, "by the close of the nineteenth century, more carceral than rehabilitative in nature". This paralleled the Catholic Church's growing power and influence in Ireland, as from the 1830s onwards, "congregations of female religious began assuming control of Catholic Magdalen asylums" (Smith, 2007, p. 25). As Claire McGettrick *et al.* articulate, by the time that Ireland achieved independence in the early 1920s, the then predominantly Catholic-run asylums

> were already in place to perform their part in the purity project of nation-building. Their work was to contain the perilous bodies of those considered to be the most disrespectable: economically vulnerable girls and women. (McGettrick, *et al.*, 2021, p. 3)

These women, who were judged to be sexually deviant or at risk of such behaviour, were removed and confined to protect Ireland's reputation as a newly independent Catholic country with a strict moral code. According to Leanne McCormick and Seán O'Connell (2021, p. 34), a significant number of women from the Free State and later Republic were transferred to Northern Irish Catholic institutions, proving that the institutionalisation of women was

happening all over the island. As was the case in the Irish Free State, in Northern Ireland in the same period, there were both Catholic and Protestant run Magdalene Laundries and Mother and Baby Homes. The latter were specifically for unmarried pregnant women, while Magdalene Laundries were places of punishment for all women "deemed incorrigible" and seen to step outside of the strict and conservative boarders of Ireland's Catholic ideology (Coen *et al.*, 2023, pp. 2–3). South of the border, the vast majority of these institutions were Catholic run (McCormick *et al.*, 2021, p. 21). When committed to the Magdalene asylums, women were forced into a system of hard labour and prayer. Though often physically abused, the aim of their punishment was mainly psychological; they were forced to internalise what was deemed to be their guilt and shame and to rationalise their own incarceration.

The imprisonment of Magdalene women also deterred 'free' women from defying the traditional Catholic patriarchal system, keeping them under the control of their husbands or fathers under threat of being sent to a Magdalene Laundry themselves. The Irish Free State decided that "Ireland would be triumphantly Catholic above all else" to set itself apart from Britain (McGettrick *et al.*, 2021, p. 9). Newly Independent Ireland was made up of a heavily conservative State and the Catholic Church, which had increased in influence since before the Great Famine (1845–1852). By the time of Irish Independence, the Catholic Church had made itself indispensable to the governing powers and as Smith informs us:

> the governing burden of the British colonial administration was lightened as it increasingly ceded responsibility to the Catholic Church for areas of social welfare including education, health care, and institutional provision. (Smith, 2007, p. 24)

Ireland's Catholic identity was ardently felt and deeply ingrained. It was believed to have been an essential factor in the fight for Irish Independence and as such it became integral to the formation of the Irish Free State (McGettrick *et al.*, 2021, pp. 9–10). The burden of a Catholic identity in relation to reproduction and sexual morality was placed disproportionately on Irish women post-independence. Irish women were solely responsible for enduring the shame and punishment resulting from inappropriate sexual conduct, whereas Irish men faced no penalty for sexually deviant behaviour.

Magdalene survivors received a State apology from Taoiseach Enda Kenny in 2013 and a limited redress scheme was introduced shortly after—following years of pressure. The redress scheme is legally considered to be a gift to survivors rather than an obligation. It includes a waiver that effectively forfeits legal rights to further challenge the State regarding the laundries. This scheme communicates that the State has "no legal obligations towards the

women and committed no wrongdoing" (McGettrick *et al.*, 2021, p. 129). Members of government still deny the State's involvement in the laundries in an effort to supress

> the kind of knowledge that challenges the status quo of those who govern and the bases of respectability and control of knowledge on which they assume and enact their superior power. (McGettrick *et al.*, 2021, p. 5)

The Irish State facilitated the laundries by subsidising, by sending women and girls to them and by ensuring they stayed there (McGettrick *et al.*, 2021, pp. 91, 102). McGettrick *et al.* (2021, p. 3) assert that Church and State are steadfast in remaining intentionally ignorant of their role in the Magdalene abuses and their responsibility in providing adequate compensation for survivors. This prevents survivors from gaining the justice and healing that they need (McGettrick *et al.*, 2021, p. 5). The Irish government's deliberate ignorance and evasion has been labelled a policy of "deny 'til they die'" (McGettrick *et al.*, 2021, p. 54). 'The Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee to establish the facts of State involvement with the Magdalen Laundries' (2013) has been labelled "an exemplary document of how governing classes exert power through strategies of ignorance" (McGettrick *et al.*, 2021, p. 114). In this report, there is continuous "miscounting, misapprehending, equivocation and mis-defining" along with "ignoring correspondence and reports" (McGettrick *et al.*, 2021, p. 114) including survivor witness statements. The report also seeks to diminish the abuse suffered by Magdalene women, especially in comparison to other institutional abuse, such as that in the reformatory schools (McGettrick *et al.*, 2021, p. 18). The United Nations does not accept that the report was a result of "an independent and thorough investigation as required by international law" (McGettrick *et al.*, 2021, p. 84). By minimising the experiences of Magdalene survivors, the Irish government encourages the Irish public to move on and forget. The State-sanctioned narrative on the laundries has not changed; in his speech to welcome Pope Francis, who visited Ireland in 2018, Taoiseach Leo Varadkar implored the Pope to 'listen to the victims' of Church-related abuse in Ireland, the Taoiseach did not acknowledge any State responsibility when he said there was 'much to be done to bring about justice and truth and healing for victims and survivors' (McGettrick *et al.*, 2021, p. 191).

'Countervisuality' and Cinema

Countervisuality allows the most vulnerable members of society a voice and a space to be recognised. Fintan O'Toole (2009) reminds us that often there is "much more power in being

forced to confront what you already know than in being amazed by the unexpected". This describes the power of the countervisual. The countervisual is not something that is completely unknown, rather it is something that people are encouraged to ignore or look away from. Mirzoeff (2011, p. 1) compares this concept to a situation in which a person walks by a crime scene and a police officer tells them to move on as there is nothing to see when, in fact, they know otherwise.

As previously outlined, Mirzoeff (2009, p. 15) explains that visual culture must "claim the right to look" which includes "the claim to a history that is not told from the point of view of the police". By this he means that people must look for truths that are not necessarily sanctioned by State or Repressive State Apparatuses, as Louis Althusser (1972) defines them, and that visual culture has a responsibility to enable this 'look'. Cinema is a looking machine: it looks at the viewer; it looks at how the viewer looks; and it shows the viewer its own looking and how to look at others. The camera is an instrument of looking that reveals this process, rendering it explicit. It attempts to emulate the way viewers look at and watch each other in real life. From the very beginnings of cinema, its codes and conventions have been set up around the act of watching or 'the look'. Cinema uses techniques such as zoom in order to focus the viewer's watching, point-of-view shots in order for the viewer to vicariously experience the watching of one on-screen character by another and camera angles to establish power dynamics between the watcher and the watched. Cinematic watching is also gendered, objectifying women and empowering men, which inspired Laura Mulvey (1975) to develop her theory on 'the male gaze'. Significantly, cinematic apparatuses observe power structures and so may usefully foreground the observing of visualities. They have the ability to uphold repressive or patriarchal visualities, particularly in mainstream cinema. They also have the converse ability to deconstruct visualities, presenting countervisualities which, in turn, give a voice to vulnerable members of society and minorities.

Features of Melodrama

Melodrama is a style of film that prioritises emotion over action (Durgnat, 1991, p. 137) and often features a sensationalised plot to produce this emotion. While melodrama is a subgenre of drama, the drama genre tends to align more with realism, attempting to represent stories truthfully or realistically in a way that is believable for audiences. Melodrama instead prioritises emotion and has been associated with certain negative ideas such as "excess", "exaggeration" and "escapism", which has meant that it has been held in low esteem by many critics (Landy, 1991, p. 16). These negative associations are due to the heavy emphasis on

emotion over other elements, such as character development. Actors often exaggerate their behaviour and emotions in melodrama or behave in contradictory ways. Another typical feature of melodrama is victimisation of female characters (Landy, 1991, p. 14). Women are central to melodrama and are typically subjected to a series of events that cause deep suffering, which results in much of the emotion produced. There is also usually an extreme contrast between right and wrong (Carroll, 1991, p. 189). This means that 'good' characters appear saintly while 'bad' characters seem despicably evil. An attachment to an antiquated past is also evident in melodrama. Consequently, it tends to find solutions to social problems in a way that does not challenge power structures stemming from that past (Williams, 1998, p. 75). Melodrama often treats the symptoms rather than the causes of social issues and so problems tend to be dealt with on a personal level and case-by-case basis without consideration of wider social and political issues. It is important to consider, then, whether the ample suffering witnessed in *The Magdalene Sisters* and *Sinners*, which may just be experienced by the viewer as a common feature of melodrama, in fact re-enforces the suffering that took place in institutions like these. The following section explores the films in turn, beginning with *The Magdalene Sisters* and evaluating each film's potential towards countervisuality as melodramas.

The Magdalene Sisters

The Magdalene Sisters, directed by Scottish filmmaker Peter Mullan and released in 2002, is set in Ireland in 1964. The film follows the stories of Margaret (Anne-Marie Duff), Bernadette (Nora-Jane Noone) and Rose (Dorothy Duffy) as they enter a Magdalene Laundry. Margaret is sent to the laundry after she is raped by her cousin at a wedding, Bernadette is committed to the laundry because she is seen flirting with local boys from her school yard and Rose is incarcerated after giving birth to an illegitimate baby. The film follows the journey of the three women until they leave the institution. The plot of the *Magdalene Sisters* is depicted primarily using elements of melodrama but at times ventures into the Gothic genre. The early wedding reception scene stands out as particularly melodramatic due to the absence of dialogue, with all meaning expressed through exaggerated looks and gestures. The excessive cruelty of the nuns in the Magdalene Laundries occasionally crosses into the realm of the Gothic, which shares characteristics with the genre of melodrama, as will be explored. The potential for countervisuality is maximised towards the end of the film when the Magdalene women watch the Hollywood melodrama *The Bells of St Mary's* (1945) on Christmas Day, which will be looked at in detail shortly. Although this scene suggests that countervisuality can occur within melodrama, it is not enough to sustain the rest of the film which is marred by codes and

conventions contrary to countervisuality such as exaggeration, excessiveness and escapism. Another factor that signals *The Magdalene Sisters* as an example of the melodrama genre is its high level of watchability, which is one of the key attributes of melodrama. The film's commercial success at the box office, earning "€975,441 in its first four weeks" (Barton, 2004, p. 108) supports this assertion. Barton argues that this stemmed from a

> public appetite for dramas highlighting the corrosive effects of Church hegemony in the past when filtered through individual hardship narratives. (Barton, 2004, p. 108)

While *The Magdalene Sisters* undoubtedly serves as an informative film, its countervisual and consequently socially transformative potential is diminished by the limitations of melodrama. Melodrama, which prioritises the eliciting of emotion over challenging the viewer's perspective, restricts the film's ability to enact significant change in the viewer's mindset.

One of the most emotionally charged scenes in *The Magdalene Sisters* occurs immediately after Margaret is raped. The scene also clearly establishes that women, as previously noted, were blamed for improper sexual behaviour, even when they were victims of sexual violence. Meanwhile, men faced no repercussions for their actions, even when they were perpetrators of sexual violence. The entire scene unfolds within a single room, which is reminiscent of melodrama's theatrical origins. Margaret, having just been sexually assaulted by her cousin Kevin (Seán McDonagh), returns to the wedding reception where the band is playing. The viewer witnesses an emotional Margaret telling her relative Theresa (Julie Austin) what has happened. Theresa angrily approaches Kevin and questions him about his behaviour. She then notifies his father (uncredited) who, instead of addressing his son, looks at Margaret. Subsequently, Theresa informs Margaret's father (Ian Hanmore) who also looks at Margaret, which causes her to bow her head in shame. Both men interrogate Kevin and Margaret's father calls the priest (Seán Mackin) from the stage, leading to a conversation between the four men in a separate room. Margaret's father can be seen pointing her out to the priest through a gap in the wall. After a few moments, Kevin is led out of the reception by his father. Margaret's father continues to talk to the priest in the doorway. Close-ups of a worried Margaret are interspersed with all these interactions as she becomes increasingly anxious. Shots of Margaret's mother (Deirdre Davis) also punctuate the scene as she begins to notice that something is wrong, but she remains still, and completely and deliberately separated from the proceedings. Shots of male hands playing musical instruments onstage are also intercut with the action. This manual imagery strongly implies male agency, blame and responsibility; that her fate is 'in the hands of men' so to speak. The scene ends with a tearful Margaret looking towards her father for support and receiving a scathing accusatory stare. As this occurs,

Margaret's attack is mouthed from person to person while traditional Irish music drowns out all other sound. This scene bears resemblance to silent cinema, where the narrative is conveyed to the viewer solely through looks and actions, with no audible dialogue, while the music sets the tone. Thomas Schatz (1991, p. 149) discusses how silent cinema uses particular techniques to "enhance the victims' virtuous suffering" such as "long camera takes" and "frequent close-ups of the anxious heroine". The scene features both of these while the diegetic music drowns out all dialogue. This adds to an overall 'excess' as well as the suffering of a female character, which are key features of melodrama, and which establish the scene as a melodramatic one. Excess within melodrama refers to a general over-expression of emotions and emotive actions, mainly through character.

Martin McLoone (2008, p. 123) argues that this scene is remarkably effective in highlighting the "hierarchy of male power" within 1960s Ireland. Though this observation holds true, it still feeds into the conservatism inherent in melodrama, which dictates that women should continuously and visibly suffer on screen. Margaret's suffering is highlighted by dramatic pointing, frequent shot/reverse shots between characters and a deliberate close-up focus on male hands. The concentration on male hands becomes a characteristic of melodrama which always strives "to force meaning and identity from the inadequacies of language," (Gledhill, 1987, p. 33). This is re-enforced by the apparent inadequacy of dialogue in a scene where language is drowned out by these same male hands playing their instruments. Male hands also serve to heighten Margaret's powerlessness in this scene. Within the space of victimhood, it is difficult to create any kind of countervisual perspective, as the viewer of melodrama is expected to encounter victims and feel sympathy. In this way, the victim becomes just another familiar convention of the genre, rather than a catalyst for the viewer to reflect on the laundries, or the identity-affirming ideologies that sustained them, in new and insightful ways.

Another central attribute of melodrama that prominently features in *The Magdalene Sisters*, and consequently undermines its potential for countervisuality, is extremism. The nuns in the film are caricatures in their villainy at times, allowing the viewer to be faced with two extremes of good and evil. This exaggerated portrayal further solidifies the placement of *The Magdalene Sisters* within the realm of melodrama. Marcia Landy (1991, p. 16) affirms this when she connects melodrama with 'excess' and 'exaggeration'. Gledhill proposes that in melodrama:

> innocence and villainy construct each other: while the villain is necessary to the production and revelation of innocence, innocence defines the boundaries of the forbidden which the villain breaks. (Gledhill, 1987, p. 21)

As the behaviour of the nuns becomes progressively more evil, the confined women appear increasingly innocent. This undercuts the film's ability to be countervisual as it reduces characters to stereotypes that cannot convey the complexity of the laundry experience for either the nuns or the Magdalene women.

The film also occasionally incorporates elements of the Gothic. In one particularly shocking scene, Sister Jude (Frances Healy) and Sister Clementine (Eithne McGuinness) humiliate a group of naked women, comparing their breast size and genital hair. Elizabeth Cullingford (2006, p. 16) notes that "Mullan's fact-based film participates in a long-established fictional genre constituted by melodramatic exaggeration: the sexualized anti-Catholic Gothic". Melodramatic exaggeration such as the kind this scene conveys indeed pushes this film into the territory of the Gothic. William Patrick Day (1985, p. 63) stresses that the Gothic primarily uses spectacle in order to express and instil fear in the viewer rather than through the use of characters or narrative. In the scene where the Magdalene women are forced to strip in front of two nuns for their amusement, it is the spectacle of this that is highlighted in the frame. The setting of a convent is also something that re-enforces the Gothic nature of this scene, as Jerrold E. Hogle (2002, p. 2) notes that a Gothic setting is often "an antiquated or seemingly antiquated space". Hogle argues that:

> the oppression and 'othering' of the female seen from her own point of view has been a principal Gothic subject. (Hogle 2002, p. 10)

The Magdalene women are continuously othered and oppressed within *The Magdalene Sister*s, particularly in scenes like this, which could reasonably be labelled as Gothic. Like melodrama, the Gothic genre features excess (Hogle, 2002, p. 1) and the victimisation of women; hence the styles of melodrama and the Gothic work well together as they share certain characteristics. Hogle (2002, p. 10) explains that the "confinement of woman by patriarchy" is a common theme of the Gothic. It is the spectacle of the nuns' excessive cruelty within an antiquated space of female punishment that pushes this film into Gothic territory. Within this Gothic context, it is very difficult to portray any kind of countervisual perspective that indicates the shared responsibility of Church, State and society for the existence of these institutions. Rather, it singularly emphasises a certain kind of evil that stems from the religious zealotism at the core of the official Irish national narrative. It directs all blame and responsibility onto the Church and the Church alone.

Another example of melodramatic exaggeration that pushes the film into the realms of the Gothic and which further limits its ability to be critical and countervisual happens after Bernadette's first attempted escape. Bernadette is pinned down by Sister Jude and Sister Clementine while Sister Bridget (Geraldine McEwan) cuts her hair as blood streams down her face. The viewer is presented with a close-up of Bernadette's bloodied eye with Sister Bridget's face reflected in her pupil. Cullingford (2006, p. 31) calls this "a striking moment of visual gothic" and reasons that Mullan's aesthetics and anger "lead him into melodramatic exaggeration". Here, again, we see that the spectacle of the scene and the exaggeration of Bernadette's bloodied eye within an antiquated space of patriarchal female confinement make this scene Gothic. Exaggeration, however, diminishes much of the complexity around the existence of the laundries. Gledhill (1987, p. 32) recognises that melodrama frequently stems from "an attachment to an outmoded past—to what seem simplistic Victorian personifications of Good and Evil, Innocence and Villainy". Good and evil are depicted in very simplistic terms within this film. Smith makes the important point that:

> the film fails to explore a crucial irony of this history–that it was abuse committed by one group of Irish women against another, in a society and during a time when women's agency was subject to a patriarchal church and state oppression. (Smith, 2007, p. 150)

This is a crucial consideration that cannot possibly be explored with simplistic personifications of good and evil. Smith speaks about the fact that entering the convent for many young women was their way of escaping:

> the precarious navigation of the nation's discourse of sexual morality, a morality offering marriage as the only acceptable vehicle for human sexuality and holding women responsible for all transgressions of societal proscriptions. (Smith, 2007, p. 157)

The nuns' motivations are not explored in *The Magdalene Sisters*. Mullan perhaps avoids this in order to focus on the plight of the Magdalene women and to emphasise their suffering as innocent victims. In underlining the women's innocence, Mullan exaggerates the nuns' depravity. However, the nuns were also subjected to a patriarchal system in which they lacked agency. Many women became nuns to escape the limited options available to them besides marriage and procreation. An attack solely on the Catholic Church cannot demonstrate the wider social dynamics and the collaboration between Church and State in running the laundries. As this version of events does not challenge the State-endorsed visuality—that the Church is exclusively responsible for the laundries—it cannot be countervisual.

Although the melodramatic nature of *The Magdalene Sisters* limits its ability to be countervisual, one scene that does possess countervisual potential is when the nuns organise a film viewing on Christmas Day. The film, chosen by the archbishop, is *The Bells of St Mary's*

starring Bing Crosby and Ingrid Bergman as a mother superior. The whole institutional community has gathered for the occasion and Sister Bridget announces her secret love for "the films". Through the framed screening of *The Bells of St Mary's*, the viewer is shown the idealisation of Catholicism juxtaposed with the grim reality. Smith (2007, p. 156) affirms that Mullan's placing of the two reverend mothers side by side "exposes the seductive sentimentality that works through popular media to buttress the nuns' absolute power". The framed diegetic watching of the classic Hollywood film presents us with a Church-sanctioned visuality that is simultaneously deconstructed through the eyes of the Magdalene women. This act of countervisual watching is privileged in this scene and demonstrates the disillusionment experienced by the Magdalene women. It is an interesting, almost carnivalesque space where the women have the opportunity to watch the nuns for once and evade their gaze. Normally, the Magdalene women are subjected to a "compulsory visibility" which "assures the hold of power that is exercised over them" (Mulvey, 1975, p. 187). As Ingrid Bergman, framed in close-up, tearfully prays for help on screen, Margaret, Rose and Bernadette watch disbelievingly as Sister Bridget's eyes fill with tears. The use of a Hollywood melodrama in this scene that idealises the Church and the convent also acts as a critique of the melodrama genre itself. Ironically, the melodramatic film moves Sister Bridget to tears when the real-life suffering of the women under her care fails to elicit emotion. This communicates the superficiality of feelings stirred up by melodrama. The scene therefore achieves countervisuality once more in how it reveals the limitations and shallow nature of melodrama and briefly breaks the spell. Smith (2007, p. 155) remarks that, in the scene, Margaret, Bernadette and Rose's reaction to the film shows Mullan's audience "the need to resist the seductive powers of popular cultural representation and its distortion of complex social realities". Though countervisuality is achieved in this scene, it is not achieved throughout the film. Consequently, there is a distortion of complex social realities in the rest of Mullan's film due to the restrictions and conventions of melodrama.

Sinners

Also released in 2002, *Sinners* by Irish director Aisling Walsh, is set in Ireland in 1963. *Sinners* follows Anne-Marie (Anne-Marie Duff) as her aunt commits her to a Magdalene Laundry because she has become pregnant out of wedlock. Anne-Marie eventually gives birth and after her child is taken from her, she agrees to marry a local man in order to be released from the laundry. Narratively, and in many ways formally, *Sinners* is very similar to *The Magdalene Sisters*. The structure of melodrama rigidly shapes the narratives in both films, and they even

have similarities in casting, with Anne-Marie Duff playing a woman confined to a Magdalene Laundry in both films. Anne-Marie is compelled to marry a stranger in order to escape the laundry, proving the tendency of melodrama to solve problems in a way that does not challenge existing power structures. Anne-Marie's friend Kitty (Bronagh Gallagher) behaves in contradictory ways in order to fulfil the role of the melodramatic victim, which the genre dictates. Lastly, the repeated framing of women looking out of windows also embodies an element of melodrama, where significance is assigned to objects beyond the limits of language. This attribute also hinders the potential for countervisuality. One of the key ways in which *Sinners* differs from *The Magdalene Sisters* is in its use of pop songs, which feature diegetically throughout the film. This provides a contrast between the nature of 1960s culture and the laundry space, which conveys a backwardness and portrays a sense that the Magdalene women have been forgotten and left behind. It is the radio that sets up one of the few countervisual moments of the film. However, despite the clever use of the radio, the film is limited by the generic conventions of melodrama which nullify much of its countervisual potential.

As melodrama deals with social problems that exist within a specific society, there are always particular contributing political and ideological factors. However, melodrama does not deal with these issues as this would go against the conservative nature of the genre, as already mentioned. Linda Williams claims that one

> of the key features of melodrama is its compulsion to reconcile the irreconcilable–that is, its tendency to find solutions to problems that cannot really be solved without challenging the older ideologies of moral certainty to which melodrama wishes to return. (Williams, 1998, p. 75)

She clarifies that this resistance does not address the real problems; it only addresses the effects of those problems (Williams, 1998, p. 76). After an attempted escape, Anne-Marie hides in the house of a widower called Frank (John Kavanagh). Though he initially informs the police of her whereabouts, he later visits her at the institution. He explains that he thought she might have been a "lunatic" as he knows about "you Maggies". This conveys the pervasive societal view about the women locked away in Magdalene Laundries. Anne-Marie asks Frank to help her convince her brother Eammon (Michael Colgan) to take her home. He returns to tell her that Eammon will not be coming to sign her out and instead offers to marry her. He prefaces this by saying "I know people will think I'm mad taking on a Maggie," again betraying his prejudice towards Magdalene women. He is motivated more by his own loneliness and attraction to Anne-Marie than any sense of duty or kindness. Anne-Marie agrees to marry Frank but insists that they have a non-sexual relationship. Frank initially disagrees arguing, "You'd

be my wife, it'd be your duty". Again, the audience is reminded that Frank is a conservative man living within a conservative Catholic country propped up by misogynist ideologies and visualities. Anne-Marie does not relent, and Frank finally agrees. A sham marriage to a virtual stranger is the only solution to Anne-Marie's internment. An Irish woman can only gain respectability within the confines of marriage or the convent, the reasons for which melodrama does not challenge. Gledhill (1987, p. 38) acknowledges that melodrama "addresses us within the limitations of the status quo, of the ideologically permissible". Although the character of Anne-Marie points out the underlying misogyny in the process of punishing only women and never men, Anne-Marie's liberation does not free the other Magdalene women or end the system of female incarceration and restriction. Similarly, in *The Magdalene Sisters*, Margaret's release and Bernadette and Rose's escape does not free the other penitents. If melodrama is only able to find solutions within an existing power structure and without challenging the authority of that power structure, it cannot be countervisual. Countervisuality involves looking beyond the ideologies endorsed by the ruling powers towards an alternative way of living or seeing. Marriage is a way of solving Anne-Marie's problem of confinement without challenging the authorities and visualities that caused Anne-Marie to be incarcerated and again demonstrates the limitations of melodrama and its repeated failure to be countervisual.

Due to a specific melodramatic structure, in which intense emotion is prioritised over character development and plot, characters often behave in a way that is contrary to what has already been established. They do this to bring about potent moments of emotional expression, which in turn cause an emotional response in the audience. Mulvey observes that

> melodramatic characters act out of contradiction, achieving actual confrontation to varying degrees and gradually facing impossible resolutions and probable defeats. (Mulvey, 1987, p. 77)

For instance, Kitty hopes that she can convince Patrick (Gary Lydon)—a policeman who attends the laundry regularly—to marry her so that she can keep her daughter and free herself from the laundry. She also hopes that he will let Anne-Marie live with them too. This is hopelessly naïve, especially as Patrick presents as a fickle character whose mother and sister rely on him financially. It is also out of character for Kitty, who has been a source of reason and wisdom for Anne-Marie up to this point. When Patrick informs the nuns of his affair with Kitty, she is beaten and her daughter is taken from her. Shortly after, she commits suicide, which is the culmination of a series of intense moments of victimisation. In relation to Kitty's story, we can see that the formal mechanisms of melodrama largely guide her actions and limit her behaviour. Mary Ann Doane (1987, p. 296) admits that "the woman's film", melodrama,

is not at all "radical or revolutionary. It functions quite precisely to immobilise". For countervisuality to occur, melodrama needs be radical and revolutionary. Though Anne-Marie begins to fight the system by refusing to work, this does not free her from the institution. Melodrama as a mechanism can only bring about her liberation through her concession to the Catholic ideological apparatus of marriage. Thomas Elsaesser reflects that the

> persistence of the melodrama might indicate the ways in which popular culture has not only taken note of social crises and the fact that losers are not always those who deserve it most, but has also resolutely refused to understand social change in other than private contexts and emotional terms. (Elsaesser, 1987, p. 47)

Witnessing innocent women being abused physically and verbally forces the audience to feel sympathy for them as previously pointed out in relation to *The Magdalene Sisters* but it does not necessarily make them aware of the socio-political causes for the laundries. As Elsaesser (1987, p. 47) claims, the persistence of melodrama "has encouraged increasingly escapist forms of mass-entertainment". Escapist forms of cinema cannot conjure up countervisual perspectives that challenge power structures and State-endorsed ideologies because the viewer must be conscious of the political points that the film is making while they are watching and they therefore cannot 'switch off'.

Furthermore, the use of space and boundaries in melodrama is deliberate and gendered; melodrama tends to place women in the domestic positions they are tied to in larger society. This normalises the confinement of women to the home and limits female characters' agency beyond the realms of the home. In melodrama, signification is attached to space in the same way as it is attached to objects to convey emotion and meaning beyond what words can express. Doane observes that the

> deployment of space in the 'woman's film' is motivated rather directly by a fairly strict mapping of gender-differentiated societal spaces onto the films — the woman's place is in the home. (Doane 1987, p. 285)

Though the female characters in both *The Magdalene Sisters* and *Sinners* are not in a traditional home, they are in a space where they must carry out the same work and that they are forbidden to leave. The Magdalene Laundry is the space into which these women have, due to their perceived transgressions, been displaced beyond the site of the home. The tendency of melodrama to re-enforce women's role in the home is problematic when dealing with narratives concerning the confinement of Irish women as punishment for transgressing the boundaries of the domestic. Doane reflects that within melodrama.

> images of women looking through windows or waiting at windows abound. The window has special import in terms of the social and symbolic positioning of the woman — the window is the interface between inside and outside, the feminine space of the family and

> reproduction and the masculine space of production. It facilitates a communication by means of the look between the two sexually differentiated spaces. (Doane, 1987, p. 288)

For example, in *The Magdalene Sisters* we witness Margaret's mother looking sorrowfully out of the window as Margaret is driven away to the laundry. She is immobilised within the space of the home due to her position in Irish society. Margaret's father, in contrast, escorts Margaret to the car, occupying the masculine outdoor space of agency. Windows as markers of boundaries and the act of looking through them takes on extra significance in *Sinners*, as each time a child is taken away from its mother, she watches powerlessly from a high window overlooking the driveway. The feminine space of the inside becomes barren as each child is taken from its mother to be with a new, wealthier mother in a traditional home space. Shots of mothers watching their babies leave them are used to punctuate the narrative of this film, marking the first, second and third acts. The first of these occurs when Anne-Marie arrives in the laundry, and she sees a young woman crying at the window. This scene is used to foreshadow the moment when Anne-Marie will be forced to part with her own child. It also initiates an emotional expectation on the part of the viewer from this point onwards. The second act is marked by Brída (Elaine Symons) watching from the window as her child is taken away. The emotional stakes are raised here as Brída is a much more prominent character than the woman from the first act in whom the audience have invested more emotional interest. Anne-Marie has also given birth by this time, and she has reluctantly connected with her child. The audience knows that her separation from her son is now imminent. Brída refuses to get upset and insists she is happy for her daughter to be spoiled by her wealthy adoptive parents. As she watches out the window, she is perhaps envious of her daughter's freedom. She turns on the radio and dances alone to "Don't Let the Sun Catch you Crying" (1964) by Gerry and the Pacemakers. The song suggests a forced moving on emotionally from this event by Brída and, more importantly, by the audience. This demonstrates the manipulative nature of melodrama that not only tells the viewer how to feel but also the pace at which they should move forward. In the third act, Anne-Marie's baby is taken after she has escaped, been recaptured by the police and brutally punished by the nuns which represents the height of her emotional crisis. Tears stream down her bruised face as she holds up her hand to the window. As the three act structure dictates, her story is resolved shortly after when she marries Frank and leaves the laundry. These painful moments, within the structure of melodrama, are just another narrative device. *Sinners* cannot sustain countervisuality beyond brief moments as it strictly adheres to the conventions of melodrama, which serve to generate an emotional response rather than challenge audience perceptions.

Countervisual potential in *Sinners* is evident early in the film when the women, under the surveillance of a nun, are sewing and knitting in the evening room. In this scene countervisuality is achieved using sound as it communicates with the image. Mirzoeff's notion of visuality and countervisuality does not just concern the purely visual. He clarifies that vision in terms of visuality is more akin to the definition of vision that encompasses imagination and creative power. Mirzoeff (2009, p. 3) states that "vision is never singular but involves all the senses and modes of psychology". Sound is an essential cinematic tool that guides the viewer's gaze and the way they understand the meaning of the images presented to us. In this scene, one woman cries as she watches her child being taken away by their new parents against her will. On the radio, a commentator describes events as President Eamon de Valera (1882–1975) is being blessed in a special mass. The woman's weeping is so loud that it obscures the sound of the radio and a nun walks over and increases the volume, callously drowning out the woman's tears. The nun leaves the room and Brída changes the station so that "Walking Back to Happiness" by Helen Shapiro (1962) plays. Brída begins dancing with Angela (Ruth Bradley). The coupling of a mother's anguish at being separated from her baby and the Catholic blessing of Eamon de Valera is highly significant. In the diegetic pairing of sounds, Walsh implicates de Valera in this woman's suffering. De Valera bears a lot of responsibility for the incarceration of Irish women and the dispossession of their children. Cullingford affirms that it was

> de Valera's 1937 constitution, which accorded the Catholic Church a 'special position' within the Irish State, enshrined the heterosexual family as the national norm, and defined women solely as mothers 'within the home'. (Cullingford, 2006, p. 24)

Women who stepped outside of their defined space were deemed a threat to the government sanctioned ideologies and visualities and were consequently separated from the rest of society. A key part of this scene is when Brída interrupts de Valera's blessing in favour of the pop song "Walking Back to Happiness". This is where the countervisual potential of the scene comes to the fore. Switching the station in this way is a rejection of Eamon de Valera by these women and the Catholic visualities that he upheld and enforced, which were scaffolded by the laundries. Moreover, it is a rejection of the relationship between Irish Church and State and their authorised visualities. The lyrics "walking back to happiness" indicate a metaphorical change in direction or vision, a way back to happiness and an escape from the misery of religious oppression by turning away from Church and State visualities. Walsh implicates the State in the Magdalene Laundries and directly names Eamon de Valera as a key conspirator. This is a much stronger indictment of the State than achieved by Mullan in *The Magdalene Sisters*.

Conclusion

Ultimately, melodrama is too restrictive as a genre to successfully achieve countervisuality. While a progressive director's aim may be to highlight a certain social inequality, the formal fundamentals of melodrama impose limitations on the material that make the resulting film quite conservative and unable to truly further the discourse or challenge viewers ways of seeing. *The Magdalene Sisters* and *Sinners* reproduce patterns of domination and exploitation in relation to the Magdalene Laundries and as such they cannot sustain countervisuality. Cinema that is conservative in form cannot be socially transformative and awaken resistance as its formal mechanisms reproduce reactionary patterns of containment. Though melodrama has allowed women a valuable place in cinema, it is still a highly limiting genre that often becomes contradictory in its objectives. Mainstream melodrama is a repressive apparatus in itself, and so, when melodrama as a genre is employed, with all the best intentions, to construct narratives within institutional settings such as the Magdalene Laundries, it tends to formally reinforce the oppression of these places. *The Magdalene Sisters* and *Sinners* cannot meaningfully further the discourse around the laundries towards helping the nation deal with its traumatic past as both films suggest—especially with their reasonably happy endings—that there is nothing more to reflect on. Neither film suggests the existence of any lasting trauma (either on a national level or for the survivors) and instead the viewer is left with a sense of closure and the belief that these tragic events belong to the past. These films do not put any kind of pressure on the contemporary Irish State to fulfil its moral obligation to the Magdalene women. Instead, they uphold State-sanctioned visualities that the laundries are a thing of the past to be blamed predominantly on the Church with no bearing on the present day. The reality is that the survivors of the Magdalene institutions and the charities working on their behalf continue to fight for proper and just treatment by the State in terms of their human rights and recognition as survivors of abuse at the hands of the Irish State and Church combined.

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“Far From Their Original Homeland”: Encountering Decolonial Families in Cherie Dimaline’s *The Marrow Thieves* and Waubgeshig Rice’s *Moon of the Crusted Snow*

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Abstract
Cherie Dimaline’s The Marrow Thieves *(2017) and Waubgeshig Rice’s* Moon of the Crusted Snow *(2018) have been studied as Indigenous critiques of the climate crisis, Western knowledge systems, and Canadian concepts of reconciliation. Scholars argue that both Indigenous futurist novels criticise the systemic marginalisation of First Nations people in Canada. According to Mark Rifkin, central to settler-state encounters with Indigenous people in North America are the imposition of European constructions of the family and the erasure of Native kinship systems. However, the subversive depictions of the family in Rice’s and Dimaline’s texts have yet to be explored in-depth and in conversation with each other. To address this gap, this article conducts a comparative analysis of* The Marrow Thieves *and* Moon of the Crusted Snow *to investigate how Indigenous futurist texts transform science fiction (SF) conventions to decolonise and queer the family.*
This analysis uses postcolonial and queer theories alongside theories of Indigenous futurisms to critically examine the families in Dimaline’s and Rice’s novels. This study contextualises the contemporary Canadian family and considers the implications of Western settler-colonial family ideology for Indigenous groups in North America, investigating how the two authors employ Indigenous futurisms in their portrayals of First Nations’ gender roles, parenthood and kinship systems. Both texts are set in the near future where Indigenous families and communities are forced to hone their survival skills to avoid succumbing to the apocalypse. The families resist exploitation through storytelling and cultural inheritance. Central to their resistance against the effects of the colonial encounter is their transgression of Western gender and familial norms as well as their cosmologies of kinship which foster their relationship with the land. Ultimately, both Dimaline and Rice employ dystopian settings typical of SF to subvert traditional family structures in defiance of settler-coloniality.
The study of the family in SF has been limited to conventional biological families depicted in narratives that perpetuate imperialist endeavours through tales of space exploration and interplanetary colonisation. By conducting a comparative analysis of the portrayal of queer decolonial families in Indigenous futurist texts, this article expands the study of the family in SF outside the boundaries of traditional Western encounter narratives and the nuclear family form.

Introduction

John Rieder (2012, p. 19) argues that in the process of mapping the “non-Western world”, Western imperialists “developed a scientific discourse about culture and mankind” which influenced the beginnings of what is now called science fiction (SF). Indeed, Sheryl Vint (2021, p. 62) notes that space colonisation narratives transpose colonial powers’ historical subjugation of Indigenous people onto futuristic settings. Consequently, traditional SF narratives of colonisation, conquest and the exploitation of other people’s worlds closely resemble the real

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experiences of Indigenous people and their ancestors (Medak-Saltzman, 2017, p. 139). In response to the imperialist roots of SF, Indigenous futurist texts such as Cherie Dimaline's *The Marrow Thieves* (2017) and Waubgeshig Rice's *Moon of the Crusted Snow* (2018) appropriate and transform the genre's conventions to resist the stereotypes and oppressive norms imposed on Indigenous people since their initial encounters with European colonisers. *The Marrow Thieves* and *Moon of the Crusted Snow* have been examined as acts of literary resistance to climate change, Western scientific paradigms, notions of historical progress and Canadian settler ideologies of reconciliation (Bussière, 2020, p. 47; Childers and Menendez, 2022, p. 212; Zanella, 2022, p. 9). However, these novels' portrayals of queer Indigenous family formations have yet to be explored in-depth and in conversation with each other. To address this discrepancy, this article undertakes a comparative examination of how Dimaline and Rice utilise SF conventions to decolonise and queer the family.

The imposition of settler norms on Indigenous peoples and the assimilation of Indigenous people into settler society in Canada resulted from historical encounters between colonisers and Native populations. In particular, British, French and Canadian settlers have used family discourse to facilitate and justify the oppression and dislocation of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people. The First Nations people are the original inhabitants of Canada and live mostly in the south. The Inuit are Arctic Indigenous people, while the Métis have mixed French and Cree ancestry.[1] Historically, families who belong to these Indigenous groups have opposed the white middle-class nuclear family model, which consists of married parents and their biological children. The concept of family may differ among Indigenous groups due to factors such as "higher mobility" and "cultural kinship systems", with many Indigenous families being much larger than the nuclear family unit, often including multiple generations and members not related by blood (Tam *et al.*, 2017, p. 245). Colonisers aligned these non-nuclear Indigenous kinship systems with primitivity. Consequently, as Mark Rifkin (2011, p. 4) argues, marriage and the nuclear family form that it dictates have been imposed on Indigenous people to erase their supposedly "uncivilised" kinship formations. Simultaneously, justifications for the eradication of Native sovereignty have, in part, been legitimised by family discourse that disapproves of Indigenous family forms.

The apocalyptic scenarios in the two novels under examination vary. In *The Marrow Thieves*, society has collapsed due to water shortages, whereas in *Moon of the Crusted* Snow, a reserve in the far north of Canada becomes isolated from the rest of the world. In both

[1] The Cree are a North American Indigenous group. They primarily live in Canada and are one of the country's largest First Nations.

Dimaline's and Rice's novels, their resistance to imperialist family norms facilitates the characters' survival. Western family ideology is undoubtedly heteronormative and according to Rifkin (2011, p. 32), heteronormativity is often confined to "an unmarked whiteness in ways that consign people of colour to an undifferentiated sexual savagery outside the hetero/homo binary". As heteronormativity "excludes those who are seen as straight but still perverse due to their performance of desire, homemaking, and family", Indigenous families that do not conform to settler norms of marriage and kinship can be defined as queer (Rifkin, 2011, p. 33). Despite queer analytical frameworks originating in Western critical theory, Indigenous scholars have adopted queer theory as a decolonial resistance to white-normative modes of queerness as well as imperialist attitudes toward Native gender, sexuality and family. Instead of casting Indigenous people's non-heteronormative behaviours, such as gender and sexual non-binarism as well as communal modes of kinship as tradition, Indigenous scholars such as Qwi-Li Driskill (Cherokee) [2] (2010, p. 69) and Sandy O'Sullivan (Wiradjuri)[3] (2021, p. 3) reclaim the term queer as a political mode of decolonising Indigenous kinship and family systems which defy Western family ideology. The use of the term queer in the analysis of Indigenous modes of being is, therefore, a rejection of imperialist queer histories, which assert that modern queer subjects and politics have developed within whiteness and in opposition to Indigeneity (Morgensen, 2011, p. 43).

Both *Marrow Thieves* and *Moon of the Crusted Snow* constitute critical dystopias, aligning them with queer, feminist and Indigenous dystopian and utopian literary traditions. According to Matias Thaler (2019, p. 608), critical dystopias are categorised by the recounting of "painful stories" that allow us to determine "where danger looms in the present" so that we can then "gesture towards potential responses in the future". For Indigenous writers, dystopian settings are particularly generative; they acknowledge Indigenous oppression throughout history but are also an opportunity to imagine a better future (Whyte, 2018, p. 224). To examine how apocalyptic encounters with the settler state facilitate the queer decolonisation of the family in Rice's and Dimaline's Indigenous futurist novels, this article first considers how Indigenous people have historically survived apocalyptic circumstances, and the role of ancestral memory in asserting Indigenous presence. Subsequently, it analyses the texts' intersectional critiques of the imposition of binarised systems of gender and their effects on Indigenous women as well as settler-state imposed ruptures of Indigenous fatherhood. Finally, this article explores how the texts transform the consequences of the apocalyptic colonial

[2] The Cherokee are one of the Indigenous groups from the Southeastern Woodlands of the United States.
[3] The Wiradjuri are the largest Aboriginal group in New South Wales, Australia.

encounter into an opportunity for the reclamation of Native sovereignty through their portrayal of the relationship between the land and queer decolonial families.

Apocalyptic Encounters

Dimaline's and Rice's dystopian novels resist the colonisation of the family by first illuminating Indigenous people's apocalyptic encounters with the colonial conditions of contemporary Canada and projecting them into the future. Kyle P. Whyte (2018, p. 224) argues that some Indigenous perspectives on climate change situate the present time as already dystopian. In other words, Indigenous knowledge systems acknowledge that the world has already entered an era of climate dystopia. The near futures of *The Marrow Thieves* and *Moon of the Crusted Snow* imagine the decline of our present climate dystopia to envision how it might be escaped. *The Marrow Thieves* is told from the perspective of Frenchie, a Métis teenager who has witnessed several climate disasters including the "Water Wars", during which drinking water was in short supply. At this time, rising sea levels caused fifty per cent of the population to perish, threatening the survivors with a disease that caused an incapacity to dream. This affliction does not affect the Native population, whose bone marrow is believed to cure the settlers' illness. In their search for a cure, the "Department of Oneirology"—utilising the scientific term for the study of dreams as a guise for the mass genocide of Native people and the development of a white-supremacist nation—begin to abduct Indigenous people and extract their bone marrow in reinstated residential schools[4] (2017, p. 14). The use of Indigenous people as a cure for the settlers' disease results in the displacement and destruction of persecuted Indigenous families and reflects how in *The Marrow Thieves*, according to Emily Childers and Hannah Menendez (2022, p. 213), "Indigenous bodies become literal commodities in yet another settler-state enacted genocide". The dystopian apocalypse in Dimaline's novel is fuelled by scientific ideology typical of SF. More specifically, the scientific study of dreams—Oneirology—is used to identify treatments for the settler's inability to dream, justifying the genocide of their Indigenous counterparts. As imperialist scientific discourse dictates that Indigenous people are considered less than human, and that which is non-human is devalued by settler governments, settler colonialism easily transfers technologies of domination. These technologies move seamlessly from environmental destruction, which led to the "Water Wars" and to the massacre of Indigenous people.

[4] Residential schools were government-sponsored religious schools established in Canada in the nineteenth century to "sever familial and cultural ties and indoctrinate [First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people] into the hegemonic Euro-Canadian cultural order" (Hutchings, 2016, p. 301).

In contrast, although scholars speculate that environmental destruction triggers *Moon of the Crusted Snow*'s dystopian setting, the cause of the apocalypse in Rice's novel is unknown. The Anishinaabe[5] protagonist, Evan Whitskey, and his community, located in the far north of Canada, are cut off from all electricity and outside communication. People from the south infiltrate the community, and as supplies diminish, attempt to create animosity amongst the community's struggling inhabitants. The novel's apocalyptic setting highlights the failure of Western science and progress within Indigenous communities, disrupting Western narratives of science as an overwhelmingly positive force. In the opening chapters of the novel, Evan arrives home from hunting and notices that "It's so quiet" in the house (2018, p. 8). He and his partner, Nicole, soon realise that the electricity is off, and that internet and phone reception have dropped. Evan comments that losing phone reception "was common" because the

> cell tower had only gone up a few years before […] when construction contractors from the south wanted a good signal while they built the massive new hydro dam farther north on the bay. (2018, p. 14)

Encounters between Western Europeans and the Anishinaabe people resulted in the forced migration of Evan's ancestors and their confinement on a reserve in a remote part of Canada, far from their original lands by the Great Lakes. Here, the inadequate facilities and harsh weather have caused Evan and his family to become accustomed to the electricity switching off and the internet and cell phone reception dropping. For settler populations, the loss of resources such as electricity and phone service indicate catastrophe and feature in many dystopian and apocalyptic narratives. However, for Evan and his community, the loss of these technologies is part of everyday life. Thus, the contemporary Indigenous experience of settler colonialism is akin to an apocalypse, elucidating the continued negative impact of Western colonisation on Native North American families.

Indigenous futurisms uncover the historical experience of apocalyptic conditions for Native North Americans by projecting Indigenous genocide into the future. By envisioning dystopian futures that draw on Indigenous oppression in the past and present, Indigenous futurist writers imagine "way[s] out" of the "dystopic present into better futures" (Medak-Saltzman, 2017, p. 145). In *The Marrow Thieves*, when Frenchie is separated from his family and living alone in the overgrown landscape, he encounters Miigwans who adopts him into his

[5] The Anishinaabe (alternatively spelt Anishinabe, Anicinape, Nishnaabe, Neshnabé, Anishinaabeg, Anishinabek, Aanishnaabe) are an Indigenous group situated in the Great Lakes region of Canada and the United States.

patchwork family. An important practice in Frenchie's new Native family is "Story" during which members of the group recall their own and their ancestors' past. Frenchie recounts how Rose, a girl who joins the group "was raised by old people" and "spoke like them" which made their family "feel surrounded on both ends—like [they] had a future and a past" (2017, p. 44). During "Story", Frenchie's found family strengthen their kinship with their ancestors who encountered French, British and Canadian colonisers. Kinship is a central aspect of Indigenous life and links family and community. Becoming kin, according to Patty Krawec (2022, p. 1), means being "related to everything" and being one's "relatives, all of them". This sense of responsibility and connection to those who are both family and community is fostered by storytelling in *The Marrow Thieves* (Zanella, 2020, p. 9). To reassure the group that they have a future, Miigwans tells of how they had "survived this before"—this being genocide—and how they "will survive it again" (2017, p. 45). The apocalypse and Indigenous genocide are therefore invoked as a continued experience for Indigenous nations in Canada, not merely a memory or historical phenomenon. Aileen, an Elder in Evan's community in *Moon of the Crusted Snow*, makes a similar point when she recalls how a child told her that they thought the world was ending, prompting her to remind Evan that:

> Our world isn't ending. It already ended. It ended when the Zhagnaash[6] came into our original home down south on that bay and took it from us. (2018, p. 149)

The Anishinaabe people's world as they knew it was destroyed by their encounters with Western imperialists and the subsequent displacement and genocide of their people occurring over the course of over five hundred years. Therefore, both Rice and Dimaline appropriate the apocalyptic setting of SF to invoke ancestral memory and to situate Indigenous people firmly in the present, while also denying the erasure of their past and projecting them into the future through their continued survival. Simultaneously, the never-ending apocalypse challenges Western concepts of linear time where "civilisation" continuously "progresses" away from the past—a way of thinking many Indigenous societies did not espouse historically.

Moreover, the invocation of ancestral memory of the apocalyptic displacement and separation of Indigenous families is an act of resistance to the annihilation of Indigenous kinship systems. In the nineteenth century, Canadian federal government policy enforced marriage as a means of "dissolving tribal modes of collective ownership that went along with gender-nonbinarism, non-monogamy, and/or matrilocal open marriage" and assigned property to the heads-of-household—the husband and father of the Indigenous family (Lewis, 2022, p.

[6] Englishmen in Ojibwe (a language spoken by many Indigenous people in North America).

40). At this point, the goal of the Canadian government altered from eradicating all First Nations, Métis and Inuit people to assimilating them into Western European culture and the new culture of the Canadian nation-state. The forced "conversion of Indigenous people to Christianity–especially through residential and boarding Schools, most of which were run by Christian institutions" inculcated binary gender and heteronormativity which resulted in some Indigenous groups rejecting Native gender roles and non-nuclear family formations (Robinson, 2019, pp. 1676–1677). Aileen's ancestral remembering, storytelling and recounting serve to underscore for her relatives the historical imperialist endeavour to destroy the Indigenous family and reshape it in the European image when she tells her community that their ancestors:

> whispered stories and the language in each other's ears, even when they were stolen from their families to endure forced and often violent assimilation at church-run residential schools. (2018, p. 53)

Aileen's storytelling emphasises that their relatives also experienced an apocalypse and encourages them to come together as a family, denying the erasure of Anishinaabe history as an act of resistance to the separation and destruction of Native families.

Similarly, Dimaline projects the terror of the Canadian residential schools into the future to emphasise the continued impact of colonial family ideology on First Nations and Métis families. In the near future of the text, the recruiters from the Department of Oneirology imprison Indigenous people in residential schools where they extract their bone marrow. Frenchie recounts how his dad arrived home one day before both he and Frenchie's mother were abducted by recruiters—and told them how:

> the Governor's Committee didn't set up the schools brand new […] they were based on the old residential school system they used to try to break our people, to begin with, way back. (2017, p. 15)

Many Indigenous groups, including the Métis, to whom Frenchie and his biological family belong, were nomadic people and their confinement to residential schools and reservations destroyed their families. Frenchie's mother reminds him of how—following the arrival of Europeans—his ancestors' movements were no longer autonomous but resulted from their persecution by the settler state:

> There were generations in our family where all we did was move. First by choice, then every time the black cars came from town and burned out our homes […] Now the cars are here again. Only now, they are white vans. (2017, p. 22)

Sarah Nickel (2017, p. 303) argues that acts of displacing Indigenous people and keeping them in strictly monitored reserves or residential schools "were grounded in the belief that Indigenous standards of living were too low". In particular, nomadism was considered

primitive, animal-like behaviour. As such, their persecution was legitimised by the belief that Indigenous families were uncivilised and incapable of caring for their own children, themselves or their land. Dimaline's portrayal of reinstated residential schools and the destruction of a Métis family in the future rejects the consignment of Indigenous people to the past while illuminating the Canadian government's continued efforts to alter and destroy the Indigenous family both in reality and in this dystopian future.

Encountering Resistance

Settler encounters with Indigenous people in North America not only transformed the landscape of what was once known as Turtle Island (North America), but they permanently altered the cultural and social lives of the people who lived there. Emma Battel Lowman and Adam J. Barker (2015, p. 79) posit that "settler colonialism does not rely solely on the elimination of Indigenous bodies but on the elimination of Indigenous identity and peoplehood". In the early twentieth century, "enfranchisement" policy was designed to bring Indigenous people into Canadian work and education systems so they could be "civilized…out of existence as Indigenous" (Lowman and Barker, 2015, p. 80). Dimaline's text depicts how settler ideology facilitates the eradication of Indigeneity when Wab, an enigmatic young woman in Frenchie's newfound family, tells her "Story". Prior to joining Miigwans' family, Wab lived in the inner city with her mother who was a drug addict and sex worker. In this dystopian future, non-Indigenous people are taken to safeguarded areas and Native people are left to survive in the crumbling cities. Wab recalls how the military took "cleaner citizens to new settlements and gated communities" while her Indigenous neighbours went to "the death camps" to be "murdered real slow" (2017, p. 94). The use of the word "cleaner" to describe the non-Indigenous or settler people who were brought to safety suggests an innocence or unmarkedness not available to the Indigenous people of the city. Instead, their Indigeneity marks them as "unclean" and consigns them to savagery. From their first encounter with Indigenous people in the Americas, settlers used uncleanliness as a marker of Indigenous primitivity as exemplified by Anishinaabe scholar, Shelly Knott Fire's (2021, p. 122), recollection of her mother roughly cleaning her and brushing her hair "in order to avoid being called 'dirty' by the zhaagnosh who were tourists in the village". To be seen as civilised, according to Western colonialism, one must be unmarked by primitivity. The gated suburban community within which atomised white middle-class nuclear families live has long been a symbol of American family life. Wab and her Indigenous neighbours' persecution is justified

by colonial family discourse which perceives them as unclean, and consequently unfit for the safety of the gated community.

A core aspect of the imperialist attack on Native peoplehood is the dehumanisation of First Nations, Métis and Inuit women. Wab's experience as an Indigenous woman in a colonial nation-state elucidates *The Marrow Thieves*' intersectional resistance to the dehumanisation of Native women. Due to a lack of employment and resources in the city, Wab brings messages and other commodities to people in exchange for food. She is eventually caught by a gang of her competitors and is raped repeatedly over two days. Wab's story reflects the violence Indigenous women suffer because of settler colonialism. According to Krawec (2022, p. 116), "Black and Native women […] were seen in the past, and still today, as always sexually available, always promiscuous", unclean, and animalistic. As a result, encounters between Indigenous women and settlers often lead to sexual assault and rape. In contemporary Canada, Indigenous women who go missing or who are murdered are often assumed to be sex workers, an assumption that is typically used to justify sexual violence against them. Wab's story illuminates the unique lived experience of Indigenous women as a result of the colonial encounter which inscribes them with a sexuality that defies the image of white civilised purity—symbolised by the docile white wife and mother of the nuclear family—consigning them to a less-than-human status and justifying their subjection to rape and sexual assault.

In addition to highlighting the plight of Indigenous women in settler societies, both Dimaline's and Rice's texts resist the gender binarism imposed on Indigenous people through the enforcement of Western conceptions of marriage and the family. In many pre-colonial societies, women had a high degree of autonomy and the female gender role was not situated in opposition to that of the male (Vázquez García, 2002, p. 91). However, the imposition of the

> European model of the nuclear monogamous male-headed family as legislation limits native women's access to land in their own communities and places them in a vulnerable position vis a vis their male counterparts. (Vázquez García, 2002, p. 91)

The apocalyptic conditions in both Dimaline and Rice's novels are used to emphasise Native women Elders' spiritual and leadership roles in defiance of the limitations of Western patriarchy. Minerva, the grandmother figure in Frenchie's family in *Marrow Thieves*, and Aileen in *Moon of the Crusted Snow* are responsible for passing on the cultural teachings and language of their ancestors to the children and young adults in their communities. In *Marrow Thieves*, Frenchie remarks to Rose that he "feel[s] bad for you guys" when they have to stay at the camp while he and the other boys hunt with Miigwans (2017, p. 50). Rose, however, rejects the implication that spending time with the Elder Minerva at their homestead is any less

important or exciting than the act of hunting for food when Frenchie expresses his shock at hearing her speak Ojibwe[7] and Rose tells him that she learned the language from Minerva because "Minerva has the language and us poor guys are stuck with her so we learn" (2017, p. 51). Frenchie's dismay at Rose knowing more "language" than he does highlights the high status of language for Native people in contemporary Canada, situating Minerva's position as a teacher of that language as a decolonial act of resistance to not only the erasure of Indigeneity but to the devaluation of Indigenous women. At the same time, Rose's rejection of Frenchie's belief that staying at the homestead is less vital to their survival is a rejection of Western family discourse where domestic work is undervalued. Thus, the Native women in *Marrow Thieves* resist colonial family discourse supported by patriarchal legislation, towards reclaiming Native sovereignty and decolonising the Indigenous family.

Similarly, in *Moon of the Crusted Snow*, Aileen's role as an Elder garners her respect from her community. Aileen is empowered by her knowledge of Indigenous language and medicine, and she encourages other women to also adopt these skills. For example, Evan's partner, Nicole, "really appreciates all the things [Aileen is] teaching her about the old medicine ways" (2018, p. 147). Evan works for the roads sector of the band—the governing body for their community's use of reserve lands, money and other resources managed by the Canadian federal government—while his partner, Nicole, remains at home with the children in a reflection of heteronormative Western patriarchal family formations. Nevertheless, Nicole is empowered by working with Aileen to learn Anishinaabemowin and their traditional medicinal practices. However, Aileen is not only an influence on the women of her community but she also often "shared a teaching or an old story with the young men when they came to visit" (2018, p. 148). In this way, Aileen's elevated role in the community, among both men and women, defies binarised imperialist family ideology, which sought to assign power in the form of property to Indigenous men and weaken Indigenous women, to assimilate Indigenous families into Western patriarchal society.

As well as enforcing binary gender roles, European encounters with Indigenous people created long-standing ruptures in Native families by hindering the ability of Indigenous fathers to have meaningful relationships with their children. In contemporary North America, Indigenous fathers face high levels of incarceration and historical trauma. According to Jessica Ball:

[7] The language spoken by the Indigenous people of the Subarctic and Northeastern woodlands in North America.

> Removal of children from family care and families from traditional territories, along with high rates of incarceration of Indigenous men, have produced a fissure in the sociocultural transmission of father roles across generations and created monumental challenges for Indigenous fathers' positive and sustained involvement with their children. (Ball, 2009, p. 29)

Dimaline's *The Marrow Thieves* and Rice's *Moon of the Crusted Snow* use the apocalyptic setting to decolonise fatherhood by portraying positive Indigenous paternal figures. Frenchie is reunited with his father late in the novel once they have both joined new families, but Frenchie is uneasy about their reunion following his experience of taking on the role of protector in his new family. While reminiscing about his life with his family prior to being separated from them, Frenchie notes that his only job was to "Just remain [him]self" but now his "job was to hunt, and scout, and build camp, and break camp, to protect others" (2018, p. 195). The significance of the fatherly role he plays in his new family is made evident by the advice given to Frenchie by his found father Miigwans when he reminds Frenchie to practise safe sex:

> All I'm gonna say is babies are the most important thing we have to move ahead. So when they come, they need to come to families that want them and are ready to take responsibility. (2017, p. 197)

Frenchie is primed to become a father by taking on the role of protector and learning how to be accountable for his actions. Upon reuniting with his father, he realises that the expectations and skills he has inherited from both his biological father and Miigwans re-establishes familial connections severed by the settler state-mandated recruiters. Therefore, through both reuniting Frenchie with his father and portraying the inheritance of skills from father to son, Dimaline uses the apocalyptic conditions of the re-established residential school system to decolonise the family and repair the ruptures inflicted on it by the colonial encounter.

In *Moon of the Crusted Snow*, the apocalyptic setting decolonises fatherhood by portraying positive Indigenous father figures who ensure the community's survival. In Rice's novel, Indigenous fathers use storytelling and survival techniques passed down through generations to repair and secure the ruptures settler-colonialism inflicts on their families. Evan exemplifies the positive Indigenous father figure in his interactions with his children and his role in the community. Early in the novel, Evan notes his father's influence on him as a child when he remembers how:

> His father had first taught him to identify and follow moose tracks in the deep bush around their reserve when he was five. (2018, p. 5)

Evan is thinking about his upbringing while "tracking his own kill to support his young family" (2018, p. 5). Evan inherited essential hunting skills from his father, who played a crucial role in teaching him how to provide sustenance for his family. Later, Evan arrives home to his partner and family and remarks that "the kids were what pushed Evan through the bush and the hunt", solidifying the connection between inheritance, survival skills and fatherhood (2018, p. 5). This stands in contrast to colonial ideology that perpetuated the belief that Indigenous children should be separated from their parents for their own good. Evan not only provides food for his children but also cultural security, speaking in Anishinaabemowin to his son and daughter and promising that he will teach them how to hunt. The portrayal of a father whose connections to his own father allow him to pass down his cultural knowledge and survival skills to his children repairs the fractures caused by colonial family ideology.

Transforming the Encounter

In their resistance to Western family ideology, the families in the texts transform their apocalyptic encounters into an opportunity to reclaim Native sovereignty. Danika Medak-Saltzman argues that a central motif in Indigenous futurisms is the exploration of dystopian possibilities,

> which allows for contemplation of dangerous 'what ifs', aiding us to imagine our way out of the dystopic present into better futures. (Saltzman, 2017, p. 145)

In other words, dystopian narratives facilitate the transformation of past and present dystopian climates into positive visions of the future by Indigenous futurist writers. A core aspect of this transformation is the queering of the family. As outlined earlier, the families in both texts are decolonial but because they are structurally complex—making them uncivilised according to Western family ideology—the family formations in the texts can be considered queer (Rifkin, 2011, p. 33). This queerness is evoked by the fluidity of their family forms, a fluidity which facilitates a familial relationship with the land and non-human animals and collapses the human/non-human binary. This also aligns with Indigenous cosmologies of kinship which often facilitate queer ecologies. Kinship is a central aspect of many Indigenous groups' lives and is based on mutual relationships and community. However, the community fostered through kinship is, according to Daniel Heath Justice, not a stable or static group but

> an adaptive state of being that requires its members to maintain it through their willingness to perform necessary rituals […] to keep the kinship network in balance with itself and the rest of creation. (Heath Justice, 2008, p. 149)

The flexibility and balance of the families in the text are what Timothy Morton (2010, pp. 275–276) terms queer ecologies, where

> Life-forms constitute a mesh, a nontotalisable, open-ended concatenation of interrelations that blur and confound boundaries at practically any level: between species, between the living and the non-living, between organism and environment. (Morton, 2010, p. 275)

A boundaryless relationship to the land and the non-humans that live on it is central to decolonisation and, according to Patty Krawec (2022, p. 11), First Nations and Métis people do not own the land but view "land itself and conditions of that land, like altitude and climate" as part of their genome. Krawec (2022, p. 11) explains that as an Anishinaabe woman, her

> roots reach out and draw upon the land of many places, connecting [her] here, where they reach deeply into the land that created [her] paternal ancestors.

The families in both texts cultivate kinship connections such as those described by Krawec and Morton with the non-human beings they encounter.

In *Moon of the Crusted Snow*, Evan, his friends, and his brother take Scott—a white settler from the south whom they welcome into their community—out hunting moose. After he shoots and easily kills a moose, Scott comments that "They're basically like sitting ducks out there", prompting Evan's uncle to explain that the bulls are vulnerable in the Winter following their rut and that hunting them at this time is "kinda like cheating" emphasising that "It's not the Anishinaabe way to take more than you need" (2018, pp. 125–126). Scott's comment reflects imperialist extractionist attitudes toward Indigenous territory by disregarding the detrimental consequences of overhunting the moose. For Evan's people, however, "the land is in all of them" and the non-human animals on that land are of equal value to the humans living on it (2018, p. 202). As a result, they are aware of the destruction that could be caused by over-hunting and offer prayers and gratitude to the land and Mother Earth when they do kill moose, thanking the "Great spirit […] for the life you have given us today" (2018, p. 4). In contrast to thoughtless imperialist destruction and appropriation of resources, Evan, his family and his community embody a queer ecology and view the land as their relative that must be cared for and maintained. The portrayal of a queer ecology—within which the human/non-human binary collapses—undermines imperialist narratives which use this binary to support the domination of Indigenous people and is thus, an act of decolonial resistance.

In *The Marrow Thieves*, environmental destruction directly results in the development of the disease that causes settlers to lose their ability to dream. While the subsequent genocide of Indigenous people forces them to abandon their homes, it also presents an opportunity for healing the natural world and for Indigenous people to re-establish their connections to the

land. The settlers and other non-Indigenous people are moved to gated communities by the government facilitating the natural world's reclamation of areas once urbanised. Frenchie notes the cause of the current apocalyptic conditions: "The Earth was broken. Too much taking for too damn long, so she finally broke" (2017, p. 100). Just as the land was taken from the Indigenous people of Canada to eventually diminish their population and their culture, so the Earth is broken by imperialist extraction and capitalist pollution. Rather than lamenting their new reliance on the land in the absence of brick-and-mortar homes, electricity, and other modern resources, Frenchie and his new family feel connected to their ancestors and Indigenous identity through the land, with Slopper (one of Frenchie's non-biological brothers) remarking that they are "bush Indians for real now" (2017, p. 141). When they meet Frenchie's father and his new family, they and Miigwans are tasked by Frenchie to consider what is next for them as Indigenous people:

> I mean we can start healing the land. We have the knowledge, kept through the first round of these blasted schools, from before that, when these visitors first made their way over here like angry children throwing tantrums. When we heal our land, we are healed also. (2017, p. 208)

This exemplifies the interdependence of Indigenous people and the land; their healing relies on the healing of the land and vice-versa. As a result, in *The Marrow Thieves*, Frenchie and his relatives form a mesh with the natural world in a queer ecology, which is central to their efforts to decolonise Canada and regain their sovereignty. As Krawec (2022, p. 141) states, "Decolonising means returning the land to the people from whom it was taken". This is not because the land "belongs" to Indigenous people in terms of neoliberal capitalist property ownership, but because Indigenous people view the land as their kin and exist in an intricate reciprocal relationship with it.

The families in Rice's *Moon of the Crusted Snow* extend beyond the walls of their homes into the natural world and their community. When the electricity, following the cell phone towers, goes out Evan's community congregate to discuss their strategies for surviving autumn and winter. Evan, his father, the chief, and other council members are joined by Aileen at a meeting in the town hall where Aileen addresses the crowd, and greeting them, says "Good afternoon, my relatives" (2018, p. 53). Scholars argue that pre-colonisation, many Indigenous nations were communal and egalitarian, with the needs of the many subsuming the needs of the individual. In *Indigenous Continent*, Pekka Hämäläinen (2022, p. 63) asserts that "The collective mindset that prevailed, reflecting broad-based and carefully balanced economies, also distinguished North America's Indigenous peoples". This collective mindset is reflected

by the extension of the family in *Moon of the Crusted Snow* to encompass the entire community which includes the land and the non-human beings that live on it. Rather than splintering into atomised units, the community come together as relatives to preserve their existence allowing them to survive an apocalypse reminiscent of their ancestors' original encounters with European and Canadian colonisers. The supposed primitivity of their egalitarian and non-hierarchical familial arrangements justified the Canadian settler state's continued attempts to destroy Indigenous families through the removal of Indigenous children from their reservations and by placing them into white settler homes as well as residential schools. If queerness is a radical rejection of settler-imposed sanctions on the non-Western family, Evan's community/family's assertion of their kinship ties and marked resistance to atomisation and rigidity is a queer act of decolonisation.

Dimaline's *The Marrow Thieves* similarly queers the family. According to Patricia Zanella, *The Marrow Thieves*

> offers a radically different vision rooted in the liberatory practices of Indigenous worldmaking through an expansive understanding of kinship embedded in Indigenous landscapes and soundscapes. (Zanella, 2020, p. 178)

This radically different version of the future is entangled in creating new family forms that directly challenge the heteronormative and nuclear visions of family imposed on Indigenous people by colonisers since their first encounters with them. Frenchie's biological family, which replicates that of a nuclear family consisting of married, heterosexual parents and their biological children, is broken up by the emergence of the new residential schools. However, he soon finds a new, non-biological, non-nuclear family that lies somewhere between the Indigenous families of the "old days" when they "were huge and sprawling" but without "the common connection of grandparents or aunties like [they] used to have so often" (2017, p. 31). The family that Frenchie joins is not exactly like the ones of old because "none of [them were] related by blood", but it is unlike a nuclear family because there is no mother, just a father figure in Miigwans and a grandmother figure in the Elder, Minerva (2017, p. 31). The children are also not all like siblings with some of them forming romantic relationships with each other. Consequently, family in the text is not rigidly defined but is fluid and is based on shared experiences rather than biology. As in *Moon of the Crusted Snow*, Frenchie's family strengthen their familial bond through storytelling. Miigwans tells the story of the first residential schools to the young people of the group as a means of strengthening their connection as a family and stoking their desire to not only survive but to flourish:

> when we were on our knees with the pukes, they decided they liked us there, on our knees. And that's when they opened the first schools. (2017, p. 34)

He tells the story of how their ancestors also fought to survive genocide and sustained their nations. This serves as a reminder that their people have persevered through times not dissimilar to those they are experiencing now. At the centre of this survival is the maintenance of non-Western family formations in defiance of settler attempts to separate and displace them. The fluidity of Frenchie's found family and their rejection of the hermetic definitions of colonial family ideology is undoubtedly queer.

The Indigenous families in Rice and Dimaline's texts do not merely survive their apocalyptic encounters but they transform them into opportunities to reclaim the land and assert Indigenous sovereignty. Indeed, the apocalypse in both texts allows the families to imagine a future where they no longer need to resist colonisation but can flourish (Bussière, 2020, p. 47). Samuel R. Delany argues that imagining the future gives one agency:

> Without an image of tomorrow, one is trapped by blind history, economics, and politics beyond our control. One is tied up in a web, in a net, with no way to struggle free. Only by having clear and vital images of the many alternatives, good and bad, of where one can go, will we have any control over the way we may actually get there in a reality tomorrow will bring all too quickly. (Delany, 2012, p. 14)

Though *The Marrow Thieves* and *Moon of the Crusted Snow*'s critiques of the effects of settler colonialism seem to imagine a dark future for Indigenous people, their vision of the future also provides hope for how Indigenous people might take advantage of the collapse of society to reclaim their sovereignty. Throughout history, Anishinaabeg, much like Evan's community have taken the consequences of colonialism and transformed them into new opportunities:

> The skills they needed to persevere in this northern terrain, far from their original homeland farther south, were proud knowledge held close through the decades of imposed adversity. (2018, p. 48)

The skills honed from other apocalyptic encounters with settlers allow them to overcome the harsh apocalyptic winter and, in the summer, to leave their community in the north eventually prompting them to step "onto the trail, one by one, to begin this new life nestled deep in the heart of Anishinaabe territory" (2018, p. 213). Their collective mindset allowed them to come together as a family to take the "collapse of the white man's modern systems" and regain the lands they were displaced from (2018, p. 212). Evan's family/community's reclamation of their former homeland is the ultimate queer act of resistance—the radical decolonisation of Canadian "territory" through the assertion of non-Western kinship ties that extend into the natural world.

Dimaline's text also transfigures the apocalypse to imagine the possibility of Indigenous sovereignty. Central to this transfiguration is the metamorphosis of Frenchie's kinship system from the rigidity of the nuclear family to his new mutable family. Instead of staying with his biological father and his dad's new community, Frenchie is drawn toward Rose and his found family which represents "an idea of home [he] wasn't willing to lose" (2017, p. 233). A stationary life with his biological father is no longer satisfactory to Frenchie. He would rather continue his found family's decolonisation efforts. In the final paragraphs of the text, Miigwans is reunited with his husband, Isaac, and through this reuniting, the dream of a better future is stoked in Frenchie:

> I watched it in the steps that pulled Isaac, the man who dreamed in Cree, home to his love. The love who'd carried him against the rib and breath and hurt of his chest as ceremony in a glass vial. And I understood that as long as there are dreamers left, there will never be want for a dream. And I understood just what we would do for each other, just what we would do for the ebb and pull of the dream, the bigger dream that held us all. (2017, p. 247)

This article contends that the "bigger dream" that holds them all is the decolonisation of Canada and the reclamation of Indigenous lands. The return of Isaac to Miigwans represents the dream of Indigenous sovereignty, a dream that is reflected by the same-sex love between two men and is the ultimate rejection of colonial heteronormativity. The apocalypse facilitates the creation of newfound Indigenous families as well as the restoration of Native connections to the land. For this dream to become a reality, however, they need to cast off heteronormative systems of kinship and hold onto the new and diverse ones they have created.

Conclusion

Rice's and Dimaline's dystopian Indigenous futurist novels use apocalyptic settings to project Indigenous people's encounters with colonisers into the future to illuminate their continued battle for Native sovereignty. Central to their apocalyptic settings are the detrimental effects of colonialism on First Nations, Métis, and Inuit families in Canada. By projecting Indigenous suffering and genocide into the future, they challenge the naturalisation of apocalyptic conditions for Native people while rejecting their eradication, their assimilation into Canadian culture, and the appropriation of their lands. *The Marrow Thieves* and *Moon of the Crusted Snow* centre Indigenous kinship systems that oppose colonial heteronormative nuclear family formations, and through their invocation of ancestral memory of the displacement of Indigenous people and their incarceration in residential schools, they challenge the separation and destruction of First Nations and Métis families at the hands of the Canadian settler state.

By depicting nuanced Indigenous womanhood, positive Indigenous fatherhood, and the intricate relationship between Native people and the non-human, the texts assert modes of relation that queer Western conceptions of family. Moreover, they affirm Indigenous community/family and found family ties that, ultimately, ground the transformation of the apocalyptic setting of SF into an opportunity for the reclamation of Native sovereignty.

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Recuperating Racebending as a Worthwhile Practice in an Imperfect Entertainment Industry

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Abstract
This article examines and uses the music video for JAY-Z's song "Moonlight" (2017) and its remaking and recasting of Friends *(NBC 1994–2004) to think about how recast remakes and their repetition with a race-difference might be more than just a superficial play for diversity. It seems that the music video itself, as well as its creators and commentators, deem the act of replacing White actors with Black ones in remakes as producing only, what Kristen J. Warner (2017, p. 34) calls, "plastic representation". This article uses the shot-by-shot recast scene of "Moonlight" to consider how such recastings with a race difference might in fact nevertheless be productive for decentring whiteness. It argues that there is something worthwhile in Alan Yang's re-reading and re-making of* Friends *with Black actors within the music video, and in this recasting practice—which one can call "racebending"—more generally. Firstly, racebending can be seen as a type of "viewing as if" (Laugalyte, 2020) and "reparative reading" (Eve Sedgwick, 2003, p. 150), both concepts framing the practice as an impulse to "repair" cultural texts that are perceived to somehow be lacking, in this case, in terms of the types of bodies that are and are not represented. Secondly, by considering the music video within the context of* Friends *and other adults-living-with-friends sit-coms, such as* Living Single *(Fox, 1993–1998), this article argues that racebending is a part of the adaptation and adoption process, always mirroring the racial politics of the time. Though the entertainment industry needs to go through some truly radical changes to become decolonised, this article contends that racebending is not the answer to the White-centric U.S. entertainment landscape, but an important practice in an imperfect system.*

Introduction

Demands for increased diversity on screens, especially in terms of seeing more images of non-White people, are not difficult to find on the internet, especially for those living in the Anglosphere, such as in the U.S., or if one consumes a lot of U.S. media. However, many scholars have shown the idea of diversity as not being altogether straightforward. One reason for the critique of diversity is because profit is a big motivator in industry, which means that culturally diverse representations depend on the whim of what is popular and profitable at any given moment. To articulate diversity as a money-making strategy, Sarah Banet-Weiser (2007) has written about the championing of diversity as a "branding strategy" for the children's channel Nickelodeon in which characters of different ethnicities and races are shown but whose diversity is in fact tightly managed and ensured to be palatable by omitting any overt social critique. Melanie E.S. Kohnen (2015, p. 91) has outlined how the channel ABC Family has been rebranded to attract a type of millennial audience, that she explains is both invested in cultural diversity as well as, importantly, affluent, which highlights diversity onscreen as dependent on the attitudes, but more significantly, the wealth, of its audiences. Finally, Axelle

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Asmar, Tim Raats and Leo Van Audenhove (2023, p. 25) have explored how Netflix, through its press releases, stresses its commitment to diversity, "ethnic, sexual or linguistic", and that it does so for the purpose of generating a transnational appeal to gain a competitive advantage. The pitfalls of this kind of market-motivated diversity are articulated in, for instance, Arlene Dávila's book, *Latinos, Inc.: The Marketing and Making of a People* (2001), which is dedicated to showing how reliance on what is profitable creates images of the most marketable aspects of ethnic cultures and people, leading to reinforced stereotypes. Furthermore, Kristen J. Warner has written about how superficially diverse images, which are in reality hollow and meaningless, are in danger of populating our screens when there is an unthinking demand for diversity:

> while I do not share the popular expectation for mediated imagery to matter, its overdetermining of black images as the marker of societal progress or regression makes any image acceptable on its face, obliterating context and sidelining any consideration of depth. Thus have images in the era of representation matters become hollowed, malleable signs with artificial origins (Warner, 2017, p. 34).

In these ways, calls for diversity should be looked at with caution, and any demands one makes for it should be thought out, with an awareness of how easily diversity can be co-opted by market logics and compromised.

Academics are not the only ones looking at thoughtless demands for and claims of diversity with caution, it comes from popular culture too. A good example of this, and a focus of this article, is the music video "Moonlight" for JAY-Z's song of the same name from his album *4:44* (2017). Before outlining the argument of this article, the following is a description of this music video and the critique it makes. Directed by Alan Yang (*Master of None*, Netflix, 2015–present), "Moonlight" recreates a *Friends* (NBC, 1994–2004) scene shot-by-shot, including the same setting, dialogue and costuming, but replacing the White actors with up-and-coming contemporary Black actors: Lakeith Stanfield plays Chandler, Lil Rel Howery plays Joey, Jerrod Carmichael plays Ross, Issa Rae plays Rachel, Tessa Thompson plays Monica and Tiffany Haddish plays Phoebe. The *Friends* episode that is "remade" and recast is the beginning of "The One Where No One's Ready" (season 3, episode 2), and the only other alteration besides the casting is the replacement of the iconic *Friends* theme tune, The Rembrandts's "I'll Be There for You" (1995) with the song "Friends" (1984) by Whodini. The scene itself shows Ross (Carmichael) hurrying everyone to get ready for a black-tie gala at the museum, though no one takes his pleading seriously. While the lines and their delivery are replicated almost exactly by this new cast, their performance is slightly off-kilter, subtly lifeless

and mawkish. Warner (2017, p. 32) says of this scene that “the performances feel like hollow experiments produced in a laboratory; they feel plastic”.

The shot-by-shot recreation is interrupted when the actor Lil Rel Howery, who plays the Joey character, receives a call on his mobile phone, disrupting the performance of the *Friends* episode, and breaks character to silence his phone. Reaching into his pocket, he apologises to the rest of the actors: “my bad everybody, that’s my fault”. At this point Jerrod Carmichael (playing Ross) asks if the actors can “take five”. As the rest of the actors start leaving their positions, the camera cuts to behind the set where the Black actor and comedian, Hannibal Buress, appearing as himself, is standing and eating at the refreshments table. Here, one hears Buress express his criticism of the *Friends* re-cast remake to Carmichael: “Garbage […] It’s just episodes of *Seinfeld*, but with Black people. Who asked for that?” Carmichael defends his choice to act in the remake by saying, “This is something, like, subversive. Something that would turn a culture on its head”. To which Buress responds,

> Well you did a good job of subverting good comedy. You gonna do a Black *Full House* next? *Family Ties*? Why stop there?

Then, when Carmichael asks Buress what he is doing employment-wise, Buress replies,

> Chilling man, I just booked this role in *Pirates of the Caribbean: Cruise Line*. Yeah, I play a parrot with a bad attitude, but he has a heart of gold. It’s terrible, but it’s way better than this shit.

The music video’s critique of half-hearted attempts at diversity here points to the problem of the exclusionary nature of the entertainment industry in the U.S. which marginalises African American artists and creators, not to mention other artists and creators who are non-White. Buress’s articulated criticism explicitly frames the *Friends* remake in the video as an insult to Black actors, the question being: why not write original comedy for Black actors in the first place? The criticism is especially poignant considering that Carmichael’s *The Carmichael Show* (2015–2017) had been recently cancelled just over a month before the release of the music video for “Moonlight” on NBC, the same Network which aired *Friends*, with NBC Entertainment President Jennifer Salke saying that “[i]t was hard to find a stable audience” (cited in D’Alessandro, 2017) in response to a Television Critics Association (TCA) reporter. Note, “stable audience” here is no neutral term but refers to the industry standard of affluent, advertiser friendly and White audiences that networks value and without which television shows are regarded as expendable.

Warner (2017, p. 32) celebrated the video's critical stance, seeing it as asking, "critical questions about the intersections of representation and employment for black actors", and more specifically asking,

> [h]ow do they [Black actors] balance taking jobs that seem facile all the while attempting to imbue the parts with depth through subversive performances that may not be as easily perceived as intended? (Warner, 2017, p. 32)

and as creating a

> response of discomfort, amid the realization that neither playing nor watching white characters metaphorically dipped in chocolate on screen can deliver the progress that was implicitly promised by watchdog groups like the NAACP who for years have sought to strategically diversify the labor force in meaningful ways. (Warner, 2017, p. 32)

In other words, Warner sees the music video as being a critique of shallow attempts at diversity.

The act of this recasting as problematic is further observed in Yang's commentary, which aimed critique not at *Friends* itself but "a culture" more generally:

> I know people might look at the video as some sort of implicit criticism of shows, but, to me, that wasn't really the intention. I say that with complete honesty. I think "Friends" is a really good show, it's a well-made show. So it was less pointing a finger at that show or any network and more of a balance of, look how far we've come as a culture in terms of representation onscreen. Look how far we still have to go. And look at how important it is that we get the opportunity to tell our own stories and create our own art. I don't wanna be didactic and preach to people and tell them what the video means. But this video does not come from an angry place. It's more to point things out and start a conversation rather than try to shame people (cited in in Rao, 2017).

JAY-Z on iHeartRadio also pointed his criticism at "the culture",

> It's like a subtle nod to *La La Land* winning the Oscar, and then having to give it to *Moonlight* […] It's really a commentary on the culture and where we're going" (cited in Ross, 2017).

Indeed, the song "Moonlight" that begins to play two thirds into the music video, with JAY-Z rapping lyrics such as "We stuck in La La Land/Even when we win, we gon' lose", refers to the 2017 Oscars incident where *La La Land* (2016) was mistakenly named winner of Best Picture instead of the actual winner, *Moonlight* (2016)—the first all-Black cast film to win the award. This "#OscarFail", as it trended on Twitter, was highly criticised for overshadowing the pioneering achievement by the Black director Barry Jenkins and his all-Black cast. The end of JAY-Z's "Moonlight" music video is a reflection on this mishap. As the song begins to play at this point of the video (indeed, there is no music or vocals until now, almost two thirds into the video), the viewer sees Carmichael, led by Rae, leaving the set. Eventually, Carmichael finds himself sitting on a park bench in the middle of the night, staring at a giant full moon. This

moment serves as a reference to the Oscar-winning *Moonlight* and perhaps also to the one-sheet for *La La Land* from the scene that depicted Emma Stone and Ryan Gosling dancing by the park bench against the background of a beautiful evening sky. As Carmichael sits in solitude and looks into the distance and the music video draws to a close, one hears the sound recording of the Oscars announcement by Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway overlaying the final shot, announcing *La La Land* as the winner of Best Picture, followed by the sound of applause. This scene and JAY-Z's comments about "the culture" refer to this Oscars incident and how it represents industry dynamics happening in the industry[/industries] where Black artists, actors and creators are repeatedly overshadowed and do not obtain the proper attention their work and talent deserve.

Recuperating Racebending

The above example clearly outlines that the situation is far from ideal. The path to improvement is complicated and that superficial attempts at injecting African American presence on the screen is not the radical transformation that the U.S. entertainment industry needs. However, this article aims to reconsider and recuperate the kind of practice of recasting the audience gets in the "Moonlight" music video as one that is worthwhile. It argues that this practice, which is categorised here as "racebending", is not just what Warner calls "plastic representation" (Warner, 2017, p. 34), or superficial attempts at diversity, but is also productive for decolonising the entertainment industry.

This argument is made by discussing the practice of racebending and the many forms it has taken in recent pop culture, followed by the framing of this practice using two concepts, "viewing as if" and "reparative reading", to redeem the kinds of recastings in the "Moonlight" music video. Racebending is also positioned in the context of the adaptation and adoption process, specifically considering the music video and *Friends* in the context of sitcoms about adult friends co-habiting together. In this way, this article highlights that gender and race transformations are part of the process of adaptation, always reflecting the current socio-historical period. Through this contextual reading, this article also shows that *Friends* itself is a racebent text, rather than an "original" text. To do so, this article uses JAY-Z's music video which, one could say, epitomises Warner's plastic representation. To elaborate more on what Warner means by "plastic representation", it is worth looking at the "operational definition" Warner provides:

> [plastic representation] can be understood as a combination of synthetic elements put together and shaped to look like meaningful imagery, but which can only approximate

> depth and substance because ultimately it is hollow and cannot survive close scrutiny (2017, p. 35).

She coins the term “plastic representation” following the term “plastic soul” which was used by the White British artist David Bowie’s to deprecate and criticise his own culturally appropriated album *Young Americans* (1975) where he sings in the style of soul—a music genre that originated in the African American community (2017, p. 35).

The reason for considering the term “plastic representation” in relation to JAY-Z’s music video in this article, however, is not for the purpose of deciding whether this term is appropriate to describe the music video or not. Rather the argument questions whether such racial recastings more generally should be categorised as “plastic representation” or if there are more productive ways of thinking about such recastings. Thus, rather than laying emphasis on the analysis of the music video, this article (1) explores and demonstrates framing the phenomenon of racebending itself, as it appears across cultural texts, with recuperative concepts (“as if” viewing and “reparative reading”) and (2) uses concepts and methods from adaptation studies (the concepts of “the copy” and “the original” and the methodology of looking at texts in the context of other texts from which they have been adapted and adopted) to surface racebending in the entertainment industry as a meaningful practice and a part of the way that texts evolve. Thus, while this article examines the “Moonlight” music video to a certain extent the focus of the argument concentrates on racebending in the entertainment industry more generally.

What Is Racebending?

Racebending is a practice in the production of adaptations and remakes where the skin colour of characters is reconfigured, making White characters have another skin colour or non-White characters be White. The term “racebending” itself was coined after the *Avatar: The Last Airbender* (Nickelodeon, 2005–2008) cartoon to film adaptation (*The Last Airbender* [2010]) (‘racebending’ being a play on words of the title) which, to fans’ outrage, was cast with White actors playing Middle Eastern and Indian roles. Fans responded to this casting by setting up Racebending.com and a corresponding community on LiveJournal, using the word “bending” to pay tribute to their loyalty to the *Avatar: The Last Airbender* cartoon while calling out the industry (Gilliland, 2016, pars. 2.2–2.3). The term’s usage has continued and broadened after this much criticised casting, describing casting of films and other adaptations that alter the ethnicity of characters. It has been used in the mainstreaming of whiteness by mainstream film production companies who cast White actors to play non-White characters as well as to

promote diversity onscreen by casting Black characters to replace originally White ones. Racebending is also practiced by fans who use it to undermine the dominance of whiteness in mainstream popular culture by populating their fan art with non-White versions of their favourite White characters.

Examples of racebending in cultural productions abound in the 2010s, where there had been a surge in Hollywood films and television series which used racebending to remake White characters into non-White characters, as well as "gender-bending" to recast women in roles that were played by male actors in the original texts. The "as-if" racebending of identity (specifically gender and racial identity) is especially noteworthy in the case of the 2016 *Ghostbusters* (originally made in 1984) which received a strong backlash (Adams 2016; Shoard 2016; Dvorak 2016).[1] But many other examples abound, including 2014 *Annie* (originally made in 1982) where the White Annie is recast with a Black actress, the remake of Norman Lear's television series *One Day at A Time* (Netflix, 2017–2019) with a Hispanic family (originally ran 1975–1984 on CBS), *High Fidelity* (Hulu, 2020) television series remake of the 2000 film that cast Zoe Kravitz in the main role of the originally white male protagonist, *Ocean's 8* (2018) which featured a female cast instead of the typically male cast of the *Ocean's* films, and one could also think about the casting of Jodie Whittaker as the first female Doctor and Ncuti Gatwa as the first Black Doctor in the popular science fiction television series *Doctor Who* (BBC One, 2005–present). Although technically the character of *Doctor Who* can be regenerated in any form, he nevertheless has only been cast as a White male previously, making the more recent castings noteworthy.

Racebending is also pervasive in fan art and audience practices. Examples of audiences and fans using this racebending approach to texts, especially by non-White audiences and fans, include comedian Corin Wells (2019) who in a Twitter thread recast *Game of Thrones* (HBO,2011–2019) with Black actors. Another example is Black *Harry Potter* fans who, after speculating about the race of Hermione in the books, have created images of Black Hermione in acts of fan recasting. Yet another example is fan slash videos that nowadays exist for almost every show made, but were originally brought to light in academia by Constance Penley (1997)

[1] Racebending and gender swapping may or may not involve blind casting (that which Warner argues the entertainment industry ought to avoid), since it depends on the choices of the writers and the actors in terms of how much is changed about the character. For example, the new text might be barely rewritten, and a White actor merely replaced with a Black actor, repeating the same lines of dialogue. However, the character may be rewritten greatly to create a culturally or gender-specific character. See the example given of the 2016 re-make of *Ghostbusters* later in this article as an example of a recasting that makes a good effort to take into account the implications of recasting men with women actors.

who looked at slash videos of Spock and Kirk reimagined as a homosexual couple. In these videos, fans edit together scenes from the original *Star Trek* (NBC, 1966–1969) series to bring out an eroticism between the two, seemingly straight male characters. Here, sexuality, rather than gender or race (which are more visible signifiers of identity), is bent. Nevertheless, there is an exhibited desire to read the text imaginatively, creatively, politically and daringly with the aim of re-creating it.

Of course, racebending by fans and by the entertainment industry are two different things and the motivations for each are distinct. Racebending by fans cannot be understood as being motivated by profit. Instead, fans may be driven by pleasures involved in remaking characters in their own likeness or simply in the participation of re-making the original texts in whatever way they desire. The act of racebending or "fan casting" (Gilliland, 2016, par 1.6) as performed by fans is seen as achieving a reclaiming and a remaking of popular culture in line with their commitments to and desires for more diverse and inclusive representation. As Elizabeth Gilliland notes,

> [t]he racebending movement on Tumblr suggests an effort by fans to reclaim books, films, and television from the whitewashing that often takes place in the entertainment industry. (Gilland, 2016, par. 01)

Gilliland even offers some more utopian ideas about fan recastings,

> The pervasiveness of these fan casting experiments on Tumblr (including hundreds of individual posts, as well as blogs devoted to fan art dealing exclusively with this movement) suggests that a demand for diverse casting exists that Hollywood isn't answering. Even more notable, these pieces of fan art indicate a dissatisfaction with a society in which white is constructed as the unquestionable norm to which all other cultures must conform. Through the diversified reshapings of popular culture touchstones, these fans are creating an online space which rejects the homogenous entertainment of the past and present in favor of a self-made, heterogeneous future. (Gilliland 2016, par. 1.7)

Here, the motivation for fans to racebend their favourite characters is seen as a desire to envision a more inclusive and diverse popular culture, both in the present and for the future. The 'Do-It-Yourself' aspect also speaks to an ideal form of democratised cultural production, written about extensively by Henry Jenkins in *Textual Poaching* (1992).

While more optimistic ways of understanding racebending dominate writing about fan productions, the celebrated motivations that fans are understood to possess cannot be said to be completely absent from the entertainment industry's cultural productions. As Kohnen argues,

> Instead of dismissing branded diversity […] we should closely examine it to recognize the possibilities and constraints of emerging culturally diverse representations enabled by television brand management. (Kohnen, 2015, pp. 88–89)

For instance, the rebooted *One Day at a Time* of the original White American family sit-com by Norman Lear (1975–1984), has been widely praised for its casting of a Cuban-American family and the way the show represents Latin Americans, whatever the motivation for that casting might be ('*One Day at a Time* (2017 TV series)', 2023; Parry, 2021; Solá-Santiago 2019). In this vein, this article argues that the kind of racebending one views in popular culture texts also has the potential to make a positive difference to viewer's media landscape.

Racebending as Reparative Reading and Viewing "As If"

What is valuable about the practice of racebending becomes evident when framed using two different concepts: "as if" viewing and "reparative reading".

<u>Viewing "As If"</u>

First, this article explores Yang's re-reading and remaking of *Friends* in the "as if" mode, wherein the recast remake of "Moonlight" is considered a reading of *Friends* "as if" it was Black. Before delving into how the "Moonlight" music video is an "as if" remake, the following section engages with what the concept of "as if" refers to in this context. Though the focus on the "as if" relation primarily pertains to interpretation here, it is important to note that the "as if" can operate at both the level of text reception and production. When occurring at the production level, it simultaneously influences reception, as the creator engages with the original text during the adaptation process.

The "as if" strategy of viewing screen texts involves the viewer generating alternatives that could be on the screen, rather than focusing on what is actually presented. Consider the example of *Pillow Talk* (1959), a film based on phone calls between the heroine Jan and the male antagonist/hero Rex. In his analysis scholar Ned Schantz (2008, p. 66) laments the limited opportunities for relationships that the narrative/screen offers to Jan. It seems that the only opportunity Jan has for intimacy is with the manipulative and duplicitous Rex. However, in his reading of *Pillow Talk*, Schantz not only critiques the restrictions Jan faces but also provides an alternative possibility when he remarks that: "Jan never talks on the phone with a woman!" (2008, p. 66). Schantz's observation of *Pillow Talk* here is noteworthy: Schantz's sees certain images of Jan that he feels are lacking regarding his feminist commitments (Jan only talking on the phone with Rex) and he wonders about seeing alternative images that would be more in

line with those commitments (Jan talking on the phone with her girlfriends). His consideration is both a critique of the heteronormativity of the film and offers a potential alternative to the image of heteronormativity onscreen. This article is interested precisely in this type of viewing strategy where an alternative to the screen is imagined, especially in line with one's political commitments.

Importantly, the term "as if" is an adaptation and a tribute to what Schantz calls "reading as if in a female network" in his book *Gossip, Letters, Phones: The Scandal of Female Networks in Film and Literature* (2008), which is a springboard for the thinking about the "as if" viewing in this article, as well as elsewhere (Laugalyte, 2020). In this book, Schantz (2008, p. 4) challenges himself and the reader to approach the English novel and Hollywood films "as if in a female network" and to use one's resources (whatever the imagination can muster) to foreground female networks where they appear only in the cracks and margins of the text. He critiques, invents new interpretations of events, challenges accepted understandings of plots and characters and imagines alternatives to the events of well-known stories about women, all with the aim of bringing the female network that operates beneath the patriarchal surface of the text to our attention. The goal of this article could be described as, rather than "reading as if in a female network", to "view as if in an African American network", seeing the strategy of racebending as one avenue to do so.

While Schantz's concept of the "as if" was initially adapted for the level of imaginative viewing, i.e. reception, where viewers would ask "but what if?" (Laugalyte, 2020), this article is concerned with applying the "as if" way of relating with a text to interpreting the creative process and adaptations. As already outlined, in the case of the music video for Moonlight, this article considers Yang as inquiring into the TV show *Friends* "as if" it was about Black as opposed to White people; in other words, asking "what if" *Friends* were Black. This, the Black version of *Friends* both imagined and manifested by Yang, is an alternative to the White cast of *Friends*. Yang performs this "as if" reading/remaking by simply recasting the original cast of *Friends* with Black actors, but keeps the setting, the dialogue, and the costuming identical to the *Friends* scene being remade. The video does not inquire into the implications of this kind of recasting (i.e., what changes about the setting, the dialogue, the costuming when there are Black actors instead of White?). Since the audience knows that Yang's recasting is pessimistic of such practices, they are instantly made aware that keeping everything the same is the point of his video. But in other instances, following the ramifications of a recasting such as this one could lead to interesting results. For example, the 2016 *Ghostbusters* remake made far more systemic changes than merely swapping gender or ethnicities. Various elements of the film

were rewritten along with inserting female actors in the originally male parts. One notable change involved shifting the male Ghostbusters celebratory heroes' reception from the New York public to a scenario where the female Ghostbusters receive private acknowledgement from the Department of Homeland Security but are publicly denounced fraudsters. This clever alteration serves as a commentary on gender double standards. Thus, in practice, there are also examples of good imaginative efforts being made in the recasting of texts in addition to more straightforward ones like Yang's.

The "as if" mode of relating to texts, of which racebending can be seen as one strategy, is especially significant because it can be, and often is, aligned with one's political commitments and therefore is a politicised strategy of viewing. In other words, it is not so much about the texts or interpretations that result from engaging with the "as if" strategy, it is about the activity itself. It is about the search for better alternatives to what is onscreen or on the page. The importance of this kind of inquiry into alternatives as an approach to texts, especially where the identity of characters is concerned, lies not in the results arrived at but at the level of the activity itself. This incessant speculation matters in a White-centric popular culture because it emphasises the importance of plurality of bodies and voices that, this article proposes, constitutes an ethical form of relating to texts. Relating to the text in this way is productive for creators and viewers who want to see more just and ethical representations and commits creators and viewers to continually attempt to imagine ways they can make popular culture representations align with their political and ethical commitments. Thus, using the "as if" reading/remaking approach allows an understanding of Yang's remaking and recasting as a productive and worthwhile practice in these terms of searching for better alternatives to what already exists in popular culture.

Reparative Reading

Another way to think about how racebending can be seen as a productive practice for working towards more just representation is by considering it in light of what Eve Sedgwick calls "reparative reading", that is,

> the many ways selves and communities succeed in extracting sustenance from the objects of a culture – even of a culture whose avowed desire has often been not to sustain them. (Sedgwick, 2003, pp. 150–151)

Racebending can be seen as one of these ways of "extracting sustenance" from cultural objects, through their transformation. In this way, this article considers racebending as a form of reparative reading, because of racebending's desire to create more welcoming and inclusive

popular texts across various spheres of textual production, from industry making mainstream popular culture to fans creating fan art, even when those efforts fall short of ideal representations.

To understand reparative reading in more depth, it is important to understand what an "unrepaired" reading is, or in Sedgwick's words, a "paranoid" reading. In her essay 'Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, or, You're So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Essay Is About You', Sedgwick (2003, p. 126) diagnosed the dominant form of academic analysis as paranoid (fearful or unrepaired). This type of reading or viewing has been previously examined by Paul Ricoeur (1970, p. 33) in his study of Marx, Nietzsche and Freud as the "three masters of suspicion" and then later it has been tackled by Rita Felski (2009, p. 28) under the term "suspicious" reading. It emphasises a critical stance towards all texts where the reader assumes that they are always at risk of being duped and taken advantage of. Thus, when reading in the paranoid mode, the reader is on guard and focuses on critiquing the text for its shortcomings. This is the kind of "paranoid reading" that Yang can be seen to do when he introduces criticism of racebending practices into his "Moonlight" music video with, for instance, the Carmichael and Buress dialogue and its sharp criticism of the entertainment industry and what it offers to Black actors and audiences. Sedgwick (2003, p. 149) sees the critical paranoid reading as insufficient because it paralyses and fails to provide hope to move beyond critique to something that is sustaining and nourishing. In opposition to the paranoid mode, Sedgwick articulated an alternative approach which she called "reparative":

> a reparative impulse [is] additive and accretive. […] it wants to assemble and confer plenitude on an object that will then have resources to offer to an inchoate self. (Sedgwick, 2003, p. 149)

She sees the reparative as more joyful and subversive than the paranoid. The reparative mode is then about finding pleasure and sustenance for the self in a text and letting go of the critical stance, not because one is naïve about power structures, but because one wants to have a more hopeful and nourishing life. This article extends Sedgwick's reparative reading context and suggests that when creators adapt texts and changes them with a desire to also make them more nourishing for their intended audiences, they also engage in reparative reading, or reparative creating. It is the contention of this article that Yang has created a "reparative reading" through his adaptation of the *Friends* scene by racebending of the cast because it performs inclusions that a mere critical video cannot achieve. This racebending of the *Friends* scene can be seen as being in the reparative mode. Granted, perhaps not many will find much nourishment in this particular racebent scene in the "Moonlight" music video, and rightly so as it has a critical

paranoid edge to it. However, it is worthwhile to consider this proposal to highlight racebending more generally as a reparative form of reading, viewing and creating.

When one views racebending acts as "reparative", what is illuminated is the inclusions made, where previously there were exclusions, and importantly hope about cultural production and representation as opposed to paranoia arising from critiquing how texts do not measure up to a desired inclusive and diverse screen media landscape. Racebending is then about going beyond critique, producing something that is hopeful and about repairing the shortcomings of the text. Taking into account the criticism that U.S. popular culture centres and privileges whiteness (a paranoid criticism), racebending then goes on to create that ideal or preferred situation where whiteness is decentred, here by replacing White actors with Black actors (the reparative). Though racebending is not the ultimate solution, as Yang (cited in Rao, 2017), JAY-Z (cited in Ross, 2017) and Warner (2017, p. 34) point to the problems of this more facile approach to diversity, especially in a climate where original comedy written by and starring Black people has experienced difficulty surviving beyond a few seasons, such as *The Carmichael Show*, as mentioned earlier, racebending nevertheless begins the work of repairing the culture of White-centricism.

The Adaptation and Adoption Process

By examining racebending as more than just a plastic practice, one can elucidate its significance within the broader process of text adaptation, adoption and evolution. This approach allows one to understand how text continually mirror the socio-historical moment and its racial politics. One can do this by placing the music video in relation to *Friends* as well as other sitcoms about adult friends co-habiting together such as *Living Single* (Fox, 1993–1998), an all-Black cast show with the same format as *Friends* which aired one year prior, and looking at this context using concepts from the field of adaptation such as 'the original' and 'copy' to think about how these texts relate to one another and to undermine the primacy of any one of them.

To make this inquiry, one needs to ask whether there is something to be said about repetition and the copy, and especially the copy that makes alterations which are not deemed to have any originality. Texts and textual production are so closely bound together, as one sees in genre films and the formats of television series. Screen texts are always loose copies, sometimes the copies become increasingly better, stretching, challenging and subverting the genre they belong to, and thus they become increasingly more complex than their predecessors, their "originals", while in other copies it is difficult to perceive invention and novelty,

sometimes, because there is not any. Sometimes texts get better with repetition, sometimes they get worse. And sometimes, they remain exactly the same. Remaking, mimesis and repetition is a pervasive practice of culture. Consider Orson Welles's celebration of the copy and copying in *F for Fake* (1973), a film that puts into question people's dislike and condemnation of the forged artwork. When the character in the film played by Nina van Pallandt is asked why she wants people to make forged art works, she replies, "because the fakes are as good as the real ones, and there's a market, and there's a demand". If the culture market, high or low, is so dependent on copies, then the racebending within the "Moonlight" music video that is deemed so plastic by Warner, does not appear so problematic—at least from the perspective of the market.

Turning to the adaptation history of the "Moonlight" music video, the centrality of repetition and the copy is brought to the foreground further. Though the "Moonlight" music video is an adaptation of a *Friends* scene, *Friends* is not necessarily the original text. There are claims by the creators of *Living Single* and the media that the makers of *Friends* copied *Living Single* (Djvlad, 2020), which prompts the inclusion of the latter show in this discussion about remakes and recastings. *Living Single* was a show about a Black group of single friends also in their thirties, but which did not garner the hype and status that *Friends* enjoys to this day, certainly they did not get a reunion revival as *Friends* did in 2021 (*Friends: The Reunion* [2021]). If one can consider *Friends* to be a kind of remake or adaptation of *Living Single*, however loose, then what is also foregrounded is the pervasiveness of adaptation and the falsity of the canon text without precedent (one of the basic ideas underpinning adaptation studies is the connectedness of cultural texts and the falsity of the idea of the 'original'). What emerges then, is that *Friends* itself can be read as an "as if" reading of *Living Single* (*Friends* as a White version of *Living Single*) where the primacy of *Friends* is erased and where *Friends* is understood as a whitewashing of *Living Single*. What this does is it allows one to read the "Moonlight" music video's recasting not as a "blacking up" but as a reclaiming of a format initially spearheaded by Black creators. One of the main cast Kim Fields Freeman commented about the lack of recognition *Living Single* still garners,

> the minute they start referring to us as 'Black Friends,' that's when I'll go off. It's better to call them the 'White Living Single'. (cited. in Izadi, 2017)

This sentiment is exactly what Yang's music video and its recastings can be seen to express when one considers *Friends* itself as an "as if" reading of its predecessor. The racebending of *Friends* seen in light of *Living Single* shows that Yang's music video is not just a case of inserting Black characters in canon texts of White casts, it reminds us that canon texts of White

casts are sometimes, or perhaps often, remakes of other texts populated by non-White casts. It is especially in this light that "Moonlight"'s racebending, and racebending more generally, can be seen as productive as it highlights the process of the constantly ongoing remaking of texts in which race and gender transformations never cease and often reflects dominant ways of thinking of the contexts and historical periods in which people live.

Conclusion

To conclude, this article has argued for the recuperating of racebending, emphasising its significance beyond being mere plastic representation, but as an optimistic and enriching practice that can also subvert White centricity. Two perspectives in which racebending can be seen as productive are highlighted. First, when considered in light of how fans practice racebending, and when framed in terms of some recuperative concepts ("as if" and reparative reading), and, secondly, by framing the "Moonlight" music video in terms of adaptation and reading it in the context of *Friends* and similar shows that undermines *Friends* as an original, concluding that racebending is a practice that is part of the adaptation process. Finally, while noting that it is important to address the entertainment industry at its roots and to think seriously about the deep problems that exclude many types of people from creating and distributing their content, this article argues that one needs to acknowledge that racebending within the industry is a worthwhile practice within an imperfect system.

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A Timely Tragedy: Deviant Women and Cultural Dissonance in Kim Ki-young's *The Housemaid*

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Abstract
In recent history, the Korean peninsula has endured change at a remarkable pace, transitioning from an insular unified entity to a battleground of cultural encounters and political upheaval. This article examines the renowned Korean director Kim Ki-young's (1919–1998) film The Housemaid *(1960) as an expression of the culturally contingent anxieties surrounding modernisation in post-war South Korea. This film serves an allegory for the dissonant socio-political climate during the early 1960s, presented through a narrative of a fatal affair between an emasculated husband and a young housemaid. Kim explores themes concerning Korean patriarchal norms, the state's paranoia regarding the West and the role of women in a rapidly modernising Korean society. Central to* The Housemaid*'s narrative is the presentation of deviant women as symbolic of broader societal concerns, embodied by an industrious housewife whose material ambitions signal a departure from the state-sponsored ideal of personal frugality. The housemaid is hired to compensate for the housewife's inability to fulfil her expected domestic and maternal responsibilities, and her introduction heralds the destruction of the Korean family. Kim's portrayal of the housemaid's unpredictable behaviour and her manipulation of the patriarch illustrates the destabilising force of modernisation. The underlying cultural tensions surrounding the undermining of gender roles in the traditional Confucian family are also evident in Kim's depiction of an emasculated husband. This article highlights the multifaceted anxieties of post-colonial, post-war Korean society surrounding the erosion of traditional values, the liberation of women and the looming threat of ideological intrusions from the West. By examining Kim Ki-young's writing and his unique cinematic approach, this article offers valuable insights into the cultural, social and psychological aspects of this period of South Korea's modernisation process. Ultimately,* The Housemaid *serves as a compelling and provocative reflection of the prevailing sentiments concerning modernity and the patriarchal family.*

Introduction

Once a unified, homogenous and proudly insular socio-political entity, the history of the Korean Peninsula has been marked by a series of undesired yet seemingly unavoidable cultural encounters (or confrontations). Arguably, the most pivotal moment occurred in the early twentieth century when the Japanese Empire colonised Korea in 1910, an occupation that persisted until the end of the Second World War. The turbulent process of colonisation brought the short-lived Korean Empire (1897–1910), a successor state to Korea's long-standing Chosŏn dynasty (1392–1897), to an abrupt end—initiating a thirty-five-year period of occupation marked by cultural oppression, political suppression and forced modernisation. This last factor was used by Japan to justify its presence in Korea. After the colonial era ended in 1945, Korea faced further interventions from foreign military powers: the United States and the Soviet Union. Divided along the 38th parallel, an arbitrary border delineating what is now regarded as

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North Korea and South Korea, the Korean Peninsula functioned as a proxy mediation zone during the Cold War (1947–1991). The Korean War (1950–1953) effectively solidified these charged political conditions, which still affect the peninsula today. Moreover, successive authoritarian regimes (1948–1988) in South Korea continued to suppress political opponents while implementing harsh modernisation policies, resulting in civil unrest, widespread student protests and retaliatory state brutality. However, coinciding with the de-escalation of the Cold War, South Korea began transitioning towards democratisation and globalisation, a shift epitomised by Seoul's hosting of the 1988 Olympics (Snyder, 2017, p. 53).

The process of reconciling the innumerable traumas of the twentieth century, coupled with anxieties surrounding modernisation and the "Westernisation" of Korean society, are distinctly communicated through the work of acclaimed Korean film director and auteur Kim Ki-young (1919–1998). He is noted for his unique blend of traditional melodrama with elements of psychological horror, used to convey salient concerns regarding the claustrophobic socio-political climate during the Cold War, the role of women in Korean society, the influence of the West and the modern condition in a Korean context. No film so adequately distils these cultural discourses as Kim's seminal work *The Housemaid* (1960). This unsettling and thrilling psycho-drama functions as a cautionary tale about a fatal affair between an emasculated husband and a young, unpredictable housemaid, who is hired to alleviate the stresses of an upper middle-class family. This article discusses how, through this dramatic encounter, Kim Ki-young encapsulated and exploited cultural anxieties regarding the transitory social conditions in post-war South Korea.

The Housemaid is centred around an aspiring middle-class Korean family striving to enhance their social status through the acquisition of a larger, two-storey house and modern conveniences. Kim Dong-sik (Kim Jin-kyu), a composer employed to play the piano for a factory's after-hours choir and father of two children, along with his wife, Mrs Kim (Ju Jeong-ryu), a seamstress, are expecting their third child and have just moved into their new residence. To alleviate their stress, the Kim family hires the titular housemaid, Myung-sook (Lee Eun-shim), a cleaner at the factory. However, instead of assisting the family as intended, her presence in the household causes additional problems. A sexual affair between Myung-sook and Dong-sik creates tension between him and Mrs Kim, entangling her in a psychological tug-of-war with the housemaid for dominance over the patriarch. Myung-sook becomes pregnant with Dong-sik's child, giving her powerful leverage over the family. Mrs Kim encourages her to terminate her pregnancy and Myung-sook becomes a vengeful agent within the household. Fearing the economic and social repercussions of Dong-sik's involvement with Myung-sook,

the family are coerced into accommodating the affair. Dong-sik's capitulation to the desires of the housemaid, coupled with the family's self-interest and material aspirations, results in the demise of this modern Korean family. Chang-soon (Ahn Sun-ki), the eldest son of the Kim family, tragically dies, followed by Myung-sook and Dong-sik, who end their lives by drinking poison together, leaving Mrs Kim to contemplate her own culpability. The audience is also prompted to consider her involvement, particularly in the light of her unrelenting ambition. There is also a final caveat as the director returns the audience to the opening scene of the film where a similar affair had been mentioned in a newspaper article. This revisitation suggests that the narrative just witnessed may represent a cautionary alternate reality. In this reframed sequence, Mrs Kim adopts a more modest, submissive role, now weary of the influence of a young, unmarried housemaid. As will be discussed in more detail, the hypothetical tragedy serves as a commentary on the ramifications of straying from the traditional Confucian model of the Korean family.

The expression of real-world, transitional anxieties, most notably concerning the mobilisation of women in the industrial workforce, are manifest through this dramatic encounter. This is most visible in the director's presentation of Mrs Kim and Myung-sook, who are both ambitious, working women positioned outside of the state-sponsored image of the modest housewife. More broadly, Kim Ki-young's characterisation of the modern Korean family communicates prominent concerns surrounding the modernisation of Korean society and the resulting emasculation of Korean men, thus threatening the traditional order. These themes should be considered in the context of a Korean society that had endured a traumatic process of assimilation under Japanese colonial rule (1910–1945). The resulting liberation and partition of the Korean Peninsula led to a period of rapid modernisation and, with the promise of security from the United States, South Korea paved its way to becoming a global economic powerhouse. Crucially, the significant displacement of the Korean population during Japanese occupation, the disruptions resulting from partition and the Korean War, in effect, "helped […] break up traditional, rigid class lines" and set the stage for Korean society to experience "change and mobility" (Seth, 2011, p. 499).

The Housemaid, released during a brief transitory period between the tenure of inaugural President Syngman Rhee (1948–1960) and military coup leader Park Chung-hee (1961–1979), serves as an effective mediator of the socio-cultural repercussions of this era. For context, Clark W. Sorensen (2013, p. 317) asserts that post-liberation the South Korean state continued to create standardised bourgeois family structures to maintain social order through patriarchal authority. In *The Housemaid*, this authority is challenged by the wife's refusal to

assume a traditional, submissive role, opting instead for a more assertive and industrious presence within the family. The ambition of upward mobility, expressed through Mrs Kim's material aspirations and the housemaid's effort to transcend her own status, is presented as the antithesis of traditional Confucian Korean values (Sorensen, 2013, p. 317). Kim Ki-young constructs his characters within this dynamic, post-colonial framework, with the housemaid embodying the collective anxieties of a modernising Korean society. To contextualise Kim Ki-young's commentary and explore the encoding of socio-political dialogues in the film, this article will examine how the characters are written in relation to the post-colonial authoritarian state and the omnipresent influence of Confucian ideology in Korean society. In short, this article demonstrates how a culturalist literary analysis of the characters in *The Housemaid* reveals more about the intimately domestic yet universally resonant concerns that emerged from the complex geo-political climate of the Cold War.

Kim Ki-Young: Framing *The Housemaid*

Kim Ki-young was born in Seoul during the colonial period, later moving to Pyongyang while in elementary school before eventually travelling to Kyoto, Japan to prepare for medical school (Kim, 2021, p. 310). Upon returning to Korea after its liberation and partition (1945), Kim attended the Seoul University School of Dentistry, where he engaged with a modernist theatrical group (Kim, 2021, p. 311). When the Korean War broke out, Kim began his career as a documentary film director for the USIS (United States Information Service). During this time, he developed his skills as a filmmaker while being influenced by Japanese cinema and experiencing the West as filtered through Japanese theatre (Kim, 2021, p. 311). Already, a myriad of influences can be discerned, which will become evident in this article's reading of *The Housemaid*. The film itself forms part of the lasting impact of *shinpa*, a Japanese mode of theatrical melodrama that was introduced to Korea during the Japanese occupation (Pierse and Martin, 2013, p. 5). *Shinpa* has been described as 'an emphatically sad' mode of melodrama, 'focusing on romance and female suffering', which is particularly reflective of Myung-sook's tragic encounter with the Kim family (Pierse and Martin, 2013, p. 218). Although Kim Ki-Young produced this film during a period when South Korea was still recovering from the Japanese occupation, the Korean War and severe poverty, as Kyung Hyun Kim (2013) argues, *The Housemaid* "is far from the product of an underdeveloped cinematic sensibility". Indeed, Kim Ki-Young's work may prove that early Korean cinema, even during times of disarray, transcended its socio-economic conditions, perhaps as an indirect consequence of Japan's

colonial influence and the infrastructure provided by the security arrangements with the United States.

The Housemaid can be further situated within the broader significance of melodrama in 1960s Korea. Korean melodrama, including early Hollywood-derived cinematic melodrama, is recognised as a "national specificity" for its focus on the lives of ordinary lower-middle and working-class citizens (Jin, 2016, p. 76). This represented a departure from Hollywood's grandeur or general concern for upper-middle-class bourgeois housewives and widows (Jin, 2016, p. 76). *The Housemaid* exemplifies this trend, presenting a melodramatic narrative concerning a familial conflict enriched with locally resonant and timely concerns. Myung-sook is a young, unmarried woman and factory and domestic worker whose uncompromising pursuit of motherhood challenges societal norms. Likewise, Mrs Kim's consistent vying for her family's economic advancement is indicative of the ongoing changes and mobility within post-war Korean society. These aspects of *The Housemaid* gain additional importance from Jin's (2016, p. 76) insights into the cultural relevance of Korean melodrama during this period, specifically its consciousness of pertinent social issues. Indeed, Kim Ki-Young's film exemplifies this focus, as it examines the complexities and challenges to societal changes.

Discussing the history of the South Korean horror film, Art Black (2003, p. 188) considers *The Housemaid* as "a modernist film noir with naturalistic opening and closing scenes bookending the expressionistic main story", forming part of Kim Ki-young's legacy of "deeply personal psychodramas". The film's structural choice in its framing is particularly intriguing. In the opening scene, the audience is drawn into the living room of the Kim family, where they are presented with a typical portrait of a modern Korean family. This sets the stage for the story that is about to unfold to function as a cautionary potentiality, contained and presented in an alternate reality that explores the potential consequences of certain actions. Having witnessed the dramatic unravelling of the Kim family due to Myung-sook's actions, the audience is returned to this opening scene, where Dong-sik and Mrs Kim resume their discussion in reference to a newspaper article about a man who had an affair with a housemaid. The shocking drama of *The Housemaid* is, therefore, suggested to be a hypothetical imagining of the story in the newspaper. To reaffirm, two textual "realities" are created: one where the Kim family remains prudent and adherent to Confucian norms (the bookending scenes) and one where they do not and thus fall victim to the housemaid (the internal plot). Kyung Hyun Kim (2013) argues that this way of framing of *The Housemaid* distorts the viewer's perception of fiction and reality, potentially influenced by neorealism and further complemented by Kim Ki-young's experience of producing documentary films (Kim, 2013). In the framing sequences,

the Kim family is presented in a less theatrical, more authentic manner, which also contributes to this distorting effect. Moreover, Dong-sik directly addresses the audience in the final framing scene, rendering the film even more surreal. Now aware of the threat of the housemaid, Dong-sik, speaking to camera, forewarns men of women "who could lead to their downfall". This abrupt shift from the formal theatricality of the film, up to that point, dispels the intoxicating double-reality created by the director. By breaking the fourth wall with a somewhat jovial public announcement, Dong-sik's remarks reaffirm the fictionality of the film, situating it as a nightmarish, cautionary reality. However, Kim Ki-young's directorial approach in using the camera to invite the audience into the Kim household as passive voyeurs who are thrust into the drama as it happens, simultaneously undermines their awareness of the film's fictionality. Although operating within the melodramatic mode, the plot has also been described as "not overwhelmingly implausible", which further adds to its potency (Kim, 2013).

Additionally, comparisons have been drawn between Kim Ki-young's cinematic panache on display in *The Housemaid* and German dramas of the 1920s and 1930s. This observation considers elements such as the use of close-ups, contrasting shadows and modernist musical scores (Kim, 2013). Moreover, considering Kim Ki-young's portrait of a Korean family and the overtly emotive nature of the plot, Kyung Hyun Kim (2013) explains that it almost feels as if it were produced "in a society as liberal as Weimar Germany" (Kim, 2013). This can be verified by examining Kim Ki-young's early life and experience. In his early twenties, Kim Ki-young spent three years in Kyoto, a period considered crucial for the formation of his aesthetic taste. This time was significant for Kim Ki-young, marked by his exposure to Japanese theatre and "avant-garde film watching experience" of German expressionism, which were the only foreign films available in wartime Japan between 1937 and 1941 (Kim, 2021, p. 311). Among the genre, Robert Wiene's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920) stands out as a prime example. The events of this film are contained within a hallucinatory flashback and given these similarities drawing a comparison between *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* and *The Housemaid* is justifiable. Kim Ki-young's exposure to German expressionist cinema in Japan likely influenced his directorial approach, particularly concerning the dream-like framing of his film. In Wiene's film, the narrative unfolds as a flashback, told from the perspective of an asylum inmate named Francis, casting doubt on the authenticity and reliability of the recounted events within Wiene's fictional universe. Here, there is an attempt to distance the horrific events of the film, not only from the audience but from the protagonist himself. Similarly, in *The Housemaid*, a fiction-within-a-fiction emerges, which functions to doubly insulate the internal story and perhaps temper its unnerving impact.

For instance, the introductory scene of *The Housemaid* is only revealed as a framing device when the narrative circles back to this moment following Dong-sik's apparent death, after consuming poison. This technique is reminiscent of its German expressionist counterpart, notably Wiene's emphasis on the use of narrative framing and perspective to manipulate viewer perception and emotional response.

The German expressionist inflections of Kim's work become more compelling when considering the framing of his later film *Insect Woman* (1972). Therein, the internal plot is suggested as being a similarly hypothetical scenario or a dramatisation of a story told by a patient at an asylum for unfaithful men who have become impotent. The film comments on the emasculation of men and the suspected threat of industrious, sexually liberated women. In the final scene of *Insect Woman*, Kim again transports the audience back to the film's opening scene, using the opportunity to deliver a cautionary message about leading "a good married life". Kim Ki-young presents the audience with unsettling yet tentatively plausible scenarios in both *The Housemaid* and *Insect Woman*. He frames these narratives to reinvoke their fictional nature while also imparting a dream-like or uncanny quality. Not unlike many German expressionist film directors, the framing of the narrative in this way is particularly potent, delivering striking, socially resonant commentary while maintaining sufficient aesthetic distance. This cinematic approach has proven to be conducive to exploring post-conflict anxiety, as seen in Weimar Germany of the 1920s and in 1960s South Korea, re-surfacing through the films of Kim Ki-young.

Cultural Context

As outlined, during the latter half of the twentieth century South Korean society grappled with the aftermath of occupation as well as new forms of domestic authoritarianism, which embraced modernisation and globalisation, while entangled in the broader geopolitical tensions of the Cold War. However, it is the more intimately domestic tension between reconstructing and maintaining a national identity informed by pre-colonial Confucian values, while simultaneously opening up South Korean society to influence from the West, that is evident in *The Housemaid*. This struggle is mediated through the Kim family's encounter with the housemaid. Dong-sik and Mrs Kim are presented in a way that relates to many of the anxieties of this period. The burden of having to work extra hours to sustain their social ascendancy effectively primes the married couple to be exploited by Myung-sook. Mrs Kim, who works as a seamstress, reneges on the traditional duties of her role as housewife and undermines Dong-sik's authority as the family's primary earner. This shift in household dynamics leads to an

unexpected development: the patriarch is approached by a factory worker, Miss Cho (Um Aing-ran), with Dong-sik agreeing to give her private piano lessons to earn more money. Following the sudden death (suicide) of Miss Kwak (Ko Seon-ae), a factory worker who was fired for sending a love letter to Dong-sik, a guilt-ridden Miss Cho confesses to Dong-sik that she pressured Miss Kwak into writing the letter. Now revealed as his true admirer, Miss Cho is vehemently rejected by Dong-sik, resulting in a violent encounter in the household. Myung-sook, having quietly observed this development, seizes the opportunity to blackmail Dong-sik and threatens to tell Mrs Kim everything, granting her an initial influence over the family.

Myung-sook's motivations are generally well established, as in her role as the family's maid she is treated unfairly. For example, she is scolded for smoking yet Dong-sik enjoys this freedom without judgement. Similarly, her request to receive piano lessons, just as Miss Cho does, is denied. Prior to her manipulation of Dong-sik, Myung-sook is weary of the hardships that accompany her social status as a housemaid and she yearns to be given the same level of attention and freedom Miss Cho is afforded (as Dong-sik's mistress). Myung-sook must outcompete the other women around her by any means necessary to attain upward mobility. It could be argued that this turn of events would not have happened if Mrs Kim had assumed a more subordinate position in the family. Additionally, Dong-sik lacks the sort of patriarchal authority that one might expect of a married man during this period, which is central to the messaging of the film and a key component of the present enquiry.

The Housemaid's portrayal of the modern Korean family raises questions about patriarchal norms, the role of the mother and the threat of an unmarried woman who endeavours to subvert the matriarch. The narrative is based around the idea that Mrs Kim's determination to transcend their current economic and social status is damaging to the traditional Korean family. Dong-sik's vulnerability to the advances of young, unmarried women, is enabled by the corruption of the traditional family that is indirectly instigated by Mrs Kim's motives. As stated above, this analysis is concerned with Kim Ki-young's exploration in *The Housemaid* of the undermining of Confucian norms and the modernisation of Korean society. One approach to this enquiry is through a period-specific reading of the characters in the film. This method seeks to unveil deeper insights into the broader socio-cultural implications of Myung-sook's ruination of the Kim family.

The Patriarch, Dong-sik

Dong-sik is predominantly presented as a rather despondent, somewhat uncharismatic man who works as an extracurricular music teacher in a women's textile factory. This portrayal

contrasts sharply with the witty, confident version of Dong-sik witnessed in the film's opening and closing scenes. For the majority of the film, Dong-sik is depicted as a man who has lost his potency, presumably due to the corruption of the patriarchal family structure resulting from his wife's deviancy. To contextualise his occupation further, it is important to consider the sociopolitical landscape of 1960s South Korea. During this period the Democratic Republican Party, the country's ruling party, viewed the middle class as being exclusively composed of businessmen. The opposition party, the People's Party, defined the middle class more broadly to encompass "middle-level peasants, salaried men and shopkeepers" (Yang, 2018, p. 39). These views are important in understanding how Dong-sik's job might have been perceived by the more conservative sectors of society as inadequate for supporting an aspiring middle-class family.

Although Dong-sik is married, he is positioned as an object of desire for the women in the factory. At home, he is a dutiful father and husband. Kim Ki-young emphasises Dong-sik's commitment to his family by highlighting his resistance to extramarital advances. Dong-sik also expresses concern for wife's wellbeing amidst her attempt to the assume the role of both housewife and breadwinner, further supporting the idea that he is a man of good character. Yet, it is interesting that even a dutiful, thoughtful husband like Dong-sik ultimately succumbs to the charms of the housemaid. The patriarch falls prey to the housemaid's manipulation of the modern Korean family, revealing a plot that is encoded with cultural anxieties about women's rejection of traditional Confucian norms.

Exploring the role of Confucianism in Korean society and determining whether Kim Ki-young addresses such themes are necessary to further situate these events. Prior to the Japanese occupation of the Korean Peninsula in 1910, the Chosŏn dynasty, which endured from 1392–1897, saw a revival of Confucian values. Consequently, as Park and Cho (1995, p. 199) have articulated "the ideal of male superiority within the patrilineal family became more prominent". According to traditional gender roles, decision making and economic provision were considered the realm of the husband, while women were expected to focus on raising children and domestic duties (Park and Cho, 1995, p. 132). However, in *The Housemaid*, these roles are not clearly defined. Dong-sik lacks the sort of patriarchal authority that might be typically expected, while Mrs Kim also deviates from social expectations. Under the Chosŏn dynasty a strict hierarchal relationship between spouses was maintained, where a woman was expected to "sacrifice herself completely […] to serve her husband and family in an exemplary manner" (Park and Cho, 1995, p. 124). This is at odds with Mrs Kim's aspirations for social and economic advancement, highlighting a contradiction between her ambitions and the

traditional ideology. The erosion of patriarchal control in the Kim household leads to the employment of the housemaid, Myung-sook, triggering the ensuing horrific events. The message is clear: deviation from Confucian norms—perhaps toward Western liberalism—results in the breakdown of the traditional Korean family. In other words, the traditional, philosophical ties that held Korean society together for centuries were under threat from the allure of modernity. This ideological conflict is deftly encapsulated by Kim Ki-young in *The Housemaid*.

A Culturalistic Reading of Mrs Kim and Myung-sook

As the colonial period neared its conclusion, the industrial workforce saw significant participation from women. This demographic was predominantly assigned to menial and repetitive roles (Seth, 2011, p. 285). These women were primarily young, unmarried and worked to support their families while also saving for future marriages (Seth, 2011, p. 285). In the decades following the Korean War, millions of people migrated from rural areas into the cities, where the combined forces of industrialisation and education fostered the growth of a substantial, literate industrial working class (Seth, 2011, p. 428). These phenomena are distinctly reflected in Kim Ki-young's presentation of the textile factory, where Dong-sik works, and the female characters within it, all of whom are unmarried. The literacy of the women is demonstrated when Miss Cho, Dong-sik's student and initial admirer, presents him with a letter. Moreover, the presence of these single women introduces a dynamic of potential temptation to married men like Dong-sik. Kim Ki-young explores the threat that these young unmarried women pose to the established social and familial order through the character of Myung-sook.

The contrasting appearances of Myung-sook and Mrs Kim further reflect cultural beliefs and social stratifications. Even among her colleagues in the factory, Myung-sook, who is first presented as smoking a cigarette in the wardrobe of her dormitory, stands out for her more casual, if not generally unkempt, appearance. In contrast, Mrs Kim represents a more sophisticated cohort of women in Korean society. This is supported by her formal demeanour and traditional attire. However, her refined appearance does not shield her, and women like her, from criticism. Yang observes that the state and the intellectual elite were critical of upper-class women for their perceived "self-indulgence and extravagance" (Yang, 2018, p. 43). More precisely, this criticism extended to the consumption of foreign cosmetics, which was seen as "an especially immoral and unpatriotic act" that left the Korean economy vulnerable to "infiltration" from Japan or the West (Yang, 2018, pp. 43–44). The impact and influence of the

West is also commented on by Kim-Ki young. The arrival of a television set to the Kim's home serves as a signifier of the West and of foreign influence in Korean society, a point that is emphasised by the images shown of American showgirls. Myung-sook, too, is shown to be influenced by Western culture. In contrast to the formal appearance of Mrs Kim, Myung-sook adopts a more Western-inspired style. This underscores her working-class status, but her appearance also mirrors the state's paranoia about ideological intrusions from the West. This dynamic underlines the complex intersections of gender, class and nationalism in Korean society.

The conservative Korean state during the 1960s believed that "prudence in everyday life" would lead to rapid economic development and strongly disapproved of any form of material excess, which was believed to signal "moral decay" (Yang, 2018, p. 42). Instead of indulgent upper-class women or "unenlightened" rural women, the state focused on "wise and frugal" middle-class housewives, who were deemed capable of "rational household management", being therefore "the key to national economic development" (Yang, 2018, p. 44). One of the ways the state encouraged frugality was through popular women's magazines, which featured articles about "smart and economical" middle-class housewives (Yang, 2018, p. 44). In short, the state targeted middle-class housewives as "agents who would introduce a disciplined lifestyle into their households and society as a whole" (Yang, 2018, p. 44).

This context is important in reading Mrs Kim and Myung-sook, both of whom deviate from the state-endorsed model of womanhood. For example, the arrival of the brand-new television as a significant moment for Mrs Kim and her family is indicative of the sort of extravagance that the government actively discouraged through public messaging (Yang, 2018, p. 43). Furthermore, Myung-sook's character encapsulates societal anxieties surrounding poor but uneducated domestic workers, as well as factory workers, often stereotyped as ignorant or sexually deviant. She demonstrates a certain ignorance to domestic sensibilities, as illustrated by her unceremonious maiming of a rat, alongside her inappropriate sexual behaviour toward Dong-sik, both of which reinforce these concerns. As Yang (2018, p. 45) states, housemaids "were often portrayed in films as dangerous and wicked home wreckers who seduced their landlords". Yang (2018, p. 154) further observes that *The Housemaid* exemplifies this narrative, providing insights into the societal archetypes from which Kim Ki-young constructed the characters of the ambitious housewife and the guileful housemaid.

Deviant Women in Fiction

The depiction of Mrs Kim and Myung-sook in *The Housemaid* shares parallels with the representation of deviant women and conflict among women in fiction more generally. Influenced by Western concepts introduced through Japanese theatre, Kim-Ki-young presents Mrs Kim and Myung-sook in relation to the patriarchal family in a way that has a certain universality. In relation to fictional representations of "wicked women", Carretero-González *et al.* (2009, p. 199) note that "female independence has traditionally been perceived as a menace for the order established by patriarchal society". As outlined, *The Housemaid* portrays the dismantling of the patriarchal family through forms of female independence. The disruption begins with Mrs Kim's nonconformity to traditional gender roles. This is particularly evident in her employment of the housemaid, which frees her from the typical responsibilities of a housewife. Mrs Kim's choice enables her to engage in paid work and to contribute financially to the household. Conversely, Myung-sook, driven by her fetishisation of the patriarch and her longing for maternity, attempts to take Mrs Kim's place in the family. Both women deviate from the state-sponsored archetype of the modest housewife, prompting a consideration of the argument that "popular representations of the collective imagination" often present "female independence" in the form of "wicked, evil women who sometimes are the worst enemies to their own gender" (Carretero-González *et al.*, 2009, p. 199).

While the audience's initial condemnation lies with Myung-sook, Mrs Kim's culpability comes into question when it is revealed that the housemaid is pregnant with Dong-sik's child. Dong-sik's complaint that: "this never would have happened if we had stayed in our old house", reinforces the idea that Mrs Kim's desires have ultimately damaged their marriage. At this juncture, Myung-sook appears vulnerable for the first time, which Mrs Kim exploits. In a desperate act of self-preservation, Mrs Kim feigns pity to manipulate Myung-sook. She reassures her that "you're like a little sister to me". This chilling exchange leads to the miscarriage of Myung-sook's child, as she throws herself down the stairs at Mrs Kim's instigation. Mrs Kim reminds her husband that: "we can't let our precious lives be destroyed now", highlighting the extreme measures she is willing to take to elevate their status. The transformation of Myung-sook from perpetrator to victim is symbolised through the changing of her clothing from black to white. This portrayal of Mrs Kim and Myung-sook aligns to dynamics commonly found in fairy tales, as observed by Carretero-González *et al.* (2009, p. 202). They describe these narratives as illustrating enduring conflicts among women, often depicted as "female enmity […] directed from a mature wicked woman towards a young, virtuous girl" (Carretero-González *et al.*, 2009, p. 202).

As the film progresses, Mrs Kim becomes the quintessential older, malevolent woman. Although Myung-sook's pursuit of motherhood is executed in a reprehensible manner, her motivations are arguably less egregious, given that Mrs Kim is driven by self-interest. With that being said, the housemaid's earlier actions complicate this narrative convention, creating a layer of moral ambiguity. In *The Housemaid* both central female characters exhibit traits typically seen as "wicked". This is perhaps reflective of a system whereby, as Carretero-González *et al.* (2009, p. 202) suggest, "wickedness may be the only way left for them [women] to survive whilst maintaining their autonomy". Carretero-González *et al.* (2009, p. 204) also argue that "instances of female enmity contribute to maintain the same order that oppresses women" and thus, "it is important for a patriarchal society to keep women as enemies". Where conflict among deviant women arises in fiction, there is an apparent universality in its function to critique or reflect the pressurised social conditions within patriarchal systems. Notably, the daughter of the Kim family, Kim Ae-soon (Lee Yoo-ri), suffers a physical condition that makes it difficult for her to ascend the staircase of their new house, symbolising the broader struggle for women's upward mobility.

A Psychoanalytical Reading of Deviant Women: The *Wonhon* and the Vengeful Mother

The loss of Myung-sook's child is shortly followed by the birth of Mrs Kim's baby. This juxtaposition situates the housemaid as a vengeful agent, torturously unresolved in her ambition to become the mother of Dong-sik's child. Although *The Housemaid* never truly incorporates supernatural elements, this iteration of Myung-sook's character is particularly poignant when understood in the context of Korean folk beliefs concerning the vengeful female spirit or *wonhon*. Originating from Korean shamanistic culture, the *wonhon* has been described as the spirit of those who died an unjust death (Nam, 2019, p. 196). Situating the *wonhon* in the context of 1960s Korean cinema, Hyangjin Lee states that:

> their ultimate enemy is the man, who tends to be portrayed as a helpless child caught up in the turmoil of women's war. (Lee, 2013, p. 33)

Dong-sik undoubtedly conforms to this pattern, as he spends much of the film grappling with the aftermath of his affair with Myung-sook. Both characters fall victim to the ensuing conflict, while Mrs Kim desperately attempts to maintain the social integrity of the family. Lee (2013, p. 33) further suggests that "the return of the *wonhon* points to a potential loss of patriarchal power and the symbolic castration of masculinity". Although Myung-sook does not return as a literal ghost, her symbolic resurgence as a grieving mother situates her as the cultural archetype

of the *wonhon*—a vengeful figure seeking retribution for injustices perpetrated against them. Oh (2013, p. 61) notes that Korean horror films often "feature motherhood as the primary motivation of the *wonhon*", which further supports this reading of Myung-sook. The first victim of her vengeance is Chang-soon. Myung-sook pretends to poison a glass of tap water, causing Chang-soon to panic and fall down the stairs to his death, a striking signifier of the loss of patriarchal control within the family. Dong-sik learns of what has happened and confronts Myung-sook: "you are the devil […] I'm taking you to the police". Seemingly glossing over the sudden and tragic death of her son, Mrs Kim reminds Dong-sik that "if the factory learns about this, you'll lose your job". Ultimately, the audience is reminded that Mrs Kim's concern for upward mobility and status is a fatal vulnerability that leads to the destruction of her family.

Kim Ki-young's presentation of Myung-sook, manifest as the *wonhon* and vengeful mother, can be further examined through Barbara Creed's formulation of the monstrous-feminine, in tandem with Julia Kristeva's (1982) theory of abjection. Creed (1986, p. 44) contends that "all human societies have a conception of the monstrous-feminine" which focuses on the aspects of womanhood that are considered shocking, terrifying, horrific or abject. Kristeva (1982, p. 2) outlines that the abject "has only one quality of the object—that of being opposed to I", as such it is conceptualised as "a weight of meaninglessness, about which there is nothing insignificant, and which crushes me". The abject, a concept which Creed applies to presentations of "monstrous" or deviant women, attempts to describe that which threatens one's perception of self and identity. Creed (1986, p. 44) links the monstrous-feminine closely with Freudian themes of sexual differences and castration. Such an approach might suggest that Kim Ki-young's construction of Mrs Kim represents the symbolic castration and emasculation of Dong-sik. Through her perverse manipulation of the patriarch and the killing of his son, Myung-sook is effectively positioned as the monstrous-feminine; or that which is abject or undermining of patriarchal authority. She is manifest, or quite literally invited into the household, because of Mrs Kim's deviation from Confucian norms, thus in *The Housemaid* the monstrous-feminine is symptomatic of the loss of patriarchal control.

Creed (1986, p. 45) further notes that Kristeva (1982) "suggests a way of situating the monstrous-feminine […] in relation to the maternal figure" while similarly "attempting to explore the different ways in which abjection, as a source of horror, works within patriarchal societies". While Myung-sook is the most overtly "monstrous" character in the film, given her frantic demeanour, Mrs Kim is similarly abject in relation to her reluctance to assume a more traditional role in the household. Considering the maternal figure in Korean film, Oh (2013, p. 61) argues that "like Creed's archaic mother, she does not respect the Law of the Father" and

thus, in a Korean context, “will not follow Confucian models of patriarchal gender inequality”. In *The Housemaid*, both maternal figures are indirectly antagonistic to Confucian gender roles through their desire for upward mobility. Oh (2013, p. 61) recognises that there is also a duality to the maternal figure, particularly in Korean horror films of the 1970s and 1980s. It is suggested that mothers are both victims and agents of Confucian patriarchy. Arguably, evidence of this is present much earlier in *The Housemaid*, released in 1960. For example, Mrs Kim subverts patriarchal norms by means of her industriousness, yet at the same time fiercely protects her family’s reputation and her husband, despite his infidelity. Similarly, Myung-sook’s ultimate aim is to become the mother of Dong-sik’s child, effectively reconstituting the patriarchal family. Perhaps what is being described here is a contradictory or irreconcilable yearning for more autonomy within a pressurised patriarchal society. With this in mind, the enmity between Mrs Kim and Myung-sook can be attributed to their shared experience as victims of the patriarchy (Lee, 2013, p. 33). Mrs Kim’s animosity toward Myung-sook stems from her determination to preserve the very patriarchal family structure that subjugates them (Carretero-González *et al.*, 2009, p. 204). Myung-sook’s desire to be a mother and her subsequent denial of this role lead her to seek revenge. Myung-sook’s actions, which resulted in her own demise and that of Dong-sik and his son, may symbolise the fear that Koreans had about the collapse of the patriarchal order and the traditional Korean family. However, Mrs Kim’s aspirations are confirmed as the cause of the family’s turmoil as she confesses in a statement that aligns with Dong-sik’s earlier sentiments: “if only I hadn’t wanted the new house”. This admission aligns with the state-sponsored propaganda, which encouraged frugality and modesty.

The idea that the abject functions in opposition to meaning and the self may reveal more about the presentation of the deviant mother in Korean horror cinema. In patriarchal systems, deviant women have the potential to break that system, thus undermining identities constructed in relation to that social ideology. Mrs Kim and Myung-sook are abject in the context of a modernising Korean society informed by the Confucian model of patriarchy. Kristeva (1982, p. 9) proposes that “we may call it a border; abjection is above all ambiguity”. This conceptualisation can be considered in relation to the psycho-cultural subtleties of horror and the ambiguity of roles inferred by these characters relates to that which does not adhere to fundamental perceptions of order and reality as prescribed by Confucian ideology. Therefore, the horror presented in *The Housemaid* is not simply the disturbing and violent acts that are conducted by Mrs Kim and Myung-sook respectively. As Kristeva’s concept suggests, what is truly terrifying about the Kim family’s encounter with Myung-sook is the crossing of cultural

boundaries and, ultimately, the loss of patriarchal control in a more egalitarian, modern Korean society.

Conclusion

Kim Ki-young in *The Housemaid* encapsulated many post-war anxieties that were germane to the rapidly modernising South Korean society. The Kim family is presented in opposition to the traditional Confucian family, where women are expected to assume a submissive role in relation to their husband, who in turn is expected to exhibit patriarchal authority. Through a close reading of the socio-political climate during the 1950s and 1960s, Mrs Kim's yearning for material gain and her deviancy from the state-sponsored role of frugal housewife is suggested as leading to a fatal corruption of the traditional Korean, Confucian family. Myung-sook demonstrates the absolute defilement of Dong-sik's authority. Dong-sik's surrender to the desires of Myung-sook is symptomatic of Mrs Kim's material aspirations, which is central to Kim Ki-young's commentary. Due to their adherence to conservative social values, the Kim family need to accommodate the sexual affair to save face, which compounds their misery. Through consideration of Kristeva's theory of the abject, the translocation of culpability from the housemaid to Mrs Kim reveals her to be the primary antagonist, suggesting a textual repudiation of her deviancy from Confucian ideology. Kim Ki-young's commentary reveals a certain dissonance at the heart of South Korean society concerning competing social ideologies, specifically the threat of Western liberalism, in the form of materialism and social mobility, in contrast to Confucian values, such as frugality and patriarchal authority. Importantly, Mrs Kim's efforts to reconcile both sentiments, seeking to maintain her own extravagances and the traditional family, results in tragedy, which includes the deaths of her son, her husband, and Myung-sook and her unborn child. While serving as a cautionary tale against deviating from Confucian norms propagated by the state, the film also illustrates how conservative values can be disserving, through the accommodation of Myung-sook's behaviour, for example.

As mentioned, the central message of the film is clearly and somewhat satirically communicated in the final scene, after the internal story has concluded. The audience is returned to the opening scene: an alternate timeline where these events have not occurred or have been prevented. Referencing the newspaper article that details a similar story, Mrs Kim questions "how a man of good character" could become involved with a housemaid, to which Dong-sik responds "it's a man's greatest weakness". Myung-sook enters, offering to make Dong-sik's bed, but Mrs Kim insists on doing it herself, noting that "having a young girl in the

house is like offering raw meat to a tiger". Dong-sik, whose inherent vulnerabilities are mitigated by his wife's adherence to Confucian norms, addresses the camera and the audience, forewarning that, "as men get older, they spend more time thinking about young women". This somewhat jarring conclusion repositions Mrs Kim in her state approved role as modest housewife, now reluctant to allow Myung-sook to assume her position in the family, which effectively reaffirms patriarchal control. What is most fascinating about *The Housemaid* is that while on the surface it appears to resonate with Confucian state ideology, there is a veiled suspicion that social conservatism is problematic in terms of the physical and psychological cost of maintaining one's social integrity.

This article has demonstrated that *The Housemaid* is a useful conduit for examining cultural dissonance and transient, post-conflict anxiety, specifically, in this instance, where deviant women are presented in opposition to the patriarchal family. In summary, Kim Ki-young's film is not only an example of master-crafted, genre-infused cinema from this period, but it also reveals more about Korean history through these recurring cultural archetypes and the mediation of competing social ideologies in response to the tumultuous events of the twentieth century.

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The Encounter Between Xiao Youmei and Nie Er: Two Divergent Approaches to National Salvation Through Music

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Abstract

Music played a functional role in spreading new ideologies and cultural perspectives from the outset of the establishment of the Republic of China (1912–1949). However, even musicians who shared the aim of modernising the nation and were active in the same locations could differ markedly in their positions, both in their ideas on how to achieve this and in the actions they undertook towards that goal. This article explores the contrasting approaches of two twentieth-century Chinese composers, Xiao Youmei (1884–1940) and Nie Er (1912–1935), toward Western classical music. Xiao, classically trained in Western music, founded China's first specialised music conservatory, the National Conservatory of Music (Guoli Yinyue Xueyuan), later renamed the National College of Music (Guoli Yinyue Zhuanke Xuexiao), advocating for the role of Western classical music in elevating Chinese musical standards. In contrast, Nie, a left-wing composer, had a more complicated relationship with Western music. He publicly debated the role of music in China's modernisation and criticised fellow musicians in both the press and his writings. This article explores Nie's evolving attitude toward Western music in China by addressing key questions: Did Nie truly regard Western classical music as irrelevant, even though he studied violin under foreign instructors and recorded in his diary that he practiced classical music intensively? Furthermore, if he considered the National College of Music unimportant, how can his repeated attempts to gain admission be understood?

Drawing from these inquiries, this article reconstructs the encounter between the ideologies of two of China's foremost musicians during the Republican era. It highlights Xiao's advocacy for progressive social change through the promotion of Western musical education, while also demonstrating that Nie was more receptive to certain elements of Western music than has previously been acknowledged. Through this analysis the article enhances the understanding of the complex roles both composers played in shaping the modernisation of Chinese music and musical practices.

Introduction

The introduction of Western culture to China from the 1840s onward not only brought processes of modernisation but also the problem of cultural hegemony. Beginning with the Self-Strengthening Movement in 1861, it became typical in the first half of the twentieth century to adapt Western education and technology to China's needs (Spence, 2013, p. 208). Shanghai, with less centralised political control than other cities,[1] was strongly influenced by this situation. Around the turn of the twentieth century, Shanghai became a major metropolis,

[1] Despite the demise of the Qing dynasty (1636–1912) and the 1911 Revolution's founding of the Republic of China (1912–1949), the social structures left by the Qing dynasty did not completely collapse. Political and social instability marked this period in China's history, known as the Warlord Era. Different groups in Beijing and Nanjing competed to seizing power. Shanghai, on the other hand, was administered by foreign powers and stood somewhat outside these struggles for national dominance. See, for example, Spence, 2013, pp. 316–321. Appendix 1 provides a timeline of key dates relevant to the discussion in this article.

with its growth heavily dependent on various foreign concessions (Wang, 2001, p. 1660). With these concessions, Western foreigners transformed the city, resulting in a more urbanised outlook with new administrative and commercial enterprises. While the new streets and buildings signified the Western hegemonic presence, Chinese residents ignored these external influences (Lee, 1999, pp. 3–4, 308).[2] On the one hand, Shanghai residents accepted these influences without resistance and notice because they were so pervasive and embedded. Indeed, the external changes were seen as the Western achievements, which resulted in a new understanding of hierarchy. For example, in foreign concessions, residents of Shanghai could not engage in activities without permission. On the other hand, their unquestioned Chineseness allowed their disregard to be interpreted as an ability to embrace Western modernity openly, without the fear of cultural colonisation (Lee, 1999, p. 312). These external changes were also viewed as products of modernity, though they led to some issues of cultural colonialism. For example, the establishment of church schools provided a chance to disseminate Western culture, but it also led to an uncritical admiration and culture among the Chinese. However, the existence of China's cultural heritage for thousands of years enabled it to approach the issue of decolonisation in the process of learning. Therefore, Western-influenced Chinese patriots living in Shanghai could not avoid developing contradictory attitudes toward Western culture, as they sought to acquire Western learning while simultaneously patriotically opposing the impact of Western power. These contradictory attitudes were thoughtfully discussed in Paulo Freire's book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. He notes that when the oppressed experience oppression, they become dependent on the culture of their oppressors (1972, p. 42). However, this 'dependence' can manifest in various ways. An exemplification of this phenomenon is found in the views of the Chinese patriotic musicians who held differing opinions about Western music.[3]

There were divergences surrounding the influence of Western music in China, which led to conflicts among Chinese musicians. The main point of contention was the role of Western music in the modernisation of China. One of the most telling examples of this debate was the conceptual encounter between the ideologies of Xiao Youmei (1884–1940) and Nie Er (1912–1935), evidenced by Nie's public challenge to Xiao. This case study illustrates how Chinese musicians utilised Western culture to cultivate their own cultural identity, while simultaneously resisting Western colonialism—a process that was viewed as a form of

[2] For more on Western culture, Western hegemony and cultural colonialism, see Lee, 1999, pp. 307–323.
[3] Western music in the Republican period generally referred to European, American, Japanese and other styles of music in general, especially classical music.

decolonisation. Many Chinese musicians felt that receiving Western education and training would enable them to resist its musical dominance and ultimately lead to a new form of Chinese music. For instance, Xiao Youmei (1934a, p. 638) argued that the development of Chinese traditional music necessitated the adoption of Western compositional techniques, including harmony, counterpoint, instrumentation and pattern analysis. Hence, his pursuit of Western musical education did not entail the abandonment of Chinese musical traditions; rather, it served to catalyse the evolution of Chinese music. However, due to ongoing foreign military action and seizures of Chinese territory, such as the Mukden Incident (1931) and the January 28 Incident (1932), a significant increase in anti-imperialist thinking prompted some musicians to question Western influences, including Western music. Nie Er was one such cynic; in his diary entry from 4 February 1932 (p. 391), he expressed his belief that Western classical music was counter revolutionary. Even though he was not yet a member of the Communist Party of China (CPC), his left-wing ideology[4] had started to manifest itself. In his political stance, Western classical music became a symbol of cultural repression intertwined with foreign militarism.

Xiao Youmei and Nie Er are both celebrated musicians in contemporary China, with extensive scholarly attention devoted to their work. Scholars examining Xiao have paid particular attention to his stance on music education, focusing on three specific influences that shaped his thoughts: Western, Japanese and traditional Chinese musical thought (Zhu, 2011; Zhang, 2014). Researchers have also highlighted the impact of his educational initiatives and why he emphasised the social role of music (Li and Shao, 2020), as well as the context of his contributions to the rise of music education in China (Ho, 2012). Moreover, due to his prolificacy as a composer, his musical compositions have been subjected to several forms of analysis. For instance, Chi Bing (2009) evaluated the components of Xiao's piano compositions, while Du Shanshan (2012) and Han Hua (2015) examined his vocal music using the renowned piece "Wen" ("Ask", 1922). More recently, Jin Tingting (2020) investigated the interplay between melody and lyrics, using Xiao's work as a case study.

The research on Nie Er focuses on his left-wing beliefs and musical works. For instance, Mi Lei (2008) treated Nie as a crucial example in examining the role of music during the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945). Other researchers, such as He Shide, Wang Shu, Peng Huang and Yang Shuli, have examined his songs from a variety of perspectives. He

[4] Left-wing ideology is recognised as progressive thinking that supports social reform. In the Republican period, it referred to anti-imperial and anti-feudalist thinking.

(1951) discussed the revolutionary ideas by analysing Nie's vocal music. Yang (2012) and Wang and Peng (2013) explored the artistic characteristics of Nie's prominent vocal works "Tietixia de Genü" ("Downtrodden Singing Girl"), and "Meiniang Qu" ("Song of Meiniang"). The focus of their research was Nie's nationalism, which has also been studied by international scholars, including Joshua H. Howard (2012, 2021), who discussed Nie Er's and China's "sonic nationalism". In summary, these investigations have enhanced our understanding of the cognitive processes of these two composers and establish a foundation for comparing them to one another.

Some comparative studies investigate Xiao and Nie alongside their contemporaries. Scholars have compared Xiao to music educators such as Wang Guangqi (1892–1936) (Xu, 2016), Cheng Maojun (1900–1957) (Liu, 2006), and Huang Zi (1904–1938) (Zhu, 2005),[5] all of whom were influenced by distinct Western music ideologies. In relation to Nie and his contemporaries, his relationship with Li Jinhui (1891–1967), leader of Mingyue Gewutuan ("Bright Moon Music and Dance Troupe"),[6] has been subject to investigation (Chen and Zhang, 2010; Zhang, 2010). Li is credited with formally introducing Nie to the music industry; however, Nie's contrasting musical perspectives led to frequent disputes between the pair. Despite comparisons of Xiao or Nie with other contemporary musicians, there has been limited research directly comparing their work with each other. Xiao has primarily been recognised as a music educator, despite also being a prolific composer. In contrast, Nie has commonly been regarded solely as a composer, primarily one of left-wing and proletarian songs, which differ significantly in scale and approach to Xiao's compositional work. Nevertheless, each sought to save the nation by inspiring the Chinese people's spirit through music—whether by adopting Western music technology to create new compositions or by resisting the cultural colonisation brought by Western music. Thus, their distinct musical approaches toward this shared aim merit further examination.

Exploring the Backgrounds of Xiao Youmei and Nie Er

To properly compare Xiao and Nie, it is imperative to delineate their distinctive musical ideologies, disparate educational backgrounds and work experiences, respective repertoires of

[5] Wang Guangqi was a musicologist and renowned social activist. See further Xiang, 1994, pp. 191–208. Cheng was a Chinese composer. See further Xiang, 1994, pp. 397–408. Huang Zi was a music educator and composer. See further Xiang, 1994, pp. 530–553.

[6] Li Jinhui was also the founder of Zhongguo Ertong Gewuju ("Chinese Children's Theatre"). In May 1927, he founded the Zhonghua Gewu Xuexiao ("Chinese Dance School") which changed its name in 1930 to Mingyue Gewutuan ("Bright Moon Song and Dance Troupe"). In this article Mingyue Gewutuan is used as the standard. See Xiang, 1994, pp. 179–190.

musical compositions, approaches to Western music and political entanglements. This section outlines Xiao's and Nie's backgrounds, before discussing their dependencies on Western music. Given their shared status as composers of national anthems, the comparison of their music serves not only to elucidate their respective approaches to Western music but also to illuminate their social and political ideologies.

Nationalist Music Educator, Xiao Youmei

Xiao Youmei, the "father of contemporary music education" in China (Ho, 2012, p. 195), was born in 1884 in Zhongshan city, Guangdong province. He received home tuition and a private education, as his father was an old scholar of the Qing dynasty (Xiang, 1994, p. 87). In 1889, Xiao and his family relocated to Macau,[7] where he studied English and Japanese, laying the groundwork for his later studies in Japan. In 1892, Sun Zhongshan (1866–1925), the first interim president of the Republic of China (1912) and the first leader of the Nationalist Party of China (1919), became Xiao's neighbour in Macau. Sun and Xiao's family became close and Sun's revolutionary thoughts deeply influenced Xiao (Xiang, 1994a, p. 88).[8]

In 1900, Xiao returned to Guangdong province and enrolled at Shimin Junior High School[9] in Guangzhou city; two years later he travelled to Japan to study. From 1902 to 1906, he attended the Tokyo Music School where he studied singing and piano (Xiang, 1994, p. 88). In 1906, he joined the Tong Meng Hui ("Chinese Revolutionary Alliance"), a secret society founded by Sun Zhongshan, Song Jiaoren (1882–1913), and others, who were Chinese progressives in Japan (Xiang, 1994a, p. 88). In the same year, Xiao secured funding from the Qing dynasty's Guangdong government and enrolled at Tokyo Imperial University, where he studied education, graduating in 1909. In the same year, Xiao returned to China and achieved the "Wen Juren" degree (literally, "Recommended Man"), which the Qing dynasty had established for students who had studied abroad (Huang and Wang, 2007, pp. 54–56). On 1 January 1912, Sun Zhongshan became the first president of the Republican government in Nanjing following the 1911 Revolution. However, Sun was promptly replaced by Yuan Shikai (1859–1916) on 13 February 1912. In April, the Nanjing government was disbanded, and Xiao briefly served as Sun's secretary until its dissolution (Xiang, 1994a, p. 89). After that, Xiao

[7] Portugal gained perpetual occupation rights over Macau in the Sino-Portuguese Treaty of Peking (1887).
[8] Sun Zhongshan was another name for Sun Yat-sen. For more about Sun's revolutionary thoughts, see Zhang, 2006, pp. 54–101.
[9] While English translations are used for the names of educational institutions in the main article, their original Chinese names are provided in Appendix 2.

relocated to Guangzhou and accepted a position with the Guangdong Province Department of Education. Meanwhile, he joined the Chinese Nationalist Party.

In October 1912, Xiao received funding from the Republican government to study in Germany. In 1916, he received his doctoral degree in music from Leipzig University and returned to China in March 1920. Shortly after, he was appointed to the Department of Education in the Beiyang government[10] and was selected by the National Anthem Society to compose the melody for “Qing Yun Ge” (“Song of the Auspicious Cloud”).[11] In October 1920, his melody was chosen as the National Anthem of the Republic of China[12] The following year, in 1921, based on Xiao’s suggestion, a music department was established at the National Beijing Women’s Higher Normal School,[13] the first of its kind in China. In 1922, a similar programme was set up at Peking University in Beijing and Xiao served as director of teaching affairs. During his seven years in Beijing,[14] he completed numerous musical compositions, including the solo songs *Wen* and *Xin Nishang Yuyiqu* (“Garment of New White Feathers”, 1923), and compiled several music education textbooks (Xiang, 1994a, pp. 94–98).

While in Beijing, Xiao devoted himself to building the first professional music conservatory in China, but the government did not support him, however this changed in 1927. When Cai Yuanpei (1868–1940)[15] returned to his role as education minister for the Nationalist government in Nanjing, he supported Xiao to open it because of Cai’s aesthetic educational thought. Cai believed that the spirit of China’s people changed with the aesthetic education. Therefore, Xiao received ¥3060 to fund the construction of a music conservatory in Shanghai: the National Conservatory of Music (Xiang, 1994a, p. 98).[16] In the beginning, Cai was the principal and Xiao was a professor and dean. From September 1928, the government tried to hire Xiao as the principal, but he repeatedly rejected the offer until July 1929. In September 1928, Xiao re-registered with the Chinese Nationalist Party (No. 4216-Hu) (Xiang, 1994a, p.

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[10] The international community recognised the Beiyang Government as the legitimate Chinese government from 1912–1927.

[11] “Qing Yun Ge” was recorded in *Shangshu Dazhuan–Yuxiazhuan*, which is an ancient Chinese book of uncertain authorship and date. The Beiyang government selected “Qing Yun Ge” from this book as the lyrics for the national anthem and issued a public call for musical compositions.

[12] The national anthem, “Qing Yun Ge”, was subsequently replaced by “Sanmin Zhuyi Ge” (“Three Principles of the People”), which was composed by Cheng Maojun in 1928.

[13] The Ministry of Education changed this institute’s name to the National Beijing Women’s Normal University in 1924.

[14] Beijing, also named Beiping and Peking in the Republican period. In this paper, to avoid confusion, Beijing is used, except for some special official names, such as Peking University, the Sino-Portuguese Treaty of Peking, or the National Beiping University Art Academy.

[15] For more information about Cai’s aesthetic education and education reform, see Liang, 1996, pp. 1–20.

[16] The National Conservatory of Music was renamed the National College of Music at the request of the Ministry of Education in 1929. It was the predecessor of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. Elsewhere in this article the title National College of Music is used as the standard.

109). Although there is no documentation linking Xiao's registration to his educational work at the National College of Music, it has been inferred that he did so to benefit his role in educational leadership, as being a member of the ruling party was considered advantageous for such leadership positions. During this time, many organisations were established at or alongside the new music college, such as the Yinyue Wenyishe ("Music and Art Society", 1933), and the Yinyue Boyin Weiyuanhui ("Music Broadcasting Committee", 1934) (Xiang, 1994a, p. 105). Following the establishment of the music conservatory, Xiao faced funding challenges to keep the school running. Despite such difficulties, the institution nurtured many renowned Chinese musicians, including prominent composers He Lüting (1903–1999) and Xian Xinghai (1905–1945).[17] Additionally it trained a multitude of music teachers for different kinds of schools.

Therefore, it is no exaggeration to say that Xiao's contribution to cultivating musical talent laid a foundation for the development of Western music in China, because these musicians or music teachers, who underwent Western curricula, emerged as the main force for disseminating Western music in China. For example, as per the mandatory curriculum of 1929, there were fourteen distinct courses, of which only one focused on Chinese music, while ten were centred on Western music, and three were language or political classes (see figure 1). Furthermore, Xiao's reliance on Western music manifested not only in his approach to music education, but also in his musical compositions. The Western technique of composition and the piano accompaniment score for the National Anthem, "Qing Yun Ge", in E major is one clear piece of evidence of this (Xiang, 1994a, p. 93), as the recurring note fah (highlighted in red in figure 2), was not a trait of Chinese music. In addition, Xiao composed another version of "Qing Yun Ge", for military bands, but believed it was unsuitable for performance on the Chinese flute, the di (Xiao, 1921).

[17] He Lüting (1903–1999) served as president of the Shanghai Conservatory of Music from 1949–1984. His famous works included "Mutong Duandi" ("Buffalo Boy's Flute", 1934) and "Tianya Genü" ("The Wandering Songstress", 1937); see further Xiang, 1994, pp. 485–501. Xian Xinghai (1905–1945) was known for "Huanghe Dahechang" ("The Yellow River Cantata", 1938); see further Xiang, 1994, pp. 617–636.

Course	**Course Name**[18]	**Preparatory Course**	**Under-graduate Course**	**Teacher Training Program**
		Points	Points	Points
Compulsory Courses	Dangyi ("The Principles of the Party")	0.5		0.5
	Guowen, Shige ("Chinese, Poet")	2.5	3.5	4
	Guoyin ("Chinese Music")	0.5		0.5
	Diyi Waiguoyu ("English, French")	6	8	9
	Putong Yuexue ("General Music theory")	2		2
	Heshengxue ("Harmonics")	4		4
	Zuoqufa Chubu ("Elementary Composition Skills")	1		1
	Hechang ("Choir")	1.5	0.5	1.5
	Shichang ("Sightsinging")	1		1
	Yinyue Linglüefa ("Music Form Analysis")	1		1
	Yinyueshi Gailun ("The Outline of Music History")	2		2
	Jiaoyu Xue ("Pedagogy")			1.5
	Jiaoshou Fa ("Teaching Theory")			1
	Gedui Zhihuifa ("Choir Conductor Method")			1

Figure 1: Compulsory Courses

Note: This information is from Yang Xiao, *A Study of The Music Education System of the National Conservatory of Music – the National College of Music* (2022). Shanghai: Shanghai Yinyue Xueyuan Chubanshe, pp. 148–149.

[18] For a better understanding, I have added English translations for all courses.

卿雲歌

Andante maestoso

蕭友梅作曲

歌聲

鋼琴

卿

雲……爛……兮，糺縵縵……兮，

日月……光……華，旦復旦……兮

日月……光……華，旦復旦……兮。

Figure 2: The Musical Score of "Qing Yun Ge"
Originally published in *Music Magazine* (31 May 1920).

Left-Wing Song Composer, Nie Er

Nie Er (originally named Nie Shouxin) was born in Kunming, Yunnan province, in 1912.[19] After his father's death, his family lived in destitution. Upon completing elementary school in 1925, Nie enrolled in Yunnan First Associated Middle School, and later, in 1927, at Yunnan First Normal School to receive a tuition waiver (Xiang, 1994b, pp. 216–217). There, Nie was exposed to proletarian revolutionary ideas and began learning violin and piano (Xiang, 1994b, p. 219). He moved to Shanghai in 1930 to work as a salesclerk at the Yunfeng Shanghao department store, but the store went bankrupt in March 1931 (Xiang, 1994b, p. 220). In April of that year, Nie launched his formal music career by joining Mingyue Gewutuan as a violinist (Xiang, 1994b, p. 220).

Li Jinhui insisted on "music and dance as entertainment" (Li, 1994, p. 190), a viewpoint rejected by Nie's revolutionary ideas. As an example, within his article, 'Zhongguo Gewu Duanlun [A Short Treatise on Chinese Song and Dance]', he advocated that music ought to resound with fervour for the masses, simultaneously dismissing Li's proposition that "music serves solely for entertainment" (1932a, p. 54). Despite his criticisms, Nie's membership of Li's musical group gave him greater autonomy to compose his own material. In July 1932, Nie wrote several articles, such as 'Xialiu [Dirty]',[20] which criticised Li's work and intensified his conflict with him. After a meeting on 5 August 1932, Nie was asked to temporarily withdraw from the troupe. As a result, he left Shanghai and relocated to Beijing to seek new opportunities (Nie, 2011, pp. 472–481).

One month after he arrived in Beijing, Nie took the entrance exam for the National Beiping University Art Academy, which he failed. In October 1932, the Zuoyi Yinyuejia Lianmeng ("Leftist Musicians' Union") was founded in Beijing and Nie was one of the founders (Xiang, 1994b, p. 224). After failing to secure a job in Beijing, he returned to Shanghai. In 1933, on the recommendation of the drama activist, playwright and poet Tian Han (1898–1968),[21] Nie joined the CPC. In February, Nie and other progressive musicians organised the Zhongguo Xinxin Yinyue Yanjiuhui ("Chinese Contemporary Music Research Group"). In April 1933, Nie became deputy director of the music department at the Shanghai branch of Pathé Records, where he recorded several works, including "Kaikuang Ge"

[19] Nie Er was the name he gave to himself. Because he had perfect pitch, his friends and colleagues called him, Mr Erduo ("Mr Ear"). Therefore, he preferred to adopt this, and this name was more well recognised by the public.
[20] Original published in *Dianying yishu* ("The Art of Movie") 8 July 1932b, see further Nie Er Quanji Bianweihui, 2011, p. 44.
[21] Tian Han was the lyricist of, "Yiyongjun Jinxingqu".

("Miners' Song", 1933), "Matou Gongren Ge" ("Dock Workers' Song", 1934) and "Kuli Ge" ("Song of the Labour Force", 1934). Most of his compositions targeted the proletariat, aligning with his revolutionary ideals. In June 1934, the opera *Yangzijiang Fengbao* ("Storm on the Yangtze"), which Nie co-wrote with Tian Han, premiered in Shanghai and featured an anti-Japanese theme (Xiang, 1994b, p. 231). In May 1935, his famous work, "Yiyongjun Jinxingqu" ("March of the Volunteers") was published, serving as the main theme song for the film *Fengyun Ernü* ("Children of Troubled Times", 1935) (Xiang, 1994b, p. 232).

One perspective on the characteristics of Nie's music suggests that Nie preferred the Western major scale, a limited vocal range and the repetition of a main melody—techniques he likely absorbed from Russian military songs (He, 2006, p. 85). These Western elements, combined with his revolutionary ideals, are reflected in the most famous song of his compositional work "Yiyongjun Jinxingqu" (see figure 3). After the foundation of the People's Republic of China in 1949, this song was chosen as the provisional national anthem and officially endorsed in 1982, cementing Nie's legacy in modern Chinese history. In July 1935, Nie died in an accident while in Japan. His works were significant, not only as anthems of revolution and the voice of the working class but also as examples of how Western musical traditions could be integrated into a distinctly Chinese revolutionary sound. Nie's responses to Western classical music also reflected the impact of Western cultural colonialism, but his compositional approach was different from that of Xiao Youmei.

中华人民共和国国歌

（义勇军进行曲）

田 汉作词
聂 耳作曲

进行曲速度

起

来！不愿做奴隶的人们！把我们的血肉，

筑成我们新的长城！中华民族

到了最危险的时候，每个人被迫着发出

最后的吼声。起来！起来！起来！

我们万众一心，冒着敌人的炮火前进！

冒着敌人的炮火前进！前进！前进！进！

Figure 3: The Musical Score of “Yiyongjun Jinxingqu”

Note: G major (circle mark); a limited vocal range (triangle mark); the repeat of a main melody (underline mark). This score is from the official website of the State Council the People’s Republic of China. Available at: https://www.gov.cn/guoqing/2017-06/07/content_5200610.htm (Accessed: 4 April 2024).

Differing Dependencies

To further explore the musical approaches of Xiao and Nie, the dependency on Western music evident in their musical thoughts must be further clarified. Initially, the matter necessitates a reassessment of dependence within the framework of this historical period. Frantz Fanon (1967, pp. 83–108) discusses the relationship between dependency and the colonised in his book, *Black Skin, White Masks*. He argues that, regardless of how colonisers justify their actions, two points define their colonial behaviours and create dependence. The first occurs when those who are colonised recognise their 'backwardness', and the second is that they show their desire to enter the coloniser's world. Thus, people who reject their own music while admiring music from other countries may exhibit a form of dependence. In this respect, Xiao and Nie were no exceptions. As was outlined in the previous section, their music reflects characteristics and compositional techniques of Western music.

Both of them have different attitudes toward Western music and Chinese traditional music. Xiao believed that:

> People would be influenced by listening to a great deal of beautiful music [such as Western classical music]. However, the voice of old Chinese musical instruments cannot inspire the people's spirit. (Xiao, 1934b, p. 650)

Here, Xiao acknowledged the superior evolution of Western music over that of Chinese music. However, he elucidated that the burgeoning prevalence of 'bad' music in China (i.e. traditional Chinese music considered outdated) stemmed from a protracted history of governmental disregard for the cultural significance of nurturing the populace's spiritual well-being through music (1934a, p. 638). He further noted (1934a, p. 638) that music received diminishing attention from the population after the Tang dynasty (618–907), as it was no longer regarded as a respectable profession. Consequently, fewer people researched music, and consequently the development of Chinese music halted. The underdevelopment of Chinese musicians meant that they lacked the ability to create keyboard instruments and staff notation (Xiao, 1934a, p. 638). These views indicate that Xiao assessed Chinese music through the lens of the Western musical system, providing additional support for his endorsement of Western music.

Similarly, Nie's desire to study in the Western-style music conservatory and his preference for Western music also reveal the existence of dependence in his thought. In April 1929, Nie passed the entrance exam for the Music Class of the Art School of the Guangdong Opera Institution,[22] but dropped out one day later, claiming that he did not want to learn

[22] This school was founded by Ouyang Yuqian (1889–1962) in Guangzhou in 1929. Elsewhere in this article the title Guangdong Opera Institute is used as the standard.

traditional Cantonese performance in luogu ("gong and drum ensemble music") or sixian ("music for silk-stringed instruments") (Xiang, 1994b, p. 218).[23] His failure of the 1932 entrance examination for the National Beiping University Art Academy has already been mentioned and in 1934 he failed the entrance examination for the National College of Music. Nie's unsuccessful attempts make it clear that learning Western music was more important to him than studying traditional Chinese music. Furthermore, while there are hints of traditional shan'ge (literally, "mountain songs"; a genre of folksong) and haozi ("work songs"; a genre of folksong) in Nie's music,[24] his music showcased an array of Western music traits, with a notable emphasis on Russian military songs, as elucidated in the preceding discussion.

The above details demonstrate examples of Nie's and Xiao's dependence on Western music or Western music culture while their contrasting backgrounds led them to distinct kinds of dependence. Xiao's heavy reliance on Western music was prompted by his experiences of studying abroad and his research on Western music. Given his familiarity with Western music, he insisted on the Western music educational method. Therefore, Xiao's knowledge advocated societal change through reliance upon what he saw as developed Western music. It is worth noting that Xiao did not believe Chinese music was poor, he simply believed it to be less developed than Western music (Xiao, 1938, p. 679). As a result, he devoted himself to incorporating Western-style systems of music education into China to change Chinese musical culture. He believed that once Chinese music reached the same level as Western music, it would become more appreciated in Chinese society (Xiao, 1938, p. 680). Xiao's dependence on Western music manifested itself in two ways: first, he borrowed Western music technology and institutions, such as instruments, notation, music structures and the organisational characteristic of German music education, to develop Chinese music, educating more Chinese musicians in Western musical means who could go on to compose new Chinese music; second, he disseminated Western music to cultivate a new spirit among the people and boost morale during the Second Sino-Japanese War.

In contrast, Nie did not have a chance to embrace a systematic Western music education, learning Western music and its compositional skills in a more piecemeal manner. Nie did not assume that Western music offered a grand panacea to China's situation. Xiao (1930, p. 276), insisted on "art for the public", and thus, Western music, which lacked a mass base in China, was not what he had in mind. If Xiao's attitude toward Western music was one

[23] These two ensembles provided the accompaniment in Cantonese Opera.
[24] Shan'ge is a form of Chinese music in which individuals sing improvised lyrics, often love songs. Haozi includes songs sung while working.

of inclusive selection, Nie's attitude was one of contradictory reception. Nie learned and questioned at the same time. He studied Western music intensively, as illustrated by his playing of the violin, analysis of harmony and attendance at Western music concerts, while believing that "Western classical music was a counterrevolution" (Nie, 1932, p. 391). Nie's ambivalent attitude was also induced by his political stance and his participation in left-wing organisations. Compared with Xiao, Nie did not intend to work with the government. Hence, he had greater freedom to express his dissatisfaction with society and musical trends, a freedom further enhanced by his use of pseudonyms, as explored in more detail below. Nie's aim was to compose music for the working class as a means of expressing their plight and challenging the capitalist nature of the era's artistic production more widely. In summary, their educational backgrounds, social and political standing and occupational requirements all contributed to shaping the nuanced dependency that both Xiao and Nie established on Western music. These differences provide the foundation for their ideological encounter.

The Conceptual Encounter Between Nie Er and Xiao Youmei

The respective dependencies of Nie and Xiao do not diminish the value of their ideas or contributions; rather, they explain the underlying causes of the conflict between them and the root of their disagreement, even though both were ultimately committed to advancing China's interests. The ideological encounter between Nie and Xiao took place between 1933 and 1935. At the request of the Shanghai Municipal Education Bureau, the National College of Music had begun broadcasting Western music through the Shanghaishi Guangbo Wuxian Diantai ("Shanghai Wireless Broadcasting Corporation") in 1933 (Xiao, 1934b, p. 650). Nie, writing under the pseudonym Wang Daping,[25] published 'Yinianlaizhi Zhongguo Yinyue [The Achievement of Music in China]', in *Shenbao* ("Shanghai News") on 16 January 1935. There, Nie discussed the development of music from five perspectives, one of which was the radio programme. Nie initially praised the practice of the National College of Music's radio broadcasts, but then critiqued them for being too elitist to be appealing. He used the phrase "Experts in school" to indicate that their music was not grounded in wider social realities, such as the impoverished living conditions of individuals and the impact of war. However, according to Xiao's article 'Yinyue de Shili [The Power of Music]' (1934c, pp. 596–597), the choice of Western music in the College's radio programme was to alter the moral character of individuals

[25] Nie used several pseudonyms, such as Nie Ziyi, Wang Daping, Black Angel, Zao Sen and Wan Yu. At that time, many authors used pseudonyms to avoid difficulty from the government or any other power that opposed progressive ideas.

through music. Though this was not a direct response to Nie's viewpoint, it expressed Xiao's thoughts on why he made radio programmes focused on Western music. Xiao deliberately introduced Western music that he considered 'good' to the public via radio broadcasts. This difference in perspective represents a key divergence between Xiao and Nie regarding how music could save China.

Nie and Xiao's conflicting perspectives concerning the role and contribution of Western music continued over the following years. On 3 June 1935, Nie delivered a speech entitled 'Zuijin Zhongguo Yinyuejie Zongjiantao [A Recent Review of the Music World in China]' at a gathering of artists in Japan. He distinguished three groups in Chinese music circles, first, Xiao Youmei and his National College of Music which represented Western music, especially, Western classical music; second, Li Jinhui and his mimi zhiyin ("vulgar song"); third, revolutionary movie music catering to the masses (Wang, 1992, pp. 296–297). Nie considered that Xiao only focused on composing classical music, without considering the Chinese people's needs (Wang, 1992, p. 296). Clearly, Nie's comments suggested that Xiao's music was unsuitable for the Chinese context and that classical music did not hold significant relevance in China. During the war era, revolutionary music that encouraged people to overcome difficult situations was seen as more relevant, while classical music, such as piano sonatas and violin concertos, had little practical effect. Under these circumstances, classical music represented a luxury that could be enjoyed only for leisure. However, Xiao responded to this opinion during an interview about Chinese new music in 1938, expressing that in:

> learning and adopting Western techniques to create Chinese new music […] during the war era, [we should] create more patriotic songs [i.e. revolutionary music] and circulate them for a short period of time: this would prove that music was not a luxury. (Xiao, 1938, pp. 679–680)

Xiao's answer proves that he viewed Western music was a tool for developing new Chinese music. The genre of new music included both classical and revolutionary music. Both types of music were composed by drawing on Western music, especially classical music techniques. Xiao's view reflected the complexities of the Republican period, in which different kinds of music could support different functions. While Nie Er's revolutionary songs served a purpose for left-wing organisations—encouraging the masses to overcome challenges in a difficult situation—Xiao's engagement with Western music contributed to the establishment of a music education system under the Nationalist Party. Therefore, while Nie did not highly rely on learning Western music or classical music techniques, Xiao depended heavily on Western

music, its techniques and its established education system to build a music system and contribute to China's broader educational development.

Comprehending the entanglements between Xiao and Nie is a complicated task. After an incomplete analysis, it is easy to draw one-sided conclusions. For example, in a recent newspaper article Huang Minxue stated that:

> Nie used academic classical music and Li Jinhui's popular music as breakthroughs about his criticism to explore Marxist musical ideas and to implement revolutionary musical activities. (Huang, 2021)

Huang implies that Nie targeted Xiao and his National College of Music, citing Nie's claim in his diary in support of his argument:

> Is classical music entertainment for the leisure class? What can [you] do if you practice études for several hours per day and become a violinist in a few decades? Can you evoke the spirit of the masses by playing a Beethoven sonata? (Huang, 2021)

Huang's argument is plausible given that Nie and Xiao had distinct musical ideals and that Nie had written those words. Nonetheless, two aspects remain unclear, each of which leads to a series of questions. On one hand, did Nie's placement of Xiao into the camp of Western music imply that he viewed this camp as hostile? Did Nie's division of the Chinese music industry into three camps—classical music (represented by Xiao Youmei), popular music (represented by Li Jinhui), and left-wing music (represented by Nie Er himself) (Wang, 1992, p. 296)—suggest hostility towards the other two camps? Did Nie approve of Xiao's work? These questions lack definitive answers, and it is important to clarify that none of them can be resolved through a single piece of evidence, such as this short quotation. On the other hand, is it possible that Nie's diary entries reflect his dissatisfaction with classical music? What about his desire to study Western music in a professional music conservatory? What was Nie's relationship with Western music, and how did Xiao perceive Western music? Only by addressing these issues, can the entanglement between Xiao and Nie be resolved. The following discussion analyses their encounters from two perspectives: social pressure and political affiliations.

Firstly, the social atmosphere imbued most aspiring musicians with a powerful sense of responsibility. This shared social pressure meant that Xiao and Nie both believed in the power of music to achieve societal transformation. Xiao believed that "music has a strong relationship with national spirit" (Xiao, 1934d, p. 613), and that "music could improve people's national consciousness and patriotism" (Xiao, 1937, p. 673). Nie also believed, according to his diary on 8 November 1930, that music held power to influence the masses (Nie, 1930, p. 276). Hence, at this point, Xiao and Nie had similar thoughts. They diverged on what kind of

music could best contribute to saving China. Describing his broadcasts mentioned above, Xiao insisted that "the sound of ancient Chinese musical instruments could not stir the soul," so, most of the music that he selected was Western (Xiao, 1934b, p. 650). As already mentioned, according to his diary on 4 February 1932, Nie considered that Western classical music was counter-revolutionary (Nie, 1932, p. 391).[26] Yet he also wrote on 3 June 1934 that "music was a way for people to speak" (Nie, 1934, p. 553), and thus music should belong to the masses. From Nie's perspective, classical music was not what the populace desired, so he contemplated what type of music would resonate with them instead. He questioned the function of classical music on multiple occasions in his diary.

Secondly, Xiao's and Nie's different political responsibilities led to their varying opinions concerning Western music's educational function. Xiao worked for the government on his return to China in 1920 until his death in 1940. He dedicated himself to establishing a new music conservatory in China by transplanting the Western musical education system.[27] He paid attention to music education, arguing that three factors had contributed to the failure of the development of Chinese music: instruments, musicians and the music education system (Xiao, 1934a, p. 638). In relation to the first factor, and as already mentioned, Xiao believed that Chinese musicians after the Tang dynasty had not improved either China's indigenous systems of music notation or its musical instruments. Concerning musicians, Xiao held that a lack of progressive spirit had prevented musicians from learning from other musical genres. Finally, according to Xiao, the evolution of musical education and the development of standard musical notation were impeded by the lack of any professional musical institution. After considering these three factors, Xiao was determined that establishing such a music education institution was the most crucial step to take. A formal institution for music education would address the development of music education, and then notation and instruments would also improve. His approach provided an efficient method for establishing a well-developed music education system in China; however, it also risked misleading those who perceived him as an uncritical adherent of Western classical music.

In contrast, Nie's political outlook differed from Xiao's. Nie had always desired a revolution, and his actions were typically aligned with that goal.[28] Therefore, it was impossible

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[26] Nie considered that Western classical music represented Xiao and the Nationalist Party government. Thus, from his political position within the CPC, he considered it to be counter revolutionary.
[27] For more about the music education system of this institution, see Xiao, 2022.
[28] In 1928, he joined the Sixteenth Regiment of the National Revolutionary Army, but he quit because of unjustified corporal punishment and frequent underfeeding. In 1929, after the explosion of the powder magazine, he took part in several activities to fight against the forces of Yunnan's warlord. In 1930, he went to Shanghai to hide from the Yunnan authorities (Xiang, 1994, pp. 217–219).

for him to serve the government, as Xiao did. Since Nie had no official role, he did not need to assume responsibility for managing improvements in the education system. Xiao's "Copinism" (serving the Government in improving the education system) was not Nie's path (Xiao, 2022, p. 271). Nie's conception of the ideal musical education was one that matched his revolutionary beliefs. As a result, Nie, regularly complained about the highbrow education of the National College of Music. For example, he wrote in his diary on 24 September 1931 that:

> We [i.e. Nie Er and his colleagues in Mingyu Gewutuan] decided not to study in the National College of Music in case of becoming labelled as having been taught by so-and-so, because it did not really offer the opportunity to study for us. (Nie, 1931, p. 338)

Meanwhile, Chinese old-style education was also not his desired means of studying music. As noted, he left the Guangdong Opera Institution because its Cantonese music education also fell short of his revolutionary expectations. To clarify, traditional Chinese music, such as Cantonese melodies, did not derive from the contemporary societal realities of its time, which did not meet the need of his revolutionary ideas about evoking the response of the people.

Part of Nie's argument was that the National College of Music was fixated solely on Western classical music. But to what extent did that claim reflect reality, and was Nie entirely opposed to Western music education? It takes time for a well-developed system to take shape, and education is no exception. Xiao's action, in establishing a replica of the music education system he had seen overseas, was a model that offered tested methods in a period of rapid change. However, it is not entirely accurate to identify the National College of Music as exclusively focused on Western music education. For instance, Chinese music was added in the 1930s (Xiao, 2002, p. 151) and the number of Chinese language classes were increased, while language classes in Italian, German and French were reduced (Xiao, 2002, p. 164). As the president of the conservatory, Xiao advocated that:

> Learning Western music does not mean all of us will become the sons of Bach, Mozart or Beethoven, but that we become their students [...]. We should use their harmony [technique] to create our new music. (Xiao, 1934e, p. 616)

The new music that Xiao mentioned included both art music and patriotic songs.[29] Consequently, it is too reductive to say that the National College of Music represented the Western school of music.

Nevertheless, to explain Nie's attitude towards Western music education, his views towards Western classical music should be discussed. Nie's words about Western classical

[29] Art music generally refers to a style that evolved from classical music and places emphasis on aesthetics, including instrumental music and vocal music.

music in his diary were triggered by the incident that occurred in Shanghai on 28 January 1932. Hence, he wrote about his doubt of the role of Western classical music because he considered it could do nothing during wartime. Nonetheless, he wrote this while he continued to practise the violin. This shows that he did not dislike Western classical music itself. Indeed, he expressed his desire to enter the National College of Music in his diary on several occasions, and in 1932 and 1934 he took the entrance exams for the National Beiping University Art Academy and the National College of Music respectively. This further suggests that Nie saw value in Western music education.

Conclusion

Xiao and Nie were not natural opponents; rather, they were potentially able to appreciate each other's work. Although Xiao did not publicly acknowledge Nie Er or his songs, he encouraged musicians to create more socially valuable music and organised the teachers and students at the National College to compose patriotic songs. It is possible that Xiao recognised and even admired Nie's efforts as a patriotic songwriter.[30] Furthermore, Nie's desire to study at the National College of Music also shows that he approved of Xiao's mission. As the first professional music school, Nie approved of this school.

Their ideological conflicts were induced by several factors, as they and those around them struggled to address Western musical hegemony. As the first Chinese music educator to earn a doctorate in music, Xiao's primary occupation remained in that field. As a music educator, his goal was to cultivate more musicians who could use music to change the difficult national situation; he believed that a lack of music teachers was the cause of an underdeveloped music education, which in turn was the reason why Chinese music was underdeveloped. The changing music curriculum was the first indication that he fought against Western hegemony in musical education; his thoughts on the restoration of Chinese music through "Keeping the spirit without losing its ethnicity" (Xiao, 1938, p. 679) offers a second indication. This meant that Chinese musical elements should not be completely discarded when composing with Western compositional techniques. His sixteen years of study abroad did not imprint in his consciousness an image of Western music alone. Nevertheless, breaking out of the model of the education system he had acquired through his training was clearly a hard task. In his opinion, it was an indisputable fact that Chinese music lagged behind Western music (Xiao,

[30] Since 1933, Nie's output expanded. Some of his works, such as "Maibao Ge" ("Song of a Newsboy", 1933) and "Matou Gongren Ge", became popular. These works introduced Nie to a wider public and they were likely familiar to Xiao.

2022, p. 275).[31] Xiao and his colleagues at the National College of Music all struggled subtly against the hegemony of Western music by recognising Western musical technique as an additional avenue for developing Chinese music. Furthermore, their welcoming attitude cannot be regarded as acquiescence to the hegemony of Western music. A point of comparison is offered by considering the perspectives of contemporaneous Chinese novelists. As Leo Ou-Fan Lee states, these authors'

> sense of Chinese identity was never in question *in spite of* the Western colonial presence in Shanghai [...]. [It] was only because of their unquestioned Chineseness that these writers were able to embrace Western modernity openly, without fear of colonization. (Lee, 1999, p. 312, original emphasis)

Similarly, Xiao's and Nie's acceptance of Western music indicated that they did not believe it could significantly threaten their Chineseness in the music they created. This is why Nie Er as a left-wing composer criticised elitist Western music discourse and attacked the commercial aims of the music industry, even while he also created music using Western techniques. Because of his educational background, he was better equipped than Xiao to challenge the hegemony of Western music. As a result, his radical rhetoric has occasionally led to misinterpretations by later readers. Instead, this rhetoric was an additional method by which he rejected Western cultural colonisation, freeing himself to use Western musical techniques and resources to create the modern music that he believed the Chinese people needed. Freire's fundamental contention for a revolt against the dependence on a banking model in education emphasises the necessity of a dual approach involving introspection and proactive measures, which can effectively convert reliance into autonomy (Freire, 1972, pp. 42, 56). Nie rejected the colonisation of Western music culture in exactly this alternative manner. The encounter between Xiao and Nie, and their divergence over the ways in which Western music could empower Chinese society, shows just how difficult such reflection and action could be, even when two musicians shared an overall aim.

The intricate entanglements that Xiao and Nie created offer a compelling example of one way that local populations worldwide approached the matter of invasive Western cultural hegemony in the early decades of the twentieth century. Xiao's and Nie's attitudes also symbolise the diverse perspectives of representatives of discrete social strata regarding cultural hegemony. Such perspectives shift, not only in response to the ongoing intrusion of foreign culture (and military or economic power) but also as the musicians mature and encounter new

[31] Xiao's colleagues at the National College of Music, Huang Zi, Zhu Ying and Qing Zhu also believed that Chinese music was inferior to Western music (Xiao, 2022, pp. 262–275).

challenges and possibilities. The result is a complex pattern indicative of their individual rationalisations and resolutions to these challenges.

Appendix 1: Timeline of Key Events

1644–1911: Qing dynasty

- 1861–1895: Self-Strengthening Movement
- 1866: Birth of Sun Zhongshan
- 1884: Birth of Xiao Youmei
- 1889: Xiao and his family move to Macau
- 1892: Sun moves to Macau
- 1902–1909: Xiao studies at the Tokyo Music School, Japan
- 1906: Xiao joins the Chinese Revolutionary Alliance
- 1906–1909: Xiao studies education at Tokyo Imperial University, Japan
- 1909: Xiao returns to China
- 1910: Xiao achieves the "Wen Juren" degree from the Qing government

1911–1912: The 1911 Revolution and end of the Qing dynasty

1912–1949: Republic of China

- 1912: (January) Sun Zhongshan becomes first president of the Republican government in Nanjing
- 1912: (February) Birth of Nie Er
- 1912: (March) Xiao Youmei becomes Sun Zhongshan's secretary
- 1912: (April) Xiao accepts position with the Guangdong Province of Education and joins the Chinese Nationalist Party, Guangzhou
- 1912–1916: Xiao studies at Leipzig University and receives the doctoral degree in music, Germany
- 1920: (March) Xiao returns to China
- 1920: (September) Xiao appointed to the Department of Education in the Beiyang government, Beijing
- 1920: (September) The department of music of the National Beijing Women's Higher Normal School founded
- 1920: (September) Xiao starts to teach music courses at Peking University
- 1920: (October) Xiao's melody for "Qing Yun Ge" chosen as the National Anthem of the Republic of China
- 1922–1927: Xiao serves as director of teaching affairs at Peking University
- 1925: (March) Death of Sun Zhongshan
- 1925: (July) Nie completes elementary school, enrols in Yunnan First Associated Middle School
- 1927: (July) Nie completes middle school, enrols in Yunan First Normal School
- 1927: (October) Music department of Peking University closes
- 1927: (October) Cai Yuanpei becomes education minister for the Nationalist government, Nanjing
- 1927: (November) National Conservatory of Music founded
- 1927: (December) Xiao becomes temporary principal of the National Conservatory of Music
- 1928: (March) Nie joins the Sixteenth Regiment of the National Revolutionary Army
- 1928: (September) Xiao re-registers with Chinese Nationalist Party
- 1929: (April) Nie passes the entrance exam for the Music Class of the Art School of the Guangdong Opera Institution
- 1929: (July) Nie takes part in several activities to fight against the forces of Yunnan's warlord
- 1929: (July) National Conservatory of Music renamed the National College of Music
- 1929: (August) Xiao becomes principal of the National College of Music

- 1930: (July) Nie moves to Shanghai to hide from the Yunnan authorities
- 1931: (April) Nie joins Mingyue Gewutuan
- 1931: (September) Mukden Incident
- 1932: (January) January 28 Incident
- 1932: (July) Nie publishes articles 'Zhongguo Gewu Duanlun' and 'Xialiu', in *Dianying Yishu*. (August) Nie asked to withdraw from Mingyue Gewutuan and moves to Beijing.
- 1932: (September) Nie fails the National Beiping University Art Academy entrance exam
- 1932: (October) Nie is a founding member of the Leftist Musicians' Union
- 1932: (November) Nie returns to Shanghai
- 1933: National College of Music begins broadcasting Western classical music through the Shanghai Wireless Broadcasting Corporation
- 1933: (January) Nie joins the CPC
- 1933: (February) Nie and other progressive musicians organise the Chinese Contemporary Music Research Group
- 1934: (January) Nie fails the entrance examination for the National College of Music
- 1934: (March) Xiao publishes 'Yinyue de Shili', in *Yinyue Jiaoyu*
- 1935: (January) Nie publishes 'Yinianlaizhi Zhongguo Yinyue', in *Shenbao*
- 1935: (May) Nie's song "Yiyongjun Jinxingqu" published
- 1935: (June) Nie delivers the speech 'Zuijin Zhongguo Yinyuejie Zongjiantao' in Japan
- 1935: (July) Death of Nie Er
- 1938: (February) Xiao gives interview about new music in China
- 1940: (December) Death of Xiao Youmei

1949–present: People's Republic of China

- 1949: (September) Nie's "Yiyongjun Jinxingqu" selected as the provisional national anthem
- 1982: (August) Nie's "Yiyongjun Jinxingqu" officially endorsed

Appendix 2: English and Chinese Names of Educational Institutes

Name of Educational Institute (English Translation)	Original Chinese Name of Educational Institute
Music Class of the Art School of the Guangdong Opera Institution	Guangdong Xiju Yanjiusuo Fushe Yanju Xuexiao Yinyueban
National Beiping University Art Academy	Guoli Beiping Daxue Yishu Xueyuan
National Beijing Women's Higher Normal School	Guoli Beijing Nüzi Gaodeng Shifan Xuexiao
National Beijing Women's Normal University	Guoli Beijing Nüzi Shifan Daxue
National College of Music	Guoli Yinyue Zhuanke Xuexiao
National Conservatory of Music	Guoli Yinyue Xueyuan
Shanghai Conservatory of Music	Shanghai Yinyue Xueyuan
Shimin Junior High School	Shimin Xuetang
Yunnan First Associated Middle School	Yunnan Diyi Lianhe Zhongxue
Yunnan First Normal School	Yunnan Shengli Diyi Shifan Xuexiao

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Book Review – *Philosophy of the Tourist*, by Hiroki Azumi, trans. John Person.

Urbanomic, 2023. 238 pp. £24.00

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Hiroki Azuma offers at the start of the recent translation of his celebrated *Philosophy of the Tourist* that he is specifically not writing about the "tourism" that exists as a part of a currently broad historiography on the topic within the humanities. The cover image—which shows two slovenly Western tourists seemingly lost in their journey, ostensibly unknowing of their destination, uncultured and passive—points to this issue, whereby Azuma questions the existing meaning of the tourist in historiography and the public sphere through an image of the way tourists are often dismissed as inferior and non-essential to understanding the modern world.

Taking tourism seriously and in a different theoretical direction, Azuma starts from first principles concerning what a tourist meant in different versions of classical, neoclassical, and modern philosophy. This analysis, published in different forms in Japanese originally from 2011 to 2017, offers a way of thinking about the governing dynamics of world systems in a new frame, and reflects upon the tourist as the "other" in different contexts. As such, rarely does the work engage with specific tourists or specific tourist sites, as *Philosophy of the Tourist* looks not to what tourists specifically do for themselves, but rather their places as active or passive agents in the networks of the information age and knowledge economy; explicitly, what they do to the world system.

Azuma defines tourism simply as the movement of a person from outside of their original land to visit or travel to another place for reasons outside of employment. For Azuma, the modern historiography on tourism places the tourist too quickly into modern ideals of globalisation, liberalism and mundialisation without understanding that those categories are tied to a primary rootedness that also involved the birth of the tourist. A scholar of Jacques Derrida from early in his academic career, Azuma starts his analysis in *Philosophy of the Tourist* from his work on Derrida and the postcard, especially applied in the second section of this work. This approach allows Azuma to offer a reassessment that is consequently about deconstructing oversimplifications related to categories of globalism. It examines tourism before it became commonplace, as it transitioned into a quotidian phenomenon, and explores the modern age of its frequent use in what Azuma understands as a flawed historiography.

This vast reconsideration is separated into two sections that comprise seven chapters, which are often written in the first person with much internal dialogue on the page that might turn away the non-theoretical reader. The first section “Philosophy of the Tourist,” looks at the tourist as a figure of Enlightenment philosophy that was at the source of how Immanuel Kant understood the possibilities of the Democratic and perpetual peace. That framing, whereby the tourist was one of the first ideals that would have been necessary for the assurance of peace across territories through free movement of bureaucrats, places the modern tourist in limbo between the global and the local.

Based on analysis of different perspectives and influences of the traveller in Rousseau, Voltaire, and Kant, readings of hate and love of the “other” through Carl Schmitt, Alexandre Kojève, and Hannah Arendt, and the possibilities of resistance and revolution through Hardt and Negri on the multitude, the first part of *Philosophy of the Tourist* is an ambitious reimaging of actants in the world system. The project as a whole, and especially the second part of the book, “Philosophy of the Family,” focuses on Dostoyevsky and the fraught ideal of the Family as a basis for building political connections with the “other”. This analysis is directly linked with literature from Kojin Karatani on the structures of modern world economies related to cultures and the ‘other’, as both Karatani and Azuma apply Kant’s understanding of the perpetual peace to think about issues of borders, nations, and travellers. The definition of tourism in these shared contexts is inherently positivistic, in that it seeks to establish a link to the perpetual peace of Kantianism, but is also anti-modern, as it explores the wake of the Hegelian and Marxist positioning of the power of the nation as linked to the rise of capital after primitive accumulations. As such, Azuma is between and within many different dialectics of modern theory, attempting to position the tourist within a considerable number of literatures that lay at the basis of philosophical inquiry since the Enlightenment.

In identifying the role of the tourist as part of the nation-state (protected by the allegiance to the original place) and the world system (protected by the need for the expansion of markets), Azuma articulates a theory of modernity that wavers between the extremes of the democratic peace to be earned supposedly by respected but relatively open borders, and the total war and anarchy that could arrive without protections of original place and nationalism. Thinking more with Schmitt and placing that German philosopher in a similar field of thinking as Arendt on issues of nationalism and insider/outsider classifications, allows Azuma to reason freshly about multifarious networks of connection related to borders, immigrants, and tourists.

In this theoretical analysis on ‘othering’ that leads into the second part of the work on the “Philosophy of the Family,” the tourist exists apart from the original nation-state of their

origin (because they have money to spend elsewhere) and are never to be integrated into the new place of their travel (as they have original allegiances to the previous space). They become, at times, nearly total capitalists in their consumption in the foreign space, as the tourist does not seek to create cultural alliances or familial bonds in the new place—neither for revolutionary aims of the multitude nor for any kind of new nationalism as Family. These are visits solely to consume and are protected by the rights to consumption granted by the world system and forms of discourse tied to modern capital, forever knotted to the safeguards of nationalism that provides rights of protection.

Philosophy of the Tourist is for a wider audience of radical readers, especially those well-versed in Kant, Schmitt, and modern neo-Marxist philosophies. As Azuma claims, tourists, even as they themselves might be passive in their desires to create links to others in new spaces, must, inherently create associations simply by existing, building cybernetic nodes of connection with both human and nonhuman objects of agency. As such, tourists unwillingly become, for Azuma in a positive takeaway provided implicitly through much of the work, the main actants in bringing down the ultimate emergence of capital linked to the world system after the End of History so categorised by Francis Fukuyama; because, in their mysterious ability to be always creating the world system, whether through "misdelivery" or actual alliance in the possible frame of the Family, the tourist can also uncannily map its undoing.

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Book Review – *Metaphysics and the Moving Image: “Paradise Exposed”*, by Trevor Mowchun.

Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2022. 265 pp. £90.00

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Trevor Mowchun’s *Metaphysics and the Moving Image: “Paradise Exposed”* is an illuminating contribution to the fields of film studies within the context of nineteenth and twentieth century Western philosophy, particularly the work of Friedrich Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger. As both a scholar and filmmaker, Mowchun aims to bridge the gap between philosophy, the philosophy of art and the artform of cinema itself. In the introduction, titled “The Death of God, the Birth of Film and the New Metaphysics”, Mowchun first makes the claim that it is no coincidence that Nietzsche’s attack of metaphysical truth at the end of the nineteenth century occurred in the same breath as the rise of cinema, a medium which records and reflects the ‘true’ world. In addition, Mowhcun posits that with the “death of God” (and as a result the death of Western metaphysics), cinema has succeeded philosophy in its ability to represent and engage with metaphysical thought. The rest of the book attempts to build on this over-encompassing argument.

The first chapter, titled ‘Image Breakthrough: Disclosure and Derailment in Painting, Photography and Film’, provides a philosophical backbone to Mowchun’s arguments. First this chapter delves into the struggle and overlap between the philosophies of Heidegger and Nietzsche on art. It then briefly explores philosophies behind painting and photographic art before exploring three influential ontologies within the realm of photographic arts: *Camera Lucida* (Barthes, 1981), *The Ontology of the Photographic Image/The Myth of Total Cinema* (Bazin and Gray, 1960; Bazin, 1967) and *The World Viewed* (Cavell, 1979). These seminal works serve as a basis for the subsequent sections. Mowchun illustrates these philosophies with several case studies. Unlike later analyses in the book that focus on entire films, these studies dissect individual scenes. While this approach broadens the scope of examination, it also arguably leads to underdeveloped case studies, particularly evident for the film *Stalker* (1979) directed by Andrei Tarkovsky. This film is also unique among the other works studied due to its distinct socio-cultural context within the U.S.S.R. While only one scene is studied in the chapter, the entire film engages both narratively and visually with metaphysical philosophy.

Chapter 2, titled ‘The Evolution of the Concept of “World” from Philosophy to Film’, focuses on how film constructs the world in its own image. Mowchun compares this to

philosophy as a discipline and argues that philosophy also draws from the universe, representing itself through human thought. Similarly, cinema is concerned with representing the universe, specifically through the film's mechanical unconsciousness, which allows the world and objects within it to represent themselves in ways that can be alien to the viewer's perception of the world. The chapter concludes with a critical discussion of Stanley Cavell's interpretation of Heidegger and its relevance to the world depicted in Terence Malik's *Days of Heaven* (1978).

Chapter 3, titled 'Paradise Exposed: Psychic Automatism in Film', begins with a stream-of-conscious prose piece, a "primer", based loosely on the idea of grace as actions executed without awkward self-awareness, drawing from Franz Kafka. Mowchun compares this concept of grace to the naturally recording of reality by films through automatism. This argument draws from Kleist's metaphor of a puppet master moving strings to gracefully simulate a human dancing (Kleist, 1982). In Mowchun's use of the analogy the filmmaker assumes the role of the puppet-master, using the medium of film to orchestrate an automatic representation of reality. The exploration of grace through automatism is further elucidated through case studies of Robert Bresson's films, emphasising his directing philosophy and use of amateur actors.

Chapter 4, titled 'Nature, Whose Death Shines a Light: Exteriority and Overexposure in The Thin Red Line', revisits Terence Malick's work, specifically analysing *The Thin Red Line* (1998). This chapter explores how films connect three facets of nature: the human, the natural and the dramatic presence of the natural in a cinematic world. It discusses the representation of nature's presence in film, its immeasurability, ability to over-encompass life and how it is exposed through metaphor, language and culture. It also highlights the diverse approaches to representing nature in cinema and analyses their emergence in Malick's film.

The final chapter, Chapter 5, titled, "'Mother, I am Dumb…": The Reevaluation of Friedrich Nietzsche in *The Turin Horse*', eschews a formal conclusion. Instead, it briefly considers *The Turin Horse* (2011) by Béla Tarras as a rumination on the book's opening arguments. This film is seen to reflect the central thesis of the book by cinematically exploring metaphysical philosophy against the backdrop of Nietzsche's mental decline. The title of the film and its opening text refer to the apocryphal Turin horse which supposedly caused Nietzsche's mental breakdown after witnessing its brutal treatment. Mowchun contemplates Nietzsche's assertion that there is no God without the process of belief and suggests that cinema, as a visual marvel, can reaffirm that same belief.

This book conveys passion and an authority on its subjects and the author must be commended for skilfully examining the topics at length. However, despite Mowchun's repeated assertions that the moving image has taken the role of metaphysical thought from the written word, the book falls short in fully justifying cinematic exceptionalism. As a result, the central claim of the book's introduction remains unrealised. It is noteworthy that several of the films analysed are adaptions of literary works, such as *Stalker* and *The Thin Red Line*. A comment on the effect of intertextuality between these films and their sources might have helped to illustrate how exactly can the reader distinguish between metaphysics in cinema from metaphysics in literature. Similarly, despite claims in the introduction of the moving image as a broad concept, even including animated imagery outside of movies (p. 7), the examples given are limited to American and European live-action films, with two of them made by the same director.

These filmmakers covered by the book are all connected in some way. They are inspired by each other and are also influenced by the very philosophers central to Mowchun's core argument. For example, Malik's philosophical background, particularly his study of Heidegger before becoming a filmmaker (Woessner, 2011), and *The Turin Horse*, which draws both from Nietzsche's biography and his philosophy (Steven, 2017), both exemplify the intertwining of philosophy and film making. It is unclear whether these works represent a broader focus on metaphysics in cinema or if they are only specific examples of brilliant filmmakers who draw from philosophy in their own work. Despite these flaws, perhaps a measure of the book's success is how it provides insight into its own filmmaker/author in the same way as some of the cited essays reflect on their own filmmakers/authors. In the spirit of this, a brief reflection or note on the author's experience as a filmmaker would have been appreciated.

Despite some issues with its central thesis, the work accomplishes many of its objectives. Mowchun adeptly illuminates the overlap between philosophy and film studies and makes a significant contribution to the scholarly discourse surrounding Terence Malik's work by Stanley Cavell (1979: 2005). Furthermore, it explores the intricate connections between film, the philosophy of art and metaphysics. Although the author expressed hope that the book be appropriate for a general audience, it is much better suited for those who find themselves, like the author, in the intersection between the disciplines of philosophy and film studies.

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Book Review – Public Morality and the Culture Wars: The Triple Divide, by Bryan Fanning.

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Bryan Fanning's *Public Morality and the Culture Wars: The Triple Divide* is an ambitious scholarly undertaking that meticulously navigates the intricate web of contemporary societal divisions around public morality. Fanning argues that certain social values and laws in contemporary Western societies, specifically English-speaking democracies, are rooted in unspoken and deeply ingrained beliefs about human nature, as well as in the rights and responsibilities of the individual. These beliefs are evident in ongoing debates related to issues such as censorship, abortion and LGBTQ+ issues, as Fanning shows.

The book explores how, over time, moral understandings have developed and become implicated in law, politics, social norms and more. It develops the central argument that particular values about human nature, personhood, rights and responsibilities hold significant influence. They are not a thing of the past, but rather have developed and adjusted to our contemporary context. Additionally, Fanning argues that the beliefs upon which moralities are based can be sorted into three major and conflicting types or streams, although they sometimes form alliances in addition to oppositions. The first type includes conservative views often based on Christian understandings of personhood. The second type involves classically liberal beliefs in the individual. The third type is seen as progressive, advancing ideas about the socially constructed nature of the self. Understanding how these beliefs continue to shape social and political conflicts adds an important perspective to sociological studies on morality, law and social policy.

Fanning provides a clear exploration of how moral understandings have manifested in societal structures and practices over the past two centuries, as well as in recent decades. He explores various contemporary debates on contentious issues, demonstrating how these debates shape moral politics and practices. The first chapter illustrates how advocates of the different types of moralities and beliefs have historically sought to impose their views on society and culture. Here, Fanning lays the groundwork for the subsequent discussions by examining how different belief systems have historically sought to frame society through their morals. He traces the evolution of different perspectives on moral thought throughout the subsequent chapters.

In the second chapter, the focus turns to the enduring influence of the Ten Commandments and the profound impact of St Augustine's writings, particularly *The City of God*. Augustine's negative view of human nature and his advocacy for coercive governance in the face of sin are explored in depth, highlighting how these ideas have shaped conservative perspectives. The third chapter juxtaposes Augustine's ideas with those of Rousseau, emphasising the contrast between their views on human nature and societal corruption. Rousseau's belief in the innate innocence of individuals and the corrupting influence of external forces lays the groundwork for later critiques of oppressive cultural structures.

Chapter four delves into liberalism, free speech, and intolerance, with a focus on John Stuart Mill's seminal work on individual liberty. Fanning examines the tension between protecting individual freedoms and guarding against the 'tyranny' of the majority, as well as contemporary challenges to the liberal tradition. In chapter five, the discussion shifts to religion, prohibition and censorship, exploring how theological beliefs have influenced temperance movements and debates over censorship. Fanning highlights unusual alliances between conservatives and feminists on issues like pornography, emphasising the complexity of these debates. Chapter six examines civil religion and its potential for intolerance and exclusion, drawing on Rousseau's concept of a universal civic religion. Fanning warns of the dangers of coercive public morality and the stifling of diversity in the pursuit of a uniform societal ideal. In the subsequent chapters, Fanning further delves into the emergence of unexpected alliances between 'conservatives' and 'liberals' against 'progressives'—Fanning's words, in line with previous scholarship on public morality—on certain issues, with some advocating for the enforcement of their values through law and other structures and practices that enforce public morality.

The seventh chapter navigates the contentious debate surrounding abortion, exploring the diverse perspectives of secular and religious, conservative, liberal and progressive thinkers. Fanning provides a sensitive and wide-ranging analysis of this complex issue. He navigates the historical, social, and philosophical dimensions that shape perspectives on abortion within the triple divide of conservative, liberal and progressive beliefs. The chapter scrutinises how these moral frameworks influence the ongoing debates surrounding abortion, highlighting the clash of values, rights, and individual autonomy. Fanning achieves a nuanced analysis of how different belief systems contribute to the polarisation of abortion discussions, shedding light on the complexities that emerge when moral convictions intersect with legal and ethical considerations. This chapter serves as a crucial exploration of a contentious issue within the

broader context of the culture wars, offering readers a deeper understanding of the diverse moral landscapes that underpin attitudes toward abortion in contemporary societies.

Following the chapter on abortion debates, Fanning explores debates on sex differences and gender identities, tracing the evolution of feminist thought and contemporary discussions on LGBT+ issues in the eighth chapter. Finally, in the concluding chapter, Fanning reflects on the future of debates on public morality, noting the enduring influence of both religious and secular ideologies. While liberals advocate for individual moral autonomy, conservatives and progressives alike continue to seek to enforce their values on society. The author cautions against dismissing religious influences on public morality and calls for a nuanced approach to navigating these complex debates.

Fanning's book contributes to an interdisciplinary understanding of contemporary debates, drawing on concepts and theories from sociology, but also law, psychology and history. This is crucial for studies on (public) morality—as people's moral understandings find their way into all these domains. The book uncovers the underlying assumptions of opposing positions, contextualising them, and providing readers with a comprehensive overview of issues that often have long histories and multiple phases of political and/or legal developments. Taking a chronological perspective and tracking moralities temporally as well as thematically is an interesting approach which highlights how moralities continue to underlie various debates.

However, the categorisation of the actors Fanning studies into three major types—conservative, liberal, and progressive—although a convenient framework, risks homogenising diverse perspectives within each category. The book tends to present these belief systems as monolithic entities, potentially overlooking the intricate and internal variations within conservative, liberal or progressive thought. Such generalisations might oversimplify the complexity of individual viewpoints and hinder a more nuanced understanding of the intricate interplay between moral values and cultural conflicts. Overall, Fanning's analysis feels more philosophical and theoretical than sociological and might perhaps be expanded on by additional empirical work. Despite this, the book remains a valuable contribution to the interdisciplinary discourse on contemporary debates, provided readers approach its categorisations with a critical awareness of the dynamics around issues such as abortion and same-sex marriage, and how particular discourses on culture wars sometimes further fuel societal polarisation.

All in all, *Public Morality and the Culture Wars: The Triple Divide* offers a thought-provoking and insightful analysis of the triple divide—and its mutually constituted and constitutive nature—that characterises public morality and the culture wars in contemporary contexts. The book is an invaluable resource for students and scholars interested in morality

issues and relevant theories, particularly when trying to grasp the multitude of contemporary political formations that these currently shape.

Charlotte Waltz is a postdoctoral researcher at the Department of Public Administration and Sociology at Erasmus University Rotterdam and the Pandemic and Disaster Preparedness Center. Her research considers how interdisciplinary scientific advice can contribute to pandemic and crisis responses. She received her PhD from University College Cork, where she researched post-legalisation abortion governance in the Republic of Ireland. Her work has been awarded an Irish Research Council Postgraduate Scholarship, a VSBFonds Award and a Cultuurfonds Scholarship.

Book Review – Connected Mobilities in the Early Modern World: The Practice and Experience of Modernity, edited by Paul Nelles and Rosa Salzberg.

Amsterdam University Press, 2023. 280 pp. €121.99

Brian de Ruiter
Brock University

Connected Mobilities in the Early Modern World contests the perception of a static early modern European society by highlighting the integral nature of its mobility through an examination of various understudied topics. The book explores this mobility and the (potential) limitations imposed on it by focusing on the following interrelated themes: 'Moving Bodies,' 'Crossing Borders,' and 'Networks, Distance, and Circulation' (p. 7). These themes are explained in three chapters each, thus engaging with the topics at great length. The research contributes to more recent scholarship by analysing the subject of mobility and the ways in which it has been perceived, facilitated and experienced by exploring a range of areas related to religion, physical being including aspects of gender, and extending to discussions of infrastructural development. The introduction to the volume identifies some of the existent research and frameworks that have explored this field of inquiry, including a "framework of circulation," which is important since Paul Nelles and Rosa Salzberg differentiate 'circulation' from 'movement' (p. 25). In this regard, the editors note applicable frameworks can move this field from being primarily descriptive to providing greater analysis. The introduction also presents potential pathways for future scholarship and a lengthy bibliography, which provides a firm foundation for additional research in this field.

The first three chapters by John Gallagher, Gerrit Verhoeven and Carolin Schmitz engage with the theme 'Moving Bodies' by focusing on the "motivations and experience of movement" (p. 26). Gallagher examines Fynes Moryson's *An Itinerary* (1617) as a case study to probe into early modern language acquisition and how such knowledge of languages and gestures could shape one's interactions and mobility in culturally and linguistically diverse areas. Verhoeven delves deeper into investigating the "experience of movement" through his study of the Grand Tour. He examines a vast range of travel journals written by Netherlandish burghers to give an account of how developed infrastructure and mobility created "a more positive framing of the landscape" (p. 75). The fact that these sources spanned a period from the late sixteenth to the mid-eighteenth century gives Verhoeven a sampling to chart the shifts in infrastructure, traveller experience and changes to itineraries. Verhoeven presents a lengthy

discussion on the evolving nature of transportation and its associated experiences, followed by a shorter section on how communication "created a virtual community" of individuals connected on an emotional level through letters while being physically distant (p. 77). Schmitz's chapter engages with motivation as she explores the factors that drove "ordinary patients" (p. 88), predominately in rural Spain, to travel for health reasons and the arrangements they made to meet these practitioners by studying Spanish Inquisition records and an assortment of other documentation. Schmitz illuminates the existence of "medical pluralism" in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Spain and recognises that "walking between 10 and 25 kilometres seems to have been typical" to seek out a diagnosis and/or treatment (pp. 104–105). This more or less aligns with Michael MacDonald's (1981) research that provides data on the approximate number of miles people were willing to travel to seek the services of Richard Napier, a fact noted by Schmitz. Although this helps lead Schmitz to conclude that "proximity seems to have played a secondary role," she recognises further research needs to investigate how 'proximity' was conceptualised in the early modern period (p. 105).

The second theme engages with borders and the various means "to channel and control the movement of people, goods, and information over distance" (p. 27). The theme of control and monitoring of those who crossed borders is particularly emphasised in the chapters by Irene Fosi and Darka Bilić as they analyse the mechanics of such control within the Papal States and Venetian Dalmatia, respectively. Fosi notes the distinction between "papal policies and their enforcement" (p. 114) when looking at the Roman Inquisition's policies towards Protestant merchants and students during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Fosi's use of documents from the Archivio della Congregazione per la Dottrina della Fede reveal how the Inquisition sought to restrict and monitor these Protestant movements due to concerns about heresy. Her research also demonstrates that civic authorities were reluctant to enforce the Inquisition's policies since they had concerns that it could adversely affect universities and local economies. Paola Molino engages with the question of how mobility affected sixteenth-century handwritten newsletters by examining three topics: the "infrastructure of circulation" for these newsletters, their "translation," and the "technologies of [their] production" (p. 135). By examining newsletters housed at the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Archivio Mediceo del Principato and Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Molino was able to analyse the quality of handwriting to determine some "were copied in haste" and compare copies of newsletters to determine if alterations were made and to what extent (p. 145). Molino puts forward potential explanations to account for these variations, which include copying errors and deliberate decisions on the part of newswriters to alter or omit content. Bilić takes an engaging look at

how and why the *lazzaretto* transitioned from "a plague hospital" to "managing the movement of people and goods" (p. 157) with the flow of goods being prioritized. Bilić delves into the development of the Dubrovnik and Split *lazzarettos* to conclude they were "shaped" to accommodate Ottoman traffic and by "the need to maintain order, security, and peace along a volatile border" (p. 177).

The third theme focuses on "how long-distance networks were activated in the context of early modern religious mobility" by examining three topics: the circulation of *agni dei*, the mobilities of Franciscan friars, and charting and analysing the mobilities of alms collectors with a focus on the travels of a Catholic Armenian one by the name of Father Andreas Ouzounean (p. 28). On this point of circulation, Paul Nelles probes into the uses of whole and fragmented *agni dei* in the sixteenth century as he seeks to showcase the importance of mobility in the study of this object. Nelles identifies various uses of *agni dei*, including "as markers of contact and conversion" (p. 28), but he particularly notes how these wax objects "furnished tangible links to Rome" (p. 187). Although research exists on what *agni dei* potentially symbolised in local and regional contexts, including in early modern England (Muller, 2008), Nelles is more interested in charting the global mobility of these objects. Felicita Tramontana explores how "overlapping networks" that were not primarily meant to transport people and "the existence of a continuum between short- and long-distance movement" (p. 232) shaped and assisted the movement of Franciscan friars and their possessions from Europe to the Holy Land and back during the seventeenth century. Tramontana identifies the ports used by these friars, particularly Livorno, and the travel dynamics that were influenced by natural and human factors and ship availability, which meant "journeys had to be constantly negotiated and decisions continuously modified" (p. 224). The last chapter focuses on the mobility of Father Andreas Ouzounean, as Sebouh David Aslanian traces the wide extent of this alms collector's movements in Europe and Asia by examining documents from archives of the Bzommar Congregation and the Antonine Archives. Although Aslanian examines the use of infrastructure for movement, he homes in on the importance of paperwork, such as certificates and letters, which he stresses "facilitate[d] both their [the alms collectors] fund-raising and their movement" (p. 253).

Connected Mobilities in the Early Modern World contributes to the growing body of literature in this field, as it explores the nuances of mobility for a variety of different social groups including rural, students, merchants and religious figures. Some of the authors in this text greatly contribute to the existing research on their topics through the sources they have uncovered, particularly Verhoeven whose content analysis of over 150 travel journals has

allowed him to present statistical data on the shifting nature of traveller experiences and mode of travel on the Grand Tour over time. His examination of letters has allowed him to engage with the questions on communication that he posed near the beginning of the chapter. The number of letters he has collected can potentially lend themselves to additional studies to further flesh out the communication aspect of the Grand Tour and how "letters and gifts created an emotional community" (p. 79). In addition, some of the authors identify potential pathways for further research. Such is the case with the questions Gallagher put forward at the end of his chapter and by Schmitz, who identified the need for further inquiry into the connections between gender and health-related mobility in rural Spain and Europe in general. Although the nature of the topics in this book and the identified pathways for future research are valuable for academics and students of early modern history, the language of the text makes it accessible for a general audience. This collection of essays makes a great contribution to current and future scholarship, and it is expected that future inquiry into this field of study will continue this trajectory as it uncovers new and underutilised sources and new ways of understanding and conceptualising early modern mobilities.

Dr Brian de Ruiter has been an adjunct professor at Brock University since 2008, teaching in the Centre for Digital Humanities, Department of History, the Centre of Intercultural Studies, the Centre for Canadian Studies and the Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies. In 2018 he was awarded the Clarke Thomson Award for Excellence in Sessional Teaching for this work. He received his PhD in 2014 from Swansea University focusing on North American Indigenous Cinema.

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Book Review – *Memory, Mobility, and Material Culture*, edited by Chiara Giuliani and Kate Hodgson.

Routledge, 2022. 258 pp. €136.00

Chara Charalambous
University College Cork

The central argument of *Memory, Mobility, and Material Culture* is that objects profoundly influence the shaping of cultural identity. This volume, featuring contributions from fifteen authors with diverse backgrounds in the field of social sciences and the arts is an excellent reference guide for material culture, memory and mobility in the field of social and cultural history, as well as in cultural studies. The book delves into historical and ongoing debates that have an impact on the present. Each part of the book has a set of case studies, and through thorough investigation, meticulous fieldwork data collection and direct communication with the people involved, the book serves as a pathway to a better future by addressing present-day challenges. Edited by Chiara Giuliani and Kate Hodgson, this volume represents a collaborative effort, with the contributors exploring various dimensions of the intersection between memory, mobility and material culture.

The book is a testament to the authors' combined expertise, making it valuable for those looking to expand their knowledge on tangible memory. While memory is often abstract, perceived as an intangible concept associated with the past and nostalgia, the twelve chapters explore the variety and alternative mechanics of the notion of memory. Readers are afforded the opportunity to identify its importance through mobile and tangible material in the form of objects. Drawing from different disciplines, including art history, architecture, heritage studies, language, literature and design the chapters provide diverse insights. This range of perspectives is reflected in the structure of *Memory, Mobility, and Material Culture*, which is divided into four parts that each focus on four distinct angles of the subject matter.

The first part, 'Moving Testimonies', analyses how resistance and personal beliefs can be destructive to local social norms and political circumstances. The authors' critical approach demonstrates how material objects, such as suitcases, maps, and shirts, can be a means of activism and protest. Furthermore, they act as relics not only of personal memory but also cultural memory and identity. In this section, it is evident that solidarity, civil conflicts, and violence can be expressed through the performing arts. Notably, Johanna Carvajal González, in her chapter entitled 'Why Is a Museum a Place to Rest in Peace? Relicarios by Colombian Artist Erika Diettes', discusses how a museum can be the ideal location for fostering peace and examines how materiality and physicality can create a safe space for social memory and

mourning through artistic installations. Specifically, she recognises how objects like clothing and accessories can assist in the process of grief in times of civil conflict (González, pp. 57–75).

The second part of the book, 'Moving Homes', discusses the harsh reality of the twenty-first century and the challenges faced by those who have been forced to leave their homes. In this section the authors explore the concept of nostalgia and how tangible objects such as jewellery, crafts and statues can hold sentimental value. It is evident that memory is intensified in diasporic populations, and the presence of certain objects can provide comfort to the displaced. Mastoureh Fathi, in 'Memories of Material Home: Refugee Women's Depiction of Absent Objects', focuses on continuity rather than the past (p. 100). The author advocates for artistic interventions in situations where people are forced to flee their homes. According to Fathi, one must concentrate on the links between memory and home, which must constantly be re-evaluated.

The book's third part, titled 'Moving Designs', stands out as an exceptional section that merges the arts and social sciences in a very alluring way. The authors in this part bring to life the ways in which design and architecture can contribute to the sustainability of memory, nostalgia, and belonging in a society. They paint a vivid picture of the ways in which the design of objects such as jewellery can be incorporated into cultural identity. In particular, Ombretta Frau's persuasive and engaging chapter examines the intricate symbolic value of pieces of jewellery possessed by Italian writers Contessa Lara (1849–1896) and Marchesa Colombi (1840–1920), who had different social backgrounds, but both struggled to find their identities in society. Through a detailed analysis, Frau sheds light on the societal pressure women face to feel involved in their community.

The final and fourth part of the book, 'Moving Histories', reminds the reader that objects, along with sensory experiences, have a vital involvement in history. The authors present an insightful view of how material culture and its associated practices can contribute to the protection of the past. Emma Bond and Mona Bozdog in 'The Smells and Tastes of Memory: Accessing Transitional Pasts through Material Culture' offer a fascinating interpretation of the role of sensory memory in accessing past experiences. The authors of this chapter explore how an object, such as sugar, can evoke non-visual senses, such as smell and taste, which then recreate and bring to life bitter and sweet recollections and re-imaginations of the past. Furthermore, the chapter creates additional possibilities for the consideration of nostalgia as a means of both safeguarding and challenging colonial legacies.

Memory, Mobility, and Material Culture is a core resource for researchers across the social sciences and arts disciplines. It provides a wealth of knowledge and insight that can help deepen scholars' understanding of the field. However, while the book focuses on material culture and objects, illustrations are lacking. Nevertheless, the plethora of case studies and fieldwork data, as well as the strength of the arguments presented in each chapter, support the overall quality of the discussions. By delving into the complexities of memory, mobility and material culture, the authors of this book offer enriching and constructive data that can aid researchers from all angles of the fields of arts and social sciences.

Chara Charalambous is a PhD candidate in Ethnomusicology at University College Cork. In her early career, she performed in many cross-cultural concerts in Cyprus, Greece, the UK, Ireland, Portugal, Spain and India. Chara is conducting crucial research on the sociocultural impact of carnival music from Cyprus. Her research is centred on the Limassol Carnival Serenades, where she analyses its influence on the local traditional music scene to ensure cultural sustainability. Additionally, she has presented her research at various conferences and seminars in Canada, Cyprus, Ghana, Ireland, Portugal, Spain and the UK.

Academic Event Report

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Event: Summer school "Urban Imaginary — Exploring Our Urban Futures"
Venue: Botanical Gardens, Centro de Estudos Educativos, Lisbon, Portugal
Date: 3rd to 7th July 2023

The "Urban Imaginary — Exploring our Urban Futures" summer school was a five-day training course organised by Dr Julia Bentz (NOVA University, Lisbon), a researcher in interdisciplinary social sciences and the leader of Working Group 3 (WG3), Arts and Outreach of the COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) Action, SHIFT (Social Sciences and Humanities for Transformation and Climate Resilience). The event took place in Lisbon's historic Botanic Gardens and the National Museum of Natural Science and History. Over the five days, students and academics from diverse backgrounds engaged in enlightening discussions. A total of 108 candidates worldwide applied for the summer school. SHIFT COST Action (CA21166) generously awarded twelve full grants and ten half-grants.

The summer school offered an intense lecture schedule, comprising of two morning panels and two afternoon sessions daily. Each morning session commenced with embodiment exercises led by Dr Marcus Bussey (University of the Sunshine Coast, Queensland, Australia) in the open space of the Botanical Gardens. These music-accompanied sessions focused on a theme that participants were guided through. Next, there were peer discussions which allowed participants to reflect on their experience. During the embodiment sessions, activities included dance, movement, performance, silences and pauses, dialogue, monologue, poetry reading and storytelling. Participants could choose to be active or remain still. They sometimes danced on behalf of the others or observed the actions of others and their interactions with space and subjectivities.

Day One

The first day's lecture was given by the futurist and methodologist Dr Maya Van Leemput (Erasmus University, Brussels) who discussed conflicting images of future and how individuals are continuously influenced by these images. Dr Van Leemput focused on how people are pushed towards specific changes of the future by thinking about its potentials and

possibilities. She illustrated this concept by assigning three different tasks to three groups who formed a triangle on stage which she labelled the "futures triangle". This triangle depicted how our future is influenced by certain forces: the pull of possible futures, the push of present needs and emerging trends, along with the weight of the past, tradition and existing systems. Dr Van Leemput concluded her presentation stating that the vision of the future is deeply informed by our perceptions of the past; therefore, what is recommended when considering futures is to "look back before looking forward".

The second lecture was given jointly by Dominika Glogowski (Director of artEC/Oindustry), an expert in visual arts, art history and art management and Dr Andreia Sousa (University of Aveiro) who holds a PhD in marine ecosystems and climate change. Both speakers drew attention to the idea of becoming more sensitive to nature through "sound" and "deep listening". They highlighted the significance of embodied relations in the ocean through sounds of dolphins and marine soundscapes. They also emphasised how listening is a multifaceted activity that can transform both humans and nature, fostering interaction and action based on emotional responses. This fluid approach to listening and communication, as Glogowski and Dr Sousa underlined, resonates with the fluidity of water as a transportation system.

The afternoon session started with Dr Van Leemput who explored the contradictions, complexity and chaos in our environment, suggesting that they indicate a shift towards post-normal times. Within this chaos, she advocated for imagining the future for individuals to navigate themselves effectively. She also focused on the changing conceptualisation of time, which she linked to the idea that there is not just one single future but there are "futures" which are "queer".

Dr Julia Bentz, the main organiser of the summer school, led the last session, which took place in one of the remarkable halls of theNational Museum of Natural Science and History. Participants formed a circle on the marble floor and briefly shared their superpower, reflecting on their lives in relation to the object they brought with them. This unconventional introductory session set the tone for the lecture series and extracurricular activities in the following days, fostering encounters and embodied practices.

Day Two

After the morning embodiment exercises on the second day, Dr Bussey and Dr Lena Bloemertz (University of Applied Science FHNW in Switzerland) delivered a talk on how space affects humans and moulds their behaviours, which stimulated a discussion on cities

as places of transformation. Dr Bloemertz focused on the relationship between food, eating habits and urban environments.

The last session was led by Dr Bentz and Dr Kiat Ng (University of Porto), one of the supporting organisers of the summer school, a researcher at the Interdisciplinary Centre of Marine and Environmental Research (CIIMAR). Their presentation departed from the prevalent idea of the subject-object separation in modern science. Dr Ng emphasised the need for a reconsideration of transdisciplinarity because reality is incomplete and interconnected. Similarly, Dr Bentz highlighted the relationship between humans and nature, drawing attention to the idea of rekindling connections between all beings. Dr Bentz stressed the notion that through deep listening, self-reflexivity, creating space and taking action, individuals can relate to the others and practice kinship. The presentation ended with an epigraph by Dr Robin Wall Kimmerer (SUNY), which is worth quoting at length as it closely aligns with the objectives and theme of the summer school:

> Singing whales, talking trees, dancing bees, birds who make art, fish who navigate, plants who learn and remember. We are surrounded by intelligences other than our own, by feathered people and people with leaves. But we've forgotten. There are many forces arrayed to help us forget—even the language we speak.

For the rest of the day, participants met to establish co-creation groups before embarking on a phenomenological exploration of Lisbon. They were divided into three groups for different guided tours: sound, visual and smell and taste. The sound tour was led by Dr Sousa and Dominika Glogowski. The guide of the visual tour was Dr Leticia do Carmo (Lisbon Architecture Triennale). The smell and taste tour was led by a professional herbalist and perfumery expert, Marion Rimbert. At the end of the day, the groups reconvened at a park to reflect on their experience.

Day Three

On the third day, Dr Pedro Pinho (University of Lisbon), a biologist with a special focus on urban biodiversity and Dr Siddharth Sareen (University of Bergen), professor of energy and environment gave their speech. They talked about ways of integrating technology and natural elements into urban futures. Their presentations highlighted certain solutions for enhancing urban sustainability through nature-based approaches such as expanding the use of solar power within urban areas. Dr Pinho and Dr Sareen also raised intriguing questions like "is planting trees always a solution?" to challenge the ongoing environmental discourse and uncover limitations within existing environmental systems.

The second session featured Dr Jelena Ristic Trajkovic (University of Belgrade), another supporting organiser, who is an associate professor of architecture and the co-leader of the WG3. She discussed the development of future urban scenarios and drew on various questions relating to space and spatial scenarios. Dr Ristic Trajkovic stated that our task should be to develop the program of possibilities for everyone and design spaces for friendship and inclusivity. She also maintained that our behaviours and environment are interlinked in a way that environment acts on the way how we feel. In the same way, we have the power to change our environment through our behaviours, bodily acts and artistic practices because space is the product of interrelations.

In the afternoon, Dr Ristic Trajkovic, together with Dr Bloemertz, elaborated on alternative futures, citing the example of Barcelona's superblock model, an initiative about prioritising pedestrians over cars in the neighbourhood. They concluded that the future scenarios for cities should encapsulate reciprocal interactions among places, people, culture and time, which underscores the necessity of focusing on convivial and cohesive urban futures.

Day Four and Day Five

The participants, in groups of five, worked towards their final projects and prepared artistic and academic presentations based on what they had learned about Lisbon in the preceding days. Tutors were available to guide them in the process. On the final day of the summer school, each group presented their project, followed by an open floor session for questions, discussions, and evaluation.

Conclusion

The absence of hierarchies between scholars, students and stakeholders made the event valuable for participants. It created a space of understanding and tolerance where everyone could contemplate and collaborate towards transforming our urban futures. The programme, which incorporated lectures and training sessions, was bolstered with various extracurricular activities such as a traditional Lisbon boat tour and a guided tour of the Botanical Gardens. The summer school ended with a farewell dinner in one of Lisbon's environmentally conscious restaurants. Participants felt thankful for the meaningful encounter and hoped for further collaborations in envisioning more kincentric urban futures.

Dr Dilek Öztürk Yağcı is a lecturer at Istanbul Technical University, School of Foreign Languages where she teaches writing composition and short story courses. She is currently a Postdoctoral Research Fellow in the School of English at Trinity College Dublin. After graduating with High Honours from the English Department at Ankara University, she earned her MA in English Literature from Boğaziçi University, focusing on narrative presence in Samuel Beckett's drama. During her PhD studies, she served as a research fellow at Queen's University Belfast, working with both the Institute of Irish Studies and the Brian Friel Theatre. She completed her PhD at Middle East Technical University, examining spatial dynamics in Brian Friel's late plays through contemporary human geography. Her research focuses on contemporary British and Irish literature, theatre and performance studies, as well as studies of space, place, and environment. Her monograph, *Re-Reading Brian Friel: Space, Place, and Text*, will be published by Routledge in 2025.

Academic Event Report

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Event: The 16th Annual Feminist Theory Workshop (FTW)
Venue: Duke University
Date: 24th to 25th March 2023

The Feminist Theory Workshop (FTW) is a two-day annual conference hosted by the Department of Gender, Sexualities, and Feminist Studies at Duke University, North Carolina. Established in 2007, the FTW, now a mainstay of the feminist academic calendar, has featured distinguished speakers who are titans of feminist scholarship, including Hortense Spillers (Professor Emerita, Vanderbilt University) in 2007, Donna Haraway (Professor Emerita, University of California, Santa Cruz) in 2011 and Silvia Federici (Professor Emerita, Hofstra University) in 2018. I had the privilege of participating in the 16th Annual FTW (March 24th to March 25th, 2023) and flew to North Carolina for the event. The workshop was a hybrid event, and as well as having a substantial crowd physically present, there was a large and supportive online community in attendance. Across the two days there were five keynote speakers, smaller seminar sessions and a roundtable discussion. The keynote speakers were Professor Roderic Ferguson (Yale), Professor LaMonda Horton-Stallings (Georgetown University), Professor Sayak Valencia (El Colegio de la Frontera Norte) and co-keynote speakers Dr Nat Raha (Independent Activist-Scholar) and Dr Mijike van der Drift (Royal College of Art, London). The workshop focused on contemporary developments in feminist theory, especially concerning epistemologies of power and community, with the aim of finding spaces for connection and alternative pathways of growth in an increasingly polarised world.

Day 1: Professor Roderick Ferguson, Dr Nat Raha and Dr Mijike van der Drift

The first day of the FTW began with an organised lunch. This was a lovely way to meet other academics from all around the world, most of which were PhD students. In the afternoon, Professor Ferguson gave the first keynote speech. He focused on conceptualising masculinity, especially concerned with what he deemed the 'super-patriarch'—an embodiment of psychopathy, the type of masculinity that takes lack of empathy, personal gain, and individualism to extremes, and a type of masculinity that neo-liberal capitalism depends on. Professor Ferguson agitated the narrative behind what is considered 'psychopathic' behaviour,

and while his talk received some pushback from the audience, it was a thought-provoking and transgressive lecture that encouraged a more critical view of both masculinities and clinical psychiatry. This critical approach to production of empirical knowledge was a common theme across all the keynote talks.

The second lecture of the first day came from co-keynote speakers Dr Raha and Dr Van Der Drift. They spoke of theorising their experiences as trans women and trans activists into the conceptualisation of 'femme collectivities', which is a key part of their co-authored book, *Trans Femme Futures: An Ethics for Transfeminist Worlds* (forthcoming, 2024, Pluto Press). 'Femme collectivity' in this instance refers to the supportive gatherings of women and femme-identifying people, and Dr Raha and Dr Van Der Drift pointed to the power and resistance that such collectivities can hold, as well as the potential transformative capacity of femme collectivity in a political sense. Like Professor Ferguson, they pointed to the need for new ways to extend knowledge.

Day 2: Professor Sayak Valencia, Seminars and Professor LaMonda Horton-Stallings

On the second day Professor Valencia and Professor Horton-Stallings gave talks. Professor Valencia began the morning session, and her talk focused on femicide and cultural representations of the murder of women. In particular, she called attention to the killing of trans women. Generally speaking, academic work surrounding femicide can be quite trans exclusionary, and in direct contrast with this Professor Valencia adopted and prioritised a transfeminist approach. She then examined masculinity in the context of gendered killings, calling us to consider what she called 'necro-masculinity'—the interweaving of masculinist ideals and gendered violence, similar to Professor Ferguson's analysis.

After this first talk, the seminar sessions began. Each seminar consisted of twenty to twenty-five people, and groups were assigned based on general area of academic expertise, so members of each group had some overlapping scholastic commonalities. Each seminar group was led by one of the keynote speakers. I was placed in Professor Valencia's group, as I work primarily in gender-based violence. The seminar discussion focused on conversations around the talks already given, as well as a very pertinent exploration of what it means to be considered an 'expert' in any given field, especially concerning the act of witnessing. Some points that arose pertaining to this concerned the ethics of voice and narrative, and the role of the academic in legal settings, particularly in courts of justice. The seminar discussions complemented the content of the earlier talks and allowed space for the enactment of progressive ideas collectively and the querying of power dynamics.

Professor LaMonda Horton-Stallings gave the final keynote lecture in a talk that spoke to storytelling and cultural narratives, detailing the historical (but also contemporary) strong resistance to the storytelling and experience of Black women in academia, especially queer Black women. She also discussed the power of storytelling as a tool for positive political and social change, as well as addressing how storytelling can help to broach difficult topics with larger audiences, such as eroticism and sensuality.

Conclusion

The Duke FTW drew to a close on the second day with a roundtable of notable academics. These were Professor Amber Jamilla Musser (University of New York) and associate professors Sameena Mulla (Emory University), Juliette Singh (University of Richmond) and Kimberly Lamm (Duke University). Gathering the corners of discourse together, this discussion illuminated the key themes and shared motifs of the talks. The roundtable panel concluded that a feminist psychoanalytic approach was prevalent in the keynote lectures, and all of the speakers pointed to the harms that traditional (i.e. Freudian) psychoanalytic thought has brought to vulnerable communities. Finding spaces of resistance and new ways of conceptualising power and knowledge were also key components of the sessions. A further commonality of the talks was an evident attempt to carve out space for ‘political possibilities’, examining what those possibilities look like, and who they affect.

The FTW was a beautiful way to re-enter world of convivial academic connection after COVID-19 lockdowns. Participating in the workshop and sharing research and experiences with colleagues from around the world was a rewarding and enriching experience.

Ellen O Sullivan is a third-year PhD student in Sociology and Women’s Studies in UCC. Prior to beginning this PhD, she completed a master’s degree in Women’s Studies and her research analysed the media presentation of Incel homicide in America. Her PhD research focuses on the portrayal of femicide in Irish media, and how that representation informs our ideas about nationalism and nationhood. She has presented her work on gender-based violence, masculinities, and femicide both nationally and internationally. Currently, she is also working as a tutor in the Department of Sociology and Criminology, UCC.

Corcaiġ Ceann an Doṁain

Richard Keyes McDonnell

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This map is entitled Corcaiġ Ceann an Doṁain ("Cork, the Head of the World"), which is inspired by the Latin phrase *Roma caput mundi*. It is painted with acrylics on canvas board, and finished with coffee stain and shellac, and the map is orientated to the east. The aim was to make a map from the perspective of Cork being at its centre and distort the world around it. The central landmass is Ireland with a disproportionately sized Cork: on the left is the Shannon estuary, and further above is Galway Bay and Lough Neagh. Surrounding Ireland is Iceland on the lower left, Iberia on the lower right, Norway and Britain to the top, and India and the Caspian Sea at the top right. The map is inspired by medieval world maps, or *mappae mundi* (in particular, the Cotton World Map found in a manuscript held in the British Library - Cotton MS Tiberius B. V, f. 56v) which were produced in what is now Britain, France and Germany from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries.

These maps share little (and arguably no) relationship with the modern discipline and concept of cartography, and exist in an altogether separate paradigm of production, composition and consumption. This contention was elaborately explored in Matthew Edney's *Cartography: The Ideal and Its History* (2019) and has become a topic of discussion at the proceedings of the International Conference for the History of Cartography and the International Society for the History of the Map. In particular, the standard historiography of maps has come under criticism for producing teleological narratives of map history which presuppose certain values and ideals as to what a map is, and is for, which largely originated in recent centuries.

These kinds of medieval maps are primarily concerned with relaying events in time (predominantly biblical, classical, and sometimes near historical) and setting them in the context of space. They appeared in bound manuscripts like the Cotton World Map, as well as standalone large wall maps (such as the Hereford and Ebstorf maps). Usually, they depict the continents of Asia, Africa and Europe, which were situated in the northern habitable zone of the Earth, as it was understood from the climate zone theories appropriated from classical and late antique cosmology. They were often oriented eastwards toward Paradise and centred their projection on Jerusalem, giving prominence to the biblical world.

Corcaiġ Ceann an Doṁain
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They are representative of encounters of several kinds: on one level, they reveal encounters with landscapes, peoples, and cultures that are at the margins of or altogether removed from the mapmaker's knowledge and offer historians valuable insights into how these mapmakers understood their world in relation to others. But the encounter which these maps are perhaps

most concerned with could be said to be the immaterial relationship between the self and others. The didactic genre of *speculum* ("mirror") literature became widely popular in the late medieval period. The thirteenth century Old Norse *Konungs Skuggsjá* ("King's Mirror"), which takes the form of a dialogue between father and son discussing politics and morality intended as an instructional manual of sorts, also included discussions of the shape of the world and of its 'marvels'. What sort of cosmologies and metaphysical lenses frame our everyday lives (consciously or unconsciously), how might they influence our ethical and spiritual development, and ultimately, influence how we encounter, reckon with, and ultimately relate and act with others?

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Mac Fheidhlimidh

Cáit Pléimionn
University College Cork

> *"Screaming her rebellion from within in the womb [...]"*
> – Muireann Ní Bhrolcháin (1994), p. 118.

Éist -
An liúbhéic, an ghéis

Idir uafás agus iontas
ar na meisceoirí ciúnaithe
Iad ag stánadh, ag gácáil
gan tionnúr ar a súile
ar bhean chéile Fheidhlimidh
is a comrádaí ceilte.

Ó Chathbad a tháinig
an fógra fáidhiúil:
Macaomh laoich
Gaiscíoch brúidiúil!

Líonadh na hadharca
nuair a chualathas a gháir chatha
fraochmhar chun fola -
agus d'óladar a shláinte.

Rain

Niamh Meaney
Mary Immaculate College, Limerick

Just because he is the sun and you are the rain,
Does not mean you are no more than he.
Because even though the sun gives light and life
It also burns and destroys.

Rain may be gloomy
But it comes along to fill the thirst of the earth.
And fix the scorched destruction of fire.
It is the mediator of the elements.

You are the rain.

One Winter in Genova, I Was Somebody Else

Lucy Holme
University College Cork

Oh, to idly smoke again! To pay no heed to age or risk
and stifled lungs, to the surreptitious shaving off of days.
But the truth, when it hits is so unchic. Even though I long
to feel European-sleek again, like Kate Moss in 90s Versace
or Monica Vitti in tortoiseshell shades; to return
to when I'd court the hours like zealous suitors,
wrapped in the Ligurian dusk—
          well, that girl is gone.
From a mezzanine high above Via Roma, cigarette in hand,
I'd watch the women in mink hats and muffs stroll,
miniature dogs tucked underarm. I bought Alaïa wedges
from the vintage boutique; black velvet with a cliff-face heel,
straps which climbed my calves like blackened ivy,
but mostly my scuffed leather boots sufficed for the places I went—
like Maddalena, where I met you. When a local salon cut me a fringe
I said nothing, though it didn't suit—thought incognito best
for this brand-new shameless guise. It never made sense to me—
the plot twist—but regardless, after we kissed, I couldn't get
the chalk taste of you out of my mouth. Nothing on Earth
had ever scared me more than what I was about to do.
          A salt-wash of wounds—
          a blood-let under blood moon.
Now, I have forgotten the date they built the Sottoripa,
and when the sea still lapped the colonnaded quays.
I guess we never see the details at first. The flaked orange rust
on the balustrade, which stained my hands. The iron key,
hanging slant on a broken hook. The ravens plunging for bread
in the fountain on the night I got locked out.
Things like that had never happened to me before.
What is Italian for *magnitude*? I was always looking up
the damn phrases you used—*Sentiamo come te la cavi adesso—*
          Too bad! You'd say, *it's slang, of course*. I never worked out
          what you meant. I haven't yet.
But with a stitch from climbing the marble stairs and a fever of sorts,
I waited for you to ride the death-trap elevator. And later,
when you slammed the kitchen door the glass pane cleft
scattering barbed slivers like a mean February frost.
I liked that you didn't smoke, but you never minded when I did.
You joined me on the terrace only once. A galvanic charge
as lightning hit the flagpole on the roof and lit up the port.
Remember the calm before you brought me shaking
into bright white plumes.

Figure

Marie O'Brien
University College Cork

Through the trees, the light seeped through
I swear I saw a glimmer
A beam of light, I swear that night
I swear, I saw a figure

I saw it there between the barks
I watched, allowing my thoughts simmer
I swear that night I saw it right
I swear, it must have been her

That night the light, it burned so bright
Until slowly, I saw it dimmer
I swear that night, I saw the light
Though no saint, I swear I'm no sinner

Grace in Motion

Janine Schipper
Northern Arizona University

On this lovely rainy morning, as puffy white clouds with stormy grey bottoms drift across the sky, I find myself writing from indoors, versus the outdoor spaces that usually captivate my senses. The rhythmic pitter-patter of raindrops against the windowpane creates a cozy ambiance that contrasts with the usual bustling energy of the outdoors. As I gaze outside, the lush greenery seems even more alive, each leaf and flower sparkling with raindrops, nature's own delicate jewels. The air carries a faint earthy scent, a reminder of the rejuvenation this rainfall brings to the land. The symphony of distant thunder adds an element of grandeur to the scene, reminding me of the power and beauty of the natural world. I'm taken back to the ten days this summer when we took a safari in Kenya, and I looked across the far expanse of the savannah. The rain outside seems to echo the rhythm of that distant land, connecting the lushness of my current view with the arid beauty of the African plains.

In my mind's eye, I remember a scene of forty colossal cape buffalo, a living embodiment of strength and wild beauty, slowly traversing the expanse of the land. I am positioned on the opposite side of the watering hole that they are heading toward, a curious observer separated by the trappings of a ditch and protective fencing. Yet, this strategic vantage point affords me an intimate encounter with these majestic creatures as they march with a purposeful gait towards their destination.

Each member of this impressive assembly tips the scales at a staggering 900 pounds, and some even approach a ton. Their imposing mass belies their elegance as they gracefully move together. There is no frantic jostling or disorder among them, no individual rushing ahead in a bid to quench its thirst first. Instead, they flow together as an organic whole. In stark contrast, mere feet away from my position, humans bustle with their own activities. People scurry about, anticipation palpable in the air, eagerly awaiting the opening of the dinner buffet. The quiet arrival of the cape buffalo, zebras, elephants, and others, gently organising themselves along the edge of the watering hole, contrasts with the frenetic energy of the diners. Amidst the chaos, diners buzz around, raising their voices to be heard over the clamour of the crowded room, oblivious to the magnificent creatures just a few feet away, engaged in their tranquil evening drink. Two waiters

appear at the dining room entrance, each awkwardly manoeuvring a sizable container toward the centre of the room. Their steps lack synchronisation, each dedicated to hurriedly delivering the food as fast as possible. Meanwhile, the diners clumsily inch closer to the front of the line, as if proximity to the source would expedite the arrival of their meals. The juxtaposition strikes me—here I stand, an enthralled witness to the buffalo's unhurried approach to the watering hole, while nearby, the human world whirls in a flurry of anticipation.

A poignant realisation dawns upon me—humans, it seems, are captive to the whims of their own goals, ensnared in the labyrinth of their anticipations for the future. Their mental landscapes are painted with visions of forthcoming meals to quell their hunger or, failing that, to fulfil their many desires. I am no exception to this pattern. How often have I found myself eagerly awaiting a meal, only to consume it hastily and thoughtlessly. Meanwhile, in stark contrast, the buffalo are present in their bodies and with each other, in no rush to quench their thirst as they gracefully move across the land.

It was like this with all the thousands of animals we witnessed over those unforgettable days, without a single exception. As I observed the imposing African Elephants, with the males weighing in at over 7 tons and the females at 4 tons, I beheld these immense beings through a fresh perspective. My preconceived notion of their footsteps resembling thunderous crashes across the earth was swiftly dispelled. Instead, their colossal strides were but a faint murmur upon the terrain, not the anticipated resounding boom. These titans of the savannah, much like the cape buffalo, exuded an undeniable air of elegance and effortlessness in their movement. Every step they took, filled with a gentle graceful ease, highlighted the presence they held within their own bodies.

Immersed in the company of countless captivating African animals for ten consecutive days, including a myriad of buffalo, elephants, as well as hippopotamuses, giraffes, gazelle, ostriches, lions, cheetahs, wildebeest, and impala, I found myself existing in their midst. From dawn till dusk, day after day, their very essences seemed to integrate into my own. I could feel my own body as it moved across the earth in a different way. I received the gift of their graceful presence modelled for me, and a fragment of their essence was carried home, residing within me.

At times, a wave of longing washes over me—a yearning for the sense of connectedness and fluid presence that being with those animals brought. Yet, I also simply miss the animals themselves. I ache for the symphony of sounds—the gentle yet resolute tug of grass as an elephant grazes, uprooting it from the earth or the low rumble of a buffalo's call, resonating through the air,

or the piercing high pitch of a hyena's squeal, cutting through the night. My heart longs to once again observe the grazing animals—gazelles, impalas, and zebras—feeding side by side, watching out for one another. I yearn for the sight of the cape buffalo as they gather in groups, their eyes meeting ours as we passed by, signalling a deep connection between our worlds.

The rain has eased into a gentle drizzle, and I'm venturing outdoors for my morning walk. Perhaps I'll see some cows in the forest today. They'll traverse the forest with the same unhurried pace, pausing now and then to regard me, evoking memories of the buffalo's contemplative gaze. There's also the chance of encountering elk, the giants of this forest. The bull elk can weigh over 1000 pounds. And just as my immersion with the African animals taught me, I'll be reminded to become present within my body. I'll stride unhurriedly, syncing my pace with theirs. I'll walk slowly, synchronising my steps with the rhythm of my awareness, forging a connection with my body, and learning from the animals how to be, gracefully, human.

In Through the Ears

Josh Wagner
Independent author

Triskelion swirls of neolithic fog, carved freehand into the living wood. Three interwoven spirals, balance in opposition. Set to stone thousands of years ago at Éireann's ancient passage tomb. To re-emerge long after on Sicilian and Manx in a cartoonish wheel of human legs.

But all you see is *Starry Night*.

You'd been out jogging, and when you stopped to take a breather against the tree you noticed it. Carved into the branch's bark. By a faerie queen, perhaps? The thought makes you smile. Out branding sacred oaks to advertise a coming ceremony. A summons and a signpost that will lead curious hearts to the grove, where a network of loosely confederated animal-hybrid fae-types will shepherd the stirring hypnogogs toward an awakening to the invisible world that has been hiding under their noses all along. Then they'll dance by light of a full moon until the toxins sweat off into flower cups and the leafy midrib folds of undergrowth. Later, these will be gathered carefully and poured over dying embers in the first frosty dawn of a new age.

Laugh at these notions. They distract you from a terrifying reality laying siege to your conscious mind. You don't know where you. You don't know what came before, just moments ago. What little light filters through the branches indicates sunset. And these are deep woods with thick and heavy understory. But the last thing you recall is jogging through the park after morning therapy. Ages ago. Far away. Did you zone out and get lost? It would not be the first time. What does your therapist say? Deep breaths until you find the place in your body where anxiety originates.

You hear a voice cry out: *Someone's coming!*

A voice in your head, though, probably. Urgent, like a warning or promise. Or… like an invitation? The worship, the dance. Your laughter echoes off the leaves. Alone in the woods. No clue how. Breathing in and out. Not to worry. An entire city surrounds you. Still, streets will trickle to forest at some point. Like out where Emma went off the road. Asleep at the wheel. Rolled her car. Unconscious when she died, they say. You hope for a visit every night. But she never comes, and by now you've decided that wherever she is (which is *nowhere!* She is dead is where she is), it's certainly not the dreamworld. Anyway. Still. Shouldn't have died. Should absolutely not be

dead. Not by any statistical reckoning. Not in any sensible world. Wasn't driving fast. Drifted off the road, came to a gradual stop. Sustained no injuries other than the bonk on the head that knocked her out. Barely enough slope to roll the car. Upside down so gravity could choke her to death with her own seatbelt. If she hadn't buckled up, she'd still be alive. Or even if she'd been going a bit faster. Crashed into a tree. Then maybe

she

would

still

be

alive.

Your scream is a high-pitched rattling *fuck*, or *faaaaargh* or something starting with an *f*, and then on and on, mixing into reflections off the leaves until your air runs raw and you've curled into a spiral on the ground, tasting your own tears.

Someone's coming.

The thought connects to a sound. A crunch of footsteps… or echo of. So faint.

Perhaps you're only losing your mind. Undiagnosed brain tumour or some creeping degenerative illness. That might be better than an unreliable timeline. Skipping ahead for no reason. Or back… Way back. Your fingertip traces the triskelion. Centre wave to outer rings, flowing right on down the drain toward the point of reversal and back again. How long have you been...? Is this your life now? No clue where you came from or what brought you here or where here even is... Nor, if you are honest, have you ever been able to recall a single incident in its full extent from beginning to end. All episodic. No continuity, this life of yours. No start, no finish, no transition from what came before. Just a head jam packed with the middles of things. Perhaps this moment, too, will fade from as you overcome consciousness through slow, deep breathing, peeling you out of the world and into your body. Dissolving into the sensation of pulse, the flow of suspicion. How long will it take, you wonder, swirling along the carved trenches where tiny slivers of bark flake away? Kneeling now. Fingers on the tree. Swirling the carved trenches into tiny flaking slivers of bark. Did you do this? How long until this mindless tracing becomes the only reality you've ever known? Until it dawns on you that you are in fact and have always been that very queen. Dispatcher of emissaries. Constructing your labyrinths from tree to tree—summoning the lost and confused, the abandoned and mislaid, the runaways and the cursed and the

sleepwalkers, the amnesiacs and the dreamers and those whose anchors have flown away. Bring them. Beckon them here. Draw them into your arms. *Someone is coming*. Footsteps grow near. Soon they will kneel before you, trembling in your firefly mists and those delicate silver flowers who grow and bloom and wither in a breath. Someone is coming. How long until the signal? Until they leap and dance in triskelion swirls, crushing the meadow with bare toes, ducking low branches and kicking up splashes of dew... on and on and on and on… in a pattern begin ages gone by… passed down through generation from mother to child, from lover to lover, from child to stone… tracing these footpaths, rolling back the years breath by breath until the rehearsal is indistinguishable from the performance, spun and renewed, charmed and awakened, dressed in fresh infancy and crystal skin, coddled over by open hearts, warm eyes, contented exhaustion until each memory leaps off the cliff's edge of their tongues, egged on by a melody drawn in through the ears. And how long until they're startled awake by the car bouncing and rolling and slamming against the side of the planet or from flight through woods too sparse and civilized for anyone to possibly get lost. Not on their own. Not without your guidance and spells. Sleep little baby all is well.

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Somebody is coming. Breathe deep, and allow the feeling to enfold you. Let the grasses and the wildflowers grow high above you, until your pieces have diminished enough for insects to

ferry low. Down, down, along highways of root. Down into murky municipalities you are parcelled and carted and fed nibble by nibble into grubling mouths. Do not fear the winding way. You will rise again. In one thousand years, when the world is ready for luminosity, for starting over. When the queen of the wood forgets her silly dreams—and in forgetting, recalls herself as dancer and inducer and metanoist and resurrectionist?

Not so long, it seems. A soft shuffle disturbs the bracken beneath your feet. Soon your incipient arrival will deposit you there beside the tree. Someone has come. A shattered thing. What's that? You don't remember the path you took to get here? A tumble, a roll, some spiralling lights? Hush now. Fear not what you can never recall... Sit beside me under the star jammed night. Inhale the expanse. Retrace your footsteps. Feel into your body. Exhale your form. Offer up dreams, and rest a while.

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