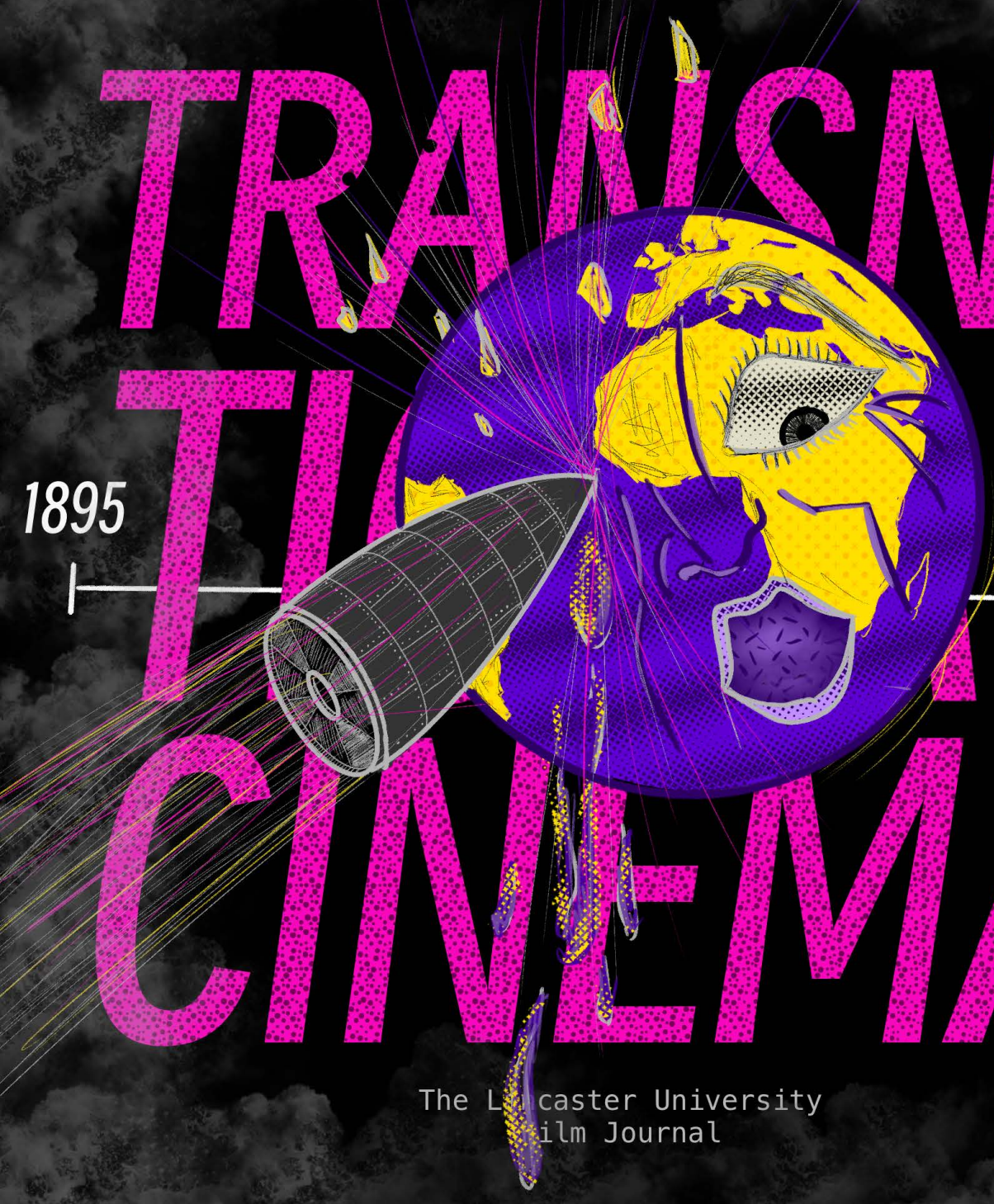
CUT/TO

# TRANSNATIONAL CINEMA

1895 — 2023



The Lancaster University
Film Journal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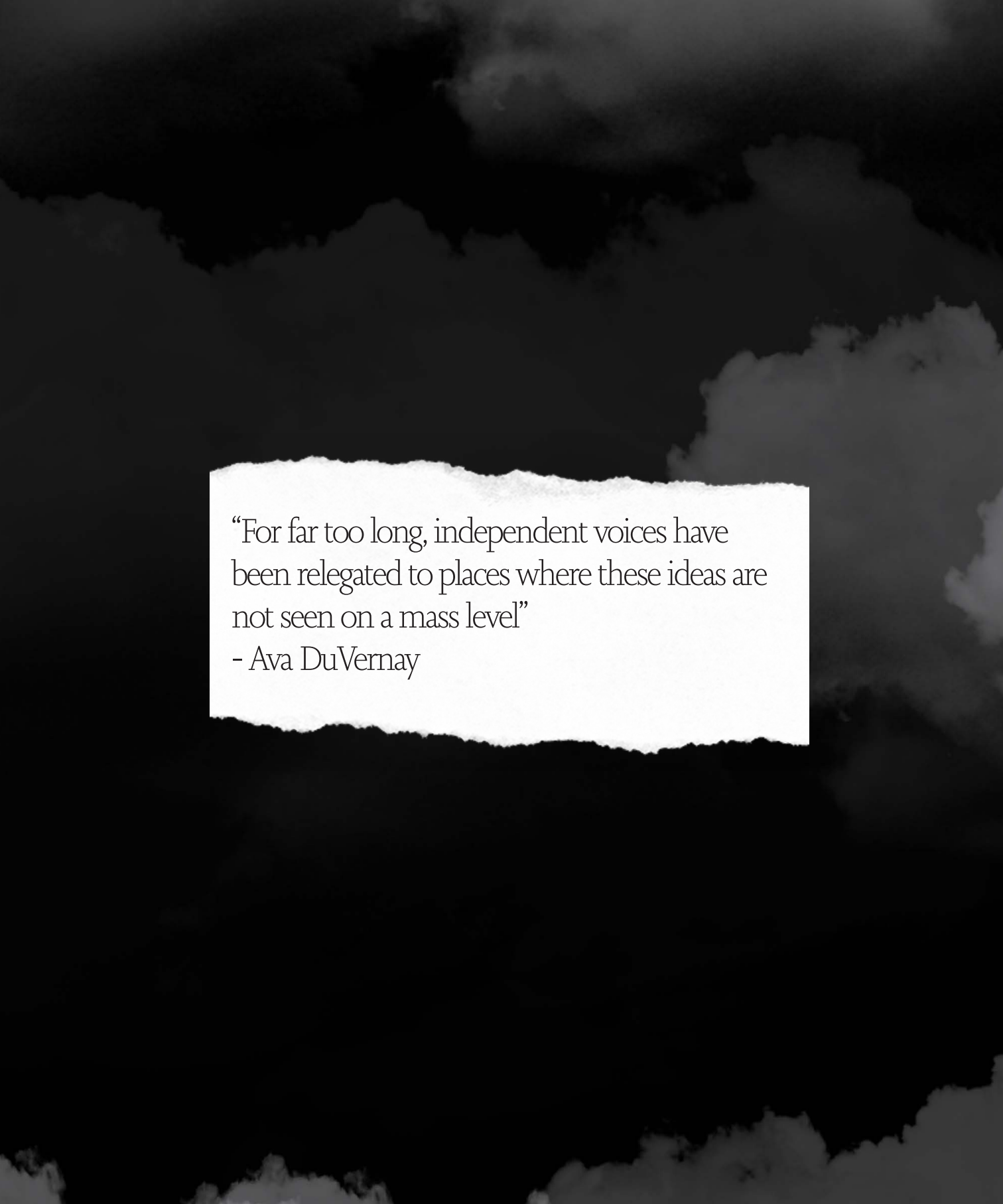
“For far too long, independent voices have been relegated to places where these ideas are not seen on a mass level”
- Ava DuVernay


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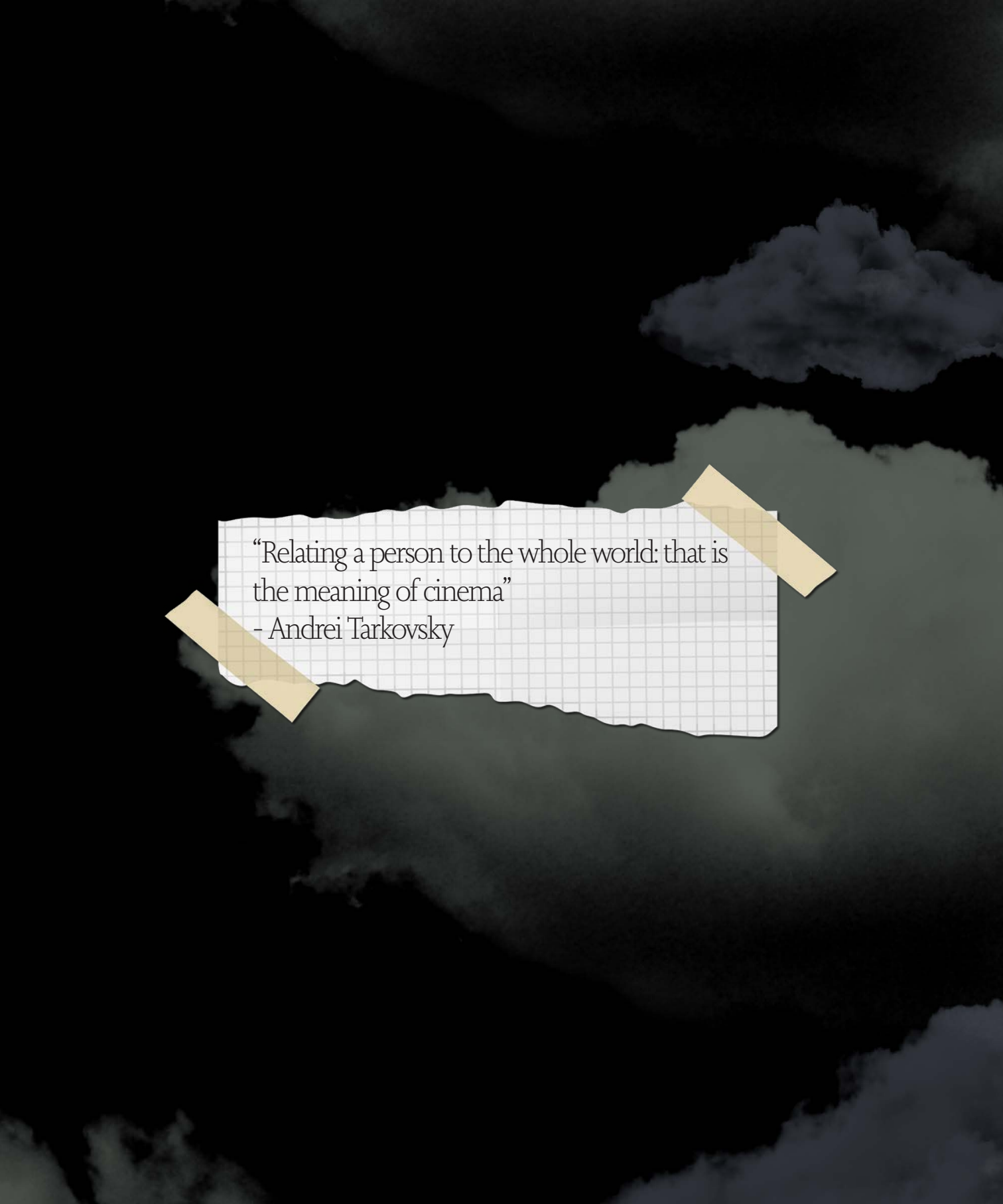
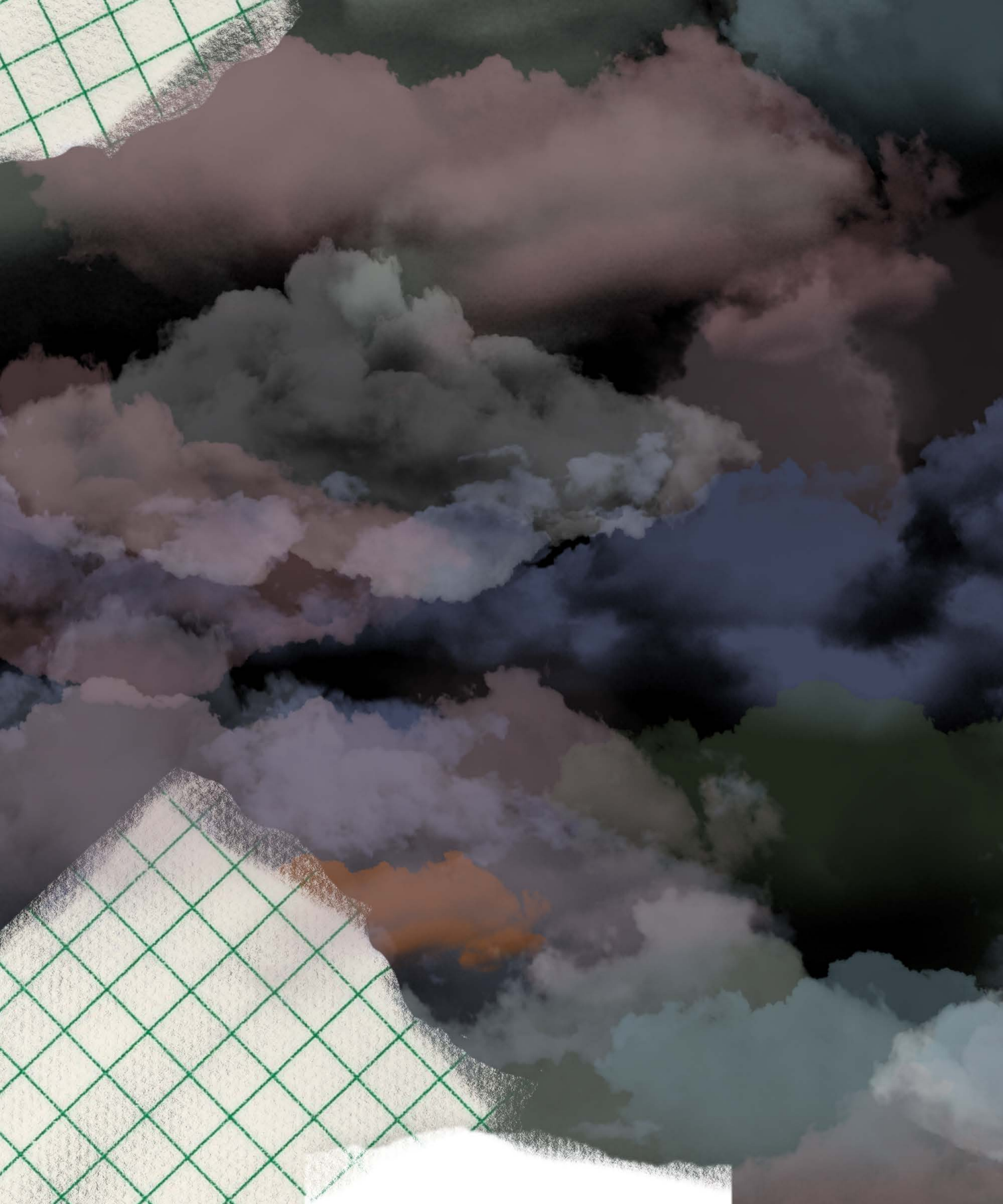

"Relating a person to the whole world: that is
the meaning of cinema"
- Andrei Tarkovsky


Why don't they make movies like ours?
Why don't they tell stories as we do?
Why don't they dress as we do?
Why don't they eat as we do?
Why don't they talk as we do?
Why don't they think as we do?
Why don't they worship as we do?
Why don't they look like us?
Ultimatly, who will decide who "we" are?
- Martin Scorsese



## ARTICLE:



## ESSAYs:



## FILM REVIEWs:

ARTICLE:

# ODE TO MOTHER

## The 'transnational' status of South Korean director

BY BOBBIE-JO GLENDINNING

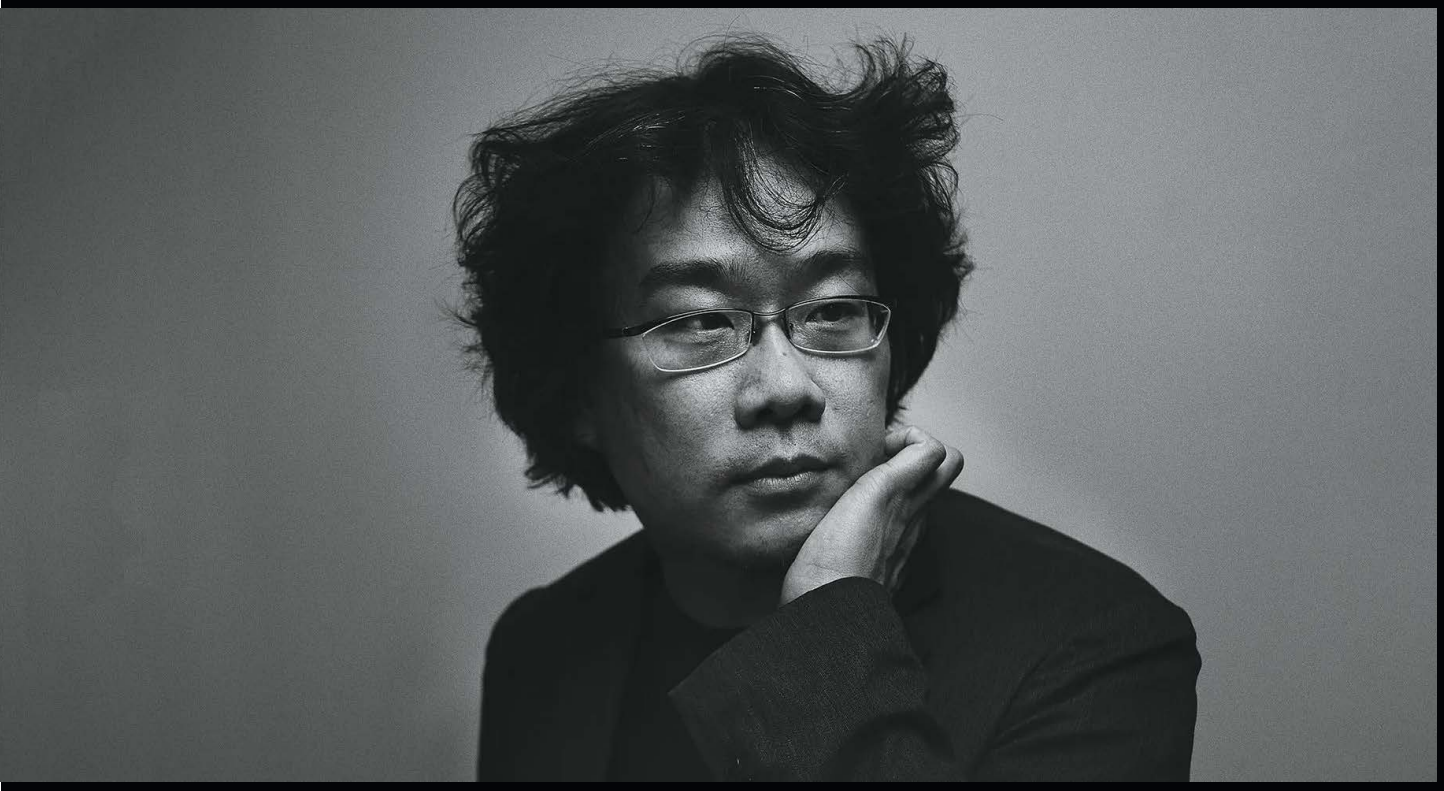
Bong Joon-ho is now a standardised name in the average viewers' cinematic vocabulary, thanks to his 2019 film festival boom concluding with the Best Feature Film Oscar win for his latest film, Parasite. However, even before his outstanding success in the year 2019, Bong had begun to create a transnational status for himself around the globe for making films that were beautifully and brutally critical of Korean society. That being said, in order to discuss the transnationality of a singular director of South Korean cinema, it is important to establish and acknowledge the country's wider history as one that is entrenched in cross-cultural influence. In the past century, Korea has been subject to all manner of influence through War, imperialism, and globalisation. The manner of these discourses has not gone without recognition in global tabloids, or one can make a simple google search before falling down the rabbit hole of vast, interesting histories of Korea as a country. As other countries have responded to their own national discourses and social political struggles, Korea adapted the arts, and no less cinema, to reflect, challenge and embrace the transcultural influence on the country over the past century. Regarding this, in a lot of cases within South Korean cinema, audiences can often navigate the films through this transnational framework and identify not only what the film has to say, but also where it comes from. No less can be said about Bong Joon-ho throughout his career, but even more recently, and increasingly interesting, right now as a director who will be respected globally for centuries to come.

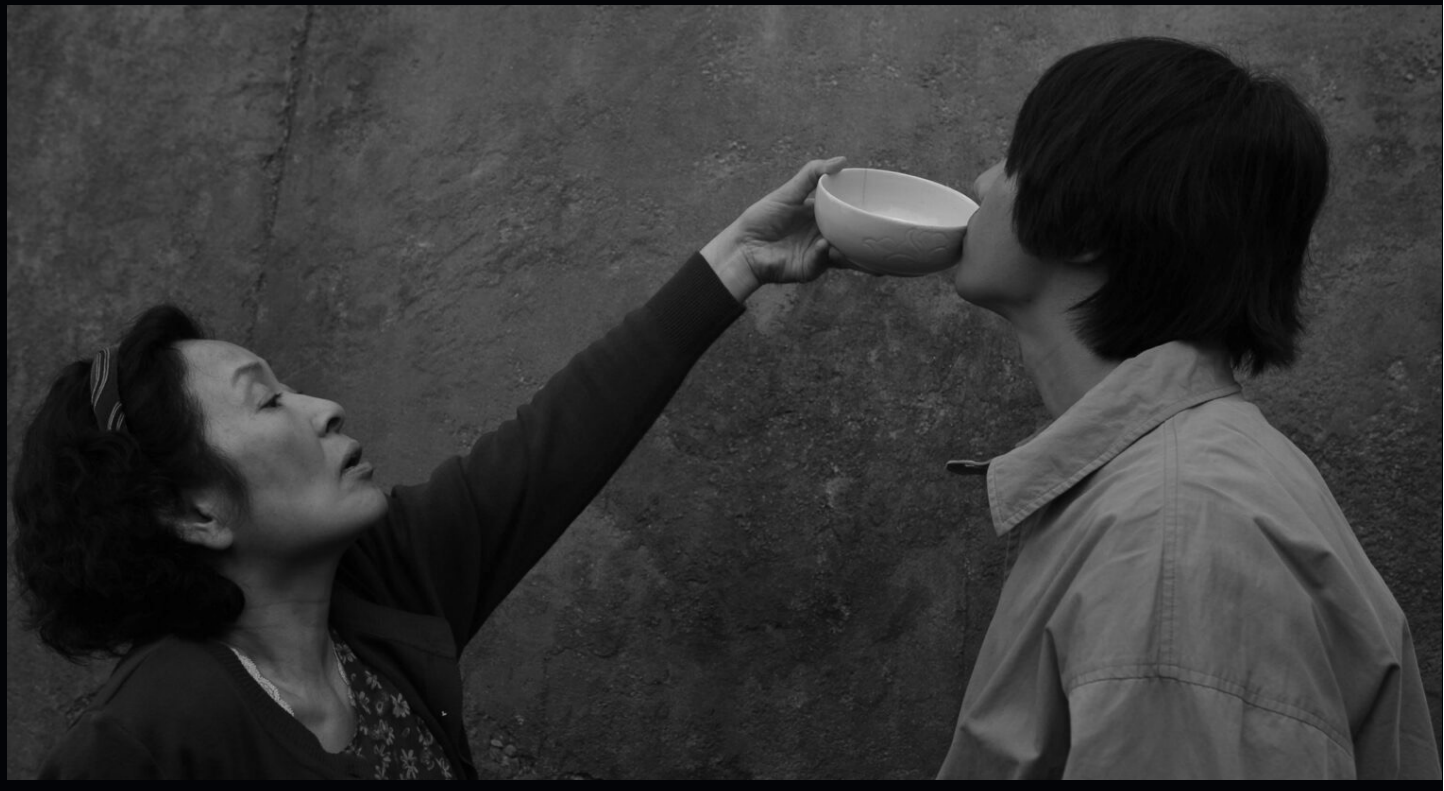
As previously stated, Bong's films actively seek to critique and reveal truths of South Korean society and politics within their given historical contexts. Be that presenting a broken justice system in Memories of Murder (Bong, 2003: South Korea) - based on South Korea's first serial killer in the 1980's - or the overbearing American influence manifested into an underwater beast in The Host (Bong, 2006: South Korea). Bong's auteur status has largely been accredited to the presence of poignant themes and messages, but also in doing so through the reforming of conventional Hollywood genre films. Joshua Shulze claims that a common trait of Bong's is to put a Korean setting into a familiar Hollywood genre (2019, pp. 21-29). Extending this remark further, it is not simply the Korean backdrop that make Bong's films a transnational success. Rather, it is the multi-layered presence and commentary on Korean history, Korean socio-politics and nationalism that makes the films and Bong transnational. With that being said, as Bong's status as a filmmaker continues to be recognised finer layers of his authorship have come into the discussion.

Delving deeper into the transnationality of Bong as a director then and having identified the Korean/national influence on the director, what is left to consider is the cross-cultural influence present within his work. A Sight and Sound article by Tony Rayns draws light on an American influence that has helped to shape Bong as a filmmaker in South Korea. Most notably he claims Bong to be a 'Hitchcockian director' in the way that he is a prolific pre-planner and devoted to perfectly plotting the moments of suspense in his films. He continues to say that "Above all, he learned Hitchcock's knack of disguising serious intent as entertainment". (Rayns, 2020, no pagination). Rayns is refereeing to the intention to highlight serious Korean topics, for example, class structures in Parasite, through entertaining stories and images. As his films suggest, Korea has been shaped and changed by outside influencers. The same then can be said for the director himself.

As 'The Master of Suspense' Hitchcock remains a prominent figure in Hollywood filmmaking history. His films become recognisable through authorial traits that have been credited, borrowed, and reformed across the global cinema. Rey Chow and Markos Hadjinoannou in their chapter called The Hitchcockian Nudge; or Aesthetics of Deception point out features of Hitchcock's style that have become his defining stylistics. Of course, his.

films continuously relish in suspense, often through McGuffins, intense music, and the red herring. Furthermore, they state that his films are rife with depictions of institutions that specialise in evidence (the justice system, psychiatrists, detectives etc). (2017, pp. 159-174) What is interesting, then, is the dimensions of transnationalism that come to be when discussing the dynamics between Hollywood (Hitchcock) and South Korean (Bong) cinema in this way, especially concerning the elements of Bong's own auteurism in comparison. Bong's film Mother (Bong, 2009: South Korea) draws attention to these dynamics of transnationalism that are becoming present and consistently shifting concerning Bong as an international filmmaker. This film follows the story of






nameless character Mother on a journey to protect her mentally ill son, Da-joon, from the injustices he faces at the hands of the law when a teenage girl is found murdered. As a mentally challenged young man, Do-joon is manipulated into confessing to the murder. It becomes Mother's mission to prove her son's innocence by any means necessary, including the false imprisonment of another mentally ill boy in replacement of hers.

Interestingly, Mother has often been discussed by critics and theorists as Bong's least critical or political Korean film. However, what this statement neglects to suggest in this absence, is the crucially transparent commentary it makes on maternity and unconditional love that almost any audience member in the world can connect to. Furthermore, as a detective narrative, not dissimilar to that of Hitchcock's, the film presents the dynamic relationship between Hollywood and South Korean cinema. Mother is a 'typical' Whodunit narrative that is successful in drawing attention to the conventional entertainment of this classic Hollywood genre. However, buying into the narrative does not negate the intensity of seriousness within. In comparison the Whodunit narrative of Hitchcock, Mother is relatively the same in terms of basic narrative beats. However, what Bong takes and expands from Hitchcock are the very things that make Mother so complicated. Mother is desperate in her search for the true killer of the young girl, in so far as she

‘Once you overcome the one-inch tall barrier of sub-titles, you will be introduced to so many more amazing films’

comes to disregarding innate human understanding of bad versus good. Considering the typical detective of a Hitchcock narrative, it was typically unlikely for that character to 1) be the mother of the assailant and 2) be outrageously morally ambiguous. This Mother is laced with critical meaning while inevitably entertaining, leaving it impossible to peel your eyes from the screen.

With that being said, Bong proves as one example of a South Korean filmmaker that adds a diverse and intrinsic dimension to the transnationality of South Korean cinema. Mother embodies the traits of a Hitchcockian suspense narrative that intrinsically deals with the turbulences of institutions that reveal their truest, unfaithful nature. Additionally, the film connects the world through maternal instinct in a way that beautifully flips the conventional images of a mother as a pure woman.

Ultimately, the transnationality of Bong as a South Korean filmmaker is naturally enriching and bottomless. His films reinvent the Hollywood genre in a way that criticises the dynamics of the genre that make them conventional. They criticise the modernisation and American influence on the country, however, at the same time, reinforce authorial traits from arguably one of the most prolific American filmmakers in the world. In the wake of his international successes, Bong is becoming more recognisable as a genius filmmaker of contemporary cinema to western filmmakers and audiences alike. Most notably seen in a demand for Bong to make the move to the West to make his next feature films. His transnational, cross-dimensional, Korean/Hollywood films and filmmaking processes have and will continue to influence generations of filmmakers aspiring to make films like his. His styles and techniques shifted on a transnational scale to be copied, borrowed, and reformed, just as he had with Hitchcock. Consequently, Bong demonstrates his influences from a cross the border as he has now shifted from the inspired to the aspired.

ARTICLE:

# Changing Terrain of Cinema from India and Achal Mishra's Gamak Ghar

BY ANAND SUBHASH BORSE

With more and more films crossing borders and getting viewed in countries miles away from the lands they were made in, the idea that only a certain kind of film is made in a particular country and is thematically, aesthetically and stylistically unique to that particular land is challenged in today's highly connected world. These films from foreign lands do not only affect how people watch or consume cinema but also how people make films (Ezra and Rowden, 2006). Although such cinematic trade and influences have always been a part of any country's cinema culture, it was earlier films only by certain masters of 'world' cinema that became easily available to watch, courtesy of film societies and film clubs (Majumdar, 2021). This, however, was limited only to connoisseurs of cinema who had access to such societies and clubs. This has changed with the advent of, first, the internet and various legal (and illegal) ways of accessing films and now, with several OTT platforms (Iordanova, 2013, pp.46–50). This is true for a country like India, which has long been associated with 'masala' films from the Hindi-language Bollywood and other mainstream industries, too. The country has seen a specific shift in film practice and viewing in the last few years. Along with masters of 'world' cinema, unique voices from other third world countries like the Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand, Mexico, etc. have found a place in the cinema-viewing culture of the country because of availability on the internet. Filmmakers like Lav Diaz, Carlos Reygadas, Apichatpong Weerasethakul are among favourites alongside Robert Bresson, Andrei Tarkovsky and others.

This has led Indian filmmakers, both mainstream and non-mainstream in exploring new ways of making films. Therefore, when one sees a film like Killa (The Fort, dir. Avinash Arun, 2014), one is reminded of the Iranian films featuring children and their quests and journeys. When one sees Newton (dir.Amit Masurkar, 2017), one sees how different it is from other Bollywood films and yet mainstream enough to have a proper release in the theatres. Trijya (Radius, dir. Akshay
Indikar, 2019) brings Kiarostami's minimalism to one's mind. Although rooted in their specific cultures, set in local backdrops, stylistically and aesthetically these films go beyond the national borders, making room for a transnational engagement. To understand this more, Achal Mishra's film Gamak Ghar (The Village House, 2020), serves as the best example. The film is about a house inhabited by three different generations over a period of three decades starting from 1998. It is a nostalgia about the disintegration of the joint family system, migration of the younger generation to bigger cities for education and employment, about a loss that is not apparent in the globalised world unless a film like Gamak Ghar makes us see it. Starring mostly his family members as the cast, the film tries to capture small and big moments that the family has shared

over the years with things changing over time. 'Earlier, we, your youngest uncle, your father, we used to live here together with grandma... But then the youngest uncle got a job elsewhere. We moved to the city. And your father mostly stayed away for studies. He had to become a doctor. Gradually, our visits became less frequent. Now, we come here just once a year. It's not as easy to visit the village anymore. Nobody seems to have time these days' (Gamak Ghar, dir. Achal Mishra) - A voice-over towards the end of the film conveys what Mishra and many like him feel. The film is set in a remote Indian village and is made in a local language (Maithili) instead of the dominant Hindi. It is about Mishra's ancestral house, a family that eventually disintegrates, leaving the house inhabited which will one day turn into ruins or be renovated into a modern house. One might call the film a true 'Indian' or even 'Bihari'2 film representing true Indian or Bihari culture and problems. However, is that really true? The film might be local in terms of its content and theme, but the way Mishra tells the story makes it a global film. In an interview to Filmmint, Mishra talks about how he kept going back to Early Summer (dir. Yasujiro Ozu). Mishra makes use of different aspect ratios for different time eras to capture the mood of the era and the house, which is an experiment quite new to India. The voice-over sounds like it has travelled from a Hirokazu Koreeda film and found place in an Indian film. Like Yasujiro Ozu and Hou Hsiao-Hsien, his camera stands still observing the characters meandering through time oblivious of their ever-changing lives. How did Achal Mishra acquire this cinematic language? His journey into filmmaking might help us look at his films which are essentially local and yet global in their execution. A son of a doctor, Mishra, born and brought in a city in India, moved to the United Kingdom as a Film Studies undergraduate student only to drop out a year later to make films. It was here, he says in an interview to The Real Cinema Podcast, that he discovered filmmakers like Yasujiro Ozu, Hou Hsiao-Hsien, Nuri Bilge Ceylan, Hirokazu Koreeda that shaped him as a filmmaker which is clearly visible in his films. Had he not travelled to the United Kingdom and not discovered these filmmakers, would Gamak Ghar still be the same film as it is today? Had he not seen films of a different kind than Bollywood, would his second short film Dhuin (Mist, 2022) be a kind of visual homage to Abbas Kiarostami? There are no specific answers to these questions except the fact that exposure to cinema in India has changed filmmaking over the last few years making new images visible, new voices heard, new terrains explored and Achal Mishra is one of the many filmmakers who are making this possible.

ARTICLE:

# Women Walking

BY LOUISE GORSE

It's 5.13 pm on June 21st, 1961, and a woman in Paris is trying on hats. She smiles, admires her reflections and sighs, 'tout me va...je me saoulerais d'essayer des chapeaux et des robes', 'everything suits me...trying on hats and dresses gives me a thrill'.
It's a warm summer's evening in Oslo. A woman is at a party with her boyfriend. She isn't in the mood, so decides to walk back home through the city, alone. She pauses and takes in the view of the city of Oslo in the dusk light. Wiping away the tears that spring to her eyes, she happens upon a lively party. Here, she is anonymous, but welcome. She lights a cigarette, pours herself a drink, and begins to make eyes at a man across the room.

Women walking in the city. A topic that has fascinated filmmakers across the globe throughout recent film history, as women wander across borders and across decades, from Hiroshima mon amour in 1959 to Lost in Translation in 2003. In Agnes Varda's modernist masterpiece, Cléo de 5 à 7, we follow a woman drifting through the streets of Paris, awaiting the results of a medical test. Sixty years later, in 2021, Joachim Trier (who indeed notes Hiroshima mon amour as one of his top ten films in 'Sight and Sound') releases The Worst Person in the World. It entranced audiences with dreamy sequences of Julie strolling the streets of Oslo, navigating the path of young womanhood. Whilst Julie treads the lines between security, love, excitement, and thrill, Cléo's anxieties erupt when she realises that she is treated as a beautiful body, and a pitch-perfect voice, rather than a person, or a talent. But why is it that the European city becomes the ideal location for women protagonists to find their feet? And what has changed for women in the years between the two films, as they stride the line between gazer and object of the gaze?

It's 5.18pm on June 21st, 1961, and a woman in Paris asks her taxi driver, 'Vous n'avez pas peur la nuit?' 'Are you not afraid at night?'. Male art students jeer and shout, even putting their faces through the car window, and the woman throws her body back in fear and disgust. The men surround the car, and a waterbomb falls from an apartment above.
Another warm summer's day in Oslo. A woman loves her boyfriend, but would she love someone else more? She watches him take his dry laundry from the airer and fold it. She is overwhelmed, she is confused. She hears herself say yes to a cup of coffee. Her head and heart wander further apart until she cannot take it anymore. She hits pause. Everything stops, and she steps out into the city, at once busy and stagnant, and runs with such freedom and ease to find the man from the party. They embrace and walk the city together until the sun sets.

Baudelaire's concept of the 'flâneur' suggests a man who 'marvels at the eternal beauty and the amazing harmony of life in the capital cities, a harmony so providentially maintained amid the turmoil of human freedom' (1863, p.10). This character was, and is, necessarily male. The female 'flâneuse' takes elements of this marvel: Julie is moved to tears by the landscape of Oslo, and Cléo spontaneously bursts into song when walking through the gardens. However, the element of danger seems far more prevalent in the flâneuse. In a 2022 UK survey, studies found that 82% of women felt unsafe walking alone after dark in a park, and 45% in a busy public place. This is significantly higher than 42% and 18% of men respectively. Cléo, doomed not only to the existential crisis which the modernist New Wave character must undergo, is also forced to navigate the metropolitan road to self-realisation with the interruption of leering men. The events of 2021 proved that the streets are still dangerous places for women. Though not explicitly shown by Trier (perhaps a female filmmaker would have included moments of street unsafety), Julie is still not allowed to be fully at home in the city. She must 'pause' the action, removing the city's capacity for an interruption, in order to pursue her desires uninhibited. The city and the flâneuse are ultimately irreconcilable.

Later on the evening of June 21st, 1961, the same woman with a different name walks hand in hand through the grounds of a hospital with a man she just met in the park. She looks at him, she looks forward, and she walks. 'Il me semble que je suis heureuse', 'I've the feeling I'm happy'...
Oslo life passes by outside the window, ex-boyfriends, colleagues, children, possibilities. A woman looks out. She arrives home to her apartment. It is small, but it has two big windows, with seats beside them. With the


city always in view, she kicks off her shoes and sits. She looks at the city and then looks at her work. A sense of peace lives in the studio apartment, and lives in the content half smile that now settles on her face. She has the feeling she's happy.

Despite the peace on the faces of the protagonists at their respective conclusions, I am left with a bitter taste. The city which once took Julie's breath away is now only visible through a window, whether it be of her workplace or her studio apartment. Cléo's joy can only find its home within the walled hospital gardens. For both women, their rambling was only a search for answers, not the ultimate destination. Unlike the male flâneur, who knows what it is to be 'away from home and yet to feel oneself everywhere at home; to see the world, to be at the centre of the world, and yet to remain hidden from the world.' (Baudelaire, 1863, p.8), the flâneuse can never be at home in the streets. The woman wanderer, even in 2021, encounters heightened emotion in the city: existential crisis complete, she returns to an enclosed space and shuts the door. I hope in years to come the flâneuse can find the same ability to be at the centre of the world, but in the long sixty years between Cléo and Julie's lives, it seems the safe haven is still the walled garden.


ESSAYS

ESSAY:

# CHANGING: the transnational activities of Kore-Eda Hirokazu

BY LI MENGZHUO

## *INTRODUCTION*

After Japanese director Kore-Eda Hirokazu won the Palme d'Or at Cannes with Shoplifters (2018) in 2018, he gradually moved beyond Japan and started collaborating with great production teams or actors from abroad. His latest film, Broker (2022), has helped him return to the Cannes circuit. Since the 1920s, the movie industry has worked locally, nationally, and internationally (Higson, 2000). Because of its culture and location, the East Asian film industry has made it easier for people from different countries to work together. This paper will examine the link between Kore-eda Hirokazu's films and international collaborations. Transnational elements have affected Hirokazu's style of making movies. This essay will talk about how the distinctively Japanese style of Hirokazu has changed and how this change can be seen in two examples: Shoplifters and Broker.

## *KORE-EDA HIROKAZU AND TRANSNATIONAL*

"Transnational" usually refers to international co-production or collaboration that brings together technical and artistic experts from all over the world (Higbee and Lim, 2010, P10). In an article published in 2000, Higson Andrew pointed out that global operations in the film industry will usually be on two levels. The first aspect is the production level and film producers' activities. Hirokazu's collaboration in Korea begins with an all-Korean cast in Broker. Broker co-stars Song Kang-ho, Bae Doo-na, and Lee Ji-eun. Song Kang-ho played the hero in the 92nd Academy Award-winning film Parasite (Bong Joon-ho 2019). Bae Doo-na is one of Korea's most famous actors, and Lee Ji-eun is one of the country's most popular singers. In terms of casting, it's all top-notch.

One good thing about productions that take place in more than one region is that well-known directors from all over the world usually have more freedom to choose better actors for their roles. The director and the actor are win-win and mutually supportive. The actor has the opportunity to work with a director from another country, and it is very beneficial for the actor's personal development to be able to open his work to other markets first. Top actors guarantee a high performance level and many fans for the movies.

Other talented composers have come to the film because of the director's fame. For example, Hong Kyung-pyo, a cinematographer who has worked on famous films like Parasite (Bong Joon-ho 2019) and Snowpiercer (Bong Joon-ho 2013), and Jung Jae-il, a music composer who also produced on Parasite and the TV series Squid Game (Hwang Dong-hyuk 2012), have joined the excellent team for the film score. The audience will also pay more for such a team, creating a positive cycle.

The second level is that, regarding the distribution and reception of films, cinema operates on a global scale (Higson 2000). Broker was first released in South Korea on June 8, 2022. The primary audience for this film is the Korean audience. Even though both the actors and the people who made the movie are Korean, it's still not clear how the audience will react to it. They will realize what Hirokazu has done if they see the film, which is to change the audio-visual language of his films. The details of this will be discussed later in this essay.

There is also the question of whether or not the change in style in Hirokazu's films is related to the film genre. What is clear is that Hirokazu wrote the script for Broker. In the early stages of writing the screenplay, he must have been thinking of a non-Japanese, international market. The script for Broker and the genre it

belongs to are already based on a global and cross-regional scope. The transnational dimension's influence begins at pre-creation.

***KORE-EDA HIROKAZU' JAPANESE STYLE***

Kore-eda Hirokazu has long been obsessed with the expression of family ethics. Most of his feature films are about family and closeness. For example, they show the relationships between family members and think about how the family fits into society. He has also always excelled at capturing perfectly observed moments of ordinary humanity (Neary, 2019).

For a long time, Hirokazu's feature films have often been shot in a style similar to that of documentaries which can be traced back to his earlier years (the 1990s) when he made many documentaries (Sørensen, 2011). Often, an artist's early experiences can be used to figure out what their main style traits are. For example, the Chinese director Zhang Yimou has a distinctive composition and colour style. This is also related to the fact that he majored in photography at the Beijing Film Academy as an undergraduate and started as a cameraman when he entered the film industry, so he is more sensitive to the visual presentation of films.

The most distinctive feature of his films is the extensive use of long takes. For Asian filmmakers, the use of long-take is preferred to show everyday life. Long-takes help to show what reality is like in everyday life by keeping the time and space of reality the same (Wu, 2017). In Still Walking (2008), Hirokazu uses long takes to show the expected life of a Japanese family and how their relationships change over time in a way that is simple, unpretentious, and warm.

Another characteristic of his work is the light he uses to significant effect — the warm tones that natural light brings to the images. Scenes such as soft sunlight on people's faces and houses filled with sunlight are often seen in the images. Most of Hirokazu's movies have stories with a lot of warmth, and these visual elements fit with that. In Our Little Sister (2015), the scene is filled with lots of sunlight, which shows the calm and beautiful scenery of the sea town and the loving family of the four sisters trying to live together after their father's death. In addition to the features above, he often preferred long shots and medium shots. But these striking, intensely personal shots seem to have been overturned in Broker.

***KOREAN GENRE FILM SHOOTING STYLE***

Before explaining the point of view, it is also essential to talk about how Korean genre movies look. Korean crime thrillers, monster movies, horror films, disaster films, and black comedies have been widely disseminated over the decades, like Oldboy (Park Chan-wook 2003), The Host (Bong Joon-ho 2006), Train to Busan (Sang-ho Yeon 2016), and Parasite (Bong Joon-ho 2019). Genre films are made in a standard, predictable way, so their visual styles are usually the same. There are similarities in terms of scenery and shadows. When portraying the circumstances of the lives of minor, marginal, or dangerous characters at the bottom of society, they prefer dim lighting and low key, confined spaces, focusing on the shifting light and shadow on the character's face. When filmmakers want to create a dangerous, tense, mysterious, or horror atmosphere, they often use various visual techniques like whip pans, following shots, and close-ups.

***CASE STUDIES: SHOPLIFTERS BROKER***

The comparison of Shoplifters to Broker is not only because Shoplifters is perhaps Hirokazu's best-known work internationally and one of the more representative of Hirokazu's Japanese aesthetic. It is also because the two films share a very similar story. In an interview at the Cannes Film Festival, Hirokazu mentioned that both films are based on the "non-blood family" theme and focus on small, non-mainstream people (Brzeski, 2022). The overall visual presentation of the two films is different, although there are many similarities.

The first striking difference is the lighting. The indoor set should be the first to be noticed, and both films have many indoor sets. The light in interiors usually comes mostly from artificial sources rather than natural light, so it has more potential to be artificially manipulated. In Shoplifters, when Yuri (Miyu Sasaki) is picked up by Osamu (Lily Franky) and Shota (Kairi Jō) and brought home, the entire interior is lit mainly by light bulbs from the roof. It is brightly lit in warm tones, so visually, it gives the viewer a sense that the whole atmosphere of the home is homey and welcoming.

In contrast, the light for Broker is dark and dull, and some of the sequences could even be thought to have been made that way on purpose by the director. The most obvious example is the film footage in which the unwed mother, Moon So-young (Lee Ji-eun), arrives at the home where she has picked up her child and the light is changed by the manual adjustment of Ha Sang-hyeon (Song Kang-ho). He can clearly be seen getting up and turning off the overhead light before moving from the darkened bedroom to the adjacent living room. Obviously, there is still a camera position in the room with the lights off. The camera is filming from the dark room into the living room outside, making the already dim room even darker. The intention may only be explained by the fact that people are likely to turn off the lights in everyday life. However, it is difficult to justify the recurring darkness in Broker.

In addition, the director treats the natural light in daytime interiors differently. In Shoplifters, the camera shoots with the light as much as possible. The sunlight hits the people' faces head-on or sideways, and the whole environment is high-keyed. For example, in the bathroom shower scene (0:47) and the home chat scene (0:44), the opposite is common in Broker, where the light is being avoided. The camera tends to shoot in the direction of the incoming light or with the figure's back to the light in silhouette. The camera mainly shoots in the direction of the light or with the figures' backs to the light in silhouette. Examples include the footage from the orphanage where Dongsoo lived as a child (0:31) and a scene with the main characters in the car (0:22). Consequently, most of the time Broker's images are understated and the faces of the figures are prone to lightlessness. One can't help but see a deliberate move by the filmmakers in the direction of the general characteristics of the Korean genre.

Another more pronounced difference in visuals is the individual shots, i.e., changing from being good at long takes to fast-switching shots, turning long shots, medium long shots into medium close-ups and close-ups. In Shoplifters, Kore-eda's use of medium shots captures the Shibata's nomadic life without intruding on the space (Neary, 2019). Still, in the sequence where Yuri is first brought home, several shots are over 15 seconds long, all using medium long shots. The first image depicts a Japanese family eating around a foot warmer. The edge of the screen is filled with furniture and other things, showing in detail how traditional Japanese homes are set up. The appearance, move-

ments, and details of each family member at the dinner table are captured in full detail, and the image of a large, extended family is brought to life.

In the next shot, Nobuyo (Sakura Ando) asks Yuri for her name and age. It is a conventional way to use the shot reverse shot of two people talking in most movies, and the aim is to show the facial expressions of the two people talking and their reactions to each other. The film, however, continues to employ the long shot extended shot treatment.

The third shot follows the same technique, with a long take that keeps the family's daily conversation intact and a medium shot that includes everyone in the family. Aside from the two people talking, the heart of the family — the grandmother (Kirin Kiki) — is at the back of the frame, eating noodles and clipping her toenails, rambling on about how it is rude for the father of the family to hold his chopsticks up to people. The long shot also visually brings everyone in the family closer together, seemingly crowded and full of details and characters, but instead of distracting the viewer, it shows the atmosphere of a large family getting along daily, making the whole sequence full of life and human emotion. This is typical of the camera language and expression of Hirokazu.

In Broker, however, similar scenes are filmed in contrast to the Shoplifters. At the film's beginning, the three adults who are about to form a holiday family get together for the first time. Apart from the long shot used at the beginning to show the room in its entirety (only a few seconds), each character is given a separate waist shot or close-up shot as they speak. Again, several people are shown talking, but Hirokazu does not use the same technique as Shoplifters. The shots are switched according to the person speaking. It is worth noting that Sang-hyeon and Dong-soo are in the same gang, and it might have been more appropriate for them to be on the same screen to show that they are on the same team, but instead of doing so, Hirokazu gives them separate shots.

These examples show how Hirokazu has changed to fit a cross-cultural environment, primarily a different audience market, even though Japan and Korea are both in East Asia, which has similar cultural roots. These changes seem to have benefited the box office and local audiences. However, they were detrimental in more ways than one. First and foremost, he is removed from the genre in which he excels and the label that makes him feel as if his film style does not fit. He has moved into new territory, which is a brave move on his part. The second and most important thing to consider is how well the film's style matches the story. In short, the visual style presented visually resembles that of a suspense film. It does not match the story elements and logic of the film itself.

***CONCLUSION***

Transnational collaboration as a specific ground makes for a more or less transformed filmography that moves internationally. This paper combines the ideas of "transnationality" and "transnational exchange" of individual directors, using film style as the primary key study area. I want to show the differences and details between the style of Kore-eda Hirokazu's work before and after the transnational collaboration. This will show that the change in style isn't because of the need for a plot, theme, or character but because he copied Korean genre filmmaking styles to appeal to the Korean market. Besides, this article is more about how blind and purposeful Hirokazu was when he gave up his unique Japanese style and started using the visual style of Korean genre films. This deliberateness and whether or not it should be encouraged or praised are open to discussion. This article doesn't discuss some things, like whether the audience liked the final production of Broker and how well it did at the box office. What is certain is that the idea of "transnationality" has a lot to teach us about directors' transnational cinema and how it is shown.

ESSAY:

# Sociopolitical Symbolisms In COMRADE KIM GOES FLYING

BY FELICIA CHU

Comrade Kim Goes Flying (2012) is a refreshing romantic-comedy feature comprised of European and North Korean crew and an entire North Korean cast. Directed by KIM Gwang Hun 김 광 훈 from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK or North Korea), Anja DAELEMANS from Belgium, and Nicholas BONNER from England, this film's international collaboration was nothing short of a miracle as there was no precedence of such a creative film endeavour. In addition, it was largely collaborative as North Korean writers wrote it in consultation with Daelemans and Bonner. Moreover, it was set and filmed in Pyongyang and edited in Europe. DPRK, also known as the Hermit Kingdom, is not known to collaborate with Western media. In fact, Western media and the internet are illegal to the masses. The DPRK's tightly controlled media also means that tourists require permission from their minders to take any footage, and journalists are banned from visiting.

The film's mise-en-scène looked like scenes from the countless documentaries I have seen. I cannot seem to put my finger on it, but it looks like it was from another time, like a set. Through the film, audiences get a snippet into the life of Comrade Kim Yong Mi, an excellent North Korean coal miner, daughter, and Trapeze Enthusiast turned professional. The plot follows: the film starts with Comrade Kim's mother encouraging her dream of flying as a trapeze artist. Even though she is passionate about acrobatics, she willingly becomes a coal miner instead, as assigned by the state and following her father's footsteps. Due to her excellence as a coal miner, she was awarded the opportunity to work at a construction brigade as a builder for a year in Pyongyang. At the start of her time there, she meets her heroine, trapeze star Ri Su Yon, who encourages her to audition for the circus. She fails the audition and is insulted by Pak Jang Phil, Ri Su Yon's Trapeze partner and star. Comrade Kim decides to prove him wrong, and with the help of the construction brigade manager, her fellow construction comrades and the metalworking brigade, she stars in the Workers Festival. After bumping into her multiple times and being impressed by her performance at the Worker's Festival, Pak Jang Phil falls in love with Comrade Kim. Pak Jang Phil, the coal mine manager, circus party secretary, vice president and coach, went to her home to personally invite her and persuade her father to let to join the circus. She trains at the circus as one of their older students. Through the harsh training and almost giving up, she perseveres and grows closer to Pak Jang Phil. In the end, she partners with Pak Jang Phil for a trapeze act to pass a trial to represent North Korea on the world stage. With the encouragement of her community, she succeeds in achieving her dream of flying as a trapeze artist.

To better understand this film, it is good to note the DPRK's political context up to its release. At the end of the Second World War, the Korean Peninsula was divided in two along the 38th Parallel by the United States (US) and the Soviet Union. In 1948, the DPRK and the Korean Workers' Party, led by Kim Il Sung, and South Korea, led by Syng-

man Rhee, were established. In 1950, the DPRK, backed by China and the Soviet Union, attacked the South, which the United States backed. This proxy war, known as the Cold War, unofficially ended in 1953 with an armistice and a Demilitarised Zone along the Parallel. (National Archives and Records Administration, 2022) However, no official treaty was signed; the two Koreas were still technically at war. (Blakemore, 2020) After President Kim Il Sung's death in 1994, the DPRK's leadership was passed to his son and heir, Supreme Leader Kim Jong-Il. The DPRK continued the Juche ideology using the Juche ideology established by Kim Il Sung. The rest of the world shunned the DPRK for lacking human rights and freedoms. Kim Jong-Il also emphasised his military presence through "Songun Chongch'i", or military-first politics, and started building nuclear weapons. (North Korea under Kim Jong Il, 2023) This was criticised for having been a contributing factor to the country's famine in the 1990s. (Rengifo-Keller, 2023) Besides ruling over North Korea, he loved films and wanted North Korean movies to stand on the international stage. Throughout his lifetime, he led the creation of propaganda state films, collected over 30,000 DVDs and even kidnapped an actor and director couple to improve his state's film industry. (Johnson, 2013; Madlena, 2016) President Kim Il Sung died in December 2011, and the film was developed from pre- to post-production from 2006-2012. Hence, the film and its messaging were likely to have been noticed and approved by the President, in line with his ambitions of bringing recognition to North Korean movies. The film has since been broadcasted on North Korean public television in January 2016. (Comrade Kim Goes Flying, 2016)

For the rest of the essay, I will attempt to define the highly nuanced Juche Ideology and use symbols from the film to understand the manifestations of Juche as a state-governing ideology, with the subject of Juche being the masses — secondly, I will explore the empowerment of women and the middle class through a more individualised interpretation of Juche — lastly, I will conclude with how the film and artistic choices are aspirational and encouraging. According to Kim Il Sung, who established the official state ideology in 1972, Juche refers to "being master of revolution and reconstruction in one's own country", "believing in one's own strength", and "displaying the revolutionary spirit of self-reliance". In the film, two of the three applications of Juche envisioned by Kim Il Sung, "economic self-reliance and self-sufficiency" and a "viable national defence system", ring through. These envisionments are Juche's governing principles, Charip-economic independence, and Chawi-Military Independence. Charip is the idea that independence and self-sufficiency are essential for political integrity and national prosperity. (Lee, 2003) The manifestation of this can be observed in three equally important ways. Firstly, a robust heavy industry capable of supplying other sectors of the economy. The film symbolises this through its scenes of the metal brigade and construction brigade. These brigades were presented to be highly efficient and filled with inexhaustible and motivated comrades. These comrades had enough time and energy to take on more work, learn acrobatics and attend mass dances, always with enthusiasm. Secondly, independent food production, which is regarded with the same importance as it would mean people can support themselves. Throughout the film, not only was there an abundance of home-cooked food and DPRK packaged food, but it was also easily accessible off the street. Thirdly, the supply of raw materials and fuel. In the film, coal and, by extension, electricity is abundant. Comrade Kim was awarded for exceeding her targets consistently; in one of the scenes, her comrade and best friend even cheered her on for exceeding her goal by 120%. Chawi refers to self-reliance concerning defence in order to remain sovereign. The symbolism of Chawi can be observed through the military uniform that the metal brigade and construction brigade workers wear and the way characters refer to each other as comrades. Throughout the film, Juche is at the core of collective life. In addition to the above, audiences were presented with Pyongyang's must-see landmarks,

such as the Juche Tower, the Arch of Reunification and the Mansu Hill Grand Monument of Kim Il Sung, before the addition of Kim Jong Il. Therefore, a collectivistic understanding of Juche was presented as highly important and part of one's everyday being. With this in mind, it is interesting to understand how Juche might have been adapted to the times and interpreted as a more individualistic ideology through the other artistic choices in the film.

In the book On the Juche Idea, Kim Jong Il states that "man is the master of everything and decides everything" as the philosophical principle of Juche. (Kim, J.I., 1982) This is because man has Chajusong - independence, creativity and consciousness. (Lee, 2003) In essence, this means having agency over one's life to make meaningful decisions that determine one's future. The film offers an interpretation of this principle with the subject of Juche in its principal form for individuals instead of the masses. In the film, Comrade Kim embodies girl power. She goes through life winning with an iconic and reassuring smile, representing the optimistic outlook that gets her through life. I have never seen anyone smile so much during a film. Instead of putting her in her place, her tenacity and outlook eventually won over her comrades, thus supporting her in chasing her dreams of becoming a Trapeze artist. This is progressive and extraordinary as work is assigned by the state and lifelong. (Yoon, 2014)

This suggests that the state might be more open to one following their passions, provided they are incredibly talented and hardworking like Comrade Kim was. Even though Comrade Kim's father expressed that he did not want his daughter dreaming about Trapezing, his mother, his coal mining boss, and the circus leaders persuaded him to let her join the circus. Beyond a father being concerned about his only child, this could symbolise a shift in traditional values from sticking to a lifetime of assigned labour to charting one's future.

Arguably, since most of the characters directly in power are male, it can be interpreted as patronising. Comrade Kim's father, the leaders of the brigades and Pak Jang Phil are male. However, this film is somewhat balanced. Comrade Pak's deceased mother, whom she looks to for strength, her best friend, her grandmother, her Heroine Ri Su Yon and her Trapeze teacher were all instrumental stakeholders that empowered her. As the DPRK is a highly patriarchal society, the depiction of the men supportive of her non-conventional dream is a leap. (Lee, 2015) By extension, this could symbolise a change in times, with the working class, by extension, recognised for their passions and maybe getting the chance to be masters of their individual destinies. Her smile also represents the DPRK's outlook on the working class. Hence, these points to a slightly more liberal DPRK and a potential evolution in how the masses are allowed to interpret Juche.

The film can be interpreted as symbolic of the DPRK's aspirations for the future. Right at the film's start, the DPRK and South Korea are illustrated as one Korea. Nevertheless, this is unlikely due to rising tensions, arsenals, and global political powers. Secondly, there is an aspiration for the working masses outside Pyongyang to achieve food security through the portrayal of abundance. However, due to sanctions, lack of suitable farming land and poor infrastructure, this is unlikely as well. (Al Jazeera, 2023; Ahn, 2023) The fact that the film had the collaboration of 3 directors from different countries, perhaps signified the openness of DPRK's filmmakers to collaborate and nod in the direction of more Western media collaboration in the future, regardless of politics.

In conclusion, even though the directors did not intend to be political, it still contained many political messages that reflect the DPRK's Juche, which is helpful in understanding where the DPRK may be heading. This film used Juche to arouse revolutionary energy in Comrade Kim to persevere in her life. Comrade Kim goes flying is genuinely like no other. It is such an empowering and fun film to watch. The presentation of girl power was uplifting. The circus stunts, North Korean linocut artwork and the meet-cute were on point. The film continued production even though the DPRK suspended British tourist visas, which is a testament to the importance of this endeavour. (Reuters, 2009) One can only hope for more peace, so such collaborations that uplift regardless of borders can occur in the future.

Just an extra nugget!!!

There was a translation error due to the linguistic gap between the North and South. South Korea has adopted many loanwords from other languages, which the North has not due to its isolationism. (Park, 2023) There is a scene in which Comrade Kim asks Pak Jang Phil not to touch the coal she was inspecting. She either says '(teochi)', or '(dachi)'. The earlier meaning, do not touch, uses the borrowed term  from English, which means touch. The latter means do not get hurt, withmeaning get hurt. Essentially, either would suit the context. On closer inspection, the English subtitles state, "No... Do not Touch"; this suggests that a fifth country was involved (including the China PR team), South Korea, South Korean descent, or a translator who learned Korean from the South! The thought that a South Korean edited the translation and forgot that loan words do not exist in the North makes me amused. Cheers!

# ESSAY:
# 'RASHOMON QUESTIONS REALITY YET CHAMPIONS HOPE' (DONALD RICHIE).

BY JAMES RIST

Donald Richie's observations of the film Rashomon (Kurosawa, 1950) and its plot create a strong discourse on how the director, Akira Kurosawa, is able to create a strong thematic sense of deception throughout the film. Richie's statement of 'Rashomon questions reality yet champions hope' allows for an analysis of the film's narrative and thematic traits as well as how stylistic choices allowed many critics to claim the work as a 'Western' film. Many elements can point to this conclusion and it is important to consider how Richie's interpretation and the critical reflection of the film's genre are vital in understanding how the film gained notoriety beyond its country of origin.

The film Rashomon, encourages viewers to question reality from the opening scene, beginning with steady editing and establishing shots of heavy rain whilst the opening credits roll. Kurosawa places the viewer in an immediate position of unease through the use of pathetic fallacy, a technique used heavily in Western literature, which builds questions of reality to unsettle the viewer. In this introduction, Kurosawa gives the first indication of conflict in the narrative through the Woodcutter's line, 'I don't understand, I just don't understand'. This opening line stating the uncertainty felt by the Woodcutter to the Priest places the action in the midst of their dialogue, building questions of the plot and narrative as viewers are left in the dark as to the situation. The ambiguity created by Kurosawa's side two-shot of the pair staring into the rain as well as the line's stoic delivery, immediately builds a state of unknowing where the plot will reveal what is causing these characters to feel unsettled. The 'questioning of reality' is further emphasised as Tajomaru tells his version of events. Towards the end of this scene, we can see the strength of Kurosawa's camerawork and his use of lighting and framing to convey a greater sense of meaning and desire attributed to the mise-en-scene. Kurosawa displays a voyeuristic viewing of the Bride as she waits for her husband to return with Tajomaru, placing the camera at a high angle with the light of her white dress contrasting with the forest setting as she is top-lit in the frame. Kurosawa's framing of the Bride in the centre creates an aurora of attraction, both to the viewer and the voyeur, Tajomaru, peering through the branches to look at her. This idealised viewing of the char-

acter displays the subjectivity of the story as Kurosawa is cross-cutting the scenes of the suggested events, with Tajomaru's testimony reinforcing this to be his version of events, narrating them to the viewer and the court. This creates questions about the truth of the events, as stated by Jarvie, "however sincere the witnesses are, their stories will not be completely congruent. How, then, shall we decide on the truth of things?" (1987). It can therefore be argued that Kurosawa's intentions for his viewers are for them not to question the truth and reality of what events took place, but instead, accept that this is the reality of each character. This is suggested by Richie, "They all told the story the way they saw it, the way they believed it, and they all told the truth. Kurosawa therefore does not question truth. He questions reality." (Richie:1969:224).

The development of the narrative at Rashomon Gate is crucial to Richie's belief that the film' questions reality', with the final line of the Bride's story being 'what should a poor, helpless woman like me do?' followed by her falling to the ground in tears as the Woodcutter and Priest watch in the background right of the frame. Being purposely distanced from the situation emphasises their need to gain perspective. This is further encouraged by a motivated cut back to Rashomon Gate as the three men sit around a fire, with the Commoner stating, 'women use their tears to fool everyone, they even fool themselves', devaluing the Bride's
story despite evoking more sympathy then Tajomaru's story. This line is an interesting look at how the Commoner is attempting to steer the conversation away from the details of the murder and instead chooses to focus more on his perception of women as a means for disregarding her testimony. The character's denial is considered by Richie, claiming that "In all of Kurosawa's pictures there is this preoccupation with the conflict between illusion (the reactions of the five and their stories) and reality (the fact of rape and murder). (Richie:1969:225). It could be suggested that the Commoner's purpose in the narrative is to detract from the seriousness of reality and to create illusion through his nonplussed or mocking reactions to these versions of events. Through the use of character dynamics and dialogue, Rashomon directly states the 'questioning of reality' as Kurosawa frames the Priest in the centre of the Woodcutter and Commoner as a means to state his moral neutrality within the situation despite still being deeply disturbed by the events.

Richie's view that Rashomon' champions hope' can also be analysed as the film draws to its conclusion. Kurosawa patiently builds his narrative and utilises his darkest story of the Woodcutter's as the films last, to create bleakness to the possible reality for these characters. Throughout the Husband's story, we see a weakness in Tajomaru, shaking as he wields his sword and stumbling in his desperate pursuits of the Bride as she runs in fear. Kurosawa portrays his attempts to obtain the Bride here as weak and pitiful to view, juxtaposing Tajomaru's opening testimony to the Husband's where he is no longer the feared bandit and instead mopes in his failure by feebly walking out of frame. This scene demonstrates Jarvie's belief that "Rashomon, then, could be looked on as reductio of the eye-witness principle. To show its absurdity you need two conditions: an event highly emotionally charged, and one involving several people" (1987). The Husband's story creates the strongest emotional reaction out of the men as all versions of events from the court have been recounted.

Commoner laughs, again in an attempt to disregard the possible reality, with the Woodcutter quick to defend, stating, 'I don't lie'. Kurosawa's vehicle of truth within the film manifests through the Priest who interjects amongst the pair bickering, stating 'I believe in men.' This character makes the strongest case for Richie that the film' champions hope' as he is stubborn in his unwavering belief that humanity will prevail, which can be viewed as foreshadowing the film's conclusion.
The hope in this scene is first formed through the initial non-diegetic sound of the baby's cry, followed by the track and pan of the camera following the Commoner towards the sound. Kurosawa's inclusion of the baby differs from the film's source material, In a Bamboo Grove (Akutagawa, 1922), to give his film a more uplifting and hopeful ending where there is restoration and solace for the Priest. Hope in humanity is a theme of the film that is used to inflate the viewer's expectations depicting the Commoner stealing the kimono, dissolving any respect the viewer may have had for the character and giving an understanding of his dismissive attitude. From this, hope must be restored. The Commoner pushes the Woodcutter from the rain back underneath the shelter of the gate as the pair stand in a mid, two-shot, with the Woodcutter accusing the Commoner of hypocrisy, asking, 'So what did you do with the dagger?'. The Commoner's accusations mount as the camera tracks the movement of the pair, with the Commoner forcefully shoving the Woodcutter against the wall. Kurosawa, through his use of blocking and framing, is again able to still maintain hope in the scene by again placing the Priest in the centre frame, standing in the background, and looking after the baby. The camera cuts to a close-up of the distressed Priest witnessing events unfold and acting as the beacon of hope for the film, visibly upset by the immorality of the men. Kurosawa distances viewers from the action by cutting to a high-angle longshot to display the shame of the Woodcutter, whose body is sunken by the guilt of stealing the dagger.
This is juxtaposed with the Commoner feeling no remorse for his theft of the kimono. Kurosawa uses stationary, objective camerawork transitioning using fades from the Commoner leaving in the rain to more wide shots of the Priest and the regretful Woodcutter. This shift in editing and camera movement eases the drama of the conflict between them, allowing the characters to contemplate their situation. The change in tone is noted by Bordwell, stating that "rapid pacing needs the foil of extreme immobility" (2009), indicating Kurosawa's play with the spectator's emotions both through the narrative and visuals,

with the use of editing as the key contributor to this view. The Priest's aggression at the attempt of the Woodcutter to hold the child demonstrates the loss of faith, defending the child by visually and figuratively turning his back on the Woodcutter. Hope is built as he pleads to take in the child stating 'another one wouldn't make a difference', symbolising the idea that through the death of the Husband, there is rebirth through the child as redemption. Kurosawa's inclusion of the child can be seen as a plot device used to restore the hope of the characters that have been broken by the events. The Priest's announcement of 'I think I can keep my faith in man' connotes his disappointment in his doubts of the Woodcutter as he hands off the child. Symbolically championing humanist beliefs and restoring hope. The Woodcutter walking out of the tracking frame as the Priest stands at the gate watching his departure in the background conveys his guidance of morality. Kroeber's view "that the woodcutter has been shown to be a thief and liar may remind us that many humane and decent acts, such as saving a baby, are performed by unattractive, even repulsive, people" (2006), complicates Richie's interpretation by suggesting the viewer's hope is repaid but through an unsavoury figure. The counter to this is that the Priest is, throughout the film, suggested to be the only redeeming member of the group and his involvement with these men is then rewarded in the hope that he has saved the Woodcutter through the child.

Rashomon being perceived as 'Western' is an important aspect of why the film had a strong impact on critical responses. For example, there is considered influence from the West on the director's stylistic trademarks throughout the film. In Tajomaru's story, there is a conscious effort by Kurosawa to create a strong element of menace to the character as it is his description of events. The stylised chiaroscuro lighting through the trees as he stalks the Bride from above creates an unsettling and tense sense of voyeuristic pleasure for the character. The use of high contrast light and shadow comes from two predominant Western sources as influences, through its inception within German Expressionism, such as Metropolis (Lang, 1927) and Nosferatu (Mernau, 1922), creating a surrealist element and the classical Hollywood use in film noir to form a sense of suspense and mystique. Tajomaru can be considered a strong example of a 'Western character' due to his deceptive nature that intends to create a stronger image as the feared bandit. His threat as the film's main antagonist being a known presence before the trial to the group of men, suggests he has similarities to other Western antagonists such as Old Man Clanton in My Darling Clementine (Ford, 1946). Kurosawa admitted to being influenced by Ford's work within the Western genre, a point Sarris notes that "Kurosawa's debt to Ford is "self-acknowledged." If Kurosawa had not given the show away, would Ford's influence be mentioned at all" (Sarris:1963:16). Sarris' final thought on if critics would acknowledge the Ford influence is intriguing when applied to Richie as his interpretation on Rashomon can perhaps also be applied to films from Ford's filmography. It can be argued that My Darling Clementine 'champions hope' in the same way as Rashomon, where morality and good prevail in the face of adversity and 'questioning reality' is Wyatt Earp coming to terms with the challenge of the lawless Tombstone. As previously mentioned, the use of the pathetic fallacy of the rain, whilst being a trademark of Western literature, was also linked as being influenced by Ford's tendency to display natural elements to set the tone of his films. director's reliance on pure cinema techniques where dialogue is limited, and action propels the narrative is another trademark that can be attributed to Ford's Westerns through his lonesome desert settings. The definition of "pure cinema as visual storytelling" (Hitchcock & Gottlieb:2015:100) can undoubtedly be suggested in Rashomon conveyed through the juxtapositions of each character's stories and how the action shifts the portrayal of these characters to the viewer, such as the initially intimidating Tajomaru contrasted to his final scene.

Kurosawa was also able to influence Hollywood through their adaptation of his film, Seven Samurai (Kurosawa, 1954), into the traditional Western genre, The Magnificent Seven (Sturges, 1960). It is clear from this that the narrative elements of Kurosawa's work were easily transferable to Western ideologies. For example, Rashomon, a film where faith in humanity ultimately triumphs, is also adapted into American Hollywood cinema as The Outrage (Ritt, 1964). The film's unreliable form of storytelling and narrative is known as 'The Rashomon Effect', where the characters dictate the narration and the truth is left to be uncovered. This effect can be seen in later Hollywood films such as 12 Angry Men (Lumet, 1957), utilising a similar structure of narrative and plot, even including a similar moral guidepost for the viewer through Henry Fonda's Juror #8 comparable to Kurosawa's use of the Priest. The critical view that Rashomon is a 'Western' film is valid when giving weight to the genre tropes it engages with. Strong themes of pride and honour in the film are best displayed through Kurosawa's depiction of on-screen action. His use of subjective cinematography between the Husband and Tajomaru, with the camera remaining at eye level between the two men as they battle with their swords, is a technique utilised in the conclusion of Once Upon a Time in the West (Leone, 1968). Altering the form through more extreme. close-ups and cutting between the eyes of the two in conflict instead of the faces in Rashomon.

Overall Richie's interpretation of the film and critical opinion regarding it to be a 'Western' are discourses that suggest the film to be foundationally conventional to Hollywood filmmaking. On the other hand, Kurosawa forms a deeper conflict within his narrative based on Japanese literature using his auteur trademarks that build the film's dramatic tension.

ESSAY:

# HOW LOLA MONTÈS PROVIDES, AS DELEUZE ARGUES, 'A BIT OF TIME IN THE PURE STATE'

BY MOLLY BAILEY

Deleuze's theories on cinema are interesting in their approach to concepts such as space, time, memory and movement. He argued that cinema was a mode of representation concerned with manipulating perspective and time in order to revisit the past within a narrative. Deleuze's works can be split into two complex theories in which he coins definitions of the time-image and the movement-image. He focuses, primarily, on the idea that there are two ways in which both people and films can go into the past. A most basic concept of time would be what Deleuze defined as the movement-image in which time is represented through space. He determines that everything around us is an image but it is only when these images are ordered and have a relationship with each other that there is meaning created; specifically, within cinema. In relation to filmmaking, Deleuze argues that cinema can achieve: "a bit of time in the pure state" (Deleuze, 1989, p. 82). For instance, within a film of the detective genre, there would be a clear difference between true and false and how visiting the past can solve the mysteries being experienced in the present. However, as Deleuze begins to define the time-image, he makes a distinction between how it would be used in cinema as something that blurs the lines between the past and the present and how they fit together.

This comparison of the two terms underlines Deleuze's arguments alongside the critics and academics that have attempted to simplify it and comment on its relevance to cinema. For example, David Deamer states that: "Such movement-images create a coherent consciousness in comprehensive space through chronological time. The time-image thus indicates the collapse of the domains and determinates of the movement-image." (Deamer, 2016, p. 41). What he means by this is that, the movement-image differs heavily from that of the time-image as it focused on how action moves through time, often through the use of chronological time or narrative cohesion. The key difference highlighted by Deleuze that helps with this concept of distinguishing the time-image from the movement-image is that time is not fixed within time-image films. The time-image, almost purposely, manipulates a narrative or sequence of events in order to explore how a character experiences time and revisits their past self. One of the most significant films in explaining how the time-image can convey meaning is Lola Montès (Ophüls, 1957, France). Lola Montès follows the life of a young courtesan and dancer as she navigates through the complexities of life, looking back on her past now from the perspective of her new life in the circus. Richard Rushton explains "But the aging Lola is herself the central star of this entertainment-recreation of her own life." (Rushton, 2012, p. 78) in reference to how time is manipulated within the film. An interesting concept tackled within this film includes that of the crystal-image and the differentiation between the ac-

tual and the virtual as established by Deleuze. The crystal-image is described by Rushton: "Where does the present end and the past begin? This is the question central to Deleuze's notion of the crystal-image." (Rushton, 2012, p. 80). Deleuze focuses on the crystal-image, in a simple way, as something that marks the area between the present and the past. Rushton argues: "It is the crystal-image that can show us "a little time in the pure state." (Rushton, 2020, p. 120). This, cinematically, can be through montage, shot and framing in order to create meaning within how characters move between two planes of existence: the past and the present.

Ultimately, Deleuze's philosophical concepts concerning time and movement all coalesce to form his argument underpinning the importance of distinguishing between the past and present within cinema and more generally within life itself. He argues that the role of many films would be to represent "a bit of time in the pure state" (Deleuze, 1989, p. 82). Though one could say his arguments are convoluted and complicate a seemingly simple idea, it is clear that Deleuze thought it important to relate his arguments to cinema in order to generate meaning. The aspects of shot, montage and framing allowed for him to argue that the manipulation of time allows audiences to develop an understanding of wider concepts concerned with genre such as crime and detective films.

Primarily, within his book Cinema 1, Deleuze begins his argument by introducing a very controversial perspective when thinking about cinema. It was set out that a typical flashback film could be represented in one of two ways. The first way that a flashback film can be organised is through the character revisiting their past memories in order to answer some kind of question or solve a mystery. For example, when looking at the film Mildred Pierce (Michael Curtiz, 1945), it is clear that the narrative fits this model of flashback film. The film follows the stereotypical tropes of the flashback detective or crime film in that it starts with the murder of Monte Beragon and the characters revisit scenes of the past in order to find the murderer in the present and solve the mystery. Deleuze's argument establishing the concept of the movement-image fits well for this film as he described it as: "movement-images, in which space depicts time." (Hengehold, 2013, p. 135). What he means by this is that, the scenes taking place in the present are focused within a police station setting and the scenes in which they visit the past take place on a timeline where we learn along with the characters. This manipulation of time could be said to represent: "a bit of time in the pure state" (Deleuze, 1989, p. 82).

When applying the concept of the movement-image to this, it is clear that this film utilises space in order to organise its narrative and solve the ongoing murder mystery. Ronald Bogue theorises that: "In fact, Deleuze argues, it is Bergson himself who best understands such movement-images, and this dif-

ferentiation of immobile cuts/abstract time and real movement/concrete durée provides an important first step toward the development of a general theory of cinema." (Bogue, 2003, p. 22). The reason Bogue makes this comment concerning Bergson is because he was, arguably, the main influence for Gilles Delezue when first introducing his philosophical concepts concerning cinema. Bogue proceeds to comment: "The mechanism of cinema aptly illustrates consciousness' inherent distortions of movement, but Bergson's apparent misgivings about the cinema itself are misplaced, Deleuze points out, for the cinematic image projected on the screen is perceived not as a set of still photographs to which motion is somehow added from the outside, but as an image directly and immediately in motion, a moving picture, or movement-image." (Bogue, 2003, p. 22). What he means by this is that Deleuze argued that it was not solely the image on screen that generated meaning but the way in which that image was organised in relation to the ones both prior to and following it. The importance of this concept is that cinema can represent: "a bit of time in the pure state" (Deleuze, 1989, p. 82) and allows for audiences to experience the visual medium alongside the characters. This is where he introduces the term 'movement-image' and how the way visual scenes are organised grounds his argument of how movement generates meaning in cinema.

On the contrary, Deleuze introduces his concept of the time-image and how it differs heavily from that of the movement image in the organisation of narrative and its significance in representing time. Rushton comments: "Unlike what is expected of the movement- image, the task of the time-image is not one of assuring us that the present is here and the past there. Rather, the task for films of the time-image is to declare that if the present is here, then the past is here with it, and so too is the future." (Rushton, 2012, p. 60). A link between

the past and the present is consistently highlighted from Deleuze when he lays the foundations for his time-image concept. For instance, within Lola Montès, a hybrid between the past and present is created in order to show the relation of time within a character's life. The reason for Deleuze establishing this argument could be said to be futile and far-fetched in that it achieves very little in the wider perception of cinema. If looking at the cinematic art form from a philosophical point of view negates the escapist nature of it due to rationalising all representation of time, then it could be said that the very essence of cinema is lost. However, it is clear that Deleuze enjoyed analysing the relevance of time within cinema due to the concept that, if the past is fixed then it leads to the inference that the present and future are too. It was argued by Deleuze that, although the events of the past cannot be changed, one's perception of what has happened can be altered. This would mean that, in simpler terms, the past can be changed and allows for future events to be indeterminate. For example, within Lola Montès, the scenes that depict her wedding night with the King is represented very differently between the circus scenes in the present and her actual memory of the past. The perspective created by Ophüls from this could be two-fold. In one way, it could be argued that Lola's (Martine Carol) reputation is what is important to her; her desire is to represent herself in the best light possible. However, an alternative interpretation of this is that she simply remembers the past very differently when performing in the circus. Through multiple, repeated performances and her own altered memory of the past, she convinces herself that she was truly happy on her wedding night. Although, when she does actually visit her past soon after, she is shown to be rather unhappy. As a result, the argument from Deleuze comes to the surface in that, by her representing her past through the present circus scenes,

she revisits her past-self and changes her perspective on the events. This then allows her to represent her marriage more positively in the present and, thus, the argument remains that she has the ability to change her future too.

In addition to his introduction of the time-image, Deleuze establishes other concepts such as the crystal image and the actual vs the virtual in order to further his argument concerning the representation of time in cinema. These complex theories are explained by Rushton: "Let us begin with a proposition, then: the actual is present, the virtual is past. In other words, if the actual is what is happening to me in the present, then the virtual is composed of my memories of things that have happened to me in the past." (Rushton, 2012, p. 87-88). This remains as an additional way to understand the differentiation between past and present for Deleuze in that he argued that the actual and the virtual must always coincide with each other and one cannot exist without its opposite. In reference to Lola Montès and other films that delve into a character's past: "The use of flashback in films of the movement- image is usually a strategy of transforming the virtual into the actual." (Rushton, 2012, p. 88). In this way, what Rushton argues is that Deleuze acknowledges the difference between the actual and the virtual as the former serves as objective fact behind, in Lola Montès, the protagonist's life. However, the latter serves as subjective in that the notion of revisiting the past in order to 'change' it is implemented once again, representing "a bit of time in the pure state" (Deleuze, 1989, p. 82). Deleuze argued that, by revisiting the past, one can change their perception of the events in a way. This is how the virtual and the actual coincide with one another and work together to create a boundary between fact and memory, showing how both are impacted by character's interpretation and the audience's perspective.

Moreover, Deleuze argues that this distinction between the actual and the virtual, when present in a flashback film, can be so well intertwined that: "...what was virtual now becomes actual while what was actual correlatively becomes

virtual: the actual and virtual become entwined to the point where we can no longer tell which is which." (Rushton, 2012, p. 89). This is an interesting premise when looking at Lola Montès as the film, due to being part of the time-image and manipulating time and memory, blurs the lines between what is objective and what is manipulated. For example, within the circus scenes in the present, the Ringmaster (Peter Ustinov) is telling Lola's story and how she came to be such an influential person. However, as her dancing skills are commented on, it is clear that there seems to be a manipulation of the truth with Lola exhibiting that she is not very skilled within this area despite what the story of her past says. Rushton, again, comments on the difference and significance between the actual and the virtual in representing the past and present and the, somewhat, blurred line that an expression of both can achieve. "...the indiscernibility between the real and the imaginary, the present and the past, the actual and the virtual, becomes an objective 'fact'." (Rushton, 2012, p. 89). This manipulation of time allows for the representation of every theory that Deleuze sets forth to be proven and that cinema can demonstrate: "a bit of time in the pure state" (Deleuze, 1989, p. 82). It allows for there to be experimentation concerning time and the way in which moving images can be used together in order to distort what is the truth and what is not.

In addition to these concepts, the idea of a crystal-image was used by Deleuze to further his argument. Within this theory, it has been said: "The crystal- image in the cinema initiates a split between the past and the present, between the actual present and the memory of the present that the past evokes, a split between what Deleuze calls an actual image and a virtual one..." (Rushton & Bettinson, 2010, p. 121). This is an interesting consideration within Lola Montès, specifically within the framing in her flashback scenes. For instance, when Lola first meets the Ringmaster, she is looking through the window into the space where he in his carriage. The way in which we are shown the action with the window framing the shot demonstrates a crystallized image. This allows for a distinction between the actual and virtual despite being part of the same memory. This, in turn, blurs the lines by physically obscuring our view between objective and subjective truth as we see Lola within a frame that is constantly split into sections of the image. Deleuze supports this in his argument: "The situation is quite different: the actual image and the virtual image coexist and crystallize" (Deleuze, 1989, p. 83-84). This physical divide places the audience both on the outside of the action and peering into what the Ringmaster is doing; further proving the actual and the virtual combining in the same moment. The sections created by the window are important in distinguishing the distortion of truth. As the audience, we can only see the action through another plane, our perception is morphed and, thus, so is Lola's memory. Within the film, there is often a split of the action between windows, doorways and different coloured lighting in order to achieve a visual divide that represents the gap between the actual and the virtual. This represents Deleuze's theory and how cinema can be used to represent both the time and movement-image. Lovorka Grmusa argues: "the indiscernibility... the present and the past, of the actual and the virtual, is definitely not produced in the head or in the mind, it is the objective characteristic of existing images..." (Grmusa, 2017, p. 2017). The way in which the crystal, actual and the virtual images all represent his theories is through the concept that, once the images are put together in a sense of 'movement', meaning is created to every shot. For instance, in Lola Montès, every shot from Ophüls feeds into the representation that an image alone does not connote anything but it takes movement between shots and a manipulation of time to encompass "'a bit of time in the pure state' (Deleuze, 1989, p. 82). Rushton summarises: "Ophüls' films exemplify the crystal-image, the construction of interlinked strands between Lola's present and past in Lola Montès," (Rushton, 2012, p. 82.) Ultimately, the way in which Lola Montès represents the distinction between the past and the present is through the

The Arts of Beauty, or Secrets of a Lady's Toilet, with Hints to Gentlemen on the Art of Fascinating "To all men and women of every land, who are not afraid of themselves, who trust so much in their own souls that they dare to stand up in the might of their own individuality to meet the tidal currents of the world.

crystal-image manipulating the aesthetic and artistic choices within the film's framing.

Overall, it is clear that Deleuze found it fascinating when differentiating time from movement within cinema as an art form. His main argument concerns the concept of how time is represented and how the 'movement' of a film, such as the transitions and framing making it a moving image, can allow for meaning to be created between a character's past and present. Deleuze argues: "Instead of an indirect representation of time which derives from movement, it is the direct time-image which derives from movement..." (Deleuze, 1986, p. ix). When combined, Deleuze's terms of the actual, virtual and crystal image all coalesce in order to achieve meaning behind flashback films and the manipulation of time. Within Lola Montès, Deleuze argues: ""Time, but time which has already rolled up, rounded itself, at the same time as it was splitting." (Deleuze, 1989, p. 84.) Ultimately, Deleuze possessed the belief that cinema was not just something that presented time artistically but directly applied meaning to every symbol it creates. Overall, the main argument of Deleuze remains as: "The cinema does not just present images, it surrounds them with a world." (Deleuze, 1989, p. 68) and he establishes how films such as Lola Montès can indicate "a bit of time in the pure state" (Deleuze, 1989, p. 82).

ESSAY:

# How the aesthetic, ideological, and political nature of Hong Kong cinema has been affected by the 1984 Joint Declaration and the 1997 handover

BY MOLLY BAILEY

The events of the 1997 handover to Chinese rule and the 1984 Joint Declaration mapped out what would be years of social anxiety within Hong Kong life and cinema more generally. The 1997 handover was implemented in order to demonstrate the formal passing of Hong Kong from the rule of the United Kingdom to China. Throughout the years surrounding the handover and the subsequent agreement that Hong Kong life would be allowed to flourish and adapt up until 2047 were some of the most significant in the development of the Hong Kong film industry. Hong Kong films demonstrated a clear shift in their subject matter in order to appeal to the local feeling of unease and foreignness when looking at the identity of the Hong Kong people. Steven Chen argues: "After the 1997 re-unification, Hong Kong witnessed a rapid decline in its economic and cultural influence, and a subsequent loss of identity" (Chen et al, 2019). Ackbar Abbas comments on the term: "culture of disappearance" in relation to this loss of identity that so many people felt in their impending handover to Chinese rule and how it would impact all aspects of their lives. Gary Bettinson claims that: "In the wake of the 1984 Joint Declaration, which formalized Hong Kong's return to China in 1997, the British colony faced potentially seismic cultural change. For Abbas, the countdown to the 1997 handover triggered a pervasive crisis of identity..." (Bettinson, 2014, p. 8). This relates to the crisis experienced in Hong Kong in relation to the 1984 Joint Declaration. This agreement stated that Hong Kong would be handed over to China in 1997. The period from 1984 to 1997 was one of fierce anxiety and an overwhelming sense of a lack of belonging. The period after 1997 marked a drastic change within the co-production model of China as, despite Hong Kong maintaining a sense of normality up until 2047, there was a shift in how films were being made and utilising their connections to the Mainland. Meaghan Morris supports this: "Such a strong and oppressive sense of lost identity, the fear of abandonment and desire for belonging, find expression in the Hong Kong film industry..." (Morris, 2005, p. 81). The films that were created in response to ongoing social issues and were all similar in their subject matter. The local's anxieties concerning their new way of life were consistently represented through the woes of the protagonists and the locations in which these films were shot: "...and the fin-de-siècle imagination triggered by the 1997 handover, are displaced by stories of individuals on the verge of oblivion." (Lee, 2009, p. 64). The characters, location and general tone throughout the films were all similar and represented the ongoing concerns of the Hong Kong people.

Within this essay, two films that will be explored to demonstrate a significant shift within Hong Kong cinema includes that of Rouge (Kwan, 1987, Hong Kong) and Happy Together (Wong Kar-wai, 1997, Buenos Aires). Rouge follows Fleur (Anita Mui) as she experiences the life of a courtesan in the 1930s. She begins to fall in love with Chan (Leslie Cheung) as we follow their story that, ultimately ends in tragedy. The film intertwines the narrative running through the events of the 1930s and that of the 1980s and gives us a look into the common trope of the ghost story within Hong Kong cinema. In comparison, Happy Together follows the lives of Lai (Tony Leung Chiu Wau) and Ho (Leslie Cheung) as they search for better living conditions whilst in a relationship in Argentina. The film follows their own personal issues as well as the tension growing within their relationship and the prospects of finding a new life. The two films compare in subject matter with Rouge being released before the handover but after the Declaration and Happy Together being released almost immediately after the events of 1997. Had Rouge been released later it would, arguably, be more direct in its representation of the handover. Rouge, effectively, demonstrates the tension within Hong Kong at the time in a subtle way that uses a ghost story in order to show the ignorance of the local audience: "In the film Rouge (directed by Stanley Kwan, 1987), we see a self-mocking scene about Hong Kong people's poor knowledge of history. Fleur is a ghost, who has died in the 1930s and re-appears in the 1980s

to look for her long-lost lover." (Lei, 2021). The history of Hong Kong combined with the ongoing historical events rife in the wake of the 1984 Joint Declaration and the 1997 handover allowed for films like Rouge and Happy Together to have their own individual significance in their respective times. An interesting point to make concerning the subject matter of Rouge is that there is a representation of the past and the present that would be advised against or censored within modern day filmmaking in Hong Kong due to influence from the Mainland.

Primarily, one of the main focuses of the conflict and tension surrounding Hong Kong cinema during the 1980s and 1990s was the signing of the 1984 Joint Declaration: "In the several years before the 1984 Sino-British Joint Declaration, Hong Kong was to experience yet another crisis of confidence." (Zhu, 2013, p. 126). Within this agreement, it was stated that on the 1st July 1997, rule over Hong Kong would be passed from British authority over to the People's Republic of China. As a result, the period between 1984 and 1997 was one of high tension for the Hong Kong people and this was reflected through the cinema of the time. Ackbar Abbas comments on the notion of a disappearance of identity within the locals of Hong Kong in the wake of the impending handover to China. He argued that there was a 'culture of disappearance' that allowed for the production of Hong Kong cinema that included stereotypes surrounding class difference and tense relationships that could be said to be a metaphor for the pressure surrounding Hong Kong at the time. Bettinson comments on the argument of Abbas and how it had an impact on Hong Kong cinema and the tropes it used as the 1997 handover was announced in 1984. "Ackbar Abbas's Hong Kong: Culture and the Politics of Disappearance (1997) offers a paradigmatic instance of the culturalist approach. Abbas draws his thesis from the historical circumstances of the moment." (Bettinson, 2014, p. 8). With Hong Kong as a Special Administrative Region (SAR) now, there was a constant anxiety surrounding society from the 1984 Declaration.

Additionally, Abbas argues for the concept that Hong Kong identity was impacted surrounding the events of the 1984 Joint Declaration and the 1997 handover and, as a result, cinema was used as an allegory for the ongoing anxiety and loss felt by locals. The approach from Abbas is a culturalist one that looks at the issues plaguing society in the 1990s. One of his main focuses was that of a 'space of disappearance' in which he comments on the changing attitudes within Hong Kong as a result of the previous uniqueness of Hong Kong identity and how, once the Joint Declaration

was agreed, that identity was displace by the Mainland. The central issue seemed to be that subsequent cinema traditions would fade away when the Mainland got involved. This 'change of space' raised many questions for various New Wave filmmakers in their representation of Hong Kong identity and the loss of culture that was feared by so many. The sense of fear surrounding the looming handover and the consequential loss of culture could have been said to be a result of the enormity of the effects of the handover being felt. For example, Abbas writes: "This is very precisely a culture of disappearance because it is a culture whose appearance is accompanied by a sense of the imminence of its disappearance, and the cause of its emergence — 1997 — may also be the cause of its demise" (Abbas, 1997, p. 70 -71). Overall, it was clear that the impending consequences from the handover were something that many locals and filmmakers alike struggled with in Hong Kong and the constant reminder of the change of rule for the country allowed for an allegorised cinema to be created. The loss of identity and the anxiety surrounding the Declaration and the 1997 handover provided an ideologically and politically motivated subject matter that the majority of Hong Kong filmmakers implemented, however subtle in their representation.

Furthermore, with Hong Kong locals struggling with the adaptation to Chinese rule once again, it was agreed that the handover, though taking place in 1997, gave Hong Kong 50 years to remain as a SAR. The agreement stressed that there would be an allied relationship with China once the handover took place but Hong Kong would maintain a certain notion of autonomy in the years following. This, in turn, put filmmakers into a position in which they felt responsible in its representation of the tension surrounding the handover in the 1980s and 1990s. There was a clear shift in a previously stable Hong Kong into one in which the locals felt no real sense of identity as they had to adapt to a rule that many had not been exposed to before. "Now faced with the uncomfortable possibility of an alien identity about to be imposed on it from China, Hong Kong is experiencing a kind of last-minute collective search for a more definite identity." (Abbas, 1997, p. 4). Abbas comments on this disappearance of identity and culture consistently throughout his analysis of the films surrounding the tension caused between 1984 and 1997. The films around this time were fuelled by an ongoing anxiety caused by a loss of identity from Hong Kong locals. This loss of identity sparked a tendency to take what was happening both socially and politically and turn it into an allegorised narrative within their films.

Moreover, due to the Declaration being signed, there was an increase in the consistent global influence that Hong Kong experienced. The term Hollywoodization was used to discuss this impact as Hong Kong filmmakers migrated over to Hollywood. There were new codes and conventions in place that were often seen as part of classical Hollywood filmmaking, specifically within the Hollywood Melodrama. This involved an infatuation with the female protagonist, incorporating scenes of domestic conflict and a clear representation of the tragic love story especially in terms of the tone running throughout the narrative being one of sentimentality. This increase in the representation of Hollywood through films in Hong Kong was interesting in reference to the New Wave of filmmakers being introduced to cinema during the 1980s and 1990s.

Likewise, Abbas argued for aspects of globalisation that had a significant impact on subject matter within Hong Kong cinema. He comments on the two trends of Hong Kong cinema between 1984 and 1997: nostalgia and formal and stylistic commentary. These trends proved essential in representing a New Wave of film that allegorised the social issues in Hong Kong in the 1980s and 1990s, particularly that of the disappearance of identity and the comparison between the past and the present. For example, one of the trends that he argues in favour of in cinema was the nostalgia trope. He argued that this was a distinctive feature of Hong Kong cinema in the late 20th century. This trope in Hong Kong cinema is represented particularly well within Rouge. Kwan released Rouge as a film that was concerned with the representation of the cultural disappearance. Kwan captured the subject matter that Abbas held as important in the cinema of the 1980s and 1990s. Abbas writes: "It is not the appearance of 'Hong Kong themes'... that is significant in the new Hong Kong cinema but, rather, what I call a problematic of disap-

pearance: that is to say, a sense of the elusiveness, the slipperiness, the ambivalences of Hong Kong's cultural space that some Hong Kong filmmakers have caught in their use." (Abbas 1997, p. 24). The notion of nostalgia within Rouge is a significant thematic quality that could be seen across Hong Kong cinema more generally and allows for this representation of disappearance both literally and metaphorically. Within the film, Fleur starts to search for Chan in the modern-day and could be said to be literalising this notion of cultural disappearance presented by Abbas. This is demonstrated through his disappearance and her nature as a ghost. The nostalgic nature of the scenes placed in the past are interesting when analysed stylistically. To support this in relation to the social issues in Hong Kong at the time: "As a nostalgic film, Rouge was a critical and commercial success. In this melodrama, Stanley Kwan juxtaposes Hong Kong's 1930s and 1980s through the visit of a ghost." (Lei, 2021).

Stylistically, Kwan provides a blue, cool-toned lighting within the scenes that take place in the present. Visually, this is interesting in comparison to the golden hue of the lighting within Fleur's past. For example, even when Fleur visits Chan's family in order to express an interest in marrying him, she seems relatively happy despite her circumstances as a courtesan, all through the notion that she has found true love. In comparison, when we are first introduced to Yuen (Alex Man) and Chor (Emily Chu), the camera pans around the office as everyone slaves away at their work. The lighting is cool-toned and the location is almost clinical in its representation. In addition to this, the way that Chor and Yeun first interact, though she is being given a gift, seems unemotional and cold. This is juxtaposed heavily with every representation of Fleur and Chan and how, despite Fleur's circumstances and their tragic end, are demonstrated as completely enamoured with one another. Additionally, the motif of the 'rouge' allows for a symbolic representation of the aesthetic change within Fleur throughout the film. She is gifted the makeup by the man she wants to marry and then, within the scenes in the present when she cannot find him, she loses the red colour of her lipstick. This representation of makeup throughout the film, though subtle, makes it so that there is a visual representation of this loss of identity for Fleur. Overall, there is a significant juxtaposition between the past and the present even with subtle motifs running throughout. The relationship between Yeun and Chor is interesting in comparison to Chan and Fleur as it allows for the cold nature of modern-day relationships to be represented. The aesthetic of Fleur throughout the present scenes is jarring and we continuously see her looking very tradition in comparison to that of the people she interacts with. Her traditional dress sparks comments on her appearance and, often, is followed by her losing the red colour of her makeup. This is significant as a motif as it allows for the difference between the two times to be demonstrated and her loss of identity to be highlighted as she searches for Chan and in modern society generally.

Abbas comments on the importance of classical techniques concerned with the Hollywood melodrama for Hong Kong cinema. For example, Rouge focuses on a female protagonist presented with a tragic love story that proves as an allegory for the ongoing decline with Hong Kong identity. Rey Chow comments: "We are now able to define the relation between nostalgia and the filmic image in Rouge." (Chow, 1993, p. 64). The implementation of the conventions concerning the Hollywood melodrama are important when looking at the influence of the West on Hong Kong filmmakers such as Stanley Kwan. In addition to female protagonists and stylistic techniques separating the scenes of the past and the present, the film focuses completely around the fatalistic narrative. The suicide that Fleur speaks of serves as the catalyst for the rest of the events of the narrative and works as a metaphor for the decline of hope within society.

During the early 2000s, in the years soon after the handover, there was an agreement to propel Hong Kong cinema into a co-production model with China. In retrospect, the various scenes including the representations of ghost, reincarnation, intimate scenes and violence within Rouge would not be allowed within the co-production model. This model arose as a result of the 1997 handover and represents the Mainlandization of Hong Kong cinema; further feeding into the idea of The Mainlandization Thesis and how traditional Hong Kong filmmakers were fading out of

existence. This Mainlandization and Hollywoodization of cinema in Hong Kong meant that filmmakers were now limited in what they could produce in comparison to the subject matter demonstrated in Rouge and Happy Together. To support this line of argument concerning the influence of the Mainland and Hollywood, Bono Lee comments that: "the fertile ground of creative freedom that they had experiences in 1990s Hong Kong" (Lee, 2012, p. 194) had been lost. Ultimately, the creative freedom and auteuristic nature of Hong Kong filmmakers throughout history were subverted as a result of the social issues in Hong Kong. This was due to being limited within the consequences of the Hollywood and Mainland tropes adopted by the country's cinema at the time. The co-production model, whilst arriving much later than the films discussed in this essay, only prove further that there were several aspects of the Mainlandization and Hollywoodization of Hong Kong cinema that resulted in rendering the local practices obsolete.

Furthermore, the Declaration and handover represented a clear shift within subject matter as there were new censorship, artistic limitations for directors and social struggles. Poshek Fu argues: "Even the themes were different: crime and corruption in 1979, as opposed to the youth culture and the question of identity (political or social) in the works of the early 1980s." (Fu, 2000, p. 102). The 'Mainlandization' of Hong Kong cinema meant that directors had to be careful in their representation of the 1997 handover and Joint Declaration and had many rules to follow concerning certain genre tropes and subject matter. Chin Pang Lei claims that, in the 1980s and 1990s: "These films not only respond to the 1997 handover of Hong Kong, but also react to the political anxiety in the city in recent years." (Lei, 2021). As a result of the Mainlandization of Hong Kong cinema, the subject matter and genre tropes were censored very differently to the films during the period of 1984 to 1997. In addition to this, the inevitable 'Hollywoodization' of Hong Kong cinema emerged during this time. Both the Mainlandization and Hollywoodization served as two globalising pressures for Hong Kong cinema. These pressures came soon after the 1997 handover and, unsurprisingly, had a huge impact on the representation of China and the social anxieties surrounding it post-handover. The implementation of tropes popular within Hollywood and the Mainland meant that the same sense of a loss of culture was generated and the fear that the traditions of Hong Kong filmmaking would become obsolete was felt widely.

In comparison, a filmmaker that seemingly manipu-

lated the events of the 1997 handover and the effects of Hollywoodization and Mainlandization in order to produce a strong narrative within his films was Wong Kar-wai. With the emergence of this new way of incorporating filmmaking, Stanley Kwan was one of the main influences with Rouge, released first in 1987 in Taiwan and being stationed in the centre of the increasing worries. This purgatory period that Hong Kong locals found themselves in between the announcement of the handover in 1984 and it actually happening was something that influenced the subject matter of Rouge greatly. However, Wong released his film Happy Together in the year of the handover and materialized as someone that advocated for more of an art cinema. This is interesting when considering the effects of the 1997 handover and how soon after, specifically within the early 2000s, Hong Kong would progress into a co-production model of filmmaking with mainland China. Though Mainlandization became apparent later in the development of Hong Kong cinema, it is clear that Wong could be said to actively reject the influence from the Mainland in him welcoming a location change as drastic as Argentina. This location change, whilst stemming from the political issues surrounding a sense of home for locals, may have been a creative choice in representing Wong's films as art cinema. Gordon Mathews supports this: "Consumption, as a share experience of local place and performance, exists within a changing local and global political-economic landscape." (Mathews, 2001, p. 45). Overall, Wong used his films as a vehicle for social commentary surrounding the ongoing turmoil experienced in Hong Kong in reference to the 'culture of disappearance' that Abbas has commented on previously whilst maintaining his auteur style.

Moreover, there were several aspects to this film that made it so that the events of the 1997 handover were represented fully. The main theme that provided social commentary on the issues rife in Hong Kong was change. For example, a way in which Wong implemented this notion of Western techniques was his filming locations. Wong took his film beyond the constraints of Eastern locations and decided to shoot in Argentina. The underlying theme throughout Happy Together is that there is promise of a new and better life. One of the main visual motifs throughout the film is that of the lamp. During the scene with Ho staring at the lamp with the Iguazu falls flowing freely, the camera zooms in on the falls and cuts to a canted angle of the staircase, quickly followed by a desperate scene in which he cries in the apartment. This juxtaposition allows for the lamp to be represented as a symbol of finding a home compared to the way that the protagonists are currently living. It seems to serve as a symbol of a safe haven that is appealing because it is described as 'The end of the world where all problems can be left behind." However, the visual representation of the real falls are somewhat violent and destructive with the waves crashing in on each other as a motif that runs throughout the film and splits up the action. These sequences contradict that of the ending where Lai finds complete peace when he visits. This concept is commented on further during the ending of the film when Lai visits Chang's (Chang Chen) family. We hear his voiceover say: "Finally, I could see why he's happy running around freely. He has a place where he could always return to." In reference to this, the auteur techniques presented by Wong including his dialogue, music choices, voiceover and manipulation of time all feed into the aesthetic and political nature of the social situation that Hong Kong found itself in. Soon after Lai's voiceover, the film's soundtrack plays and we are presented with the idea that Lai is going to progress onto better things than he experienced in Argentina, solidifying the desire for his home in Hong Kong once again. Overall, the voiceover and music combine to promote the concept that there is hope for the future compared to the desperation felt throughout the beginning of the film and Hong Kong society generally.

Similarly, this hope for the future is replicated within Rouge. Throughout our viewing of Fleur's story, there is a desire for her to find her true love. There are several interpretations for the ending of the film in terms of how audiences would have felt in relation to the social allegory highlighted. On one hand, Fleur completes her goal and is left with the idea that she is progressing to a better life. However, the notion that Fleur dedicated her life to something that ended as a dishonest betrayal could be said to replicate the depressing nature of Hong Kong identity in the 1980s

and 1990s. This contradictory nature of Fleur's life and death perfectly represent how: "Many Hong Kong people who were born and raised in Hong Kong have said that their feelings on the eve of the 1997 handover were complicated and contradictory." (Zhuo, 2008, p. 215). Fleur, overall, encapsulates the disappearance of culture promoted by Abbas in that she is both elusive at the end of the film and between scenes. She remains traditional within her clothing, movement and make-up and is represented as negative within modern society because of it. This is inferred further with how many comments she gets on her appearance and the initial fear that Yeun and Chor feel towards her. Ultimately, she seems to promote the values of Western and Mainland cinema in their aim to eradicate Hong Kong tradition and culture in filmmaking.

Moreover, both Happy Together and Rouge are interesting in their representation of time and change as they seem to function in the same way despite having relatively different narrative motivation. The temporal salience and the manipulation of time within each story seems to all feed into the idea that the past and present within Hong Kong were jarringly different. This temporal salience accommodates Abbas' claim to the second trend of Hong Kong cinema: formal and stylistic commentary. In Happy Together slow motion is used often when Ho and Lai argue and break up. The world seems to slow down as the two consider their circumstances heavily. They are constantly faced with the issue surrounding life in Argentina despite the main theme throughout the film being that of new beginnings. This infers that, despite Hong Kong audiences rejecting the new rule, they still have a desire to stay in their home country. The consistent use of slow motion and the fragmented narrative within Happy Together allows for Wong to manipulate time. Wong utilises this in order to represent the longing for the past and the desire to keep tradition identity intact. Joelle Collier comments in relation to this that: 'Faced with the date of June 30 1997...what power could a Hong Konger desire more than to control time itself?' (Collier, 1999, p.77). What is meant by this is that, surrounding the tension cause by the handover, there is a longing expressed by Hong Kong audiences to be able to control time and, ultimately, control their future which is represented in Wong's direction. By comparison, Rouge uses temporal salience in a way that juxtaposes the past heavily, not unlike Happy Together. Both films present the difference between time visually with Happy Together highlighting its past scenes in black and white to show ongoing turmoil in the protagonists' relationship. Rouge does this through the cool vs warm lighting between the past and present scenes. Ultimately, both films utilise individual aesthetic to represent the aversion to change that many Hong Kong audiences would have felt surrounding the 1997 handover.

The disappearance of identity that Abbas continues to argue makes it so that the entirety of Hong Kong cinema, thematically, allegorised this sense of change in society that was rejected by many locals through its lighting, location and characters. Wong would continuously demonstrate auteur techniques that manipulated time. Wong recognised the importance of temporal salience within his films in the same way that Kwan does with his juxtaposition between past and present in Rouge. Kwan acknowledges that there is a clear disappearance of identity for Hong Kong viewers surrounding the events both in the 1980s and 1990s. Both films, through their temporal salience, seemingly hold a mirror up to society and slow it down in order to represent ongoing issues which is often represented visually using the protagonists standing in mirrors in both films. The films, within their endings specifically, promise a more accepting, liberal way of living through their characters and what their futures entail. Within Happy Together, this is represented through the location shooting in Argentina and the overarching theme of hope. However, an alternative to this is that, within the aesthetic of Happy Together and wider Hong Kong cinema in the past two decades, there is the concept of hopelessness even within a film that advocates for new beginnings. This would allow for the perspective to be created that, despite moving the location of where this film's narrative takes place, the overall notion is that the effects of the Declaration and handover felt so immense to filmmakers and locals alike that it is represented as impacting audiences globally. "Culturally, the colony had developed its own identity." (Chu, 2003, p. 42). Ultimately, the over-

whelming theme running throughout Rouge, Happy Together and Hong Kong cinema as a whole is change. Overall, there is an obvious allegorised representation of the feelings of anxiety surrounding the 1997 handover. Aesthetically, ideologically and politically, Hong Kong society in the period between the signing of the Declaration and the handover allowed for a new type of cinema to be created that concerned the loss of Hong Kong identity. Abbas is a central figure in accommodating the concept of a disappearance of culture and tradition and his critique of Hong Kong cinema allows for the allegorised social issues of the Declaration and the handover to be situated in a convincing argument. Kwan and Wong are integral filmmakers in their obvious representation of this fear surrounding a loss of identity and, overall, use their films to juxtapose the past and the present in a way that is nostalgic and meaningful for Hong Kong audiences. Rouge serves as a ghost story that represents the jarring differences between the past and the present whilst demonstrating a loss of identity throughout Hong Kong history. Happy Together, with the visual motif of the falls and the lamp as a safe haven, allow for the representation of a loss of home and displacement to be identified. Various aspects of Hong Kong filmmaking from the Declaration onwards including Mainlandization, Hollywoodization, China's co-production model and Abbas' culture of disappearance all allow for a relatable subject matter to be presented to audiences. Ultimately, it is clear that Hong Kong filmmakers found it essential to represent these issues in order to create a wholly new wave of cinema that served as a canvas for ideological representation and, in turn, preserved the identity they were so concerned with losing.

ESSAY:

# TO BLEND REALISM AND THEATRICALITY

BY SKY FONG

Jean-Luc Godard described Vivre sa vie (Godard, 1962) as an experimentation of "théâtre-vérit", which is the combination of the concrete documentary style "cinéma-vérité" and Brechtian theatrical aspects. (Zand, 1962) Documentaries consist of realistic depictions of events, whereas Brechtian alienation devices intend to make the audience aware of the theatricality. This essay will evaluate whether the two seemingly contrary ideas have come together in harmony under Godard's direction in Vivre sa vie.

***1 HISTORICAL CONTEXT — THE NOUVELLE VAGUE — EXPERIMENTATION***

To understand Godard's decision to experiment with the compatibility between realism and theatricality, it is essential to evaluate the context of The French New Wave. The French New Wave, also known as the Nouvelle Vague, was historically one of the most critical film movements in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The movement gave rise to many influential French directors, including François Truffaut, Agnès Varda, Alain Resnais AND GODARD.

As Truffaut put it in "A Certain Tendency in French Cinema", "With the advent of 'talkies,' the French cinema was a frank plagiarism of the American cinema." (Truffaut, 2014, p.208) Due to their disgust towards the state of French cinema and having taken inspiration from Italian neorealism, young French filmmakers started to experiment with the norms of storytelling, which fostered new styles and themes in film. (Neupert, 2007) Godard explained that the explorations during the Nouvelle Vague also included establishing a "new relationship between fiction and reality". (Narboni and Milne, 1972, p.192)

***2 DOCUMENTARY — SOCIAL REALISM***

According to Bill Nichols, documentaries are films about reality, real people, and real events. (Nichols, 2017) Tracing back to the origins of cinema, most early films are documentaries that record daily lives, including the Lumière brothers' Arrival of a Train at La Ciotat (1896). Documentaries emphasise realism, providing a natural and unpolished look at reality.

Before the New Wave, French documentaries developed a trend of providing social commentary. The earliest example of a French social documentary is Georges Lacombe's La Zone (1928), which depicted the impoverished lives of ragpickers. (Ungar, 2018) Political documentaries involving the atrocities of the World Wars were also present, with a significant example being New Wave director Alain Resnais' Night and Fog (1955). These documentaries expressed the directors' opinions on the contemporary and the past and significantly influenced the subject matters of the New Wave films.

***3 BERTOLT BRECHT — EPIC THEATRE — VERFREMDUNGSEFFEKT***

Bertolt Brecht was a German playwright who devised a theory of the "epic theatre" that rejected the norms of theatrical illusion. Brecht believed that the theatre should not persuade the audience to identify with the characters on stage, but instead, they should be spectators with critical detachment. (Velmani, 2013)

The Brechtian way to distance the audience from the theatre is called the Verfremdungseffekt, translated as the "alienation effect", or the A-effect. Brecht explained in his essay, "A Short Organum for the Theatre" (1964), that alienation "allows [the audience] to recognize its subject, but at the same time makes it unfamiliar". Brecht aims to develop his audience as politically aware observers that remain active throughout his plays instead of passively enjoying the art without engagement. (Hoesterey, 2000)

***4 WHY TWELVE? — TABLEAUX AND EPISODES — INTERTITLES AND PLACARDS***

One of the most apparent stylistic parallels between Vivre sa vie and Brechtian epic theatre is splitting the story into elliptic tableaux or episodes. In Brecht's plays, a linear narrative is divided into loosely connected episodes, where each episode is independent as if it exists as a play-within-a-play. Brecht also uses placards (Figure 1) that contain synopsis of scenes to distance the audience from the play. (Velmani, 2013) Godard uses intertitles to separate the tableaux, referencing Brechtian techniques to create the distancing effect.

Every tableau has its unique style and purpose; for example, despite the second tableau chronologically following the first, there was not a clear flow of the story from one to another. Tableau one can be viewed alone as a conversation of a divorcing couple and tableau two is a documentary about a record shop worker. The transition from one to another is only marked by the title card (Figure 2) that briefly summarises the events and establishes the setting of the second tableau.

Godard's use of tableaux is different from how Agnès Varda uses chapters in Cléo from 5 to 7 (Varda, 1962). Instead of cutting to a black screen with words, Varda shows the numbered chapters at the bottom of the screen (Figure 3) to specify the passage of time and continues a flowing story that traces Cleo's footsteps from one place to another. Godard's vision with split tableaux does not establish a direct connection between the audience and the characters. He engages the audience to be involved and fill in the story's gaps.

***5 PRODUCTION PLAN — SHOOTING IN SEQUENCE — ONE TAKE — ON LOCATION***

Despite Godard distancing the audience from the characters with the episodic structure of Vivre sa vie, his way of shooting the film resonates with that of a documentary.

Godard said he shot Vivre sa vie in chronological order and that "If retakes were necessary, it was no good." (Ebert, 2001) His directorial decision means both the audience and the film crew are witnessing the events happening in the film for the first time. Even though the happenings are fictional, the audience is viewing the documentation of the life of Anna Karina's Nana as if she is a real-life person.

To add to the naturalistic feel in the production process, Godard accomplished a groundbreaking feat in the sound film — to shoot an entire movie on location, record directly on a single track, and involve no sound editing. (Collet, 1972) Godard brings the viewers directly into the contemporary settings of Paris's cafés, streets, and hotels. They can hear the chattering of the passers-by, the car horns, the clattering between coffee cups and saucers, and more. The camera and microphone depict the locations naturalistically instead of creating a manufactured illusion.

The viewers are placed alongside the film crew to observe the happenings. Through realistic depiction, they are given observer roles to enhance their engagement with the film, working in conjunction with the Brechtian A-effect.

***6 PRESENCE OF THE CAMERA — OBSERVER — INTERVIEWER***

Adding on to the observing nature of the camera, it seldom takes the perspective of Nana. Cinematographer Raoul Coutard places the camera as an observer and, at times, an interviewer in Vivre sa vie.

In tableau four, three shots of Nana are cut against shots of the police officer who was interrogating her about a robbery. The shots get closer and closer to Nana along the camera's axis, from a medium shot to a medium close-up, and eventually a tight close-up. (Turim, 2014) (Figures 4-6) The camera getting closer is a distancing technique that forces the viewers to pay more attention to Nana's minor facial expressions.

The interview nature of the scene draws similarities to that of documentaries, in which interviewees answer questions from an interviewer. The tableau can be compared to a sequence in The 400 Blows (Truffaut, 1959), where a therapist questions Antoine. (Figure 7) In both scenes, the protagonist is in the wrong and tries to avoid the camera's stare.

Placing the audience in the perspective of the "interviewer" creates a realistic feel to the exchange while maintaining their distance from the characters. This scene showcases how the alienation effect and natural documentary style can work together.

***7 EDITING — GODARD'S JUMP CUTS — ONE LONG TAKE***

Godard uses jump cuts to highlight the artificiality of film editing, distancing the audience. He is considered responsible for displaying the radical possibilities of jump cuts in his first film, Breathless (Godard, 1960). The first appearance of "jump cut" in English is from Variety's review of Breathless in 1960. (Bordwell, 1984, p.10) In Breathless, the camera jump cuts to a different body part of Patricia as Michel enumerates her features. (Usher, 2014, p.31) Godard uses this technique once again in Vivre sa vie. A particularly impressive instance is in tableau six, where the jump cuts interrupt a panning shot, and the cuts are in sync with the diegetic rhythm of the gunshots. The jump cuts highlight the gunshots' intensity and startling nature, engraving the scene into the viewers' memory.

A stark contrast to jump cuts is the use of an unedited long take which is the second tableau. Coutard panned and rotated the camera to trace the movement of Nana as she walked across the record store to assist a customer. Long takes are often present in documentaries to provide a raw and pure picture of reality, whereas Vivre sa vie's second tableau is a naturalistic depiction of a record store employee. The lack of cuts indicates a sense of dullness in Nana's work, providing more reasons why Nana decided to become a prostitute.

With the two contrary editing styles existing in different tableaux, the Brechtian and documentary influences do not interfere with each other. The variety in editing paces adds stylistic diversity to the film and represents the radical experimentations New Wave directors are willing to take.

***8 DISSOCIATION OF IMAGE AND SOUND — MONTAGE — VOICE-OVER***

Godard's radical experimentation in Vivre sa vie does not limit to stylistic diversity in different tableaux. For example, in tableau eight, Godard disconnected the film's visual and audio aspects.

The tableau itself visually is a documentary that captures the details of Parisian prostitution. The busy montage contains extreme close-up shots of Nana's hands, where she locks the door, switches off the lights and receives money from her clients (Figure 8). These close-ups resonate with a montage in Pickpocket (Bresson, 1959), which shows the tricks pickpockets use (Figure 9). The two montages share similarities in documenting an ethically ambiguous way of obtaining wealth and indicating the passage of time.

The voice-over of the tableau deviates from the typical documentary montage narrations, which are objective and with a "voice of God". (Sterritt, 1999) Instead, the voice-over is an exchange between Nana and her pimp Raoul. The conversation has the nature of an interview, and Raoul's answers to Nana's questions are often instructions, laws and statistics.

Despite the dissonance between images and sounds, the montage still contains abundant documentary elements. The audience is aware of the tableau's unique structure and is introduced to objective information, showing the compatibility of Brechtian and realistic styles.

***9 CLÉO FROM 5 TO 7 — WOMEN'S DIARIES — FILM-WITHIN-A-FILM***

A film that integrates realistic elements and theatricality in a similar way as Vivre sa vie is Agnès Varda's Cléo from 5 to 7 (1962). Varda tackles existentialism through singer Cléo, who is waiting for her medical results on whether she has cancer. The camera follows Cléo's every move

from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m., documenting her increasing anxiety. Both Vivre sa vie and Cléo from 5 to 7 can be seen as the diaries of the female protagonists in contemporary Paris.

The idea of a film within a film is also explored in both films. Vivre sa vie showed Nana watching The Passion of Joan of Arc (Dreyer, 1928) in the third tableau. (Figure 10, 11) Viewers witness Nana crying in the cinema and are reminded of their outsider perspective, celebrating cinema's effect on the audience. In Cléo from 5 to 7, characters laugh as they watch a spoof silent film featuring cameos from Godard and Karina. (Figure 12) Both films celebrate silent films in their ways and distance the audience through the film-within-a-film technique.

The interludes are inserted in a series of documented events in Vivre sa vie and Cléo from 5 to 7. By creating contrast between the two aspects, the A-effect of the short scenes stands out from the generally documentary narrative of the films.

***10 PICKPOCKET — THE MISUNDERSTOOD — MELODRAMA***

"[Robert Bresson] is the French cinema, as Dostoievsky is the Russian novel and Mozart is German music." — Jean-Luc Godard (Narboni and Milne, 1972, p.47)

Robert Bresson's work paved the way for many Nouvelle Vague directors, and he was often seen as the precursor to the French New Wave. (Burnett, 2004) Godard's Vivre sa vie took much inspiration from Bresson's Pickpocket (1959).

Through documenting a prostitute and a thief, Bresson and Godard commentated on the social situations in France, pointing out the social injustice and lack of care towards the misunderstood individuals. Pickpocket follows Michel, who pickpockets as a hobby, whereas in Vivre sa vie, Nana decides to become a prostitute for money. The two protagonists are unconventional, as they are negatively perceived socially. The two French directors tried to evoke empathy in their protagonists and let them speak out their beliefs. They are intellectual in philosophical conversations in the films, allowing the audience to understand more from their perspectives.
Hints of melodrama are present in the tragic endings of both films to alienate the viewers. Vivre sa vie ends with Nana failing to leave with the young man and being shot to death, whereas Pickpocket ends with Michel being caught by the police and is separated behind bars from Jeanne. Godard said in an interview that he had nothing against melodrama and that the death of Nana is a typical theatrical ending. (Zand, 1962) The directors not only paid homage to the Hollywood gangster films with the criminal aspect, but they also integrated melodrama to create a sense of theatricality. The audience is aware of the dramatised endings that fall into certain clichés, alienating them from the films.

In some ways, Godard and Bresson's films are documentaries that explore misunderstood people while maintaining the influences of artifice shown in their endings.

***11 COMMON PURPOSE — SOCIO-POLITICAL MESSAGE***

Throughout the essay, multiple examples of how the documentary and Brechtian techniques are executed not to contradict each other. But why were the two methods integrated through Godard and many other directors during the New Wave?

The answer lies in the historical context of social documentaries and Brechtian techniques. Both documentaries and Brechtian theatre have the common purpose of expressing socio-political messages through art. The two styles match the enthusiastic young directors' ambition to rejuvenate and redevelop the state of French cinema, forming a bold style that raises eyebrows all over the world

***12 FIN***

To conclude, the integration of documentary elements and Brechtian A-effect in Vivre sa vie shows Jean-Luc Godard's innovative and ambitious vision in his direction. The two effects do not necessarily interfere with each other when placed in different tableaux, whereas when they interact with each other, they work together to express the same coherent message by placing the audience as a politically aware observer. The théâtre-vérité experimentation that Godard set out to achieve in Vivre sa vie succeeded to a large degree and inspired many other filmmakers to be daring in their concepts in future generations.

ESSAY:

# "Your ghosts follow you" The Haunting Effects of Bordering in His House (2020)

BY JOHNATHAN ILOTT

When migrants, refugees and those seeking asylum finally step onto the soil of their destination is their journey over with the borders all crossed? For Remi Weekes' feature debut His House (2020), the answer is a resounding no, with borders positioned as nightmarish spectres that can haunt those who cross them long after geographical boundaries are traversed. The inflammatory language of the European refugee crisis has led to a situation in which comments such as "show me bodies floating in water" can make it into the editorials of Britain's most popular newspapers (Plunkett, 2015). It is an environment in which those who have died attempting to make the shores of Europe have been reduced to statistics and their humanity stripped from them. His House is a compelling and disturbing film that reframes the story of a South Sudanese couple's asylum in Britain as a haunted house horror. It weaves together social realism with folklore and a gothic aesthetic to evoke the real-life horrors that refugees face.

His House simultaneously speaks to both a national and transnational cinema. The film can be considered a social-realist-infused figurative re-conception of the British government's hostile attitude towards refugees. The fruition of what sociologist Maya Goodfellow argues is "decades of exclusionary politics that made it acceptable to treat migrants" in an inhumane way, Britain's hostile environment policies have sought to make life so unbearable for immigrants that they would voluntarily choose to leave the country (Goodfellow, 2020, p. 7). For film academic Peter Hutchings, "realism is generally acknowledged to be a vital component of British Cinema" and His House evokes the visual language of urban deprivation that audiences may expect from this tradition (Hutchings, 2009, p. 304). As a preview in The Guardian described it: "There has never been a whole lot of overlap between the social realism of Ken Loach and the twisted horror of A Nightmare on Elm Street. But that's about to change with the release of His House" (Gilbey, 2020). Even without the addition of ghosts and monstrous creatures, the film would be horrifying in its depiction of the state's dehumanisation and disregard for the film's two central characters.

***BORDERING***

His House can be characterised as an example of transnational cinema, in terms of its mode of production. The first film from British-born filmmaker Remi Weekes, whose parents are from St Lucia and Sierra Leone, it is an Anglo-American co-production shot in South England and Morocco (as a stand-in for South Sudan), starring Nigerian actress Wunmi Mosaku and Nigerian-British actor Sope Dirisu. The film premiered in The Midnight Strand at the 2020 Sundance Film Festival and was immediately purchased by Netf-

lix for a worldwide release to coincide with Halloween. While the production of His House qualifies the film for transnational status it is truly transnational in its focus on borders and migration. The film can be defined as a border film, fitting into what Hamid Naficy conceives of as a "journey of identity", the journey "displaced people inevitably undergo once they arrive in the new lands." (Naficy, 2001, p. 237) While the film does depict aspects of the central couple's physical journey in fractured scenes, dispersed throughout, the main focus is on how their journey continues as a lingering trauma as a result of being displaced.

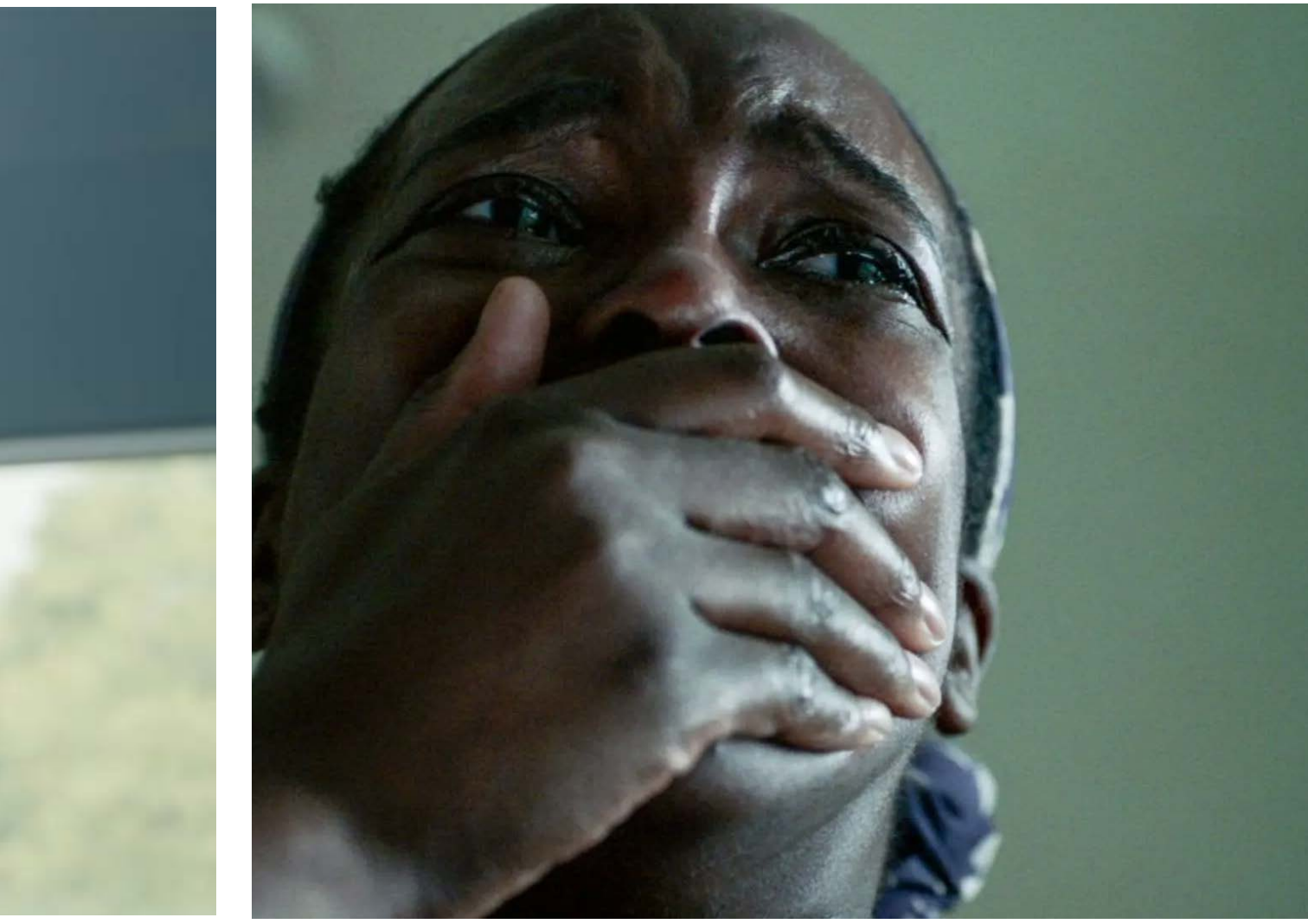
Dirisu and Mosaku deliver powerful performances as Bol and Rial Majur, both of Dinka ethnicity, who are forced to escape the conflict of the South Sudanese civil war to seek asylum in England, travelling via a treacherous sea voyage. With their asylum claim accepted they are provided with temporary accommodation in a dilapidated terraced house on an unnamed and equally dilapidated estate (filmed in Tilbury, Essex). As they attempt to settle into this new environment, they begin to suffer strange nightmares and visions leading them to suspect they are being haunted by the spirit of their 'daughter' Nyagak as well as a 'apeth' – a type of night-witch derived from Dinka folklore.

Weekes' film is part of a new mode of European films, alongside Ali Abbasi's Border (2018) and Mata Diop's Atlantics (2019), that have emerged on the festival circuit and which respond to migration and border anxieties through the combination of folklore and social realism. Based on a John Ajvide Lindqvist short story, Border is a Swedish film that imagines a troll employed to work border security, excelling in the role due to an incredible sense of smell. Meanwhile, Senegalese-French-Belgian co-production Atlantics tells a melancholy magic-realist fable about a construction worker who drowns in an attempt to sail from Dakar to Spain. His spirit returns to haunt his lover and the film explores the effects of migration on those left behind, rather than those who leave. In discussing Border, Meta Mazaj conceives the term "catachrestic locus" to describe the re-conception of borders "not as spatial 'fact' or a transitory threshold" but as symbolic space to challenge notions of identity (Mazaj, 2020, p. 35). Thus, for Mazaj, invoking a "border effect" becomes "something not to be crossed over or beyond, but to linger at" (Mazaj, 2020, p. 46). This reflects a shift in scholarly work on borders in recognising that they are not simply an expression of lines on a map, but that "local, urban, intimate and subjective spaces are now just as important as geo-political boundaries" (Wolfe & Rosello, 2017, p. 2). This has given rise to the notion of "bordering" which James Wesley Scott defines as "the concept…in which borders are constantly made through ideology, symbols, cultural mediation, discourses, political institutions, attitudes and

everyday forms of border transcending and border confirming" (Scott, 2012, p. 87). "Bordering" responds to a change in border control and how it has moved beyond the demarcation of geographical spaces and the protection of border infrastructure. In the introduction to their book Bordering Nira Yuval-Davis, Georgie Wemyss, and Kathryn Cassidy state, borders have "moved from the margins into the centre of political and social life" and therefore the reinforcement of those borders has been extended beyond geographical space and into socio-political responses to migration (Cassidy, et al., 2019, p. 1). Yosefa Loshitsky argues that this is not just a British impetus, but a European-wide one, and that "Fortress Europe" increasingly erects racial, ethnic and religious boundaries" (Loshitzky, 2014, p. 187). As His House demonstrates, notions of national sovereignty can be reinforced through the institutional treatment of migrants as other, delineating "us" and "them" to create socially constructed borders. The film depicts how bordering is instituted in multiple ways from geographic to governmental policy to low-level social interactions.

***CROSSING BORDERS***

While His House is about the traumas of physical border crossings, the journeys that Bol and Rial undertake from South Sudan to Britain are little represented, especially in the initial stages of the film; however, the echoes of border imagery reverberate throughout the film. For Naficy, "journeys take a number of forms, and they cross many borders — not only physical and geographic but also psychological, metaphorical, social, and cultural borders" and these myriad forms of journey are presented in His House (Naficy, 2001, p. 222). The film begins with a short montage of scenes in South Sudan. Bol is shown carrying Nyagak through an arid landscape, together with Rial they board



the back of a van and then there are images of a boat and bodies in the water. The sequence establishes images of exile but offers just a glimpse of their experience of migration and within five minutes of the start of the film, they are receiving their asylum decision. It may seem that the couple are finished with their border ordeals but instead, the borders extend into their every day, defining their lives. The location of their stay is not explicitly detailed, but presumably, these early scenes represent a Home Office detention centre. This accommodation evokes the imagery of a prison and the restraint to freedom and movement they entail. Their room is cell-like and shared with another applicant, and they are escorted by a security guard to a gymnasium to hear the decision on their application. On the route, they walk past the cell next to them, its open door allowing them, and the audience, to witness two guards wrestling the cell's inhabitant on the ground, with furniture upturned and blood smearing the floor. The opening montage cuts from the shot of bodies floating in the water to Bol waking in his bed, suggesting he is reliving these scenes in his sleep and reinforcing both the desperate situation he and Rial were fleeing and the traumatic impact they have had. Yet rather than recognising this, the environment they find themselves reinforces an inference of criminality. Even upon notification that their asylum claim has been accepted the line "congratulations, you're being released from detention" is delivered with solemn judgement and they are reminded that they are being "released on bail as asylum seekers. Not as citizens, not yet". These processes reinforce that while they may be in Britain, Rial and Bol are othered, separate from the nation.

This atmosphere of security and imprisonment does not improve once their asylum claim is accepted and they are

provided with a house to live in. Having somewhere to live should be the start of a process of settlement, but they are not even told the whereabouts of the house that they to live in. Pamela Ballinger argues that in "the relationship between borders, sovereignty and citizenship... individuals negotiate a sense of home in the legal, physical and affecting senses" (Ballinger, 2012, p. 392). But how can this process begin if Rial and Bol do not even know where their location is? While the couple are settled in the sense that they have a house to live in, they are reminded that it is not their home. The panel emphasises this by telling them "you will be sent to a home of our choosing," highlighting their lack of freedom of choice; it is a house they have not chosen in a location they do not know. What is more, when they arrive at the house it is in a state of disrepair: abandoned white goods are strewn across the front yard, doors are hanging off their hinges, the buzzing sound of flies can be heard, and rubbish litters the surfaces with food and pizza boxes left behind. Despite the neglected state of the house, a reoccurring comment from caseworkers is that the house is "bigger than mine," inferring both an underlying resentment towards Rial and Bol, and furthermore, that the couple should be grateful for this apparent generosity. The viewer is left to speculate what became of the previous tenants and question what led them to live in this state. With the detritus left behind, the lack of permanence is suggested yet again: they have inherited the house from someone else, someone also in the asylum process, and someone else will, in turn, replace them. The process of settlement is therefore systematically undermined, as the temporary nature of their stay is continually asserted to prevent a process of emplacement.

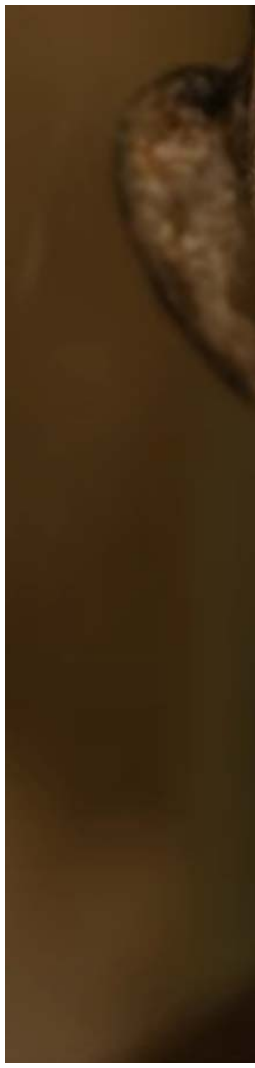
Further reinforcement of displacement is evident from the wider environment the couple find themselves in. When she makes her first attempt at venturing out of the house in search of a pharmacy, Rial finds herself lost, with the hand-drawn map provided to her by their caseworker, Mark (played by Matt Smith), proving incomprehensi-

ble. With only this map to guide her, rather than inspiring a sense of freedom, the journey compounds Rial's isolation and displacement. In the beginning, she is surrounded by playing fields with imposing high-rise flats in the background, but the concrete encroaches as she becomes lost in a maze of back alleys. Her route narrows as she tries to find her way through with high concrete walls on either side. Eventually, she is forced to turn around when she comes to a dead-end: blocked by a barred gate. The shots and images in this sequence suggest a social realist desire to document the area's social deprivation, but the concrete and walls also serve to evoke border infrastructure. They assert Loshitzky's notion of how "the cinematic landscapes of Fortress Europe… are typically trauma-saturated rather than healing landscapes" (Loshitzsky, 2010, p. 16). When Rial is forced to turn back she sees a boy playing football next to the gate, and as she emerges from the passageways, she sees him again playing on the other side. His uncanny traversal of the borders that blocked Rial's path re-iterates her positioning as other, rejected by the very landscape she is inhabiting. Rial and Bol may have made it to Britain but the legacy of their border experiences has permeated into their lives.

A HAUNTING

The hauntings only begin when Bol and Rial arrive at the house, once their asylum is accepted, signalling that it is triggered by their attempts at settlement. The length of their stay in the detention centre is not detailed in the film. Government advice states that it can take up to 6 months for a decision, though current statistics indicate that 70% of current cases are taking longer than this timeline (Walsh, 2020). This suggests that Rial and Bol have been in the UK for over half a year, yet they only become haunted by their border experiences once they begin their new lives when they are legally allowed to start the process of seeking asylum. This is not a haunted house but a haunted asylum process. In a study on the detrimental impact of detention centres on mental health, Pauline McLoughlin and Megan Warin argue that "the effect of immigration detention spaces is thus understood as eroding personal and social resources for coping, and exacerbating vulnerabilities and posttraumatic stress." (McLoughlin & Warin, 2007, p. 255). They invoke Edward Casey's term of the "anti-place", a site "forced to fit the requirements of institutions that demand certain very particular forms of building." (Casey, 2013, p. 223). In this conception the house provided to Rial and Bol can be considered to be such an "anti-place", with its decrepit state, doors falling off, and peeling wallpaper. It is literally a hostile environment: an institutionally owned building, which through managed decline is damaging to the mental health of its inhabitants. It is from this environment that the spectres emerge, border imagery again being evoked in how the ghosts that haunt Bol and Rial appear to exist within the walls of the house. Knocks and noises can be heard from within the boundaries of the house, eyes and partial faces appear in holes in the walls watching the couple invoking connotations of surveillance. It is as though the poor state of the house is designed to be punitive and the hauntings embody how the environment exacerbates the effects of the traumas felt by the inhabitants.

As the supernatural occurrences become more intrusive, so too does the trauma of border crossing experienced by Bol. Cathy Caruth argues that trauma is a "wound" and that the "experience of a trauma repeats itself, exactly and unremittingly, through the unknown acts of the survivor" (Caruth, 2007, pp. 1-2). This repeated cycle can be seen in the experiences of the characters in His House, in particular, Bol. With his environment re-enforcing his displacement and evoking border imagery, the boundaries between reality and nightmare begin to break down for Bol as his past experiences invade his present. In this sense, the title His House becomes defined figuratively as "His Trauma". Bol sets about trying to fix the issues in the house, but as he goes about these tasks such as wallpapering and re-attaching doors, he



is ignoring the underlying issues afflicting him. He pretends the haunting is not happening, but in doing so the state of the house and his mental state continue to deteriorate. He has nightmares and hallucinations of water as he struggles to reconcile his past with his attempts to settle into his new life. Emblematic of Bol's returning trauma is a scene in which he and Rial are sitting at the table to eat: the camera slowly tracks back revealing the house gone, the kitchen wall in ruins, steel bars poking from the edges of the rubble as though the house has been bombed. Bol continues eating unaware of the change in his surroundings as the remaining wreckage of the house is revealed to be floating on the ocean. As he begins to realise he is surrounded by water, Bol looks down, catching sight of numerous bodies beneath the surface. Echoing the language Caruth uses to describe trauma, Naficy posits that borders are "infected wounds" and that the "subjectivity they engender cannot be postnational or post-al, but interstitial. Unequal power relations and incompatible identities prevent the wound from healing" (Naficy, 2001, p. 32). This suggests that for refugees border crossings, like trauma repeat and echo even once the initial event is finished.

The "unequal power relations" Naficy discusses are demonstrated in the atmosphere of surveillance that the couple are subjected to. Scott argues that "the process of bordering can be defined as the everyday construction of borders" and so the landscapes that Bol and Rial inhabit invoke the images of border infrastructure, but this infrastructure needs to be overseen by guards and security. (Scott, 2012, p. 84). Thus, combined with the border images, they are surrounded by signifiers of surveillance and security. The barks of unseen dogs punctuate the night; their next-door neighbour stares out of her window keeping watch on the couple; Rial is followed for no apparent reason by a teenager. Nicholas De Genova argues that bordering results in "the entirety of the interior space of the state [becoming] an unmitigated regulatory zone of immigration enforcement" (De Genova, 2012, p. 495). Living in the house has delineated them as other and

recognisable to the residents of the estate, Imogen Tyler argues in this vein "that the figure of the asylum-seeker is not invisible, but rather hypervisible" with government policy regulating refugee's lives in a way designed to emphasise their conspicuousness (Tyler, 2006, p. 193). In this process, Tyler suggests that the threat of violence from within the community can serve as a "central means of governing Asylum-seekers." (Tyler, 2006, p. 193). With the hostile environment policies that "effectively made immigration enforcement officers out of a range of citizens" the residents of the estate have assumed this position of voluntary border security, monitoring Rial and Bol's movements (Grierson, 2018). Shortly before an inspection is due, their voyeuristic neighbour demonstrates this by confronting Bol, telling him: "Why don't you just leave?... They're gonna kick you out anyway. I'm tryin' to help you." Similarly, in one of the film's most upsetting scenes, Rial approaches a group of three black teens, hoping to ask for help. However, upon hearing her accent they instantly begin, insulting and swearing at her: "Go back to fuckin' Africa, man... Only English around here darlin'." The confrontation complicates Rial's sense of diasporic identification, feeding into her displacement and disorientation. The group assert the primacy of the nation-state because as De Genova argues "the generic figures of 'immigration' and the diffuse politics of 'foreignness' suffice to reanimate race in terms of commonly, and perhaps increasingly, are articulated as nation – in terms of the 'national' identity of the 'natives.'" (De Genova, 2012, p. 500)

The surveillance and scrutiny that Rial and Bol find themselves under also serve to remind them of the threat of deportation. For De Genova, "The spectacle of border enforcement conjures up the fetish of transgression," in which the nation-state (and by extension its citizenry) keep watch in hope of punishing these transgressions (De Genova, 2012, p. 498). Their movements are restricted and monitored; they are presented with rules they cannot break; when they are granted asylum, they are warned:

You will be reviewed and must report to

us weekly. You must not miss a single report. You do not have permission to work or to supplement your earnings by any other means... Final condition. You will be sent to a home of our choosing. You must reside at this address. You must not move from this address.

When they move in, the couple are presented with further rules from which they must not deviate: "no candles, no smoking, no animal... no pets, no guests, no friends, no parties, no ball games, no games, no balls." Between the official rules and inspections and with the residents of the estate acting as eyes for the state, the area in which Rial and Bol live becomes a "carceral archipelago": Michel Foucault's conception of an institution in which the authorities continuously observe for "the slightest illegality, the smallest irregularity, deviation or anomaly" (Foucault, 1977). For Foucault in these institutions, it does not matter if the subjects are guilty or not, and for Rial and Bol it too is treated as immaterial what their reasons for seeking refuge and claiming asylum are. If national borders signify security, then the very fact that Bol and Rial are in Britain represents a rupture in this security, thus they are detained, deprived of rights and watched.

***BAD ONES***

While they are treated as criminal, a dichotomy emerges between them not being wanted and the demands on them to assimilate. Throughout the film, a distinction is made between good and bad immigrants. Their caseworker Mark tells them: "make it easy for people, be one of the good ones." The dehumanising language suggests that there are "bad ones," and implies the public will automatically assume Rial and Bol are such, with the onus placed on the couple to overcome this prejudice themselves. For Bol the opportunities to assimilate into British culture arrive only briefly, he sits in a pub and joins in with a group watching a football match, singing about Peter Crouch. They acknowledge him and raise a glass but the scene emphasises his separation from the group, with Bol sat apart, relegated to the bottom corner of the frame. His attempts are again undercut when he visits a clothing shop and decides to buy a polo shirt that he sees modelled in an imposing advert on the wall. Throughout his time browsing, he is followed by a security guard in the background. The guard begins his surveillance as soon as Bol walks in suggesting it has been instigated by Bol's appearance and skin colour. These opportunities to assimilate into British life are presented as rare, there are few people in the drab urban environment in which they live and the few people do meet are hostile or passive-aggressive. Thus, while Rial and Bol are expected to assimilate, the film questions what exactly there is for the couple to assimilate into?

Rial and Bol being "good ones" is complicated for the viewer when the nature of Nyagak's death is revealed. In flashback, the viewer learns that she was not the couple's daughter but was effectively kidnapped so that Bol could use her as an excuse to board a departing coach. They continue on their journey with her but it is further revealed that Bol did not attempt to save her when their boat capsized. The dissonance this information creates is never reconciled by the film, in part because Nyagak serves more as a symbolic connection to South Sudan than a developed character in her own right. The spectres that haunt the couple take several forms but all are specific to South Sudan or their journey to Britain. One is in the image of Nyagak (or potentially her actual spirit) with a tribal mask covering her face, and the source of the hauntings is an Apeth, a night-witch derived from Dinka folklore that Rial says has followed them to Britain and which tells her, like the people they meet, that they don't belong. Naficy proposes that "exile is inexorably tied to homeland to the possibility of return," and the hauntings become a manifestation and connection to home

and their differing attitudes to returning (Naficy, 1999, p. 3). Rial acknowledges the problems in Britain, but ignores the conflict they have escaped, the notion of home becomes idealised for her to the extent that it appears she now genuinely believes Nyagak to be her daughter and that if she could return home, it would bring her back. Conversely, Bol attempts to overlook the dangers in the house in his refusal to consider returning home, and so for him, it is the threat of being deported that is most severe. They are forced into a liminal space in which they have escaped the hostilities of war but have become marginalised by the country in which they now live.

With the haunting intensifying, Rial attempts to escape the house having succumbed to her desire to return home. She traps Bol in a room, unlocks a window and runs out, but not into the estate: instead, she is in South Sudan, apparently in the courtyard of a community centre. She is greeted by a group of women who embrace her. The initially jubilant scenes subside and the women sit on the floor whispering words which are inaudible to the viewer. Rial is central to the shot as the silence becomes overwhelming: she asks after her daughter but in doing so comes to realise she is in a dream and remembers Nyagak is not her daughter. Naficy argues that "it is possible to return and to find one's house is not the home that one had hoped for, that it is not the structure that memory built" and it is this realisation that Rial faces in her fantasy of return. (Naficy, 1999, p. 3). The film cuts to a shot of the corner of the room, time has passed and Rial emerges from a small cupboard, she has been hiding and comes out when Bol arrives looking for her. The camera pans across the room to reveal the women Rial was talking to are dead on the floor. For Ballinger "being at home may be the desired but impossible object of a return to a 'lost' homeland" and in her dream, Rial must confront the realities of the conflict they escape, that for her a return to her homeland is impossi-

ble (Ballinger, 2012, p. 399). It is only after this realisation that the film displays an extended sequence recounting their journey and the death of Nyagak. Only once Rial faces the truth behind her traumas is she able to let go of her dreams of home and with Bol eject the Apeth from the house. One of the most powerful effects of the film lies in how it uses gothic and the horror genre to respond to a climate in which:

Within mainstream Western representations, the refugee is most often represented either, in humanitarian literature, as a child-like, solitary, destitute and helpless figure or, in hostile news media and political rhetoric, as a mute, threatening, and undifferentiated mass of men pressing at the border. (Bennett, 2013, p. 174)

In presenting the resulting trauma of the characters first and then the journey second the film ensures the audience recognises Rial and Bol not as part of a collective but as individuals with their own stories. This evokes Arundhati Roy's proposal that "there's really no such thing as the 'voiceless'. There are only the deliberately silenced, or the preferably unheard" (Roy, 2004). If the images of the refugee crisis are now so ubiquitous that they are easy to ignore, then the reconfiguring of them as horror returns the visceral impact they should have.

## CONCLUSION

In the closing scenes of the film Mark asks Bol if he still sees Nyagak, Bol responds "your ghosts follow you. They never leave", Rial adds "this is our home". There is a look of defiance and insistence on their faces as they answer. Mark leaves the house and Rial and Bol walk forward a few steps: framed by the doorway, they are staring directly at the viewer. A cut to their point of view reveals it is not the viewer they are looking at but the spirit of Nyagak, who remains in the house, standing in the room opposite them. Cutting back to Rial and Bol, the film further reveals the couple to be surrounded by a room full of the spirits of refugees. They are haunted by those who, like Nyagak, were lost at sea. In this brief shot the film jolts the viewer into remembering the real-life situations that His House is drawing upon, these figures represent the human cost of attempting to reach "Fortress Europe", they are the "bodies floating in water" that columnists have demanded to see.

Using the accessible framework of a gothic-infused ghost story, the film reveals the haunting effects of trying to seek refuge in contemporary Britain. If border journeys continue as a mental journey of settlement after the physical borders are crossed, then border security is designed to destabilise this process. Borders are thus evoked and reinforced through everyday action and social structures. For Rial and Bol they must face the traumas of escaping conflict, of leaving their homeland and of witnessing the dangers and death their exodus entails. Yet at their destination, the act of their survival provides reason enough for them to face punitive treatment by a system designed to weaponize their trauma against them. Rial and Bol must abide and live by rules that appear designed to emphasise their otherness and to highlight that as they are not citizens they cannot belong. They are not the first to live in the house and will not be the last reminding the viewer that this process is a continuous one, one which pervades through society and co-opts members of the public to enforce it. His House is a frightening and effective horror film, full of horrifying ghosts and confidently constructed jump-scares. However, Weekes' film is at its most chilling in its figurative evocation of the real-world consequences of the journeys refugees are forced to make and the institutionalised marginalisation they face if they survive them.


REVIEWS

# FILM REVIEW:
# ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT

BY NICHOLAS GOLDWIN

As war films go, there is very little left in terms of thematic exploration that hasn't already been done to death in the genre, which is especially fitting in this instance given that All Quiet on the Western Front (2022) is the third adaptation of its 1928 source material.

The story of Paul Bäumer (portrayed by Felix Kammerer) is that of a feeble race against his own insignificance in the face of the wider conflict, never once presenting his struggles as anything other than the dehumanising conveyer-belt of violence that he was misled into thinking would lead him and his friends to glory.

Director Edward Berger manages to infuse a genuine sense of tragedy onto this adaptation, remaining faithful to the original novel's intentions of deconstructing the romanticised patriotism in the minds of the German soldiers during World War One. The story is straightforward in its demolition of his initial idealistic notion of war, as Bäumer quickly learns of the violence he's capable of inflicting on his enemies. The subsequent shame, guilt and disgust he and fellow soldiers feel towards what they've been compelled to do by a cause means he rapidly questions his own faith in, all of which I'd thoroughly conveyed through Kammerer's heartbreaking performance. This narrative runs parallel to peace negotiations overseen by Matthias Erzbeger (portrayed by Daniel Brühl) further highlighting the total lack of control that the soldiers have over their lives. It is simple and blunt, but effectively so.

Contrasting this, I felt that there was a great yet subtle emphasis on the numerical toll that the war incurred. There are numerous shots throughout the film that emphasise the
reduction of lives to statistics: piles of boots, coffins waiting to be interred into the ground,
dog tags from fallen soldiers scattered like the bullets that claimed them in battle. This
results in a pay-off at the end of the film, when Bäumer's dog tag fails to be recovered after the armistice is put into effect, cementing the central tragedy of the protagonist who fails to
be recorded as the hero that he hoped he could be, just before failing to be recorded at all.

# FILM REVIEW: CORSAGE

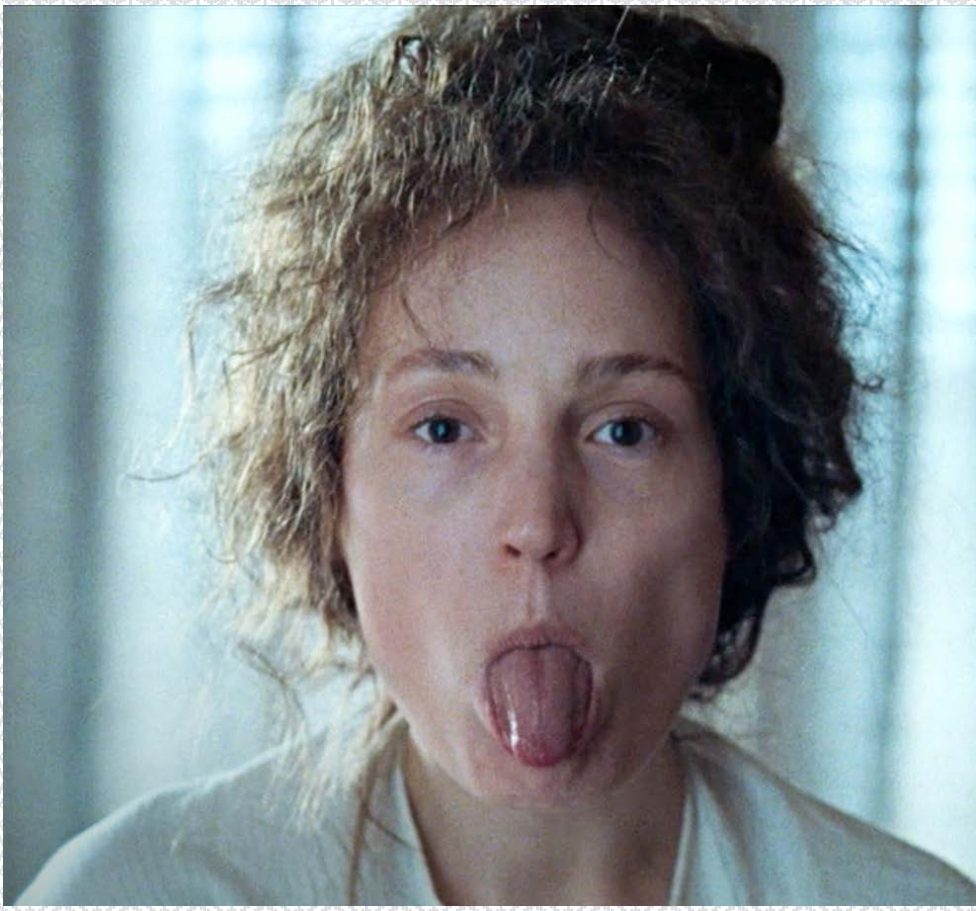
BY LOUISE GORSE

Anger, loneliness, and rebellion define the life and times of Empress Elisabeth (nicknamed Sisi) in her latest reincarnation in Corsage (2022), Marie Kreutzer's masterclass in feminine power. But there is an eerie presence hanging over every move of Empress Elizabeth of Austria, following her so closely that it seems to live on her very body, which she desperately attempts to shed.

Vicky Krieps is no stranger to playing a complex woman who finds herself in the thralls of high society. However, unlike Alma in Phantom Thread, Sisi's pain outweighs the pleasure. Corsage follows the fictionalised life of the real Empress, who has just turned 40 and lives a life restricted in more ways than one. Each day, the corset is fastened tightly around her body, and the suffocating atmosphere of the film creeps in. With the soundtrack including a classical reimagining in the Rolling Stones' As Tears Go By, and the later invention of the film camera making a premature appearance, we are reminded that this film is not a biopic in the traditional sense. Through departing from historical fact, we see the life that Sisi could have lived. Ditching the true story of her assassination, this version of Sisi is granted not only agency over her life, but also her death.

Ideas of body, ownership and restriction permeate every aspect of the film. The Empress is seen dressing, reaching jouissance in the bathtub, horse-riding, and drifting through the endless rooms of the manor houses. However, all these movements are somehow ethereal, and the film follows Sisi trying to break out of the phantasmic woman she is forced to be by society: one who is poised and picture-perfect, one who does not make mistakes. This battle for freedom and autonomy over her body results in her cutting off her hip-length hair, leaving it slumped over the back of her chair, corpse-like, and even inciting an emotional reaction of grief from one of her ladies-in-waiting. Sisi begins to take heroin, and her body becomes more relaxed, unable to be forced into poised position, unable to be the statue that her public image demands. As the credits roll, the culmination of her fight for bodily autonomy reaches a peak, with a beautiful extended scene showing Sisi expressively extending her limbs out into the ballroom, taking up as much space as she desires, and flowing like waves in the ocean.

The ferocity of Kriep's Sisi is an essential force to Kreutzer's story. Her simultaneous disdain and desire for the corset is performed with the complexity needed for this entrapped woman. Indeed, in the final act, when her elaborate rebellion is enacted, it is the veil, the dress, and the corset which allow a way out for Sisi. Freeing herself from the constraints using the very tools of restriction themselves allows for a fitting, rather than fitted, ending for Elisabeth.



# FILM REVIEW:
# AFTER LOVE

BY LOUISE WHITEHEAD

In this feature film debut, director Aleem Khan patiently sets out to explain the story of Mary (Joanna Scanlan), a recent widow. She discovers a harrowing set of facts about her deceased husband Ahmed (Nasser Memarzia) which prove turbulent to her current way of life, and the scope from which she once regarded him.

What continues to fester is a slow, tormenting grind of angst that appears initially unjustified, but still mutely significant of her husband's parallel death and discovered alternate life. An "After Life", After Love.

The homebase of Dover with Mary feels not dissimilar to her busy counterpart from Calais (Nathalie Richard's frustrated Genevieve), in the sense that they suit one and the same place having received a shared love of "their" Ahmed.

With a remarkably shredded narrative whilst delving into these emotional tremors, Khan surprises through his methodical reflections from which Mary repeatedly displays, increasing upon the complex place religion has and continues to have for her. Correspondingly then, a frequent murmur of waves merge hesitantly into elongated string arrangements more familiar to the drama genre. Further, this blending of the natural and unnatural attach some level of humanity to Mary's environment and is what After Love relishes in drawing tension from.

Islam's ritualistic position in her life proves significant as a token of Ahmed that lingers on simply by respect of another (Genevieve), and her equally disenfranchised son, Solomon (Talid Ariss), yet outweighed by both in Calais. In one rhetoric, Mary nevertheless turns to her husband's guidance with artificial compartments of Ahmed which audibly hold 'life', whether that be a voicemail or tape for example. Needing to know he is still there as at least partially the man she knew. Albeit in a volatile state.

Across the span of After Love, reminders of the cracking and 'perversion' of family structure glare over monstrous white cliff-faces characteristic of Dover, which Khan seeks out to fully accentuate the scale of. In sweeping panoramas which dominate the frame, to physical walls of a house in comparison to Mary and what she has been bonded to by her relationship with Ahmed, these fall under a comparable pain eluded within Genevieve. Scanlan fully optimises her stoicism and facial serenity to leave much to ponder for her co-stars (as does Mary's piety which infuriates her when questioned). But do not mistake, that family bond is persistent, even detrimental to our protagonist when trying to liberate her mind.

Joanna Scanlan possessing a stone-faced determination of the likes seen in After Love's promotional material, taking central control of this aspect of her husbands' shade, is by contrast shown to naturally dismantle by the very prospect of doing so in practice. Either physically with a churning of routine fluctuating up and down as she ponders what to do, or inviting in her all-consuming tears of non-verbal betrayal by Scanlan's powerfully imposed test of resilience.

# INTERVIEW WITH DANIEL DRAPER

**Participants**
**Antoni Konieczy and Daniel Draper**
**Transcript by**
**Bobbie-Jo Glendinning**

**Antoni: I was very curious to know what made you choose Lancaster, 17 or 16 years ago when you applied?**

Daniel: I didn't apply to that many universities to tell you the truth. I think the whole thing was that it was not too far away from Liverpool. The (degree) course was good. It was filled with philosophy. I needed to get out of Liverpool and Lancaster just presented the perfect sort of opportunity.

**Antoni: So, we know you came back to Lancaster recently. I was wondering if you have a comparison of how it looked back then and how it is right now.**

Daniel: I remember finding it sort of strange with it being a campus university. Also, it was small. Obviously, Liverpool is not the biggest city, but it's a lot bigger than Lancaster. The city's almost like its own little micro entity, and the university is like a little micro entity away from the city. I think I've been back a few times recently and in the 18 years since I was there, I don't think it's changed at all really, to tell the truth.

**Antoni: That is interesting to hear. But, one thing that has truly change is the (degree) course. I was wondering whether you could talk to us about how the course you took back then looked like.**

Daniel: It was a bit annoying, the course, when I was there because now in the course, you can just study film. Whereas I had to mix it with one of the three other subjects. I did philosophy. They were totally separate. So, my degree was film and philosophy. I thought you'd be looking at philosophy within films, but it was really philosophy and then film separately. This detracted from the film really because I just wanted to study film. In my third year I switched to cultural studies which had a lot more in common with film studies. But I still have fond memories of the course at university. I was recently going through my collection of books, and I came across some that reminded me of modules I studied in Lancaster. There was a Hong Kong module with Gary Bettinson, I'm not sure if they still do it. That was absolutely fantastic. There was also Silent Cinema with Bruce Bennett. That was amazing.

**Antoni: I am a first-year student, but looking at the future module I can take in the degree course I believe those modules are still going.**

Daniel: I highly recommended those two modules! 15 years on I still actually think about them with a lot of fondness.

**Antoni: How did your family and friends, react to you going for this degree?**

Daniel: That's a good question. My family had no issues with that at all. I think they were just happy for me to go to university and explore my passion.

**Antoni: How well do you feel like it equipped you for setting up your production company and working in film as a professional?**

Daniel: It was a very theory-based course when I studied in Lancaster. I only made on film during the time I was there, and that was in the cultural studies side of the degree. That didn't bother me really though. Theory is important and is something I still enjoy. In terms of going to university rather than joining 'the real working world', so to speak, it meant I could watch and study two or three films a day. That is something that is my appetite now. I can't get rid of that habit from studying at university. I still try and watch one film a day, and I think it goes back to having that

time at university and getting used being exposed to cinema every day. You need that to be able to learn and take it in and to appreciate cinema for what it is. That is what has really rooted me in cinema. What has made me love it. The technical side of making film comes later, I picked that up after learning these habits at university.

**Antoni: That is very inspiring. But at the same time, you are a huge success story because you have established your own company in 2014. I was wondering whether you could talk about that process. When the conception of the idea occurred to you?**

Daniel: So, after I left Lancaster, I didn't actually want to do anything. I went traveling around America. I wish I'd taken a camera. I went to India also. Then I got a job in a production company in Liverpool where I worked for two or three years, and it was boring as hell. I thought it would be dead interesting. I thought I'd get on the first step of the ladder in the industry and work my way up. I also worked as a runner and I did progress in the company, but it was all office based, research. Which I do like, but any time there was a shoot, it was cooperate, which just wasn't for me. So, I left and set up my own film company with somebody I met at the film company. It was to just have more controls and basically almost force ourselves into making more films, and films based on passion rather than ones we were paid to make. We enjoyed the idea of making films, this is why we study film because we want to make movies.

**Antoni: I think what also speaks to the fact that these are passion projects, at least the Dennis Skinner documentary, it was crowdfunded. So, how did that process look?**

Daniel: Well, the interesting thing with the Skinner film is, it was only partly crowdfunded. That part was to get the film finished really. We got some donations from trade unions, and we shot that film over three years for £2,000. Almost nobody got paid. So, we had a 90-minute film there for £2,000, but with the Skinner film we needed the archives, which is very expensive. So, we decided to run a Kickstarter campaign to raise the money for the archive footage and to pay for the composer and the sound designer. I think we raised about £23,000, something like that in the end. It was good because we got the film finished and it almost forced our hand into self-distribution. We distributed that film ourselves. We had about 300 screenings of it. It played in the Odeon and some art house cinema, so that money was so valuable because it set the template for every other film in terms of distribution.

**Antoni: So, Almost Liverpool 8. I wanted to move to that film now because this seems to be the only film that you have co-directed. So how is that process different from what you did beforehand? How challenging was it for you to move to this mode of filmmaking?**

Daniel: It was quite easy, actually, to tell you the truth, because up until now, the four films I've made, have only been made with three people. Myself, Alan who shoots and Kristie who edits. That's it. I sort of do sound and what not. So, it was not difficult. Initially I was just going to produce that project but then lockdown hit, and it affected what we were doing. So, it just made sense for us to make that film together in many ways because it's a documentary about the postcodes of Liverpool. Liverpool 8 is split into two. One side is Toxteth and the other is Dingle. Alan lives in Dingle, and I live in Toxteth. So, it made for a good balancing act for Alan to shoot his side of the community and me to shoot mine.

**Antoni: Back to the Nature of the Beast film. There is this one scene where Dennis Skinner expresses his opinion on Woody Allen's films, and I allowed myself to stalk your Letterboxd profile and it seems that you have seen pretty much every single one of his feature films. So, what is the connection there? Where does that interest stem from?**

Daniel: Yeah, I remember reading in Dennis's book that he liked Woody Allen. I didn't see that coming, but when I spoke to Dennis, and he's a real sort of cinephile. We were talking about Woody Allen, but not some of the more obvious title names, I'm talking real obscure film titles. So, it just made sense to me to put that scene in the film because it was something we both bonded over. As a filmmaker I'm not really that inspired by Woody Allen. It probably goes back to what was saying before really about being obsessed with cinema. I've got an obsessive personality. I like to find a complete filmography of a filmmaker and watch the entire collection. Actually, just yesterday I completed Abel Ferrara's filmography. Now I've got Kurosawa and Billy Wilder in my sights.

**Antoni: My next question is about Werner Herzog. Just because I think it may tie to your filmography a little more because he is this brilliant documentary filmmaker. So, if there is anything there that speaks to your aspirations or inspirations?**

Daniel: I am utterly inspired by Werner Herzog. Werner Herzog and Agnes Varda are my filmmaking idols. They are almost cut from the same cloth in terms of how they approach cinema. There is this book, called A Guide for the Perplexed. It's about 500 pages and it's a series of interviews with Paul Krugman and Herzog. That for me is the bible. I keep returning to that because it has inspired me to continue making films. If you've never made a film, you will make a film because the book is just full of knowledge, real knowledge. It breaks it down. They talk about how you don't need to start from the bottom in these companies and work up. You should instead go into the real working world, experience life and make your own films. He is an absolute idol of mine.

**Antoni: In July last year, on the podcast, you mentioned that you're working on a non-political project, and you said that you're moving to something entirely different. Is this something that you can elaborate on at this time?**

Daniel: I've got two new projects that I'm shooting this year. One project is a sort of symphony film, a portrait of the city of Liverpool. I'm really enjoying making, actually, just filming three or four days a week in the city and looking for different perspectives, different angles, and just trying to see how the city breathes. And the other documentary is about a book, a prize-winning author. So, both are non-political. I want to sort of prove to myself that I can make non-political films that make sense.

**Antoni: So, as someone who is from Liverpool and is obviously very proud of that fact, how do you feel about the representation of Liverpool on screen in general?**

Daniel: I think that the representation is not very good. Take Terence Davies and his films out of the equation, it's not very good, as a city we celebrate musicians, writers, poets, artists more than filmmakers, really. I don't think many people in Liverpool know who Terence Davies is, which is a travesty on the city. There is always filming happening in Liverpool, be it for Batman or some Netflix series, but no one ever knows its Liverpool. I think that's what inspired me to make films about the city really. Because I feel like it's almost a duty of mine, as a filmmaker who cares about the city, to make films about it.

**Antoni: For students interested in a similar career trajectory, what is the process of setting up your own production company like?**

Daniel: It's pretty straight forward setting up your own production company. However, making money through the company is a different matter! It was the right route for me as I wanted complete creative control over all stages of production and distribution. Every film we make allows for another to exist in a way, with all proceeds being invested in the next production. This started with our first film, Nature of the Beast, and still goes for today as we shoot our fifth and sixth feature documentaries this year. I'm not motivated by money (a huge befit as an indy filmmaker!) which is not necessarily a good business model, but having my own company has allowed the work to flourish - and that's vital for me.

**Antoni: The Big Meeting: What was it that drew you to make a film about County Durham? What was the process for making a film in a community like this, were there any obstacles you had to overcome to make the film happen?**

Daniel: We filmed at the Durham Miners' Gala in 2016 for our film about Dennis Skinner and it was an amazing experience - colour, noise, art, culture - thousands of people moving together in unity through the cramped streets of Durham. I found it hard to articulate the experience, so decided to make a 90-minute film instead! It was such a welcoming, warm community and the Durham Miners' Association gave us complete access to film "The Big Meeting" and bought in to our approach and vision for the project. The fact that Nature of the Beast played to over 300-people at the Miners' Hall in Durham six-months previously may have helped. The shoot itself was a challenge as we only had a single day to film what would make up 75% of the documentary. We shot on 15 cameras (from 16mm to GoPros) and seemingly managed it. We went from a single camera and filming over three-years with Nature of the Beast to fifteen and a single day for The Big Meeting. I've never worked like that before or since, but it was an exciting experience.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