Pūrātoke

Journal of Undergraduate Research
in the Creative Arts and Industries

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Cover photograph: *elle - an octophonic drone interface* by Jesse Austin, hardware interface. [figure 04]

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Pūrātoke: (Maori: *1. (verb)* to glow, gleam /
2. (noun) glowworm / *3. (noun)* bright spark,
clever person).

Pūrātoke is an online, peer-reviewed journal, dedicated to the publication
of high-quality undergraduate student research within the creative arts and
industries. The journal welcomes academic articles and creative research
outputs from all creative disciplinary areas. All submitted work will undergo a
rigorous peer-review process, based on initial editorial screening and evaluation
by two or three anonymous referees.

Papers and creative submissions may be based on work that has been produced
for assessment during a student's degree but will only be considered if the
assessment has been completed.

Contact: epress@unitec.ac.nz

Welcome to this inaugural issue of *Pūrātoke: Journal of Undergraduate Research in the Creative Arts and Industries*. Contained within, beneath or behind (depending on the particular spatial metaphor you prefer when engaging with digital artifacts) are examples of excellent research undertaken by undergraduate students as part of their studies. And this statement makes reference to the overarching mission of this journal: to showcase the breadth and excellence of original research being engaged with by undergraduate students, a fact that is only slowly being recognised by some international tertiary environments and one that we ignore at our peril.

First, though, a comment about the title of the journal. The word pūrātoke is a Maori name for, first of all, the glowworm larvae (Arachnocampa luminosa) and, by extension and analogy, a way of describing, variously, bright sparks or clever people. As a verb, pūrātoke means to glow or to gleam, to shine in the darkness. The name therefore reflects and respects tangata whenua as the original peoples of Aotearoa New Zealand and acknowledges te ao Māori as the framework within which creative work occurs and is received in this country. However, the name also speaks to the various ways in which intellectual activity and creativity are often viewed as they occur at an undergraduate level. Undergraduates are frequently overlooked by fellow academics who consider newness, originality or excellence in academic practice, or its possibility, to exist elsewhere; and while undergraduate work is graded and assessed, it is often then seen as (by all concerned) simply a necessary hurdle on the way to more meaningful studies and outcomes at post-graduate level.

The journal's subtitle similarly responds to the vexed condition of cultural production in these contemporary times. The notion of the 'Creative Arts' might be a familiar one to most readers, and those disciplines which might constitute the creative arts are easy to imagine, a fact which speaks to the embedding of discourse much more than it reveals some fact about the world. The moniker 'Creative Industries' is more recent but, again, its success as a descriptor is more evident in the number of courses and qualifications that now carry it than in the ease with which we might define it. But between them, these two terms usefully point at different ways in which we might consider practices of creativity in a social and cultural setting, as well as moments of contention between their interpretations.

For example, acting, dance, painting, composition might easily be considered part of the creative arts because their outcomes correspond with easily reached for (perhaps orthodox) notions of what art might look and sound like. But what about arts management, theatrical production, software development or product design? What, too, about textual analysis and other critical practices that are oriented around and towards objects other than themselves? Some definitions of the creative industries focus on those practices that are seen as belonging within this terrain as identifiable by their focus (i.e., they are in the service of 'art'); other definitions distinguish the creative industries by their ability to generate capital (both fiscal or cultural), or to exploit knowledge. The notion that a piece of creative work emerges as the result of, or in relation to, either art or industry might involve prioritising the value of the outcome within one cultural or social schema or another, but runs the risk of missing the point that surely the key evaluative criteria should be the attempt to achieve creativity, even aside from how we might indicate what constitutes this.

This desire to entertain work from a wide range of practices that might, in some way, align themselves with either (or both) the creative arts or industries is represented in the range of material present in this first issue, and equally in our hopes for future issues of *Pūrātoke*. Our desire is for the journal to recognise and celebrate a wide range of textual practices; however, expediency means that all of the works in this first issue are oriented towards written outputs, even if the specific focus of their analyses are varied.

Within these excellent pieces is a range of orientations, from textual analysis through to discussions of political economy, and a diverse set of approaches from the traditionally formal through to the embodied and enacted. Cinema analysis is strongly represented, ranging from Georgia Scott's semiotic analysis of Ousmane Sembene's Xala (1975) and Caitlin Lynch's exploration of Sophie Henderson and Curtis Vowell's Fantail (2013), to Hamish Parker's discussion of female roles within post-modern

Westerns and Kerri-Lyn Wheeler's critical insights into the representations of sex and (homo-) sexuality in Blue is the Warmest Colour (Abdullatif Kechiche, 2013) and Carol (Todd Haynes, 2015). Compositional practice is similarly strongly represented, with Luke Venter's insights into gender and power as visible in the Orientalist discourses of Western classical music, and Matthew Everingham's analysis of the differences between those Hollywood masters of orchestration, Bernard Herrmann and John Williams. More practically oriented, but no less fascinating, is Jesse Austin's discussion of software development and compositional practices associated with octophonic sound spatialisation. Both Molly Robson and Rebecca Hawkes explore public discourses of shame and disgust, with Robson examining the furor surrounding Metiria Turei's recent pre-election admissions and Hawkes assessing the public 'doxing' (or the public revealing of information to enable the shaming of) white nationalists in Charlottesville, Virginia. Samantha Smith provides a timely assessment and updating of Edward Herman's and Noam Chomsky's model for identifying propaganda in relation to the role of the media industries and, finally, Holly Walker's 'My Female Body' utilises academic discourse, critical theory and typography to explore her own engagements with identity, art and her body as an example of embodied research.

As diverse as these pieces are, together they indicate both an attention to the specifics of textual practice and close analysis, and the development of creative and thoughtful voices within their disciplines. They represent a fine introduction to, and demonstration of, the kinds of scholarship this journal seeks to champion, and it is our hope that *Pūrātoke* will expand to include a wide range of creative works, academic and scholarly analyses, and pieces that, to borrow Holly Walker's phrase, embody research in a rigorous fashion. It is to that end that I'll close this brief introduction with a Call for Works for our second issue of *Pūrātoke*. We are, as I hope I have made clear, interested in a wide range of practices and textual forms (with a guide being, perhaps, the recognition that if it can be hosted on a digital platform, we are interested in encountering it). Finally, we at *Pūrātoke* welcome correspondence and we look forward to engaging with the wide range of creative practices undertaken by undergraduate scholars in this country and beyond.

Scott Wilson and Samuel Holloway

Caitlin Lynch

Post-colonial New Zealand
Cinema: Gothic aesthetics
and the repression of Pakeha
violence in *Fantail*

Caitlin Lynch

POST-COLONIAL NEW ZEALAND CINEMA: GOTHIC AESTHETICS AND THE REPRESSION OF PAKEHA VIOLENCE IN *FANTAIL*

Abstract

Fantail (2013), written by Sophie Henderson and directed by Curtis Vowell, has not yet received scholarly attention for its relationship to several dominant trends in New Zealand cinema. This essay examines *Fantail*'s protagonist Tania as a new articulation of the gothic Pākehā woman in identity crisis, a trope embodied in films such as *The Piano* (Jane Campion, 1993). Through Tania, *Fantail* acknowledges the harmful consequences of Pākehā repression of colonial violence, ignorance of Māori historical disenfranchisement and eroticisation and appropriation of Māori culture. This reading models how gothic aesthetics, adaptations of past tropes, and restricted narrative subjectivity can function within film as tools of critique, allowing *Fantail* to simultaneously perpetuate and criticise dominant representational trends in New Zealand's national cinema.

Film theorists Hilary Radner and Misha Kavka have noted a trope in New Zealand cinema involving female, Pākehā characters debilitated by identity crisis and a gothic sense of isolation. This is apparent in prominent New Zealand films *The Piano* (Campion, 1993), *Crush* (Maclean, 1992), and *Vigil* (Ward, 1975). Another tendency of New Zealand cinema is to represent modern Māori disenfranchisement without attributing this to colonial roots. Barry Barclay and Leonie Pihama have critiqued *Whale Rider* (Caro, 2002) and *Once Were Warriors* (Tamahori, 1994) for skirting around colonial history to remain palatable to Pākehā audiences. As a film that engages deeply and critically with both these trends, Sophie Henderson and Curtis Vowell's *Fantail* (2013), has not yet been given scholarly attention. A film about a "blonde-haired, blue-eyed women who identifies as Māori," *Fantail* engages with cinematic tropes of Pākehā women and the (mis)representation of Māori disenfranchisement with a post-colonial self-awareness (*NZ On Screen*, 2013). Through its gothic aesthetics and dark ending, *Fantail* warns of the dangerous consequences of Pākehā repression of past colonial violence.

The trope of the melancholic Pākehā woman is crucial to *Fantail*'s critique of Pākehā colonial repression. In her chapter 'Screening Women's Histories' in *New Zealand Cinema* (2011)*,* Radner explains the trope as a product of the colonial settlement process. Male settlers' 'do-it-yourself' individualism and aggression-fuelled fraternity developed into a Pākehā culture that was "fundamentally masculine" (p. 120). Meanwhile settler women, excluded from male culture and geographically distant from other women due to their agricultural lifestyles, failed to successfully "transplant" a living, collective female culture from Britain to New Zealand (Bell, 2006, p. 225). In interviews in *The Pantograph Punch* (Tan, 2013, para. 96) and *The Lumière Reader* (Brooks, 2013, para. 20) repectively, Henderson has commented that as a Pākehā woman who doesn't "like sports … [or] … work on a farm," she has been left "longing to have a culture." Cultural theorists, such as Bell, explain the experience of early settler women as cultivating a sense of isolation, cultural deprivation and melancholia in Pākehā women, a sensibility that is echoed in their literary and cinematic representations. The writings of Katherine Mansfield and Janet Frame are full of lone female characters that illustrate such a theory. The melancholic woman transitioned to screen in Vincent Ward's short film adaptation of Frame's novel, *A State of Siege* (1978), which handles Malfred's self-imposed isolation in a gloomy, rural cottage. In addition, Ada in *The Piano,* Angela in *Crush,* Lizzie in *Vigil* and Penny in *In My Father's Den* (McGann, 2004) all appear deeply melancholic and traumatised by their isolation. In somewhat of an oxymoron, Pākehā women in film can be collectively identified by their exclusion from a collective social culture; in other words, their social identities rely on their lack of sense of social belonging.

Fantail's protagonist Tania (played by Henderson) exemplifies the trope of the isolated, culturally deprived, white woman. Tania exists only in the shadowy peripheries of society. She has no community or kin, except for her dying mother (who doesn't speak in the film), her boss Rodge, and her little brother Pi. When Pi leaves for Papamoa, Tania is distraught: "You can't leave me by myself!" Throughout the film Tania is mostly alone, or (bar a few minor shots) only interacts with one other

Figure 1 – Wide shot of Tania, isolated at the gas station, *Fantail*. Courtesy Curious Film, Auckland, New Zealand.

character at a time. This isolation is exacerbated by her graveyard shift at the local gas station, where her few interactions with customers are from behind a window. Only in one of the very last shots of the film, when Tania rides the bus and other patrons react to her crying, do we see any acknowledgement of her existence from a wider community. Although set in South Auckland, Tania's lack of interactions mirror the rural experiences of Ada, Malfred and Lizzie. *Fantail* is a twenty-first-century representation of the anxious, isolated, culturally deprived Pākehā woman, visible throughout New Zealand cinema and the literature that preceded it.

Gothic aesthetics are essential to the melancholic Pākehā women trope. The gothic stretches back to medieval Europe, based upon religious notions of debasement and exclusion from the heavenly sphere. The "female gothic" is a "coded expression" of women's simultaneous ostracism from the masculine sphere and "entrapment" by patriarchal culture (Radner, 2011, p. 269). In cinema, this is expressed not only in narrative, but also in mise-en-scène and other formal elements. Dim, shadowy lighting, lone figures, vertically elongated shapes, austere, puritanical costumes, slow pace and melancholic, eerie music are all symptomatic of the female gothic. Ian Conrich has theorised another gothic subset in New Zealand film, which he labels "Kiwi gothic" (2012, p. 393). Born from settler anxiety, Kiwi gothic particularly emphasises geographical isolation in its desolate, barren landscapes that "assail and entrap … eccentric, disturbed, or disadvantaged" individuals (pp. 393, 397). Female and Kiwi gothics come together in the Pākehā woman trope, their aesthetics embodying the character's psychological and physical entrapment in the New Zealand cultural and geographical environment.

Fantail employs this hybrid of the female and Kiwi gothic. Tania, who demonstrates all the traits Conrich associates with gothic characters, is aesthetically entrapped via costume, set, performance and lighting. Her dark hoodies, long sleeves and hair-shrouded face may not qualify as the Victorian attire conventionally associated with gothic, but this contemporary equivalent maintains the demure, body-concealing features of traditional gothic costume. Tania's hood performs the same gothic function as Ada's bonnet. The gas station, where the majority of the film takes place, resembles a cage. Because Tania works the night shift, she locks herself inside and only serves people from behind the vertical, black metal bars on the window. The station is lit by cold, fluorescent tubes that cast harsh shadows on Tania's face. Frequent wide shots show Tania swamped by the darkness of the barren service station (Figure 1). Despite their completely different spatial-temporality, these shots in *Fantail* evoke the same sense of isolation created in *The Piano*'s extreme wide shots of Ada on the desolate, rugged beach. Though Tania fantasises about escaping to the Dream World theme park in Australia, *Fantail*'s portrayal of her daily existence as encaged makes this ambition seem hopeless. The reference to female gothic in Tania's costume and Kiwi gothic in her environment communicate the underlying sense of entrapment essential to Tania's character.

The gothic Pākehā woman trope sees such characters seek reprieve from their isolation and identity anxiety through erotic interactions with Māori characters. *Fantail* presents an interesting new articulation of this relationship. In *The Piano,* Ada's settler anxiety leads her to reject her colonial suitor Stewart and pursue Baines, a Pākehā man who, with his tā moko and atavistic lifestyle, masquerades as Māori. This eroticisation of an appropriated Māori-ness in order to "escape from repressive Victorian sexual norms" has been deeply criticised by Mark Reid as a "parody of Māori culture" and an avoidance of representing interracial intimacy (2006, p. 109). In *Crush* (made one year earlier than *The Piano* but set 140 years later), Angela's adolescent identity crisis fuels her erotic moment with Horse, a Māori man. In other words, the film represents interracial intimacy as transgressive rather than romantic: it is Angela's experiment with asserting an identity independent of Pākehā masculinity. In *Fantail,* Tania's identity crisis also leads to a desire for Māori-ness, but in herself, not a sexual partner. Tania has always thought Pi's Māori father, present in all her childhood memories, was her father too. Pale and blonde, Tania believes she is Ngāti Whātua, only her "brother got all the Māori genes." When Dean bluntly asks, "Why do you want to be a Māori?" Tania replies indignantly, "What's your culture?" insinuating that she has the same reasons for identifying as Māori as Dean does. For the lonely, isolated Tania, insisting on being Māori is an attempt to belong. Although Tania does have a sexual relationship with Dean, his Māori identity is not eroticised or posed as a transgressive alternative to Pākehā masculinity. Unlike the characters in *The Piano* and *Crush*, Tania channels her identity-anxiety into being Māori rather than being with a Māori (or masquerading as Māori) man.

In her desperation to be accepted as Māori, Tania judges other Māori characters' expressions of cultural identity. She is highly critical of Dean, who responds to Tania's "What's your culture?" question with "Free-running, maybe?" To Tania, Dean's

Figure 2 – Tania judges a Māori woman's clubbing attire, *Fantail*. Courtesy Curious Film, Auckland, New Zealand.

engagement with 'Pākehā' activities makes him less Māori. In a later scene, a Māori woman from Tania's high school kapa haka group shows up at the gas station wearing a snapback cap and gold hoop earrings (Figure 2). When the woman asks directions to the Sapphire bar, Tania criticises how "girls [at the bar are] too dressed up, dancing like they're in a hip-hop video." This awkward 'foot-in-mouth' exchange highlights Tania's insecurity in her own identity and inability to accept a Māori woman who does kapa haka *and* goes clubbing. Whilst Tania practises poi, wears a pounamu and uses colloquialisms associated with Māori culture ("bro", "mean as"), she is not shown to have any connection to a wider whānau, marae or whakapapa, some of the key structures of Māori community. Having learned her version of Māoriness from a position of isolation, Tania's conception of Māori identity is limited. Having learned her version of Māoriness from a position of isolation, Tania's conception of Māori identity is warped and misconstrued. In the struggle to maintain her perception of herself as Māori, Tania ends up unintentionally policing other people's orientations to their cultural identity.

Film scholars have critiqued recent New Zealand films for not attaching socio-historical causality to the struggles of its Māori characters, and it might initially appear that *Fantail* demonstrates that critique. Barry Barclay criticises *Whale Rider*'s exploitation of indigenous "intellectual and cultural treasures" and erasure of the specific geographical and historical context of the story in its efforts to market an "international story" (2003, p. 11). In a similar vein, Leonie Pihama expresses deep concern over the way *Once Were Warriors* portrays Māori poverty and violence without attributing it to "the impact of colonialism" (1998, p. 4). *Fantail*, too, in its portrayal of gang culture and absent fathers, represents Māori disenfranchisement

without acknowledging colonial oppression. When Pi gets involved with a bunch of teenagers and their drug use, violence and petty crimes, the source of their delinquency is never investigated. Tania writes them off as "losers," bad kids. This judgment contrasts a film like *Mauri* (one of the few films considered Māori 'Fourth Cinema' – a term coined by Barry Barclay to describe indigenous cinema), which portrays its gang as a reaction to institutional, police racism. Similarly, the neglectful parenting by Pi's father might seem ignorant of postcolonial discourse on the effect of colonialism on Māori whānau structures. The audience is told very little about Pi's father, only that he used to read Pi and Tania the Maui myths and now lives on the Gold Coast. The fact that these kids have no connection to anyone in his whānau or iwi is not explored as a potential consequence of historical land alienation, the colonial rejection of whānau in favour of atomised nuclear families, or the systematic economic disenfranchisement that may motivate Māori to look to Australia for work. Much has been written about the effects of colonialism on Māori masculinity, but it is not a discourse *Fantail* appears to engage with.

Rather than conclude that *Fantail* misrepresents Māori identity, I propose that *Fantail* strategically stresses mistaken perceptions of Māori identity by Pākehā. In other words, I read Tania's judgment of Māori cultural expression and *Fantail*'s lack of acknowledgment of the colonial roots of Māori disenfranchisement as a self-aware criticism of Pākehā ignorance. While Tania claims to represent Māori culture, *Fantail* as a film does not. Instead, *Fantail* is a representation of Pākehā conceptions of Māori, which are affected by repression and denial of New Zealand's colonial past. Tania's subjectivity dominates the film: for the most part, the audience only knows what she does. Once viewers acclimate to the intentionally restricted nature of the narration, they can begin to analyse what information is misrepresented and why. Tania's criticism of other Māori, bound up in her desire to belong, reflects the contradiction of the Pākehā women trope, in which white prejudice clashes with a fetishisation of Māori culture and community. Tania's inability to look at the deeper socio-historical roots of the issues the other Māori characters deal with represents Pākehā refusal to address the violent, racist truth of New Zealand's colonisation, which has been repetitively mythologised in public dialogues as a peaceful, positive process. The brooding imagery and unsettled tone of the film simulates this repression. Therefore, the aesthetic features of the female/Kiwi gothic hybrid outlined earlier can be more precisely read as a "post-colonial gothic" that "articulates the traumas [that arise] from repressed colonial violence" (Kavka, 2014, p. 227). Misha Kavka reconfigures post-colonial gothic in her theory of a Māori gothic, haunted not by the presence of the dead (as there is "no notion of spiritual trespass in Mātauranga Māori"), but the presence of descendants of colonialism who "have been absolved of participation or concern" (pp. 23, 239). Ultimately, *Fantail*'s gothic aesthetics are a visual manifestation of Tania's entrapment, isolation and repressed post-colonial guilt, and enable the film to draw attention to the negative repercussions of Pākehā cultural appropriation.

The ending scene is essential to reading *Fantail* as a critique, rather than as a propagation of post-colonial misrepresentations. The majority of the film balances

drama and comedy: the overall melancholic tone is peppered with moments of warmth and smile-inducing humour. The last fifteen minutes, however, are unexpectedly dark. When a person in a black balaclava and hoodie bursts into the gas station, a terrified Tania hits him over the head with a hammer. Only as he falls dead to the floor, with blood gushing out onto the white tiles, does Tania realise the person was Pi. After failing to reference white violence against Māori throughout the whole film, it is suddenly brought to the forefront. The visceral, drawn out scene is highly distressing to watch and opposes the palatability Pihama critiques in other films. Pi's blood is literally on Tania's hands (and face and hair), and she is forced to take responsibility for a violence that, while unintended, has serious consequences. This scene takes place just after Tania learns her father is not Pi's dad, but her white boss Rodge. The coinciding of Tania's realisation of her Pākehā ethnicity with the killing of her brother creates an allegory for addressing post-colonial trauma. After Tania kills Pi, she scrubs the tiles of any evidence and abandons his body at the airport. In the monologue which overlays the action, Tania claims, "I am no-one." No longer identifying as Māori, she is still unable to accept her Pākehā identity. The combination of Tania's identity dissociation and her concealing of her role in Pi's death solidifies *Fantail*'s critique that Pākehā post-colonial refusal to acknowledge the violence of the past has harmful consequences.

Whether overt or subtle in its expression, "New Zealand cinema is informed by and continually negotiating its prevailing myths of colonisation" (Joyce, 2009, p. 241). *The Piano, Crush, Vigil, Whale Rider, Once Were Warriors* and *Mauri* have engaged in different ways with dominant concerns of identity and colonial history. *Fantail* is a contemporary engagement with critical discourses about New Zealand film, simultaneously perpetuating and criticising representations that erase colonial violence via the figure of the gothic Pākehā woman. This reading models how gothic aesthetics, adaptations of past tropes, and restricted narrative subjectivity can function within film as tools of self-critique. Whether or not there is acceptance of a reading of *Fantail* as depicting the negative potentials of repressing colonial violence, the film undoubtedly engages in the "conversation about being a New Zealander," which is a subject of major concern to scholars of national cinema (Brooks, 2013, para. 53).

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Author

Caitlin Lynch has recently completed a Bachelor of Arts, which she began at the University of Auckland and finished at Victoria University of Wellington. She majored in film theory and, with a minor in history, held a particular focus on the New Zealand context. She is about to pursue post-graduate study at Victoria, aiming to continue her research on the representation of New Zealand history and national identity in cinema.

Course information

This paper was written in June 2017 for Victoria University's Film 302: Cinema and Representation, taken by Dr Missy Molloy. The course applied key feminist theories of representation and spectatorship, as well as post-colonial and queer analysis, to a wide range of female-made films.

Georgia Scott

Xala (1975): A close textual
analysis

Georgia Scott

XALA (1975): A CLOSE TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Abstract

Xala (1975), a significant film for African cinema, directed by Ousmane Sembene, is a comedic dramatisation of events following Senegal's (then recent) independence. Sembene focuses two hours of screen time on despising El Hadji, a greedy, corrupt Senegalese businessman involved with unjust negotiations besieging the new government, and his inelegant downfall after being unknowingly cursed with erectile dysfunction by the underprivileged he steps over daily. To retain the status which comes with a Mercedes, three wives and suspect business deals, and to have the 'Xala' (curse of impotence) removed, El Hadji must jump through many hoops while the audience grimaces in secondary embarrassment on his behalf.

Influenced by both French and African filmmaking styles, Sembene weaves a range of significant signs and symbols into the frame to convey key ideas. Visual poetics, unlike dialogue, speak across language barriers and allow Sembene's film to reach a wider audience. Whether the viewer enagages with Sembene's semiotics or uses cultural familiarity to understand these key ideas, a similar conclusion can be reached.

Brief summary of chosen scene

El Hadji (the main protagonist) and his second wife Oumi, exit her house and make their way out to his white Mercedes, where Awa, his first wife is waiting. Oumi asks El Hadji who will be seated in the back of the car with him. The final shot reveals both wives and El Hadji squashed into the back of the car on their way to the wedding of his third wife.

This sequence occurs very early into the two-hour film, therefore the audience is still being introduced to the film's central themes surrounding postcolonial Senegal (as independence from French rule has only just occurred 'minutes ago') and El Hadji's faulted character. The major turning point of the film, when El Hadji discovers the impotence the Xala has placed upon him, occurs shortly after this sequence.

Although this sequence is short, and consists of only six shots, it is saturated with subtextual meaning.

1.

Analysis of the sequence

This sequence primarily focuses on a triangular relationship between El Hadji and his current two wives on the day of his third wedding. Being what could be characterised as a postcolonial statement film, a common theme throughout includes power struggles and the desire for status. Through Ousmane Sembene's directorial amalgamation of Western film techniques as well as African methods of storytelling, the audience is presented with a piece of cinema that can be analysed across several levels. Effective analysis, however, relies on the audience's understanding of signs and symbols with regards to characters from a potentially 'unfamiliar' cultural setting.

The key signs in this sequence are not simply objects, but characters and their personalities. The first frame consists of Awa, El Hadji's first wife, waiting in the Mercedes for her husband and his second wife Oumi. Awa begins central in the frame, before she shuffles to the right of the back seat. Our eye is firstly drawn to her elaborate and traditional clothing (which will be discussed in more depth later). Her body language is an indexical signifier of her quiet confidence; a hand resting on her cheek, and eyeline towards the action. She has presence, exudes confidence and status – a reflection of her traditional values and upbringing. The shifting of her position in the car is an index which can be interpreted in a multitude of ways.

On a superficial level it may be read that she is seeking a better position to eavesdrop on the conversation between El Hadji and Oumi, as she is positioned to be possibly peeking through the small side window of the back door. However, further reading into the ideologies surrounding an evolving feminist movement and understanding the central thesis of the film, the move is an exertion of status (Ruken Ozturk, 2007).

A quick cutaway to a long shot of El Hadji's white Mercedes is an icon of his personal belief in his superiority to others. The white European car appears to be in pristine condition, despite its dirty surroundings. A bus passing in the background, and a man on a bike, demonstrate how out of place the car seems in a third-world, postcolonial society. The Mercedes is a recurring sign throughout the film; as an icon, demonstrating the wealth of being able to own an expensive, imported car, and also an index, highlighting El Hadji's fetishisation of commodities and desire for status early on (Mulvey, 1996).

The next shot is a medium two shot of El Hadji and Oumi, as Oumi poses the question as to who will be seated in the back with him during the drive to the wedding. Sitting in the back of a chauffeured car demonstrates one's high status, and is a very 'Western' concept. Once Oumi's question is posed to El Hadji, it is much more obvious as to why Awa moved in the previous shot. In Senegalese culture, a man is able to wed many wives, however, the first wife always holds the most status (usually due to it being an arranged marriage to a family with significant lineage). It could seem that

Awa is framed in a negative light, appearing to be jealous and nosy, whereas she may have analysed the situation, and most favourably positioned herself for an enjoyable car ride, with the status of first wife, with her husband.

Oumi and El Hadji begin to walk down to the Mercedes, and we cut to a medium long shot of them passing through a gate. El Hadji moves aside to let Oumi walk through first, however, she shuns this gesture, and pushes him through the gate before her. Although El Hadji is in a dominant position of power in his place of work, he is emasculated to an extent, around his more dominant wives. In many cultures wives preside over the running of the house. In traditional Senegalese culture (with Islamic influence), women do act dominantly in monogamous (and in this case polygamous) relationships, therefore Oumi's behaviour would be classified as the norm. Where the irony lies is that Oumi is portrayed and behaves exaggeratedly as a Westernised woman, who, in turn, still demands to be treated with traditional values, which is confusing for El Hadji. These mixed messages are evident as the couple 'disagree' about who is to walk through the gate first, which would act as moment of humour for African audiences with an understanding of these conflicting gender roles.

The final and most powerful image of the sequence is the three shot of Awa, El Hadji and Oumi packed tightly into the back seat of the Mercedes together. The shot has a humorous quality to it; all three characters are too proud to sit in the front seat, and instead subject themselves to an awkward ride. Similarly to the single shot of Awa at the beginning, the positioning of the three characters, especially by centralising El Hadji, is another indexical signifier of status (Hall, 2007). Denotatively, there is very little space in the car, which is why the characters appear to be squished into the back together. However, it is the connotative meaning which is most significant to the interpretation of the text. El Hadji is trapped between his two wives and their cultures. In relation to blocking, it is very significant to the film's context, how Oumi is draped over El Hadji's shoulder. On a simplified level of interpretation, she is displaying dominant, protective body language over Awa. However, reading further into the social context of the film, this image is a metaphor for El Hadji, and his position of significance in post-Neo-colonial Senegalese society, yet he is still being

influenced by the French. With careful attention to wardrobe dressing and/or minor colour grading in post production, Awa is made to 'pop'.

The viewer's eye is firstly drawn to traditionally adorned Awa, who appears 'out of place' in the frame, similar to the way many native Senegalese citizens would have felt throughout the French colonisation, as their culture was shunned. It is the materialistic and Westernised Oumi (a result of postcolonial influences) whom El Hadji looks most akin to. Throughout the film, he will further betray his own people and become estranged from his cultural heritage as a result of post-independence corruption.

Using standard Western film techniques, such as careful framing, attention to colouring, and blocking in particular, the audience is encouraged think more favourably of Awa over Oumi. The two shot of El Hadji and Oumi frames her as being pushy and demanding, the three shot in the backseat of the car shows Awa feeling confident in herself despite Oumi's attempts to make her to not be so. Such important character traits are captured so simply, almost as if through an observational documentary. This simple nature of the shots in this sequence (such as there being little or no camera movement, and minimal cutting between shots) is common African filmmaking practice. As Boughedir says:

> Black African films have taught me to brush away things which are not needed in the cinema and try to get down to a certain undemonstrative essentiality. … When you keep a camera on the level, it's what's inside that fixed frame that counts: the movements, the space and the framing. (as cited in Barlet, 1996, p. 161)

Of the six shots which make up this chosen sequence, each has a distinct purpose. To further enhance the level of depth reached through formal film signification, Sembene has also used multi-dimensional poetic African storytelling techniques when constructing the frame and its contents. Using methods of African storytelling assists with creating more meaningful content for social semiotic interpretation.

Throughout the sequence, the characters' clothing is a significant icon and index. On the surface, the clothes denotatively reflect the values of the characters wearing them: Awa, the first wife, is dressed in traditional formal Islamic attire. This is iconic of her traditional Senegalese roots and connection with her culture. Oumi, the second wife, is dressed in a more revealing 'little black dress' with a wig. Her modern style of dress is reflective of her 'Westernised' and materialistic personality. El Hadji is dressed in a smart black tuxedo. Similarly to Oumi's outfit, the tuxedo is iconic of how El Hadji's perception of Western culture being deemed more 'favourable' is causing him to lose sight of his roots and responsibilities that come with being an indigenous person in a position of power.

Upon deeper examination, connotatively, the garments act as indexes symbolising Senegal's changing power over time. Barlet (1996) suggests:

> Symbols do not merely represent, they suggest
> a meaning and ultimately create a unity, a
> participation in the play of vital forces which
> rule the world. (p. 143).

Oumi's dress provides the audience with a great deal of information about her character; she is a Westernised French woman in a Senegalese woman's body. The dress's black colour is a trove for interpretation. Black can be used to symbolise sophistication, sexual temptation, and evil; all attributes which relate to Oumi's character.
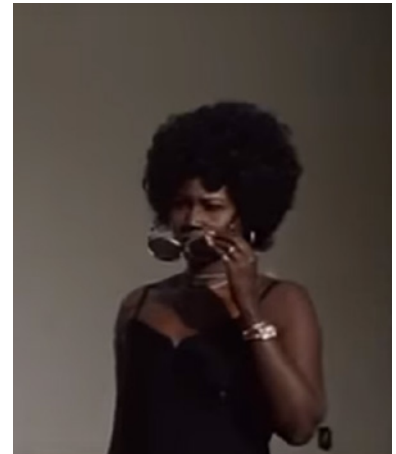
Metz discusses how the concept of 'primitive symbolism' is now unfairly deemed to be 'unstable and fragile'. He uses the classic example of how "Good cowboys wore white shirts and bad cowboys black shirts" (as cited in Wollen, 1998, p. 200) in early silent cinema to convey the idea of which characters were good and bad. This method of iconography was later labelled as being too simple and unnecessary, as audiences have become more sophisticated over time (with the assistance from storytelling technologies). Oumi is not a 'good' character, as she encourages El Hadji's materialistic commodity fetishism through demanding money, dominance and affection.

Awa, in stark comparison, proudly sports golden-coloured clothing of cultural significance to 'the people', and is proud of her heritage (unlike her husband and Oumi). She is the image of what is pure and good:

> While modernity weakens patriarchy, women represent the perpetuation
> of that emulation which is the strength of the traditional village. The films
> willingly pay homage to them, showing them to be tough and hard working.
> (Barlet, 1996, p. 100)

In a film constructed by an African filmmaker for an African audience, one of Sembene's key messages surrounds the detrimental effects of colonisation on the indigenous people (Rushton & Bettinson, 2010). What is interesting from the perspective of a Western viewer is that Sembene frames 'one of their own' – El Hadji, the corrupt Senegalese businessman – as the enemy, and not the primary source of the conflict being the French. It would be too simple, and subsequently less meaningful, for an African filmmaker to create a piece of cinema which solely points the finger at Western society; that is all too common. Instead, by using a character with a sense of relatability to the audience, Sembene intends to tell the viewer that postcolonial corruption is a two-way street; a risky angle to take.

These specific concepts are significant to the film's successful interpretation, therefore it is essential to have an understanding of the director's influences. Sembene is a director strongly influenced by European filmmakers, and also auteurs from other artistic media, such as Bertold Brecht. The observational style of *Xala* has similarities to Brechtian concepts of audience estrangement and alienation in the theatre, and Sembene recognises that he has been influenced by Brecht's work: "I like Brecht and I'm trying to take inspiration from his example" (as cited in Barlet, 1996, p. 16).

Sembene uses these Western forms of film craft to tell stories of people from his own country (Senegal), by inextricably incorporating traditional African methods of storytelling; sem-enna-worq for example:

> The film language of *Xala* can be constructed on the model of an African poetic form called 'sem-enna-worq' which literally means 'wax and gold'. The term refers to the lost-wax process in which a goldsmith creates a wax form, casts a clay mould around it, then drains out the wax and pours in the molten gold to form the valued object. ... Wax refers to the most obvious and superficial meaning, whereas the gold embedded in the art work offers the true meaning, which may be inaccessible unless one understands the nuances of folk culture (as cited in Barlet, 1996, p. 161).

While a Western audience may need to use formalised semiotic analysis techniques to try to strip away the wax layers of the potentially unfamiliar cultural setting, African viewers (for whom the film was primarily intended for) are able to access relatable cultural cues, or symbols that are often recurring through a range of artistic media. African storytelling methods are comprised mainly of motifs; visual poetry. As Africa is a large continent, there are a large range of languages, tongues and dialects, even in a single district. For a filmmaker's work to be versatile and reach a large audience, it needs to use a universal language which is easily interpreted by a range of people. Barlet explains:

> The intense use of symbols does not, then, lead inevitably to opacity. It is, rather, the opposite which happens when the camera manages to grasp the complexity of the African gaze, that symbolism which both conceals meaning and reveals it, which suggests while occluding, which unveils while adding to the mystery. (Barlet, 1996, p. 158)

Xala, in terms of construct, is a complex piece of cinema. It is comprised of many subtextual layers. The 'gold' woven into the film may not be fully accessible unless one has an understanding of the Senegalese historical and cultural contexts, especially surrounding the time in which it is set. However, African cinema characteristically focuses on using signs to convey important ideas, which speak across language and cultural barriers.

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Author

Georgia Scott holds a Bachelor Degree in Screen Arts. She is currently working on a range of film projects based in Auckland, New Zealand. She has a keen interest in world cinema and documentary forms.

Course notes

Notes

The images used in this analysis are stills from the film *Xala* (1976). Every effort has been made to locate the owner of the copyright. If the rights holder wishes to contact the journal we will either credit them or remove the images as they wish.

Hamish Parker

Post-modern Westerns and
the Endangered Woman

Hamish Parker

POST-MODERN WESTERNS AND
THE ENDANGERED WOMAN

Abstract

This research essay explores the increasing scarcity of female roles in post-modern western films due to changes that have occurred over several decades since the origination of the genre.

A string of highly-acclaimed post-modern western films of the twenty-first century have an absence of major female characters, the cause of which stems from the way the genre has progressed since its inception. Classic westerns of the twentieth century had explicit representations of society and straightforward (albeit archaic) gender roles, each functioning in a direct manner to fulfil the plot, but as the genre has changed over several decades so has the representation of society, which has directly impacted the already limited female character. By understanding genre conventions of traditional twentieth-century western films, and then looking at how the representation of society has changed in certain post-modern westerns of the twenty-first century, a link between the representation of society and the representation of women will be established, to understand what the female character means thematically to each film and why her role has become increasingly endangered in the genre.

The traditional western is a genre that follows well-established conventions which make it universally recognisable in film. Structural codes which feature particular kinds of plot, character and setting all function in specific ways to create a western archetype where certain themes and ideas are found. In *Film Art: An Introduction*, Bordwell and Thompson write that:

> … quite early, the central theme of the genre became the conflict between civilized order and the lawless frontier. From the East and the city come the settlers who want to raise families, the schoolteachers who aim to spread learning, and the bankers and government officials. In the vast natural spaces, by contrast, people outside civilization thrive – not only Native Americans but also outlaws, trappers and traders, and greedy cattle barons. (p. 339)

The divide between civilised settlements and the savagery of the wilderness is a fundamental element in classic westerns, which quickly boils down to good vs evil. While the wilderness is dangerous and untamed, civilisation is organised and well-mannered. Uncivilised outsiders (most notably Native Americans) threaten society with acts of violence and savagery, but because civilisation is not violent it requires outside help for protection and calls in the cowboy who "stands between the two thematic poles. At home in the wilderness but naturally inclined towards justice and kindness, the cowboy is often poised between savagery and civilization" (Bordwell & Thompson, p. 339). The cowboy is the protagonist who serves as the lens for the audience. His masculine disposition, which he has full jurisdiction over, is always the central driving force of the narrative. It is *his* journey we follow, and the characters he encounters often have very direct purposes in relation to him, which is particularly noticeable in the cowboy-centric orientation of the female roles.

The role of the women is not found in the wilderness as it is dangerous, untamed, and not suited to her given characteristics. The woman is only found in society, where her role comes to represent the positive qualities that the cowboy must protect. A concerned mother represents the civilised good of society, while an innocent daughter

represents the purity that must be protected. A romantic interest tempts the cowboy away from a life in the wild but will ultimately be unsuccessful, as the cowboy's ethos is unable to integrate with civilisation. The feminine role in relation to the masculine protagonist far exceeds her importance as an individual character, and because of this she lacks depth and is nothing more than an extension of society's representation. This is how the role of the woman is portrayed throughout countless traditional westerns, but with the emergence of revisionist westerns that eventually led to the post-modern westerns of the twenty-first century, the image of society begins to change and the roles that existed for her become threatened.

Post-modern western is a term which is split into two genres of western that emerged in the late twentieth century. One is the revisionist western and the other is the neo-western. The revisionist western uses a traditional western setting but incorporates modern values, and the neo-western uses the conventions of western storytelling but incorporates new values in contemporary settings. Revisionist westerns look at the old with new eyes while neo-westerns look at the new with old eyes. What both genres have in common is how their representation of society has changed drastically from the traditional western, causing the motives of the masculine protagonist to change and the role of the woman to become increasingly scarce. The mid to late 1990s saw the emergence of revisionist westerns which questioned the highly defined ethics of good vs evil in traditional westerns. In post-modern westerns, society is no longer good and lawful but has become increasingly dark and corrupt. Without an unquestionably good society to preserve, the narrative changes from an outsider's quest to protect civilisation to an insider and his role in society. Films begin to show morally ambiguous heroes, or anti-heroes such as the bank robbers of *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* (Hill, 1969), or the ultra-violent revenge plot of *Django* (Corbucci, 1966). The motives of the protagonist change from helping the good of the masses to helping their own needs, often seeking blood or reprisal on the corrupt society that has turned against them.

As the lawful society dies off in post-modern western films, many of the established female roles also begin to die as their habitat is lost. The concerned mother begins to die because society is no longer lawful, as does the innocent daughter as society is no longer pure. The romantic interest has the best chance of survival as she is a deep-rooted figure in storytelling that transcends the western genre, but even her role is threatened. While some films still employ her as a damsel in distress for love-driven plots, her frequency has lessened. In many cases she is relegated to the minor role of the partner with little importance to the film, or to that of the prostitute who shows the darker and lustful side of sex that remains in a fallen society, which, although it is one of the few roles women have which doesn't show society's virtue, it is still a subservient role to man and "in many ways not that much different [from the partner] since in both cases women trade sex for money, room, and board" (Aquila, 2015, p. 14). The masculine protagonist is the lens through which the audience views the world, and is therefore able to adapt to whatever representation of society is being shown; but because the female role has traditionally been an extension of a *good* society, her role becomes increasingly scarce as twenty-first century westerns

continue to grow darker.

No Country for Old Men (Coen and Coen, 2007) is one of the best-known neo-westerns of the twenty-first century and is one of several highly acclaimed post-modern westerns, including *The Revenant* (Iñárritu, 2015) and *There Will Be Blood* (Anderson, 2007), all released within a decade of each other and all having a noticeable absence of major female characters. These films show a darker representation of society than the classic westerns before them which, in relation to the change of genre conventions, is the crucial link to understanding how women are represented and why they have so few major roles. *No Country for Old Men* portrays a society which is no longer honest and lawful, but a "vivid expression … of the darkness in the new West" (Adams, p. 164), which is established in the opening narration in a way that shows a self-awareness to the genre conventions that it draws on. When police sheriff Ed Tom Bell says "I was sheriff of this county when I was 25. Grandfather was a law man. Father too," from this we know that he comes from a long lineage of authority that has insight into the nature of society, which has changed over time, much like the genre itself. He then says:

> There's this boy I sent to the electric chair. … He killed a fourteen-year-old girl. Papers said it was a crime of passion, but he told me there wasn't any passion to it, told me he had been planning to kill somebody for about as long as he can remember. … I don't know what to make of that. The crime you see now it's hard to even take its measure.

Through his speech it is clear that things are not what they used to be. Crime is no longer a classic good vs evil tale where the villains, although evil, have clear motives and goals. Crime is now nihilistic and unknowable, as is the act of a man killing a girl for no real reason. In the face of this new, dark society, "Sheriff Ed Tom Bell represents the traditional ideal of masculinity," (Adams, p. 172) and through his fleeting nature he acknowledges the "the failure of patriarchal authority, [and] the breakdown of the old system and its values" (p. 172).

This dark, post-modern society with elements of traditional western values is the crucial dynamic to understanding how women are (and are not) represented in *No Country for Old Men*. The film is largely occupied with "the question of manhood [which] is linked with the western genre's focus on violence and domination as defining features of masculinity" (Adams, p. 170), and because most of the film does this by following Llewelyn Moss's journey through the dark side of society, there are few roles available for female characters to influence him, as all female roles are on the pure, traditional side of society. After Llewelyn leaves home, the only female characters with speaking roles he encounters are the Del Rio motel clerk and the poolside woman. The poolside woman is a clear reminiscence of the romantic interest who tempts the masculine protagonist away from a life in the wild. She asks if he's "a sport", referring to being a cowboy, which she judges from his outfit and rifle. She then flirts with him, saying "Beer! That's what's coming. I'll bring the ice chest out here. You can stay married." Her recognition of him as a cowboy and the subsequent

excitement of this signals her depiction of a more traditional character, but Llewelyn is uninterested in her. While the camera shows him in close-up shots from her point of view, she only ever appears in long shots from behind Llewelyn's shoulder, keeping the focus on him and creating an emotional distance in his side of the conversation.

The Del Rio motel clerk is an interesting role because, like the Desert Aire trailer park manager whom psychopathic hitman Anton Chigurh encounters, and Ed's secretary, she is one of several minor female characters who appear in administrative positions, whose femininity has been stripped away due to their being mere outlets for the business they work at. They function in a similar manner to the encounter in traditional westerns – women who would guide the cowboy through his journey, offering him food or a place to stay, but these women are brash and uncaring, simply wanting to get their job done. They have adopted masculine traits and, unlike the poolside woman, they are not impressed at the status of the male characters, nor are they fazed by the obviously dangerous activities they are engaged in. They show us how very minor roles are capable of being adapted to post-modern westerns in the way that they conform to a contemporary masculine world.

Carla Jean Moss (Llewelyn's young wife) is the only major female character in the film, and easily the most prominent female character featuring in any of the previously stated films, but still she appears in less than ten percent of the film's screen time. Her role is in direct contrast to the dark side of society: she is not sexualised, she wears modest clothes and no discernible makeup. She worries for Llewelyn, acting as a voice of reason, and only interacts willingly with other characters who are on the good side of society, such as Ed. Her final scene with Anton Chigurh (into which she enters unwillingly) shows how she is the polar opposite to his remorseless, fatalistic character. Anton has a submissive attitude to events, taking no responsibility for his actions or the dark nature of society which he helps create. He offers Carla a chance to live with a coin toss to decide her fate, but she refuses, saying "the coin don't have no say. It's just you." She upholds traditional western morals, showing honour and loyalty to her husband even though his actions are the cause for her death (and yes, she does die: Anton checks the soles of his boots for blood after he leaves the house), but because the film focuses largely on the defining features of masculinity, her role in the film is relatively minor, only coming into fruition in the final act after the death of her husband.

If women represent the goodness and domesticity of society in the western, then how does *The Revenant* (2015), a film without a fully constructed society, represent women? The answer is, it doesn't. At least not women who belong to the group of people comprising modern society. *The Revenant* is a revisionist western that portrays early settlers in America and has only one line of dialogue spoken by a female character. The line is "I will cut your balls off" and is spoken by a Native American woman who, along with other women in the tribe, have a minuscule role. She says this after being saved from a sexual assault, which leads back to more of a classic western representation where "misogyny [is] the norm as evidenced by numerous rapes, shootings, and beatings of women. Female victims [are] typically

depicted in ripped clothing that revealed bare legs and bare backs, or [are] shown in titillating poses" (Aquila, p. 19). The scene does not overtly sexualise her in the sense of being titilating to the audience's gaze, but her character has no more depth than the fact she is a sexual assault victim.

The narrative follows Hugh Glass and other settlers traversing the wilderness which, as we have been told time and time again, is no place for civilised women in the western genre. Because of this there are no European women in the film, only Native American female roles. The film shows war between Native Americans and settlers, but there is no black and white depiction of good vs evil. The Native Americans are represented sympathetically, as it portrays their land and resources being taken, but they are also violent and vindictive characters. While the settlers are the aggressors, theirs is the narrative we follow, and many of the individuals are likeable and seemingly removed from the damage their group inflicts. This puts both groups in a moral grey area. The film leans towards the settlers being 'the bad guys' because they are more to blame for the damage being done to the land, but regardless of race, mankind is the source of destruction.

After the chaos of battle there is a still shot of scenery where we see the scorched earth and scattered bodies, as a burning tree eventually tumbles down. In another scene we are shown thousands and thousands of buffalo skulls stacked in a pile. The film's dark tones, which are common in post-modern westerns, do not stem from a debased society in an obvious way, simply from man's impact on the earth. However, the role of the (Native American) woman is still employed to show goodness as she is in opposition to the evil which is happening. She is a hunter-gatherer with a level of mysticism about her, which was a common characterisation of indigenous women in traditional western cinema, and because of her natural characteristics and ties to the land she is a victim of the devastation that is taking place. She has minimal screen time, no character depth and her only real scene of importance involves being saved from a sexual assault. In this instance she has not adapted from her traditional representation, and because the film is largely set outside her main habitat of modern towns and cities, there is little-to-no place for her to exist.

Finally, *There Will Be Blood* is a revisionist western that tells the story of Daniel Plainview, a ruthless oil tycoon who promises to bring prosperity to the people of a small town but is only focused on his own "greed and ambition" (Anderson, p. 187). *There Will Be Blood* has plenty of minor female characters who all conform to traditional western conventions. The town has a focus on wholesome family and church life, so women function here in their classic role, showing civility and purity. Young girls wear white clothing, and mothers and townsfolk wear modest dresses with hats, and cross necklaces. In one scene we see much of the town come out for an outdoor feast, and the depiction of women as part of society here helps mould a classic image of peace and unification. In the representation of the town women are plentiful as extras, but individual major female roles are completely absent. The film shows an awareness of this that it uses to portray the evil attributes of Daniel.

Because women represent the good in society, the lack of substantial female roles in Daniel's life shows how he is not a part of this. He tells people his wife died in childbirth, but really he adopted his son from a man who died working on one of his oil rigs, in order to appear like a family man. In one scene where he addresses the town he uses Mary, Pastor Eli's young sister Mary, as a prop, holding her up for everyone to see as he tries to show his link to society, but during actual business he only ever deals with men. The film goes beyond using women to represent the goodness of society to employing the absence of women as a device to show the evil of society. At the film's end Daniel has become a cynical, lonely alcoholic while his adopted son H. W. has married Mary and is now an honourable man, although adult Mary is never even shown. The film has slid completely into the darkest representation of society, therefore there is no place for Mary. Much like traditional westerns, being incapable of showing civilised women in the wild because of the purity they represent, post-modern westerns are often incapable of showing *any* women in the darkest reaches of society because of the goodness the genre wants them to represent. The problem with this is that post-modern westerns almost always show dark representations of society that either give women little place in the genre or force them to be used in a contrasting manner, which does not require them to have major roles.

In all three films, minor female roles have largely kept their roots from traditional westerns and major roles have almost completely vanished as the genre has refused to integrate them into new representations of society. Whether or not the absence of women in these films is a problem is up to the viewer to decide. The films may try to depict a somewhat realistic interpretation of the times and events, but because the scenarios being shown are conceived of according to a male-dominated world, the absence of female characters is a clear consequence. But for a genre that has managed to adapt to so many new settings and scenarios it seems odd that it has struggled to reinvent the female role. These films are often viewed without audiences realising how few major female characters there are, but if a film had an almost entirely female cast with only one male character having a single piece of dialogue, I can tell you that audiences would damn sure notice.

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Author

Hamish Parker graduated from Victoria University of Wellington with a Bachelor of Arts majoring in both film, English literature and creative writing.

Course information

Professor Missy Molloy's Film 302 – Cinema and Representation – examines how cinema represents issues such as gender, race, ethnicity, and sexuality in a critical manner, paying attention to theories of representation and spectatorship central to feminist film studies which address provocative depictions of sexuality and social inequality onscreen. This paper was submited in July 2017.

Jesse Austin-Stewart

Creating Interfaces for Live
Octophonic Spatialisation of Sound

Jesse Austin-Stewart

CREATING INTERFACES FOR LIVE OCTOPHONIC SPATIALISATION OF SOUND

Abstract

This essay will detail the process and creation of *elle – an octophonic drone interface* for the CMPO 381 – Interface Design for Live Electronics paper at Victoria University of Wellington.

elle – an octophonic drone interface is a 2-channel hardware interface that enables users to control an 8-channel MaxMSP patch, of the same name, with which one can create continuous drones by dropping any audio sample into the patch. These drones can then be spatialised within an octophonic array. The hardware and MaxMSP interface interact with one another to enable aural and visual feedback of the physical changes input by the user. It is designed as a simple interface to use, so that the knowledge barrier to entry is small.

Background

Intentional spatialisation of audio has existed since Alan Blumlein invented modern stereophonic sound in the 1930s to solve the issue of sound in film appearing to come from a different direction from where the sound was occurring on screen (BBC News, 2008). From then on, spatialisation of sound continued to develop, with quadraphonic and octophonic works first appearing in the 1950s, exemplified in works by Karlheinz Stockhausen and John Cage.

The New Zealand School of Music at Victoria University of Wellington has a strong culture of spatialisation of sound with multi-speaker arrangements. Recently, work has appeared from lecturers and postgraduate students in this realm, along with a strong push for realising ideas around multi-speaker spatialisation within undergraduate courses. Lecturers Dugal McKinnon, Jim Murphy and Mo Zareei collaborated on *Lost Oscillations* in 2015, "a sound installation that requires the human touch – literally – of its audience in reactivating and feeling through the layered sonic archaeology of Christchurch, the city's contemporary and historic soundscapes and ever-shifting spatial character" (McKinnon, 2015, para. 1). In her thesis, recent PhD graduate Bridget Johnson (2017) identifies a need for development of interfaces designed to spatialise audio in order to engage with spatial aspects of music. Her iPad interface *tactile.motion* enables the user to spatialise sound by moving objects around the iPad touch screen, which in turn moves sound around an octophonic speaker array in an intuitive, simple-to-use interface. One hope of Johnson's is that through the development of new spatial interfaces, new spatial aesthetics may emerge.

Numerous sonic arts courses at the New Zealand School of Music encourage live spatialisation of audio (mostly spatialising stereo works for an 8-speaker arrangement) and writing works for octophonic arrangements.

It is important to understand this context to understand from where the work originates and its influences derive.

MaxMSP patch

The MaxMSP patch will be detailed before describing the physical interface and its code, so that there is context to support and understand the coding and design decisions.

Figure 1. *ELLE – A DRONE INTERFACE* by Jesse Austin, MaxMSP patch GUI.

The octophonic MaxMSP patch derives from a patch of similar nature. MaxMSP is a visual programming language used for music and multimedia. Figure 1 is a mono version of *elle – an octophonic drone interface*. It was created as a part of the CMPO 211 – Projects in Interactive Music and Sound paper in 2016, and was designed so that users could drop in audio, and also effect live audio, to create continuous drones and manipulate textures.

The signal chain to control the samples began with manipulating the sample speed, where users could change the speed between -1 to 1 times the original speed. This then ran into a bandpass filter with which users can change the frequency (Freq.) and bandwidth of that filter (Q). This then ran into a reverb with all values predetermined, excluding the Dry/Wet, which you can change within the patch. It is then adjusted by a volume dial before being sent to the master channel. If selected, it can be sent to a bus channel before reaching the master. It can also be muted and soloed. The bus and master channels also run through a filter, with which you can change the Freq. and Q before both run through a volume dial. This signal flow proved effective, partly due to being similar to mixer views in traditional DAWs and also being relatively intuitive. This signal flow was copied and added to the newer octophonic patch.

Figure 2. *elle – an octophonic drone interface* by Jesse Austin, MaxMSP patch GUI.

In Figure 2, much of the adjusted octophonic patch is the same. There are additional 'lights' by channels 'Sample 1' and 'Sample 2' as well as 'Sample Speed', however these lights will be detailed in the explanantion of the hardware.

After running through the same signal flow as the mono patch, the interface runs into an 'octophonic dial'. By turning this, users can position the sound around the octophonic array. A 'Spread' control is placed below this. This enables you to make the sound come from all speakers at equal volume (value 0 on the spread dial) or be quite directional, mainly coming from one speaker (value 1) and also in between those points (values 0-1).

Mathematics for the 'octophonic dial'

The next sections describe the software, signal processing and hardware implementation of the octophonic interface.

For this patch, the octophonic dial has a value of 1024. This value is essentially arbitrary, however, it was originally chosen as it has enough steps to ensure that there are no aural jumps between speakers. The value between 0-1024 will be called 'x'. 'i' will equal the result of the previous equation. The equations below explain each step of the process. It is important to note that this math is applied to all eight outputs of each channel and adjusts the volume of those individual outputs (speakers) to move

the sound around the circle:

> *x − 64* (to offset the ring by half the space between two speakers so that it is set up as a flat octophonic system)

> *i − π/1024* (to take the value between -64 - 960 and convert to a value of pi to work in radians. Is not 2π, as cos^2 has two periods in 2π and only one in π)

> *cos(i − (speaker number * 1/8π)* (cosine is used because $cos(x) = cos(-x)$. This makes our output between values -1 to 1. The 'speaker number' variable is converted to terms of π, so that it can be adjusted based on the specific speaker it is adjusting)

> *i²* (converts our value to a value between 0-1)

At this point, we obtain a float value between 0-1 by adjusting our 'octophonic dial'. This value then runs into an equation in which we also take into account our 'Spread' value (a float value between 0-1). The math for this 'Spread' value will be explained, and then it will be explained how they work together. will be used to represent the 'Spread' value and its changes, in the same way has been used:

> *$1 − \sqrt[3]{1 − f}$* (this equation sharpens the curve of the value between 0-1, rather than being a linear change. The cube root is arbitrary, however it is what sounded the best)

These *i* and *f* values are then used together to adjust the volume of the eight different speakers:

> *(i − 0.87) * f + 0.87* (the 0.87 value is used to equalise the volume across the speakers when the 'Spread' value changes. This value was found by trial and error and what 'sounded best'. It is included in the first part of the equation to balance out the addition of 0.87 in the last part of the equation)

> *i * 127* (multiplies the result of the previous equation by 127, as the volume/ gain sliders in MaxMSP work with values between 0-127)

Assistance from Christopher Milson, an undergraduate mathematics student at Victoria, was used to obtain the above equations, and the end result was a collaborative effort.

Hardware interface

The next section details the physical construction and layout of the hardware interface.

While the MaxMSP patch is designed with eight channels, the physical interface

only has two. This was done for multiple reasons. Firstly, the Teensy 3.5 didn't have enough pins to connect to for all the parts needed to complete a full eight channels. There were limited parts available to work with and limited money to spend on more parts. Time was also another constraint, as to complete and test a full 8-channel version of the board would have taken too long, if allowing time for mistakes and fixing errors.

The lack of pins on the Teensy 3.5 is also the reason why there are not as many potentiometers on the physical interface as there are dials on the software interface. Both the reduced number of channels and reduced number of potentiometers has meant that solutions had to be created to be able to physically manipulate all parameters.
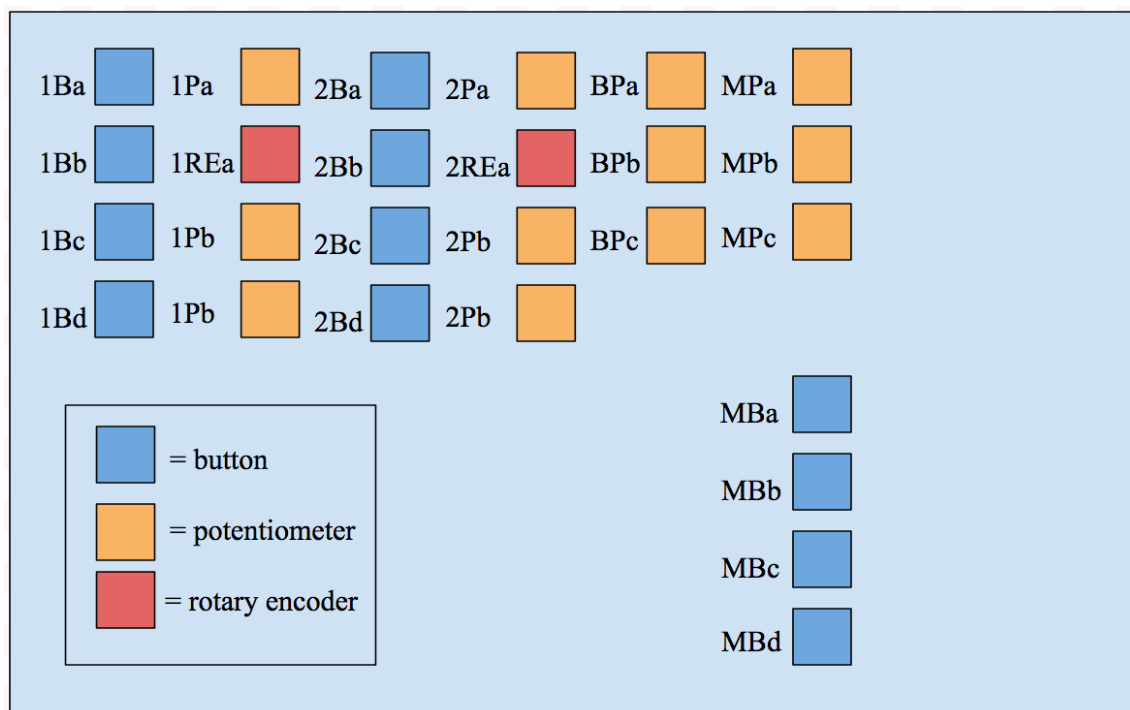
Figure 3. A model of the physical interface.

If button MBa is pressed, it sends a message to MaxMSP (the way it sends a message, and the other details surrounding this, will be explained later), which switches between channel groups. This goes between channels 1-2 (which are active on the image of the interface in figure 2, as shown by the 'light'), 3-4, 5-6 and 7-8. Also, if 1Ba or 2Ba are pressed it will cycle the potentiometers 1Pa and 2Pa respectively between effecting 'Sample Speed', 'Freq.', 'Q' and 'Dry/Wet' on the software interface. Like the channel switching, the light will change depending on which dial is active.

This solution saves time and money and solves the issue of not having enough pins on the Teensy. The main problem that comes with this is that when you move a dial after switching channels or dials, the value will jump to wherever that potentiometer's last value was. This could potentially be solved within either the MaxMSP patch or the Arduino code, by ramping the value to slowly move to where their potentiometer is. But this could be a complicated solution that would still not 100% solve the problem.

Figure 4 shows the physical interface. The case was collaboratively designed and 3D printed with Victoria University computer science undergraduate student, Joshua Hylton. The open aesthetic of the case fits the bare design of the board and lack of caps on top of the buttons, potentiometers and rotary encoders. The board on which everything is connected has been hot-glued to the case and when in use feels sturdy, providing a robust platform for performance.
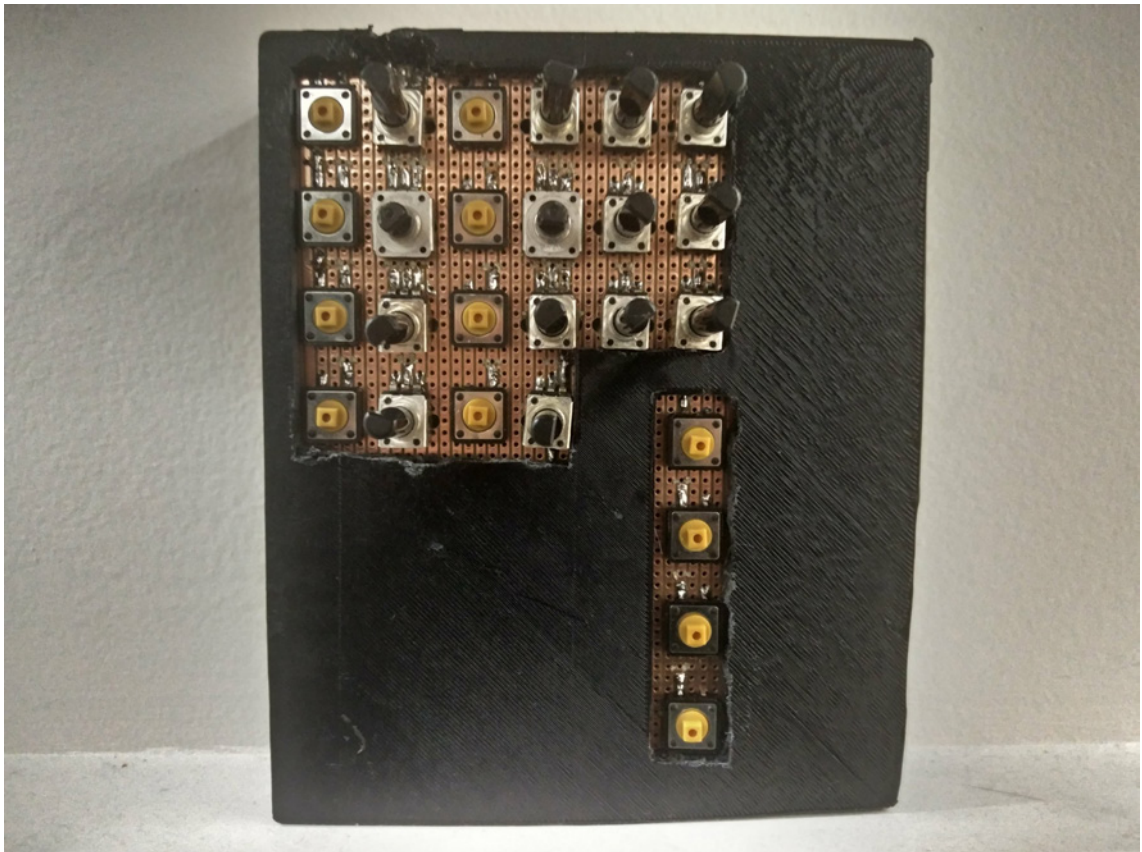
Figure 4. *elle - an octophonic drone interface* by Jesse Austin, hardware interface.

The parts used in the physical interface are as follows:

- Teensy 3.5
- 12 potentiometers
- 12 buttons
- 2 rotary encoders
- Veroboard

The following schematic (Figure 5) details the layout of the board. It is important to note that while all potentiometers have been connected to analog pins, there was not a model of the Teensy 3.5 on Fritzing, so the buttons, potentiometers and rotary encoders are not connected to the same pins as the they are on the Teensy, however, the general layout explains what is necessary to understand.

Figure 5. Schematic of *elle*'s hardware interface.

Function/purpose of sensors

Buttons are used to send bangs within MaxMSP. The potentiometers are used to send values between 0-127 to the 'Sample Speed', 'Freq.', 'Q', 'Dry/Wet', 'Spread' and 'Volume' controls. The rotary encoders are used to send values to control the 'octophonic dial', as they can turn 360° and are continuous.

Arduino code

In the following passage the arduino code, and how that code takes the information received from the sensors and communicates that with MaxMSP, will be detailed.

Buttons

The buttons use state change detection methods to change a value when pressed.

```
if (button1ChannelOneState != lastButton1ChannelOneState) {
  if (button1ChannelOneState == LOW) {
    button1ChannelOneCounter++;
    if (button1ChannelOneCounter == 2) {
      button1ChannelOneCounter = 0;
    }
  }
} else {
  button1ChannelOneCounter = x;
}
```
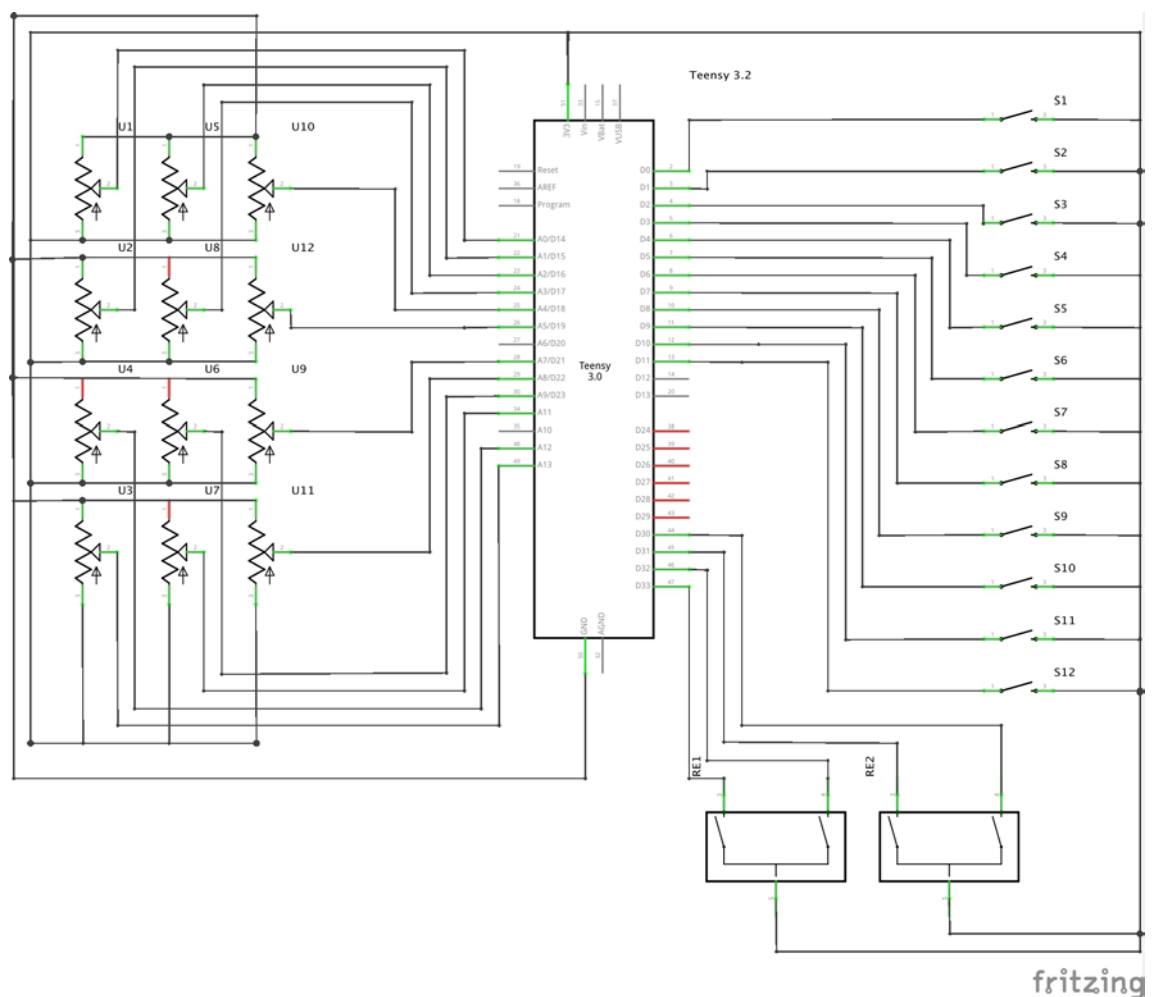
Figure 6

This code compares the current state of the button (whether it is pushed or not) with the previous state. If it is different, it will then see if the state is 'LOW' or 'off' (in most cases, this would usually be 'HIGH'), and the Teensy's inbuilt pullup resistors are then used on each pin, instead of a hardware resistor, to work the buttons. In 'void setup' the pin number was set to INPUT_PULLUP instead of INPUT. If it is 'LOW', then it adds to a counter. If the counter then becomes '2', it sets the counter to 0. This means that a push of the button alternates the value between 0 and 1. If the state hasn't changed, it sets the counter value to 'x', which will be explained further on when talking about communicating with MaxMSP.

Potentiometers

State change detection methods are used to get values from the potentiometers.

```
if (effectChannelOnePotOne != previousEffectChannelOnePotOne) {
  previousEffectChannelOnePotOne = effectChannelOnePotOne;
} else {
  effectChannelOnePotOne = x;
```

Figure 7

If the potentiometer value has changed from the previous value, the previous value is then made equivalent to the current value to then notice another change. If the values are the same, then it sets the potentiometer value to 'x'. The potentiometers read a value between 0-1024, that has been mapped down to 0-127, as this is MIDI resolution.

Rotary encoders

```
if (newRotaryChannelOne != positionRotaryChannelOne) {
  positionRotaryChannelOne = newRotaryChannelOne;
} else {
  newRotaryChannelOne = x;
}
```

Figure 8

The rotary encoder code is set up the same way as the potentiometer code. The Teensy rotary encoder library (PJRC) is used, which means fewer arguments have been included in the code. A full rotary encoder rotation gives 96 values, and the rotary encoder provides infinite positive and negative values.

Serial print and 'x'

All the individual pieces of data of all the potentiometers, buttons and rotary encoders are printed in a long line and are printing continuously. The firmware sends this serial information to MaxMSP as ASCII, where it is unpacked, converted back to

serial and distributed to the correct parameters to control.

To print in a line and have individual printing channels (as opposed to just one) every sensor must print at the same time. The issue is that if MaxMSP is always receiving information, it will be constantly changing and adjusting parameters, and when using 'bangs' this becomes an issue. To combat this, an 'x' has been set up inside arduino as a character to equal 'a', because this character has a serial value of 170. Inside MaxMSP, every channel that is unpacked has been set to not pass on value 170 (only the rotary encoders send 170, but it is relatively inconsequential to remove that value).

Related works

Accepting the lack of ability of the MaxMSP patch to spatialise in a new way means this work somewhat ignores Johnson's (2017) interest in creating new spatial aesthetics through new interfaces, and could be considered a critique of my work. Johnson's research "stems from artistic practice and a desire to deeply explore spatial aesthetics in sound art" (p. V), and this is where our main intentions differ. While exploring spatial aesthetics in sound art is still an aim in my work, I want to do so within the confines of the interface I have designed. Exploring how to spatialise sound differently was not my intention, rather, it was being able to implement and create a working interface for live spatialisation. Further, this work promises much progress on subsequent multi-input hardware interfaces, a topic left unexplored by Johnson.

Darren Copeland's *NAISA Spatialization System* explores sound beyond the two-dimensional design of Johnson's interface, allowing the user to use physical gestural control to manipulate sound by using all three dimensions, as well as tilt, roll and directional control. The physical controller, like mine, controls a MaxMSP patch. This interface creates and offers a new way to explore physicality within spatialisation, as demonstrated in his 2015 performance at MANTIS festival (NOAVARS, 2015).

In contrast to Copeland's work, one could mention the diffusion of stereo works for multiple stereo pairs. The technique, as described by Smalley in an interview with Larry Austin (2000), was explored in the CMPO 210 – Projects in Electronic Music course. The process involved using four groups of faders to control four stereo pairs of speakers in an octophonic array and performing a live spatialisation of a stereo work.

These three interfaces and methods, as well as *elle*, demonstrate the wide variety of options there are in performing and spatialising sound, but also show that there is a lot of room to further innovate in the way we approach creating interfaces for spatialisation of sound.

Collaboration

Collaboration was a large factor in completing this project. The nature of academia makes you realise how little you know, and with the short timeframe that undergraduate courses have, there was little opportunity to expand upon mathematics and 3D modelling skills.

To work on the equations, Christopher Milson and I sat with an octophonic array, trying different equations to reach the end result. The collaboration involved me describing to him, in abstract musical and sound terms, what I was trying to achieve, and him interpreting that mathematically and implementing it into the visual code until we found something that aesthetically suited the aim.

Creating the 3D-modelled case involved measuring the vero board with the sensors and collaboratively deciding how we would position the case around the unit. With his experience of 3D modelling and printing and my direction, we were able to conceive a structure together that fits and houses the unit in a robust and sturdy fashion.

Future work

I would like to make improvements and adjustments to the current interface that would include completing a full 8-channel hardware interface that mimics the design of the GUI, fixing the solo channel function inside of the MaxMSP patch (it only allows one channel to be soloed at once), including some switches to shift between different speaker configurations (whether that be speaker routing or number of speakers) and replacing the buttons used with quieter ones.

Beyond this, it would be interesting to take inspiration from Johnson, and use the mathematics that I have worked out for this to try and create new interfaces for spatialisation that enable me to explore different spatial aesthetics, or use the mathematics in the development of my own creative practice.

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Author

Jesse Austin-Stewart has just completed his Bachelor of Music, majoring in composition, specialising in sonic arts, at Victoria University of Wellington. Heading into postgraduate study, Jesse intends to explore the relationship sound has with space in various capacities.

Course information

CMPO 381 is a course run by Dr Jim Murphy at Victoria University of Wellington, in which the objective is to design a custom digital interface for musical expression. The course focuses on the use of microcontrollers to control computer-based music software and different sensors to vary input data.

Kerri-Lyn Wheeler

Examining Sex and Climaxes in *Blue is the Warmest Colour* and *Carol*

Kerri-Lyn Wheeler

EXAMINING SEX AND CLIMAXES IN *BLUE IS THE WARMEST COLOUR* AND *CAROL*

Abstract

This essay uses the films *Blue is the Warmest Colour* (Kechiche, 2013), and *Carol* (Haynes, 2015) to examine the challenges and questions which arise when a male filmmaker directs a film with a queer female relationship at its centre. Whenever a male creator has authorial power over queer female subjects their authenticity comes into question. This is especially notable in the critical response to *Blue is the Warmest Colour*'s explicit sex scenes. *Carol*, however, was seen as a more authentic representation as it does not eroticise its characters to the same extent. This essay uses textual analysis of the films' climaxes and sex scenes to contrast the way in which the two relationships are represented. It also draws on feminist film scholarship. Through this, it becomes clear that it is possible for a male filmmaker to represent queer female relationships in a way which can be perceived as authentic. However, a film's sex scene will inevitably be read in the context of the filmmaker's gender and sexuality.

The films *Blue is the Warmest Colour* (2013), directed by Abdellatif Kechiche, and *Carol* (2015), directed by Todd Haynes, are films that centralise queer female relationships. In addition, both films are adaptations of other source material: *Carol* of Patricia Highsmith's 1952 novel *The Price of Salt*, and *Blue is the Warmest Colour* derived from the graphic novel of the same name by Julie Maroh, which was originally published in 2010. These films saw great critical success, with *Carol* nominated for six Academy Awards and winning the Queer Palm at the Cannes Film Festival, and *Blue is the Warmest Colour* winning the Palme d'Or at the 2013 Cannes Film Festival. In other words, these are two of the most widely acclaimed films with a lesbian relationship at their forefront and were both directed by men. In this essay, I wish to question what happens when a man is the one telling the story of two women in love, and what happens when this story is being adapted from source material that was originally written by a queer woman. I draw on the work of Ann M. Ciasullo, Karen Hollinger, Natasha Distiller and Laura Mulvey to connect these films' representation of sex to feminist film theory. Textual analysis of each film, including the differences from the source material, will illuminate the authorial choices and cinematic effects of male-oriented framing of queer female desire, how this plays into how each film changing or maintaining its original ending, and the difference in how sex scenes are portrayed in each film.

Blue is the Warmest Colour is a coming-of-age film set in modern-day France, which portrays the romance between two girls, Adele (Adèle Exarchopoulos) and Emma (Léa Seydoux). Beginning in Adele's last year of high school, *Blue is the Warmest Colour* deals with Adele coming to terms with her sexuality after she sees Emma on the street and becomes infatuated with her. The film then follows their relationship from its inception to the resolution of their break up. *Carol* follows the story of Therese (Rooney Mara), a young shop clerk who wishes to become a photographer, and her relationship with Carol (Cate Blanchett), an older woman going through a divorce from her husband and struggling to maintain custody of her daughter. The film predominantly deals with Carol and Therese's relationship and Carol's divorce. *Carol* also showcases the struggles of being a queer woman in 1950s America. Both films deal with a younger female character who becomes infatuated with an older woman who has come to accept her desire for other women. Prior to *The Price of Salt*'s publication, happy endings to lesbian narratives were all but unheard of; *Carol* maintains the relatively happy ending which the novel it was based on became known for. On the other hand, *Blue is the Warmest Colour* changes the sad ending of the graphic novel for one which presents Adele with having a more hopeful outcome. These endings provide insight into the questioned purity of adaptations, which will be later discussed.

Sex scenes

When looking into how a film represents sexuality, analysing how the sex scenes between characters are articulated is crucial. Haynes and Kechiche approached the

onscreen portrayal of lesbian sex from different angles. *Carol* places far less emphasis on eroticising the female body in its single sex scene. While both characters are nude in the scene, no close-up shots linger on their form, and the majority of the scene is shot in a medium framing. Haynes uses this scene as an opportunity to show the romantic feelings of these characters finally being expressed, having had taken one hour and twenty minutes of the film's run time to build to this climatic scene. The scene also serves a narrative purpose, and is therefore less gratuitous than the sex scenes in *Blue is the Warmest Colour*. At this point in the film, a private investigator, who was hired by Harge, Carol's husband, is following Carol and Therese to find proof of Carol's lesbianism, which will lead to Harge gaining full custody of their daughter. The private investigator records the two of them having sex and sends the audio tape to Carol's husband. The scene ensures that the audience does not have to rely on subtext to be able to clearly read why Carol becomes so upset when she finds out that they have been recorded. Through this scene Haynes is able to advance the plot, ensuring that it serves a clear purpose to the film. Additionally, it is because the sex scene does not overly eroticise the two characters that it does not feel gratuitous.

Blue is the Warmest Colour's sex scenes are seemingly far more gratuitous. While Kechiche's choice of using no added soundtrack to these scenes calls to mind Chantel Ackerman's 1974 film *Je, Tu, Il, Elle,* in which a lesbian sex scene is depicted with only diegetic sound, but that is where the similarities end. His camerawork shatters any realism that Kechiche hoped to gain via comparison to Ackerman's approach to screening lesbian sex. Where Ackerman places her camera theatre-like, stationary and at a distance from the action, Kechiche favours close-ups and shots that pan over the two actresses' bodies. The first sex scene between Adele and Emma fully exemplifies what Laura Mulvey deemed "The Male Gaze", illustrating Mulvey's argument that "in their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact" (1989, p. 11). Indeed, this sex scene is coded almost entirely for erotic impact, with its use of lingering close-ups and prosthetic genitalia. The scene begins with a medium shot of Adele and Emma's naked bodies pressed together; the camera tilts up and down offering the viewer an eroticised view of both their forms. The rest of the scene relies on a series of close-ups of various sexual acts. The camera cuts frequently to show Adele and Emma in different positions, making the already long scene (around 7 seven minutes in length) feel even longer. Their bodies are given to the viewer as a form of spectacle, with the scene only providing slight narrative support to the development of their relationship. Maroh, after watching the film which was based on her graphic novel, wrote on her blog that the scene was, to her, "a brutal and surgical display, exuberant and cold, of so-called lesbian sex, which turned into porn, and made me feel very ill at ease" (Maroh, 2013, para. 7). While the original novel did have a few pages of more graphic sexual content, Maroh felt that the film portrayed lesbian sex in an unrealistic fashion, stating that what was missing on set were actual lesbians (Maroh, 2013). It is difficult to read this choreography of this scene without taking into account Kechiche's heterosexuality, which shines through in the way in which he uses the camera to linger voyeuristically on the naked forms of the

characters. This scene illustrates Distiller's claim that "female sexuality has always been theorised within masculine parameters" (2005, p. 47. The sex scenes in *Blue is the Warmest Colour* are shown through a male lens and showcase a masculine idea of what lesbian sex looks like.

It is also interesting to note that in both films the central relationship showcases women who are more 'femme' than 'butch' (Ciasullo). In both cases, this can be read as a way of making the relationship – and the sex scenes – more marketable to the viewer, as the average viewer might find watching two conventionally attractive women more pleasurable. As Ciasullo states, "...the femme body is nearly always a white, upper-middle class body" (2001, p. 578), femme in this case referring to a feminine lesbian. This preference for conventionally attractive lesbians indicates that directors find portraying a queer relationship risky enough without having to add other elements that challenge conventions of female representations.

The endings of relationships and the endings of films

Within *Carol* and *Blue is the Warmest Colour,* the romantic relationship at each film's centre deals with different challenges. Within *Carol,* the struggles are those of a queer relationship in the 1950s, with Carol trying to maintain custody of her daughter. In *Blue is the Warmest Colour,* the central struggles are related to Adele being scared that Emma will leave her, resulting in Adele entering a sexual relationship with one of her male co-workers while still dating Emma. At a point in each film, the relationship between the two central characters is severed: in *Blue is the Warmest Colour,* when Emma finds out about Adele's infidelity, and in *Carol,* when Carol's husband uses the tapes he has of her and Therese to threaten Carol with losing custody. Carol then ends her relationship with Therese to temporarily reconcile her relationship with her husband, so that she can keep having a relationship with her daughter.

Blue is the Warmest Colour culminates with Adele and Emma's relationship ending. Emma has fallen in love with another woman, and Adele – after failing to rekindle the relationship – is left single at the end of the film. However, in the final scenes of the film, she converses with a man (who earlier in the film kept her company at a party when Emma abandoned her to talk to people higher up in the art world) thus hinting towards a potential romantic relationship. As she walks out of the gallery and down the street, a reverse shot reveals him also walking out of the gallery looking for her. While Adele is positioned as a bisexual, the film strongly indicates her relationship with Emma was an anomaly. Though Adele is shown to be a bisexual woman, through her relationship with Emma and various men, Emma is the only female figure that Adele sleeps with. This ambiguous approach to Adele's sexuality links back to her categorisation as 'femme'; Ciasullo argues that "within mainstream culture, the femme is not really considered a lesbian" (2001, p. 599). While the trend of only portraying femme lesbians whose sexuality is deemed to be a phase is beginning to fade out, it is still evident in popular culture. Adele's 'femme-ness', when

coupled with her relationships with men, could cause viewers to read her sexuality as 'inauthentic'. As Ciasullo argues, "… in mainstream cultural representations of lesbianism, there is always a *but,* always the possibility … that she who is lesbian … can 'unbecome' lesbian" (2001, p. 592). In addition, the fact that Emma and Adele's relationship was broken apart due to Adele's affair with a man underscores the film's lack of commitment regarding lesbian sexuality. Here I do not wish to erase the validity of bisexuality, but to point out that within *Blue is the Warmest Colour*, Adele's bisexuality offers ample opportunity for the male viewer to fantasise, and these fantasies would conform to representational strategies historically aligned with heterosexuality. This is highlighted through Emma being the only female in the narrative who Adele has long-term feelings for. Adele's relationship with Emma, and brief kisses with her classmate, are shown as adolescent experiences which she – by the end of the film – has moved on from. Adele will always love Emma, but it is implied she is the only girl who she will ever love. The film leaves her to pursue more conventional heterosexual relationships.

Meanwhile, the ending of *Carol* functions quite differently. While I cannot argue that the ending of *Blue is the Warmest Colour* does not offer a sense of hope for both Adele and Emma, it is a sense of hope which separates them. At the end of the film, they are both moving on from the relationship. *Carol,* however, ends with Therese and Carol looking at each other from across the room, and the promise that they will find a way to be with each other. At this point in the film, Carol has told her husband that she cannot stop herself from being who she is and relinquished custody of her daughter, with the condition that she has visitation rights. The ending of the film is, in the world of lesbian cinema, a relatively happy one in terms of their relationship. While there is no romantic speech and embrace where the couple promises to love each other forever, the glance between Carol and Therese is full of promise. *Carol*'s ending directly parallels *The Price of Salt.* By comparing these two endings, we can begin to understand Hollinger's argument that "to create a lesbian subject position in a film, clearly it takes more than simply replacing a heterosexual with a lesbian couple" (1998, p. 12). In a heterosexually-centred film, the ending of *Carol* would be considered disappointing by a mainstream audience. They would expect an ending that more clearly rewarded them for having followed this couple's story, but in the world of the 1950s, the ending of *Carol* is perhaps more accurate. Alternatively, the ending of *Blue is the Warmest Colour* repeats strategies of traditional heterosexual love stories, and would perhaps work better as such. If the ending was placed into a film that followed a heterosexual couple, the bittersweet feeling of hope which Kechiche aimed to portray would shine through. However, in this queer love story, we cannot escape the sexual politics that occur when a queer female protagonist spends the film in a relationship with another female character, only for the film's ending to foreshadow a (corrective) heterosexual romance.

Blue is the Warmest Colour's deviation from the original source material is even more problematic than its compromised ending. The graphic novel begins with the death of Clementine – who in the film was renamed Adele – who, after being kicked out by Emma, went to live with her friend Valentin. During this time Clementine becomes

addicted to pills, which leads to her death. Prior to her dying, though, she and Emma reconcile. Clementine leaves Emma her notebooks, which she wrote during their relationship; on the back she had written a note asking Emma to not linger on her relationship with Clemetine and to move on. Kechiche's rewrite of the ending, while subverting the tired bury-your-gays trope, which queer scholarship has sufficiently analysed, also got rid of any political discourse that the film may have raised. While there may have been backlash to yet another queer character dying on film, Kechiche missed an opportunity to create conversation around the acceptance of LGBTQ youth and the struggles they face, such as being kicked out of their homes. This is not the only change in the adaptation which Kechiche made to tell a more conventional story. In the graphic novel, Clementine is kicked out of her house by her parents because of her sexuality; in the film they think Emma is just her philosophy tutor. While Kechiche's ending is more conventionally hopeful, the changes he made in the film have erased the adaptation's potential to call attention to issues, such as queer youth being disowned by their parents and the rising addiction statistics in LGBTQ youth, raised by the graphic novel.

Conclusion

This essay investigates multiple effects of a male filmmaker creating a film that is centred on a queer female love story. I complicated this issue by analysing two films which were based on source material written by queer females. Through this analysis I found that adaptations of queer women's stories by male directors are more successful – in terms of accuracy – when they follow the source material closely. My analysis of each film's sex scenes revealed that when the scene serves the plot, sex scenes are less gratuitous. Through a reading of both films' portrayals of the romantic relationships and their endings, Karen Hollinger's argument that one cannot just place a queer female couple into a heterosexual framework and expect it to be an accurate portrayal (1998) becomes pertinent. Maintaining the original source's approach leads to greater authenticity in the portrayal of lesbian sexuality than adapting it to suit conventions historically based in heterosexual tropes. In the end, *Carol*, which stayed close to the original source material, is the film that portrays the lesbian experience more accurately, most likely due to the original author's experiences and intentions remaining inscribed in the text. This essay's results would be interesting to contextualise in light of films directed by women or other queer filmmakers.

Maintaining the original source's approach leads to greater authenticity in the portrayal of lesbian sexuality than does adapting it to suit conventions historically based in heterosexual tropes.

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Author

Kerri-Lyn Wheeler was born in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe and immigrated to New Zealand in 2003. She is currently a third-year student at Victoria University of Wellington working towards a double major in film and theatre. Kerri is going on to pursue an honours degree in 2018.

Course notes

This essay was submitted in June 2017 for FILM302: Cinema and Representation taught by Dr Missy Molloy at Victoria University of Wellington. This course examines how cinema represents issues such as gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality and class in a critical manner. In 2017 the course focused on women's screen authorship and innovative approaches to gender, race and sexuality in global and world cinema. The course introduces theories of representation and spectatorship central to feminist film studies, surveys their applications to a wide range of films, and examines how queer and postcolonial theorists have adapted them to address provocative depictions of sexuality and social inequality onscreen.

Rebecca Hawkes

Local Nazis in your Area: Public shaming and communal disgust in the doxing of white nationalists at Charlottesville

Rebecca Hawkes

LOCAL NAZIS IN YOUR AREA: PUBLIC SHAMING AND COMMUNAL DISGUST IN THE DOXING OF WHITE NATIONALISTS AT CHARLOTTESVILLE

Abstract

Eagerness to 'name and shame' neo-Nazis after alt-right violence and intimidation at the 'Unite the Right' rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, has revitalised the ethical debate over the practice of 'doxing' (dropping documents) to publicly shame previously unidentified white nationalists. Drawing on Sara Ahmed's politics of emotion to analyse the affective politics of doxing as a weaponised form of public shaming and expression of personal disgust raises urgent questions about the effects and ethics of doxing as an activist practice and form of cyber-harrassment.

Yes, You're Racist
@YesYoureRacist

Following ∨

If you recognize any of the Nazis marching in #Charlottesville, send me their names/profiles and I'll make them famous #GoodNightAltRight

9:43 AM - 12 Aug 2017

67,639 Retweets **85,702** Likes

💬 2.3K   ⇄ 68K   ♡ 86K   ✉

The social justice-oriented Twitter account *@YesYoureRacist*, dedicated to outing racist individuals since 2012, has been influential during and after the Charlottesville rallies. *@YesYoureRacist*'s posts identifying specific men pictured in the tiki-torch march have garnered tens of thousands of likes and retweets, while also being shared in journalistic media outlets and credited with the exposure of socially unacceptable white supremacists (Sydell, 2017). The practice of doxing Charlottesville protestors challenges the extent to which shame can be expected to "reintegrate subjects" into a social ideal (Ahmed, 2004, p. 106). The current media environment of dispersed personal networks, through which doxing for weaponised public shaming is enacted and disseminated, also complicates the dialectical relationship between witness and subject which Sara Ahmed describes as necessary for the elicitation of shame (Ahmed, 2004). Accounting for the political potential of negative or "ugly" feelings (Ngai, 2005, p. 333) like shame and disgust helps to interrogate social media users' practice of sharing doxed material, especially by mobilising disgust as a source of community-formation in the act of sharing content which shames others. The dual emotional justifications for sharing doxes on social media – eliciting shame in a responsible individual, and affective community-formation through shared disgust at that individual – must be urgently appraised in order to pursue the effective deployment of feelings for political organisation, and "turn emotions into active refusal, into generative action, not short-circuiting again within our own, comfortable worldview" (Zyrzycka, 2016, para. 23).

Public shaming is a form of social control, deployed when a person violates the norms of a given community and others respond by publicly criticising or ostracising them. Recent advances in mobile, digital, and networked communications technologies have drastically altered the methods of social norm enforcement deployed to constrain behaviour (Klonick, 2016), and also the communicative infrastructure which affords the affective conditions of political subjectivity (Wetherell, 2013). Doxing – the intentional, non-consensual, public online release of personal identifying information about an individual, "often with the intent to humiliate, threaten, intimidate, or punish" – has become an established means of public shaming and credibility-delegitimisation in the internet era (Douglas, 2017, p. 199). Regardless of fluctuating terminologies used to describe online shaming (doxing, trolling, flaming, internet vigilantism), the purpose of these actions is to invoke an emotional response in the target which confronts their self-worth and understanding of their place in the world (Klonick, 2016). Doxing is a tactic social justice and anti-fascist activists claim can help vulnerable communities subvert and resist the strategies of white supremacist hate groups and oppressive institutions (Colton et al, 2017). Ostensibly, this form of public shaming works because of the threat of exclusion unless the shameful behaviour is atoned for; the exposure of white nationalist beliefs leads to a turning-away from the shamed subject by other members of civil society (Ahmed 2004). "It's hard to get a job, hard to make a living, hard to have a normal social life when all your friends and family know you believe in ethnic cleansing" (Hankes cited in Blum, 2017, para. 12).

High profile doxer *@YesYoureRacist* has crowdsourced and published the names,

Twitter handles, addresses, places of employment, and universities of a number of "torch-carrying far-right extremists" who attended the 'Unite the Right' rally (Oppenheim, 2017, para. 9). The demonstration began on Friday 11 August, ostensibly protesting the removal of a statue depicting Confederate General Robert E. Lee (Collier, 2017). All the Confederate monuments in Charlottesville were erected in the 1920s as the Ku Klux Klan was experiencing a resurgence and new Jim Crow segregation laws were implemented (Abramowitz et al, 2017). The statue and other monuments to Confederate 'heroes' and slave-owners were established to materialise and reinforce white supremacy in public spaces and have become contested sites of patriotic pride and shame (Abramowitz et al, 2017). On Saturday 12 August, James Alex Fields Jr deliberately accelerated his car into a crowd of anti-racist counter-protesters, killing one and injuring 19 others (Collier, 2017). Marchers at the alt-right rally also used Nazi and white nationalist slogans and paraphernalia (Victor, 2017). Although not every alt-right attendee self-identified as a Nazi, all marched in solidarity with Nazi groups.

Logan Smith, who runs the @*YesYoureRacist* Twitter account, says others should 'name and shame' the white supremacists, especially as they were brazen enough to show their faces and effectively volunteer their identities (Sydell, 2017). "They're not wearing hoods anymore — they're out in the open, and if they're proud to stand with KKK members and neo-Nazis and anti-government militias, then I think the community should know who they are" (Smith/@*YesYoureRacist* in Sydell, 2017, para. 3). Having marched 'proudly' in public, shamed participants who have been doxed now wish to hide (Edwards, 2017), having experienced a non-consensual "exposure" (Ahmed, 2004, p. 104).

Rally attendees identified by @*YesYoureRacist* include Cole White, employed at a hot dog restaurant in Berkeley, California, University of Nevada student Peter Cvjetanovic, and Jeff Tefft. White "voluntarily resigned" on Saturday after his employer confronted him, and Cvjetanovic says he has received "violent and graphic" death threats after being identified shouting and holding a tiki-torch aloft in photographs (McAndrew, 2017, para. 3). Tefft's father posted a letter in a local newspaper disavowing his son and declared that, although he and his family are not racists, once his son's face and name were posted on social media the family also became targets for harassment (Sydell, 2017).

'Naming and shaming' through doxing invokes a moralistic position that is not validated in typical instances of bullying or harassment (Collier, 2017). While tactics of online shaming and cyberharassment can share analogous attributes such as repeated verbal aggression, threats of violence, privacy invasions, reputation-harming lies, calls for strangers to physically harm victims, and technological attacks (Klonick, 2016), online shaming differs from cyberbullying in that shaming specifically delivers retribution for an alleged violation of a normative social ideal. Klonick points out that in contemporary circumstances "online shaming often turns into cyber bullying and harassment the more attenuated the social actions become from the nexus of social norm enforcement" (2016, p. 1034) with persecution lasting for days or even years

after a dox. Harassment from the online shaming also overflowed to innocents who did not participate in the rally. The employers, schools, and families of identified rally attendees were targeted for hate mail and threats, using information revealed through doxing.

In doxing, there is no right of reply; no direct communicative channel to the mob through which targets can 're-cover' through apologetic expressions of regret or shame (Ahmed, 2004). Nor can mistaken targets completely clear their names in the case of misidentification (Victor, 2017). The intention to elicit individual shame which thus encourages ethical social participation cannot be said to be fulfilled through doxing, as most participants in the distribution of the dox will not encounter the 'shamed' individual aside from in the publicly circulated dox itself.

Doxing is also frequently perpetuated by misogynist/racist/xenophobic groups or 'publics' ideologically aligned with the alt-right, with the tactic used against the very people anti-fascist activists seek to defend through doxing alt-right figures (Douglas, 2017). Online shaming is still most consistently deployed against already-marginalised groups (Yomato, 2016), especially LGBT individuals, people of colour, and women (Sobieraj, 2017), thus the amoral practice upholds current social inequities and violence even as it might also be used to protect vulnerable people.

Many social justice commentators perceive the extrajudicial practice of doxing as an understandable response to traditional law enforcement institutions' failure to adapt to the rapidly shifting needs and realities of the digital world (Ellib, 2017). Crowdsourced online shaming seems like a cost-effective, adaptable and democratic technique for combating socially undesirable behaviours and creating an ethical society. However, the distinction between people's justice and "lynch justice" is uneasy, with doxing attempts subject to mercurial mobs' whims and subsequent persecution potentially infinite in duration (Klonick, 2016, pp. 1040-1041). In a misfired doxing attempt, Kyle Quinn, a professor at the Engineering Research Center at the University of Arkansas, was misidentified as a photographed rally attendee who possessed a passing resemblance to Quinn in facial hair and build, and was wearing a T-shirt emblazoned with 'Arkansas Engineering' (Victor, 2017). Despite the blunder being revealed within a day, countless strangers accused Quinn of racism, posted his home address on social networks, demanded he lose his job, and threatened his family (Victor, 2017). Doxing is unreliable as a means of exacting proportionally appropriate justice, because online shaming is "(1) an over-determined punishment with indeterminate social meaning; (2) not a calibrated or measured form of punishment; and (3) of little or questionable accuracy in who and what it punishes" (Klonick, 2016, pp. 1029-1030).

Shaming punishments can even cause some targets to form proud communities around their social deviancy (Posner, 2000). Arguably the alt-right/white-supremacist/neo-Nazi assemblage that rallied in Charlottesville is a prime example of this refusal of shame, instead taking pride in their "cry-bully martyrdom" (Phillips, 2017, para. 14) as they marched alongside one another, unmasked. According to

Ahmed, the emotion of shame can only be provoked by awareness of inadequacy based on external disapproval from another, and that witness must necessarily elicit desire or love in order to then elicit a shame response (Ahmed, 2004, p. 105). In this model, being shamed by someone whose opinion and identification the subject is actively uninterested in or opposed to might even have a reversed effect. For a white supremacist, the indignant disapproval of people of colour and 'politically correct' white folk may only fuel their pride in their position. For antifascist doxers, the chief challenge from 'Unite the Right' white nationalists is their *shamelessness*. That is, in their refusal to conceal their identity or recognise their beliefs as socially undesirable; their proud attachments to Confederate monuments and Nazi symbolism that are typically regarded as sites of grievous [trans]national shame; and their disregard for the condemnation of antagonistic groups. If shame doesn't *work* in doxing white nationalists, what other affective attachments might doxing contribute to?

Ahmed's description of disgust can be set to work describing a key affective response which fuels activist projects of social media users who propagate @*YesYoureRacist'*s doxing. Sharing doxed materials is a speech act which can not only elicit shamed affects in targeted individuals, but also express the limits of one's own political position and self-image. The distributive magnitude of shaming online changes the affective utility of 'sharing' a dox (republishing an original post on one's online social networks). If the dox is designed to elicit shame in a targeted individual for their failure to adhere to social ideals, the speech act of sharing the dox also expresses one's own felt disgust at historical wrongs and "bad feelings" represented by the targeted individual (Ahmed, 2004, p. 84). Disgust is a feeling of "badness" that momentarily consumes the subject but is ultimately expelled and 'stuck' to the bodies of others (Ahmed, 2004, p. 104). The expression of disgust is one of proximity then and then propulsive rejection (Ahmed, 2004), a pulling-back from close contact with an offensive object that wholly attributes the affective experience of sickening threat to something inherent in the object's qualities (Ahmed, 2004) Disgust stands its object (in this case the photographed Charlottesville Nazis) in for a border of the self; "an act of substitution that protects the subject from all that is 'not it'" (Ahmed, 2004, p. 86). In this way the proclamation of disgust by sharing doxed information works to reify an anti-racist moral/ethical position for social media users. Disgust also makes the identified individuals *abject,* and deems them inherently disgust-ing (Ahmed, 2004).

Disgust is performed through speech acts (Ahmed, 2004). Naming something as disgusting produces the "set of affects *which then adhere as a disgusting object*" (Ahmed, 2004, p. 93) and public statements of disgust call "upon others to witness our pulling away" (Elspeth Probyn cited in Ahmed, 2004, p. 95). Disgust is an especially sociable affect because "it seeks to include or draw others *into* its exclusion of its object," inviting them to take a position on the object (Ngai, 2005, p. 336). An affective community is formed by people united in their sharing of disgust; literally so on Twitter, where the disgusted population is inventoried via retweets of @*YesYoureRacist'*s posts condemning alt-right Charlottesville rally participants. In doxing, the disgust stuck to the object and declared by the community of disgusted

witnesses subsumes the actual object – who, in the case of doxed white supremacists, are still human beings, although this humanity seems rarely considered in the Charlottesville doxings unless it turns out that the dox falsely accused an innocent individual like Quinn (Victor, 2017).

Disgust is especially prominent in the case of Charlottesville doxings because the affective 'stickiness' of negative feelings to Nazi paraphernalia and slogans is so potently "*an effect of the histories of contact between bodies, objects, and signs*" (Ahmed, 2004, p. 90). Given the transnational legacies of genocide, slavery, xenophobia and racism that 'stick' so disgust-ingly to 'Unite the Right' marchers and their chosen Nazi symbolism, the accumulation of affective value and the stickiness of signification complicate arguments for critical reflection on the disgusted public's rejection of white nationalist ideology through sharing doxes from Charlottesville. Disgust also provides justification for commentators to dismiss concerns about doxed individuals with total abjectifying rejection; "fuck them and the grand dragon they rode in on" (Phillips, 2017, para. 5). But the supposed value of shaming is that it allows for the possibility that the shamed could live up to social ideals, despite prior failure (Ahmed, 2004). Disgust is predicated on a desire for totalising exclusion of the offensive object or individual, but shame allows for a reconciliatory inclusion.

The shaming of white nationalists at Charlottesville is reprocessed through networked social media into an expression of disgust as doxed materials and images are shared. This affective shift from marking a person's behaviour as shameful to declaring it disgusting is a core problem with the tactical dissemination of doxing materials. While the ethical imperative of shame makes the emotion a "potentially ennobling or morally beatific state", disgust is a less virtuous emotion than shame, being an explicitly amoral and noncathartic feeling (Ngai, 2005, p. 6). Shaming implies a possible process of reconciliation (Ahmed, 2004); a failure to adhere to a norm but a promise of recovery into a social ideal. But perhaps some shameful acts cannot be forgiven or reintegrated into social equilibrium; shame's sanitising "discourses of reconciliation" (Ahmed, 2004, p. 113) could thus be constructively tested by disgust.

The sharing of disgust is linked to rage not just via the affective conditions of online 'outrage culture' but through shared anger about the ways in which the disgusting saturates the witnesses' lives (Ahmed, 2004). Disgust at doxed white supremacists forces witnesses to confront the prior contamination of white supremacy in American culture even as they rush to identify the bodies that 'cause' the event and thus locate the source of disgust in a few abject individuals – Peter Cvjetanovic, etc. Expressing disgust about, and publicising one's absolute rejection and disavowal of, the photographed poster-boys of white nationalism may serve as a means for well-meaning white folk to express their shame over white supremacy without confronting our own participation in its more insidious institutional forms (Francois, 2017). In this way the doxed alt-right may become symbolic scapegoats bearing an unspoken stickiness of white liberal shame and self-disgust in complicity with systemic racism. But through evaluating the "intense and unambivalent negativity" of disgust, more

insidious ugly feelings and "politically efficacious emotions" might be accessed (Ngai, 2005, p. 354).

New media outlets and digital technologies have radically changed the terrain on which we enact forms of witnessing and access. The formation of affective communities and political identities within free-market platforms invites the commodification of affect and ideologies, even as they prompt new forms of engagement with conflict and oppression (Zyrzycka & Olivieri, 2017). Individual emotions have become a shareable metric for cultural/political stances, generating "emotional infrastructures" (Zyrzycka & Olivieri, 2017, p. 528) that either conform to patriarchy, racism, xenophobia and oppression, or deploy feelings as "a form of against-ness" (Ahmed, 2004, p. 174) by demonstrating opposition to, for example, racist rallies in Charlottesville. An ethically-motivated response of disgust when confronted with Nazi symbolism makes it difficult to dispassionately assess anti-fascist tactics of resistance against the burgeoning alt-right, even where these tactics reproduce right-wing strategies of violence and harassment. Online expressions of disgust and disavowal are framed as activist forces pushing back against systemic violence, bigotry and economic inequality (Zyrzycka, 2016). *@YesYoureRacist* and social media users who share the doxes employ the tactic of doxing not just to elicit the interior shame of the white supremacist but to activate the collective disgust of the witnessing community. Both emotional states are intended to enforce a desirable social order. "Negative" affects typically considered undesirable can be socially productive because, despite their felt discomfort, their capacity for oppositional or antagonistic forms of meaning-making can provide a source for critical resistance (Ngai, 2005, p. 3). However ethical antifascists' intentions may be in doxing or sharing doxed information, this is a form of aggression linked to the exercise of control and desire for power.

Image from Selk. Screenshot taken 27/08/2017.

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Author

Rebecca Hawkes holds an MA with Distinction in Creative Writing from the International Institute of Modern Letters, and this year has returned to her academic roots in the Media Studies Honours course at Victoria University of Wellington. She is currently pursuing research projects about sex robots and sugar babies.

Course Information

Dr Cherie Lacey's MDIA 403: Mass Media and Popular Culture course at Victoria University of Wellington explores the critical importance of feeling in popular media culture. Traversing a range of affective and emotional states, from happiness to outrage, shame to compassion, the course considers whether we are now – as many theorists believe – living in an age of emotional non-catharsis. This course is an advanced study of how affect and emotion are activated and deployed in popular media forms, investigating how affect relates to intimate publics, the politics of emotion, and the production of communities and norms. This paper was submitted in semester 3, 2017.

Holly Walker

My female body.

My female body.

It looks familiar. And it is, it is shown everywhere.
Advertised as consumable,   accessible
My female body is selling you beer,
My female body cleans your home,
My female body is waiting for you online,
My female body,

My female body is an object, in the subject of _____ life.
.
.
.   Is 'my female body' an independent object?
.
.
.
.

Comfortable to look at through the *dominant gaze*.

the soft skin
the long lashes
the pink lips
the wide hips
the gentle hands

You know I'm reminded of Maya Angelou,

"It's in the reach of my arms,
The span of my hips,
The stride of my step,
The curl of my lips.
I'm a woman
Phenomenally." (Angelou, 1995)   This has all been said before.

                                                                                    by me.

I am going to try and articulate why and in the process hopefully learn for myself. This writing piece is an act of embodied research in itself. This is my performance practice transferring into my language and writing style.

Undoubtedly being predominantly a nude performance artist, as a woman, empowers me.
I get a rush of courage every time I bare my flesh and I dare my audience to have the "guts to deal with cunts" (Wilke, 2007).

This is the same rush I imagine the women of the '60s and '70s had during their coming-out period and the beginnings of exploring their sexuality. Gray Watson writes, "This focus on the immediacy of the body was enacted by a young generation of artists who displayed their own, often naked, bodies in the public sphere, and extended by some who made their own bodies the theme of their artistic exploration" (Watson, 2007, p. 8 - 9).
I can feel them with me. I feel the same need to enact the feminist cry,

"The personal is political." (Watson, 2007)

"The personal is political." (Hanisch, 2009)

"The personal is political." (A whole bunch of feminists in the 1960s)

Perhaps because I am still physically trying to explore notions of my identity for myself.

Embodiment in performance involves an emotional and psychological engagement, and a physical enactment. Doing this in my body, a body that is already marked with so many politics, feels to me to be the most human, grounding and connective form of creative and conceptual communication. I'm learning who I am and what my politics are, then creatively communicating them. Amelia Jones writes, "If the point of any feminist and/or queer theory and practice is, at the very least, to create an awareness of the ways in which gender and sexuality inform discourse and determine structures of individual as well as collective social, cultural, and economic power, then we can say that both are inherently *political*" (2016, p. 15).

My politics may be fundamentally different from those of the performance artists of the '60s and '70s, but there are echoes of the past and new politics that arrive with cultural and social change that beg me to make art.

There are new politics and attitudes towards feminism. I don't want to lose momentum in the movement but there are moments of criticism around whether our world still needs feminist, nude, even *'vulgar'* artistic protests.

yes.

2016. Tess Thackara writes, "The art world must reflect this more expansive, diverse form of feminism, finding commonalities across races, genders, and classes. We must both draw connections between the work of women and other oppressed groups, and spotlight their diversity and specificities. Some have tried to argue that it's time to put identity politics to bed; it's not. The experiences of many people in this world are still shaped by the way they identify themselves, or the way others identify them. But we need a vastly expanded notion of the conditioning factors that make up our realities" (Thackara, 2016).

We still need feminism; we still need protest.

"Revolution is not a one-time event." (Lorde, 1984, p. 140)

)

Real questions I have been asked in 2017 – only because I am a female performance artist:

"Why do you need to live perform?"

"Why do you insist on doing it nude?"

"Are you just trying to be provocative?"

"Didn't we have the sexual revolution already?"

"Are you a lesbian?"

"Butch or Femme?"

"If you're a feminist, do you still suck your boyfriend's dick?"

"Are you dom or sub?"

"Can you be a sub and a feminist?"

"If you are in a monogamous relationship, can you still be a nude performance artist?"

"Does your partner know?"

"You must sleep with a lot of people because you're a feminist and don't care right?"

"Can I kiss you?"

I have become intimately accessible.

But it's 2017…

Before I learnt about my feminism, I thought I was just loud and sexually confident.
In 2017 I am still loud and sexually confident, but I also have research and embodied experiences to
~~justify this.~~
Understand this.

Xabier Arakistain writes, "I discovered feminism as a theory that explained my life to me and clarified that social dynamics I was living in had a logic: the logic of the patriarchy. So I wasn't introduced to feminism rather, I had to go and look for it." (Arakistain, 2016, p. 226)

I had a similar experience to Xavier Arakistain with my own *'feminism virginity.'* In the way that once I began to learn about it, it sounded like my own story, a place I belonged, a familiar space.

Once I found this space it became hard to want to be anywhere else. This evolved my feminist identity, because I found a place that was the <u>same</u>.

Once I lost my *'feminism virginity.'*

A lot of people become really interested in me.

Similar to my actual virginity.

I suppose they were both provocative events.

Feminism was a <u>same</u> place to me, But <u>other</u> to people around me.

I Learnt.

being woman   is being   other

being a feminist woman   is being   other

being a nude, performance artist, feminist, woman   is being

                                                                other.

Once I found my <u>same</u> I embraced becoming <u>other</u>, becoming art. Being other is ok, because there are others. The women who have paved the way to enable my freedom within my creative practice give me a sense of safety and power. Looking backwards before I move forward in my own work has been one of the most valuable methods in feeding my passion, grounding my position and stirring my compulsion to create.

Marina Abramovic

Audre Lorde

Carolee Schneemann

Annie Sprinkle

Siân Torrington

Anahera Gildea

Julia Kristeva

Yoko Ono

Luce Irigary

Valie Export

Jeanette Winterson

My Mother   To name a few.
Our allies, our whakapapa. My safety.

The safety and power I gain from these women of my history is a gift, an heirloom.

Creating art feels like a healthy exchange. There becomes a sense of obligation when you receive a gift, to reciprocate the generosity. This is my experience with my feminist whakapapa and knowledge. Their knowledge began a journey of embodied research, research of myself as an entity.

As a body.   And a performance artist.

The feeding of my mind will decide where I position my physical self in the world, how my physical self acts in the world. Raised by a solo mother, inspired and informed by my female whakapapa,

                                    It isn't surprising I've ended up a feminist performance artist.

The knowledge I have gained from these women has shaped the research of myself. In sharing this research in the form of performance art, I hope to communicate in a new language the knowledge these women have fed to me and invite it to be accessible to other bodies, The audience.

"The key to emotional strength and personal freedom is always to bring the responsibility back to ourselves. We may not be able to change events, but we can change our response to them" (2001, pp. 66).

Knowing these histories and letting them inform my work is about reproduction, re-articulation and producing something based on historical embodied experiences, for the new cultural, social and economic climate.

Sometimes it can feel like a failure when the audience believes sexual politics and feminism in performance art is outdated. They love to see a naked girl, but don't want to deal with the politics. My 21-year-old body can bring currency to the creative concept and I do feel a responsibility to make my work accessible and thoroughly considered.

I have contemplated how perhaps when viewing something like a feminist, nude performance, the audience needs to step back and stop immediately trying to receive knowledge for themselves, be changed or cultivated by the work. By looking into the performance artist, the performance body, and rather than instantly and probably subconsciously trying to make a relative connection to their own experience or circumstance, they could look into the body performing the work and witness their position.

Why do they feel the obligation to do this?

Why are they putting their body in front of me?

What sort of importance does the subject they are addressing have, to a point they will perform a 'concept' essentially in hope that someone may understand or gain some clarity of their own?

Rather than trying to consume,   observe.

                                   Make an exchange.

Give art a chance to communicate with us before we look back within ourselves.

My Art is an object, in the subject of _____ life.

We can decide how much of our time and ourselves we commit to each object within our vaster subject. By giving more time, making more space to see an object, understand and listen to an object. We can alter our beliefs and position within our subject. Humans too often try to resolve their questions or problems in their lives by becoming quiet and existentially looking within themselves for an answer.

                              Because, god forbid, disrupting someone else with reality.

Art can ask us to look at it, but to really gain anything from the work we have to look past ourselves.

Jeanette Winterson writes, "Art, all art, not just painting, is a foreign city, and we deceive ourselves when we think it familiar. No-one is surprised to find that a foreign city follows its own customs and speaks its own language. Only a boor would ignore both and blame his deflating on the place. Everyday this happens to the artist and the art. … We have to recognise that the language of art, all art, is not our mother tongue" (1996, pp. 4).

At this point of being a performance artist I have felt a shift in the way my artist body transfers into my personal body and this somehow enables a sort of accessibility to me.

Have I shared too much of a physically intimate experience with an audience that I am now supposed to be comfortable with exposing myself?

My nude self.

My emotional self.

Making my   *'private parts '*   public parts.

What constitutes private parts and public parts? It feels to me at points that these sites were proscribed by someone else, everyone else.

I would much rather be naked in a room full of art critics than have to have a conversation with one about an emotional trauma of my past.   This may not be normal.

The emotional trauma is there in my body and it informs my creativity.
My embodied experience informs how I communicate in society; it defines my perceptions of the world.

When I perform nude it feels like I am giving an audience my story, my honest and purist self.
Because literally here I am   <u>this body.</u>   Its scars, its hairs, its bruises,   see all of me.

This is my gift to you.

I see the performance as a gift to the audience, a gift of perspective or an opportunity to empathise with a new concept that may have been foreign to them.

This is my gift to you.

In giving this gift I gain a sense of fulfillment within myself because I have created art. I have materially articulated an intangible concept and given it to an audience. Encouraging an audience to understand and speak my language with me, language they may have known but forgotten. Language that feels more natural than their mother tongue.

I have developed a performance language to communicate these ideas.

To be consumed   observed   appropriated.

And through consumption, we are potentially at risk of being appropriated or perceived alternatively dependent on different individuals' contexts and embodied perspectives.

"The risk of visibility is the risk of any translation – a weaker version of the original script, the appropriation by (economically and artistically) powerful 'others'. The payoff of translation (and visibility) is more people will begin to speak your tongue" (Phelan, cited in Schneider, p. 41). The more visibility I have gained, the broader the perspective and context stretches.

I have learnt that I have limited control over the reading of my work. With the consuming culture around art and creative practice, the audience tends to take what they want or need.

This became explicitly clear when I began working in a video medium and sharing my work to a broader audience.

@TheInternet.

I MOVED FROM AN ARTIST BODY TO SEX OBJECT.
I HAVE ALWAYS ACKNOWLEDGED THE ASSOCIATION OF SEX WITH MY BODY WHEN I PERFORM.

SEX.

SEX AS FUCKING
SEX AS LOVE
SEX AS GENDER
SEX AS BIOLOGY
SEX AS CREATION
SEX AS WHAKAPAPA

…………………………………………………………………………………………BUT I'M JUST SEX TO THE INTERNET…

………………………………………………… HTTPS://VIMEO.COM/HOLLYRPWALKER …………………………………………………

SHOWING ART OUTSIDE OF THE INSTITUTIONAL ART SPACE, AND MAKING IT SO ACCESSIBLE, ALLOWED ME TO RECOGNISE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE IMMEDIACY OF LIVE FEMINIST, NUDE PERFORMANCE. WITHIN INTIMATE GROUPINGS OF PEOPLE, THE PERFORMANCE IMMEDIACY AND INTENTIONS ARE MORE DIRECTLY COMMUNICATED. MY AUDIENCE WAS NOW INFINITE AND BY PROTECTING THE VIEWERS WITH A COMPUTER SCREEN BETWEEN US, THE ACCOUNTABILITY AN INDIVIDUAL AUDIENCE MEMBER FEELS IN THE SPACE, MY SPACE, IS LOST.

PERFORMANCE MAKES ME POWERFUL REGARDLESS OF HOW MY BODY IS READ.

Because I know my truth.

I KNOW, TO YOU, THIS BODY COULD LOOK LIKE,

YOUR MOTHER'S BREAST

YOUR PROSTITUTE'S ASS

YOUR WIFE'S EYES

YOUR CHILDREN'S KNEES AND ELBOWS.

YOUR HIGH SCHOOL BOYFRIEND'S HANDS

YOUR HIGH SCHOOL GIRLFRIEND'S MOUTH

ALL FAMILIAR TO YOU, SOMETHING YOU ALREADY KNOW.

ALL YOURS.

NOT MINE.

'WHAT I LOOK LIKE,'

BECAME FILTERED THROUGH A

'WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO LOOK LIKE, FOR YOU.'

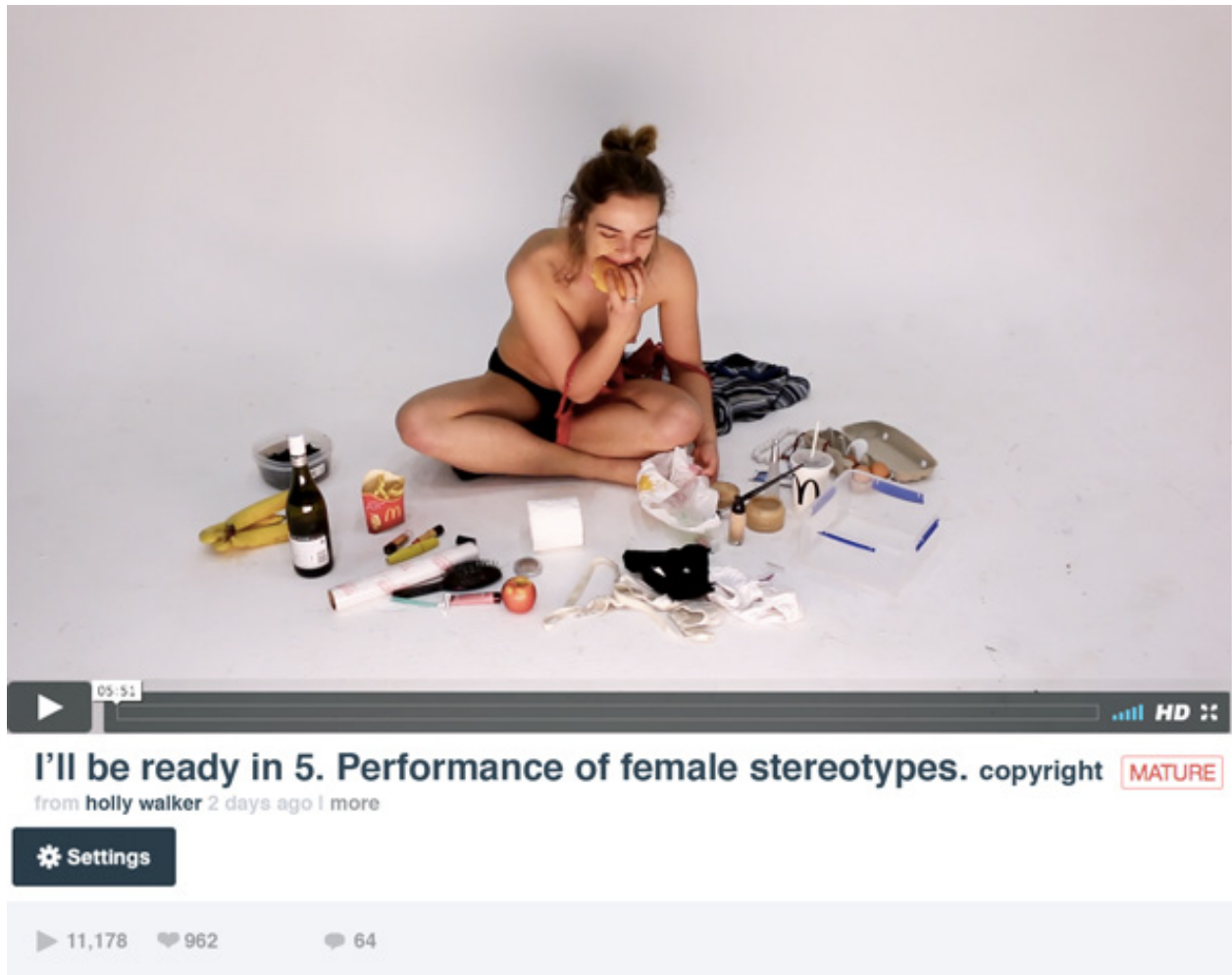WITHOUT CONTROL OR IMMEDIATE DIRECTION FOR THE GAZE, THE INTERNET TOOK SOME OF MY POWER.

We weren't seeing eye to eye.

Quite literally, there is no immediate empathy or humanity about viewing a body on a screen. It is no longer live performance; it is a video reproduction. My confusion around the ethics lies within the circumstance of how, if it's not an actual bodily interaction within the space, does that disregard any psychological empathy with a performance artist? Or is the distance between reality and internet too far, therefore the objectification is justified?

Alison Adam writes, "There is a tendency for advocates of cyber culture, from roboticists to cyberpunk science fiction writers, to ignore and even deny the primacy of the body. This reflects a turn to the virtual, which, at its extreme, sees the body as mere 'meat'. … If, as I suggest, philosophy has a tendency to equate women with the bodily realm" (Adam, 2005, p. 102).

At the beginning of this year one of my video performances was publicised on a German porn site. My initial reaction was that I believed I had done something wrong. Because it had been categorised by something bigger than me as porn,   it was porn. Over 10,000 views now that this work was porn. I'm completely convinced at this point.

<div align="right">I made porn.</div>

My big pornographic debut.

I'll be ready in 5. Performance of female stereotypes. copyright [MATURE]
from **holly walker** 2 days ago | more

⚙ Settings

▶ 11,178   💙 962   💬 64

Ironically this performance was supposed to be an exaggeration of feminine stereotypes. Although it came to be more a display of masculine stereotypes associated to porn consumption. It felt like 10,000 people saw porn, against me, who saw performance art. The power of the majority became confusing and uncomfortable. I read that, "Nudity represents innocents. Awareness of nudity represents sin"(Lucie-smith, 2007, p.12). in relation to Christianity and the female body, I'm not Christian, but for some reason when I felt myself in a 'dirtier', pornographic environment, it did feel like *sin.* My artistic, bold and unforgiving performance body reverted to the safety of the dominant culture's perspective. I began questioning whether the artist or the audience chooses the context.

Am I art? Or am I porn?   I forgot my truth.

64 Comments

Fr
It good to see there is still hair on some ladies

ransom
I want to watch you all day, you look like a dream Holly. You are a very sexy lady.

Noisy Andrew
The ironic comedy aspect of this is gold..
You deserve 10000 likes..
oh hang on..
"a woman should get 10 000 likes"...

Ulf Larsson
Hi Holly. Love to see your beautiful naked body. You are such a beautiful woman.

John Angel
This is incredible! You're talented with this!
I would love to fuck a woman like yo. You seem very emotionally intelligent . I want to show you
how much i love your work. x

Ed Porben
Perfect body!

Angel66
I want to fuck your tight little ass so badly! I love watching you work so hard. everytime see you
have a new video i get so hard 4 you

Noel4
Adorable ! merci…

Topside
Very sexy bod!

Dieter Bauer
Pretty girl , perfect and sexy body .

Jonjon
When i watch your videos i am wanting to masterbate myself, but it is hard to do so because it is
about art making, you a very sexy girl Holly.

Ja Bond881
Mmmmn gorgeous xP

loinol101
You are an angel, I love the way you articulate metaphors in your work. you also have a perfect
little body which is sexy to watch. thank you.

John An3
This is incredible! You're talented with this!

William Make
Would like to see more. Beautiful girl!   Reply

If art is in the eye of the beholder,

the beholder,

be holding,

his cock while watching my 'art' ONLINE.

It's no longer my context.

Or my problem.

Realising I couldn't communicate creative concepts with a nude body because it was saturated in everyone else's sex. My body once freeing, became restricting, became frustrating.

"Where the masculine imagination saturates the social arena with its obsessive return to the Woman's body, or the Woman as body, women only have an artificial power frustrated by the multiple obstacles that exist between them and the world" (Irigary, 1984, p. 28 - 29).

I felt like screaming   "WAIT, WAIT, *LISTEN TO ME!*"

_____

There is a silver lining though, because I refuse for there not to be.

In considering universal creation myths in relation to my moral compass and my *sin,* I was reminded of this silly quote: "From Eve to Pandora, the female sex has only generated misfortune" _(Zabunyan, 2005, p. 89). If so, *sin* and *misfortune* have been some of the most important pivotal points for creation. I only wish to be as radical as those two matriarchs.

My *sin* and *misfortune* with the internet is my context to own now, and I can take from it what I need and leave behind the rest. In the time of being reminded of the sexualisation and objectification that happens when the artist isn't present on the internet, I have been gifted with the knowledge of knowing my art isn't redundant. This has been an insecurity of mine in the process of becoming so involved in feminist art-making. There has been a lingering feeling that I may be over-reacting or being over-emotional. But then I stop and think, in whose opinion?

I want to be over-reacting because just acting isn't comfortable for me.

I want to be over-emotional because just emotional without questioning my feelings doesn't satisfy me.

I'm not talking to the point of extremism, just enough to be radical.

Becoming radical.

I remember the first time I went to Siân Torrington's feminist group, and we had to go around the circle and say why we came to the group. My response was something like …

"Because I want to learn more about my identity and have a safe space to be myself, a self that feels different to who I am 'supposed to be'."

A couple more people said why they were there …

"because I want to listen and learn"

"because I don't know enough about feminism and I'm a woman"

"because I think I have too much sex for a girl, and it's been blamed on daddy issues but I don't believe that bullshit, so I figured I was a feminist"

– that one made me laugh.

It came to Siân's turn and she said,

"I came to this group because I want a revolution." (Torrington, 2016)

The feeling I had when I heard the boldness and agency in those words is a feeling I became addicted to. It was the gift that my feminist whakapapa had been giving me, but I was there in the room with her.

Realising there are others, embodying our exchange. Powerful and together,

I thought, me too.

Thank you.

Type references

Chaparral pro.
Designed by Carol Twombly. Finding female typefaces for essays has been an impossible task but I got there: http://typedia.com/explore/typeface/chaparral/revision/5/

Orator std.
John Scheppler. It can be used for tabular material or technical documentation. Commonly used for web coding.

Arial.
Font sourced from Pornhub.
Arial. Robin Nicholas
and Patricia Saunders.
https://www.google.co.nz/
search?q=pornhub+logo&source
=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved
=0ahUKEwiJlryI4MDUAhXHFZ
QKHWz0AOoQ_
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Key words

Performativity, body politics, identity, feminism, autobiographic, 'personal is political', 'public/private', sex, gender, protest, New Zealand, art

Abstract

Before I learnt about my feminism, I thought I was just loud and sexually confident.

In 2017 I am still loud and sexually confident, but I also have research and embodied experiences to justify this.

Understand this.

With a growing understanding of my feminist whakapapa from Audre Lorde to My Mother, and the richness of knowledge they have left for us, I want to share, I want to be loud, I want to talk about sex, I want to talk about personal politics and how it honestly feels, not how it is supposed to feel. This may seem over-emotional, and it is.

I over-react because just acting isn't enough for me.

I'm over-emotional because emotional without questioning my feelings doesn't satisfy me.

I write to understand my space and more than that, who I am within that space. Stripping back false constructions and ideals that have become ritual conformity to reveal, relearn, reverse and find an authentic sense of my identity.

Author

I am Holly Walker, a 21-year-old woman from Wellington, Aotearoa. I am a newly graduated fine arts student whose practice is mainly based in performance. My works, writing and art practice, explore the abundant realm of feminine sexuality, my own body politics and the echoes of women before through embodied research and autobiographical reflection.

In my work I allow the rational to submit to the emotional. Through this process, I attempt to create a raw, unfiltered expression of questions that leave space for curiosity and engage with my research. By writing in a performative style, I aim to display a journey, a thinking process, to further a communal perspective on the subjects of feminism, identity, gender politics, the private vs the public, and sex.

Course information

The Honours Research Seminar, at the College of Creative Arts, Massey University, Wellington, is a programme of advanced study, led by Martin Patrick, that addresses the application, dissemination and discussion of research practices in contemporary art. Emphasis is placed on selective investigation and presentation of critical issues in the production of art and culture.

The final assignment of this fourth-year seminar functions as an opportunity to effectively articulate aspects of individual studio research practice within a larger critical context. The assignment consists of researching and writing an informed critical essay that both examines and engages with relevant materials related to individual practice. This paper was submitted in June 2017.

Luka Venter

Evocations of the Other: Treatments of the exotic and the feminine in nineteenth-century music – The Redemption of *Sheherazade*

LUKA VENTER

EVOCATIONS OF THE OTHER: TREATMENTS OF THE EXOTIC AND THE FEMININE IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY MUSIC – THE REDEMPTION OF *SHEHERAZADE*

Abstract

The concert hall, as much as the operatic stage, is a theatre – a place for viewing, and the observation of narratives. Music can be and often is read as the latter, whether overtly programmatic or not, and though abstracted through the intermediation of instruments, the orchestral and operatic literatures of Western art music enact and present narratives and struggles of power. Classical music has been dominated since its inception by men, working in a historically white European context, with the result of an almost total exclusion of the first-person perspectives of women and non-white ethnic and cultural identities. This fact, coupled with an intense historical fixation with the Orient within Western classical music, transforms the concert hall and operatic stages into extra-artistic theatres where the material presented can be read as representative of Western societal trends, attitudes and prejudices.

This research draws connections between colonialist and patriarchal thought and musical representations of the ethnic and/or female 'Other' in the Western canon, and traces the use of certain musical *topoi* in conjunction with female and ethnic tropes. I examine these with reference to works ranging from Rameau, Saint-Saëns, and Strauss, among others, with a particular emphasis on the operatic and orchestral works of Rimsky-Korsakov, inquiring into the possibility of subverting Orientalist and misogynist elements within such musical works from a socially critical perspective.

I will argue that classical music, rather than existing as a purely sonic artefact, becomes representational, on the stages of the concert hall or operatic theatre, of power struggles and of imbalances of power between men and women, and between white and non-white ethnic and cultural identities. I will do so in an attempt at communicating a vital understanding of classical music as a cultural object that ties into lived socio-political realities.

The treatment of women and the treatment of non-white ethnicities have long been equatable. Though the struggles of one never has and never will outweigh the struggles of the other, the two have for centuries suffered oppression in many similar ways within Western society, and the traces of this litter the world of European art. This applies specifically to those arts in which life can be credibly breathed into the subject matter: theatre, music, and therefore, notably, opera. Exoticist tendencies within these, whether subconsciously or not, often had sinister roots in colonial aspirations, much in the same way that depictions of women in music, and particularly in opera, had clear links to the societal subjugation of women. The treatment of both on the operatic stage came to reduce each to a version of themselves in which the edges were smoothed, any unwieldy truths to their identities filed down to fit the standard mould. Specifically in treatments of the East, the dramaturgical and musical treatment of the exotic and the feminine fell increasingly under the power of the imagination of the Western male throughout the eighteenth, and especially the nineteenth centuries (Al-Taee, 2010). The male monopoly on the creation of high art throughout this period, and indeed to this day to an extent, is undeniable, and therefore the intrinsic treatment of the Other within the circulation of the arts in Western society begs scrutiny – particularly given its intrinsic and dangerous links between ethnicity, sexuality and violence, and any combination thereof. Given the significance of geography in its creation and its notable intersection of all of the above, an especially enlightening object for the study of these can be found in Rimsky-Korsakov's *Sheherazade*.

The crux of this essay is not to delve into the labyrinth of male European colonial thought and all of its manifold expressions in art. To do so would require a great many more words than is permissible here. However, it can be argued with a certain assuredness that musical treatments of the ethnic in nineteenth-century music evolved in tandem with colonial aspirations and the branching out of Western imperialism towards the East, and to a smaller extent also to the Americas (Mason, 1991). Rameau's *Les Indes Galantes*, for instance, is a prime example of the latter. This work takes one on a globetrotting theatrical adventure that passes sequentially though Turkey, Peru, Persia and Illinois. In the final tableau, tellingly titled *Les Sauvages,* Rameau scores a duet for soprano and baritone with chorus in which the community of Native Americans celebrates the return of peace in a 'traditional' pipe ceremony. Based on an earlier harpsichord piece also titled *Les Sauvages*, Rameau makes extensive use of a "LOUD, soft, soft, soft" pattern which while a feature of many Native American musics, is largely a stereotypical representation of the manifold traditions as a collective (Locke, 2009, p. 50).

Interestingly, the questions of cultural interaction and ethnic representation are singularly relevant to this piece, which was coincidentally taken by the French missionary Amiot to Peking later in the century and presented to the Chinese, who received the music with apparent disdain (Amiot, 1788/2005) leading to Amiot subsequently devising a number of highly questionable theories about racial comparison and superiority. The French, in their colonial excursions, were no strangers to indigenous peoples, and in fact often paid much more heed to their

cultures than did the Spaniards or the English (Savage, 1983). The French had even experienced performances of music and dance by Tupi Indians in Paris, which may very well have been witnessed by a number of eminent French musicians (Pisani, 2005). Whatever the quality of French interactions with indigenous peoples, the aforementioned example, though singular and only fractionally representative, nevertheless forms part of a widespread trend in cultural (and therefore geographical) representation that runs from the early history of European music right through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and beyond. These musical trends constitute a certain cultural imperialism in which the subtleties of the ethnic culture in question are time and time again effaced and musically represented by a generic mould more in tune with contemporary European perceptions of the Exotic – be it American, Middle-Eastern, or from elsewhere.

In the nineteenth century specifically, in tandem with a growing cultural preoccupation with the East, composers began musically exploring the possibilities of creating more immediate representations, or at least, largely superficial evocations of its peoples and landscapes. As in the eighteenth century, this was often done by taking one musical element – one generic cultural signifier – and spreading it across the board, so to speak. Such musical elements were then taken, largely without question, to represent entire geographical swathes, as is often done to this day with the major pentatonic scale often being used to suggest or occasionally even wholly represent the Far East. In a similar way, the use of octatonic scales, or chromatic inflections that would evoke these, were increasingly used to suggest the Eastern Other. Félicien David, for instance, made extensive use of octatonic scales in the remarkable Symphonic Ode *Le Désert* in 1844, which, while making use of several actual Middle-Eastern elements, including a stylised call to prayer, is nonetheless still a work marked by a distinct geographical indistinctness. Nevertheless, the use of octatonic scales does in fact bear some verisimilitude to existing musical traditions in the Middle East, including those of Turkey, the Levant, the Arabian Peninsula, and by extension North Africa as well.[1] The problem arises, however, when one feature such as this is used to wholly represent a people, a culture, or even an entire geographical region simply by merit of being *an* element from within the vast range of 'Oriental' musical traditions.

The use of octatonic scales, and in particular, the use of the interval of an augmented second that appears within them, has a long and astonishingly repetitive history within Western art music that continues to this day – witnessed even by something as simple as a modern-day interpretation of the harmonic minor scale as being "Arabian" (Taylor, 2007, p. 55). The harmonic ambiguity of the octatonic scale is something that has piqued the Eurocentric imagination hugely over the past three centuries. With its simultaneous major/minor duality allowing for a pronounced tonic major chord whilst still retaining elements of that disconcerting flattened supertonic of such modes as the Locrian, the octatonic scale has a huge dramatic potential that has lost none of its potency even in the twenty-first century. This harmonic, and therefore dramatic, duality has long been exploited to evoke a sense of mystery and awe, perhaps even fear – all of which were prime features in the Western perception

[1]

Octatonic scales can for instance be linked to the *maqam saba* – a mode in the maqam tradition of Arabic music, though the Arabic modes often make use of microtonal inflections that are discarded when transplanted to Western art music.

of the East. As such, the scale and its characteristic augmented second intervals easily became the chief signifier of that mysterious allure of the exotic. Rimsky-Korsakov's 'Eastern Romance' (Op.2, no.2), written over 1865-66, exudes just that. The accompaniment is characterised throughout by heavy low fifths in the bass, over which the piano spins a heady octatonic melody full of melismatic flourishes. Sumptuous chromatic turns give the music an added sensuality and colour, into which the soprano sings a text full of fantastical imagery of a rose serenaded by a nightingale in the night. The song and its rather telling title reveal just how much musicians were still held in sway by musical evocations of what they perceived the East to sound like.

Another art song by Rimsky-Korsakov, 'On the Hills of Georgia' (Op.3, no. 4), also written in 1866, shares a number of the exoticist features of his 'Eastern romance'. The unsettled harmony and winding chromaticism are immediately similar to the latter, however, half-way through the song, Rimsky-Korsakov introduces another musical element to signify an impression of ethnicity: the use of drones, or pedal points – the nearest pianistic equivalent. It is interesting to note that this song, immediately by having its geographical setting named, already anchors the material for better or for worse in a verifiable source. Strikingly, however, the use of drones are in fact an important feature of Georgian folk music, and the vocal line here takes on a much more sustained character, with a more contained, single flourish not dissimilar to those found in traditional Georgian vocal music. The song is nevertheless still firmly rooted in the soil of exoticist thought, but it is interesting to note the presence of some ethnic authenticity coming through. Even if this is only to a slight degree, it is nonetheless important to note that the most Georgian-sounding passages occur on lines in the text devoid of any geographical or ethno-cultural markers.[2] In this early work of Rimsky-Korsakov's, therefore, there can already be seen some traces of a certain cultural sensitivity often eclipsed by an often-erroneous label of exoticism with regards to some of his more significant works.

Vladimir Stasov, a critic and a huge figure in Russian cultural life, in a discussion on the prevalence of 'Oriental' material in the art music of the Russians, wrote that, in contrast to the unsuccessful eighteenth-century faux-Orientalism of Mozart and the like, in their musical evocations of Turkishness, the New Russian School was gifted with a much more immediate impression of the East rooted to a much larger extent in reality and much less in purely imaginative thinking (Stasov, 1882, as cited in Taruskin & Weiss, 1984). He points out that a number of Russian musicians had actually visited so-called exotic locales and that, while many others had not done so themselves, many artistic elements of what is Eastern had entered the mainstream of Russian cultural life. This use of Oriental material is often cited as a key element in Russian nationalist music, but perhaps it could be posited that centuries of experiencing a sense of Otherness in interactions, whether artistic or otherwise, with Europe, had left the Russians with a unique sensitivity, comparatively speaking, to treatments of the East.

2

The line in question reads: "My despondency is neither tormented, not alarmed by anything, and the heart again burns and loves – because it is unable not to love".

Perhaps it was because of this sensitivity to the closeness of what by most of Europe was viewed as the vague, distant and indistinct East, that Rimsky-Korsakov's musical treatment of the 'Other' in the famous symphonic poem *Sheherazade* was done with such striking sensitivity. The work is often presented as one of the definitively exotic works of the nineteenth century and certainly does take part in a certain sensationalisation of the East. The fourth movement, for instance, puts on display a barbarian festive fervour that is reminiscent of the notorious (though thrilling) orchestral boisterousness of the bacchanal from *Samson et Dalila* and looks forward to the comparable display of pagan hedonism of Strauss' fin-de-siècle 'Dance of the seven veils'. Yet, upon closer inspection, *Sheherazade* holds a startling wealth of material likely inspired by or written in the vein of actual musical traditions. As such, beneath the veneer of ethnic sensationalisation, Rimsky-Korsakov's music displays a degree of cultural sensitivity that hopefully challenges established notions of the work's, for lack of a better word, agenda.

The second movement that Rimsky-Korsakov conjures up from the textual source material of *1001 Arabian Nights,* titled 'The Tale of the Kalendar Prince', can on the surface seem like just another cog in the exoticist machine that supposedly is *Sheherazade* – beautiful, yes, evocative, yes, but culturally significant beyond that? Probably not. However, upon closer inspection, this movement is perhaps the most telling in the whole work with reference to Rimsky-Korsakov's treatment of the ethnic Other. The movement opens with a restatement of the famous solo violin theme first introduced towards the beginning of the first movement. As this solo ascends to a vigorous climax, it cadences onto a passage remarkably similar to traditional Georgian music. Much of the music from Georgia makes extensive use of short melodic cells with repetitive rhythmic patterns, and there is overall an overwhelmingly common use of drones – particularly in the vocal traditions. Drones *are* a common feature of many non-European, and also European folk traditions, and so cannot be taken as representative of accurate representation of Georgian music here. However, the way in which Rimsky-Korsakov plants a melodically and rhythmically repetitive solo for bassoon – itself timbrally very similar to the duduk so prevalent in the Caucasus – over drones in fifths that shift diatonically, as is highly characteristic of much Georgian folk music,[3] is all highly indicative of some degree of familiarity with and understanding of the vernacular music of that region. Indeed Balakirev himself transcribed a number of folk songs and dances while travelling through Georgia in the 1860s – bringing them back to the wonder and rapt admiration of those in his circle, including Rimsky-Korsakov, who personally stated: "These new sounds were a sort of revelation for us then, we were all literally reborn" (Volkov, 2010, p. 102).

Rimsky-Korsakov's enthusiasm for the music of the Caucasus therefore is clear. More than being just a clear imitation of its musical traditions however, the Georgianness of the bassoon solo importantly matches the subject matter as well. The movement vaguely deals with the Turkic subject matter of a Prince disguising himself as a travelling Muslim ascetic, and therefore the music explicitly supports the narrative frame provided – however vague the outline given by the composer. Georgia is now

and was then, like Russia, a Christian nation, but did have a prominent Muslim population. In fact, the Muslim populations of the Caucasus were something of a thorn in the side of the Russians. The northern Caucasus was as highly a contested territory then as it is now. Tolstoy himself fought there and based some of his writings on his experiences. Pushkin also often dealt with Georgia and the broader Caucasus in his writings. In *A Prisoner of the Caucasus* (1822), specifically, he treats the Circassians – a people of the Northern Caucasus and adherents to Sunni Islam – relatively favourably throughout the poem, but then subverts this totally in the epilogue when he rejoices in the suppression of the Caucasus that bent its "snow head in self-abasement" in response to a Russian military commander who was on the march to violently subdue the Caucasian barbarians, and the poem closes like a smug fable about the folly of resisting the Russian advance (Pushkin, 1822/2001, p. 131-48). Bearing in mind the fact that the devastating Russo-Circassian war and the subsequent ethnic cleansing of the region reached its height in the 1860s and was notably revisited artistically by Tolstoy in 1872, and bearing in mind Rimsky-Korsakov's own affinity for the peoples and cultures of the Caucasus, it is perhaps not improbable to see a correlation between his treatment of the Caucasus in the second movement of *Sheherazade* in the bassoon solo, and the sharp aggression of the military fanfares that disrupt the tableau's initial peacefulness. The structure of the movement certainly seems to tap into the Romantic symphonic model of the heroic struggle – perhaps Rimsky-Korsakov's emphatic and vocal appreciation of the culture could have translated to an appreciation of its people and found its way into his treatment of the Caucasian and Islamic other in this movement. Interestingly, it can be argued that the ethnic Other is not the only one treated in this work.

The aforementioned violin solo that opens the movement and re-appears several times throughout the work as a whole could perhaps too be more significant than is initially apparent. The work as a whole opens with a stark, fortissimo theme played in unison by the low woodwinds and the strings in their low registers, but is dominated by the trombones – an instrument having historical associations with death. This theme is powerful, yes, imposing even, but within two bars that grandiosity already seems curiously undermined by the pompous regality of a trill. The passage following for a dulcet, pianissimo woodwind choir certainly dispels any air of command the opening theme initially evoked, and certainly the entrance of the solo violin immediately after puts the intimidation of the opening theme to the back of one's mind, and instead places its own lyrical insistence at the forefront. Many have interpreted the stern opening theme as being representative of the Sultan in the tale of Sheherazade: a misogynistic tyrant who, after witnessing his wife committing adultery with a slave – notably a black one – vows to sleep with a young virgin each night, and murder her the following morning to avoid the pain of future betrayal. The violin solo must surely then represent the character of Sheherazade herself. Rimsky-Korsakov once disavowed any such explicitly leitmotivic interpretations of his themes, stating rather indistinctly:

> In vain do people seek in my suite leading motives linked unbrokenly
> with ever the same poetic ideas and conceptions. On the contrary, in the

> majority of cases, all these seeming *Leitmotive* are nothing but purely musical material or the given motives for symphonic development. (Rimsky-Korsakov, 1909/1923, p. 58)

Rimsky-Korsakov here seems quite adamant, however the inexact language used brings a total application of his words into question. His treatment of the so-called Sultan theme, and of the violin solo that appears significantly in each of the four movements of this work titled after the character it most likely represents, certainly seems to imply a dramatic function in addition to the musical touched on above. Indeed the score itself somewhat explicitly points to a dramatic narrative aspect in the violin solo. At almost every one of its appearances throughout the entire work, the solo appears accompanied by the marking "Recit.", which, given Rimsky-Korsakov's own extensive vocal work, is surely telling. The notion that the marking was included purely as a tempo and/or mood indication is dispensable as well, as there exist a number of non-dramatic alternatives that could have been used. Bearing this in mind, the violin solo takes on a whole new significance. Musically the Sultan motif remains virtually unchanged, but, unable to find resolution, pushes the harmony constantly – this theme is repeatedly moved around the orchestra – which does support Rimsky-Korsakov's words on how the themes are not characters, but treated for the most part just as that – musical themes. However, Sheherazade's voice again and again rears its head above the oceanic surges of the thematic material and its undulating accompaniment – cutting through the stark lines accompanying what one assumes is a musical representation of one of the tales of Sinbad's marine voyages as per the title. Her ornate and melismatic motif is disseminated throughout the orchestral textures – here her voice rings out in an echo of her violin motif in the clarinets, there in the flutes – as if adapting her own personal voice to the nuances of the tale being told to best appease the Sultan.

Across the work as a whole, Rimsky-Korsakov endows her voice with a trajectorial development that seems to support a development of her character – and indeed this is done with a remarkable sensitivity. Each subsequent statement of her theme is given an added intensity. At the opening of the second movement, her theme is augmented by a double-stopped homophonic writing for the solo instrument that makes vivid use of the open G-string, the violinistic equivalent of the female chest voice – a vocal phenomenon long considered hugely exciting and long explicitly linked with sexuality. (Wood, 2006). Towards the middle of the third movement her voice reappears, restating her theme before launching into a number of iridescent virtuosic figurations over the orchestra. The addition of this increased virtuosic and harmonic complexity to the bare frame of her first utterances implies a growing conviction and urgency to her storytelling. After all, her tales are very literally a matter of life and death. When the solo violin breaks away from this pattern, it takes on a theme briefly stated towards the beginning of the movement and vigorously pours it out over the orchestra, who surge forward in an impassioned display echoing her voice. It is here that the voice of the feminine Other in *Sheherazade* first truly comes into its own, when it ceases to exist in a melodic vacuum and melds with the full orchestra – no longer the Other, but now a part of the collective whole.

The opening of the suite's final movement is a condensed and modified restatement of the first bars of the work as a whole, and as such, revisits the power struggle between the male oppressor and the would-be female oppressee. The Sultan's theme is here rendered more compact, but through the addition of triple-quaver subdivisions of the originally grandiose theme, and its fortissimo delivery on the biting lower strings of the string section, the theme is given an added sharpness – a sort of belligerent petulance when compared to the subsequent restatement of *Sheherazade*'s theme. The latter is again imbued with a renewed strength of purpose: fortified now by polyphonic double-stopped writing, emphatic triple-stopped chords, and emotionally anchored by a low B-drone in the basses – further supporting the idea of the feminine assuming an increased strength in response to the cruelty of the Sultan.

During this movement, several themes heard throughout the work return with an added edge and immediacy, implying an intensification of *Sheherazade*'s story-telling and thus an intensification of her struggle to subdue the male oppressor. At the height of the movement, the Sultan's motif returns, resplendent, full-glory in the brass while the remainder of the orchestra scatters before it. As the music builds, however, the theme is suddenly joined by the military fanfare first heard in the second movement. The two jointly rear up towards a violent paroxysm, but are sharply cut off by a crash of the tam-tam and the rest of the orchestra, and a jarring modulation to B-minor – perhaps related to the unusual presence of the B-drone underscoring *Sheherazade*'s theme earlier in the movement. Just as the feminine voice took its strength from the orchestra in the third movement, the masculine is here robbed of it by similar means and is subsequently mollified – its unwieldy whole-tone-based harmony smoothed out and pulled towards A-minor. Significantly, the musical vicar of the female voice in *Sheherazade*, the violin solo, is rooted in A-Dorian, to which the music returns when the title character's theme again appears a few bars later. As the restatement of this theme spirals upwards, the solo violin lands on a top-E and is tellingly joined by just a single other violin soloist while the male voice of the Sultan sounds out in the low strings, subdued and pacified by the voice of Sheherazade and what can only be interpreted as her sister, who soar above it in a display of easy, unforced, but ultimately hard-won musical dominance.

In his ground-breaking study of Orientalism (1978), Edward Said wrote that "to talk about Orientalism is to talk about power" (cited in Mason, 1991, p. 167). In a similar vein, to talk about the feminine in the history of Western society broadly, but more specifically within the frame of nineteenth-century music, is to talk about the suppression of that femininity. Rimsky-Korsakov's treatment of both the ethnic and the feminine in *Sheherazade* displays a sensitivity that unfortunately did not find its way into most depictions of women, and specifically ethnic women, in the musical literature of the nineteenth century. Just as ethnic musical traditions were often simplified and limited to a few choice elements signifying a much wider range of ethnicities, so too were the human elements of the ethnic subject matter depicted in the nineteenth century often simplified into two simple categories – the violent and the sensual: men were often violent, as depicted in the trope of the Ethnic Tyrant, while ethnic women were often crudely sexualised, and this often resulting in

recourse to the female trope of the Ethnic Temptress. Roger Parker, in his writings on the subjugative treatment of women in nineteenth-century opera, wrote that within the operatic tradition there existed two types of women: "the docile ones who usually suffer and die; and the scary ones who almost always suffer and die" (Parker, 1997, p. 158-9) Sexual women were at particular risk, and ethnic women especially so; a combination of these two features therefore would prove unequivocally lethal.

Dalila (Delilah) and Salome are two particularly notable figures whose sexuality is indivisibly tied to their ethnicity, and both stand in stark contrast to the Judeo-Christian values of their male opposition. In Richard Strauss' *Salome*, the titular character is a woman whose eroticism is made so pronounced as to verge on the psychotic – her desire for Jochanaan and her rejection by him drive her to wild extremes, scandalously baring her body to Herod – another ethnic tyrant – and famously begging for and ultimately receiving the severed head of Jochanaan. Both dramaturgically and musically, the relative delicacy of Salome's character as a young girl is highlighted, but as she descends into furor her voice is horrifically warped into a series howls and shrieks as she is consumed by her desire for Jochanaan – the stoic, blameless male representative of the Western ideal. Dalila's (the female antagonist of Saint-Saëns' *Samson et Dalila*) feminine sexuality is likewise distorted and vilified for the precise reason that it is used against a man, and specifically a man of God and an enemy of her 'barbaric' people, the Philistines. It is worth noting that, musically, her most important utterances – i.e., her arias – are not exoticised, and that she instead is gifted some of the most cathartic and lyrical music in the literature available to the mezzo soprano. That being said, it is salient that the axis on which her role spins, the ravishing aria 'Mon coeur s'ouvre à ta voix', though surely one of the most exquisite moments in all opera, is subtly but quite tellingly subverted by the entry halfway-through of Samson, the tenor. The figure of Samson hovers at the musical periphery throughout the aria, and instead of the Ethnic Temptress Dalila, it is to Samson that Saint-Saëns chooses to gift the closing bars of the number, awarding him a lush and powerful top B-flat as he exclaims his ardour – which by virtue of being male, by default trumps that of his ethnic and female lover.

The figure of Cleopatra is often sensationalised and occasionally also vilified for her ethnic sexuality – again used against a man of the West, though in this case Western in ethnicity, whereas characters such as Samson or Jochanaan are Western more through their religious adherence to a Judeo-Christian God. In Rimsky-Korsakov's own *Mlada* the figure of Cleopatra – notably a sexual character, and one who also notably transgressed boundaries of gender during the power struggles between her and her brother – appears to the work's central protagonist, Yaromir. She is accompanied by throngs of young and importantly exotic women who go about their task attempting to seduce the magically-frozen Yaromir. Immediately this recalls the countless harems of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century opera, from *Die Entführung aus dem Serail*, to Verdi's *Il Corsaro*,[4] and interestingly the scene bears strong similarities to the courtesan-like female entourage of the goddess Naina in Glinka's seminal *Ruslan and Lyudmila* (Naroditskaya, 2012). The entrance of the here almost totemic figure of Cleopatra is heralded by a quiet but insistent orchestral

undulation of a metrically blurred triplet figure accompanied by a sustained drones. The shimmering orchestral fabric Rimsky-Korsakov conjures repeatedly pulls from D-flat major to D-flat minor in the same way that the dancer representing Cleopatra's gestures suddenly shifts from strong "impulsive movement", to gestures that are "lazy and lingering". (Ibid. p. 223)

As with Salome, and to a lesser extent Dalila, the use of dance as a tool of seduction in Cleopatra's apparition scene is vitally important, and ties into a pair of historical terpsichorean polarities that mimics the all-too-often simplification of female sexuality into a mere two camps: a chaste and pious virginity, and an earthly, carnal licentiousness. In the nineteenth century and earlier, the use of dance was similarly divided. At one end of the rather simplified continuum was the use of classical ballet to express an emphasis on order, balance and control. At the other end of the spectrum was the use of dance to express a sense of the transgressive, the barbaric and the orgiastic. Carmen and her arias of seduction and rebellion, all deliberately modelled on dances, is one testament to this, and Salome is another (Hutcheon & Hutcheon, 2000). Strauss taps into the suspect, transgressive potential for dance in not just one but two of the towering works in his oeuvre, *Salome*, but notably also *Elektra*. Both of these works prominently feature a feminine descent into sexualised madness through the medium of dance (Kramer, 2004). The former dances in the name of seduction and bloodshed, and the latter dances a dance of bloodshed into which is tied that curious late-nineteenth-century preoccupation with Eros and Thanatos – sexual ardour and the longing for death, and the combination thereof (Hutcheon & Hutcheon, 1999). The link between femininity and death as is plentifully witnessed in both of these works is something also deeply embedded in the fabric of Rimsky-Korsakov's aforementioned ballet-opera, *Mlada*.

In *Mlada,* the title character is a silent role represented by a dancer, and is the ghost of a girl murdered at the start of the work. Murdered incidentally by another woman – one driven wild with desire for a Western prince, Yaromir. In order to seduce the object of her desire, the murderess Voyslava ominously enlists the aid of Morena, the goddess of the Underworld, appearing in the guise of an old woman. The evil goddess Morena's vocal lines are very rarely bound to a single tonal centre, being marked by a plentiful use chromaticism and large leaps downwards into her chest register – the use of which has strong links to female sexuality. Its use here by the goddess of the Underworld while plotting the murder of an innocent creates a grotesque effect. With the voice being the most primal and immediately physical instrument, its use is intrinsically linked to the body of its owner; and as Morena plays the divine role of the goddess of the Underworld, a realm of deep and deathly grottoes, the use of her cavernous and powerful operatic female chest voice makes explicit the nineteenth-century male interpretation of the sexual female as something dark and suspicious. Specifically, it points to a deep-seated suspicion in Western art of the dark, cavernous unholiness of female anatomy (Gilbert, 2006). The links between female sexuality and unholiness is made more explicit in the aforementioned appearance of Cleopatra in Act III. It is interesting to note that, despite being a spectre of the ancient Egyptian queen, the figure of Cleopatra is not represented by some ethereal, ghostlike figure,

but by a vigorous, full-blooded female dancer – in fact the same dancer who takes on the title role of Mlada. The unpredictability and again overtly sexual nature of her seductive dance is reflected in the unexpected modulations of the music and in its 'exotic' chromatic solo string lines. The wild, piercing clarinet solo that appears in this scene also encapsulates a sense of musical barbarism in that the harmony is constantly subverted by a sharp, strident chromaticism that is magnified tenfold by the equally strident and extremely timbrally bright and forceful top register of the clarinet.

This appearance of Cleopatra on the witches' mountain Sabbath is dramatically also highly evocative of Venus' appearance and seduction of the title character in Wagner's 1845 *Tannhäuser* – a work filled to the brim with stereotypical male treatments of female sexuality. The goddess Venus, for instance, bears testament again to that familiar nineteenth-century negativity regarding active female sexuality; her domain – as a veritable den of dissolution is even explicitly titled the Venusberg, the *mons veneris.* On the other hand, her terrestrial counterpart is Elisabeth, who represents the opposing mode of female sexuality – a pious chastity, and unwavering dedication to her male counterpart. This is in turn not unlike the black-and-white comparison of Carmen and Mercedes, and the treatment of femininity in Rimsky-Korsakov's *Mlada* is for the most part similarly dictated by an adherence to this crude polarity.

There is plentiful evidence of a deeply entrenched misogyny in Western culture that can be seen in the treatment of women in its art – specifically such performative art forms as dance and opera, where the female subject is a living breathing representation of her sex as a whole. Despite this, and despite his own dehumanisation and dualistic simplification of women in *Mlada,* Rimsky-Korsakov's treatment of the feminine in *Sheherazade* remains notable for its sensitivity, supported by the supreme craftsmanship of the music. It must be said however, that in *Sheherazade*, we have perhaps both one of the most striking figures in historical literature, and, more specifically, one of the most striking female characters to be treated in the music of the nineteenth century. She is a foreigner, a woman, and yet also a famous protagonist. She uses her body of her own volition as a tool to gain some degree of power and influence over a domineering male figure, and uses her intellect to spin a myriad of fantastical and highly detailed tales with which to beguile the senses of her oppressor – tales also treated by Rimsky-Korsakov with a particularly sharp vibrancy that underscores the manifold ingenuity of their creator within the narrative of *1001 Arabian Nights.*

It might strike some as anachronistic to attempt a feminist reading of a work written in 1888 and a cornerstone of the orchestral repertoire. It seems unnecessary to go into much more detail regarding the musical merits of the work than has already been done here. The work achieved as widespread popularity and enduring success as it did because it is music of an intensely pleasurable sonic beauty. The cathartic cumulative effect of its yearning lyricism, dazzling orchestral colours, and emotive theatricality is undeniable. Rather than existing in a vacuum separate from society, however, music – it must be borne in mind – is tightly bound to the fabric of a society's culture, and

as such can and should be read as a reflection thereof. Culture is not extra-musical, and therefore, neither is music extra-cultural. Music's engagement with our own society, and here specifically with issues of gender and ethnicity, must be investigated as an inquiry into the workings of our communities, and, more broadly, as a study of Western culture (McClary, 1994). The role of women in Western music-making in particular, while having seen a huge surge in inquestive thought in recent decades, still remains an issue too alive and too vital to let go of. Schoenberg's own writings on masculine attraction and female repulsion and his quest for an "asexual music", labellings of the feminine and the masculine in sonata form (Higgins, 1993, p.179), and also the vigorous contemporary male resistance against female conductors, are all issues with immediate relevance to our musical culture today. These gender issues must continue to be challenged actively, given the function of music as a deeply reflective model of our society as a whole.

One mode of redemption for the historical societal and artistic treatment of the Other in music, be they the Feminine or the Exotic, can be achieved through a precise and determined manual shift in the contemporary interpretation of characters and tales about these. *Carmen,* for instance – once a lesson against female sexuality that went against supposed societal mores – has in contemporary society become something of the opposite, and the character is often described in contemporary discourse as a strong and empowered woman who takes her sexuality and life into her own hands, and as a result subsequently suffers unjust and violent retribution from a domineering patriarchal society.

To conclude, it might be of particular relevance to make mention of a contemporary work that, like the original symphonic suite by Rimsky-Korsakov, offers a glimpse into the redemptive possibilities of music with regards to the treatment of the ethnic and feminine Other. John Adams' *Scheherazade.2* clearly follows in the vein of Rimsky-Korsakov's treatment of the title character; most notably, the work is subtitled 'A dramatic symphony for violin and orchestra', which immediately, in addition to the subject matter, places the Adams within the heritage of the piece by Rimsky-Korsakov. Armed with a sharp historical and social awareness, however, the conceptual material centres not on the tales told by Sheherazade, but centres more explicitly on the woman herself – her intellect, her sexuality as her own prerogative, and the unjust persecution of womanhood. Despite Adams' description of the work as being exotic, (Adams, 2015) the music does not seek to portray the allure of a far-away land, populated by tropes and peppered with sensationalist imagery like the stereotypical exoticist work. The work does feature a prominent part for solo cimbalom, but the function it serves is no different to the solo violin or the orchestra: to convey the message of the music to the audience, and not merely as some generic cultural signifier à-la-Rameau.

As a whole, the work is musically characterised by a volatile and aggressively visceral musical idiom that expresses the historical burden of women, and the plight of women in our own times too; this is a Sheherazade more openly charged by anger, outrage and passion. Adams describes *Scheherazade.2* as a reaction against the

"casual brutality" (2016) towards women in *1001 Arabian Nights* and certainly the stark idiom he employs matches this startlingly well. In performance especially, through the visual conduit of Leila Josefowicz's vigorous virtuosity, the piece makes a strong, unflinching statement about the strength of women. Written for Josefowicz herself, Adams' writing for the solo violin physicalises the narrative's emotions through the medium of Josefowicz's body and the overt, violent physicality required to realise the music.

The treatment of an ethnic woman in a contemporary work as unflinchingly dramatic as this forces the soloist – currently Josefowicz – to stand as a physical representative of the historical-literary figure of Sheherazade – a woman and a Muslim. To do so is a bold move in the context of the modern Western concert hall. It goes without question that it *is* more than unfortunate that what Adams has done in *Scheherazade.2* should be outstanding as a social statement. Ideally it *should not* be outstanding that an ethnic woman is treated with such respect and empathy, but given the blunt reality of the contemporary political and social sphere it nevertheless *is* outstanding, hugely commendable, and also hugely necessary. It *is* still outstanding within the contemporary music scene that *Scheherazade.2* treats a woman as an autonomous figure, not sexualised, but sexual, and that he musically treats the feminine with an intense and palpable strength representative of the actual, real-life strength of women from around the world. Furthermore, it must be noted that the cultural heritage of the character is here treated with a dignity far removed from the rampant sensationalism of the nineteenth century – Adams achieves this largely by musically treating the character of Sheherazade not specifically as a Muslim woman, in contrast to an *American* woman, but purely as a woman who is likely Muslim. It is through works as raw and resolute, and yet as empathetic and sensitive in both music and subject matter, as *Scheherazade.2* that many social issues latent in Western society can be teased out and we as a global community can face ourselves and perhaps begin to break down the barriers between the us and the Other

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Author

Luka Venter is a student at Te Kōkī New Zealand School of Music, Victoria University of Wellington, currently finishing a Bachelor of Music majoring in instrumental/vocal composition, Classical performance (voice) and conducting. In addition to music, he has a strong interest in theatre. His work as a singer, composer and director focuses on the intersections of language, music, theatre and the socio-political implications that arise from these.

Course information

Taught by Dr Inge van Rij, MUSC337: Music in the 19th Century (2015) at Victoria University of Wellington consists of an advanced study of selected music of the nineteenth century from a range of historical, analytical and critical perspectives with a particular emphasis the cultural and historical rationales behind various canonical nineteenth-century works.

Matthew Everingham

Orchestrating Film: The contrasting orchestral-compositional approaches of Bernard Herrmann and John Williams and their modern legacy

MATTHEW EVERINGHAM

ORCHESTRATING FILM: THE CONTRASTING
ORCHESTRAL-COMPOSITIONAL APPROACHES
OF BERNARD HERRMANN AND JOHN
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Abstract

Music is one of the most powerful forces in film, and composers' varied use of orchestration and sound is fundamental to the impact of music in this medium. From the live accompaniments of the earliest silent film, to the lush orchestrations of the 'golden age', to the electronic and experimental scores of the twenty-first century, the role of orchestration, timbre and sound has been pivotal to the function of music in film and its ability to shape and inform narrative, character and theme (Gorbman, 1987). In an increasingly vast and constantly evolving body of film music, two figures stand out as proponents of contrasting compositional approaches to orchestration in film: Bernard Herrmann and John Williams (Cooke, 2004). Their work reveals orchestration and compositional considerations as powerful tools that contribute to dramatic elements of narrative, character and theme. To understand these approaches their influences and contexts must be discussed (Part I). Analysing the contrasting orchestral approaches of Herrmann and Williams in their respective films *The Day The Earth Stood Still* (1951) and *Close Encounters Of The Third Kind* (1977) sheds light on the contrasting ways orchestration is approached to influence dramatic elements in film (Part II). It is important to examine the legacy of Herrmann and Williams' contrasting approaches in more recent film music such as the representative scores of Thomas Newman (*Wall-E* (Stanton, 2008)) and Stephen Price (*Gravity*, (Cuarun, 2013)) to fully examine the role of orchestration in film today (Part III).

Part I: Influences and context

Bernard Herrmann's (1911-1975) distinctive voice in film orchestration developed out of a varied career in film scoring spanning the 1940s to the 1970s. His score for the pivotal film *The Day The Earth Stood Still* sits in a transition point, as the composer moved out of his period of collaboration with Orson Welles and before he arrived at the period of famous Hitchcock-Herrmann collaborations. Breaking away from the lush film scores of the 1940s, typified by Franz Waxman, Enrich Korngold, Alfred Newman and Max Steiner, *The Day The Earth Stood Still* reveals the development of Herrmann's compositional voice as a modernistic counter-current that contrasts with the lush and conservative 'classical' Hollywood scores of the 1940s and 50s (Platte, 2011). *The Day The Earth Stood Still* is typical of Herrmann's distinctive orchestration and compositional methods, and is an informative example because it is one of the earliest films in which the composer utilised ultra-specific instrumentation and great attention to timbre and colour. This distinctive 'Herrmannesque' style can be traced through films such as *Journey To The Center Of The Earth* (Levin, 1959), which used five unique organs, ranging from cathedral organs to Hammond organs, and *Fahrenheit 451* (Truffaut, 1966), which featured a specific ensemble of strings, harp and percussion (*Gramophone Magazine*, 2016). Herrmann maximises the unique possibilities for orchestral and timbral colour available in film, stating "such an opportunity to shift the complete spectrum of sound within one piece has never before been given to us in the history of music. ... Each film can create its own variety of musical color" (Cooke, 2010, p. 114). Herrmann broke away from and sternly criticised the large studio system of film composition and orchestration, stating that "most film music is created by assembly line: one fellow sketches it, another fellow completes it, another one orchestrates it, and yet another adapts it. Consequently the music is dissipated; it has no direction" (cited in Cooke, 2010, p. 115). In contrast to this mechanical approach, Bernard Herrmann is unique in film music history as a composer who maintained total control over all of his orchestration, writing extensively as an individual composer (see Examples 1 and 2).

From this context, Bernard Herrmann uses a cellular and colouristic approach to orchestrating film music that significantly impacts on dramatic elements in film. Precise choices are made regarding orchestral voices that emphasise specific dramatic elements of mood, subtext, atmosphere and character. Herrmann developed an experimental, chamber-style orchestration whereby unique combinations of instruments were chosen for specific film scores, departing from using established instrumentation of the traditional Hollywood studio orchestra. Herrmann tailored his orchestrations to fit the oeuvre of the dramatic material at hand rather than applying a traditional lush symphonic approach to each film. Herrmann's sonic canvas is made up of subtle detail, with the composer often using close-mic recording and electronic manipulations, allowing for experimentation with subtle timbral textures (Deutsch, 2010). This focus on timbre at a 'micro' level is a defining feature of Herrmann's unique and inventive orchestral approach. This level of subtle, precise and distinct timbral detail is central to his compositional voice and the impact of his most successful film scores, including *The Day the Earth Stood Still*. Herrmann's

approach to orchestration and film composition also focuses on mood and ambience over large-scale thematic developments. A more restricted approach in Herrmann's orchestration gives each new instrumental entry heightened impact as viewers receive a new timbral message and associate that with new dramatic information.

John Williams' (1932-present) lush orchestral film voice developed later. *Close Encounters Of The Third Kind* (1977) sits in the period in which Williams was establishing his reputation, as the 1970s saw him propelled into international acclaim through the high-profile film scores that form the basis of his famous legacy today. The film in question came not long after Williams' break in *The Posiedon Adventure* (Neame, 1972), and subsequent disaster-films *Earthquake* (Robson, 1974), *The Towering Inferno* (Goldstone, 1974) and *Jaws* (Scorcese, 1975), which was the beginning of his lifelong collaboration with Steven Spielberg (Darby & Du Bois, 1990). In each of these films, the large budgets, heightened dramatic material and high-stakes action all allowed Williams to continue using a large symphonic palette. Williams' famous collaborations with Spielberg on *Close Encounters* (1977) and George Lucas on *Star Wars* (1977) were the two high-profile critical and commercial successes that solidified his place in film-music history. *Close Encounters* sits in a highly important and formative period in Williams' career, and its film score typifies Williams' distinctive voice in film orchestration. This film's historical significance, combined with its musical and orchestral richness, makes it ideal as a score of focus in identifying Williams' approach to using orchestration. Williams' score for *Close Encounters* stands out as one of the leading blockbuster scores of that decade from a composer who decided not to embrace jazz and popular styles, in comparison with other composers including Marvin Hamlisch, Lalo Schifrin and even Bernard Herrmann who did in the commercially successful 1977 films *The Spy Who Loved Me* (Gilbert), *Rollercoaster* (Goldstone), *Taxi Driver* (Scorcese) and *Saturday Night Fever* (Badham). The orchestral approach that Williams solidified during this period became synonymous with his name, central to his compositional style, and influenced a generation in terms of orchestral expectations and timbral possibilities in film. *Close Encounters* is a leading case study of Williams' formative orchestral approach at the height of his early career, and it informs much of his later work.

In this context, John Williams uses a predominantly linear approach to orchestration by weaving and building gestural and melodic threads through symphonic forces, to develop horizontal themes with a life of their own. Williams utilises, without hesitation, the full sonic spectrum of the traditional symphonic orchestra to create his own orchestral-musical narrative that complements and elevates Spielberg's cinematic vision, one which reaches an orchestral "apotheosis" that anchors the plot resolution (Example 13) (Schneller, 2014, p. 98). This approach has led Williams to be known among contemporary film composers as "the most traditional in terms of the orchestral forces he employs and the dramatic uses to which he puts his music" (Darby & Du Bois, 2010, p. 521). Williams' adherence to and promulgation of the symphonic idiom in film scoring meant he was the "major force in returning the classical score to its late-romantic roots and adapting the symphony orchestra of Steiner and Korngold for the modern recording studio" (Kalinak, 1992, p. 188).

Cooke describes the 'Golden Age' of classical Hollywood film scoring that Williams referenced as "essentially a leitmotif-based symphonic romanticism with narrative orientation" (Grove, 2016, p. 1). This naturally involved lush instrumentation of full symphonic forces (fully utilising strings, woodwinds, brass and percussion) and an embrace of neo-romantic harmonic and diatonic gestures (Orosz, 2015). This certainly parallels the characteristics of Williams' work such as in *Close Encounters* (see Examples 13, 14).

Despite playing in New York jazz clubs in his early years, the composer is known for eschewing the popular styles of the 1950s and 60s including jazz, limited ensembles and the song score, instead choosing to emphasise large symphonic sounds. The composer's symphonic proclivities clearly stem from his classical training as a pianist at Juilliard and as a studio-orchestra member at 20th Century Fox under Alfred and Lionel Newman. The composer notes in a lecture that in this position as a young professional he "absorbed by osmosis" the conventions of that era (Burlingame, 2012). Williams had firsthand experience as a studio pianist and orchestrator, helping to realise the previous generation of film composers' works including those of Franz Waxman, Dimitri Tiomkin and Alfred Newman (Darby & Du Bois, 1990). This involvement clearly had a lingering influence in his adherence to continuing an orchestral-symphonic film music tradition to this day. Williams' work reveals an embrace of a "traditionalist aesthetic" (Darby & Du Bois, 1990, p. 524).

It is important to note that Williams, unlike Herrmann, does not work alone in orchestrating his film scores. This is unsurprising given the large-scale projects and frequency of work that Williams has been involved in since the 1970s. For example, Williams and his team of orchestrators were once faced with composing ninety minutes of music for *Star Wars* in six weeks. With such deadlines, it is unsurprising Williams worked on the orchestrations along with Herbert Spencer, Arthur Morton, Angela Morley and Al Woodbury (Darby & Du Bois, 1990). Spencer is Williams' most frequent orchestrator and worked with him on *Close Encounters*. Williams, however, does maintain creative control over orchestration in his film scores, supplying orchestrators (when he is not orchestrating himself) with an "elaborated idea" giving precise instructions on instrumental groupings, and clearly laid out development of themes and which instrumental sections these will flow between (Darby & Du Bois, 1990, p. 523). Williams also takes on orchestration entirely himself for smaller films. This creative control and personal involvement in orchestration illustrates that Williams has decisive control over his orchestral approach.

Part II: Contrasts

To fully understand these two leading composers' orchestral and compositional approaches, the contrasts between the two need to be examined. Fundamental contrasts are seen in Herrmann and Williams' differing use of colour and line, phrase structure, thematic development and their distinctive styles of instrumentation. Both

Herrmann and Williams achieve similar dramatic results consistent with film scoring theories such as expressive effect, narrative emphasis, affecting viewers' perceptions and heightening drama and action (Rosar, 1994; Forde, 1994). The way in which each composer achieves this through differing orchestral approaches is where illustrative contrasts are found. Examining the two science-fiction films *The Day The Earth Stood Still* and *Close Encounters* is important as, despite being thirty years apart in film history, they contain similar science-fiction narratives based on benevolent and friendly extra-terrestrial visitations. Herrmann and Williams approach this similar dramatic material with differing approaches, and from this basis contrasts can be discussed.

Colour and line

A key contrast in orchestral approaches of these composers is their differing uses of the orchestra for colour versus the use of orchestra for line (motivic themes). Herrmann is a musical colourist who writes in cells, while Williams is a musical dramatist who writes in lines. This historical distinction between line and colour in film music was noted as early as 1946 by musicologist Robert U. Nelson:

> In the broad sense, musical color may be taken to represent the sensuous or exotic side of music, in distinction to musical structure and line, which may be looked upon as representing the intellectual side … There are many reasons why current film music is dominated by color. For one thing, color is associative … color plays an important role in heightening mood, Then, too, color is not intrusive, it does not compete with the dramatic action. Again, color is immediate in its effect, unlike thematic development, which makes definite time demands; infinitely flexible, color can be turned on and off as easily as water from a tap. Moreover, color is easier to achieve than musical design – an important consideration when a composer writes against time. Finally, color is readily understood by even the least musically trained film audience. (p. 57)

This statement points to the heart of the distinction between Herrmann and Williams' orchestral approaches, in that one emphasises color and the other line. This difference, however, cannot be rigidly enforced upon Herrmann and Williams, as neither composer entirely stayed on one side of this distinction in their work. To impose this on either composer would be to oversimplify, as there is a spectrum between music driven totally by colour versus that driven totally by structure and line; these are not mutually exclusive. Herrmann and Williams undoubtedly drew upon many places on this spectrum in their work. The key contrast, however, is that these composers clearly sit at different points on this spectrum. with Herrmann's cellular approach favouring instrumental colour and William's linear approach favouring thematic development and extended musical structures, as seen in the contrast between the highly colouristic Example 1 and the much more linear Example

11.

A defining feature of Herrmann's compositional and orchestral approach is his role as musical colourist. His pioneering use of orchestration and timbre in film to maximise distinct musical colour is central to the success of his scores artistically and dramatically. *The Day The Earth Stood Still* is the epitome of Herrmann's colouristic approach to orchestration; it was the first film in the composer's career where he broke from film scoring tradition and embraced an unconventional orchestration approach with unique instrumental colours. This breakthrough became the spawning ground for the unique sound and colours of his later scores such as *Psycho* (Hitchcock, 1960), *Torn Curtain* (Hitchcock, 1966), *Fahrenheit 451* (1966) and *The Twilight Zone* (1959-1964). The opening prelude of *The Day The Earth Stood Still* is emblematic of Herrmann's decidedly colouristic approach and establishes this voice for the rest of the film. As seen in the original score (Example 1), lasting only 6.33 seconds and accompanying the title credit, the prelude is made up of three musical phrases (X, Y and Z). Herrmann's handwritten score shows vibraphone clusters and a quartet of cymbals are played as written, while the piano and chimes polychord of E-flat minor over F major is faded in backwards. Three elements of this pioneering cue establish a colourist approach. The first is the unique instrumentation and choice of doubled instruments (theremins, pianos, chimes, vibraphones and cymbals), the second is the use of the polychord E-flat minor over F major, which is more colouristic than functional. The third is the specificity of electronic manipulation by Herrmann, whose decision to reverse some of the tracks makes a truly unique opening that would have captured 1950s audiences from the outset with its 'alien' sound.

Phrase structure and thematic development – cellular versus linear

A defining element of Herrmann's distinct approach to orchestration and timbre is that his film music is cellular. Cellular elements in Herrmann's film scores include building key material out of small motivic phrases, often of only one to four bars. Example 17 shows the composer's cellular approach utilising small phrases that are "susceptible to being placed in different musical contexts" (Fiegel, 2003, p. 195). These differing musical contexts often involve differing placement within the orchestration. Deutsch has suggested "Herrmann's cells often present themselves as *ostinato* … repetitive phrases that 'loop' over time" and has linked Herrmann's cell motifs and ostinatos to Igor Stravinsky's pioneering use of that same technique in symphonic orchestration, citing Stravinsky's *Petrushka* as a key example (Fiegel, 2003). Indeed Stravinsky's pioneering modern approach to orchestration and composition can be seen as a predecessor to the film technique of jump cutting, where one theme (A) is abruptly cut by another (B). Stravinsky's *Symphonies Of Wind Instruments* is emblematic of this pioneering filmic technique in art music. Herrmann implemented such a technique in his own way, to emphasise dramatic and expressive elements in film. His use of cellular themes that abruptly cut against each other often emphasises elements of the psychological or supernatural, as in *The*

Day The Earth Stood Still. This cellulisation of orchestration and motivic themes is effective as it works well with the editing process, allowing for music to be flexible due to its less linear, drawn-out structure and architecture. Evidence of these cellular features can be seen throughout *The Day The Earth Stood Still*, for example, with the interweaving chromaticisms and interlocking timbres in the opening harp-piano theme in Example 2. This passage oscillates in a cellular, looping manner between two chords, creating an ambiguous tonality in the overlapping of these harmonies. This form of 'chord shuttle' creates an uncertain polarity, where the music 'hovers' between two poles (Tagg, 2016). Such a chord shuttle can be resolved in any number of ways, and this parallels the way audiences of this 1950s science fiction film are unsure of the nature of characters Klaatu and Gort, and this in turn plays into the backdrop of an uncertain and polarised Cold War period (Bushad, 2009). Herrmann's score is not completely atonal but each cellular passage is tonally ambiguous (Example 5). This technique is central to this film score and Herrmann would later utilise it in the thriller genre in his work with Hitchcock.

Essential to the cellular nature of Herrmann's orchestral and compositional approach is his use of small-phrase structure. Herrmann's ostinato cells can be seen throughout his most famous scores, including *North by Northwest* (Hitchcock, 1959), and *Fahrenheit 451* and are evident throughout *The Day The Earth Stood Still* – notably the opening one-bar arppegiated harp and piano motif which repeats in a loop (Example 2 – see piano and harps) and the repeated descending chromatic chords in Example 3 (trombones) and also the repeating tritone-bass relational theme in Example 3. Herrmann's decisive choice to build his scores out of cellular and looping themes is central to his distinctive voice, and stands out against a tradition of conventional phrasing and classical thematic development.

This contrasts with Williams' common phrase structure, which consists of longer and/or cadential melodic themes. In music theory, this is often described as 'A' and 'B' themes or as an ABA ternary structure. An example of this linear ternary development is the extension of the 'Mountain' theme in Example 9, used to bring out the dramatic importance of the mountain as the place of visitation of the extra-terrestrial ships, and in Examples 18 and 19. This traditional phrasing occurs on a micro level with Williams' basic themes (Example 8) but also appears commonly in his orchestral writing, where the composer will maximise the dramatic impact of certain points of epic film narratives but extending his orchestral writing both vertically (utilising the full tessitura across the orchestra) and horizontally by writing extended passages that envelop the viewer in sound and build significantly out of previous musical materials. Example 13 is prime example, as it occurs at a climactic plot point in *Close Encounters*, the revelation of the mothership. This linear approach to phrasing and thematic development is employed throughout all of Williams' most famous scores.

While both composers certainly did use various phrase structures throughout their careers, they clearly approach phrase structure differently, and this influences the broader orchestral and compositional approaches that shape their film scores. A key

similarity, however, is that although the orchestral approach differs, both Herrmann and Williams' work reflect Brown's theory that film music can "narrativize, help[ing] lead 'readers' of cinema's iconic language(s) … towards story" (Brown, 1994, pp. 16-17).

Each composer approaches this 'narrativising' differently. Williams is clearly a musical dramatist who utilises traditional musical phrasing structures in his largest film scores, while Herrmann is a symbolist who is willing to subvert, shorten and adapt traditional concepts of musical grammar and phrase structure to create his own unique and atmospheric film language. Take, for example, each composer's most famous film scoring themes, in *Star Wars* and *Psycho* respectively (Examples 17 and 19). The contrast is stark. The musical grammar of the first is a traditional motivic, narrative-based, cadential structure, and the second subverts any such convention with its concentrated, sharp, dissonant and colour-based flavour devoid of any harmonic, diatonic or cadential expectations, as seen in the musical cells in Example 13. Each example is a clear illustration of each composer's differing approach to music as a narrative device.

Harmonic languages: romantic versus modernistic

Williams' orchestral and compositional voice for film music is clearly grounded in a conscious embrace of the diatonic harmonic language stemming from the romantic period of classical music. Central to this is the cadential basis for Williams' motivic themes. In all of his classic themes, and *Close Encounters* is the clearest example of this, Williams favours a more conventional approach to harmony than Herrmann's cellular approach. The five-note 'communciation motif' in *Close Encounters* could not be a better example of the diatonic and cadential basis upon which Williams builds his themes (Example 8). This diatonic foundation allows extended linear development in epic film narratives, as opposed to colouristic or atonal textures more suited to psychological atmospheres. Williams combines this diatonic-cadential approach with chromaticism and pivoting modulations for development, propelling his musical narration forward (see Examples 7 and 9).

These features have meant Williams' traditional sonic canvas has been noted for its paraphrasing of the melodic and orchestral gestures of nineteenth- and twentieth-century composers such as Dvorak, Strauss and Tchaikovsky (Orosz, 2015). Schurer has also noted parallels to Stravinsky and Debussy in the contrasting musical passages in *Jaws* (Schurer, 1997). Williams' traditional symphonic approach was "newly fashioned" for the Hollywood blockbuster in the 1970s and has remained a staple of film music vernacular ever since (Schurer, 1997, p. 67). This is epitomised in *Close Encounters*, a central example of Williams' more traditional symphonic approach to orchestration, based on diatonic harmony inspired by Romantic conventions.

Herrmann's harmonic language has similar influences to Williams' but contrasts in its use of avant-garde and modern musical principles. Herrmann's approach to film

scoring has been described as "inspired predominantly by nineteenth-century film music with a sprinkling of avant-garde techniques" (Waxman, 2010, p. 21). Herrmann himself said of his musical inspirations that:

> I might class myself as a Neo-Romantic, in as much as I have always regarded music as a highly personal and emotional form of expression … although I am in sympathy with modern idioms, I abhor music which attempts nothing more than an illustration of a stylistic fad. And in using modern techniques, I have tried at all times to subjugate them to a larger idea or a grander human feeling. (Biar & Biancolli, 1947, p. 335)

Herrmann's quote emphasises his proclivity for neo-romanticism as an aesthetic philosophy, utilising music for expression and emotion rather than trying to write music in the neo-romantic genre or style. While Herrmann's aesthetic views align with neo-romantic ideas of emotion and expression, his musical techniques and orchestral approach can be seen as a more progressive modern approach to film scoring that diverges from the classical 'Hollywood' symphonic orchestral approach developed in the 'Golden Age' of Hollywood film scoring (c. 1935-55) (Cooke, 2016). Herrmann's association with modern composers, including Charles Ives, is evidence of this. Writing of his admiration for Ives, Herrmann notes that Ives' eschewing of traditional melodic counterpoint in favour of a "harmonic haze of sound" in works such as the Fourth Symphony creates an "indescribably beautiful effect" (Herrmann, 1937, p. 14). The modern approach to sound, texture, orchestration evoking hazes of sound is a technique found in Herrmann's works, including *The Day the Earth Stood Still*. Herrmann blurs musical lines through orchestration to highlight various alien scenes and phenomena (Examples 1 and 3). Herrmann adopted Ives' layering of fragmented melodies with accompanying harmonic and rhythmic clusters creating a mass of sound and the juxtaposition of dissonance and consonance. This is illustrated in the passage 'The Day the Earth Stood Still', with shifts from harmonic blurring to diatonic swells (Example 2), the shifts between diatonic major sonorities and harmonically ambiguous bass/brass in 'Klaatu' (Example 5), and the noble hymn-like militaristic themes in the 'Arlington' and 'Lincoln Memorial' passages (Example 4), which contrast with the more harmonically ambiguous passages that dominate Herrmann's score. While it is a gross generalisation to say that either Williams or Herrmann are purely romantic or modernist, it can be seen that romantic gestures and harmonic language play a stronger role in Williams' large symphonic scores, while Herrmann was more eager to embrace modernist techniques in his film scores, while maintaining a romantic philosophy of expression which is in line with the dramatic and expressive purpose of film scoring.

Instrumentation: lush versus compact

In terms of instrumentation itself, the composers also differ. As explored above, Herrmann's musical oeuvre is a more modernistic one, and as a classical conductor

Herrmann chose to champion modern composers such as Charles Ives. In contrast, Williams' style harks back to romantic and neo-romantic techniques. This applies not only to their harmonic and melodic techniques, but also to their use of instrumentation itself. Herrmann proved time and time again that he was willing to subvert traditional Hollywood orchestration in exchange for especially tailored instrumentation, clearly evident in *The Day The Earth Stood Still* but also throughout his career in *The Journey To The Center Of The Earth*, *Psycho*, *Taxi Driver* and others. This self-restraining element to Herrmann's instrumentation may have been influenced by his earlier career writing for radio plays, efficiently sourcing sounds from a small range of instruments, and Herrmann clearly transported this unique approach into his film writing too, to create unique sonic palettes within the dramatic context of each film.

In contrast, Williams' name is synonymous with large symphonic works and his most famous film scores embrace the sound world of the symphony orchestra. The composer's own conducting favoured the symphonic world, most famously as leader of the Boston Pops Orchestra from 1980-95. Williams' work followed a period in film scores that, turning away from the style of Steiner and Korngold, was moving towards embracing popular styles including jazz, pop and rock by composers such as Henry Mancini and Lalo Schifrin. Williams' work bucked this trend, directly referencing former 'classical' Hollywood studio composers such as Steiner, Korngold, Newman and Waxman. Out of a period that had moved away from large orchestras in film scoring, Williams' orchestral approach helped solidify the symphonic orchestra's continued "position of preeminence" in modern film scoring (Kalinak, 1997, p. 68). His orchestral approach is informed by the developments and techniques of the late romantic and early twentieth-century orchestral tradition, with scholars noting his role as a "paraphraser" of the techniques, gestural and even melodic devices of Strauss, Dvorak, Stravinsky, Hanson and Copland (Orosz, 2015, p. 299). His large-scale symphonic approach has an "intertextual" relationship with these composers and the conventions of these earlier orchestral eras (Orosz, 2015, p. 300).

Part III – Modern legacy

Clearly, Bernard Herrmann and John Williams have distinctive and contrasting approaches to orchestration and film. As leading film composers of their respective generations and eras, it is important to consider the influence that their pioneering orchestral approaches have had on more contemporary film composers, particularly in the twenty-first century.

Steven Price, a hybrid-electronic film composer, uses repeating cells in his Oscar-winning score for *Gravity* (2013) in a similar way to Herrmann's cellular orchestral approach. Example 16, *Debris* shows a repeating descending string line that is layered underneath electronic soundscapes to provide anticipation and momentum as the astronaut's shuttle is stuck in an inevitable orbit set to crash with fatal space debris

heading its way. The ostinato strings, like Herrmann's ostinatos in *The Day The Earth Stood Still* and *Psycho*, create a strong sense of momentum, and highlight the impending doom and fatal consequences on screen. Herrmann's introduction of a cellular approach to film scoring and orchestration has given modern film composers an added tool in writing for and highlighting dramatic elements in twenty-first century films. Price shows a cellular approach to melodic and timbral considerations, often looping electronics in his score for *Gravity* and introducing layers such as those in the string example in *Debris*.

Herrmann's cellular approach has been adopted by other new, hybrid film composers working with electronic and orchestral voices. These include Trent Reznor (*Gone Girl* (Fincher, 2014), *The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo* (Fincher, 2011)) and Hanz Zimmer (*The Dark Knight* (Nolan, 2005)). The ability of Herrmann's cellular and looping approach to orchestration and sound to be easily applied to the heavily edited moviemaking process and electronic music has meant his approach has proven useful to a wide range of contemporary film composers now working with hybrid scores of both orchestral and electronic elements. Electronic film-scoring software and the explosion of technology in modern film studios has allowed for the exponential growth of colouristic possibilities in film scoring. Therefore, Herrmann's heavily colouristic approach to scoring is seen living on in composers such as Price and Zimmer, who can now greatly manipulate electronic and acoustic timbres (Morricone & Miceli, 2013). There is no doubt Herrmann would champion the colouristic possibilies now available through new technology in film scoring today, just as he worked on early recording manipulations in *The Day The Earth Stood Still*. Herrmann was one of the first musical colourists in film scoring and orchestration, and this legacy of colour in film scoring clearly continues to live on in the twenty-first century in the work of composers such as Steven Price.

Thomas Newman, the most recent composer in the Newman dynasty, is another contemporary composer showing a duality of influences in his film scoring. His more recent projects, especially in animation, have shown a continued embrace of the studio orchestra and a proclivity towards linear themes restated. Often more modal than Williams' romantic and lush developments, Newman's music is certainly the work of a modern composer using the symphonic foundation that Williams championed, but also showing harmonic and modal influences of minimalists such as Philip Glass. Others working in this vein include Harry Gregson-Williams, Howard Shore, Patrick Doyle and John Powell. Newman has a rich familial and professional history in film scoring, and his score for the Pixar animation *Wall-E* (2008) is a prime example of a modern film composer building on and referencing the vast cultural and musical allusions in film. His opening theme '2815 AD' (example 15) begins with harp arpeggiations and string swells, a direct reference to the science fiction scores of the filmic past. Throughout the film, Newman toys with the diegetic material that the titular lonely, anthropomorphic robot Wall-E encounters in his quest for company on a deserted planet Earth, including the songs 'Hello Dolly' and 'La Vie en Rose.' This motivic allusion is reminiscent of Williams' allusions and treatment of 'When You Wish Upon A Star' in *Close Encounters*, a similar family-friendly science-

fiction blockbuster. It is of note that *Bridge of Spies* (2015) was Steven Spielberg's first collaboration without John Williams since 1985, and Newman was chosen to work with Spielberg, producing a brooding orchestral score. This inheritance of Williams' legacy of collaboration with Spielberg shows Newman's place as a modern film composer continuing to embrace the orchestral resources available in film scoring and the continued effectiveness of linear development and diatonic harmonic processes in popular Hollywood film narratives.

Clearly both Williams' and Herrmann's respective legacies are now being drawn together in the hybrid compositional methods of modern film scoring. New technologies, particularly in film scoring, have forced older composers and allowed new film composers to "adapt established practices based on control and standardization to a new reality of flexibility and adaptation" (Kerins, 2015, p. 150). As filmmakers have continued to embrace wide ranges of musical styles and approaches, film scoring has become, in its own postmodern way, less limited to generational trends or periodic styles as it has been in the past. Modern film composers such as Newman and Price embrace elements of both Herrmann and Williams' legacies to maximise the dramatic possibilities of their music in film.

Conclusion

Bernard Herrmann and John Williams clearly forged distinctive voices through their differing approaches to orchestration, timbre and composition in film. The two acclaimed science-fiction films, *The Day The Earth Stood Still* (1951) and *Close Encounters Of The Third Kind* (1977), serve as signposts in the vast careers of each composer that illustrate their unique approach to orchestration, sound and timbre as a tool for influencing dramatic elements in film. Their distinctive approaches were informed by the musical and cultural context in which they wrote their respective scores, and analysing each approach through two closely-read film scores reveals key contrasts in the orchestral and compositional areas of colour, line, thematic development, phrasing, harmony and instrumentation. Both Herrmann and Williams utilised these aspects of orchestration differently to compose dramatically effective, musically satisfying and culturally enriching film scores that have influenced film composers and audiences alike. By pushing and setting the boundaries of music in film, these composers have contributed to the sonic expectations of generations of film viewers. This legacy is evident in the hybrid approach of contemporary twenty-first century film composers such as Steven Price and Thomas Newman, who utilise Herrmann's colouristic and Williams' linear approaches to orchestration and sound more broadly to create their own film scores in a twenty-first century technological setting, applying previous composer's approaches to sound and timbre to create new sonic results.

Example 1: "Prelude" by
Bernard Herrmann, from *The
Day the Earth Stood Still*,
dir. Robert Wise.

Showing a colouristic
opening title sequence, made
up of three distinct and
carefully orchestrated cells
X, Y and Z. Herrmann uses
polychords and carefully
prescribes the instrumental
voices maximizing the
Prelude's colour.

Example 2: "Opening" by Bernard Herrmann, from *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, dir. Robert Wise.

Another highly colouristic theme of Herrmann's, featuring a chord shuttle between two tonal poles (Dm-C half diminished) in the interlocking piano and harp gestures at the middle of the system underscored by brass clusters.

Example 3: "Danger" by Bernard Herrmann, from *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, dir. Robert Wise.

Example 4: "Arlington" (or 'Lincoln Memorial' theme), by Bernard Herrmann from *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, dir. Robert Wise.

Showing plaintive Trumpet melody, and simple Hammond organ sustained accompaniment as a rare moment of diatonic harmony used in one of the most human scenes in the film. This theme stands out in terms of its familiar militaristic colour and tonal familiarity, highlighting in its orchestration the humanity of this scene between Bobby and Klaatu against the more 'alien' sections of the score.

Example 5: "Klaatu" by Bernard Herrmann, from *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, dir. Robert Wise.

Showing polychord based on bitonal relationship between Ab and Bb major, another colouristic approach to film orchestration subtly balancing electronic ('alien') and acoustic ('human') instrumental voices. A form of chord shuttling between two juxtaposed harmonic poles also creates ambiguity in the introduction of Klaatu.

An atmospheric and
ominous cue written
by Herrmann to evoke
uncertainty and fear in
response to the uncertain
nature of the alien robot
intelligence of 'Gort'.
Tritone relationship loops
repeatedly in an eerie
fashion, highlighting
Herrmann's modernistic
approach to harmonic
functions and carefully
chosen theremins and
organs show his attention
to specific instrumental
colours in compact
orchestration.

Example 8:
"Communication" theme by
John Williams, from *Close
Encounters of the Third
Kind*, dir Steven Spielberg.

One of Williams' most
famous melodic themes,
based on a simple diatonic
framework with strong
cadential movement which
is ripe for orchestral
development across the
various symphonic voices
at play in Williams score.
Throughout the film

this theme is sequenced
and imitated in various
instrumental families
including horns, brass and
bell percussion. Williams'
orchestration imitates the
actual diegesis of the film,
as Gillian's child plays it
on a toy xylophone it is
chanted by an Indian tribe

and then blasted from the
Mothership in the final
communication theme.
Williams's simple diatonic
theme is the basis of the
"close encounter" between
the extra-terrestrial ship
and the humans, as their
communication is aural.

Example 9: "The Mountain"
theme by John Williams,
from *Close Encounters of
the Third Kind*, dir. Steven
Spielberg.

Built out of the bridge of
'When You Wish Upon a
Star' and the melodic line
from the lyric "fate is kind",
this becomes a central
theme in the plot climax of
'Close Encounters.' After
initial statement in cellos,

Williams interchanges
this throughout the winds
and strings, often soaring
in a high tessitura at the
point where Ron begins to
understand more about the
extra-terrestrial events he
has been experience.
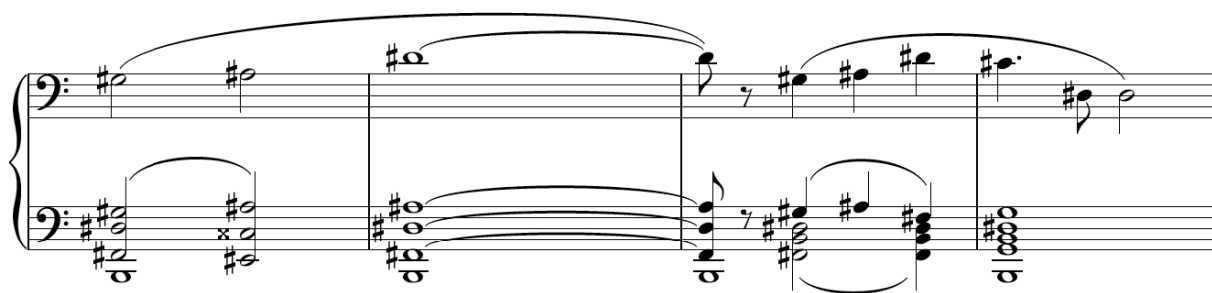
Example 13.   Williams, *Close Encounters*, "Fate Is Kind" motive ("The Visitors").

Example 14.   Leigh Harline, "When You Wish Upon a Star," bridge.

Example 11: "The Visitors" by John Williams, from *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, dir. Steven Spielberg.

Shows clear thematic development and sequencing of earlier theme, reflecting the traditional phrase structure, motivic allusion and sequencing pattern Williams utilizes to build his musical themes through an epic narrative.

STATEMENT

RESTATEMENT

CONTINUATION

Example 12: "Roy and Gillian on the Road" by John Williams, from *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, dir. Steven Spielberg.

Built out of motivic allusion to the traditional 'dies irae' latin theme, this theme forms the basis for much of the anticipatory action sequences in the orchestration and this is the first statement of this.

Later used in 'The Escape' sequence as Roy and Gillian seek to find out what is behind the military cordon around the Mountain. Williams' use of the 'dies irae' theme has been dr

Example 13: "The Mothership" by John Williams, from *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, dir. Steven Spielberg.

Extended phrasing and layering of sustained woodwind and brass over swirling string sextuplets elevates the revelation of the mothership, reaching a climax at bar 50. This is a form of orchestral "apotheosis" at the top of the film's dramatic arch as audience and characters see the large alien ship at the end of the film.

Example 14: "Bye: End Titles"
by John Williams, from *Close
Encounters of the Third Kind*,
dir. Steven Spielberg.

Cadential communication
theme recapitulated in this
final triumphant fanfarical
ending. Blazing harmonized
horns carry the cadential
theme with wind and string
flourishes.

Example 15: "2815 AD" by Thomas Newman, from *WALL-E*, dir. Andrew Stanton.

Arpeggiated Harp gesture from chord i to a borrowed flat vi chord accompanied by looming strings reminiscent of science fiction gestures used by Herrmann and

Williams earlier in film scoring history. This is a prime example of the modern legacy of the approaches of Herrmann and Williams in action.

'2815 AD'
WALL-E opening theme

Thomas Newman

Example 16: "Debris" by Steven Price, from *Gravity*, dir. Alfonso Cuaron.

This looping string cell is layered underneath a complex metallic soundscape compiled by Price, and the Herrmann-esque looping strings creates growing anticipation as the astronauts (Sandra

Bullock and George Clooney) are about to be hit by oncoming space debris stuck due to gravitational forces an inescapable orbit on the edge of earth's atmosphere.

'Debris'
repeating string cell

Example 17: 'Prelude' motivic material by Bernard Herrmann, from *Psycho*, dir. Alfred Hitchcock.

Opening Music:
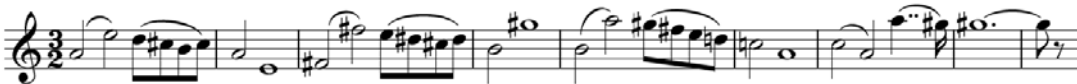

Example 18: 'The Magic of Halloween: Flying Theme' by John Williams, from *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial*, dir. Steven Spielberg.

Example 19: 'Star Wars: Main Title' by John Williams, from *Star Wars*, dir. George Lucas.
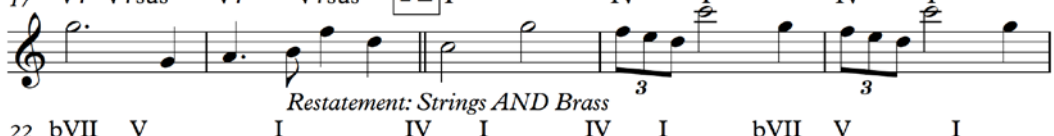
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Author

Matthew Everingham is a freelance musical director, composer and pianist currently based in Christchurch, New Zealand. Matthew completed his MusB in composition in 2016, and an LLB(hons) in law in 2017. Matthew was awarded the Douglas Lilburn Composition Trust Prize in 2016, and has had his music performed and recorded in Westminster Abbey, London, Malta, Prague and around New Zealand. Alongside his academic studies, Matthew enjoys work as a musical director for various professional theatre productions and NASDA at Ara Institute, as well as maintaining a busy freelance schedule as a composer, arranger, choral conductor, accompanist and musicianship tutor.

Course information

MUSA380 – undergraduate research essay paper – at the University of Canterbury School of Music involves an extended essay on a musicological subject under individual supervision. This paper was supervised by Dr Francis Yapp and Jim Gardner, and was submitted in June 2016.

Molly Robson

Politics, Affect and Intimacy:
The mediated sentencing of
Metiria Turei

MOLLY ROBSON

POLITICS, AFFECT AND INTIMACY: THE MEDIATED SENTENCING OF METIRIA TUREI

Abstract

This essay shifts current discussions of political analysis from the informative to the affective, using intimacy as a conceptual lens through which to consider matters of the public sphere and their mediated repurcussions. Earlier this year, in the lead-up to the 2017 general election, Metiria Turei (the former co-leader of the Green Party) publicly admitted having committed benefit fraud in the early 1990s. Although the statement was made strategically – in the hopes of eliciting a political conversation about the failings of the welfare state – Turei was soon after met with a tsunami of vicious scrutiny from mainstream media outlets, which eventually led to her resignation as co-leader of the party. Using the Turei scandal as a case study, this essay examines the myriad functions that 'private' matters can have in the public realm, from the transformative to the destructive; the formative to the divisive. Robson unpacks the discursive frameworks through which Turei's loudest critics cast their sentences, considering the ways in which they illuminate the pedagogies of privilege (whiteness, masculinity, class) that continue to overwhelm and inform 'objective' journalism in Aotearoa New Zealand. Ultimately, this essay showcases the vast complexities of public intimacies, inviting the reader to reflect on both the transformative potential of affective politics and the persisting power structures that continue to contort their enactment.

We are now inhabiting an epoch in which distinctions between public and private matters are increasingly blurred. Experiences that have historically been considered intimate affairs – gender, sexuality, race – are now readily appropriated goods that carry cultural value for matters of the public domain: be it social, political or economic. In July 2017, this symbiosis unfolded on the national stage when Metiria Turei (former co-leader of the Green Party of Aotearoa) publicly admitted committing beneficiary fraud in the 1990s while raising her daughter as a single mother. Her announcement was met with prolific scrutiny and criticism from media outlets, political officials and a large proportion of the New Zealand population, eventually leading to her resignation as co-leader. This set of events richly illustrates the transformative, often contradictory role that the intimate plays in the public sphere. By operating as a *subject in* rather than *object of* public discourse, Turei's admission generated powerful waves of affective intimacy between strangers, which in turn elicited important discussion about the obligations and limitations of the welfare state in New Zealand. However, at the same time, the mediated reaction to Turei's admission throws into stark relief the persisting parameters by which "the sanctity and limits of the intimate" are patrolled, constructed and evaluated in public spaces (Lee, 2016, p. 221). If Turei's resignation signals anything, it is that not all public intimacies are treated equally – particularly if the subject asserting the personal is socially marked at the intersection of race, class and gender.

Before embarking on any analyses of the Turei scandal and the media spectacle that followed, it is first important to clarify what is meant by the intimate. Katja Lee describes the intimate as "the personal, private, and emotional conditions of being an individual" (2016, p. 217). In popular culture, this condition connotes feelings of emotional intimacy (shared sentimental and affective attachments) or physical intimacy (the literal contact between bodies such as kissing, hugging, touching, intercourse, and so on). In academic terms, the intimate can be more broadly encapsulated by anything relating to the domestic, private or the personal: that which takes place, or rather is expected to take place, behind closed doors. The public, on the other hand, commonly denotes groups, collectives and communities of anonymous strangers and the social, physical and discursive spaces in which they assemble (Lee, 2016).

While these binary constructions remain pervasive in popular discourse, concrete distinctions between private and public are, according to Katja Lee, "increasingly fraught by their continuous and escalating sites of overlap" (2016, p. 217). In an age of media 'supersaturation,' where the experience of social reality matters less than its mediated representation, the ready expression of the intimate in public forums is now a defining feature of our time (Kavka, 2008). Kavka argues that contemporary intimacy is itself a product of technological advancements that have collapsed temporal and geographic distance, and allowed for the mass distribution of private moments to anonymous audiences (2008). She further postulates that publics are produced and sustained through the transmission of such affects. The public sphere, then, is less a universal space of collective debate than it is an affective *mood*.

Indeed, the 2017 New Zealand election has been marked by increasingly desperate appeals to the personal; with many politicians wielding intimate parts of the self as tools of political leverage. In recent years, a number of academics have attributed this growing trend of public intimacies to both technology and late-capitalist neoliberal attitudes, which champion individual subjectivity and the meaningfulness of the individual (Lee, 2016). In such a world, public intimacies can become fertile for exploitation by the powerful: "… when available for individuals and corporate and bureaucratic bodies to mobilise them for particular effect, commodified public intimacies can become, ironically, (re)privatised" (Lee, 2016, p. 225). For example, Prime Minister Bill English made headlines last week when he 'opened up' about his teenage struggle with acne, throughout which he somberly reflected on his firsthand knowledge of how it *felt* to be an outsider (Bridge, 2017). The next day, new Labour leader Jacinda Arden spoke candidly with the same reporter about the childhood bullying she received for her teeth: the intimate proximity of which was literally figured by the interview's location in the privacy of her Auckland home (Bridge, 2017). However, of all the personal anecdotes that have come to light this election, Metiria Turei's story undoubtedly claimed the most attention from politicians, news media and everyday citizens alike.

Turei first made her announcement by speech at the Green Party's AGM, in the hopes of starting a debate about poverty while drawing support for the party's new benefit reform plan, "Mending the Safety Net". In the speech, Turei detailed how as a young solo mother in the 1990s she lied to WINZ about the number of flatmates she was living with, to prevent her benefit allowance from being cut. It is necessary here to note that the intimacy – and thus vulnerability – of such a revelation of illicit behaviour was certainly not lost on Turei, nor the party at large. In fact, she explicitly acknowledged this fact in her speech: "I know that by sharing my story here today, I am opening myself up to criticism. It may hurt me personally and may hurt us as a party" (The Green Party, 14 August 2017). Instead, it was precisely this discursive utterance of vulnerability – this emotional appeal to the sentient human subject – which formed Turei's strategy in this moment: "But I also know that if I don't talk about what life is really like for beneficiaries, if the Green Party doesn't, then who will?" (2017). Moreover, the topic at stake here makes Turei's case even more salient, as there is perhaps no other issue that embodies the fusion of private and public more than the topic of social welfare. In fact, the mere conception of social welfare epitomises the public relevance of private life, and further underscores the notion that "social arrangements structuring private life, domestic households, intimacy, gender, and sexuality are neither neutral nor immutable, that they can be seen as relations of power and as subject to transformation" (Warner, cited in Stimpson & Herdt, 2015, para. 7).

Immediately following Turei's announcement, the story quickly made national headlines and sparked a furious tsunami of online debate from the New Zealand public, with a diverse range of New Zealanders all passionately weighing in on the ethical defence (or lack thereof) behind Turei's decision. Following in the emotive climate of the election at large, the vast majority of discourse surrounding the case –

both negative and positive – was of a markedly ideological nature, steeped in affective and emotional attachments between participants. Journalists, politicians, citizens and commentators all displayed a palpable willingness to offer up their *feelings* about the matter, and groups quickly became divided by the extent to which they sympathised with Turei. The sentimentality of this climate serves to illustrate how the public sphere can constitute a 'mood' or a set of affective transmissions. As Misha Kavka asserts in *Reality Television, Affect and Intimacy: Reality Matters* (2008): "… the content of public-sphere discourse matters less than its affective particularity – indeed, that the public sphere only matters when affective particularity is taken into account" (p. 55).

This hysteria exploded when further investigations revealed that Turei had not only committed benefit fraud, but also election fraud, having lied about her living situation in order to vote in another electorate, for a local MP who was a friend of hers around the same time. The cultural and journalistic imperative to 'uncover the truth' in this instance is symptomatic of the powerful anxieties underlying public intimacies, and the "cultural and/or public-specific limitations" to the ways such narratives play out in the hands of the fourth estate (Lee, 2016, p. 225). Lee extends this point to emphasise how some intimacies – "particularly those that are idealised and whose boundaries are ruthlessly patrolled" – are often fraught with contradiction: a product of both "the ease with which intimacy can now be rendered public" and the angst that this inspires in a world that evaluates the moral virtue of its public figures via mediation (2016, p. 225).

The mediated response to Turei's electoral fraud perfectly illustrates these anxieties and contradictions in practice, serving as evidence of how the intimacy that is acted out in public is not the same as the intimacy *brought into* the public. While the individual who "authorises the movement of the private into the public" can safely "enter the realm of image management and public relations", the individual who is 'caught out' by way of journalistic investigation or scandal receives a much harsher sentence (Lee, 2016, p. 220). Such is the paradox of the public intimacy. Public intimacies, especially those in politics, frequently invite questions about the authenticity of the intimate: "… has it been produced as a part of the activities of the private realm and repurposed, or has this private moment been manufactured for distribution into the public realm?" (Lee, 2016, p. 220). It is not uncommon for an audience to feel emotionally compelled by a personal story while, simultaneously, hyper-aware of its artificial execution. Our feelings are further troubled if the sanctity of the initial public intimacy is compromised, or the subject is revealed to be less 'pure' than we initially believed. On the other hand, those who conceal certain intimacies, or fail to keep them hidden, are vilified for their attempts at privacy. Though Turei's electorate crime likely made no difference to the outcome of the election at the time – and would certainly have no bearing on the future of New Zealand in the election year and beyond – the story was pitched by mainstream outlets as a matter of national importance, and journalists framed their relentless pursuit of the answers as the necessary undertaking of noble, investigative journalism. Such strategies work to conceal a more unsettling truth about our

mainstream news industry: specifically, that "… the fourth estate is just that: an estate, that is to say a seat of power, and that this power is implicated in everyday forms of social repression and in entrenching the dominant ideology" (Tiso, 2017).

In the Turei scandal, these anxieties found form in the rhetoric by which notions of purity and victimhood were fiercely constructed and patrolled in dominant media discourses covering the event. Lee argues that every culture has a "range of shifting taboos" which "prevent, discourage, or punish attempts to render some intimacies public and/or profit off them" (2016, p. 224). Indeed, Turei's public intimacy, and the ferocity of the debates surrounding it, shed an unforgiving light on the hegemonies of whiteness, class and gender that continue to contour the character of the news provided to us. The voices most devoted to vilifying Turei for her decision came predominantly from journalists of mainstream media outlets – overwhelmingly those of Pākehā men. Finlay Macdonald of RNZ claimed that "Victims deserve better", called Turei "plain pathetic" and derided the "hurt mewling" of Green supporters (2017, paras. 18, 16). *New Zealand Herald*'s John Roughan demanded that Turei name the father of her child and outright dismissed the severity of the poverty she laid claim to, writing: "If Metiria Turei is typical the system sounds not so bad" (2017). Even John Campbell, in an emotionally tense interview on *Checkpoint*, uncomfortably forced Turei to admit that her situation was not 'as dire' as that of many other beneficiaries.

These discursive strategies, though seemingly neutral, serve to insidiously enforce the boundaries of the public intimacy in accordance with pervasive myths about poverty. As Lee succinctly argues: "To have one's specific (or general) intimacies made a topic of public debate is to find one's subject/public legitimated and yet, perhaps, simultaneously affirmed unequal" (2016, p. 222). While many journalists strategically avoided explicitly addressing the conditions of Turei's subjecthood (Indigenous; woman of colour; solo mother), ostensibly to paint an objective portrait of her plight, it was precisely this restraint that laid bare the dominant Western pedagogies that overwhelmingly inform the news industry and its most prominent mouthpieces. It is important to emphasise here that access to the mainstream public sphere is not a universal right, but rather, a privilege directly determined by such social markers, which precede and form the subject's involvement and legitimacy in spaces of public debate (Kavka, 2008). As Kavka plainly puts it: "… the ability to erase one's particularities is a differential resource, available only to those who are 'unmarked' by gender, race, class and sexuality" (2008, p. 55). Thus, the racial, gendered, classist lines upon which the critics based their attacks were not powered by their explicit acknowledgment, but inversely, the assumption that they did not need be acknowledged; that they were irrelevant to Turei's predicament; and finally, that the only distinguishing factor between Turei and any other struggling Kiwi subject was her ultimate decision to cheat. This ideology was aptly illustrated by Campbell's obsessive return to Turei's relative poverty in comparison to other beneficiaries, reminding us that a greater standard of morality is required of the Māori victim. As Giovanni Tiso powerfully argues in his article "Speaking Power to the Truth: The Political Assassination of Metiria Turei", the Māori criminal is often subject to

disproportionately higher scrutiny than their Pākehā counterpart, especially when appealing to human empathy: "… when they are poor they must not only be deserving, but the most deserving of all" (Tiso, 2017, para. 8).

However, at the same time, an alternative movement was gaining traction on social media. Thousands of Twitter and Instagram users, personally compelled by the heartbreak of Turei's plight, offered up their own deeply intimate, personal stories of poverty, struggle, disadvantage, disability, survival and difference under the hashtag #IamMetiria, to show solidarity with Turei and challenge the mainstream Pākehā narrative that vilified her. Lauren Berlant calls this hybrid movement an intimate public; "… a mediated/mediating space in which the personal is refracted through the general, and members of the public sense common emotional attachment and thus belonging." (Berlant, cited in Lee, 2016, p. 22). The #IamMetiria hashtag, and its growing popularity, speaks to the democratic power of social media in collapsing spatial and temporal boundaries to facilitate affective intimacy with distant spectators and participants. Here, compassion functions as intimacy, intimacy transmits as identification, and identification becomes resistance. Despite Turei's eventual resignation, #IamMetiria constituted an opportunity, enabled by affective transmission, "… for the disenfranchised to participate as subjects in rather than objects of 'official' public discourses" (Lee, 2016, p. 221). #IamMetiria let thousands of marginalised subjectivities substantiate their public identities through the practices and performances of their own personal lives, hence legitimising both. Here, the intimate transcended its dominant role in this election as a tool of political leverage, and was reclaimed as a grassroots mechanism for the disenfranchised to transform publics, "… their composition, and the issues with which they concerned themselves" (Lee, 2016, p. 221).

Metiria Turei's revelations, the allegations that followed, and the media storm that surrounded her case were a rich illustration of the transformative, symbiotic, contradictory role that the intimate plays in the public sphere. While, on the one hand, Turei's story opened up a mediated channel for mobilising intimate publics and eliciting debates about the rights of the disenfranchised, much of this discussion was overshadowed by the racialised, gendered and classist implications of the story's coverage in mainstream media, which insidiously served to reify pervasive myths about poverty and social welfare. There is much more yet to be explored on the subject, but at bare minimum, this essay aims to serve as an examination of the power of affective politics, and the escalating, often antagonistic, relevance of private matters in the public realm. As Lee eloquently concludes of this paradox: "To have one's specific (or general) intimacies made a topic of public debate is to find one's subject/public legitimated and yet, perhaps, simultaneously affirmed unequal" (2016, p. 222).

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Author

Molly Robson is a media studies honours student at Victoria University of Wellington. Her areas of interest span representations of gender, race and sexuality in the media; the role of media in shaping society and politics; how media contribute to understandings of place and culture; mediated representations of crises and war; and everyday media's relationship to structures of power. In her spare time Molly partakes in personal photography and filmmaking projects. She has a BA in media studies and film from Victoria University of Wellington, with a minor in political science. On having completed honours, she hopes to continue postgraduate study in media studies or visual communication abroad.

Course information

Samantha Smith

How can Herman and
Chomsky's Ideas Function in
a Post-communist World?

SAMANTHA SMITH

HOW CAN HERMAN AND CHOMSKY'S IDEAS FUNCTION IN A POST-COMMUNIST WORLD?

Abstract

This essay discusses the opportunity for Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model, as outlined in their book, *Manufacturing Consent* (1988), to be altered to remain relevant in a post-communist world. The model previously described five filters, which influence the US media, causing them to stray somewhat from their role as the fourth estate, and preventing them from upholding the ideals of democracy. These filters included ownership, advertising, sourcing, flak and anti-communism. But with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the threat of communism diminished and a new threat emerged. Since September 11, the war on terrorism has become a focus in the US media, creating a new hysteria. In Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model, anti-communism can be replaced with terrorism to prolong its functionality in a post-communist world.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of democracy in post-communist states in Central and Eastern Europe, there has been a shift in US propaganda (Skoll & Korstanje, 2013). Media is essential in democratic nations to inform and educate citizens on political happenings, give publicity to political parties, and to facilitate public discourse (McNair, 2011). Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model, which was developed through their identification of problems with the functioning of democracy in the US, suggests that the role of the media is impeded by powerful elites with the means to manipulate the news to suit interests of their own. In the past, the US media has manufactured an ideology of anti-communism (Herman & Chomsky, 2002) but upon the collapse of the Soviet Union, the threat of communism for America diminished and a new threat emerged. Since September 11 (9/11) the so-called war on terrorism has become a focus in the US media, creating new hysteria (Skoll & Korstanje, 2013). The following essay is an inquiry into how Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model can be adapted to function in a post-communist world. To argue this, the role of the media in a democracy is explained, before an exploration of the ideas of Herman and Chomsky presented in *Manufacturing Consent* is followed by an analysis of the presentation of terrorism in the US media.

In an ideal democracy, the media should play the role of the fourth estate – a freely functioning system that represents diversity, encompasses active participation from citizens and monitors the activity of the first three estates: the legislature, executive and judiciary. It should function to objectively inform citizens of what is happening around them, educate citizens in the meaning of significant facts, and provide a platform for political discourse that facilitates public opinion, representing both the entirety of government and public political opinion. The purpose of this is to provide citizens with the necessary resources to vote rationally (McNair, 2011). Herman and Chomsky (2002), however, question whether the US media is a freely functioning system that can allow expression of opinion from any source. Their propaganda model suggests that there are filters within the media that prevent it from doing so (Herman & Chomsky, 2002).

Herman and Chomsky contend that the US democratic system is flawed because media are subordinated to external power. Their propaganda model argues that money and power can be used to filter out the news and set a specific agenda (Herman & Chomsky, 2002). Filtering, for this purpose, is defined as the processing of items to reject those that are unwanted (Stevenson, 2010). Therefore, the news content received by the public is filtered to leave out certain information and manufactured to serve the interests of established power (Herman & Chomsky, 2002). McNair (2011) states: "To the extent that citizens are subject to manipulation, rather than exposed to information, democracy loses its authenticity and becomes something rather more sinister" (p. 24). Herman and Chomsky (2002) believe that media function to generate support for elite policies, rather than to empower people to make informed political decisions. The propaganda model encompasses five metaphorical filters they say influence the filtering of the news: ownership, advertising, sourcing, flak and anti-communism.

Privatisation has resulted from the increasing worldwide trend of mass media (Newton, 2006) and creates the first filter of the propaganda model – ownership. This filter describes the influence of profit orientation of the colossal corporations who own dominant media channels on the media they distribute (Herman & Chomsky, 2002). Rupert Murdoch, president and CEO of News Corporation said, "When you are the monopoly supplier, you are inclined to dictate" (Jhally, 1998). Owners of mass media channels are able to be selective in the representation of political parties and set the political climate in the news. This is achieved by the implementation of policies imposed on their media outlets. Favourable representation is given to political parties that serve their interests, and they are less likely to be critical of economic or political policies that directly benefit them (Herman & Chomsky, 2002). Consequently, there is an unequal representation of political information in the news.

Profit-orientated ownership generates a reliance on 'advertising', the next filter of the propaganda model. Advertising is the prevalent source of profit made by media organisations, and thus, advertisers must not be offended. Media must endeavour to maintain a favourable marketing platform for advertisers by serving their interests. Media organisations are committed to ensuring that the content of their news does not hinder the sales of the products sold by the advertisers using them (Herman & Chomsky, 2002). Lewis said, in *The Myth of the Liberal Media* (1998), that Fiat Chrysler Automobiles sent out letters to the magazines they advertised in insisting that they send their articles to them in advance so that they could screen them to ensure 'suitability'. If Chrysler felt the articles weren't suitable, they would withdraw their ads (Jhally, 1998). In 2015, Fiat Chrysler Automobiles was estimated the eighth biggest advertisers in the US (Statista, 2016) making them a valuable client for media organisations. Thereupon, it was imperative that these magazines ensured their material was carefully constructed so as not to be 'unsuitable' for Chrysler. It is due to such subsequent corporate censorship that the media are unable to provide unbiased, independent news (Jhally, 1998).

The media are reliant on sources of information to form the content of news, thus the third filter of the propaganda model Herman and Chomsky call 'sourcing'. Dependence on sources of, which can provide a continuous stream of information, forces media outlets to serve the interests of those sources. Political actors, police departments and business corporations provide a continuous supply of information that is deemed newsworthy and, hence, it features heavily in the news. Consequentially, other sources of information are marginalised as they feature less in the news (Herman & Chomsky, 2002).

'Flak' is the term used for the fourth filter in the propaganda model to describe negative responses to a media statement or programme. Flak usually results when news stories challenge the government or corporations (Jhally, 1998), in the form of complaints including lawsuits, petitions, threats and other punishment. To avoid such punishment, news organisations must take care not to challenge dominant elites, and must restrict the risk that these elites will be critical of information presented in the news (Herman & Chomsky, 2002).

The ideology of 'anti-communism' was constructed through the instrumentalisation of the US media and is the fifth filter in the propaganda model. For most citizens, the media is the only source of information they have about the world outside the United States. According to Herman and Chomsky (2002), the US media portrayed communism as the ultimate evil, enhancing political control and enabling a push of American foreign policy in a conservative direction. This politically constructed ideology has aided the US government in turning citizens against an enemy to justify fascist activity abroad. It has also contributed to the fragmentation of the left and labour movements, as it has been used to discredit even the slightest of socialistic ideas, labelling them 'pro-communist' (Herman & Chomsky, 2002). Herman and Chomsky's ideas were first formulated during the Cold War, throughout which the US was indirectly at war with the communist Soviet Union, and thus communism was considered a threat. After the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, marking the end of the Cold War and the disintegration of their Red Army (Reese, 2000), the threat of communism faded and a new regime threatened (Skoll & Korstanje, 2013).

Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model can be adapted to function in a post-communist world. Since the events that took place in September 2001, there has been a new threat promoted to the US, thus the need for a sixth filter, 'terrorism.' Like the purpose of Herman and Chomsky's anti-communism filter, the idea of terrorism is used to create a fearful populace against the enemy, which contributes to governmental control (Skoll & Korstanje, 2013). Skoll & Korstanje (2013) said, "Political fear works as a mechanism of self-indoctrination and paves the way towards a total control. Terrorism is only an excuse encoding a much broader and deep-seated issue" (p. 355). The US media has played a significant role in creating an ideology of anti-Islam in the US to gain political control (Skoll & Korstanje, 2013).

The manufactured ideology of anti-Islam through the media has been so successful that the word 'terrorism' itself has new meaning in the United States (Snow & Taylor, 2006). A. P. Schmidd, a UN advisor, studied a variety of different definitions and used commonalities among them to produce a definition in 1983:

> Terrorism is an anxiety inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi-) clandestine individual, group or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal or political reasons, whereby – in contrast to assassination – the direct targets of violence are not the main targets. The immediate human victims of violence are generally chosen randomly (targets of opportunity) or selectively (representative of symbolic targets) from a target population, and serve as message generators. Threat- and violence-based communication processes between terrorist (organization), (imperiled) victims, and main targets are used to manipulate the main target (audience[s]), turning it into a target of terror, a target of demands, or a target of attention depending on whether intimidation, coercion, or propaganda is primarily sought. (Cited in Powell, 2011, p. 70)

The *American Heritage Dictionary*, however, defines 'terrorism' as something quite different. "The use of violence or the threat of violence, especially against civilians, in the pursuit of political goals" is the definition used here ("Terrorism," 2016). The latter definition suggests a targeting of civilians whereas the former clearly states that the direct targets are not the main targets. The newly constructed meaning of the word has been exceedingly powerful in creating distinctive stereotypical opinions about Muslim people. These ideologies are created through filtering information in the media (Powell, 2011).

Influences from the government and an obedient media helped this ideology flourish in the US. According to Kumar (2006), the government gained increased control over the mainstream media under the presidency of George W. Bush after 9/11. Propaganda was used to justify his actions in his pursuit to have the United States go to war with Iraq (Kumar, 2006). This government created the notion of 'Us versus Them' or 'the US versus Islam' using psychological manipulation. Bush used the fear created by 9/11 and linked it to Iraq by juxtaposing the words '9/11' and 'Iraq' in his rhetoric (Reese, 2007). Thereafter, his administration was able to endorse the unfounded idea that Iraq had 'weapons of mass destruction' or nuclear weapons. These scaremongering tactics helped create a political climate supportive of the war in Iraq, despite that nation having no involvement in the 9/11 attacks (Scatamburlo-D'Annibale, 2005). Furthermore, the US domestic media were submissive to President Bush's administration following 9/11. They were forthcoming in presenting news that reproduced almost uncritically the agenda of the administrator, regardless of any misinformation it contained (Snow & Taylor, 2006; Kumar, 2006). It has since been recognised that the information provided by the Bush administration was indeed often faulty or entirely false. In the midst of that government's manufacturing of consent, an ideology wherein Islam and terrorism were closely related was formed (Kumar, 2006).

The success of this constructed ideology could owe to the fact that, prior to 9/11, the average US citizen had minimal knowledge about Islam (Powell, 2011). Herman and Chomsky said that for most people, the media is the only source of information they have about the happenings of the outside world (Jhally, 1998), thus numerous citizens were vulnerable consumers of media 'information' on this subject. Ali et al. (2011) said, "Media in many ways are responsible for the creation of mental pictures" (p. 87). The US media indulged in the drama of the 'War on Terror' and little other information about Islam was offered in the news. Islam was represented with bias, being associated only with oil control, war and terrorism. Information that was necessary for the citizenry to create an accurate mental picture of Islam was filtered out of the news (Powell, 2011).

It is apparent that the US media do not uphold the ideals of democracy, straying from their role as the fourth estate (Snow & Taylor, 2006). As demonstrated in the discussion above, Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model can be adapted to function in a post-communist world. The fifth filter, anti-communism, could be replaced with terrorism as news continues to be manufactured to serve interests other

than those of the public. Karl Marx said, "The class which has the means of material production has control at the same time over the means of mental production" (Marx & Engels, 1970) and it seems that this claim is validated. Filters such as ownership, advertising, source reliance, flak, previously anti-communism and now, terrorism restrict the media from being free and independent, thus it can be considered that Herman and Chomsky's ideas have held up very well over nearly three decades.

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Author

Samantha Smith is a 2017 graduate of Unitec's Bachelor of Communications where she majored in public relations. Samantha now works as an account executive in Auckland, working with large corporates, predominantly in the food and beverage sector. This is the first time Samantha has had her work published, and she is proud to have had the opportunity to contribute to *Pūrātoke*.

Course information

Dr Philip Cass's COMM7532 – International Communication – is a compulsory level 7 course for those studying the Bachelor of Communications and majoring in public relations at Unitec Institute of Technology. It seeks to enable students to examine global systems of communication and information flows, and the contribution of these systems to effective international communication management. The course looks at international communication theory, learning how the informed management of global information may enhance effective international relationships and international organisational communication practices within developed and developing countries. Topics within the course include globalisation, factors influencing international perspectives, definition, the history and significance of international communication and information, international communication theory, economics and trade, culture, language and human rights, politics and propaganda, the role of technology, law and regulation of international communication, and implications for diplomacy. This essay was submitted in semester 2 of 2016.

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