Passing on Responsibility: Obstacles to Green Film Production in the Netherlands

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Introduction

In light of the drastic effects of climate change, research in film and television studies has started to pay closer attention to the environment. In the last 15 years several books have been published that approach screen culture from an ecocritical perspective. There is an increasing number of studies on eco-cinema and on media's ability to raise awareness and ethical sensibility for the environment (Cubitt 2005; Lu and Mi 2009; Willoquet-Maricondi 2010; Rust et al. 2012; Kääpä 2014; Weik von Mossner 2014; Brereton 2015; Alex and Deborah 2016; Duvall 2017; Past 2019). In contrast, investigations into the environmental impact of media production have been rather limited—despite early calls to probe "cinema's material ecologies" (Ivakhiv 2008: 24). This might be due to the discipline's traditional focus on textual analyses and the critical reading

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P. Kääpä and H. Vaughan (eds.), *Film and Television Production in the Age of Climate Crisis*, Palgrave Studies in Media and Environmental Communication, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-98120-4_8

of films. However, theoretically-inspired perspectives as well as materialist approaches are providing new insights into the entanglement of media and the environment. They foreground the ecological impact and tangible effects of media technologies (Gabrys 2011; Maxwell and Miller 2012; Starosielski 2015; Starosielski and Walker 2016; Cubitt 2017), reflect on the relationship of film and its natural resources (Bozak 2012) or discuss material environmental implications of mainstream film culture (Vaughan 2019). Research into production practices—in film and media studies known as the subfield of 'production studies'—started only recently to address the ecological footprint of filmmaking, with Hunter Vaughan 'environmentally-driven production culture' studies (2021: 198).

Despite growing interest in environmental issues, film and television scholars struggle to specify the ecological impact of media productions. In addition to the complexity of assessing the media industry's footprint,[1] access to production processes and data transparency is one of the main difficulties that complicate such research. Scholars in the field of production studies have addressed this problem (Caldwell 2008; Mayer 2008; Ortner 2009) and pointed out that non-disclosure contracts hamper their academic work (Vaughan 2019).

Given this veil of secrecy it comes as no surprise that production companies often don't share their data and prevent academics to study and publish their greenhouse gas emissions. This explains why existing studies of the industry's impact on the environment are either an estimate based on an input output life-cycle assessment that uses public datasets (Corbett and Turco 2006), or they are conducted and published by the industry itself (albert 2020; Netflix 2021).[2] While the industry's engagement illustrates that media organizations and industry consortia worry about their environmental footprint, their self-assessment is often driven by self-interest since they seek, for example, to prevent the implementation of sector-wide regulations.[3] Their conclusions, often overly

[1] See for example Corbett and Turco (2006), Özdemirci (2016), Jancovic and Keilbach (forthcoming).

[2] For a critical analysis of the media industry's environmental management strategies see Kääpä (2018).

[3] In its report on the carbon impact of video streaming a consortium media companies (including the BBC, ITV, Netflix and Sky) concludes for example that "the carbon footprint of viewing one hour of video streaming is very small compared to other everyday activities" (Carbon Trust 2021: 8), thereby implying that no regulatory action is needed.

optimistic, are not only a reason to be critical of studies that are funded by the industry, but also illustrate why the inaccessibility of production and data causes a problem.

In this chapter we present the results of a small-scale research project on sustainable film production for which we conducted interviews with six Dutch film professionals. The Netherlands has a relatively small film industry that relies mostly on public film funding, with the Netherlands Film Fund supporting nearly 60 feature films (including co-productions) per year (Netherlands Film Fund 2020: 2). Despite efforts to create ecological awareness and generate behavioural change amongst film-makers in the early 2010s, it has never been a priority of the Dutch industry to make sure that films are produced in an eco-friendly way. These green initiatives were framed as 'challenges' or linked to talent development programmes and, after the funding schemes expired, the projects simply petered out. Instead, the film industry installed a sustainability manager who has been offering consultancy and organizing workshops to share their knowledge. Although every film production can consult them to profit from their knowledge (Green Film Making 2021), little use was made of this option. This reluctance to consider implementing sustainable solutions—or even to think about the environmental footprint of one's film—triggered our interest. We wanted to understand the difficulties and obstacles that prevented the Dutch film industry from working in a more sustainable manner.

To map the difficulties and obstacles that impede greener film and television production in the Netherlands we conducted semi-structured interviews with six film professionals. We approached people with different positions—both above- and below-the-line—and ended up speaking to a caterer, a gaffer, a costume designer, a production manager, a director, and a producer. This selection resulted from their availability as well as the willingness of our interviewees to participate in a research project on sustainability. It comes therefore as no surprise that all respondents consider it important to work in an environment-friendly way.[4] Obviously, their answers are not representative and moreover, six interviews are by far not enough to provide a full picture of the situation and the varied attitudes towards sustainable film production in the Netherlands. However, we asked all participants to tell us more about the prevailing

[4] We are fully aware that we were 'studying sideways' (Mayer 2008; Ortner 2009) since like our respondents we are concerned about the deterioration of our planet.

tendencies in the industry, thereby addressing them as representatives of their profession. First results of a follow-up research venture that we are currently conducting for the Netherlands Film Fund confirm the findings of our previous small-scale interview project.

All our interview partners were to some extent aware of sustainable options in their field of work and have even been applying eco-friendly solutions, if possible. Nevertheless, all respondents believed that either they themselves or the Dutch film industry as a whole could or should do more to produce films in an environmentally acceptable way. At the beginning of each interview, we asked our respondents what exactly sustainability means to them and to their professional practice: depending on their particular activities in film production, their notions of sustainability ranged from vegetarian cooking to circular use of materials and avoiding artificial light, air travels or plastic waste.

Given our interest in difficulties and obstacles to enacting green policy, in this chapter we will not discuss the actions that our interview partners are already taking to work in an eco-friendly fashion. Instead, we will focus on what they are *not* (yet) doing, or more specifically, *why* they are not taking (more) action. What impediments or reasons prevent professionals in the Dutch film industry from working in a more eco-friendly way?

Production Culture

Production cultures in the film and television industry differ, depending on the type of the media product, its size and location of production. Academic research on media production pays most notably attention to labour conditions in the creative industries with a particular interest in below-the-line workers.[5] Focusing on the situation in the U.S., John Caldwell (2008) and Vicki Mayer (2011, 2017) both probe into the hierarchies, dependencies and anxieties that structure the work environment, identifying temporary employment as one of the main traits that characterizes work in the media industry. In his research on the production culture of the L.A.-based film and television industry, Caldwell classifies this situation as "nomadic labor system" and vividly describes how

[5] See for example Caldwell (2008), Mayer et al. (2009), Mayer (2011, 2017), Hesmondhalgh and Baker (2011), Szczepanik and Vonderau (2013), Banks et al. (2016), Curtin and Sanson (2016).

workers “must start angling for the next job even before their current one concludes” (2008: 113).

The size and approach of the Dutch film industry is of a substantially smaller scale; however, production in the Netherlands is organized in a similar way. As in the U.S., work is project-based and people team up only for a limited period of time, resembling Caldwell’s observation that “each shoot is essentially a new corporation that starts up, functions intensely, and closes down in a matter of months” (2008: 113). Different from (part of the) U.S. industry, film professionals in the Netherlands are not unionized but do freelance work. Although the Dutch job market is less competitive, we realized in our small-scale research that concerns about the next assignment influence how Dutch film professionals think about sustainable film production.

Film production is not only project-based work but also requires a division of labour. It is realized by a team of freelance workers who collaborate closely while at the same time being organized according to a hierarchical structure. For film professionals and service suppliers in the Netherlands, the most important resource for getting a job is their network. Past collaborations, achievements and recommendations are therefore vital to be hired for a project. As a result, film professionals pay close attention to their reputation. They seek to have good relations with their superiors and co-workers and strive to deliver good work and operate efficiently.

Film workers in the Netherlands tend to follow the established routines of their departments or profession and are reluctant to experiment with green technologies or new modes of working. One reason for their reservations is the time pressure under which films are made in the Netherlands which is due to tight financial budgets. Not only does the workflow allow no margin for breaking with production routines, they also result in a limitation of communication that focuses on solving production-related problems and leaves no room to add sustainability to the list of topics. Simply put, time pressures impede the potential for collective discussion about how a film could be produced in a more eco-friendly way.

In our interviews it became clear that the prevailing work culture, power structures and time pressure affect the extent to which film professionals adopt sustainable solutions in their field of work. We identified five topics that occurred several times and vividly illustrate the obstacles that complicate the enforcement and implementation of environmentally

sustainable film production in the Netherlands: the importance of one's reputation, the lack for clear instructions from above, the question of responsibility, the image of green film making, and ethical and financial dilemma's.

The Importance of Reputation

In general, we found that film and television production crew members fear that they may damage their reputation by pushing for more eco-friendly working. Below-the-line workers seem to be especially afraid to annoy anybody by suggesting green solutions and therefore hindering the production flow, and fear to decrease their chance to get hired for the next job. Even if film professionals rank high in their respective department and can work relatively autonomously, their position as a freelancer hinders them to take environmentally aware actions. It seems that anxieties related to reputation which in turn result from pressure on the labour market play a major role in the way crew members decide on their own working methods. Our interviews clearly indicate that the fear of not getting hired for the next job outweighs by far the intention of taking or promoting more eco-friendly actions.

A passage from our conversation with a caterer illustrates the influence leveraged by concerns about reputation. Even without explicitly being asked about sustainable solutions, she mentions vegetarian cooking and reflects on how often her catering service offers meatless meals. Producers usually leave it to her what is included on the menu and she acknowledges that she could increase the number of vegetarian meals. At the same time, she recognizes that fear of damaging her reputation prevents her from adding a second day without meat. 'You quickly get a certain name,' she remarks in our conversation and adds: 'You have to make sure that you don't become known as 'that caterer' who doesn't want to serve meat.'

In a similar vein, the costume designer doesn't want to be considered a 'difficult person.' At a certain moment in our conversation, she describes her job as being paid 'to do shopping' and is critical about the general expectation that 'a lot of stuff is available' for the director to choose from. Reflecting on the workflow within film production she addresses the tendency to delay costume decisions and points out that taking final decisions in pre-production would prevent a lot of waste and therefore be much more eco-friendly. However, since film directors usually want to postpone creative decisions as long as possible, she considers herself—as

a costume designer—not in a position to discuss this topic or set limits to the director. In addition to concerns about job opportunities and one's reputation it is thus also the hierarchical structure within a film production that prevents working more sustainably and complicates bottom-up initiatives that might exist in different film departments.

A Vision from Above

The project-based nature of film production and the division of labour makes it difficult to create a shared eco-friendly work culture. The different departments function separately from each other and make use of different forms of knowledge and expertise. This departmental separation complicates the formulation of shared goals regarding the environmental impact of a project. Such goals usually don't exist—unless they are assigned 'from above'. But Dutch producers and directors are reluctant to give instructions to work in more eco-friendly ways and therefore the level of sustainability that a film production achieves is highly dependent on the intrinsic motivation and ambition of individual crew members. Our interviews indicate that especially below-the-line workers are missing a vision 'from above' that encourages sustainable action. What is more: if they themselves suggest or implement more eco-friendly solutions they don't feel supported by the production management or people with positions above the line.

The caterer mentions an interesting example that shows how the division of labour and the lack of cooperation between departments hampers sustainable action. She tells us that she would like to recycle glass and paper, however the responsibility for processing waste lies with the location management. According to her, the people there are 'usually much blunter and say, 'it all just goes together in the trash.' That green efforts of one department are counteracted by another leads to frustration. Similarly, the gaffer is irritated by small disposable plastic bottles, that were distributed on the set due to a sponsorship deal, while he was at the same time doing his best to limit transportation and the use of a diesel generator. Defining sustainability as an overall objective would prevent not only the wasteful use of resources but also a feeling of discouragement.

On the other hand, crew members quickly seem to doubt their producer's or director's green ambitions if they indeed implement measures to work in an environmentally more acceptable way. Their efforts are not always understood as attempts to meet ecological ideals or realize

a vision of sustainable film production but rather they are perceived as pure formality. Certain green actions even backfire on the producers if crew members perceive them as a form of greenwashing. The gaffer, for example, tells us about a particular project and reports that the production department decided to stop printing call sheets—'as a green statement', according to him. Instead, they sent the documents by email. 'If this is the best that people can think of,' the gaffer voices his criticism and leaves no doubt about his opinion: 'I find this rather disappointing!'.

During our conversations, it became clear to us that crew members feel left alone in figuring out and pursuing methods to reduce the environmental impact of their work. They point to the producers from whom they expect a clear and explicit vision of a project's sustainability goals. They also want them to encourage more cooperation between the departments to collectively take sustainable actions. From the answers of our respondents, we realized how important it is that producers find the right tone when addressing green production. Crew members don't want to be lectured, they rather want to be trained and—most of all—inspired.

Giving and Taking Responsibility

Conventional production culture—with its division of labour, hierarchical structure, freelance workers, and tight budget—seems to create a gap in which clear communication is lost regarding who is responsible for sustainable film production. In our conversations we noticed an implicit distinction between initiating and implementing green measures that resulted in conflicting expectations about who should take action. Since these expectations are often not discussed explicitly, sustainability remains an intention without manifest consequences.

In our conversation, the producer recognizes for example: 'Of course, the ultimate responsibility for sustainable production lies with the producer,' since they 'can choose whether or not to do this.' However, she immediately starts talking about the agency of others by saying: 'But in the end, the executive producer and production manager must push for it to actually happen, because they do all the negotiations and conversations with all the crew members.' It is noteworthy that when we asked her if she ever speaks with people in these positions about their alleged responsibility, her answer is a simple 'no.' A production manager with whom we talked, confirms this lack of communication about expectations regarding the implementation of sustainable measures. She considers

herself more than willing to stimulate and inspire more eco-friendly practices for her film crew. However, none of the producers or directors with whom she had worked so far had ever instructed her to actually bring up this topic.

Film directors seem to have a particular complicated role with regard do sustainable film production. Their power within a film production would allow them, on the one hand, to enforce environmentally acceptable methods of working. On the other hand, their primary task is related to creative aspects, and coming up with sustainable solutions is not their line of action. According to the director to whom we talked, it is nevertheless often directors who start the conversation about sustainability, while producers listen to them when it comes to taking decisions about green measures. However, the director seems to struggle with this power and adds: 'It's not like I make the films alone. If the director of photography says that something takes a lot of time, then I'm not the one who is going to work against him. Because that makes for a grumpy crew, which is bad for life on the set.' Especially his last remark indicates that he refrains from pushing his green ambition too much for fear of ruining the atmosphere as well as his own image. It is striking that even he seems to be afraid of a bad reputation, despite his position at the top of the food chain.

In our small-scale project we realized that there are above-the-line film professionals who strive for producing films in a more sustainable way. However, they refrain from imposing green measures on their crew, because they are afraid of resistance. They rather expect crew members to take action by implementing eco-friendly production methods on their own initiative. Conversely, there are below-the-line film professionals who would like to work more eco-friendly, however, they want to be guided and supported by their superiors. Film producers and directors seem to overlook these needs and miss the chance to inspire and train their crews about the possibilities of green film making. Creating a situation for open discussion could help to close the gap between green intentions and green actions.

The Image of Green Film Making

As mentioned before, Dutch films are often produced under great time pressure and with tight budgets. Therefore, producers do not make it a priority to invest in eco-consultancy, -education or extra hours for

the crew to do research into sustainable solutions. But eco-friendly film production depends on adjustments in the working routine, which in turn require knowledge and time. Because both are usually lacking, crew members often choose convenience and old habits over the environment. Environmentally aware producers, on the other hand, expect the crew to work in an eco-friendly way, but are either not aware of their needs (inspiration, training, support) or not able to facilitate them (more time). In the end, this complex situation leads to the perception that sustainable film production is first and foremost a hassle that involves extra workload or expenses.

In our conversation the production manager, for example, remarks that sustainable film production 'means extra work for everyone' and explains that 'crew members really have to do it all by themselves.' The producer mentions that green films are sometimes the result of economic considerations, although sustainability had never been an end in itself, and admits that she utilizes the argument of 'being green' since cost reductions can be easily entered on the sustainability side. Despite her awareness of the environmental impact of films, she does not seem to be willing to change working methods and implement more eco-friendly solutions. Instead, she uses films that are by accident (or due to financial restraints) produced in a sustainable way, to paint a rosy picture of the film makers' goals and visions.

The producer, director and production manager all suggest the need to appoint an eco-manager whom they envision a crew member who is knowledgeable in green solutions and contributes with their knowledge to producing a sustainable film. Although all three respondents consider the employment of such a person the best measure to green the Dutch film industry, they immediately voice their concerns about the budget and emphasize that under the given conditions it is impossible to hire an additional crew member. Rather they would want to train someone who is already on their payroll. The director suggests for example upgrading the skills of the production or location manager. 'That would be really nice for them,' he argues. 'Location managers never get anything; they are really at the bottom of the ladder. So, for them it would be really cool to get some extra training.' Putting an intern in charge of sustainability was another proposal we heard during our interviews, which indicates not only the low priority of adhering to environmentally acceptable working practices but also illustrates that those who rank high in a

film production's hierarchy envision a subordinate and rather powerless eco-manager.

In the Netherlands the perception of eco-friendly film production is intertwined with the image of Green Film Making, an organization initiated and financed by the Netherlands Film Fund and run by one sustainability manager. For many Dutch film professionals this individual symbolizes green film production as a whole. When asked about sustainable production practices our respondents almost immediately started to talk about the sustainability manager from whom they seem to expect a solution to the sector's environmental problems. In our interviews her description ranges from a woman with an impossible mission to a person who harasses producers and directors with sustainable solutions that don't match reality.

The production manager acknowledges the tough situation of the sustainability manager who 'had to do it all alone'. She claims that everybody feels the urgency to produce films in a more sustainable way, 'but we are at the same time all creatures of habit'. Passing responsibility to initiate change on to the sustainability manager she asks: 'How can one woman alone counter our habits?' Less empathetically the producer portrays her as 'a special woman with a mission' and describes the collaboration as 'annoying' since she causes everyone whom she approaches to think 'No, thank you! I really don't need this right now!' It is noteworthy that these depictions, echoed by the director, use gender biased language and are interspersed with connotations and stereotypes that devalue the work of the sustainability manager. At the same time our respondents place her and her green visions and ambitions in direct opposition to an 'unwilling' Dutch film industry—in which they themselves play a significant role.

Ethical and Financial Dilemmas

Some film professionals seem to struggle with a common dilemma: on the one hand films can convey social and political messages and their narratives can make a positive impact, while on the other hand all filmmaking essentially harms the environment and stopping film production altogether would be the most eco-friendly course of action. In our interviews eco-friendly considerations are therefore often contradicted by the importance of a story that needs to be told. The producer grapples most with her personal and professional contribution to the environmental crisis and admits: 'Sometimes I wonder: is it perhaps my social responsibility to

stop producing films? On the other hand, I really love this profession so much and some of the storytelling is so good! But at the same time, there is so much content created. I go back and forth about this all the time.' Similarly, the production manager asks herself to what extent it is still responsible to continue producing more and more films. Apparently, they are both struggling with a dilemma that leaves them paralyzed, since despite their awareness they do not—or cannot—take any action.

For the director, in contrast, the case is clear: As a filmmaker 'you must put content and creativity first. Otherwise, you just don't get the most out of the project's potential—and might as well not make a film at all'. With this reasoning, he creates a free pass to sideline environmental considerations. References to other industries with a significantly larger carbon footprint, like aviation ('Schiphol') or to the media industry of other countries ('Hollywood'), were another strategy that our interview partners used to point to the relatively small environmental impact of Dutch film production—and to salve their green conscious.

Funding schemes create another dilemma for filmmakers, since producers often resort to international co-productions to get a film financed, which in turn requires that a film is shot or produced in all co-funding regions or countries. This funding structure increases the transportation volume of a production, while at the same time the transport of people, equipment and goods causes the largest amount of CO_2 emission of a film.[6] The producer recognizes that 'co-productions are without a doubt bad for the environment and the planet' and explains that getting a film acknowledged internationally (for example at film festivals) basically presupposes that its crew moves around the globe, or at least across borders and regions. 'A story about a Dutch family [that is shot only] in the Netherlands' is simply 'not the right content' for an international market.

Her explanation points to the complex structure of and interdependencies within the film industry that complicates transformations and more sustainable practices. It is thus not only individual film professionals who shirk responsibility; with their selection of films that they consider transnationally appealing, festivals and distributors also hinder

[6] According to Albert (2020) 35% of the CO_2 emission of a British film production is created by fuel used in car journeys and 16% by air travel. For the Netherlands, MA students from the Sustainable Development program of Utrecht University estimate that more than 40% is created by transport of persons and goods (Akbarbeyglu et al. 2020).

more eco-friendly film production, as do funding schemes and national and international film policies. Their (explicit and implicit) requirements create a dilemma for filmmakers that in the end prevents them from taking any environmentally aware action at all.

This inability or unwillingness to act might also be related to the fact that in the Netherlands the climate crisis is still perceived as abstract and distant. Until the Dutch are standing up to their ankles in rising waters the urgency seems not to be tangible enough.[7] In the neoliberal Dutch society that praises itself for meeting environmental challenges with technological solutions (since centuries) and answers ethical questions with market-oriented pragmatism, reflecting upon dilemmas can function as smokescreen that camouflages the lack of action. This doesn't mean to deny their reality, however: being caught in such dilemmas assures oneself the comfortable combination of gesturing to environmental engagement without having to change one's lifestyle or work practices. In the Dutch film industry this attitude leads not only to a continuation of business as usual, it also misses the opportunity to integrate environmental topics (subtle or prominently) in a film's story world to create awareness and therefore make an impact.

Conclusions

Our small-scale interview project shows that Dutch film professionals are quite aware of the environmental impact of film production and are knowledgeable of sustainable solutions, but are not taking action to implement more eco-friendly practices. Their responses indicate several reasons for this paradoxical situation. Firstly, it seems that due to the particular work culture and hierarchical structure that characterize film production in the Netherlands, nobody is taking responsibility for initiating or integrating environmentally aware production practices. Film professionals in all hierarchical layers attach great value and importance to their reputation and are afraid of damaging their status by asking for green solutions. Particularly low-ranking workers refrain from suggesting or implementing more eco-friendly ways of working in order to get hired for the next job. To get out of this gridlock, producers and directors need to emphasize the urgency and importance of environmentally aware work

[7] In contrast, the Covid 19 pandemic demonstrated that due to urgency it was easily and in no time possible to change working routines and to allocate extra time and money.

practices and encourage and support their crew in changing their work routines, habits and behavior.

Secondly, a hierarchically loaded communication gap seems to hamper the implementation of green film production. Below-the-line workers expect guidance from above, while producers are reluctant to give instructions, fear resistance of their crew and are in turn waiting for higher authorities to make a move. Policy makers at the Netherlands Film Fund on the other hand are hesitant to formalize environmental commitment and, rather, assume that filmmakers initiate voluntarily sustainable ways of working.[8] However, none of these expectations are clearly communicated. Greening the Dutch film production therefore first and foremost requires an open discussion that involves all hierarchical layers to clarify existing assumptions, create a shared vision, find workable solutions, and make sure that the responsibility for environmentally aware ways of working is accepted collectively.

Finally, it became clear to us that the way in which films are currently financed constrains the implementation of more eco-friendly practices of production. Tight budgets and the related time pressure result in standard routines and leave no room for thinking about new, sustainable ways of film production. However, working with environmental awareness necessitates training and planning. To make the Dutch film industry greener therefore requires extra money and time to enable training crews and to research and plan sustainable solutions before a production starts.

A comparison with other countries demonstrates how sustainable film production can be stimulated, for example by awarding eco-labels, using financial incentives (bonus, tax rebates etc.) or offering workshops and coaching.[9] Environmentally aware ways of working can even be made compulsory by obliging every film production that receives funding to get certified, to work with a CO_2 calculator or employ an eco-manager.[10] It is noteworthy that it is usually funding agencies or film commissions that

[8] During a round table discussion at the Netherlands Film Festival in 2021 a representative of the Netherlands Film Fund expressed this reluctance and justified it by arguing that 'the Dutch' don't like to follow rules.

[9] See for example the policies of the Flanders Audiovisual Fund, the film commissions of Trentino, Mallorca or Lower Austria, or of Creative Europe. For more on environmental media policy see also Kääpä (2018).

[10] See for example the Flanders Audiovisual Fund, the media and film funds in Baden-Württemberg (Germany) and the film funds Hamburg Schleswig-Holstein (Germany).

adapted their policy to set change in motion, and it is thus the Netherlands Film Fund that should play an important role in greening the Dutch film industry.

In addition to reconsidering its policy the Netherlands Film Fund should also reflect on the way it installed, financed and presented the sustainability manager to the industry. Due to the missed opportunity to promote her aims and services in combination with the absence of a green ambition, the Netherlands Film Fund played a part in how the sustainability manager was perceived by the Dutch film industry. With its lack of action the Netherlands Film Fund has demonstrated the low priority that it attached to sustainability in the last few years.

Greening the Dutch film industry can't just be limited to film production, it is also necessary to take distribution and content into account. On the one hand, filmmakers need to know (and try to reduce) the ecological footprint of the production and distribution of their films; on the other hand, they should be aware of the social impact that their stories might have. While studies into eco-cinema discuss a variety of films that are able to inspire environmental consciousness, there are only few Dutch films that deal with the degradation of the planet. Telling stories about environmental topics could even provide an answer to the ethical dilemma as to whether or not, in light of its footprint, film production should continue at all, since it could be argued that a film is worth its emissions if it contributes sufficiently to raising public awareness for the urgency of climate action.

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www.emeraldinsight.com/2040-7149.htm

Institutional racism in the film industry: a multilevel perspective

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Received 11 May 2017
Revised 3 August 2017
14 November 2017
Accepted 29 November 2017

Abstract

Purpose – While the notion of institutional racism typically focuses on racial discrimination in institutions such as governmental organisations, academic institutions and courts of law, there is a need to complement this organisational (meso) focus with the investigation of relevant factors at the societal (macro) and individual (micro) levels. The purpose of this paper is to examine the multilevel factors influencing institutional racism in the film industry.
Design/methodology/approach – Drawing on 16 in-depth interviews with individuals working in the film industry, this paper develops a conceptual perspective of multilevel racism.
Findings – The findings highlight how power structures, network-based recruitment practices, as well as formal and informal learning lead to and sustain racism in the film industry. However, agency on an individual level is observed as a way to break those patterns.
Originality/value – The findings highlight how individual agency pushes for more equality and diversity in the film industry, despite the barriers encountered on macro- and meso-levels. In addition, the important role of informal and formal learning through observation is stressed as a means to sustain the discriminatory practices in this industry.

Keywords Gender, Multilevel perspective, Racism, Film industry, Agency
Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Recent research has highlighted strong inequalities in the film industry (Jones and Pringle, 2015; Randle and Hardy, 2017; Wing-Fai *et al.*, 2015). The existence of racism in society and organisations alike cannot be denied and the film industry is no exception (Bhavnani, 2007). The film industry comprises the technological and commercial institutions of filmmaking, such as film production, screenwriting, acting, distribution; and actors, film directors and other film crew personnel. Focusing on the film industry, a recent study reveals that only 28.3 per cent of all speaking characters in films and TV series are from under-represented racial/ethnic groups (Smith *et al.*, 2016), which is about 10 per cent below the proportion in the US population (37.9 per cent) (USCB, 2015).

While studies on institutional racism have typically focused on racial discrimination in social institutions such as governmental organisations, schools, police and judiciary (e.g. Lopez, 2000), this organisational (meso) focus needs to be complemented with the study of relevant factors at the societal (macro) and individual (micro) levels in order to provide a more complete picture. This paper addresses this gap by developing a multilevel perspective of institutional racism in the film industry. By adopting a multilevel approach, we are able to shed light on how inequalities are produced and sustained thereby developing an integrated understanding of institutional racism (Nkomo, 1992; Phillips, 2011).

We make two inter-related contributions. First, we draw on multilevel insights to develop a holistic picture of institutional racism in the film industry. We argue that unless racism is understood and tackled at multiple levels in an integrated manner, instances and challenges of racial discrimination and under-representation are likely to persist. Second, our study is also a response to calls for more research on intersectionality (Chow *et al.*, 2013;

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal
Vol. 37 No. 6, 2018
pp. 551-565
© Emerald Publishing Limited
2040-7149
DOI 10.1108/EDI-05-2017-0108

Hancock, 2016). We treat intersectionality as an important analytic tool to theorise issues of diversity and oppression (Nash, 2008), which are evident in the mutual reproduction of racial, gender and class relations (Acker, 2006). “Race” refers to socially defined differences based on physical characteristics, culture and historical domination and oppression, justified by entrenched beliefs (Acker, 2006, p. 444). We examine issues of intersectionality of race and gender facing women of colour in the film industry.

Multilevel perspective of institutional racism

Institutional racism refers to particular and general instances of racial discrimination, inequality and domination in organisational or institutional contexts, such as the labour market, industry or wider society (Ahmed, 2012; Carmichael and Hamilton, 1967). It may be observed in processes, attitudes and behaviours which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage ethnic minority people. White individuals are greatly over-represented in the film industry, disadvantaging non-white individuals (Quinn, 2011). There is also a phenomenon of whitewashing (Fox, 2013) – a casting practice in which white actors are cast in historically non-white character roles–which occurs in drama schools, casting offices and mainstream media.

We use Syed and Özbilgin’s (2009) relational framework of diversity to theorise institutional racism at multiple levels. Syed and Özbilgin (2009) argued that issues of diversity and discrimination need to be understood and addressed at the macro-societal level in terms of legislative and socio-cultural contexts, meso-organisational level in terms of organisational structures and routines and micro-individual level in terms of identity, intersectionality and agency.

We use the above framework to construct a holistic, multilevel perspective of institutional racism. While racism is often treated as an organisational phenomenon, we argue that academics and policymakers also needs to consider macro- and micro-level dimensions of racism.

Macro-level

The macro-level factors of racism are related to provisions for racial equality (or lack thereof) within national legislation, social customs and cultural traditions. For example, in the absence of legal provisions for racial equality and their active enforcement in education, employment and wider society, racial/ethnic minorities are likely to remain disadvantaged and discriminated against (Geddes, 2004), although discrimination and therefore disadvantages can also remain despite existing legislation, albeit in subtler ways (Bennington and Wein, 2000). Similarly, issues of social stereotyping and xenophobia are known for their adverse impact on racial minorities (Yakushko, 2009). In white majority societies, for example, whiteness may be seen as a marker that guarantees different levels of access in terms of economic, social and cultural capital (Garner, 2006). As a result, these factors serve to construct and sustain power hierarchies in organisations and societies.

Regarding the power structures, there is evidence that power in the film industry is unequally distributed such that few individuals, mainly white men, hold much of the decision-making power (Blair, 2003), giving way to personal biases and preferences. Such biases are also evident in acting schools and drama workshops. For example, Pagan (2015) explained how a superficial commitment to diversity and racially biased structures and attitudes characterise the Fine Arts degree programmes of a top school of dramatic arts in the USA. Amongst other things, Pagan noted, “the way in which these plays are selected, structured and presented reveals the systemic racism [...]” (para. 2), showing that progress is slow or inexistent.

Meso-level

At the meso-level, institutional racism operates through organisational structures, processes, norms and outcomes. These factors also affect the relationships among individuals working in an organisation or industry, which in turn lead to formal and informal hierarchies (Blair *et al.*, 2003). In this paper, we focus on network-based recruitment practices and formal and informal learning.

First, network-based recruitment practices are commonplace within the film industry and are central to initiating, developing and maintaining work as they provide exposure to people in positional power, increase market visibility and enable workers to leverage a place within the network of decision makers (Lee, 2011). Such networks or "cliques" (Manning and Sydow, 2007) are known for their potential to be both discriminatory and exclusionary in terms of race and gender (Grugulis and Stoyanova, 2012; Handy and Rowlands, 2014; Hennekam and Bennett, 2017), age (Hennekam, 2015) and disability (Randle and Hardy, 2017). Workers outside these networks and who lack the required social capital have difficulties obtaining work and advancing their careers (Antcliff *et al.*, 2007; Grugulis and Stoyanova, 2012).

Second, formal and informal learning constitutes a means through which newcomers learn the norms and rules of the industry. In line with social learning theory (Bandura, 1977a) that posits that behaviour is learned from the environment through the process of observational learning and socialisation, we argue that individuals learn the rules of the game in the film industry both during formal and informal learning opportunities. Informal learning opportunities are common in the film industry as most individuals start as "runner" which usually implies no pay but offers the opportunity to learn the ropes.

Micro-level

The micro-level consists of individual identities, interactions and strategies. First, intersectionality may influence the experiences of individuals. Intersectionality refers to overlapping or intersecting social identities and related systems of oppression, domination or discrimination (Crenshaw, 1991). Intersectionality is the idea that multiple identities such as race, gender and social class are not unitary or mutually exclusive entities, but reciprocally constructing phenomena (Collins, 2015). While the disadvantaged position of women in the film industry has been well documented (Conor *et al.*, 2015; Grugulis and Stoyanova, 2012; Handy and Rowlands, 2014; Wing-Fai *et al.*, 2015), less is known about women who simultaneously belong to an ethnic minority group. In the film industry, the literature suggests that women of colour remain more disadvantaged than their white cohorts (Brah and Phoenix, 2013). For example, in their recent analysis of women and power in film, Sutherland and Feltey (2017) showed that films depicting women's empowerment are predominantly tales of white, middle class women. In contrast, women of colour are most likely to be featured in dominated and subordinate roles, such as maids and nurses.

Second, individuals can also express agency by going against prevailing practices. The expression of agency can be related to the notion of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy concerns the belief in one's ability to complete a specific task or reach a goal successfully (Bandura, 1997b). The presence of role models in the form of successful females of ethnic minority origins in the film industry has a signalling function in that it shows that career success is possible, positively affecting their self-efficacy beliefs. Role models are described as "individuals whose behaviours, personal styles, and specific attributes are emulated by others" (Shapiro *et al.,* 1978, p. 52). Role models are important as they can provide a source of information, encouragement and support (BarNir *et al.*, 2011).

Methods

This study seeks to develop in-depth insights into institutional racism in the film industry using a multilevel framework that links the micro-, meso- and macro-level factors that shape

this phenomenon. Our approach followed the guidelines for qualitative methodology outlined by Miles and Huberman (1994) and Strauss and Corbin (1990), using an inductive interpretivist approach. We draw on 16 in-depth interviews with individuals working in the film industry in the Netherlands. Hereunder the characteristics of the sample, the followed procedures and the analysis are outlined.

Study's context

This study took place in the Netherlands. While this country is self-defined as a liberal and tolerant country, it has been argued that a backlash has occurred in public discourses about ethnic minorities both in organisations and in the society as a whole (Entzinger, 2014). In addition, ethnic minorities are often in a disadvantaged position which cannot be explained by low human capital attributes, meaning that there is institutional discrimination and racism (Vasta, 2007).

Sample

This study reports on 16 in-depth interviews with individuals in the film industry in the Netherlands. The interviews focused on different aspects of diversity and identity in the film industry. The interview guide included questions about the interviewees' career path, different activities, their identity and how they entered the film industry. Of the 16 interviewees, 9 were women and 7 were non-white individuals. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were chosen since they provide an opportunity for detailed investigation of personal views and experiences of each interviewee. All interviews were held in 2015 and lasted, on average, for about one to one-and-a-half hours. The demographic characteristics of the sample can be found in Table I.

Procedures

The interviewees were contacted by the researcher and an individual interview was scheduled. Interviewees were recruited through a combination of chain referral and convenience sampling techniques (Miles and Huberman, 1994). All interviews were conducted by Skype and were audio recorded. Anonymity was guaranteed and the interviewees were told they could stop the interview at any time. The interviews were conducted in Dutch and lasted for about one-and-a-half hour. The number of interviews was

Table I. Demographic characteristics of sample

Arts practice	Gender	Race/ethnicity	Age
Actress	Female	Creole	29
Producer	Female	White	29
Script writer/producer	Female	Asian	39
Actress/producer/writer	Female	Asian	38
Producer	Female	White	30
Actress	Female	White	29
Actress	Female	Creole	36
Actress/script writer/producer	Female	Black	36
Actress	Female	White	27
Actress	Female	White	29
Producer/playwright	Male	White	43
Writer	Male	White	41
Agent	Male	Black	38
Art director	Male	Asian	45
Assistant producer	Female	White	26
Make-up artist	Male	White	33

not determined beforehand, however, we stopped conducting more interviews when saturation point was reached. An interview guide was used (see the Appendix), but in line with the semi-structured design, the researcher was open to discuss other issues brought up by the interviewees. As a consequence, the interview guide was dynamic and evolved as more interviews were conducted.

We acknowledge that studies on sensitive topics that employ qualitative interviews may elicit socially desirable responses from the interviewees. We adopted four conscious strategies from the research design to the data collection to minimise social desirability bias. Ananthram and Chan (2016) recommended a multi-strategy approach that has been reported to be most effective. We first ensured that interviewees voluntarily participated in the study. This was clearly communicated at the outset and allowed interviewees to be comfortable with the interview process as well as the data analysis and reporting processes. Second, we assured interviewees anonymity at every stage of the research to minimise pressure to respond in a socially desirable manner. Our third strategy included conducting one-on-one interviews in familiar and comfortable surroundings. Moreover, the interviews were conducted at a time convenient to the interviewee to maximise their comfort level. As part of our final strategy, it was explained to the interviewees that there were no right or wrong answers, thereby encouraging them to elaborate on the responses using anecdotal evidence.

Analysis

The interviews were audio recorded and fully transcribed. The analysis was conducted in three inter-related steps based on the Gioia method (Gioia *et al.*, 2013). This is displayed in Figure 1.

It is important to mention that the analysis was iterative in nature and that we had to go back and forth between the transcriptions, coding book and additional observational notes that were taken right after each interview was conducted in order not to lose sight of the context in which things were said.

The analysis evolved from the first-order themes to broader categories and dimensions in the last and third step. During the first step of the analysis, the researcher read the entire transcripts to get a feel for the data. Then, one researcher started the coding process by using an initial list of codes based on the literature. Although some codes were based on the literature, such as the importance of intersectionality and network-based recruitment practices, others emerged organically from the data, such as formal and informal learning. There was mindful openness to new themes not previously identified in the literature (Locke, 2001). The codebook was constantly modified by adding new codes, creating sub-codes or merging some codes, as the existing codes were tested against each new transcript. Figure 1 shows the data analysis structure. The first-order themes can be found on the left in Figure 1.

In the second step of the analysis and after the coding on the data, the researcher focused on the connections between the codes and the identification of second-order conceptual codes. There was a deliberate departure from the rather descriptive formulation of first-order codes, where the words of the interviewees themselves were used, to a higher level of abstraction where meaningful themes were created based on the first-order themes (Locke, 2001; Strauss and Corbin, 1990). These themes can be found in the middle in Figure 1. The main themes that were identified in the data were “power structures,” “network-based recruitment practices,” “formal and informal learning,” “intersectionality of gender and race/ethnicity” and “agency”. At this stage, we regrouped the different themes under the different levels: micro (intersectionality and agency), meso (network-based recruitment practices and formal and informal learning) and macro (power structures). In addition, connections between the different themes and concepts that were conceptually

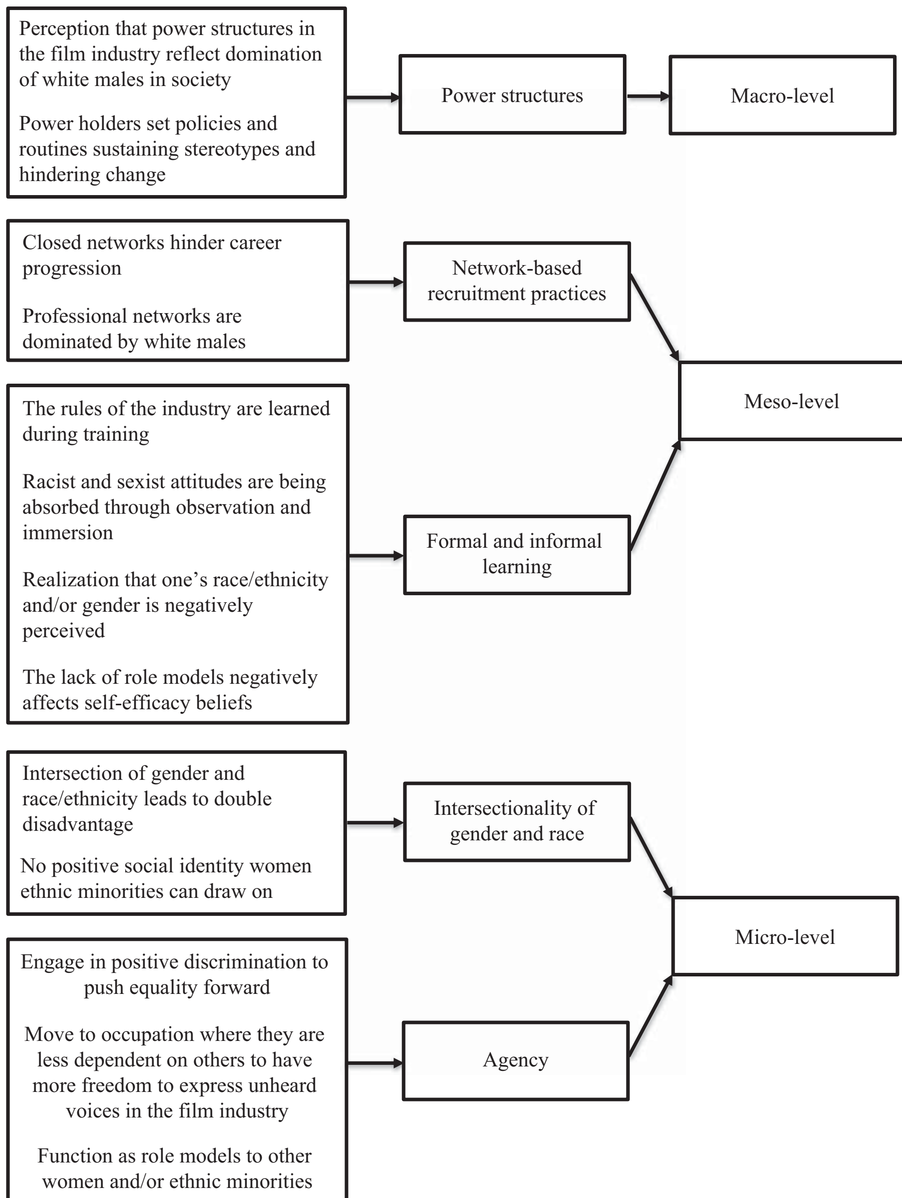

Figure 1.
Data analysis structure

meaningful were explored in order to provide a conceptual perspective of institutional racism in the film industry. The different themes were perceived to be inter-related such as the reflection of power structures in both the society as a whole (macro-level) and within the film industry (meso-level).

In the third and final step of the analysis, the literature was consulted to examine the conceptualisation related to previous research and read more about themes that had emerged from the data in order to determine whether any key constructs were missed.

For example, the importance of formal and informal learning was something we had not anticipated and it was necessary to become familiar with this body of literature in order to be able to put the findings in perspective.

Findings

The analysis of interviews and personal stories reveals a range of aspects that contribute to and sustain a process of institutional racism. The different macro-, meso- and micro- factors as part of the multilevel perspective are used to provide explanations for the findings obtained. The key themes that emerged from our analyses are depicted in Table II and the resulting conceptual perspective is presented in Figure 2.

The findings are discussed in more detail below. Quotes are provided to illustrate our main points.

Macro-level: power structures

On macro-level, the interviewees stressed that the inequalities they experienced were strongly embedded in the power structures they observed in society as a whole, as a young assistant producer explains:

> What do you want me to do about it? It's the same everywhere, in other organisations, in schools, in the government, in society. It just reflects what we see everywhere around us: that some people dominate others and that those people are in positions of power (Female, 26 years, assistant producer, white).

Theme	Level/s	Description
Power structures	Macro and meso	Domination by males and white individuals as power holders and decision makers
Network-based recruitment practices	Meso	Closed networks dominated by white males, resulting in on-going stereotypes and hindering equality and diversity
Formal and informal learning	Meso	Individuals learn the "rules" and "norms" of the industry during their training and through observation
Intersectionality of gender and race/ethnicity	Micro	Non-white females are in a particular precarious situation because of intersectionality of their race and gender
Agency	Micro	Express of agency to push equality forward by moving to positions where they are no longer dependent on others, function as role models and engage in positive discrimination whenever possible

Table II. Multilevel themes of institutional racism in the film industry

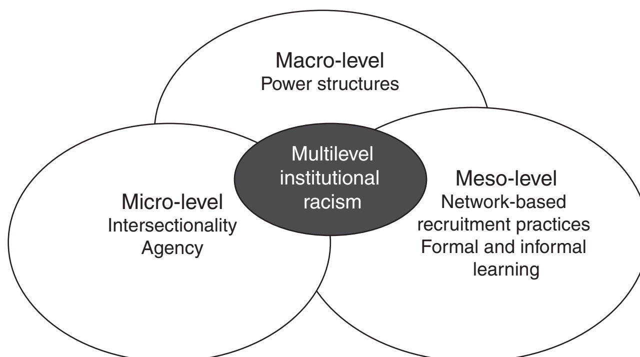

Figure 2. Conceptual model based on the findings

As the power holders in the industry are white males, these are also the ones who set policies and routines. The agent below has some decision-making power but as those decisions can be overruled by others with more power, he feels it is difficult to make any progress:

> It isn't easy to challenge the status quo as I'm not the one who takes decisions. Only the ones who are in such positions can implement the changes needed to improve the under-representation of ethnic minorities in film (Male, 38 years, agent, non-white).

This was considered problematic as this often reinforces stereotypes that prevail in wider society. Non-white individuals, females in particular, explained that they were often recruited and depicted in a stereotypical way, thereby reinforcing social stereotypes. Often they were depicted in a submissive, sexual or caring role and black people as sportive for men and inferior for women, as the following non-white actress explains:

> I always get offered the same kind of role: nurse, maid […] This is confirming the existing stereotypes and preconceived ideas. It puts me in this outdated stigmatised identity. I feel this is important, as we are also full persons, with our own character with a complex identity. It's always the same angle that is taken, reducing us to the stereotype we represent. If we want social progress, this needs to be tackled (Female, 29 years, actress, non-white).

Meso-level: network-based recruitment practices

At the meso-level, the study indicates how opportunities for employment are shaped by the interviewees' micro-individual identity (race and its intersection with gender) and social networks. The interviewees refer to hiring and promotion practices where "who you know" and "who you are" seem to be more important than "what you can". They suggest that the existing networks are closed to people of colour and women and that it hinders their career progression:

> Discrimination is part of the culture of the film- and theatre industry. It's ingrained somehow, it's because there is this existing network and people are systematically excluded (Female, 39 years, script writer/producer, non-white).

> Roles are fulfilled based on a network of friends who have known each other for a long time. It's impossible to get a foot in the door if you're not "one of them". I don't know if this is because I'm a woman and the main power-holders are men or because I'm not white. Maybe a combination of both (Female, 36 years, actress, non-white).

Meso-level: formal and informal learning

In terms of racial gaps in the film industry, the study points towards where it all starts: during one's training. Interviewees explained that they learned the "rules of the industry" during their training. Bandura (1977a) suggested that behaviour is learned from the environment through a process of observational learning and socialisation. People observe the behaviour of others in given situations and note the outcomes of these behaviours. During training, new actors absorb stereotypical behaviours as well as racist and/or sexist attitudes from others. The following art director explains how he thinks that people probably do not even notice how they get used to racist comments:

> You learn the rules of the game well before you get into the real world of the film industry. You somehow get used to comments that are actually quite racist. As it's a gradual process you probably do not even notice unless it affects you directly (Male, 45 years, art director, non-white).

The interviewees explained that people were treated differently during their training, based on race and gender. Moreover, they reported incidents where people who made their racial identity too salient were "punished":

> I remember a teacher who said something like: "don't be too Creole in the way you move. Try to minimise it, we don't want people to be different" to someone from the Dutch Caribbean. I found it so insulting (Female, 29 years, actress, white).

The participants then use this knowledge to shape their own behaviour in similar contexts and expect to obtain similar outcomes. This reflects social learning that occurs within a context in which people learn from one another and, as such, is a cognitive process in which people make sense of what they observe. This also leads some individuals to hide or reduce their stigmatised identity, such as the following African actress:

> I quickly understood what it takes to be successful. You should be male and white, pretty and social. You need to be affluent and have the right connections. I'm now downplaying my African origin, as it seems that this can only work to my disadvantage (Female, 36 years, actress/script writer/producer, non-white).

The absence of role models emerged as an indicator that breaking into and moving on in the film industry was not without barriers. In addition, it made them wonder whether they could be successful as there seemed to be so few successful examples:

> How many black women actresses are there? Very very few. The day I realised that it was kind of discouraging. Why would I succeed if others before me didn't? (Female, 29 years, actress, non-white).

Micro-level: intersectionality

The study highlights the importance of the intersection of race and gender. It highlights unique experiences of racial minority women and shows that their experiences indeed differ from individuals with only one stigmatised identity. Racial minority women were aware of this particular situation, as the following extracts indicate:

> I want to speak about the fact that I'm black and I'm a woman. While this seems unimportant to some, it does make a difference. Let me explain. We all want an identity that is valued and recognised by others. However, as a woman I'm in a disadvantaged position compared to men. Being black gives me a second disadvantage. In other words, while white women can stress their whiteness to bond with other white people and black men can stress their male-identity, I have no positive identity I can draw on (Female, 39 years, script writer/producer, non-white).

> The lack of interesting roles for women in which we are depicted as respected and multifaceted individuals (not as nurses, mothers etc.) shows that the industry or maybe the society as a whole fails to recognise our stories (Female, 36 years, actress/script writer/producer, non-white).

Micro-level: agency

The data show that individuals express agency despite the perceived barriers of macro- and meso-levels. For example, they engage in positive discrimination whenever there is an opportunity to do so. However, it is important to note that they do not consider this to be desirable, but rather see it as a necessity or a "first step" that could lead to more equality in the long run:

> As a white playwright, I noticed that there are very few plays written that involve black people. I'm now deliberately writing plays that involve people of colour, because if I don't do it they won't have work and this under-representation will continue (Male, 43 years, playwright, white).

In addition, they mentioned that they could only act on their personal level, which is what they did. This was mentioned by four interviewees:

> We cannot change what others are doing, so the only thing you can accomplish is on your own, personal level. What I'm trying to do is to challenge the stereotypes in my writing. I think that continuous exposure to other ideas will help people change their mind and finally the general mentality and stereotypes people have (Female, 39 years, script writer/producer, non-white).

Some of these women moved to an occupation where they were less dependent on others. Especially a shift from acting to writing/producing emerged from the data. Three interviewees

explained that this gave them more freedom to express the voices of under-represented groups in the industry:

> I started as an actress, but there are very few roles for non-white women. I felt I couldn't show my capabilities and develop my career. However, what made me switch to writing after all those years was the urge to tell my story, my shared story about how it is to be a non-white female actress. Instead of feeling frustrated, I now feel I'm making a contribution (Female, 38 years, actress/producer/writer, non-white).

Finally, four interviewees adopt a long-term perspective and highlight that they want to function as role models for future generations as they feel the road to equality in the film industry will be a long one:

> It's important to me to be seen, to be present. For me, being visible is a way of showing that women of colour exist. By getting as much exposure as possible, no matter what role, I hope to encourage young women of colour to pursue a career in theatre, TV or film (Female, 36 years, actress, non-white).

Discussion

Drawing on in-depth interviews with individuals working in the film industry, we enhance our understanding of the multilevel nature of institutional racism in the film industry.

At the macro-level, the existing power holders in decision-making positions were perceived to maintain or even reinforce stereotypes by placing individuals in roles that would confirm the stereotypes about them. They explained that they were often chosen for a role to fulfil a token strategy, instead of being chosen for their skills.

At the meso-level, the findings showed that the process starts during the period in which individuals are trained for the film industry. At this early stage, individuals learn the "rules" of the industry through social learning and observation (Bandura, 1977a). By observing others, they learn what behaviour is considered appropriate. They quickly realise that not everyone is equal in the film industry and that being "different" from the mainstream is an obstacle for their career advancement. Moreover, the absence of role models in the form of successful ethnic minority women signals that non-white women might be unwelcome in the film industry or are less likely to succeed (Buunk *et al.*, 2007). Once being active in the industry and trying to establish oneself, the interviewees mentioned the white-male dominated networks that were difficult to break into, hindering their opportunities to show what they were worth.

At the micro-level, the study highlighted how ethnic minority women's experiences were unique as they faced multiple disadvantages due to stigmatisation and stereotyping of their race and gender. However, the study also highlighted how some of these women (and also men) used their individual agency and resilience to address such challenges. The above-mentioned factors hindered the progression of non-white individuals. As a consequence of those power structures, they stressed the need for positive action in order to initiate a meaningful change in the industry. While they are waiting for this to happen, a natural selection is taking place in which some individuals with a multiple disadvantage may be moving to occupations where they are less dependent on others and thus have the freedom and space to tell their stories. Individuals who have to deal with the intersection of several stigmatised social identities are an overlooked group and encounter multiple disadvantages. They explained being unable to draw on a socially validated or privileged identity and faced challenges of intersectionality and adverse stereotypes. Finally, they highlighted the importance of becoming a role model themselves to show what is possible for future generations.

Theoretical implications

This paper has developed and used a multilevel perspective on institutional racism. It has highlighted the need to depart from single-level conceptualisations—which limit racism to

institutional and organisational rules, norms and biases alone—to an integrated, holistic understanding of racism at three interconnected and overlapping levels. In particular, it has highlighted the need to consider how power hierarchies and differences at the macro-societal level overlap with racial and gender hierarchies and differences at the meso-organisational level which are evident in the shape of network-based staffing as well as opportunities for formal and informal learning. At the micro-level, it has highlighted the need to consider intersections of race with gender and also individual strategies used in response to racial and gender hierarchies and discrimination.

For the sake of comparison and evaluation, future scholars may examine institutional racism at multiple levels in the film industry in other countries such as the USA, UK, Canada and Australia as well as in other creative industries such as television and theatres. Scholars may also look at other dimensions of the multilevel framework such as laws and ethnic or social norms, and diversity agendas and policies of organisations, and how they affect racism and sexism in the film and other industries.

Practical implications

The findings have some important practical implications. First of all, change is clearly needed. However, organisational change may also inherently disrupt the culture, common practices and ways of working of an institution (Blitz and Kohl, 2012). Still, the call for change in the way the film industry operates is getting louder and the existing power holders probably have to engage in a debate that will imply some meaningful changes. It has been argued that open two-way communication is critical in such as process in that individuals feel valued and heard (Devine, 2010). One possibility is to use racial affinity groups. Racial affinity groups are processes where people of the same racial group meet on a regular basis to discuss the dynamics of institutional racism, oppression and privilege within their institution (Blitz and Kohl, 2012). Such groups can provide forums for communication and group members can offer insights to help move the changes forward.

Second and related to the formal and informal training, the study points towards the need to design and implement training programmes—for actors, directors, producers, writers and technical and auxiliary personnel—in a manner that is not only inclusive in terms of race and ethnicity but also in terms of gender and other forms of identity. This could be enacted through monitoring enrolments as well as positive action to attract members of the under-represented groups with an attention to their internal heterogeneity. Established academies as well as government organisations may offer scholarships and other incentives to eligible and deserving members of black, Asian and Hispanic communities including women to bridge the current racial and gender gaps in this profession.

The Scandinavian model of increasing diversity through affirmative action (Seierstad and Opsahl, 2011) may be seen as a way forward. If the aim is to correct an injustice of the past and to put an end to perpetual whiteness, this seems to be a reasonable solution. Change in the film sector towards greater equality, diversity and inclusion, as Tatli and Özbilgin (2012) argued, requires increasing the class, gender and racial diversity of the leadership as well raising existing leaders' awareness of systematic bias in this sector.

Finally, role models could provide women from ethnic minorities with the support and encouragement they need to initiate and sustain their career in the film industry (BarNir *et al.*, 2011). Previous research has shown that women are more inspired by other women as they can more easily relate to them (Hennekam, 2016). In addition, role models need to be perceived as similar (Sealy and Singh, 2010) as well as realistic and attainable (Lockwood and Kunda, 1997). As a consequence, more visible women of colour in the film industry could help to increase equality, diversity and inclusion in the film industry.

Limitations and suggestions for future research

While this study provided some insights into the process of institutional racism in the film industry, it is not without shortcomings.

First, the starting point of intersectional research has been the recognition that gender intersects with other social identities (Crenshaw, 1991) and we chose to focus on race. We agree with Jones (2009) that intersectionality is a useful heuristic for illuminating the complexities of the lived experience and for exploring the relationships between identity categories, individual differences, social structures and systems of inequality. However, in line with Warner and Shields (2013), we argue that intersectionality applies to all identities. Indeed, the study showed that the intersection with other dimensions such sexual orientation also revealed interesting findings. While this was considered to be beyond the scope of this paper, we strongly recommend future studies to study the intersectionality of other diversity dimensions especially under-studied ones such as disability (Randle and Hardy, 2017).

Second, we cannot exclude that national or industry culture may have influenced the findings. We suggest that future studies take the national, regional and/or industry variances into account.

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Choreographic Practices
Volume 9 Number 1
© 2018 Intellect Ltd Editorial. English language. doi: 10.1386/chor.9.1.3_2

EDITORIAL

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Performing ecologies in a world in crisis

The eco-somatic concept that body sensibility and conscious action can facilitate planetary awareness has provided the basis for this issue's investigations of ecology and performance. Authors represented here envision their relationships to performance and choreography through body and ecology, and in contexts of crisis. Editors Sondra Fraleigh and Robert Bingham, who have collaborated on several scholarly and creative projects related to ecological crisis, introduce themselves and the contributions of this issue in their dialogue below.

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Guest (guest)

Robert: In the summer of 2015, when I interviewed you for my dissertation 'Improvising meaning in the age of humans', we often spoke about connecting to place and earth through the body in dance. This exchange drew on your philosophical and historical writing in dance and on our collaborative improvisations in the desert near your home in St. George, Utah. Our dialogue continued long after that summer through e-mails and phone calls, eventually leading to this collaboration as editors for the current issue of *Choreographic Practices*. At what point did environmental crisis become a focal point of our inquiry?

Sondra: We were humming along in my car, returning home to St. George, having just improvised a barefoot dance in nearby Snow Canyon with the soft multi-coloured sandstone there. I was still holding the burnt rose and bright orange colours as an inner world-sight when I asked you what you saw as the emerging urgent research field in dance scholarship. Without hesitation, you said 'ecology and performance'. And I thought, 'Wow', how could I have missed that? What have I been dancing just this very morning?

Robert: I remember that day vividly, though I don't remember the exchange you describe. That must have been the moment of revealing the orientation of our highly improvisational interview. I wanted to delve into the relationship of body and earth through dance and to find meaning in today's context of crisis, even if the latter remained unacknowledged initially. I knew you would have much to contribute to this inquiry, as you have written often about dance and somatic processes as means of accessing ecological knowledge and remembering connection to earth. This appears repeatedly as a theme in your phenomenological writing, as well as your writing on butoh, though not necessarily as a central theme (1987, 2004, 2010). I was trying to foreground it, though I don't think the notion of crisis had yet entered into our dialog. I recall that it came later and that you were, initially, unconvinced. What led you to change your mind?

Sondra: Well […] No one really likes to think about crisis, and it is a thorny research topic, difficult to scrutinize systematically. I finally realized that the need to think about environmental crisis, to write about it and encourage others to become advocates for protecting our precious planet and assessing our collective fate. Yes, I use this word 'fate' decidedly. It is a bit old-fashioned and mythologically final, but indeed we humans have a collective project. We are all in this together; climate circles the globe and touches everyone and everything. Climate warming is the most pressing issue we face collectively, and we won't get a second chance to change our behaviour for the better.

It is easy enough to speak about planetary crisis in everyday conversation, to get angry at deniers and hope that will be enough, but to take a position and defend it in research requires much more specificity and commitment. While many turn to science, we turn to art, presenting a collection of articles that show how dance and performance can reflect crisis and take activist stances in the face of fascinating challenges. Admittedly, we might wonder whether dance performance, or any other

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kind, actually makes a difference? I will never be able to prove it, but I think it can and does. Individually and collectively, we need to pay attention in all the ways that we can. Our way here is through arts activism, making it more visible in performance, word and image. Every attempt to make a difference counts. As one of my friends tells me, 'the field grows green one blade at a time'.

Careful research often begins with a definition of terms, Robert. Do you think crisis needs to be defined? There are many kinds, and we are primarily concerned with environmental crises (in the plural).

Robert: Over the past couple of years of research, I have avoided defining environmental crisis in a limiting way. In my dissertation (2017) and other recent publications (2018a, 2018b) I reference climate change, pollution, and species extinction, and I invoke the Anthropocene, the geologic concept defining human activity as the dominant geophysical force influencing the movements of the Earth System, including hydrologic, carbon and nitrogen cycles. All of these have profound implications for human and non-human species and systems. I have chosen not to isolate out any single factor or phenomenon, both because of their interconnectedness and because my interest is in promoting an inclusive discourse that allows people to define crisis according to their knowledge and experience. We signalled this preference in our Call for Submissions for this issue, where we identified possible topics but left the door open to perspectives on crisis that we had not considered. Given the large number of respondents, it seems that a solidified definition was indeed unnecessary.

This issue is oriented towards meaning: what meanings can be drawn from crisis, subjectively defined, using the tools of dance practice and scholarship? The authors have taken diverse approaches to the question. Some address environmental crisis explicitly, while others allow it to live implicitly in the spaces of language and image: a shadow of crisis. In either case, all address dance as a vehicle for sensory connection among humans and between humans and environments, relating this connectivity to ethics, politics, activism, healing and more.

Sondra: Early on we spoke of a gap in ecological research in dance and performance. How do the articles we chose for this issue address this gap? Is there a connecting thread? Or maybe ecology has been addressed in various ways in previous dance and performance research, but not explicitly in the context of crisis? I think that is three questions.

Robert: I will respond to the third, as I am not certain that there is a gap in the literature regarding ecology and dance. With respect to the context of crisis, though, I believe the story is different. As far as I am aware, this issue of *Choreographic Practices* is the first multi-authored scholarly book or journal issue to engage environmental crisis as the primary context for exploring ideas about dance. Individual practitioner-scholars such as Olsen (2002) and LaMothe (2015) have foregrounded environmental crisis in their writing on dance. In this issue, we build on such work by bringing together

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a collective of artists and scholars. We are adding to what I hope becomes a substantial body of literature on why dance matters in the context of crisis.

I choose to name crisis explicitly because it is a call to action: a circumstance requiring response. Until recently, I bought into the illusion that climate change, pollution and other issues associated with 'environmentalism' were vast, somewhat speculative matters for science to resolve, seemingly unrelated to ongoing colonial histories and trenchant patterns of inequality. I had little understanding of anthropocentrism, speciesism and extractivism (Klein 2014), nor with how they were operative in the world of consumption in which I participated every day. Much of this changed as you and I worked together and as I encountered the work of scholars and activists such as Rob Nixon (2011), Naomi Klein (2014), Tom Goldtooth (2014), Robin Wall Kimmerer (2014), Zoe Todd (2015) and others who illuminate the colonialist and capitalist roots of environmental crisis and its disproportionate impact on Indigenous peoples and on the Global South. While attending rallies in Philadelphia protesting the Dakota Access Pipeline in 2016–17, I was also taking a hard look at my everyday consumption patterns in relation to food, energy and waste and trying to understand how they fit into larger contexts of unsustainable energy and agricultural practices. Framing these various strands of research in the context of crisis reinforced my resolve to wake up and remember my embodied connection to a world of shared resources that are rapidly dwindling. Dancing, particularly in the wooded Wissahickon Park near my home (Bingham 2018a, 2018b), was the most effective tool for waking up viscerally.

Sondra: You have sparked a new line of action for me, both personally and intellectually, and in reflection, I now see a strong pragmatic orientation that has been developing in my teaching through connections to ecology for quite some time.

Robert: When I was a doctoral student, I once received this comment on a paper I had written: 'There needs to be a problematic'. That comment, which I understood as encouragement to be more critical of other scholars, became one of the factors leading to my focus on environmental crisis in my dissertation. That was the problematic, and it motivated my research and activism. What does environmental crisis mean to you?

Sondra: I take environmental issues personally, and will say more about this. My pragmatic response to a rising tide of issues is first through experiential pedagogy, in teaching inclusively and non-judgmentally, not simply for virtuoso performers as I once did, but for anyone who wants to learn directly through movement experiences in varied environments. In my volunteer work with seniors, I teach a Land to Water Yoga class of about 80 students; I am the oldest one. I modelled this yoga developmentally as a somatic process that associates the human with life on land, and in water and air. I also respond through writing from experiential perspectives, facilitating performances in

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gratitude for the wild and cultivated beauty of nature. As a traveller, I continue to deepen my contact with the world through teaching somatic dance retreats and conferences.

On the shadow side, I pay attention to how things often fall apart and sometimes explore this in performance. Butoh gives me this opportunity. If nature has beauty, it has every other aspect as well, and I see myself as part of it all. Having grown up close to horses and harvesting potatoes in community, I am romantic about the physical, tangible world of nature, and I still love ploughing my hands into the earth. When I perform in nature, I feel invested in protecting it.

Intellectually, I think and write as a phenomenologist whose work descends from Edmund Husserl. Early in the twentieth century, he articulated concerns for 'the environing world' through various interrelated horizons or ways of knowing the world (Husserl [1932] 1995: 154–65), ones that we commonly call ecological, social and cultural. He called these horizons 'lifeworlds' and wrote of their relationship to the somatic life of the body. Most significantly for dance, his student Martin Heidegger identified what he called 'the lived body' as part of, and central to the environing world, and what he often called 'the worlding of the world', imbuing the word 'world' with life and movement.

Robert: Your work cross-pollinates phenomenology, somatics and ecology.

Sondra: Yes. Husserl is the progenitor of eco-somatics, a term several of our authors develop in this issue. His work infuses the ecological perspectives of Maurice Merleau-Ponty ([1945] 1962, 1968). As we move our senses out towards the world, and a sense of the world returns to us, there is folding reciprocal play in consciousness. This is the same play that sustains creative consciousness. Merleau-Ponty described this play as a 'chiasm' or 'intertwining' of the visible and the invisible (1968, Chapter 4). His work informs modern phenomenologist and performance artist David Abrams' book, *Becoming Animal: An Earthly Cosmology* (2010), a cultural ecology of our human entanglement with all of nature. In turn, Abram influences the 'ecopsychology of perception' by Laura Sewall (1999). These ecological perspectives suffuse my upcoming book with several collaborators, *Back to the Dance Itself: Phenomenologies of the Body in Performance*. A recent multi-author book, edited by Sarah Whatley and others, takes a comprehensive look at dance and ecology through the lens of somatics, *Attending to Movement: Somatic Perspectives on Living in the World* (2015).

Robert: Before we introduce the authors individually, I want to return to your comment about taking environmental crisis personally. Why is that?

Sondra: For now: several cases in point, most recently this fall (2017), calamitous hurricanes in the USA and the Caribbean – not to mention California burning and Las Vegas in mourning from gun violence. I live 45 minutes from Las Vegas and know people affected by these disasters. Regarding

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the senseless mass killing, the largest by a lone gunman in US history with 600 people shot, what has this to do with the environment? As yet, the public doesn't know much about this gunman's motives. He doesn't seem to have a history of mental illness. He pursued a lifestyle of gambling, was somewhat of a drifter and used two houses to stockpile weapons.

I see his violence in light of ecology. Individually, we suffer a loss of sensibility when we don't really work anywhere or belong anywhere; we cease to interact with earth and each other through labour and love, and in accumulation, our collective psyche suffers. This dullness is felt in our bodies and society, as people become inured to violence, seeking empowerment in abusive and selfish ways, perhaps with guns or through sexual aggression. My perspective would be difficult to verify, but as a careful observer and environmental activist, I wade in nevertheless. Violence has multifarious roots; one of these is loss of connection to the earth as home, and related to this is loss of empathy and connectivity in community.

Still, I have hope in the goodness of people. I am encouraged by the varied approaches to environmental crises that authors in this journal issue bring to the page. Human life is linked to the health and wellbeing of local and global environments, impacting our ability and willingness to take care of each other. All the contributors make these connections, each in unique ways, since originality is one of the marks of art. For example, Denise Kenney and Nancy Holmes position the sensory body specifically as the site of ecological practice and belonging. They strive to embody work that, in David Abram's words, will spark 'a rejuvenation of our carnal, sensorial empathy with the living land that sustains us' (1996: 69).

Performing the existential continuum

Robert: Many of the authors articulate a view of humans and environments as an existential continuum, in contrast to the enlightenment construct of a nature–culture split (Plumwood 1993). This view is perhaps most explicit in Chelsea Adewunmi and Jill Sigman's contribution, a 'performance album' that documents Sigman's 2016 performance and community engagement project entitled 'Weed Heart'. The album, and the work it documents, identifies a connection between ways that the construct 'weed' is used to signify 'invasive' and 'undesirable' and ways that human populations are similarly marked on the grounds of race and religion. 'Weed Heart' speaks out by centering the lives of weeds growing in New York City and insisting that environmental crisis and social injustice be recognized as interconnected. It does so with the help of weedy collaborators, whose histories in New York and elsewhere are deeply intertwined with the histories of their human cohabitants.

While Adewunmi and Sigman evoke weed history, other authors evoke land histories. Ali East draws upon ancestral and land histories in Aotearoa New Zealand in the context of Moa, Maori and

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European migration and settlement. Her account describes an eco-somatic improvisation project she directed in the historic ruins of a 150-year-old migrant dwelling, which inquired into the sensuous narratives of the site's past. It reflects on the layers of history vibrating in the broken stone and grass, which the dancers assimilate into their leaning and settling within the ruins. While a reflection on the past, East's account is also an abrupt reminder of the present. On several occasions, a second, unsettling narrative interrupts: images of the current crisis of displaced refugees, primarily from the Middle East, who have been driven from their homes by war and famine. As East weaves together these different strands of past, present, local and global movement, she invites the reader to reflect on the embodied meanings of migration and home.

Sondra: On the other side of the globe, Québécois author Christine Bellerose traces details of Montreal's history as she embodies the movements of land and elemental nature. Through text and image, she thematizes white settler responsibility as a concern informing her performance art research, which she refers to as 'dancing land'. Bellerose's lovingly rendered artist pages invite the reader into reflections on relationship and responsibility to land and one's place in its history. In her vivid photographs, land becomes depth, not simply a flat page backdrop for performance, and body is engaged interactively in and as nature.

Robert: While these authors reflect on land, they also present dance as a vehicle for such reflection. All seem to convey a reverence for land that emerges from their embodied practices of paying attention. Their accounts offer evidence that dance can be a powerful agent for change and a tool for building a more conscious and sustainable future. Merián Soto's *Into the Woods* does so as well. Presenting a series of short, outdoor improvisation scores, she urges readers to 'just go' outside and feel the heartbeat of nature through their moving, sensing bodies. This is, she writes, a practice of peace: a healing response to a world in crisis. Referencing the devastation wrought by Hurricane Maria in her homeland of Puerto Rico, she warns that there is not time to put off changing humanity's relationship with nature. 'We are nature', she writes, proposing that meaningful change begins here and now, with the movements and perceptions of this body in relation to the environing world.

Sondra: It strikes me as I read through the contributions that several are created with two or more authors, and that those written solo nevertheless contain collaborative associations. In decolonizing approaches to research, dialogue in community is important – the idea that one would speak, listen and learn from others and be inclusively responsive rather than reacting from a position of power and singular authority. How we come to know something somatically is a matter of participation and perception. This involves paying attention and attuning not only to what is present but also to how the past has contributed to present conditions. Bellerose in her article cites the work of Jo-Ann Archibald who teaches that circular learning and sharing are akin to non-extractive practice.

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The authors of this issue tap into ecological roots, looking beyond the immediate, as Nancy Holmes, Denise Kenney, Ali East and Christine Bellerose do, each through examining experiences of home and belonging. In their article, Holmes and Kenney study common depictions of home, what having a home means and where this might be located in perception and memory. They focus on environmentally responsive site-specific work that is generated with and for a site's ecological patterns as well as its historical and cultural systems. Their article builds meaning through connections of community, proposing a problem of 'endings' that are linked to place-attachment – noting that their own reflections on 'not leaving' were generated in a site far away from their own place.

Robert: Matthew Nelson also attends to ecological patterns as he articulates principles common to somatics and permaculture. Both are practical philosophies that engage systems – bodies and ecosystems, respectively – through holistic means, employing observation, trial and error to find ways of supporting a given system's capacity to sustain itself and to flourish. While permaculture is commonly associated with agricultural and architectural practices, and somatics with human health, wellness and artistic practices, Nelson's account presents these as interconnected eco-somatic concerns whose aim is mindful, collaborative participation in the relationships of human and non-human living beings. Permaculture choreographs the interactions of living systems, while somatics deepens the felt experience of participating in the web of life.

Like Nelson, Sandra Reeve applies the concept of choreography to the interactions of humans and their environments, both in site-specific performance work and in daily living. Her sensuous writing invites readers to dwell in both realms, from a luxuriant weekend morning at her home, with whistling tea kettle and 'ageing dog wagging his tail as I come into the kitchen', to the ruins of St. Gabriel's Chapel atop the cliffs of Dorset, England, where her work *Absence* was performed. Emphasizing a perspective grounded in somatic consciousness, she proposes that feeling how we compose the movements of daily living can carry us beyond 'sustainability' towards a realm of regenerative choreographies, where the things of the world can 'begin to revive, regenerate and thrive'.

Sondra: These accounts of human–environmental interaction remind me of Bakhtin's translinguistic phenomenology (1986), which explains that every genre of speech is a living dialogue vested with the individual imprint of the speaker and oriented towards a responsive other. So I ask how I might become a responsive listener for the world I inhabit? Everywhere I see the colour of a mountain, hear the crunch of dry leaves in the woods or pick up a soft handful of sand and seaweed can be a site for listening as bodily sensing. We pay a price for denial of sensuality in coldly objectifying the body of the earth, diminishing all of our relationships.

Authors of this issue model performance in the discovery of sensuous understanding, where attentive sight becomes knowing as touching, hearing and tasting. When we acknowledge the world through the senses, it can return in unspoken interchange. We see in this issue how Andrea Olsen relates to

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ocean health through her danced performances with seaweed. Her poetry rings with sensuous understanding and immediate contact with this concrete aspect of nature. She says of her work in Iceland:

> My best exploration was dancing (and photographing) along the Wild Atlantic Coastal trail. It was the one calm and sunny day after weeks of wind, and ended with a stunning/terrifying display of the northern lights, requiring me to lie flat on the Earth in awe and howl with delight – hearing other voices in the distance.

Olsen reminds me that nature does exist, and not only in tropes or definitions, but in our direct participation with tangible elements. In our continuities with the physical world, someone or something hears our spoken and danced encounters. When we dance directly with the land, the woods or ocean, it can dance back and change us in the experience.

Robert: Dancing can be employed as a language promoting change in the Anthropocene.

Sondra: Yes, Bakhtin says: 'we speak in diverse genres without suspecting they exist' (1986: 78, 98). The movements of nature, including our human movements, speak. Is it just possible that the more-than-human environmental world has something important to say to us? I think so, as we see through Rosemary Candelario's article in this issue. I see her contribution as part of a long trajectory in developments and departures from butoh. Candelario's work draws upon Min Tanaka's Body Weather practice, once grounded in butoh through Hijikata, but now independent.

If the environing world could speak its pain, might we listen and open our eyes to the suffering? At its best, Japanese butoh and its offshoots do this. In his initiation of butoh, Hijikata Tatsumi ached as he listened closely to the world he inherited after World War II. We gather his pain in *Leprosy* and other sections of *Summer Storm* (1973) that speak of World War II. His surrealist writings show a love for raw nature in both its cruel and tender aspects, while his dance demonstrates global empathy cast in worldwide eclectic imagery, or *butoh-fu* (Fraleigh and Nakamura 2006: 52–57). More recently, contemporary butohist Takenouchi Atsushi dances to heal the earth in places that have known great suffering, including Cambodia and southwest Utah: His award-winning film with Kathi von Koerber, *Ridden by Nature*, is a performance record of environmental alarm (Takenouchi and von Koerber 2015).

I first wrote about ecological devastation through my exposure to nuclear testing at Frenchman's Flat in Nevada, not far from Snow Canyon and my ancestral home in southwest Utah. *Dancing Identity: Metaphysics in Motion* (2004) records how years of nuclear fallout affected my health and the future history of my home and family of origin. Since then, I have noticed that an ecological ethos, as a characteristic spirit of culture, community and family, can be discerned in performance. Initially, I encountered great resistance in publishing on dance and ecology; expert reviewers and publishers thought that ecological issues and personal life stories didn't belong in a book on dance.

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I wondered how this issue might address contemporary developments relative to butoh, since it originated in an atmosphere of crisis in Japan after America's dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, and concurrently our massive fire bombing of Tokyo along with several Japanese countrysides. This wartime crisis is documented in ecological detail through the Hiroshima Peace Park and Memorial Museum, dedicated to ending nuclear testing around the world. I was very pleased when Candelario submitted her fascinating article exploring Body Weather practices through the work of philosopher Timothy Morton. He argues that hyperobjects, as things massively distributed in time and space such as global warming or all nuclear materials on earth, are requiring us to respond to the environment in radically new ways. Candelario further observes how hyperobjects are addressed in Body Weather and her own site-specific performance with others. Her experiences with former Tanaka dancer, Oguri, form the basis of her evocative article in this issue, and her dance with others into the quarry near her home in North Texas.

Robert: While Morton (2013) eschews the term 'climate change' (favouring 'global warming'), climate change is named as such in the collaborative contribution of Pamela Burnard, Peter J. Cook, Susanne Jasilek and Birgitte Bauer-Nilsen. This article highlights global, local, ecological and cultural impacts of rapidly disappearing ice in Greenland. It does so through its narrative account of *Siku Aappoq* (*Melting Ice*), a collaborative choreographic project inspired by climatic changes occurring in Greenlandic coastal communities. Most of the participants in the project – including choreographer, performers, musicians, set and lighting designers – come from either Greenland or Scandinavia, where some of the planet's most dramatic changes are taking place. *Melting Ice* draws on their lived experiences of these changes and capacity to translate them into art and activism. It argues for the need to engage art, particularly dance, as a political response to climate change and as a vehicle for personal and cultural transformation.

Sondra: Climate doubters would say that the world has always experienced extreme weather, and will do so in the future, but Burnard and her collaborators warn of our collective peril, particularly how politics influence the health of the environment. There are many current examples in our country. It is now near the end of October, and President Trump, while providing modest governmental assistance continues to bully and patronize Puerto Rico after the devastating hurricane that destroyed this beautiful island earlier this month. Is this weak response for much needed aid racially motivated, political, or both? Recently, the American government also eliminated the Clean Power Plan, repealed the Clean Water Rule, backed out of the Paris Climate Accord, and approved toxic pesticides that marginalized EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) scientists say can cause significant neurological damage to children and the environment ('War on the Environmental Protection Agency', PBS Frontline Special, 11 October 2017).

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As a witness to current environmental disasters, I take them personally, because our lives are entwined with the health of all life for the foreseeable future. As America pulled out of the Paris Climate Accord under the direction of Trump, many officials made sure their individual states participated. This included California – a nation unto itself. But a closer look at California in mid-October 2017 shows it experiencing an environmental crisis of its own. Because of warming air and drying winds, California has been burning for four days with fires completely destroying the city of Santa Rosa in California's historic and beautiful northern wine country. The vines are cinder, and it is not over yet. There are yearly fires in California, but never before one such as this, destroying thousands of structures, homes, business, schools and hospitals.

As of my writing today, 5 November, the *New York Times* front page story by Lisa Friedman and Glenn Thrush reports that thirteen US federal agencies just unveiled an exhaustive scientific report that says humans are the dominant cause of global temperature rise, creating 'the warmest period in the history of civilization'.

Closing thoughts

Recent environmental changes, including many cited here and in the pages that follow, warn of unprecedented planetary suffering. Now that we can see our blue planet in photographs from space, we can look upon the whole, observing its floating beauty at a distance. Up close, we are entwined with its future, its life forms and ecological events. Ignoring the suffering of the planet and its vulnerable inhabitants imperils all life on earth, including future generations. This journal issue focuses on performative responses to crisis with articles about care for earth as our common home. Underlying this is an ethic of care for each other, as humans and as ecological kin.

The authors and performative collaborations gathered here present an enlightening view of the natural environment and our evolving place within it. Significantly, their articles and photographs point towards current ecological crises and issues of somatic displacement of the human. They ask several basic questions in their dances and performance projects. What is our responsibility to the land and to each other? What is the meaning of home? Of the earth, our common home? How do these meanings come alive when we dance?

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DOI: 10.1111/gwao.12748

EDITORIAL

WILEY

On and Off Screen: Women's Work in the Screen Industries

"On and off screen: Women's work in the screen industries"

1 | INTRODUCTION

Similar to many creative (and other) industries, the film and television industries have for long been permeated by male norms, and by the male worker as the norm. In this context, women workers have always been considered "oddities" – unless they have acted in front of the camera. To a large extent, women have been (and still are) image (Fischer, 1976; Mulvey, 1975). Women's work behind the camera have been counteracted, not least through efforts to exclude them from positions characterized as "creative" or "above-the-line" such as director, producer, and script writer. Further, women have been met with pervading difficulties in allocating finances for their projects and with circumscribed possibilities to have their work screened in the cinema. And although (a few) women are key through their function as "image," films with a woman protagonist are usually provided with a lesser budget than films with a male lead, and women actors get distinctly less paid than their male counterparts (SFI, 2018, https://www.forbes.com/sites/natalierobehmed/2017/08/22/full-list-the-worlds-highest-paid-actors-and-actresses-2017/?sh=2e1c961f3751). Let us give an example of the former: in the Swedish film industry, recently hailed worldwide of being one of the most gender equal screening industries, feature films made between 2013 and 2016 differed in terms of budget depending on the whether the protagonist in a film was male or female. Films with a male lead had on average a 33% higher budget than films with a woman lead. In that same period, women feature film directors had on average a budget ranging between 66% and 86% of the budget of films with a man as director (SFI, 2018). The report published in 2018, by the Swedish Film Institute, concluded that: "[films with women in] key functions generally have overall lower budgets than men" (SFI, 2018, p. 17).

Following the international impact that the #Metoo-movement has had and still has, and the recent demands for a 50/50 dispersion between men and women on above-the-line positions in the film industry, gender issues have advanced to the forefront in discussions dealing with the working situation in the film and screen industries. These discussions have appeared in various national contexts in print and social media, as well as in academic work (see, e.g., Jansson et al., 2020; Liddy, 2020; Marghitu, 2018; Meziani & Cabantous, 2020; O'Brien, 2019). It has become obvious that gender inequality pervades all screen industries, large and small, and that women screen workers in different national screen contexts share similar experiences. As film and television production is becoming more and more globalized, with single productions often being the outcome a variety of regional and national industries, finances and competences, working and gendered experiences of being in the industry are also becoming increasingly globalized.

Still, there are regional and local differences in how women screen workers experience their work and career situation and these need to be addressed. There are also various aspects of screen work that remain to be tended to academically. Hence, this special section offers a sample of national and local studies that all investigate how gender and equality work is done in four different contexts. It is our hope that this small sample may inspire not only more studies of national contexts, but also inspire to future cross-national studies.

Before discussing how various academic fields have engaged with the screening industries in terms of work experience and representation, we wish to point out that film and television, as two available media formats reaching large and heterogeneous audiences, constitute two of the most central expressions of our time, and that both contribute to reflect and mold our understanding of society, of others – and of ourselves (de Lauretis, 1987; Dyer, 1993). Questions

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about who is *allowed* to make film and TV and what messages and images are presented and conveyed are thus politically important and imperative.

2 | SCREEN WORK IN ACADEMIC RESEARCH

The long-standing male dominance in the industry, together with the realization that images *do matter*, has sparked an interest in studying gender in the screen industries. The gender conditions in the film industry have attracted scholarly attention across the variety of disciplines in the social sciences and the humanities, and this special section is a vivid example of this cross-disciplinary scholarship. Three specific, but interrelated fields stand out when it comes to the study of gendered work and inequalities in these industries: production studies, management and life work studies, and studies of women's presence and conditions in screen work.

In management studies and work life research, the early 2000s saw an increased interest in focusing and exploring the working conditions in the screening industries, alongside the growing interest for working experiences in what often referred to as the creative industries (see, e.g., Blair, 2001; Delmestri et al., 2005; Ebbers & Wijnberg, 2009; French, 2020; Jones & Pringle, 2015; Meziani & Cabantous, 2020; Soila-Wadman, 2003; Sörensen & Villadsen, 2014). This strand has also included a certain focus on how film can be used as a tool for instruction on how to exert leadership (see, e.g., Bell & Sinclair, 2016).

Parallel to this development is the emergence of production studies, emanating from film and television studies. This field explores film and media as cultural practices of media production, and it does so from a variety of perspectives and with various methods. Of particular pertinence here is the sub-field of feminist production studies. This field engages in studying how "routines and rituals [...], the economic and political forces [...] shape roles, technologies, and the distribution of resources according to cultural and demographic differences" (Mayer et al., 2009, p. 4) in order to understand how "power operates locally through media production to reproduce social hierarchies and inequalities at the level of daily interaction" (Mayer, 2009, p. 15). One of the field's most important contributions here is the critique of the "auteurist" view that films are the "voice" of one single artist, most often the director. Instead, they argue that films are the result of collective work. Departing from this insight, production studies scholars have noted the importance of studying the work that is carried out in the margins, to question the differentiation between "creative" and "craft" professions in film making, and to pay attention to the work done "below-the-line" by workers in the film industry who are seldom credited, but without whose work films would not be produced (see, e.g., Banks, 2009, 2018; Banks et al., 2016; Mayer, 2009, 2011; Mayer et al., 2009).

Alongside these two areas of research, there is a third, and more recent, strand that is dedicated to studying women's presence, analyzing policy measures targeting gender (in)equality along with studying impediments to gender equality in the film industry and women's conditions in a male dominated screening industry. This strand of research comes out of feminist media studies as a rather broad field, encompassing both the humanities and the social sciences. While research in both management studies and productions studies constitute important foundations for any research conducted on gender and screen work, for this special section, it is this third strand that is of most relevance, taken that it embraces and explores both local and the global aspects of women's conditions in the male dominated screening industries. Let us therefore shortly present this strand a bit more – and the issues it has raised – in order to give a contextualization of this special section and its four articles.

3 | WOMEN'S PRESENCE AND CONDITIONS IN SCREEN WORK

Studies of women's presence in the film industry have mapped the number of women behind the camera, sometimes also including an intersectional analysis and identified gendered budget-gaps and other impediments to gender equality (Cobb, 2020; Lauzen, 2019; Liddy, 2020; Smith et al., 2013). Much of this research is conducted in the United

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States, discussing the conditions in a film industry that is exclusively driven by private, and most often commercial, stakeholders. In other commercially focused film centers such as Bollywood in India and Nollywood in Nigeria, women behind the screen are reported to be few and the representation of women on screen stereotypical (Mukherjee, 2018; Prakash, 2020; Ukata, 2020). In other contexts, such as Europe, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, where there is public support for film production, gender equality is often proclaimed to be a goal. For instance, the Council of Europe (2015) declared its dedication to gender equality in film production in the so-called Sarajevo-declaration, and according to a mapping carried out by the European Audiovisual Observatory in 2019, 15 EU countries have introduced gender equality measures (EAO, 2019, p. 16).

In a recent anthology collecting evidence from a number of countries, media scholar Susan Liddy concludes that while demands for gender equality has been voiced by women in all contexts, public funding institutions range from those being "gender blind… to those who theoretically commit to equality but prevaricate on the best measures to implement change to others who have introduced formal gender policies and intervention strategies" (Liddy, 2020, p. 2). Scholars have pointed to several problems with gender equality policies and reforms in the film sector: they are often vague and without a plan for implementation (Thorsen, 2020), they only reach those who are involved in projects actually funded by public means (Cobb & Williams, 2020), and they lack intersectional intention and reach (Cobb & Williams, 2020; Thorsen, 2020). Further, when reforms are implemented, problems arise because making films include a range of different stakeholders and parties, which are out of reach of government policies (Jansson, 2016), and because the film industry is entrenched with institutionalized norms and values that is difficult to change and which tend to reduce the effects of policies (Jansson, 2017; Jansson & Wallenberg, 2020).

Scholars investigating women's conditions in the film industry have for a long time indicated that the way the industry is organized both formally and informally benefits white men. The sexual division of labor in the organization is manifested in women being found on positions such as script supervisors, costume designers, and make-up artists, as well as in various below-the-line positions. Many below-the-line professions are dominated by men, and the female dominated positions such as the ones mentioned above, tend to have lower status (Banks, 2009). Scholars have also noted differences in status among above-the-line professions. For instance, while male directors and scriptwriters are considered to be able to "carry" a movie, women directors and scriptwriters are not considered to do so (Bielby & Bielby, 1996, Eikhof and Cole in this issue). The trope of the male genius has been discussed as a hindrance to gender equality in several studies (see, e.g., Lantz, 2007; Marghitu, 2018; Regev, 2016; Schatz, 1988; and by Jansson et al. in this special section). Studies have also looked into how other features of the way the film industry is organized affects gender and concluded that the outcome of networking differs substantially to the favor of men (Grugulis & Stoyanova, 2012). Moreover, mothering duties limits women's possibilities in an industry where long days and extremely intense periods of work away from home are considered to be the normal procedure (Liddy, 2017; Liddy & O'Brien, 2021; O'Brien, 2015, 2019; Wing-Fai et al., 2015; Wreyford, 2013).

Considering all these past (and recent) studies, there is no doubt that the screening industries – as production sites and as workplaces – are of definite interest to scholars within different disciplines. This special section aims at addressing some of the issues that recent scholarship has touched upon and tried to tackle, and it does so from four different national and cultural contexts. At the center of all four articles included in the section is the analysis of women's conditions in the screening industries, including their experiences of working and trying to get by – and of how these industries continue to foster the notion of women film workers as "oddities" in an industry that continues to uphold the idea of the genius as male. Let us now turn to the four articles included in this special section.

4 | THE ARTICLES

In our first article, "The price of motherhood in the Irish film and television industries," media scholars Susan Liddy and Anne O'Brien discuss the continuous problems that surround motherhood and screen work, finding in their material evidence that there is a systemic bias against mothers, not only as women, but also as women and *mothers*, and that

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mothers have internalized the marginalization that comes from their maternal status. They have also found that many mothers adapted ways that would help them to sustain their working lives, but they were rarely supported in those adaptations by the screen production industry.

In "'Almost a European, but not quite': Experiences of Female Employees in the Lithuanian Film Industry from the Postcolonial Point of View," authors Lina Kaminskaite and Jelena Salaj discuss how the women filmmakers experience their conditions in a film industry that is still marked by the transformation of Lithuania from being part of the Soviet union to becoming a country which is a member of the EU. They argue that the Lithuanian film industry is characterized by being in a postcolonial state. While the opening up of Lithuania has meant new possibilities for women film workers, it has also presented difficulties and the negotiation of new identities and new mode of film production.

Doris Ruth Eikhof and Amanda Cole focus on how women are considered a risk in film production and how this leads to precarious conditions for women in the industry. In their article named, "On the basis of risk: Screen directors and gender inequality," they use the intersectional risk theory to understand how gender inequality is related to risk management practices in the screen industry. Studying two specific gender equality initiatives in the Canadian film industry, they show how risk management is gendered, and they argue that risk plays an important part in decision making in the industry. By understanding how risk is gendered, they argue, it is possible to change the processes that decides how risk is understood.

The last article included in this special section departs from the much-debated aspect of film production, namely the final saying over a film's final format. In "The Final Cut," authors Maria Jansson, Frantzeska Papadopoulou, Ingrid Stigsdotter, and Louise Wallenberg discuss how the relationship between film director and producer serve to reproduce gendered relations that position the male creator and producer as norm – even in contexts where both director and producer are women. Departing from a series of interviews made with mostly women working in these two professions, the authors show how these two above-the-line professions are still governed by the *malestream* and that they tend to be constructed in relation to masculinity. Clearly, even in a country like Sweden, often hailed for its equality work, the gender equality measures that are undertaken are not sufficient to come to grips with gender inequalities and the male norm.

Taken together the four articles shed light on different aspects of the film industry. The evidence provided from the different countries indicate that there are many similarities in the challenges that women in the film industry face. However, there are also differences depending on context. The article about Lithuania shows the importance of situating the film industry in a historical and political context. O'Brian and Liddy show in their article, the importance of understanding the specific context of how child care and the welfare state play out in order to capture women's conditions in film and television work. Eikhof and Cole's article demonstrates the necessity of applying an intersectional approach in order to also see differences in conditions between women, even if they work in the same industry and the same country. The article on Sweden, finally, looks deeper into how specific gender equality policies targeting the film industry plays out, and what problems remain, after having been implemented for almost 20 years. We believe that this special section is one step toward a deeper understanding of how gender shapes the working conditions in the film industry, and hope that it will inspire further research that takes a wider, more inclusive and possibly also more comparative grip on women screen worker's experiences and work conditions.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This work was supported by the Riksbankens Jubileumsfond under Grant no. P17-0079:1.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No conflict of interest has been declared by the authors.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The authors confirm that the data supporting the findings of this study are available within the article and/or its supplementary materials.

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Costume Design and Identity

Costuming as it is Used to Construct Societal Barriers

By Will Lorenzo

Fashion Film: The Cultures of Fashion
Prof. Eugenia Paulicelli

Introduction

One of the most important elements of mise-en-scene is the sartorial code. A viewer gets a chance to see into a character through his/her clothing. Costume design in film has many uses in addition to just dressing and describing a character. "Costume design is not just about the clothes: in film, it has both a narrative and a visual mandate. Designers serve the script and the director by creating authentic characters and by using colour, texture and silhouette to provide balance within the composition of the frame. The costume designer must first know *who* the character is before approaching this challenge" (Landis 48). Costuming can be used to create societal/class structures in film. Costuming has the power to place a specific character from a film in his/her respective class or social group. In many films, this specific type of costume design is obvious, but most of the time, it is very subtly done.

One of the films which use costuming to construct barriers is Vittorio De Sica's *Ieri, Oggi, Domani* (1963). This film is broken up into three separate parts. In all three parts, Sophia Loren and Marcello Mastroianni play the lead characters, yet they are different characters in each section of the film. The three distinct characters which the pair play each belong to a different social class and societal group. Not only can one examine the costume design between the three parts, and show how costuming directly relates to the placement of a character in his/her respective class structure, but one can also treat each part separately and examine the fashion of each individual sequence of the film.

In *Ieri, Oggi, Domani* (1963), we are given the unique opportunity to examine costume design across three storylines. In each storyline, Loren's and Mastroianni's characters both belong to the same societal groups, and also belong to the same social class (or at least similar social classes in the case of the third part of the film). Costuming is used in a variety of ways

and techniques to separate these classes from each other across all three parts. But another important use of costuming is creating a barrier between two (or more) characters due to their respective classes. In *Ieri, Oggi, Domani* (1963), we do not get a chance to see this as the characters in each part all belong to similar classes. There are many other filmic examples which illustrate the notion that costuming can be used to separate two characters in a film by their societal groups.

One specific film that does this is *On the Waterfront* (1954). This film uses costuming (among other elements) to separate the impoverished workers from the mobsters and union leaders. In addition to this film, many films use costuming to separate the rich from the poor – the most notable of which is probably *It Happened One Night* (1934). Since the gap between the rich and the poor is one of the defining elements of the screwball comedy, many films from this genre will also feature varying costume designs, such as *My Man Godfrey* (1936), for one.

There is one film in particular which offers a unique perspective on costume design in relation to the difference between two classes. This film is Preston Sturges' *Sullivan's Travels* (1941). This film is about a director who wants to make a socially conscious movie, so he decides to go undercover as a tramp in order to get an insider's look into the lower class. In this film, we get a chance to see costuming for all the rich Hollywood characters, costuming for all the poor lower class characters, and most importantly, costuming for the two main characters which is a sort of medium between the two. The costume design for this film exceptionally creates costumes for the main characters (who are rich and pretending to be poor), such that the costumes are a rich person's interpretation of a poor person's clothing. Examining the costume design in each of these and other films, we can establish a connection between clothing/fashion

and society. The costuming in these films places the characters in their respective class structures and societal groups.

Biograph Shorts and Silent Era

The notion of costume design being used to construct class barriers has been employed by filmmakers as early as the early 1900s. In D.W. Griffith's *The New York Hat* (1912), a poor woman is shunned by her community due to the misconceptions surrounding her wearing an expensive hat, typically associated with high society New Yorkers. Many of Griffith's Biograph Shorts use this technique, the most notable of which is *A Corner in Wheat* (1909). D.W. Griffith's *A Corner in Wheat* (1909) uses costuming to distinguish between the two major classes in the film: the extremely rich and the extremely poor. The short film is about monopolizing the wheat market. We see the man who monopolizes the wheat market is dressed in a tuxedo in the film, and all of his extremely rich socialite friends are dressed in tuxedos and evening gowns with expensive hats. On the other hand, we get to see the workers in the wheat fields and the extremely poor people who can barely afford the bread on the bread lines. These people are dressed in dilapidated clothing that looks as if it were literally falling apart on their bodies. This short film, as early as 1909, was already using costuming to create class barriers and distinguish characters belonging to different social groups.

Aside from Griffith's Biograph shorts, many other films from the silent era also employ this costuming technique. Many of Charlie Chaplin's films (both shorts and features) are centered around costume design (this is fairly evident in his depiction of 'the tramp' in his pictures). One Chaplin film, in particular, which shows a clear distinction between classes is *City Lights* (1931). Chaplin's tramp character's poverty is made clear from the very beginning of the film, and his costuming obviously reflects that. But in this film in particular, the tramp meets another character who is extremely wealthy. This drunken millionaire (as he is credited) plays a crucial part in the film, and his wealth is the crux of his relationship with the tramp in this film. The drunken millionaire (along with his butler) is dressed for the part – as a clear opposite of Chaplin's tramp. Although Chaplin's tramp costuming places him in the lower class (often poverty stricken) in just about every film in which he is the star, some of his films, *City Lights* (1931) in particular, also depict a member of the upper class as a juxtaposition to Chaplin's tramp.

These films are evidentiary of the fact that the idea of using costume design as a way of constructing class barriers was used by filmmakers as early as D.W. Griffith's Biograph shorts and all throughout the silent era. During the sound era, the first major use of this idea of costuming can be seen in screwball comedies of the 1930s and 1940s. Since one of the major motifs of the screwball comedy is a major class difference, this costuming technique greatly serves that genre. Using costume design to divide characters into different societal groups has been done since the silent era, and can still be seen in films today.

Ieri, Oggi, Domani (1963)

Ieri, Oggi, Domani (1963) is a film which is truly centered around costume design in the most unique of ways. Employing famed Italian costume designer Piero Tosi, De Sica's film is made up of three separate sections, each section featuring the same actors and actresses. Even if the sound was turned off, a viewer could tell the difference between these parts based on the costume design alone. Although the actors are the same, the costuming is related to each specific character's life, and therefore differs greatly between parts.

The first part of the film is "Adelina of Naples." This part is set in the impoverished post-war Naples and features Sophia Loren as Adelina and Marcello Mastroianni as her husband, Carmine. Carmine is unemployed and the couple resorts to selling contraband black market cigarettes to provide for their family. Italian law at the time stipulated that a woman could not be imprisoned if she was pregnant, so when Adelina is caught, she schemes to continuously remain pregnant in order to avoid going to prison. The costuming in this part of the film is probably the most noteworthy of the three parts. First of all, in this part alone, there are characters who cross class boundaries and societal groups, and their fashion is used as a distinguishing factor. Adelina and Carmine are always dressed in run down, unflattering clothes due to their lack of income. Their children are dressed the same way. We also get a chance to see that the police are similarly dressed. Although they have uniforms, these uniforms are dirty and untidy throughout the film, which suggests that they too are impoverished, which offers insight into why they seem to be on Adelina's side when she

is evading jail time. There is also a neighborhood lawyer who advises Carmine throughout the film. On him, we see modest attire, one that is much more flattering than Carmine's, but also one that is not as glamorous as one would typically associate with a lawyer. This places him in a class above that of Adelina and Carmine, but also alerts the audience to the fact that even high paying professions (like lawyers) were affected by the extreme post-war poverty in Naples.

The second part of the film is called "Anna of Milan." In this segment we see Sophia Loren as Anna (wearing Dior), the wife of an extremely rich industrialist, and Marcello Mastroianni as Renzo, her lover. In this segment, Anna is dressed like a princess throughout. The attire that she dons in this segment immediately places her into the upper class. Renzo is also dressed very well, but his costuming is a bit less over the top. His clothing definitely places him in the upper class, but he is most likely in a different societal group than Anna is, based on his fashion. Anna exudes an aura of arrogance, heartlessness, and pomposity throughout the segment, whereas, Renzo seems to be so much less arrogant, etc, which is expressed in his relatively modest clothing.

The third segment of the film is called "Mara of Rome." This part features Sophia Loren as Mara, a prostitute who services high class clients, one of whom is Augusto, played by

Marcello Mastroianni, the son of a Bolognese industrialist. Augusto is a very strange man who utilizes the services of Mara throughout the entire film. We get a chance to see the fashions of both Augusto and Mara in this segment, an interesting juxtaposition. Augusto is extremely rich and he dresses the part. Mara is also a member of the upper class, as she only services the richest possible clientele, yet she often dresses much more modestly. I feel that she may be well off, but she still lives the life of a run-of-the-mill, middle class Italian woman, with nothing extremely lavish even though she can afford it. This choice in costume design makes her character much more loveable.

Both the first and third segments of the film feature prominent uniforms, which are open for discussion in regards to costume design. Uniforms are often very important elements of costume design, since the wearing of a uniform has many implications in film. In the first segment, the most prominent uniform is the police uniform. In the third segment, the prominent uniform is a clerical uniform.

With all three of these segments making up one film, rather than three short films, the audience is forced to look at the fashion and costume design in this film, and the viewers are inherently and subconsciously analyzing the costume design across all three of these segments. We get a chance to see the lower class, the middle class, and the upper class depicted throughout

the three segments, and we can compare one person's class to another's based partly on their clothing. Costuming also placed each of the characters within their respective societal groups (which often overlap with their class), and gave the audience a chance to get a sense of a character's place in society based on their clothing.

Costume Design as a Class Barrier

Although we do not really get a strong sense of this use of costuming in *Ieri, Oggi, Domani* (1963), due to the fact that in each separate section of the film the majority of the characters belonged to similar classes and social groups, there are many filmic examples where costume design is used to construct barriers between the classes.

One of the films where costume design is used in this way is Elia Kazan's *On the Waterfront* (1954). The audience sees a large number of dockworkers looking for jobs. Many of these dockworkers are homeless, all are out of work. The costuming of these dockworkers reflects their social standing. On the other hand, the mob-connected union bosses and their henchmen are all dressed clean and proper in suits and ties throughout the film. The costuming in this film creates a barrier between two classes and social groups. This type of costuming is a very effective way to distinguish between two classes in any film, *On the Waterfront* (1954) being only one example.

One of the best uses of this kind of costume design is found in Frank Capra's *It Happened One Night* (1934). The costuming is much more subtle in this film than others, but still very effective. In this film, Claudette Colbert plays a spoiled daughter who runs away from her unbelievably rich banker father by jumping ship in order to reunite with her husband. Throughout the film, we can see her father dressed in extraordinarily over-the-top clothing. He would be walking around in an everyday three piece suit. There's a scene in the film where

Clark Gable's out-of-work character is undressing. He takes off his shirt and he doesn't have an undershirt on. His character is subtly underdressed while the rich banker is classically overdressed. This juxtaposition between fashions is what creates the barrier between the rich and the poor in this film.

A societal gap between two characters (portraying one rich and the other poor) is a common element of screwball comedies. *It Happened One Night* (1934) is the best example from within the screwball comedy genre. But another great screwball film that employs costume design techniques to create this barrier is *My Man Godfrey* (1936). When we first see Godfrey (William Powell) in the film, he is homeless and living at the city dump. He is dressed in run-down and ragged clothes. Through a series of unlikely events (of the kind which can only be found in a screwball comedy), Godfrey ends up being hired as a butler for the Bullock family, an extremely rich and socialite family. Godfrey is then dressed in a butler's "uniform" throughout

the film, but the biggest difference in costuming is worn by Cornelia Bullock. One of the spiteful, spoiled brats of the family, Cornelia is dressed in the most lavish and extravagant outfits that one could imagine. Even though Godfrey is only dressed like a "forgotten man" for the first scene of the film, the audience associates him with the lower class throughout because of it, and the differences in fashion allow the viewers to separate Godfrey from the Bullock family's social standing based on their costumes.

Another example of the screwball comedy being used as a catalyst for costuming that constructs class barriers and separates societal groups is Frank Capra's *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town*

(1936). In this film, which takes place during the Great Depression, a rural farmer named Longfellow Deeds (Gary Cooper) inherits $20 million from his uncle and is forced into moving to New York City to live the rich man's city life. This film more or less explicitly states that it is using costuming to separate classes and social groups. In an early scene, one of the butlers/tailors from the rich city mansion is talking to Deeds about how his clothes make him look like a poor laborer, and that he needs to have a

makeover. Deeds is then redressed in a rich man's attire and made to fit into the new class which he had just recently been made a part of. But even if it is not explicitly stated as it was in this film, many screwball comedies use costume design to construct class barriers and separate societal groups. Once

these films, along with earlier silent films, made it evident that costume design can be used to accomplish this task, many filmmakers began to employ the technique. And many filmmakers still continue to employ this technique in films today.

Uniforms

Uniforms can also be used as a distinguishing factor when using costuming to construct class barriers. Even though Godfrey did eventually achieve a higher class status in *My Man Godfrey* (1936), for most of the film he can be seen dressed as a butler, which is effectively his uniform. There were uniformed police in the "Adelina of Naples" segment of *Ieri, Oggi, Domani* (1963) as well, which are used to place them in their own societal group as well. The uniform is a very important element of the sartorial code, and often places a character in a specific class or societal group according to the uniform and the surrounding characters' costumes as well.

One of the best films that featured uniformed costume design as portraying class barriers was Victor Fleming's *Gone with the Wind* (1939). The opening scene shows the O'Hara's at their estate, Tara, having a party. All the young belles were dressed in flourishing gowns, one more elaborate and beautiful than the next, including their slips and undergarments. In scenes where Scarlett O'Hara (Vivian Leigh) was getting dressed with the help from her nanny, Mammy (Hattie McDaniel), it showed how the lower class maids were also dressed. Throughout the beginning of the film, everyone at the barbeque was speaking out about the inevitable civil war that was sure to arrive in Georgia. The men were also lavishly dressed in

morning suits, courting the women in their morning gowns. When the women were resting, it also showed the fashion of the slaves as they fanned the rich ladies while they slept. They soon

find out that Civil War has broken out and the men all run off to war. Then, we get to see an entire other showcase of fashion – the Union's and the Confederacy's uniforms. While the war is in full bloom, we see what a horrible thing war is and understand how it affected even the affluent homes. There are scenes where we see the male slaves (some of whom worked for the O'Hara family) hovering around in groups and a lot of them are fighting with slave owners. In one particular scene, Big Sam saves Scarlett from renegade former slaves, who are now free but are out to take revenge of their former owners. Scarlett O'Hara and her family have lost all their money and they don't have any of their usual clothing. In one scene, Scarlett has to resort to making a gown out of velvet drapes from her windows, in her attempts to get money and assistance from Rhett Butler (Clark Gable). It is a complete rich man's type of fashion show when they have fancy balls to make money for the war effort. After the war, there are scenes where Rhett Butler brings his daughter, Bonnie Blue Butler, to Paris and she is dressed in the latest fashions. It is also quite a wonderful scene when he brings Mammy home a bright red "petticoat" straight from Paris for her. As the residents of Georgia are walking about, you see not only the morning dresses the women are wearing, but they are also using parasols, as they stroll along.

In the movie, *The Help* (2011), it is very evident that the women of the house were all white, society women, having tea parties and lunches, and the help were another social class altogether. They were all African American women, who wore maid uniforms, whereas the

women they worked for wore the latest fashions. Throughout the film it was blatantly shown how the two social classes interacted with each other daily, but there was always that separation of those classes. Even when they showed how some of the maids actually raised the children of the rich folk, there was always that class segregation.

A Costume Design Masterpiece

Of all the films that use costuming to construct class barriers and create societal groups, there is none more effective in this task than Preston Sturges' *Sullivan's Travels* (1941). The costume designer for this film is Edith Head, arguably the best costume designer in history, and this film is a good case for that argument. The film is about a Hollywood director John "Sully" Sullivan (Joel McCrea) who wants to turn away from making comedies and make a more socially conscious, relevant film. In order to do this, he devises a plan to go undercover as a tramp, and cut off from his riches, he will spend countless days on the road. Along the way, he meets a failed actress (Veronica Lake) who accompanies him on his journey. After completing his journey and returning to Hollywood, he decides to go back out and give some money to the homeless people that

he encountered along the way. He is knocked unconscious by a man looking to steal the money, and after fighting with a man who refuses to believe who he is, an identity-less Sully is sentenced

to six years in a labor camp. It is there he realizes that comedies are just as important (if not more so) than socially conscious films, just before he confesses to his own murder in order to get his identity and his riches returned to him.

Clearly, this intricate plot is so detailed that poor costume design would hurt what little believability this unbelievable story has. Edith Head delivered with one of the greatest uses of costume design in American film. Without her elaborate costuming, this film would not stand in such high regard as it does today. Throughout the film, there is a constant shifting of class and social groups. At the start of the film, the audience gets a chance to see all of the rich Hollywood characters in their mansions, dressed the part. But then when Sully goes undercover, we get a chance not to see him dressed as a tramp, but to see him dressed as a rich man posing as a tramp. This very specific costume depicts a rich man wearing the type of clothing that a tramp would wear, but he is still dressed like a rich man would dress. Later in the film, when Sully and the girl (a nameless Lake) are separated long enough from their riches, we get a chance to see their costumes evolve into what real tramps' clothing would look like. Piece by piece, their shirts get torn, their shoes get stolen, their socks get ripped, all their clothing gets dirty, etc. And towards the climax of the

film, when Sully is stripped of his identity and condemned to the labor camp, the audience gets a chance to see the costuming of another class, separate from the tramp. Sully as a prisoner is literally wearing the same piece of clothing every day, and that is evident through the costume design. Sully and all the other prisoners get dressed in their best (washed in dirty water) clothes to go to the church and see a Pluto cartoon. In this scene, the costuming of the characters depicts them in a separate class than any other, and they are stripped of belonging to a societal group. All the prisoners are dressed in the same dirty, disgusting clothes.

This film not only uses costuming to separate classes and societal groups, but it also uses costuming to define the outlook and perception of different classes and societal groups. This film is a masterpiece of costume design at the hands of Edith Head. This is not to say that any other aforementioned film is not as important in the discussion of costuming used to construct class barriers, but *Sullivan's Travels* (1941) is certainly at the forefront. "Actors wear clothes that identify their roles – by period, ethnicity, nationality, class, or character" (Robinson 95). Constructing class barriers and societal groups is an effective method of using the sartorial code to depict a character's identity.

ISSN 2618-1568 Vol. 5, Issue 6: 58-63, DOI: 10.25236/FAR.2023.050611

Analysis of the Role of Costume Design in Shaping the Characters of Film and Television

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Abstract: *With the development of the times and social progress, people begin to focus on the pursuit of spirituality after their material life is satisfied. As a popular art form, film and television dramas are favored by the audience, especially the younger generation. Among them, it has become one of the important ways to spread cultural information because of its audio-visual combination and strong intuitiveness. As a result, more and more directors are focusing on the distinctive characters in film and television dramas. How to express the status, character traits and emotional changes of the characters in the drama through costume modeling has become a key research topic for many scholars. This paper analyzes the positive effects and problems of the interdependence between costume design and film and television performance, in the hope that more scholars and practitioners will explore this field in greater depth.*

Keywords: *Costume design; Film and television characters; Characterization; Role*

1. Introduction

By analyzing the characteristics of the costumes appearing in the films and dramas available in the market, we can see that people's pursuit of beauty is constantly changing and developing in different times. In modern society, with the improvement of economic level, people pay more and more attention to fashion trends. Therefore, in order to better meet the growing aesthetic needs of the audience, costume designers need to keep pace with the times and incorporate more new elements into costume design, so as to promote the progress and development of the whole industry. At the same time, because film and television works involve a wide range of fields, including drama, music, art and many other aspects [1]. Therefore, in order for the actors to successfully express the personality characteristics and emotions of the characters in the drama, they must use suitable costumes to do so. This requires costume designers to have not only solid basic skills, but also strong imagination and creativity in order to design costumes with distinctive features that meet the plot settings. To sum up, this paper aims to discuss the important role of costume design in film and television works, hoping to provide some reference value for future film and television creation.

2. The Development History of Film and Television Costume Design

2.1. The Concept of Film and Television Costume Design

Film and television costume refers to the costume design in films, TV dramas and other TV dramas in order to better show the identity, character and plot of the people in the drama. It is not only a simple means of decoration, but also a comprehensive art discipline integrating various art forms such as art, drama, music, photography and makeup. With the continuous progress of the times and technology, film and television works also present more and more diverse expressions, among which costumes, as one of the most intuitive visual elements, play an important role in promoting. Different types of film and television works need to express different themes, emotions and atmosphere, therefore, for different themes of film and television works, their costume design solutions should also be different [2-3]. At the same time, because there is a certain degree of correlation between the actors' own images and their roles, it is also necessary to consider the actors' own physical characteristics, body proportions, temperament style and other factors when designing film and television costumes, so as to more accurately express the personality characteristics and spiritual outlook of the characters in the drama.

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2.2. The Formation and Development of Film and Television Costume Design

In visual arts such as film and television, costume is one of the most expressive elements. It can not only reveal the changes in people's lifestyle and aesthetic taste in the background of the times, but also express emotions and convey messages through the actors' styling. Therefore, costume designers need to constantly research new materials, new techniques and new technologies to meet the needs of audiences in different periods. At the same time, with the improvement of technology and changes in the social and cultural environment, the storylines presented in film and television works have become more and more complex and diverse, which requires costume designers to have a higher level of imagination and sharper insight, so as to add more charm to the image of the characters on the screen. Early film and television works are often restricted by the venue, time and other factors, costumes are mostly simple and plain style, color matching mostly black and white gray or blue and white, the overall atmosphere seems more stark and simple. In modern times, due to the rapid development of film and television production technology, the picture quality of film and television works has been greatly improved, and costume design began to pursue personalization and fashion sense [4]. For example, in war films, in order to reflect the military's majesty and fighting spirit, the costume design usually emphasizes a sense of heaviness and layers; In romance films, in order to create a romantic and beautiful atmosphere, the costume design tends to choose soft and elegant colors. In addition, in recent years, the film market is highly competitive, and in order to attract more audience attention, costume design is gradually approaching the direction of "spectacle", with more and more exaggerated and peculiar shapes and color schemes [5].

3. The Problems and Solutions of Film and Television Costume Design in Shaping the Characters of Film and Television

3.1. Aesthetic Awareness of Film and Television Costume Design is not Strong

With the development of the times and social economy, people's aesthetic concept has also changed a lot. However, the costume modeling in some film and television works has not kept pace with the times, lacking a sense of fashion and beauty, and unable to meet the increasing aesthetic needs of the audience. This is mainly manifested in the following two aspects: First, some of the crew is too much in pursuit of commercial interests, ignoring the artistic nature of the costume modeling should have; Second, some actors are not suitable for their own image temperament to play the corresponding role, resulting in costume modeling and character character, identity and other inconsistencies. For these problems, we can improve from the following aspects: First of all, we should strengthen the importance of costume design for film and television [6]. As an excellent film and television drama, it is not only an entertainment product, but also a cultural carrier. Therefore, costume designers need to dig deeper into the content of the script, understand the director's intention, combine it with the current fashion trend, and integrate it into the costume modeling, so that each character can show its unique personality charm. At the same time, it is also necessary to pay attention to the details of the style, color and material of the costumes in different scenes, to achieve harmony and unity, in line with the aesthetic standards of the public. Secondly, focus on training professional talents. At present, the number of domestic personnel engaged in film and television costume design is relatively small, and the overall quality is uneven[7]. Therefore, relevant universities or institutions should increase the investment in this field and improve the comprehensive ability level of practitioners by offering relevant courses and organizing practical activities. In addition, government departments can also formulate certain support policies to attract more talented young people to join the industry and promote the whole industry to move forward. Finally, we should keep up with the trend of the times and pay attention to international developments. Nowadays, the process of globalization is accelerating, exchanges between countries are becoming more and more frequent, and various new materials and technologies are emerging. Therefore, the film and television costume designers should not stick to the old ways, but should actively absorb and learn from foreign advanced experience, master the most cutting-edge scientific and technological means to better serve the prosperous development of China's film and television industry [8].

3.2. The Production Level of Film and Television Costume Design is not High

With the continuous progress of science and technology and the times, people's pursuit of beauty is getting higher and higher. Therefore, in order to better meet the needs of the audience and improve the

ISSN 2618-1568 Vol. 5, Issue 6: 58-63, DOI: 10.25236/FAR.2023.050611

image and temperament of actors in film and television dramas, it is necessary to use some advanced technical means to assist. However, at present, many of China's film and television works in the costume design still remain in the traditional hand-sewn stage, lacking innovation and modernity. In this case, even if the actors themselves are good actors, it is difficult to present a vivid role to the audience. In response to this problem, we can draw on outstanding foreign film and television works, such as the American drama "Sherlock", its costume modeling is very focused on the use of fashion elements, the overall color and style are very sophisticated, perfectly reflecting the unique taste of the British aristocracy [9]. At the same time, the show also used a large number of high-tech fabrics and tailoring techniques, so that the characters' costumes not only have practical value, but also can well express the background of the era in which they live and the social landscape. These practices are worthy of study and reference in the domestic film industry. In addition, in order to improve the production level of film and television costume design, we must strengthen the training of relevant talents. On the one hand, universities should open relevant majors or courses to systematically teach students the theoretical knowledge of film and television costume design; on the other hand, enterprises should also invest more in the training of film and television costume designers to help them master more cutting-edge technologies and concepts so as to create more outstanding works. Only in this way can we fundamentally change the current situation of low level of film and television costume design and production, so that every actor can show his or her role to the audience more vividly and three-dimensionally [10].

3.3. The Lack of Market Demand for Film and Television Costume Design

With the development of the times and social economy, people's aesthetic level is constantly improving, and the requirements for costumes in film and television works are getting higher and higher. However, at present, China's film and television industry is facing a grim reality: on the one hand, the number of excellent film and television works is not much, on the other hand, a large number of crude and single-shaped film and television dramas are flooding the screen. This phenomenon has a close relationship with the quality of film and television costume design. Therefore, in order to make more audiences go to the cinema to watch quality films, we must start from improving film and television costume design and strengthen the understanding of its artistic and commercial value, so that it can become an important part of promoting the virtuous cycle of the whole film industry. In order to meet the growing market demand, film and television costume designers need to have a keen sense of insight and innovation, and actively explore the application of new materials, new techniques and new technologies in order to achieve more perfect results. For example, digital printing technology can be used to achieve color diversity; three-dimensional tailoring techniques to highlight the beauty of the human body curve and so on. In addition, it is also necessary to pay attention to the details of processing, such as accessories with, shoe color, silk scarf pattern, etc. may affect the overall image of the presentation effect. Only when these small elements are cleverly integrated into the film and television costume design, can we create a distinctive screen image in line with modern aesthetic concepts [11].

4. The Role of Film and Television Costume Design on Shaping the Role of Film and Television Characters

4.1. Costumes in Film and Television Drama Reveal the Character's Occupation, Status and Identity

In the movie "Forrest Gump", the main character Forrest Gump wears a red T-shirt and blue jeans, a costume that not only fits the characteristics of his era, but also suits his character. The red T-shirt is a vibrant and passionate color, which can make the audience feel his innocence; And the blue jeans represent his extraordinary life experience and his resilient spirit. Through such a simple and generous set of clothing, the personality characteristics of the protagonist can be well presented, and also pave the way for the development of the plot later. Similarly, in the TV series "White Deer Plain", Bai Xiaowen, the main character, wears a long robe and horse coat and holds an oil-paper umbrella, an image that leaves a deep impression on people. The robes and coats are one of the traditional Chinese costumes, which have a strong cultural heritage and historical precipitation, symbolizing high moral character and prominent family background.As shown in Figure 1. In addition, the robes and coats have an elegant air, which makes the actor's own image more tall and grand and helps to highlight his important position in the family. Therefore, in this drama, robes and coats become one of the main visual elements, often appearing in various occasions, such as rituals and weddings [12]. In addition to

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the above, the costumes in film and TV dramas can also reflect the character's occupation, status, identity, etc. For example, Sherlock Holmes in "Sherlock" is always dressed in black with a pipe in his hand, looking mysterious; Sheldon, the hero of "The Big Bang Theory", is always dressed in a straight suit, showing his expertise and social status. These all illustrate that different types of clothing will affect the performance effect of the character, and thus determine the style direction of the entire work.

Figure 1: Long robe and horse coat

4.2. Scientific Costume Design can Bring Out the Character's Personality

In film and television dramas, each actor has his or her own unique personality and characteristics. And these characteristics often need to be expressed through costumes. Therefore, a successful film and television work is inevitably inseparable from excellent costume design. Reasonable and accurate grasp of the relationship between costumes and characters is one of the abilities that film and television costume designers must have. First of all, costume design can help actors to better express their own image and the role they play. Different styles, colors, materials and other aspects of costumes can directly affect the actors' appearance, style and even body language. For example, in the movie "Forrest Gump", the main character Forrest Gump wore a blue sweatshirt with jeans, a simple and comfortable costume that not only met the dressing habits of young people in his time, but also laid a solid foundation for his later life experience. Secondly, the costume design can also reflect the characteristics of the times or regional cultural differences in the context of the play. For example, in some historical films, if there is a Manchu costume or Mongolian costume with obvious ethnic characteristics, it can well bring the audience into the specific historical scenes and enhance the authenticity and credibility of the film. Finally, costume design can also assist actors to express emotions and portray psychological activities. For example, in some suspense films, in order to make the prisoners look more wretched, costume designers often use elements such as torn, tattered and bloodstained for detailed treatment; In war movies, in order to reflect the soldiers' tiredness and wounds, costume designers often use rough and heavy fabrics, faded colors and other techniques. In short, film and television costume design as a comprehensive art, it is necessary to meet the director's creative requirements, but also to take into account the performance needs of actors, while also taking into account the development of the plot, art scenery and many other factors. Only in this way can we create a classic work that is loved by the audience and rich in connotation [13].

4.3. Film and Television Costumes can Render the Plot

In the movie "Forrest Gump", the classic image of the main character Forrest Gump wearing a blue

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sweatshirt with white shorts and white sneakers has been deeply rooted in people's hearts. This outfit not only fits the background of the time, but also shows the character of the main character who is simple, persistent and optimistic. At the same time, other costumes in the film such as red sweaters, leather jackets and other brightly colored clothes also add a lot of color to the whole storyline. These costumes and scenes together form a complete story atmosphere, making it easier for the audience to be brought into the emotions presented by the movie. Likewise, the look of the Empress in the TV series "The Return of the Pearl" was also carefully designed. Her costume is mainly in dark colors, reflecting the calm and atmospheric temperament of the Empress; the collar is decorated with gold embroidery to increase the sense of luxury; the sleeves are decorated with rhinestones to show the nobility and elegance. Such a set of styling not only conforms to historical facts, but also has a certain degree of artistry, which can be said to be very successful. Through the costumes of actors in film and television works, we can easily see the changes of people's aesthetics in different times and the epitome of social style. Therefore, as a cultural carrier, the value of film and television costumes cannot be ignored.

4.4. Clothing Suggests People's Psychology and Emotions

In the movie Forrest Gump, the main character Forrest Gump is an imbecile with an IQ of only 75. He wears a red sweater, white shirt and blue jeans. This set of clothes not only fits the background of the era, but also shows the identity characteristics of Forrest Gump - a child from an ordinary family. At the same time, the red, white and blue colors also represent the passionate blood and the pure and innocent heart of Gump's body. At the end of the film, Gump changed into a suit and walked into the auditorium with a jenny in his hand, at that moment he had become a winner in life. This series of transformation, in addition to the hero's own efforts, but also cannot be separated from the silent support behind him Jenny. Through such detailed descriptions, the audience can feel the changes in Forrest's inner world more deeply, thus making the whole storyline more realistic and believable. Similarly, in the TV series "Bright Sword", the military uniform worn by Li Yunlong also has an important significance. As a soldier, Li Yunlong usually always wears a black suit and tie, giving people a serious and solemn impression. However, in the face of the enemy, he would immediately change into another battle robe, holding a steel gun, showing a brave and fearless side. At this time, Li Yunlong is no longer the soldier who only follows the orders of his superiors, but a heroic figure with independent thinking and charisma. Therefore, different occasions with the clothing can very well show a person's psychological state and emotional fluctuations.

4.5. Film and Television Costumes Foretell the Fate of the Character

In the movie "Farewell My Concubine", the character "Cheng Dieyi" played by Zhang Guo Rong is a tragic and colorful opera actor. He has lived his whole life in the opera troupe, making a living as a performer, but the turbulent times and social changes make him doubt his own path in life, and gradually go to degradation and destruction. Almost all the elements related to opera in the film are enlarged or hidden, leaving only the image of the male protagonist in costume, which has become one of the most classic shots of the film. Through the image of Cheng Dieyi, we can see that film and television costumes have an irreplaceable and important role in expressing the character's inner emotions. In addition to suggesting the character's personality and promoting the development of the plot, the costume can also show the cultural characteristics and social style of the time in which the character lives. For example, the costume of Bai Jingqi in the costume drama "The Great House" is typical of the style of the late Qing Dynasty and the early Ming Dynasty, which retains traditional features and incorporates modern fashion elements, fully reflecting the aesthetic interests and values of people in that era. At the same time, the costumes of different dynasties also represent the differences of social system, economic level and humanistic environment at that time, which also need to be displayed through film and television costumes. In short, as a visual language, film and television costumes not only simply decorate the actors' appearance, but also reveal and express the inner spiritual world of the characters. Therefore, when creating film and television, we should focus on choosing the right costume style, fabric, pattern and other elements from multiple angles, combining with the needs of the plot and the positioning of the character, so as to achieve the best performance effect.

5. Conclusion

This study analyzes different types of characters in film and television dramas and discusses them in depth with the elements of costume design. From both theoretical and practical aspects, it proves that

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costume design is one of the indispensable means to shape characters, express emotional attitudes and promote the development of the storyline in film and television drama works. It also provides some reference value for better creation in related fields in the future. Costume is one of the indispensable elements in film and television works, which can not only provide the actors with stylistic basis and appearance modification, but also express the lifestyle and cultural connotation of people in the background of the times. Secondly, costume designers need to understand the content of the script and accurately grasp the characteristics of the characters in the drama, so as to make targeted costume matching and design. Finally, reasonable costume design helps to strengthen the character's personality characteristics and highlight the unique charm of the character, so as to better show the artistic value of the film. However, it should be noted that due to the constraints of subjective and objective factors, there are inevitably shortcomings in the ideas presented in this paper, and further improvement and deepening are needed. We hope that more scholars and practitioners will pay attention to this paper, so that we can jointly promote the development of film and television drama in China!

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Repositorium für die Medienwissenschaft

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Behind the Scenes: Costume Design for Television: There are Many Things you Don't Know About the League of Gentlemen

2013-12-23

https://doi.org/10.25969/mediarep/14079

Veröffentlichungsversion / published version

Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Toylan, Gamze: Behind the Scenes: Costume Design for Television: There are Many Things you Don't Know About the League of Gentlemen. In: *VIEW Journal of European Television History and Culture*, Jg. 2 (2013-12-23), Nr. 4, S. 15–26. DOI: https://doi.org/10.25969/mediarep/14079.

Erstmalig hier erschienen / Initial publication here:

https://doi.org/10.18146/2213-0969.2013.jethc041

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Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft

Philipps Universität Marburg

volume 02 issue 04/2013

VIEW

JOURNAL OF EUROPEAN TELEVISION HISTORY & CULTURE

BEHIND THE SCENES: COSTUME DESIGN FOR TELEVISION

THERE ARE MANY THINGS YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT THE LEAGUE OF GENTLEMEN

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Abstract: Focusing on the award winning costume designer Yves Barre's work for *The League of Gentlemen* (BBC, 1999-2002), this article explores the role of the costume designer in television production. Using an anthropological method that combines original interviews with Barre, Steve Pemberton (one of the writer/performers) and Jon Plowman (the executive producer) as well as second hand material such as DVD extras, the article provides insight into the show's creative process. The underlying objective is to shed light on the costume design process – an understudied stage of television production.

Keywords: Costume design, *The League of Gentlemen*, Yves Barre, Television, Stage

The League of Gentlemen's[1] unique case and multi-medial nature draw together discussions on production in creative industries and adaptation studies that develop various arguments in the context of The League's production processes (stage, television and film), costume designer's role and costume's function in film and television production. This article brings together these issues to discuss collaboration, individual input and creative autonomy in creation and adaptation processes, costume designer as an 'adapter,' and costume's extended function - not just serving the narrative and reflecting the characters but developing them – with particular reference to costume designer Yves Barre's work for *The League of Gentlemen* (BBC, 1999-2002).

Scholars such as Caldwell,[2] Cottle,[3] Ellis,[4] Hesmondhalgh,[5] Millington and Nelson,[6] Steemers,[7] and Ryan and Peterson,[8] to name just a few, provide outlooks on the complex interactions within creative industries – e.g. film and television – while their works acknowledge the collaborative nature of culture production. These works move beyond the romantic view that considers the writer to be single-handedly responsible for the creation of a cultural product, and concentrate on a wide range of contributors of the creation processes. For example, Ryan and Peterson

[1] I refer to both 'The League of Gentlemen' and '*The League of Gentlemen*'. Where italised a reference to the television programme. Otherwise: a reference to the comedy group. The same is also valid for 'The League' and '*The League*'.
[2] John Thornton Caldwell, *Production Culture: Industrial Reflexivity and Critical Practice in Film and Television*, Duke University Press, 2008.
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stress the collaborative nature of production in which 'a number of skilled specialists have a part in shaping the final work as it goes through a series of stages.'[9] Ellis argues that while primary creators do come up with ideas, these ideas, however, are shaped and influenced by other creative contributors of production.[10] In a manner that supports these observations, writer Alan Bleasdale notes: '[t]here has never been a piece of mine that hasn't been massively improved by contact with other people, by consensus and talk and their ideas.'[11] These arguments suggest that culture production is not a linear process but a complex system.

Similarly, from an adaptation studies perspective Collard,[12] Stollery[13] and Chapple[14] underline the collaborative nature of adaptation. Chapple's outlook that stresses the non-linear process of adaptation is highly enlightening:

> The effect of the production of new cultural artifacts through the processes of adaptation from one medium – whether that medium be literature, film, television, theatre, or digital media – is to produce an intertextual, polyphonic, intermedial weave that is created by artist of many kinds, whether they be authors, playwrights, film directors, musicians, actors, or technicians, and completed for "a moment in time" by us as we receive and respond to that creation.[15]

Chapple embraces the views of Negus,[16] Jensen[17] and Becker[18] who indicate that 'production of culture' takes place throughout conception, production and reception stages, which as Ryan[19] and Hesmondhalgh[20] explain, encompass various players such as primary creative personnel, technical workers, creative managers, marketing personnel, owners and executives, and unskilled and semi-skilled labour as well as audiences. These insights are particularly relevant to this study in understanding *The League's* production processes, as its incarnations (stage, television and film) are highly branded by the authorial signature of its writer/performers.

Cottle[21] argues that in order to understand the complex interrelations in media production – between industries, organisations, professionals, texts and audiences – one needs to take into account the three levels of media production: macro, meso and micro. Cottle[22] and Mittell[23] indicate that these forces work collectively. They also suggest that micro factors, which refer to the everyday working practices of individuals involved in the creation of programmes including their working relationships, the production atmosphere and the cultural milieu,[24] and a bottom up approach that focuses on the micro level analysis of a process are especially crucial for a comprehensive understanding of the complex 'mediations' involved in cultural production. Similarly, Davis and Scase[25] point to the primary status of professional practices in understanding media organisations and suggest that it is professional practices that tend to shape the execution of tasks, the definition of organisational roles in relation to specific circumstances and conditions.

[9] Ibid., p.11
[10] Ellis, 2004.
[11] Alan Bleasdale in Millington and Nelson, 1986, p. 58.
[12] Christophe Collard, 'Adaptive Collaboration, Collaborative Adaptation: Filming the Mamet Canon,' in *Adaptation: The Journal of Literature on Screen Studies,* 3-2, 2010, p. 82-98.
[13] Martin Stollery, 'Transformation and Enhancement: Film Editors and Theatrical Adaptations in British Cinema of the 1930s and 1940s,' in *Adaptation: The Journal of Literature on Screen Studies*, 3-1, 2010, p. 1-20.
[14] Freda Chapple, 'Pedagogy and Policy in Intermedial Adaptations,' in *Redefining Adaptation Studies*, eds. D. Cutchins, L. Raw and J. M. Welsh, Scarecrow Press, 2010, p. 55-70.
[15] Ibid., p.55-56.
[16] Keith Negus, 'The Production of Culture,' in *Production of Culture/Culture of Production*, eds. P. Du Gay, Sage**,** 1997, p. 70-102.
[17] Joli Jensen, 'An Interpretive approach to cultural production,' in *Interpreting Television*, eds. W. D. Rowland and B. Watkins, Sage**,** 1984, p. 98-118.
[18] Howard S. Becker, 'Art Worlds and Social Types', *The Production of Culture*, R. A. Peterson, London, Sage Publications**,** 1976, p. 41-56.
[19] Bill Ryan, *Making Capital from Culture*, Walter de Gruyter, 1992.
[20] Hesmondhalgh, 2007.
[21] Cottle, 2003.
[22] Cottle, 2003.
[23] Jason Mittell, 'A Cultural Approach to Television Genre Theory,' in *The Television Studies Reader*, eds. R. C. Allen and A. Hill, Routledge, 2004, p. 171-181.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Howard Davis and Richard Scase, *Managing Creativity: The Dynamics of Work and Organisation*, Open University Press, 2000, p.13-18.

The arguments presented here support the micro level approach that this article takes examining the costume design process and role of the costume designer in *The League*. They bring us to the significance of individual input, production atmosphere, and working relationships within media production. In the context of this article they point towards the specificity of each production and signify that costume designers, *per se*, have the weight to shape and negotiate the definition of their roles and level of creative autonomy,[26] which tend to change in every production. This points to, for example, just as *The League* would be a very different show if it was made for a different channel or in a different time period (macro elements), it would also be very different if it was made by different people. This, then, illustrates the significance of the costume designer's input. These insights also underline that through the study of an individual and particular case it is possible to develop our knowledge on costume design in television production without making overgeneralisations.[27]

Though the existing literature on costume design processes in film, television and theatre is limited, it makes similar observations. Richard La Motte,[28] and Barbara and Cletus Anderson[29] chart the general structure of costume design processes in film, television and theatre. Lugli,[30] Landis[31] and Pecktal[32] explore the role of the costume designer in media production, and Bruzzi[33] examines the role costume play in defining gender, sexuality and identity in film narratives. Though eclectic, two overarching arguments emerge from existing work on costume design:

a) costume design as an underexplored area and costume designer as a 'misunderstood' profession.[34]

b) costume designer as an important creative collaborator and costume's ability to develop the visual, narrative and ideological framework, thus influencing the reception/interpretation of a text.[35]

From an adaptation perspective, Stollery[36] and Hutcheon[37] note that apart from the most 'visible' creative agents such as writers and directors, there are other candidates for 'the role of the adapters' in film and television such as costume designers. On a similar note, for example, Briton[38] defines the designer June Hudson's role as an 'author' in *Dr Who* 1979 episode 'The Creature from the Pit.' Costume designer Judiana Makovsky[39] states that costume design is 'about designing a total person, not just clothing. I'm designing a character from head to foot.' This points out that costume designers are possible 'authors' or 'adapters' and can be one of the driving forces behind the visual, narrative and ideological framework of a text. These discussions help understand the role costume designer plays in *The League* productions.

[26] Davis and Scase, 2000; David Hesmondhalgh and Sarah Baker, *Creative Labour: Media Work in Three Cultural Industries*, Oxon, Routledge, 2011.
[27] Mittell 2004; Manuel Alvarado and Edward Buscombe, *Hazell: the making of a television series*, British Film Institute in association with Latimer, 1978, p.3-4.
[28] Richard La Motte, *Costume Design 101: The Art and Business of costume Design for Film and Television*, Michael Wise Productions, 2001.
[29] Barbara Anderson and Cletus Anderson, *Costume Design- 2nd edition*, Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1999.
[30] Emanuele Lugli, 'Costume as Appearance: A Study in the odalities of existence of film costumes,' in *Costume Symposium 2006 - Academic Research Papers,* eds. Nigel West, Violet McClean and Martina Stender, Arts Institute at Bournemouth / FWB printing, 2007.
[31] Deborah Landis, 'Hidden in Plain Sight: Motion Picture Costume Design,' in *Costume Symposium 2006 - Academic Research Papers,* eds. Nigel West, Violet McClean and Martina Stender, Arts Institute at Bournemouth / FWB printing, 2007.
[32] Lynn Pecktal, *Costume Design Techniques of the Modern Masters*, Back Stage Books, 1993.
[33] Stella Bruzzi, *Undressing Cinema*, Routledge, 1997.
[34] See, for example, La Motte, 2001, p.43; Anderson and Anderson, 1999, p.iii; Lindy Hemming in Deborah Nadoolman Landis, *Film Craft: Costume Design*, East Sussex, UK, Ilex, 2012, p.68.
[35] Bruzzi, 997, xvi; Piers D. G. Britton, 'Dress and the Fabric of the Television Series: The Costume Designer as Author in "Dr. Who,"' *Journal of Design History*, 12,4, 1999, p.345
[36] Stollery, 2010, p.1.
[37] Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, Routledge, 2006, p.75-85.
[38] Britton, 1999.
[39] Judiana Makovsky in Deborah Nadoolman Landis, 2010, p.110.

In terms of the role of costume in media productions, Bruzzi and Gibson[40] note that there is a common understanding of costume's function to serve character and reflect narrative. For example, Anderson and Anderson[41] indicate that costume can reveal elements such as sex, age, occupation, social status, geographic area, season and weather, time of the day and occasion, activity, historical period, psychological factors, while Alvarado and Buscombe[42] underline that it can also help give actors confidence. However, Bruzzi and Gibson[43] in their examination of *Sex and the City* (HBO, 1998-2004) illustrate that costume can extend these conventional roles – serving actors' performance, writer's and/or director's vision; as well as, in textual terms, character, location and narrative – but be an independent force in itself. This is an interesting point especially in the context of *The League,* a character-based comedy show that aims for a high production value, in other words a 'cinematic' look, on the small-screen.

Contributing to the existing research on costume design this essay focuses on the award winning costume designer Yves Barre's work for *The League of Gentlemen* to explore the role of the costume designer in television production. With its various incarnations (stage, television and film) *The League* comes across as a highly branded phenomenon by the authorial signature of its writer/performers. This provides a perfect case for exploring the significant contribution of the costume designer for developing a groundbreaking phenomenon. Contributing to our understanding of costume design in production processes this essay sheds light on this relatively 'hidden labour of production.'[44]

The League's multi-medial nature also becomes an interesting setting for an inter-medial discussion on costume design for stage and television. Although an in-depth exploration is unfortunately beyond the scope of this essay, discussions from adaptation studies outlined above are adopted to explore Barre's role in the transformation processes of the show.

1 What Is The League of Gentlemen? Who Is Yves Barre?

The League of Gentlemen is a quartet of British dark comedy writer/performers formed by Jeremy Dyson, Mark Gatiss, Steve Pemberton and Reece Shearsmith. While all the members write the material together, Gatiss, Pemberton and Shearsmith between them perform all the characters (male and female).

This partnership started off back in 1995 with a show they put together to fill in a slot in the Timeout Critiques' Choice festival called *I Wish I Have Seen That*.[45] The group did not have their name at this point. The show was called *This is It*! and ran for five nights at London's Cockpit Theatre.[46]

A year later, the group started performing at the Canal Café Theatre in London. This was the first time they manifested as The League of Gentlemen. In these stage shows, The League performed in tuxedos with minimal props.[47] In August 1996, the group took their show to Edinburgh Fringe Festival, which became very successful.[48] Returning back to London, they put together more shows at Battersea Arts Centre and Canal Café Theatre.[49] In 1997 they returned

[40] Stella Bruzzi and Pamela Church Gibson, "'Fashion is the fifth character': fashion, costume and character in *Sex and the City,"* in *Reading Sex and the City*, in J. McCabe, I.B. Tauris, 2004, 115-129.
[41] Anderson and Anderson, 1999.
[42] Alvarado and Buscombe, 1978.
[43] Bruzzi and Gibson, 2004.
[44] Paddy Scannell, *Media and Communication*, Sage, 2007, p.4.
[45] Gordon Anderson, Interview by Aleks Sierz, *Theatre Voice*, 5 December 2004, http://www.theatrevoice.com/listen_now/player/?audioID=235.
[46] James Abery, 'The League of Gentlemen, part one: Meet the locals,' *TV Zone*, 155, 2002, 10-21.
[47] Jeremy Dyson, Mark Gatiss, Steve Pemberton and Reece Shearsmith, 'Making of - Live at Drury Lane,' Disc 1, Special Stuff, *The League of Gentlemen - Live at Drury Lane,* BBC Worldwide, 2001.
[48] Mark Gatiss, 'Interview by Kirsty Young,' *Desert Island Discs*, BBC Radio 4, 2011.
[49] Jeremy Dyson, Mark Gatiss, Steve Pemberton and Reece Shearsmith, 'In Conversation with The League of Gentlemen (Full Version),' Christmas Special Disc 1, Christmas Special Stocking Fillers, *The League of Gentlemen - The Complete Collection*, BBC Worldwide, 2005.

to the Fringe, and this time won the Perrier Comedy Award.[50] After seeing their show at Fringe, Sarah Smith, who was a BBC producer at the time, approached the group with a deal to develop a radio show with the understanding that if successful a TV series would follow.[51] Their radio show (a six-episode run) was broadcast in 1997 on BBC Radio 4 with the name *On the Town with the League of Gentlemen*. The series won the Sony Radio Silver Award. The programme, in a simple sense, was a sketch show. Set in a fictional northern town called Spent, it told the stories of the town's bizarre inhabitants.

In 1998 before moving on to the TV series, the team put together a short run of live shows at London's Gatehouse Theatre.[52] Soon after, production for the television series began. The show was titled The League of Gentlemen. The name of the town, in which the series is set, changed to Royston Vasey. The programme ran for three series from 1999 to 2002 – including a Christmas Special in 2000 – and broadcast on BBC 2. The series won several awards including BAFTA, Golden Rose and Royal Television awards.[53] It again roughly followed the sketch show format yet, most importantly, hybridised several other genres such as horror and drama.

Video 1: ***The League of Gentlemen*, clip from TV Series 1 Episode 1**

In 2001 the group had their first major UK tour called *The League of Gentlemen – A Local Show for Local People*. It followed a similar format to their initial stage performances.[54] In 2005 *The League of Gentlemen's Apocalypse*, a feature-length film was released. Their second UK tour took place in 2006. It was a pantomime stage show titled *The League of Gentlemen Are Behind You!*

Video 2: ***The League of Gentlemen - A Local Show for Local People***

Among its various incarnations the television series seem to attract the most attention and can be described as the most collaborative work the group has done. Pemberton explains his outlook on the creation process of the television series:

> There was a lot of it we didn't know about. […] We haven't done television before. […] We felt well supported, well guided. We had a really strong producer, Sarah Smith. We had a great visual director, Steve Bendelack. And we had people who listened to us in every department, who wanted to take our ideas – the costume, the make-up – they didn't want to impose anything on us. And it was a really fruitful collaboration and the way to go forward. You can't be closed off to people's ideas. Because we could have made a show we wanted to make and it would have been very different. […] It would have been not anywhere near as good. You do have to listen to people who have done that before.[55]

One of these people who supported The League and had a major input is the costume designer Yves Barre. Cutting his teeth on stage – working with Nicholas Georgiadis who was an opera and ballet designer – Barre stepped into television by joining the BBC. Barre notes: '…really the BBC re-educated me for working for the screen. Because up to that point I only worked for the stage. And they are two different disciplines. Very, very different.'[56]

The designer elaborates: '…I think you are much freer to do whatever you like on the stage, normally in the theatre than you are on TV. The restrictions on TV are enormous…'[57] For example, Barre points to the technical elements of television production such as 'strobing' – creating something that is viewed on a smaller scale – that can be quite

[50] Gatiss, 2011
[51] Abery, 2002, p. 10-21
[52] Abery, 2002, p. 10-21
[53] BFI, *The League of Gentlemen*, BFI database, 2004.
[54] Dyson, Gatiss, Pemberton and Shearsmith, 2001
[55] Steve Pemberton, interview by the author, March 5, 2012.
[56] Barre, 2012
[57] Ibid.

restricting when compared to stage.[58]

In 1985 **Barre** became a costume assistant for the BBC during summer relief. This was essentially a short-term position (three months) where one would fill in for the regular designers and assistants who were on holiday, and learn the craft. In the following summers of 1986 and 1987 Barre came back to the BBC for further short-term positions. From then on he was made permanent and stayed on for almost ten years, until he was made redundant later on due to the BBC being re-structured by a new system of organisation.[59] Barre still continues working for the BBC as a freelance designer.

Barre describes how he got on board with *The League* as 'being at the right place at the right time.'[60] This is linked to his working relationship with the producer Sarah Smith. Barre explains:

> We were doing *Friday Night Armistice* [BBC2, 1995-99]… and I have worked with Sarah for a couple of years and you know Sarah automatically thought I was the right choice for *The League*. Because that was her next project and that was that.[61]

After that Barre stayed on throughout the television series. He also designed the costumes for the two nation-wide stage shows and the feature film that followed the TV show, becoming The League's long running creative contributor.

2 Key Costume Design Aspects in the Context of *The League of Gentlemen*

In the context of *The League* there are several key dimensions of costume design. These are the analysis and research period, costume fittings and the communication between (especially) the writer/performers and the costume designer. While each designer seems to have a different approach and each production tends to be a unique phenomenon the above aspects can also be observed in other productions.[62]

It was February 1998 when Barre discovered The League. At this point the group was doing their Gatehouse Theatre runs, which gave the designer a chance to actually watch the group on stage and see 'what he got himself into' before filming for the television series began in June that year.[63] Barre noted the tight schedule and described this as a typical constraint that costume designers had to work through. Barre reflected on how limited time influenced the design procedure:

> We usually come on board very, very late. Later than anyone else. […] So you have to really study things very fast … and you have got to become a world expert on what ever you are doing within three, four days. I mean, you know, very little time.[64]

[58] For further information on challenges in designing for television see Landis, 2007, p.17-18; Lugli, 2007, p.26; and La Motte, 2001.
[59] For further information about the change in the BBC organisational structure see, for example, David Hendy, *Life on Air: A History of Radio Four*, Oxford University Press, 2007; Georgina Born, *Uncertain Vision: Birt, Dyke and the Reinvention of the BBC*, Secker & Warburg, 2004.
[60] Barre, 2012
[61] Ibid.
[62] For example, Britton, 1999, explores the designer June Hudson's approach in *Dr Who* 1979 episode 'The Creature from the Pit'; Alvarado and Buscombe (1978:141-145) look into the costume design process in *Hazell; and* in Landis, 2012, various designers reflect on their practices in various productions. For specificity of creative labour see, for example, Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2011.
[63] Barre, 2012
[64] Ibid.

Within this limited time frame Barre started off the design procedure by reading the script:

> As I read the script I play the scenes in my mind and I read very slowly [...] As I read the script I look at the language, I look at where it's coming from, and you know… my general knowledge of culture and what I know about cinema and art, all that comes into it.[65]

This first step falls into what we can describe as the analysis and research period. For Barre this period also involved some kind of an 'anthropological' research. He stated that a part of his job was to 'study the tribe' and in the context of *The League* he added, '[t]he material given to me was a new tribe and I had to study, analyse and research.'[66] This new tribe was the inhabitants of the fictional town Royston Vasey nestling in the north of England. Apart from its 'northernness' the town also came across as a unique 'enclosed world' or 'an island in itself.[67]

As the writers noted on various occasions their collective northern upbringings played an important role in their creations.[68] The characters, the narrative and the location in *The League* flourished from the writers' own experiences, the places they grew up in and the people they met. The influence of the north on the process of writing also shaped Barre's work. As part of his 'anthropological' research Barre went on a recces:

Audio File 1: **Barre speaks about his trip to the north, 2012**

An element that supported Barre's research was his communication with the writer/performers. This included lengthy conversations as well as some sketches of the characters that the writers drew. Barre took all these as a starting point, then processed all the given information and built on them through analysis and research.[69] It is in the following stage, during costume fittings, where the costume designer's input began to crystallise:

Insert Audio File 2: **Barre speaks about costume design for Papa Lazarou, 2012**

Video 3: ***The League of Gentlemen* TV Series 2 Episode 1, Papa Lazarou**

Pemberton[70] underlined that *The League* had very long fitting sessions, which as Barre notes was 'totally unusual.'[71] The long sessions were due to three actors playing all the characters among them, each playing approximately twenty characters in one season. Barre explains:

Audio 3: **Barre talks about the fitting sessions, 2012**

These insights illustrate the specificity of each production yet point that there are also overarching elements. They also signify the importance of collaboration in production processes, in this case between the writer/performers and the costume designer. Anderson and Anderson's observations on costume design and production offer great insight in this context: 'Unity is best achieved through knowledge, understanding and good communication.'[72]

[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.
[67] Ibid. See also, Leon Hunt, *The League of Gentlemen*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008; Peter Hutchings, 'Uncanny Landscapes in British Film and Television,' in: *Visual Culture in Britain*, 5-2, 2004, p. 27-40.
[68] See, for example, Jeremy Dyson, 'An Everyday Story of Local Folk,' *The Independent*, 15 October, 2000, http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/theatre-dance/features/an-everyday-story-of-local-folk-626124.html.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Pemberton, 2012
[71] Barre, 2012
[72] Anderson and Anderson, 1999, p. 33.

3 Silhouette of a Character

'The way I work is once you do your research, once you know where you are going it's about silhouettes'
Yves Barre, 2012

The next four sections illustrate how the costume designer can have a key role in enhancing the nature of a show, creating a 'cinematic' look, and developing complex characters that hence influence the reception of the end product.

Jon Plowman[73] (the executive producer) and Barre explained that one of the key concepts of *The League* was the fact that there were three actors playing all the main parts. Due to this, as Barre noted, '…the foundation of *The League*, from a costume point of view is in fact, the silhouette of a character – the outline – that has to be changed every time".[74]

Audio 4: **Barre speaking about creating individual silhouettes for the characters, 2012**

Accordingly, in order to differentiate between the characters Barre devised an individual set of paddings for Gatiss, Pemberton and Shearsmith. Barre explained: '[…] each artist had their, what I call a belly-guts padding, they had a head and shoulders, they had a hip and bums, they had a mid rift – a base – which I devised and used to great affect.'[75] Barre described them as almost like 'Mikado kits' from where he could pick and choose to form a character's silhouette and anatomy.[76] By using these **paddings**, Barre was able to transform an actor's body into the various characters he would preform – a short man, a fat old man, a thin old lady and so on.

Barre notes that the writer/performers did not ask him to create paddings, rather it was the designer who came up with the idea. He thought that this approach was necessary and would support key aspects of *The League*: immediacy, intimacy and a sense of authenticity.[77] This links us to significance of micro level analysis in understanding how media production works. Caldwell notes that film and television 'very much function on a microsocial level as local cultures and social communities in their own right.'[78] As Caldwell explains:

> …film/TV production communities themselves are cultural expressions and entities involving all of the symbolic processes and collective practices that other cultures use: to gain and reinforce identity, forge consensus and order, to perpetuate themselves and their interests, and to interpret the media as audience members.[79]

This suggests that media professionals, such as Barre, approach texts with an 'audience-like' self-reflexivity – reading, interpreting, developing new meanings, adding to or subtracting from the initial text – as they collaborate on a production process. Then, we can argue that each production is, in a crude sense, an 'adaptation' process where various professionals, such as the costume designer, embody the role of an 'adapter' who simultaneously provide an individual interpretation and input which feeds into the collaborative production process of negotiation, mutual adjustment, conflict, manipulation and compromise.[80] Barre's initial state as an audience member, when he first watched The League on stage before the production, also builds on to the discussions on self-reflexivity.

[73] Jon Plowman, interview by the author, January 11, 2012.
[74] Yves Barre and Mark Gatiss, 'Interview with Costume Designer Yves Barre,' Series 3 Disc 2, Special Stuff, *The League of Gentlemen - The Complete Collection*, BBC Worldwide, 2005.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Barre and Gatiss, 'Interview with Costume Designer Yves Barre'.
[77] Barre, 2012.
[78] Caldwell, 2008, p. 2.
[79] Caldwell, 2008, p. 2.
[80] For discussions on dynamics of work in creative industries see, Davis and Scase, 2000; and Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2011.

At this point it is worth to briefly consider the stage shows. Barre's experiences for The League seem to be exceptional especially for the first live tour *A Local Show for Local People*. Here Barre wasn't working on a completely new project. What he did was to transform a vision created for stage to television and then re-transform it back to a stage performance.

Video 4: **A Local Show for Local People, end of part one and beginning of part 2**

The first half of *A Local Show for Local People* follows the format of The League's initial stage shows where the actors wear tuxedos which function as 'uniforms' and only use minimal props (e.g. a hat or a scarf) to differentiate between characters.[81] In the second part of the show the characters appear in full costume. Barre underlines that there was nothing new created for the stage in terms of the visual look and silhouettes, yet the difference was in how these costumes and paddings were made considering stage provisions:

Audio 5: **Barre talks about the remaking of costumes for the stage**

Video 5: ***The League of Gentlemen TV series*, 'Go Johnny, Go Go Go Go!' sketch in the TV incarnation** (The stage incarnation can be seen in Video 2)

The transformation process of the show takes us to the discussions in adaptation. As Babbage, Jones and Williams note, '… the notion of creativity is inscribed at the heart of adaptation as a practice'[82] and suggests that adaptation is both a creative and critical work. This, combined with the discussions on the significance of individual input and creative autonomy can be interpreted as when a professional such as a costume designer starts an adaptation process s/he ultimately embarks on a creative and reflexive practice – although the level of creative autonomy and input depend on the circumstances.

The League's multi-medial nature brings a deeper level to this argument. Although the writer/performers stayed the same through out the transformation processes – which relatively makes them more straightforward – the visual look of the show, especially form the initial stage performances to the television series as well as the other stage shows and the film points to the significant input of the costume designer. It reflects Barre's role as an adapter who helped transform a small stage production into small screen then into big stage, then into big screen and finally back into a big stage production through his designs. Barre's designs, however, do not just influence the visual look (the enhancing characters and creating a cinematic look), but also the ideological framework of the show.

4 The Issue of Drag

For Plowman a key point about The League is that they represent something as it is without stepping aside of a character and commenting on it.[83] Pemberton supports Plowman's observations and describes their aim as to fully-embody a character no matter who s/he might be.[84] This conception also lies behind Barre's paddings and character silhouettes.

Video 6: ***The League of Gentlemen* TV series**, Iris (played by Mark Gatiss) and Mrs Levinson (played by Reece Shearsmith)

[81] Pemberton, 2012.
[82] Frances Babbage, Robert Neumark Jones and Lauren Williams, 'Adapting Wilde for the Performance Classroom: "No Small Parts",' in *Redefining Adaptation Studies*, eds. D. Cutchins, L. Raw and J. M. Welsh, Scarecrow Press, 2010, 1-16, p.1.
[83] Plowman, 2012.
[84] Pemberton, 2012.

Taking inspiration from ‘real’ people was also important. The writers explain that in their creations they took the ‘germ’ of a situation or a person and pushed it to extremes.[85] Thus every character had a counterpart in real life. For example, Iris (performed by Gatiss) and Judee (performed by Shearsmith) were in part based on their observations on Dyson’s mother and her cleaner (by no means the characters are direct representations of certain people but compilations of various inspirations).[86] This helps us understand the idea behind the physical look of the characters as well as the actors’ performances. Although these characters might seem grotesque or exaggerated, their foundations were based on real people.

Barre underlines that trying to make the actors dressed as women look as ‘authentic’ as possible was not a suggestion he received from the writer/performers: ‘they didn’t even have to tell me that.’[87] It was the designer who made this creative decision and again it was up to him to deliver it. Barre explains:

> The real revelation for me was to see them on the stage. Because having read the script is was one thing but once I saw them on stage I really realised what this was all about, you know the parameters and what I was really getting myself into really at that point. And then I started thinking how can I make these ‘women’ women...[88]

Audio 6: **Barre explaining how he created an ‘authentic’ look for the actors dressed as women**

5 The Concept of ‘Timelessness’

Barre’s other important contribution is the idea of ‘timelessness.’ This concept emerged during his conversations with the director of the series, Steve Bendelack, reflecting the collaborative nature of media production. Barre explains what this concept meant and how he achieved it in terms of costume design.

Audio 7: **Barre talking about the ‘timelessness’ of costumes in The League**

This is an important notion in terms of understanding where and when the series is set. As Barre describes, Royston Vasey is almost an island in itself. Although the location and its inhabitants offer something familiar to the audience, there is always a surprise element in the show. One never really knows what might happen here because while these characters seem familiar, they are also, in Barre’s words, a unique ‘tribe’ with their own rules.

The concept that Barre and Bendelack developed also supports the complexity of the characters and the complex nature of the show – e.g. hybridising different genres and inspirations. For example, the nature of *The League* lies in representing something ‘just like real life and a step beyond,’ by combining their personal ‘real life’ experiences with many inspirational texts from English Gothic, horror and drama and tapping into the gothic in everyday life.[89] The ‘timeless’ concept follows the theme of ‘just like real life and a step beyond’ through and helps develop something that is familiar yet also very unique, intricate and unpredictable by nodding at different time periods. This takes us to the discussions on costume’s function. Here, the costume has an extraordinary relationship with the script. As the script does not specify a time period, costumes (along with other visuals) develop a unique ‘time frame’ and location for the narrative and the characters to exist in.

[85] Jeremy Dyson, Mark Gatiss, Steve Pemberton, Reece Shearsmith, ‘Behind the Scenes of Series Two,’ Series 2 Disc 2, Special Stuff, *The League of Gentlemen - The Complete Collection*, BBC Worldwide, 2005.
[86] Jeremy Dyson, Mark Gatiss, Steve Pemberton, Reece Shearsmith, ‘DVD Commentaries Series 1 Episode 2’, Series 1 Disc 1, *The League of Gentlemen - The Complete Collection*, BBC Worldwide, 2005.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Gatiss, ‘Interview by Kirsty Young’.

6 Crowd Control and Intensifying Ugliness

Detail is a key aspect of *The League*, which becomes obvious in the writing.[90] This attention to detail also carries through to the visuals. Barre brought this attention to detail to costume design, and crowd control is one of the ways he achieved it.

For Barre background is as important as the foreground. He argues that the audience interprets what the town Royston Vasey is about not only through the main characters but also from the supporting artists who form the fabric of the society that the series depict. Barre had one costume truck for the principle actors and one for the supporting artists, which reflects his commitment to creating an intact visual look. Barre notes:

> I had to re-dress every supporting artist from head to toe in the way I wanted them to look. […] The crowd, the supporting artists initially refused. They said, 'I'm not wearing that' and I said, 'Well you either go home or you wear it'. […] I had countless rows in the early days with the crowd. […] They thought that what I was trying was utterly crazy.[91]

This process is rather unique, as Barre remarks, this is 'something I never done since or has ever been done before.'[92] Another important aspect that the designer developed was 'hyper-ugliness,' which was also something the supporting artists resisted and pushed back against:

Audio 8: [Barre talking about his approach to 'ugliness']

Barre suggests that although one might think that the costumes were exaggerated they were actually based on the people he observed during his trips to the north of England. He also bought most of these clothes from Oxfam shops located in this area. Accordingly, for him the costumes were pretty much 'straight' and were not created 'for laughs' but mainly to develop a certain aura, authenticity and uniqueness. Barre's control of the supporting artists and the employment of the theme 'hyper-ugliness' reflect that he also had an influence on how the location and the show were interpreted by audiences.

An interesting example to consider here is the second stage tour *The League of Gentlemen are Behind You!* in terms of the visual look and costumes as it is quite different than the television series or the first stage show. This is purely due to the fact that it is a pantomime. Barre describes the new look as 'very visual, very stagey, very theatrical.'[93] For instance, as Barre notes, the characters Pauline and C.C. Smith turn into 'pantomime dames' with their costumes becoming 'very stagey' especially in terms of scale and richness. These outfits are completely new and very different than the TV series. One aspect they share with the first stage show is the necessity for immediacy due to quick costume changes.

7 Conclusion

By building on a bottom up approach this article has shed light on a specific creative process, the costume design for *The League of Gentlemen* and acknowledged the costume designer not only as a key contributor to the visual look of the show but someone who has major influence on the tone of the show, and who helped to keep it intact throughout

[90] See Jeremy Dyson, Mark Gatiss, Steve Pemberton and Reece Shearsmith, *The League of Gentlemen Scripts and That*, BBC Books, London, 2003.
[91] Barre, 2012.
[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid.

its multi-medial incarnations. The analysis suggests that through thorough research, Barre was able to 'tune himself' to the writers' 'wavelength.' This developed a close relationship between the professionals, which then allowed great creative freedom for the designer. Barre did not merely dress the characters but by developing complex paddings he also created their physical silhouettes, which had great influence on the end product. Barre also had significant control over the look of the supporting actors. Through creating the look of the people in the background, he helped create the atmosphere of the fictional town where these characters lived. Thus, the designer's artistic vision shaped the characters' physical looks as well as the atmosphere, tone and production value of the show. The analysis also reflects the costume designer's role as an 'adapter' who interpreted and added various meanings to the incarnations.

The article has also pointed out some of the important stages in the creative process such as costume fittings and research period. Although this analysis has focused on a specific and a unique programme, it also helped illuminate some of the general features of costume design for television and teased out some of the differences between costume design for stage and television.

List of Programmes

Jeremy Dyson, Mark Gatiss, Steve Pemberton and Reece Shearsmith, *On the Town with The League of Gentlemen*, BBC Radio Four, 1997.

Jeremy Dyson, Mark Gatiss, Steve Pemberton and Reece Shearsmith, *The League of Gentlemen*, BBC 2, 1999-2002.

Jeremy Dyson, Mark Gatiss, Steve Pemberton and Reece Shearsmith, *The League of Gentlemen: A Local Show for Local People,* UK Stage tour, 2001.

Jeremy Dyson, Mark Gatiss, Steve Pemberton and Reece Shearsmith, *The League of Gentlemen are Behind You!*, UK Stage Tour, 2006.

Jeremy Dyson, Mark Gatiss, Steve Pemberton and Reece Shearsmith, *The League of Gentlemen's Apocalypse*, Universal Pictures, 2005.

Biography

Gamze Toylan is a PhD candidate at the University of Westminster, Communication and Media Research Institute where she is also teaching in various BA modules. With a BA in Communication and Design, and MA in Film and Television, her current research project is on The League of Gentlemen (BBC, 1999-2002). Her thesis aims to provide a detailed study of the creation of the show. Her work develops through original interviews with media professionals, which explore how 'special moments' in television come about. Her key interests are TV production, British comedy, production design, media history and oral history.

Article ID: jethc041 | URL: http://www.viewjournal.eu
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