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Bright Apocalypse?

Envisioning the future in contemporary green animation

This case study is part of a broader research which aims to examine changes in the cultural logic of ecology in mainstream European animation since the 1980s.

Based on the theoretical framework of cultural studies, ecocriticism and animation studies, this research examines, on the one hand, the social, cultural, film-industrial and regulatory factors that have shaped the changes in the animated representation of the relationship between humans and nature to this day, and on the other hand, analyzes the role specific traits of the animated language play in this process.

Given their predominance in the global media industry, most scholarly literature dealing with animation from an ecocritical perspective focuses on films made in the US, except a handful concerned with Japanese animation (i.e., Parham, 2016; Monnet, 2017; Stibbe, 2019; Wake, 2017). The latter, with one exception, examines Hayao Miyazaki's works, which have also become part of global pop culture. Both countries had a strong influence on European animation, not only in terms of content or aesthetics, but also in the form of specific international co-productions, which were realized even with countries on the supposedly closed, eastern side of the Iron Curtain dividing Europe during the communist era. An illustrative example of this was the internationally renowned Tv series *The wonderful Adventures of Nils* (*Nirusu no fushigi na tabi, 1980-81*), co-produced by Japan, Sweden and Czechoslovakia. The analysis is presented in context of historical developments of mainstream green animations' topical and formal shifts from binary oppositions of human and nonhuman-nature through representations of post colonial ideas to questions addressing tensions between the global and the local inherent in ecological thought.

As a result of a systematic literature review of the intersections of animation studies and ecocriticism the study focuses on formal and aesthetic peculiarities of animation such as the illusion of life, anthropomorphism, metamorphosis, plasmaticness and reverberating space. As Ursula Heise (2014:318) claimed "*animation has been the principal aesthetic genre through which industrial societies have reflected on the animatedness of the nonhuman, the inanimate, and the object*". From a green perspective, the significance of the previously mentioned traits

lies in their subversive potential. For the constructed language of animation does interrogate its subject, and the differentia specifica mentioned before reject laws of physics and biology inherently. Thus they can be an excellent means of challenging the status quo, all the more so, because these traits also touch the core of the nature-culture divide by endowing nature, traditionally assumed to be discursively passive, with agency.

It is against this backdrop that this study presents an ecocritical analysis of two popular animations *White plastic sky* (2023) and *Flow*(2024). The former envisions a dystopian society where human sacrifice is a must to sustain the remains of plant world which is inevitable for humanity's survival, while *Flow* uses the ancient European myth of Odyssey, but turned upside down as a directionless, purely survival-like journey, where the main protagonists are animals instead of humans. Both films challenge the status quo with their message, form and productional background, as they were both produced in countries of the former Eastern Bloc, and *Flow* even won the Academy Award which being a low-budget, individual project, is unique in the animated-feature category.

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Title:

Horror Films as Resistance Narratives in the Post-Growth Era

Abstract:

Horror films have long served as cultural barometers, shaping and reflecting collective anxieties. In their early forms, especially during the 20th century's height of industrial and imperial expansion, horror often projected fear onto the figure of the "other"- the foreigner, the unknown, the non-human. Characters such as Dracula, Frankenstein's monster, and King Kong exemplify this tendency: threats coded as racial, scientific, or primal intrusions upon civilized society. These monsters helped define borders - between cultures, species, genders, or moral orders - and reinforced the perceived need to defend growth, order, and control. This trope aligned with dominant ideologies during periods of economic growth and expansion, reinforcing social boundaries and justifying violence through metaphor.

This presentation explores how contemporary horror cinema increasingly turns inward, using fear to expose the hidden violence of systems - economic, political, familial - rather than to dramatize threats from the outside. Drawing on post-structuralist and psychoanalytic theory (particularly Foucault, Kristeva, Žižek), I argue that the genre's symbolic focus has shifted. Rather than externalizing fear

through monsters, many recent films use horror to confront the unsettling conditions of the post-growth era: environmental decay, racial capitalism, social isolation, and institutional breakdown.

To illustrate this, I analyze a selection of contemporary films that reflect this shift. Jordan Peele's *Get Out* (2017) and *Us* (2019) frame horror not in the supernatural, but in systems of racial commodification and liberal performativity. Kiyoshi Kurosawa's *Cure* (1997) and *Pulse* (2001) depict a kind of horror rooted in social disconnection and the loss of meaning. Ari Aster's *Hereditary* (2018) and *Beau Is Afraid* (2023) explore the monstrous within the structures of family, society, and memory, where trauma, control, and anxiety replace supernatural threats. Eco-horror films like Larry Fessenden's *The Last Winter* (2006) depict nature itself as monstrous, but ultimately as a consequence of human exploitation and environmental collapse. In parallel, works like *The Platform* (2019) and *Snowpiercer* (2013) reimagine systemic power and inequality as sources of terror, turning social structures into the new monsters. These films reveal how horror today critiques systems rather than scapegoats outsiders.

Rather than suggesting a clean break from the past, I emphasize that this internalization of horror has always been a possibility within the genre. Horror's flexibility allows it to both enforce and undermine dominant narratives. In the current global context - marked by declining trust in progress and mounting crises of sustainability - the genre increasingly leans into its critical potential.

This paper contributes to broader conversations about the role of visual media in reflecting and reshaping emotional and political life in the post-growth era. Horror, I argue, does not simply depict fear - it helps us recognize what is truly frightening now.

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From Resistance to Melancholia: Generational Shifts in K-pop's Youth Narratives

Abstract

This study investigates the evolving portrayal of youth narratives in K-pop music videos (MV)s before and after Korea is recognized as a developed country by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in 2021. While scholarly attention has focused on K-pop's global expansion or gender politics (Kim(2017) and Shao(2010)), the relationship between Korea's post-2010 economic stagnation and youth narratives remains under-explored. This paper first proposes a generational transition from outward societal resistance to inward self-questioning. This research addresses this gap by analyzing how post-growth conditions reshape cultural expressions of youth struggle.

The analysis centers on two distinct eras: the MVs of 1st ~ 3rd generation represented by f(x)'s *Rum Pum Pum Pum* (2013) and BTS's *I NEED U* (2015), and the current moment embodied by NewJeans's *Ditto* (2022) and tripleS's *Girls' Never Die* (2023). Close reading demonstrates how early works already hinted at the emotional tone found in more recent melancholic expressions—like the lingering shots of abandoned spaces in BTS's seemingly hopeful *Spring Day* (2017)—while recent releases occasionally channel the rebellious energy of their predecessors, as seen in tripleS's bittersweet use of "girl never die." This melancholic turn may be theorized through Byung-Chul Han's depiction of the burnout society, which provides a useful framework to understand how melancholia reflects the internalization of failure in a post-growth world. Early MVs used dramatic action scenes—shattered glass, confrontations in the rain—to express young people's anger toward society. In contrast, contemporary productions favor muted colors, still camera shots, and open-ended stories, visually encoding Generation Z's experiences of digital isolation and precarious futures.

Drawing on Hartmut Rosa's theory of social acceleration with Byung-Chul Han's concept of the burnout society, this study analyzes how such a shift reflects the sense of stagnation in the post-growth era—where the impossibility of upward mobility leads youth culture to turn from resistance to passive introspection, and the melancholic aesthetics in post-growth K-pop music videos resonate with Gen Z's feelings that endless growth no longer brings real meaning. Ultimately, this study shows how K-pop reflects changing generational values and

emotions, as economic paradigms shift from growth to sustainability, so do the cultural narratives through which youth comprehend their position in the post-growth society of Korea.

Keywords: generational studies, post-growth, music video, Korean Wave, youth culture

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From Sino-German Reception to Global Adaptation: A Dual-Path Framework for Cross-Cultural Communication

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Abstract

This study investigates the international reception of *Black Myth: Wukong*, China's first AAA game rooted in the classic novel *Journey to the West*, with a particular focus on the German market. While the game has been widely praised in China for its technical excellence and cultural symbolism, its fragmented narrative structure and deep reliance on cultural familiarity have led to mixed responses abroad. Drawing on qualitative discourse analysis of 269 German media articles and broader theoretical frameworks from cross-cultural communication, this research identifies a recurring disjunction between technical attraction and narrative engagement in the global circulation of culturally specific digital media.

To address this challenge, the study proposes a Dual-Path Cultural Communication Framework. The first pathway, Technical Attraction, leverages visual spectacle and gameplay design to lower cultural entry barriers and capture global attention. The second, Cultural Co-Creation, emphasizes the need for adaptive storytelling and emotional resonance to sustain audience engagement across cultural divides. The framework integrates insights from Hall's Encoding/Decoding model, Schramm's communication theory, Jenkins' transmedia storytelling, and Venuti's translation strategies to highlight how meaning is co-constructed between media producers and culturally diverse audiences.

The study argues that Chinese cultural products often emphasize technological prowess while underestimating the importance of narrative accessibility. Through a case study of *Black Myth: Wukong*, the paper demonstrates how Western audiences—especially in Germany—evaluate such works through different interpretive frameworks, prioritizing clarity, emotional depth, and narrative cohesion. By contrast, the game's implicit symbolism and fragmented exposition, rooted in domestic storytelling conventions, result in cultural misalignment abroad. These

findings reflect larger structural asymmetries in global media flows and raise critical questions about how digital narratives can achieve both cultural authenticity and international resonance. The study contributes to ongoing debates about media globalization by offering a model for analysing how culturally embedded media products can balance distinctiveness with accessibility. It emphasizes that cultural export is not merely about showcasing heritage, but also about creating inclusive narrative frameworks that invite interpretation and participation. The Dual-Path Framework offers practical guidance for creators and scholars interested in fostering more effective and reciprocal forms of global cultural communication in the post-growth era of visual media.

Note: This paper is currently under peer review at *International Communication Gazette*. Should it be accepted for presentation at the Next-Generation Global Workshop, I will revise the submitted version based on feedback received during the workshop. The revised version for potential inclusion in the KURENAI repository will be adjusted accordingly to avoid any overlap with the journal submission, ensuring compliance with all copyright and publication standards.

Social Movement in Digital Green Campaign: A Case Study on Tik Tok Pandawaragroup

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the social movement of the Pandawara Group with a focus on their visual presentation and scripts to the audience on Tik Tok social media. How does the Pandawara Group popularize the practice of environmental cleanliness, particularly in waste cleaning in rivers? Are their strategies effective?. Several previous studies have stated that environmental influencers on Instagram often generate high engagement levels with the audience, especially among younger demographics. To enrich previous studies, the researcher adds Tik Tok social media to examine its influence on audience awareness. This study uses qualitative content analysis with a case study that systematically examines and categorizes the textual, visual, and audio content of the Pandawara Group's posts on Tik Tok over a period of 1 year (January to December 2024). In this study, the content of the Pandawara Group selected includes posts on raising awareness, education, environmental cleanliness, and waste management. The Pandawara Group was chosen because it has a clear and explicit goal, which is to convey messages about environmental cleanliness and waste management in rivers. Social Performance Theory developed by sociologist Erving Goffman is used in this study to provide insights into the role of the Pandawara Group's content in language, image, and messaging in understanding how they convey environmental messages to the audience. Furthermore, this theory also offers a framework for analyzing symbolic interactions to shape social reality, enabling the researcher to analyze symbolic interactions and their influence on audience perceptions. Researcher argue that the Pandawara Group uses a multifaceted approach in utilizing informative and visual content to engage and involve the audience in promoting environmental sustainability. The audience's responses reflected in this study mostly include amazement, inspiration, as well as support for awareness and actions on environmental cleanliness and waste management. The findings from this study indicate that the social movement carried out by the Pandawara Group has been successfully implemented in several places in Indonesia, such as the Cikeruh River, Citarum River in Bandung, and the Floating Settlement of Kampung Nelayan in Makassar. The social movement carried out by the Pandawara Group is not only about providing environmental information but also about raising awareness and stimulating real action from the audience, such as the emergence of several communities of young people who care about the environment and use social media to promote environmental cleanliness, such as Street Ant, Bombar Group, and Kalangsari Pride. The implications of this research can contribute to the understanding of the role of visual media and technology in the construction of social problems and environmental solutions.

Keywords: Social Movement, Green Campaign, Tik Tok, Pandawara Group, Community

Prosthetic Nostalgia and Identity in Chinese Comics: Generation Z's Fan Reappropriation of *Lianhuanhua*

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Abstract

This study focuses on the small group of Chinese Generation Z fans, aged 18 to 30, who engage with *lianhuanhua* (连环画) - a Chinese picture-story narrative - through both reading and creative reappropriation. Originally circulated from the 1950s to the 1980s, *lianhuanhua* was a key medium in mass literacy, cultural education, and political propaganda during Mao's era, deeply shaping the narrative imagination of socialist China. Although it receded from the mainstream media landscape after the 1990s due to the rise of Japanese manga and televisions widely, its visual language and ideological structures remain accessible to younger readers via family collections and digital platforms. Through publishing original visual works on social media, these Gen Z creators re-circulate *lianhuanhua* on aesthetic, affective, and identity-forming levels.

Using close reading of fan works (including narrative structure, stylistic features, and intertextual references) and oral history interviews with active young *lianhuanhua* fans who are also creators, and a small amount of digital ethnography on social media platforms, this research examines how this "outdated" medium is repurposed as a tool for intergenerational memory practices, creative labor, and identity negotiation. Findings show that participants were

often introduced to *lianhuanhua* through family archives, developing a fascination or pride in its “retro” and “localized” aesthetics. These indirect, non-lived encounters reflect what Svetlana Boym calls “reflective nostalgia”, characterized by an imaginative reconstruction of the past. The fan-made works often appropriate *lianhuanhua*’s visual language for original stories, generating what Alison Landsberg defines as “prosthetic memory”: the ability of media to transmit historical experiences beyond lived memory. Positive audience responses using tags like “nostalgia”, “red memory”, and “Chinese comics” attribute symbolic value to these works and reveal how *lianhuanhua*, even without its material form, continues to function within a post-material memory regime that supports identity formation and affective community among Gen Z.

Although these fan creators often self-identify as members of niche or subcultural groups, their works are not merely confined to these circles. Rather, they are increasingly visible within the broader ecosystem of comics and animation culture. These practices are not only aesthetic imitations but also critical responses to institutionalized media frameworks and narrative authority, enabling youth to assert cultural agency and build intergenerational connections from a marginal position. Through shared aesthetic experience and emotional investment, these fan groups form a kind of imagined community - transformed from Anderson’s national model into a network bound by memory aesthetics and visual marginality. Centering grassroots reappropriation, this study provides a generationally grounded perspective on how legacy media like *lianhuanhua* are reanimated in digital culture, thereby contributing to broader debates on cultural heritage, mediated memory, and the micropolitics of visual production.

Keywords

Lianhuanhua, Generation Z, fan culture, nostalgia, media memory

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Abstract

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18th Next-Generation Global Workshop: Visual Media in a Post-Growth Era

Title: *Value Negotiations and Hybridizations of Local Knowledge Systems in Japanese wine production*

Wine production in Japan is still a nascent activity, although the number of wineries in the country doubled since 2014, reaching 453 in 2022. Local and national public governments support this expansion, driven by expectations of rural and peri-urban revitalisation. However, Japanese wine production requires significant improvements in quality standards to conform to the threshold of expectations required by the competitive global market. The National Tax Agency Japan has issued norms since 2015, such as the Japan wine label and regional geographic indications, to further the territorialisation of production. They are tools to address the standards of the global wine market for regional representation in branding, as well as the potential of domestic wine production for local economic development.

This study seeks to decipher the mechanisms of local knowledge development, adaptation, diffusion and hybridization in Japanese wine production. Its contribution to knowledge systems literature is to investigate how Japanese winemakers are compelled into local knowledge producers, to cater contradictory institutional expectations regarding wineries' contributions to their local context, and affirmation in a competitive global market. This paper is based on in-depth interviews and participatory observations conducted in Nagano Prefecture, Japan, with wine producers, local government representatives and knowledge intermediaries. Visual artistic renderings of the findings are also realised, to be shown to and discussed with the respondents. They are to be amended and modified with their inputs and own possible visual contributions. These artistic renderings consist of knowledge network maps, as well as of tentative illustrations of the producer' projected occupation of space and linkages with community.

Borrowing principles from art-based action research, the exploration of these visual renderings as iterative research tools aims to build both focal points of investigation and efforts of holistic understanding. They are visual artistic supports developed in collaboration between the researcher and respondents to examine the interviewees' understanding of their involvement in the local space, in terms of knowledge creation and

diffusion, as well as of the manifestation of projected imaginaries on local community and landscape development.

National and local support to the creation of new wineries and to an increased focus on grape production shift and diversify what is considered legitimized knowledge in winemaking in Japan. With an either shrinking or unchanging mainstream Japanese market in terms of size and customer awareness, the necessity to secure customers, higher value for products and new nested markets encourages experimental, innovative pursuits for producers. However, these new styles of productions are layered by higher vulnerabilities and financial risks, leading to an increased need from producers for local multi sectoral collaborations, as well as for higher influence as entrepreneurs on space and community planning.

Number of words: 437

Media Representations of Diversifying Korean Society: Migrant Workers in Korean Dramas and Editorials

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As South Korea undergoes demographic shifts and increasing diversification, media representations of low-skilled migrant workers have become more visible across both print and visual platforms. This paper examines how migrant workers are portrayed in two distinct forms of media—digital editorials and televised dramas—over the past several years, revealing both convergences and divergences in framing. With rising public discourse around migration, digital print media has significantly increased its coverage of migrant labour, often focusing on themes of economic necessity, labour exploitation, and social marginalisation. These portrayals, while shedding light on structural issues, tend to frame migrant workers in passive or victimised roles, rarely acknowledging their agency or cultural presence within Korean society.

In parallel, recent Korean dramas have more often introduced foreign characters, including migrant workers, in supporting or episodic roles, prominently in series such as *Squid Game* (2021), *The Good Bad Mother* (2023), and *Welcome to Samdal-ri* (2023–2024). Among them, Ali Abdul from *Squid Game* stands out as an exemplary figure in discussions of representation. His portrayal has sparked debate: while his character marks a rare and meaningful instance of South Asian visibility in Korean popular culture and is shown as kind, loyal, and competent, he is ultimately confined within a narrative that reinforces structural subordination and vulnerability. This tension mirrors the way migrant workers are often depicted in print: sympathetically, but still from a hierarchical, outsider perspective.

By triangulating the portrayals of migrants in recent Korean dramas and editorials, this study highlights the persistence of unequal representation in both media forms, while also noting how visual media has experimented with more nuanced depictions. Unlike print media's predominantly policy- or problem-oriented framing, dramas have the capacity to humanise migrant characters, offering a more multifaceted image even as they reinforce their peripheral status. These patterns suggest that while visibility is increasing, the discursive positioning of migrants in Korean media remains largely unequal, foregrounding their utility or hardship rather than integrating them as full social actors.

This paper contributes to broader conversations around visual culture in a post-growth era by situating the representation of migrant workers within changing national narratives and cultural self-reflections. As Korea grapples with labour shortages, aging demographics, and the implications of multiculturalism, the media becomes a key site where the boundaries of belonging are negotiated. Understanding how migrant workers are framed across media not only reveals how Korean society views its newest members but also exposes the limits of inclusion in a rapidly diversifying yet hierarchically structured social landscape.

By foregrounding these representational dynamics, the paper invites a critical reassessment of media's role in shaping collective imaginaries of nationhood and labour in a post-growth Korea.

Rethinking Belonging and the American Dream: Visualizing the Articulation of Diasporic Identity in American Graphic Memoirs

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Abstract

Amid growing critiques of the American Dream's promises of success and belonging in the post-growth era, graphic memoirs have emerged as a powerful medium through which diasporic authors articulate identity and challenge dominant ideals through visual storytelling. This paper analyzes two American graphic memoirs, Mira Jacob's *Good Talk* (2019) and Malaka Gharib's *I Was Their American Dream* (2019), to examine how second-generation immigrants of Asian descent navigate racialization, cultural hybridity, and the pressures of national belonging within the constraints of the American Dream. While the Dream claims to promote equal opportunity and multiculturalism, it often obscures the racial hierarchies and exclusions embedded within its narrative. Hence, this paper explores how these memoirs interrogate the cultural logic of the American Dream and reframe belonging from a diasporic perspective.

Whereas existing research often centers diasporic identity in prose literature or sociological context, this study offers a fresh perspective by applying visual research methods that include compositional interpretation and 'graphiation'—or modulation of graphic style, to explore Asian diasporic experience in autobiography. This hybrid genre of graphic narrative and life writing have demonstrated the power of visual storytelling to convey complex and deeply personal stories and showcased its impact on the literary landscape. Drawing on Stuart Hall's theory of articulation, the analysis focuses on how diasporic identity emerges through shifting alignments with historically situated discourses and conjunctures. Additionally, the concept of the American Dream is employed as a critical framework to examine how normative ideals of success, belonging, and national identity are visualized, contested, and reimagined in both graphic memoirs.

Through a close reading of the narrative and visual strategies, this study reveals that Jacob's and Gharib's memoirs articulate diasporic identities through continuous negotiation with and resistance to the exclusionary ideals of the American Dream. Both works offer a critical perspective on dominant construction of Americanness as shaped by racial hierarchies, meritocratic ideals, and consumerist aspiration. In *Good Talk* (2019), Jacob

stages tense dialogues around race and identity, visualized through cutout paper doll figures juxtaposed against photographic backdrops that heighten emotional and cultural fragmentation. In *I Was Their American Dream* (2019), Gharib adopts a zine-inspired, scrapbook-like style to contrast playful drawings with critical commentary on microaggressions, intra-diasporic bias, and cultural tension. Hence, the unique visual styles of both memoirs become critical tools for articulating fragmented identities and challenging idealized visual representation of the American Dream. Rather than rejecting the Dream outright, both memoirs offer counter-narratives that expose its racialized exclusion and reimagine belonging as a contingent, culturally situated process shaped by diasporic negotiation.

This paper contributes to the workshop's theme of visual media in a post-growth era by demonstrating how graphic memoirs articulate alternative modes of perceiving, negotiating, and asserting identity. It also engages specifically with the politics of visual media and offers insights into how the ideals of success and belonging can be reimagined through the visual language of diasporic storytelling.

Keywords: *Americanness, counter-narratives, diaspora, graphiation, racialized belonging*

Title: *Framing Diaspora Identity: Southeast Asian Female Migrants in Taiwanese Documentaries*

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This study examines the representation of Southeast Asian female migrants in Taiwanese documentaries since the 2000s, particularly in the context of the post-growth era, and explores the formation of female communities and diasporic solidarity within their migration experiences. Although the visibility of Southeast Asian female migrants in Taiwanese documentaries has increased since the post-growth era, Existing research, such as the works of Li and Bao (2019) and Hsieh (2022), primarily focuses on how Southeast Asian female migrants are portrayed within labor systems, family structures, and gender roles. Little attention has been given to how they actively form horizontal connections and build supportive communities through everyday practices to cope with the challenge of cultural adaptation and fostering diaspora identity formation. Moreover, limited attention has been placed on examined the role of Taiwanese film festivals in curating migration-related themes, particularly regarding institutional involvement and discursive construction.

In line with post-growth scholarship, development discourses have increasingly shifted their emphasis from GDP-driven growth to ecological sustainability and socially desirable outcomes, including welfare, inclusion, and democratic participation (Fioramonti, 2024). How visual media can strengthen social bonds and support the voices of marginalized communities has become an important perspective for understanding contemporary social change. This study analyzes four documentaries—*The Power of Women* (2009), *Let's Not Be Afraid!* (2010), *Lesbian Factory* (2010), and *Help Is on the Way* (2020)—all directed by Taiwanese filmmakers. These works focus on Southeast Asian female migrants' experiences of cultural adaptation and diaspora identity formation in the contexts of marriage, labor, and family.

This research adopts diaspora studies, particularly drawing on William Safran's work, as its primary theoretical framework, supported by perspectives from gender studies, to examine how Southeast Asian female migrants form social connections and express personal experiences in Taiwanese documentaries. Diaspora theory emphasizes that migrant identity is not a fixed status, but an evolving process shaped by emotional ties, cultural connections, social networks, and transnational relationships (Safran, 1991). The study applies this framework to the four selected documentaries to examine how Southeast Asian female migrants in Taiwan construct a sense of belonging and negotiate their social positions through community practices, visual narratives, and curatorial participation. Through textual analysis of documentaries and archival analysis of film festival materials, it further explores how these women build connections, share experiences, and express their perspectives, while also considering how Taiwanese film festivals influence public understandings and policy dialogue of migration.

This study focuses on how Southeast Asian female migrants shift from being passive objects of representation to becoming active subjects who shape diaspora identity and express marginalized experiences through community practices and visual media.

Keywords: Southeast Asian female migrants, Taiwanese documentary, diaspora identity, community building

*Abstract***Visualizing Migration: Digital Media and the Cultural Imaginaries of Migration in Global South****Saroj Koirala¹**¹Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy, University of Jyväskylä

In the context of an increasingly precarious global economy, growing ecological concerns, and shifting demographic dynamics, my research explores how visual and digital media shape the imaginaries, narratives, and decisions around migration in developing societies. Focusing on Nepal, a country with one of the most persistent and symbolically rich cultures of migration in South Asia, the study examines how media representations: ranging from social media vlogs and videos to digital brochures of recruitment agencies, reconfigure aspirations, social norms, and affective desires related to mobility.

Building on a multi-scalar ethnographic approach, the paper analyzes how visual media function not only as informational tools but also as cultural texts that circulate imaginaries of success, risk, adventure, and escape. These visual artifacts construct migration not simply as an economic necessity but as a performative rite of passage, morally valorized, emotionally charged, and deeply embedded in both household decision-making and youth identity. In doing so, media mediate the tensions between local stagnation and global aspiration, between the rhetoric of personal growth and the reality of systemic exclusion.

This paper draws from my broader doctoral research project on Nepal's migration culture and is based on fieldwork conducted in both urban Kathmandu and high-emigration villages in Nepal. It illustrates how visual media reframe the meaning of migration in the post-growth era: no longer seen merely as a route to remittance or escape from poverty, migration becomes a curated, romanticized life project, both highly individualized and structurally patterned. Particularly among Generation Z migrants, platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp have become key sites of meaning-making, where images of success abroad are curated and circulated, feeding back into local expectations and kinship obligations.

Moreover, the paper engages with the post-growth theme by interrogating how digital media enable forms of "convivial aspiration" that transcend mere material accumulation. These visual media construct alternative narratives of fulfillment, ranging from "quiet lives" in rural Europe

to “freedom” in urban Japan, while simultaneously reinscribing hierarchies of class, geography, and digital literacy. They offer imagined futures that appear both attainable and ethically desirable, particularly in a context where local institutions seem unable to deliver economic or existential security.

By analyzing the visual cultures of migration in Nepal through the lens of post-growth theory, the paper offers new insights into how global migration is imagined, legitimized, and contested in the digital age. It contributes to broader debates in media studies, migration studies, and the anthropology of aspiration, highlighting how media function not merely as reflections of social change but as active participants in shaping new life-worlds under conditions of stagnation, uncertainty, and ecological strain.

This study is especially relevant to discussions of media and everyday life, transnational migration, youth culture, and the politics of hope in the Global South. It thus aligns closely with the workshop’s aim to rethink visual media in times of systemic transformation and social recalibration.

Reimagining Development: Post-Growth Narratives in Indonesian Documentary Cinema

Jordy Satria Widodo, a Doctoral Student, Literature Department, Faculty of Humanities, University of Indonesia

Abstract

This research explores how documentary film functions as a critical medium to reconstruct dominant development narratives through the conceptual framework of post-growth which challenges extractivist, growth-driven logics by emphasizing community sovereignty, ecological sufficiency, and alternative notions of prosperity. Focusing on two Indonesian documentaries, *Angin Timur* and *Tanah Tabi*, produced by the collective *Ekspedisi Indonesia Baru*, the study employs methodological approaches consisting of decolonial cinematography and visual ecocriticism to analyze the films' visual strategies and thematic content. Complementing the textual analysis, in-depth interviews with the filmmakers reveal how post-growth principles are embedded not only in narrative content but also in the films' production and distribution processes. These documentaries disrupt hegemonic portrayals of peripheral regions, such as coastal Java and Papua, by reimagining human-environment relations and putting the emphasis on the sovereignty of local communities in shaping their own stories. The research finds that both films embrace a model of visual sovereignty where narratives are co-produced through participatory methods, such as community-based research, collaborative narration, and community screenings, moving beyond "Giving voice to the voiceless" toward a framework of co-created narrative sovereignty. This approach challenges the visual regime imposed by colonial, state, and market forces. Technically, the films reject hierarchical or exoticizing gaze through the use of eye-level camera shots that position subjects and audiences on equal footing, while aesthetically employing slow, contemplative pacing and treating landscape as an active cosmological presence integral to local communities rather than a passive background. A striking example is in *Tanah Tabi*, where a metaphor juxtaposes the modest, sustainable hunting of a single cockatoo against large-scale deforestation for palm oil plantations which reveal the ecological violence obscured by mainstream development discourse. The post-growth ethos also informs the films' production choices. *Angin Timur* was filmed using motorcycles to reduce carbon emission, and *Tanah Tabi* incorporated collaborative logistics with local journalists and government actors in Papua. Distribution strategies similarly reflect ethical commitments, as both films forgo commercial circulation in favor of non-commercial community screenings (*Bioskop Warga*) and physical DVD distribution, particularly aimed at regions with limited Internet access which embodies principles of ethical accessibility and epistemic justice. Together, these strategies demonstrate how the documentaries function not merely as records but as cultural interventions in the forms of ecological storytelling that imagine and materialize post-growth futures rooted in sustainability, relationality, and community-defined well-being. By integrating decolonial visual languages with environmentally grounded production ethics, *Angin Timur* and *Tanah Tabi* exemplify how documentary film can

serve as a platform to reconstruct development imaginaries, challenge extractivist paradigms, and advance pluralistic visions of prosperity that prioritize ecological balance and community sovereignty over growth-centric models. Ultimately, this study highlights the potential of documentary cinema to enact post-growth principles both narratively and materially which offer critical tools for envisioning alternative futures beyond dominant development logics.

CHINTAWAN Annop

Cinema Studies – Nagoya University

Title: Repositioning Thai Cinema as Becoming-Thai: A Case study of *Boundary* (2013)

Abstract

This project examines how contemporary Thai cinema negotiates political rupture, censorship, and national identity through a situated application of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of minor cinema (Deleuze and Guattari 1986). While existing studies on Thai cinema often focus on national identity or auteurism, much of the discourse remains trapped between fixed national cinema frameworks and highly abstract theoretical models that insufficiently account for Thailand's historical specificities and political conditions. Particularly after the 2006 and 2014 military coups, and the violent suppression of the 2010 Red Shirt protests, Thai filmmakers have developed narrative and aesthetic strategies that resist direct political representation while still addressing collective trauma and historical silencing.

This project addresses a key gap: while Deleuze's ontology of becoming-minor offers a powerful model for theorizing subjectivity and resistance, it has been critiqued for its abstraction, Eurocentrism, and limited engagement with postcolonial contexts (Martin-Jones 2011; Buchanan and MacCormack 2008). My intervention refines Deleuze's framework by situating minor cinema within the material, historical, and affective conditions of contemporary Thai cinema. Drawing on critiques such as Chan's (2017) work on cosmopolitan cinema, I incorporate attention to global circulation, censorship structures, and infrastructural precarity to demonstrate how minoritarian fabulation operates in non-Western contexts under authoritarian constraint.

To demonstrate the feasibility of this approach, I focus on Nontawat Numbenchapol's *Boundary* (2013) as a case study. This film operates as a political fabulation that engages with the Thai-Cambodian border conflict while negotiating censorship, affective opacity, and transborder affect. Through formal choices such as long static shots of Khmer ruins (which evoke Deleuze's any-space-whatever), interviews with both Thai and Cambodian villagers expressing shared disappointment and trauma, and ambiguous musical sequences blending mor lam and Bangkok pop, *Boundary* embodies the minor cinema's indirect, polyphonic aesthetic. The film's production history—including its initial ban and partial censorship—further illustrates how minor cinema emerges not only as aesthetic experimentation but as a survival strategy within Thailand's rigid censorship regime.

To further situate this analysis, I introduce the concept of the affective geo-body as an extension of Winichakul's (1994) geo-body. While Winichakul theorizes the geo-body as the discursive construction of national space through cartography, my affective geo-body highlights how trauma, memory, sensory experience, and haunting spatialize collective identity within

cinematic form. In *Boundary*, the national border is not simply a cartographic line but a site of affective resonance where sovereignty, historical violence, and lived precarity intersect.

By refining Deleuzian fabulation through Thai post-coup historical conditions, infrastructures of circulation, censorship, and affective geography, this project contributes to a materialized theory of minor cinema that bridges abstract ontologies with political realities. It aims to offer both a theoretical intervention and a workable analytic model for my broader dissertation project on Thai cinema, subjectivity, and minoritarian politics.

Keyword: Thai Cinema; Becoming-Thai; Affective Geo-body; Materiality; Fabulation.

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Abstract

Extreme South Cinema: Infrastructures, Margins, and Bangladeshi Telefilms

My research aims to explore Bangladeshi telefilms in relation to access to infrastructures, migration, and globalization. These telefilms have often been discussed as films, and less scholarly attention has been given to their “tele” dissemination, which negotiates low and high technologies, heterogeneous production and distribution channels, yet ambitiously participate in international film festivals. While these telefilms can have hybrid roles of being ‘world cinema’ at global film festivals, and ‘telefilms’ for home entertainment, I argue their production, distribution, and even thematic considerations shed particular light on the blurring lines of television and film industries. As extractive economies, climate change, and globalization challenges the material conditions of filmmaking in Bangladesh, the “in betweenness” of tele-films need to be discussed. Thomas Elsasser’s concept of “double occupancy” has been helpful to understand hyphenated identities like that of Turkish-German films, their belonging to two cultural spaces, yet being disavowed by national cinema understanding of each country. Such underpinnings inform my study to think about Bangladeshi telefilms’ ambition to self-represent yet entertaining a home audience. Considering the intersections of low and high resources, political marginality, and vitality, I propose a new term, “Extreme South Cinema” - to describe the more marginalized within the Global South, foregrounding Bangladeshi film’s peripherality in Global South cinema circuit. To do so, first, I scrutinize Bangladeshi mainstream films post-2000 as “telefilms”, shaped by the decline of the national film industry and the rise of the TV industry using Mostofa Sarwar Farooki’s meta-film, *Television* (2012) as a method. Then, I discuss how my case studies, *Haldaa* (2017), *Komola Rocket* (2018), and *Hawa* (2022) construct hierarchies between their male protagonists, and Others—women, mother fish, serpent-like mythical Nagini—remain peripheral. These films aim to make larger critiques of extractive economy in a postcolonial world where their subjects face erasure and ambiguity and blur the lines of cinema, telefilms, and folk stories.

Keywords: telefilms, infrastructure, fish, myth, gender

Expanding Media Visibility through Sound: A Case Study of Empowering Southeast Asian New Immigrant Women in Taiwan through Alternative Radio Programs

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Abstract:

This study explores how alternative radio programs in Taiwan serve as empowering platforms for Southeast Asian new immigrant women, focusing on the intersectionality of gender, migration, and media visibility. While media representation is often discussed in the context of visual media, this research argues that sound-based media, such as radio, plays a crucial role in expanding public visibility for marginalized communities.

Drawing from fieldwork and program analysis, this study examines how new immigrant women utilize participatory broadcasting to challenge mainstream media stereotypes, articulate their lived experiences, and construct collective identities. Through qualitative interviews and content analysis, the research reveals how these women navigate the double marginalization of being both female and foreign, transforming radio from a mere communication medium into a space for collective engagement and social connection.

By bridging media studies with postcolonial and intersectional perspectives, this research underscores the importance of non-visual representation in the post-growth era. Empowering the voices of new immigrant women not only challenges dominant power structures but also fosters sustainable social relationships beyond the framework of economic development. This case highlights that media visibility is not only about what is seen, but also about what is heard.

Keywords: alternative media, new immigrant women, intersectionality, media visibility, empowerment

Title:**Governing Internet Addiction: The Paradox of Social Control and Digital Growth in Post-Growth China****Abstract:**

This study critically examines the sociomedical construction and governance trajectory of internet addiction in China through three interlocking analytical lenses: (1) the epistemic shift from pathologization to normalization of digital engagement; (2) the paradoxical coexistence of detoxification discourse with platform capitalism's attention economy; and (3) the post-growth implications of China's digital governance model, particularly in relation to the tensions between digital expansion and sustainable well-being.

Over the past two decades, the concept and regulation of internet addiction in China have undergone profound transformation. In the early 2000s, the surge of online gaming and the proliferation of internet cafés triggered widespread social anxiety and parental panic. Many families believed that the internet and games were harming children and called for medical intervention, resulting in the pathologization of “internet addiction” as a psychiatric disorder. Thousands of adolescents were sent to specialized treatment centers, where interventions ranged from medication and behavioral therapy to, in notorious cases, electroshock therapy. Internet addiction thus became a highly medicalized and moralized crisis, reflecting broader anxieties about modernization, education, and social order.

Today, however, the digital landscape has shifted dramatically. With 1.108 billion internet users and 1.053 billion short video users in China (CNNIC 2024), digital connectivity is now not only ubiquitous but also deeply integrated into education, work, and social interaction. Behaviors once labeled as “addictive” have become normalized, even valorized, as engines of economic growth and social participation. In this context, governance has shifted from medicalization to a complex assemblage of technological, regulatory, and behavioral interventions. Contemporary measures include youth modes built into apps, strict daily and monthly time limits for child and teenager, real-name and facial recognition systems to verify users' ages and enforce restrictions, and app-based time management tools. Digital detox practices—such as scheduled device shutdowns, app-specific time limits, and campaigns advocating mindful use—have also become widespread.

Yet, the rise of the attention economy has fundamentally altered the dynamics of digital consumption. App developers and platforms deliberately design features to maximize engagement, extracting and monetizing attention as a core economic resource. This relentless competition for attention not only complicates the distinction between healthy and excessive use, but also reveals a structural contradiction: while governance initiatives ostensibly aim to curb overuse and promote well-being, they often reinforce the logic of perpetual digital growth. Digital detox and youth protection policies risk becoming new sites of market expansion, turning ethical restraint into a commodity and aligning with the very growth-driven imperatives they seek to resist.

This study advances two original contributions to media studies and post-growth theory. First, it theorizes “addiction normalization” as a biopolitical mechanism that naturalizes attention extraction within China’s state-platform symbiosis, thus embedding the pursuit of growth within everyday digital practices. Second, it identifies the digital detox movement, especially child and teenager protection policies, as constituting a performative contradiction: while framed as resistance to platform logics, such governance inadvertently legitimizes the ongoing expansion of the attention economy through “ethical consumption” of detox services and parental surveillance technologies.

Keywords:

Internet addiction, China, post-growth, digital detox, social governance

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Title: Promise of Healing in Feminine Utopia: Lifestyle Fantasy and its Gendered Politics in the 2000s Japanese Cinema

This paper focuses on a film genre that emerged in Japan in the mid-2000s, commonly referred to as *iyashi-kei* (healing-style). These films share two key characteristics. First, they offer audiences a soothing affect, through patterned depiction of a utopian worldview—typically set in exotic locations—alongside the lifestyle and everyday objects affiliated with it. Formally, rather than emphasizing narrative development, they foreground visual cues related to the environment and daily life, inviting viewers to attune their individual feeling to the film’s atmospheric rhythm. Second, not only are the protagonists consistently female, but the ones involved in the production are also mainly female filmmakers, and the intended audience is predominantly women. Situating the films at the intersection of the affective labor of female filmmakers and the self-care practices of female viewers, this paper aims to unravel the mechanism behind the promise of “healing” affect’s production in the media and to further interrogate its political significance in contemporary Japanese culture and society.

The success of *iyashi-kei* began with the film *Seagull Diner* (2006) which became an unexpected hit despite its low-budget. The film depicts three Japanese middle-aged single women develop mutual-caring relationship and together run a small diner in Helsinki serving Japanese “soul food” - onigiri to local people. Following it, films and TV series with similar aesthetics—such as *Megane* (2007) and *Pool* (2009)—were produced in succession. When observed through critical scopes, deep contradictions emerge. On the one hand, a worldview alternative to capitalism is the basis of the stories; people run small local businesses based on sharing and caring relationships, and an organic and ecologically friendly lifestyle is highlighted. On the other hand, it is unignorable that the films themselves are part of a lifestyle industry that promotes goods such as minimalist interior decorations, delicate cuisine, and yoga classes to the consumers. In terms of gender, while the protagonists are portrayed as independent and seemingly unbound by familial or economic responsibilities, their femininity is nonetheless affirmed through their engagement in feminine lifestyles and care work.

Through representational and contextual analysis – especially a comparison with Japanese fashion magazine *Olive*, I aim to clarify how these films, by offering a consumerist-driven utopia, resonate emotionally with female audience of the 2000s—a time when Japanese women were subject to the dual pressures of neo-liberal precarity and conventional gender norms.

In envisioning a post-growth society, the ethics of care, practices of healing—both between people and between humans and nature—and the roles women play in these activities are often seen as valuable resources for thoughts and discussions. However, the desire “to be healed,” as an affect that preemptively suppresses other affects, may, once captured by the institution of capitalist media industries, function instead as a binding force – attaching people to normative fantasies. Through an analysis of *iyashi-kei* films from the 2000s, this paper seeks to uncover the cultural and political complexities embedded in these visual media and to explore possibilities for their critical reinterpretation. (492 words)

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31 May, 2025

“Who Cares?” Film-Making and Relational Care in Japan’s Post-Growth Era

This research project investigates how film-making and post-growth ethics can challenge the current value of home hospice care in Japan. My personal experience has become the starting point for engaging with visual media and care. During the pandemic, my grandfather was diagnosed with terminal cancer, so my mother and I decided to take care of him at home by ourselves. Recognising how hard it can be, I interviewed and documented care workers’ voices through film-making. I learned that care workers and terminal cancer patients at home have often been marginalised and isolated from a society where the hospital becomes the primary site to take care of terminally ill families instead. Engaging with Serge Latouche’s post-growth concept surrounding abundance frugale, Medical doctor Son Daisuke, and his film *うちげでいきたい My Grandmother, My Camera* (2022) as a case study, I aim to underscore how care can be conducted with relational experiences in society today.

Latouche advocated post-growth theory as a political slogan that tries to rediscover the sense of limitation, leaving the myth of progress and development (Latouche, 2009, p.9). Like him, post-growth theorists suggest the pursuit of abundance frugale, a lifestyle based on self-control, sharing, esprit de don (spirit of giving), and convivialité as pathways to transform into a fulfilling society. These post-growth ideas resonate more with the ethics of home-based care than the systematised care practices today.

In Japan, around 80% of the population end their lives at hospitals despite a majority of them hoping to die at home (Ninosaka, 2015). As economic development industrialises, the process of dying is separated from their home and community. One interviewee told me, “Because the mainstream of deathbed in society is at the hospital, how could I tell others that I was struggling with taking care of my terminally ill wife at home alone? I felt it was my responsibility to take care of her without asking for help since it was my decision to go differently from the ‘normal’ way of treating cancer patients.” This paradox shows individuals desire home-based care, but the societal systems render it invisible.

A home medical doctor in Tottori prefecture, Son Daisuke, shed light on the possibility of connecting individuals and reconstructing the meaning of “home” as a primary site of care through film-making. His film *うちげでいきたい My Grandmother, My Camera*

(2022) depicts how a family in home palliative care interacts with their patient's family and connects with the communal members. It involved residents from the local community in the film-making process: planning, filming, acting, and screening in Daisen City. He kept questioning what it meant to be a good doctor, which resonates with the post-growth theorists' question of "how do we live?" After screening his film, he commented that he felt he could provide a place for residents to discuss the problematic matter of care at the deathbed. I will carefully engage with the film and investigate how he exemplifies and practices convivialité. In the post-pandemic era, we recognise more of the significance of care work and the connectedness among families. This research will contribute to visualising the struggles of care workers, calling for a possibility of reframed care as a relational practice through film-making today.

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The Relation between Tourism and the Visual Media in a Post-Growth Era

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Letters)

At the end of the 2010s, The issue of overtourism, excessive tourists or environmental impact, began to attract attention, but the COVID pandemic had totally changed this situation so rapidly. Now in 2025, it is now being termed “Post-COVID” and “Post-overtourism”. This background has led to a degrowth shift from “quantity tourism” to “quality tourism”. This means that the tourism industry and tourists themselves has begun to consider more and more what quality is for tourism. And the quality in tourism is related to the spread of the SNS media, like Instagram ou YouTube. Nowadays, the SNS have replaced tourist guidebooks, and through the SNS, we can discover the secret restaurants and bars in a tourist destination or explore the ideal tourist spots and styles.

However, the contribution of the SNS to “quality tourism” is not just the introduction of the qualities of tourist spots and styles. Another contribution of the SNS concerns the aesthetic quality of the tourism it represents. In Instagram reels and YouTube vlogs, beautiful images referencing movies or photographs help to idealize the tourist destination. In the first place, the aesthetic role of the visual media in tourism can be analyzed from a historical perspective. From the 18th to the 19th century, the English upper classes toured Italy on the “Grand Tour”, during which many painters depicted the nature of the various tourist destinations, thus establishing the concept of “Picturesque”. This concept is now modernized by the term “Photogenic”, which is perceived as the one especially for Instagrammers.

And now, it is necessary to reconsider the aesthetic role that the visual media contribute in the “quality tourism” that is the trend in the Post-COVID and Post-Growth era. In this presentation, the first step will be to analyze the representations of tourism in the postwar 20th century, when mass tourism was on the rise, through films and photographs. From this analysis, the aesthetic process that resulted in the critique of overtourism will be found. Among them, the tourist photographs by the British photographer Martin Parr will be a major object of study. His work, in which he repeatedly photographed excessive tourists before the concept of overtourism was even invented, is a mixture of criticism of tourism and aesthetic quality. And his work can be compared to the tourist photography of another, very current Spanish

photographer Yosigo, who represents the post-overtourism era. The next step will be to analyze the representations of “quality tourism” that have emerged in comparison to overtourism, through photographs in tourist magazines and SNS media. Interestingly, the SNS media itself criticizes its own beautifying effect, which hide overtourism and present it as false “quality tourism”. This self-criticism and other video examples like YouTube vlogs should reveal the relationship between tourism and the visual media in this post-growth era.

Rather than a sociological tourism study, this presentation attempts to examine contemporary tourism from an aesthetic and literary approach.

On the Ownership of NFT Art
A Comparative Study of Physical, Digital, and NFT Paintings

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Abstract:

This thesis explores the question: What does it mean to “own” NFT art as a form of artistic expression, rather than merely an object of investment? Centered on the medium of painting, the study undertakes a comparative analysis of three forms—physical paintings, digital paintings, and NFT-based artworks—through the lens of analytic aesthetics. The core claim is that NFT art constitutes a new paradigm in the ontology and ownership of artworks, enabling for the first time the ownership of a "type" alone, independent of its material "token."

The theoretical framework is anchored in Nelson Goodman’s distinction between autographic and allographic arts, as well as in the “type-token” theory originally proposed by Charles S. Peirce and developed in art theory by Richard Wollheim. Physical paintings, with their reliance on a unique material substrate and historical production context, are characterized as autographic, where exact duplication results in forgery rather than genuine instances. Conversely, digital paintings, being fully codified as numerical data, conform to allographic art, where faithful reproductions are considered authentic instances.

NFT art, situated between these two poles, appears at first to inherit the allographic nature of digital art. However, by binding a digital image to a unique token ID and embedding it in an immutable blockchain system, NFT art paradoxically recovers autographic characteristics. Through this mechanism, a specific digital image is rendered unique and irreplicable, allowing its owner to claim exclusive possession of

what is ontologically a singular instantiation.

The second chapter investigates the “reproducibility” of artworks, drawing upon Walter Benjamin’s concepts of aura, cult value, and exhibition value. The analysis suggests that while digital art maximizes exhibition value at the cost of aura, NFT art achieves a unique balance by preserving the reproducibility of content while reintroducing an element of irreproducible ownership, thereby partially restoring the artwork’s aura.

In the third chapter, the discussion turns to the nature of ownership itself. Whereas physical paintings entail ownership of both the token and its type, and digital paintings struggle with untraceable and infinitely replicable tokens, NFT art introduces a novel regime wherein the type—the digital image as artwork—is owned through its connection to a unique blockchain token. This shift implies that NFT art enables a new form of ownership: not of a tangible object, but of an abstract yet verifiable identity—a transformation that holds philosophical significance for the future of art ownership.

This study contributes to the scarce body of philosophical literature on NFT art by offering a metaphysical and aesthetic analysis of ownership, distinct from prevalent legal or economic interpretations. While acknowledging existing critiques of NFTs as mere proxies for possession, it argues that NFT art, when treated as an autonomous artistic form, opens up a renewed conception of what it means to own a work of art in the digital age.

Beyond Hashtags: Digital Activism in #PeringatanDarurat and #IndonesiaGelap Movements

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Abstract

This study explores #PeringatanDarurat (Emergency Alert) and #IndonesiaGelap (Black Indonesia) as two digital activism movements in Indonesia that both heightened political consciousness and mobilized public criticism of government policies. The hashtag #PeringatanDarurat emerged as a quick response to a proposed revision of Law No. 10 of 2016 concerning Regional Head Elections (Pilkada), which was submitted by the House of Representatives (DPR) just one day after the Constitutional Court (MK) issued Decisions No. 60/PUU-XXII/2024 and No. 70/PUU-XXII/2024. The Court's rulings were widely perceived as promoting a more democratic and inclusive candidacy process. In contrast, the DPR's proposed revision was seen as contradicting the participatory spirit of the Court's decision, particularly regarding the candidacy threshold and age requirements for regional head candidates. Mass protests were followed both physically in front of the parliament building and digitally through the hashtag #PeringatanDarurat to defend the Court's ruling. The #PeringatanDarurat movement ultimately succeeded in influencing electoral policy, whereas #IndonesiaGelap, despite generating similar momentum, produced a very different outcome. The hashtag of #IndonesiaGelap went viral on February 17, 2025, as a response initiated by Indonesian students and netizens. Their demands included police reform, the rejection of military dual-function (*dwifungsi*) in civilian sectors, free education, and equitable distribution of the national nutritious meal program. The all-black clothing worn during the protests served as a symbol of mourning for what was seen as the democratic backsliding of the country. Although online participation in #IndonesiaGelap was higher than in #PeringatanDarurat, it failed to generate any concrete policy change. This study begins with a central question: under what conditions can digital protest influence policy, and how do internal political alignments and institutional responsiveness shape its effectiveness? Drawing on Stuart Hall's concept of conjuncture, this study examines how #PeringatanDarurat gained momentum within a political constellation that enabled negotiation between public voices and elite

interests, whereas #IndonesiaGelap did not encounter the same political opening. By comparing these two cases of viral digital activism in Indonesia, the research seeks to identify the conditions that allow digital activism to influence policy-making and how public resonance contributes to its effectiveness. Data were collected through content analysis of social media conversations on X and coverage from online news media. The findings indicate that the success of #PeringatanDarurat in influencing electoral policy stemmed from its alignment with the electoral interests of dominant factions within the DPR. In contrast, #IndonesiaGelap lacked support from any major political faction willing to confront powerful state actors such as the military, the Ministry of Defense, and the president. As a result, the digital discourse failed to find a viable political channel through which it could be translated into policy.

Keywords: conjuncture, digital activism, online protest, political mobilization, policy influence