

THIS AND THAT 9 | A JOURNAL OF CULTURE AND LITERATURE

HKBU CIE



 香港浸會大學  
HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

 COLLEGE OF 國際學院  
INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

*carolad*

*carolad*

A JOURNAL OF CULTURE AND LITERATURE  
VOLUME 9

AND THAT NINE THIS AND THIS AND THAT NINE  
AND THAT NINE THIS AND THIS AND THAT NINE

COLLEGE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION  
HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

Each year through the student societies, students from Cultural Studies (CULS) and Professional Communication and English Studies (PENG) form a team to vet and edit student essays and creative work submitted to *This and That*. The Journal celebrates the College of International Education's writing talent. It is headed and produced by lecturers at CIE.

*This and That Editing Team*

Lecturer Editor-in-Chief:

Dr Dickson Cheung

Cover Art

Carol Cheng

*Student Editors*

Student Editors-in-Chief:

Lee Wai Yan, Beatriz  
(Cultural Studies, Year 2)

Tayyeba  
(Professional Communication  
and English Studies, Year 2)

Consultant Alumna:

Chau Shun Yi, Charlotte  
(Cultural Studies 2020-2022)

Section Chief of Essays on  
Art and Literature:

Chan Hin Tsz, Rainbow  
(Professional Communication  
and English Studies, Year 2)

Editors of Essays on  
Art and Literature:

Lai Yuetong, Celstine  
(Professional Communication  
and English Studies, Year 2)

Cheng Wing Hei, Ruby  
(Cultural Studies, Year 2)

Wo Ho Ying, Apple  
(Cultural Studies, Year 2)

Mok Pak Tik, Dicky  
(Cultural Studies, Year 1)

Section Chief of Essays on  
Film and Culture:

Chan Ching Yi, Monica  
(Cultural Studies, Year 2)

Editors of Essays on  
Film and Culture:

Li Wing Hung, Koey  
(Cultural Studies, Year 2)

Wu Hiu Lo, Lizolet  
(Cultural Studies, Year 2)

Lau Kwan Hei, Lavin  
(Cultural Studies, Year 1)



Section Chief of Essays on  
Hong Kong:

Ng Yin Fung, Jacky  
(Cultural Studies, Year 2)

Editors of Essays on  
Hong Kong:

Mariam Rana  
(Professional Communication  
and English Studies, Year 2)

Mak Tsz Ching, Kathy  
(Cultural Studies, Year 2)

Tsang Yiu Chun, Marco  
(Cultural Studies, Year 2)

Pan Ming Ho, Michael  
(Cultural Studies, Year 1)

Cheng, Alexias  
(Cultural Studies, Year 1)

Section Chief of Essays on  
Controversies:

Rai Pujan  
(Professional Communication  
and English Studies, Year 2)

Editors of Essays on  
Controversies:

Maryam Tamseela  
(Professional Communication  
and English Studies, Year 2)

Tong Ling Kwan, Jessica  
(Cultural Studies, Year 2)

Li Hao, Leo  
(Cultural Studies, Year 1)

Au Lok San, Allen  
(Cultural Studies, Year 1)

Layout and Format  
Editors:

Wong Man Wai, Rachel  
(Professional Communication  
and English Studies, Year 2)

Qiang Tianchu, Terrance  
(Professional Communication  
and English Studies, Year 2)

This and That: Volume 9 © College of International Education,  
Hong Kong Baptist University, 2023. All rights reserved. All works ©  
by respective authors.

## Foreword

HKBU CIE Cultural Studies brightened up my academic path. I found a strong sense of belonging among generous lecturers and caring friends, who motivated me to serve the community by contributing essays and being one of the Student Editors-in-Chief for *This and That* vol. 7 & 8 respectively. By taking the initiative to be the President of CULS Student Society, I have earned memorable experiences, such as overseeing student editorial board meetings and coordinating activities that made me feel proud of being a CULSter. We shall continue to celebrate our proud tradition - the College Journal *This and That* vol. 9, 2023 - a terrific platform for us to showcase our essays.

Chau Shun Yi, Charlotte  
Cultural Studies 2020 - 2022

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## **Urban Space**

Dinosaur in the City 2  
*Fung Wan Chi, Gigi*

Hong Kong Spatial Politics and Edward Soja's  
Postmetropolis 5  
*Leung Tsz Yan, Stephanie*

## **Art and Literature**

*Under the Skin: Show, Don't Tell* 12  
*Mariam Rana*

Blood and Hyper-Sexualization of Women in *Thirst*  
(2009) and *Dracula* (1992) 19  
*Tayyeba*

## **Film and Culture**

*Blonde* (2022): The Non-Existent Marilyn Monroe 26  
*Lee Wai Yan, Beatriz*

An Analysis of the Authenticity of EDM 30  
*Ng Yin Fung, Jacky*



TABLE OF CONTENTS

**Hong Kong**

Cantopop is a Precious Part of Culture 36  
*Chan Hin Tsz, Rainbow*

*Ghost in the Shell* (1995) 41  
*Grace Man*

**Controversies**

An Empty, Spotless Mind 46  
*Chan Cheuk Hei, Eric*

A World Without Hunger 51  
*Mariam Rana*

URBAN SPACE  
URBAN SPACE

ART AND LITERATURE  
ART AND LITERATURE

FILM AND CULTURE  
FILM AND CULTURE

THEORY AND CRITICISM  
THEORY AND CRITICISM

CONTEMPORARY  
CONTEMPORARY

## Dinosaur in the City

*Fung Wan Chi, Gigi*

An Iranian movie, *There is No Evil* (2020), shows “normality” at the beginning by recording the daily routine of an execution officer: waking up to the alarm, eating breakfast, taking his daughter to school, spending a day with his wife. At first I was taken aback by how boring it is to record and document the mundane, insignificant details of life. However, I gradually let such boredom sink in and realized something more underneath such seemingly meaningless “recordings” of a mundane life.

Perhaps we always forget things in our lives. But once you stop to chat with your friends or pick up some random keywords, you will be surprised by how such random things can evoke past experiences and recall long lost memories. This is precisely the charm of keeping recordings of the mundane.

In the past seven days of recordings, I found something interesting. A long road which was full of the smell of the sea: Tsuen Wan Park. This was my feeling. It was really ridiculous that a giant dinosaur statue would choose this place to settle for a period of time. I can't understand why people are so eager to visit this thing. I thought ten seconds would be my limit in its presence.



“Ready? One two three!” A taste of a blue day started with a bunch of people. The noise reverberated throughout my body and I could feel that my organs woke up one by one. My eyes finally woke up and I looked hard at what’s in front of me: the dinosaur became a tourist gaze - this got me no choice - I must record this form of reality. At this ridiculous sight in front of me, I had no idea what they could achieve by staring at this same object from different angles and what meaning they could conjure by keeping such images on their phones. This joyful image of tourism got me annoyed. I could not possibly share their excitement. Country bumpkins... the only words that popped up in my head.

On that day I became a stalker: a woman hung an umbrella around her neck and held her mobile phone tightly around the dinosaur, recording its movements. While she was at it, I



interrupted her and asked her about this dinosaur. She told me she took pictures for her grandson but the reasons were beyond me. I could not help photographing her explaining and acting out her intentions. Then, I unconsciously followed in her steps around the dinosaur and snapped a few shots. My body was yearning to feel her intentions.

Standing at the same spot for over five minutes... I still had no idea why she did it. “Do you like this dinosaur figure?” she asked, and then told me that you could redeem a \$50 voucher from Nina Mall if you uploaded a photo of this dinosaur to their website. That was unbelievable. I was just starting to enjoy the conversation.

My view had changed after those seven days of observation. At first I didn't see the point of it all. Then I found that the recorded stuff never changed, but people did. Everyone had their reasons, their motives. I remember that I had once snapped a shot of the dinosaur figure for my mum... simply because she loved it. I would have felt bad too if people misunderstood me. But still I wondered... probably it was really someone's first time to “see a dinosaur”?

# Hong Kong Spatial Politics and Edward Soja's Postmetropolis

*Leung Tsz Yan, Stephanie*

Hong Kong was already an international city in the early 20th century. Hong Kong's economy was dominated by entrepot trade at first, and gradually developed into an important trading port in Asia in the second half of the 19th century. In the 20th century, Hong Kong's economy transformed multiple times. After the post-war boom, it became a world class industrial city. Since the 1980s, it further evolved into an international financial centre. In this paper, I use Edward W. Soja's two discourses from his "six discourses on the postmetropolis," namely "metropolarities" and "simcity," to represent Hong Kong as a city that has been going through transformations of dramatic crisis-driven urban restructuring.

Edward Soja's fourth discourse on the postmetropolis is "metropolarities," or the "fractal city," is concerned with the increasing social and spatial inequality and polarization emerging within the economy of post-Fordism that gives rise to new space-based social movements and political consciousness. In the 1950s, light industry rose quickly in Hong Kong and bred a working class population within a few decades. The hub of Hong Kong's textile industry has moved to Sham Shui Po since then. Garment factories and wholesale stores in the area offered clothing accessories and electronic parts. In recent years, the manufacturing sector in Hong Kong relocated to the mainland or other emerging countries, which resulted in structural unemployment. However, other

individuals who were not involved in manufacturing were unaffected. Wealth has grown for those involved in finance. The gap between the rich and the poor is getting wider. Sham Shui Po has since become an ironically shining example to showcase Soja's metropolarities, as the district ranks among the top three in the annual poverty list. The median monthly household income is broken down into 10 grades based on the data from the Census and Statistics Department of the SAR Government from 2019 to 2021. According to the analysis, the gap between the poorest and richest households has grown significantly. Before the pandemic, the rich earned 34.3 times more than the poor. In the first quarter of 2022, the rich earned 47.3 times more. Hong Kong is now a metropolarities where social polarization and new forms of social stratification do not fit into the old-fashioned class dualism anymore.

Hong Kong is also a kind of "simcity," the sixth discourse of Soja's postmetropolis that is a location where simulations of what appear to be the actual world increasingly capture, activate, and permeate daily urban life. Simcity is a situation whereby simulations increasingly take precedence over the realities, blurring the line between the real and the imagined. The intricate connection between Hong Kong and the concept of "cyberpunk" reveals this aspect of a postmetropolis.

In 2020, a nine-day exhibition named "Cyberpunk" was held in Hong Kong by the Hong Kong Design Centre and the Tourism Commission. Popular in manga, anime, film and literature, cyberpunk is a genre that refers to a high-tech near future in which humans have highly advanced cybernetic technology. Academically such a genre sparked discussions about the design and constraints of such control systems on

the human condition. Cyberpunk culture is frequently associated with authoritarian governments, widespread corruption, and a significant wealth gap. In some cases, like *Cyberpunk 2077* which originated as a board game in the 1980s, enormous multinational companies simply assumed the role of a governing body of a city. Politicians are mere puppets. Police state takes the place of politics. Architecturally, Hong Kong often serves as the inspiration, or even blueprint, for a cyberpunk universe. Iconically, Kowloon Walled City is the “New Port City” in 1995’s anime *Ghost in the Shell*. Rupert Sanders’ live-action remake in 2017 was set in a visually-enhanced Hong Kong. The sordid and congested streets and apartments in Ridley Scott’s *Blade Runner* in 1982 were also obvious tributes to Hong Kong. Such iconography of Hong Kong cityscape almost lent a sense of cultural glory. However, ironically, the seediness and rottenness behind the cyberpunk glamour really did exist in Hong Kong. For example, in order to make room for this 2020’s exhibition, the organizer was accused of evicting homeless people. Sham Shui Po residents also noted that the homeless people residing in Tung Chau Street Park had been regularly disturbed by unidentified fire alarms as early as 2017. The success of a cyberpunk exhibition had unwittingly revealed a genuine cyberpunk “low life” beneath Hong Kong’s “high tech” façade. Such an eruption of hyperreality in the society of simulacra shows that Hong Kong is cyberpunk through and through, which is precisely what Edward Soja warned us about with the discourse of “simcity” - we live in the gutter but we are not gazing at the stars ... we thought the gutter were the stars.

Other than the above two discourses, metropolarities and



simcity, Edward Soja's other four discourses of postmetropolis have also captured Hong Kong accurately to different extents: flexcity, cosmopolis, exopolis, and carceral archipelagos. A very "cyberpunk" spatial violence is in full swing in Hong Kong.

## References

- Schenk, C. (2008, March 16). "Economic History of Hong Kong". EH. Net Encyclopedia, edited by Robert Whaples. URL <http://eh.net/encyclopedia/economic-history-of-hong-kong/>
- Soja, E. (1997). *Imagining Cities: Scripts, Signs, Memories* (Westwood, S., & Williams, J, Eds). Routledge.
- Soja, E. (2000). *Postmetropolis: Critical Studies of Cities and Regions*. Blackwell Publishers.
- 黄继刚. (2011). 爱德华·索雅和空间文化理论研究的新视野. 中南大学学报 (社会科学版) , 17(2), 24–28. <https://doi.org/10.3969/j.issn.1672-3104.2011.02.004>
- 香港: 香港電台電視部 (Ed.). (2014). 繁華背後., <https://sys02.lib.hkbu.edu.hk/hkbutube/vod.asp?bibno=b3719481>
- 劉君宇. (2020, October 20). 當悲劇發生, 讓打卡繼續. <https://www.inmediahk.net/node/1078300>
- 望萬里 (Ed.). (2020, October 24). 評「數碼龐克號」: Cyberpunk「低生活」若存在於現實, 那是悲哀. <https://www.hk01.com/哲學/539887/評-數碼龐克號-cyberpunk-低生活-若存在於現實-那是悲哀>



URBAN SPACE  
URBAN SPACE

ART AND LITERATURE  
ART AND LITERATURE

FILM AND CULTURE  
FILM AND CULTURE

WANG HONG  
WANG HONG

CONTOUR LINES  
CONTOUR LINES

## Under the Skin: Show, Don't Tell

*Mariam Rana*

Michel Faber's novel *Under the Skin* (2000) is a work of alien beauty and a masterpiece of the uncanny. Jonathan Glazer's movie *Under the Skin* (2013) concentrates on just one concept from the rich and intricate novel. It mostly captures the atmosphere of the story as a whole. Isserley, the novel's main protagonist is introduced at the beginning. This is the woman's (Scarlett Johansson) character in the movie, except that she does not have a name in the movie. Other than the main female protagonist and the plot's basic idea, the novel shares very little in common. There is a basic speculative premise shared between the two - a woman travels throughout Scotland in search of men for a sinister network. Glazer's finished movie ends up being very different. There are many differences between the novel and the movie, despite how similar they initially seem. The novel and the movie are very distinct from one another in every other aspect but there is one thing that unites the two narratives: they are both outstanding instances of the writer's maxim "show, don't tell." The entire movie is ambiguous, due to the absence of dialogue and unusual premise leaving the viewers to interpret the protagonist's actions to figure out the meaning.

This movie is delivered mostly through visuals rather than dialogues, allowing the audience to follow the development of the protagonist. Glazer achieves this through manipulating the audience in a manner akin to Faber's. The opening scene is stylistically distinct, giving the bizarre visuals of space and a tense and ominous feeling. The movie opens with a pitch-black screen that remains for what feels like an eternity in perfect silence. This builds the mood for the movie's suspenseful, ambiguous start and overall vibe, which is unsettling to the viewer since it offers no explanation. Eventually, a mechanical drone starts to fade in and becomes visible as a little white dot in the center of the screen. The dot gradually gets bigger giving the impression of a birth canal dilation as the sound builds into frantic, scary music with disembodied voices playing over the top (Seitz, 2014). The audience is unsure about what the visuals imply at this moment and since the music is growing, the interaction of the music and the images on the screen causes confusion. A muffled female voice that sounds nearly robotic is heard over this scene as the speaker learns to pronounce words correctly in English. This serves as a hook just like the Icpathua in the novel. Without either stating anything or directly showing any specific spaceship props, Glazer gives his viewers a heads-up that extraterrestrial elements are involved in this scene. The excessive close-up of an eye that is shown before the screen turns black at the end of the scene gives away the fact that the movie will be about the human body.

In another scene, an enigmatic man riding a motorcycle approaches a white vehicle which is parked by the side of the road. He dismounts from his bike, disappears down a slight hill, and reappears seconds later carrying a woman's body on his shoulders. The woman is thrown into the van's back seat by him. Yet, like Faber before him, Glazer contrasts Johansson's predatory behaviour with manifestations of youthful curiosity and a desire to comprehend herself. This contrast is arguably best illustrated in the scene where Scarlett Johansson is engaged in taking off the dead woman's clothes who is lying down on the floor in a room that is completely white and putting the clothes on herself. It is a cold, sterile atmosphere and an act devoid of emotion. The woman remains motionless the entire time, from the motorcycle guy carrying her to Johansson taking off her clothes.

It seems like a doll is being moved, except for this short instance when we catch a glimpse of her eyes welling with tears. The room that the protagonists are in, is intentionally artificial, its sterility and blinding white brightness along with the unattractive nakedness of both figures, lend a clinical sense. Apart from the sounds of the dead woman's clothes being removed from her body, which stands out against the silence in this scene, there is no other sound. Only long static close-ups are used in this scene, which lasts for more than two minutes, to emphasize the bareness of their surroundings and to show the methodical removal of the woman's clothing. As there is no dialogue to explain the significance of what is happening on screen, the duration of this sequence and the absence of sound exacerbate the anxiety and bewilderment

that is created. When Johansson is fully dressed, she discovers a small black ant, which she examines with the same sense of surprise as in Faber's novel while letting it crawl down her finger. When she is not searching for men, she takes in the world while displaying an expression of pure wonder that communicates more than any words ever could. Like Isserley before, her whole character journey revolves around a struggle between her duties as a predator and her admiration for Earth. At the end of the scene, Johansson is shown having a brief, quiet exchange with the enigmatic man before getting into the white van and leaving. Glazer hints at the fact that Johansson and the guy are related in some way (most likely originating from the same planet) that the dead woman was Johansson's predecessor and that she is now taking her position without explicitly stating it.

In one of the scenes, Johansson visits a crowded mall to buy clothes and lipstick. With a camouflage of full red lips, tight acid-washed denim, a voluptuous physique and a vanquished vehicle. Like a figure in a Tom Wesselmann painting, she is all lips and breasts, the very embodiment of male fantasy (Osterweil, 2014). She appears to be driving in circles as she maneuvers the van around Scotland's streets in unscripted scenes starring real people on the street instead of actors. She occasionally pauses to ask young men for directions in an effort to find proper victims who would not be noticed. Up until this moment, the audience is equally lost as the protagonist, knowing less about her intentions and where she's headed. The effect is fascinating, causing the viewer to follow her moves automatically. Finally, she offers the man a ride, and the two strike up a conversation. It implied that they



have sex in the abandoned apartment where she brings him. But it is eventually shown in the film that Johansson is an alien in human form, who has been sent to Earth to harvest the skins of the men. It is not clear why she has to do this since she does not appear to care what these men did, as long as they are men. The novel provides an explanation for this and other questions but the film strays too far from its source for a fair comparison. Johansson's cold-blooded brutality is horrifying, especially when the fate of her victims is exposed in a bizarre scene that reveals what takes place "under the skin" of the mirror like liquid that her prey willingly falls into. The men follow Johansson as she slowly walks while taking her clothes off, but as she keeps moving across the black surface, the men sink further into a liquid with each step until they disappear. She is a vicious predator who seduces men with her sexuality before capturing and slowly killing them.

*Under the Skin* seeks to do precisely what the title suggests. It burrows within the expectancies and stimulations of spectators, lulling the most gullible into a realm of tempting destruction. Johansson's bold performance and the atmosphere created by the film make *Under the Skin* unquestionably a unique experience that viewers won't soon forget. Despite the film's ambiguity, it skillfully uses images and sound. Glazer's movie is a flawless adaptation. His version of *Under the Skin*, although it is significantly different from its origin in many areas, captures the core of Faber's book while still standing out as a unique and distinct work. This gives

readers a comparable but very different watching experience to appreciate and gives filmgoers a compelling incentive to pick up the book. Thus, the movie is a perfect example of “show, don’t tell.”

## References

- Osterweil, A. (2014). Under the Skin: The perils of becoming female. *University of California Press*, 67(4), 44-51.  
<https://doi.org/10.1525/fq.2014.67.4.44>
- Seitz, M. Z. (2014). *Under the Skin*. Roger Ebert.  
<https://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/under-the-skin-2014>

## Blood and Hyper-Sexualization of Women in *Thirst* (2009) and *Dracula* (1992)

*Tayyeba*

*Thirst* (2009) directed by Park Chan-wook and *Dracula* (1992) directed by Francis Ford Coppola are both movies showing vampirism in Korea and America. *Thirst* was inspired by the 1867 novel, *Therese Raquin* by Emile Zola. *Dracula* (1992) was based on the 1897 novel Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. Both movies have played a significant role in making the vampire genre mainstream in their own respective countries. In both movies, we see the significance of blood and how it becomes the reason for lust and murder. We also see the hyper-sexualization of women and the monstrous way they are portrayed compared with the male characters. Ultimately, both show the religious battle between good and evil and the battle between gender.

First, vampires have been seen as powerful beings in both movies, and how drinking blood gives them life and sustenance. In *Thirst*, Sang-Hyun, who is a priest, feels ashamed that he is not contributing enough to his community. He decides to volunteer for an experiment. It goes wrong, and Sang starts to experience strange symptoms like an aversion to sunlight and a desire to drink blood. He is then reunited with his childhood best friend and his wife (Tae-ju). With his desire for lust and love for Tae-Ju, he discovers that he has become a vampire. He starts to gain superhuman strength, and we see Sang descending into madness. He goes from being a priest to a monster thirsty for

blood and lust. We see him struggling to accept his vampire side and become evil. In *Dracula*, a young prince is cursed to live forever after stabbing a cross and becomes a vampire. In the years that follow, he becomes a feared immortal being but cursed to live forever without his wife. To take his revenge on God and his followers, Dracula drinks people's blood with no remorse. In both *Thirst* and *Dracula*, blood has a significant role. In many religions, drinking blood is seen as a forbidden thing. In primitive times blood was seen as an offering for the gods: "the primitives considered it God's food because it contained the soul and with it the essence of life" (Sánchez-Verdejo, 2020). If you drink blood you are closer to god. "In the eyes of the ancient Hebrews, blood is a symbol of life and a symbol of being unclean and evil" (Stone, 2001). Blood is seen as something sacred, profane, and erotic - a symbol of lust paired with evangelical sayings: "And you, their best beloved one, are now to me flesh of my flesh; the blood of my blood; kin of my kin; my bountiful wine-press" (Stone, 2001). "The blood is the life! The blood is the life!" (Stone, 2001).

In addition, in *Thirst*, Sang's followers see him as God as well. In a scene Sang is treated as a martyr who sacrificed himself for the people. A bandaged body on the cross represents Sang. The characters repeat: "Father please hold my hand! Father, please pray for me! Please pray for us!" (Pak et al., 2009). Furthermore, we see the connection of blood acting as a link between the vampire and the victim as a symbol of desire. It shows how the blood acts as a vessel for the vampire to spread its curse. Dracula can access knowledge of his victims through blood. Sang's love for Tae-Ju becomes more intense by drinking blood. Blood gives the vampire a god-like attribute. Blood lust sets Sang and Dracula apart. We see Sang as a good

vampire, as he tries to control his lust for blood but most importantly, he does not kill for blood. But Dracula is a killer, no matter who you are he will drink your blood. Park tries to make Sang different from evil vampires like Dracula but ultimately Sang is the same as he feeds off comatose people. He justifies it by saying the patients would not need so much blood anymore.

Second, we see monstrous females versus rational males in both movies. In *Thirst*, Tae-Ju has no shame in drinking people's blood. She is portrayed as a monster trying to kill everyone. In Asian societies, women are constantly pressured to be the perfect wife and mother, but many Asian horrors portray these exact same women taking revenge on men. After years of physical and emotional abuse from her husband's family, she falls in love with Sang. Being a vampire for her means killing her husband. This is where the film portrays Sang as a rational male controlling his thirst for blood while Tae-Ju is seen as a mindless monster. She also breaks the rule by infidelity. "A woman's deviance is not generated by her gender, but often by the reason that causes society to cast her out" (Zelen, 2021). In *Dracula*, Lilith seduces men and drinks their blood. Men are portrayed as doctors trying to stop Dracula, heroic "fighters" stop the Count. However, there is hyper-sexualization of women. The Vampire's wife, Lilith, Mina, and almost all the female characters are sexually monstrous and objectified. Johnathan Harker gets lured into a room by the Count's three very sexual "brides." They play the role of seductress and are depicted as extremely sexually aggressive, while men are depicted as victims; the twisted reflection of sexual repression in the Victorian era. Dr. Van Helsing says "...syphilis, venereal disease, the diseases of divine origin" (*Dracula*, 1992). Even

when the culprit is obviously male, women are still the “triggers” who are always scrutinized for their lust and villainized for their actions.

Both movies show the religious battle between good and evil and genders. As American and Korean are predominately Christians, we see a high level of Christianity in both movies. We see how the vampires are cursed and they challenge the power of god by being immortal and drinking blood as it goes against the natural order of human beings. This plays into the battle of genders as we see that evil is represented by the women who turn monstrous and carry out “unholy” tasks. While the men are seen as good at trying to fight evil and protect the world with the help of Christ, the women are portrayed as the devil’s slaves.

## References

- Coppola, F. F. (1992). *Dracula*. Columbia Pictures.  
Retrieved from  
<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0103874/>.
- Pak, C.-uk, Pak, C.-uk, An, S.-hyŏn, & Chŏng, S.-gyŏng.  
(2009). *Thirst*. South Korea; CJ Entertainment.
- Sánchez-Verdejo, F. J. (2020). The Magical Power of Blood:  
The curse of the vampire from an anthropological  
point of View. *Ehquidad Revista Internacional De  
Políticas De Bienestary Trabajo Social*, (13), 151–184.  
<https://doi.org/10.15257/ehquidad.2020.0007>
- Stone, B (2001) "The Sanctification of Fear: Images of the  
Religious in Horror Films", *Journal of Religion & Film:  
Vol. 5: Iss. 2, Article 7*. Available  
<https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/jrf/vol5/iss2/>
- Zelen, R. (2021). *Women in Horror Month: The phantom  
female in Asian horror*. Horror DNA.  
<https://www.horrordna.com/features/women-in-horror-month-the-phantom-female-in-asian-horror>





URBAN SPACE  
URBAN SPACE

ART AND LITERATURE  
ART AND LITERATURE

FILM AND CULTURE  
FILM AND CULTURE

WANG HONG  
WANG HONG

CONTOVERSIES  
CONTOVERSIES

# Blonde (2022): The Non-Existent Marilyn Monroe

*Lee Wai Yan, Beatriz*

Marilyn Monroe, the embodiment of sexiness, a famous actress, an icon to be constantly emulated, eventually becomes an image, not a person. When Monroe is mentioned, the fixed image is blonde hair and red lips. Her image appears in the imagination before her personality, and she is flattened as a single image. People recognise Monroe's image but never the person she was. As a result of the iconic nature of Marilyn Monroe, she has been imitated, and her imitations have appeared in numerous productions. The proliferation of imitations reinforces Monroe's image, and obscures her presence as a human being. *Blonde* (2022) showed a simulation of Marilyn Monroe. It presented hyperreality to the audience that consumed the icon, Marilyn Monroe. According to Jean Baudrillard (1999), simulacra stand alone from the origin and represent a hyperreality. *Blonde* is a representation of Marilyn Monroe, a simulacrum of Monroe. In this film, the signs of Monroe are shown on screen to make the audience see the actress as Monroe herself. Through Baudrillard's theory of simulacra and simulation and Roland Barthes's theory of semiotics, this essay aims to explore the representation in *Blonde*.

First, Marilyn Monroe is symbolized as a specific icon, a sign, a sex symbol. As a celebrity, Monroe is a packaged commodity. According to Churchwell (2019), the idea of one who reads about Marilyn is that it "was a persona so artificial, so manufactured and packaged, that it eradicated the person." In different writers'

stories, she “was not a real person, but a product invented for the gratification of men in the 1950s” (p. 21). Marilyn Monroe is a product for male audiences. In *Niagara* (1953), *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1953), and *The Seven Year Itch* (1955), she was invariably portrayed as sexual with blonde hair and red lips, clad in revealing clothing. “Monroe, as either a dumb blonde or a sex goddess, typifies two of the common constructs of the female” (Dick, 1985, p. 24). The repetition of the same image becomes a cycle, making Marilyn Monroe a symbol. The persona is solidified to fulfill expectations through the signs generated by the appearance of features (Barthes, 1972). In *Blonde*, red lips and blonde hair alone are sufficient signifiers of who the leading lady is.

The hyperreality of Marilyn Monroe presented in the simulacrum substituted Monroe for the character. The audience is not seeing the person Monroe but the character Monroe. *Blonde* portrays Monroe as a specific character, a depressed and helpless woman who dreams of a family. It is not a biography of Monroe’s life but a simulated reproduction. The thoughts and emotions of Monroe in it are constructed by the actress. “Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal” (Baudrillard, 1999, p. 381). Blonde is a hyperreal Monroe. It does not aim at truthfulness. It is a recreation of her life experience. In the film, Monroe falls in love with Chaplin’s son and develops a three-way relationship, which is an unverifiable and potentially fabricated “reality.” Baudrillard (1999) stated there is no real as the boundary between imaginary and reality is shattered, “the real” is from memory banks and “can be reproduced an indefinite number of times” (p. 382). In the mass productions

of Marilyn Monroe by artists, filmmakers or documentarists, Monroe has been reproduced in different ways multiple times as “realities.” The simulacra have diluted the presence of Monroe as a person. The “reality” of Monroe’s life has no authority even with a claimed “truth” by Monroe herself. Neither Norma Jeane nor Marilyn Monroe is “reality.” In the various simulacra, Monroe is represented differently, each separate from the others. All that remains is the hyperreality of Marilyn Monroe.

The reality or unreality Monroe is not important. People consume the “real” based on their preferences. Discerning reality is no longer a priority since anything can be true. In hyperreality, there is no fixed authority to rely on to set standards, and a person becomes the sole authority to himself to choose what to believe in. Monroe’s life has always been filled with mysteries and conspiracy theories. The Monroe in *Blonde* has an affair with President Kennedy. She is presented as a girl who has “daddy issues.” The song *Every Baby Needs A Da-Da-Daddy* plays several times in the background loaded with sexual innuendo. This is Monroe’s hyperreality that everyone loves to embrace.

Marilyn Monroe has become a symbol with infinite realities. Behind the name, she had never existed beyond images and symbols. The reality of Marilyn Monroe is not Norma Jeane without her Hollywood actress status, but only a blonde woman with red lips. *Blonde* (2022) is another new simulacrum fuelling the mirage.

## References

- Barthes, R. (1972). "The World of Wrestling." *Mythologies*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1972.
- Baudrillard, J. (1999). Simulacra and Simulations. In J. Wolfreys (Ed.), *Literary Theories: A Reader and Guide* (pp. 381–394). Edinburgh University Press.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctvxrcrgh>.
- Churchwell, S. (2019). *The many lives of Marilyn Monroe*. Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.
- Dick, L. A. (1985). "I Just Wanna Be Wonderful": *The Cultural Legacy of Marilyn Monroe*. Bowling Green State University.
- Dominik, A. (2022). *Blonde* [Film]. Netflix.

# An Analysis of the Authenticity of EDM

*Ng Yin Fung, Jacky*

To create electronic dance music (EDM), a computer is a primary tool for a disc jockey (DJ) or producer to churn out synthesized music. EDM is also an umbrella term for numerous EDM genres (Masterclass, 2022). In recent decades, EDM has been an important element in pop music. The popularity of EDM has raised the interest and awareness of the young generation. Besides, TikTok earns popularity with the use of EDM and its video-sharing social networking format. This essay aims to argue the authenticity of EDM in pop culture. Although EDM covers a wide spectrum, its recent overwhelming popularity has demonstrated that it was most effective in causing a cessation of thoughts.

According to the Frankfurt school, “cultural industry” produces homogeneous and predictable texts, such as music, films, or novels. Such consumers’ products desensitize people from registering conflicts in society. Consuming such products depoliticizes the working class and makes them feel complacent about their lives, without recognizing oppression and exploitation. Such products are considered “inauthentic.” On the contrary, “authentic” culture is to negate daily life, to antagonize norms and conventions, and to reveal potentials for better worlds. Theodor Adorno discusses authenticity with reference to pop music. First, he points out that the standardization of music production causes exhaustion in the market. Once a specific rhythm or style is successful, it will be repeated until it fails to attract. Second, he says that such

repetition encourages passive listening. People listen to such music until they are so numb and tired that, paradoxically, they stop hearing anything at all.

In this sense, the authenticity of EDM seems to lie in a grey area. Park (2015) stated that house music first developed in gay black clubs of Chicago in the 1980s, which was an expression of oppression under racism and homophobia. Just like hip hop, the audience or the music producer are the groups being oppressed. EDM is authentic for them to connect and recognize each other, or to liberate themselves from oppression. While DJs play their music at nightclubs, discos or music festivals, the music gradually takes on an inauthentic “rave” element that is defined by a substance-assisted pleasure-seeking trance. Rhythm and lyrics can lead such trance to an emotional roller coaster (Park, 2015). Given the wide spectrum of EDM in pop culture, authenticity or inauthenticity would be difficult to locate.

Little, Burger & Croucher (2018) examined that audiences participating in EDM music festivals could receive positive influence on their general well-being and life expectancy. However, the problem is that EDM is often associated with drug and alcohol abuse. Palamar, Acosta, Le, Cleland & Nelson (2019) estimated that a third of EDM party participants suffer from drug-related adverse effects. Half of them are related to alcohol. EDM also proliferates with the success of platforms such as TikTok that encourage the mind-numbing and insomnia-inducing habit of “death scrolling.”

To conclude, as a part of pop culture, the authenticity or inauthenticity in EDM is hard to locate. It is crucial for us to be sensitive to the process of commodification, which often



produces a mind-numbing effect. It is not the case that we cannot loosen up and relax from time to time, but it would be quite another thing when we consume solely for the purpose of escape.

## References

- Guide to EDM: Explore EDM's subgenres and cultural influence. (2022). *MasterClass*.  
<https://www.masterclass.com/articles/what-is-edm#quiz-0>
- Little, N., Burger, B., & Croucher, S. M. (2018). EDM and ecstasy: the lived experiences of electronic dance music festival attendees. *Journal of New Music Research*, 47(1), 78-95.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09298215.2017.1358286>
- Palamar, J. J., Acosta, P., Le, A., Cleland, C. M. & Nelson, L. S. (2019). Adverse drug-related effects among electronic dance music party attendees. *International Journal of Drug Policy*, 73, 81–87.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugpo.2019.07.005>
- Park, J. S. (2015). Searching for a cultural home: Asian American youth in the EDM festival scene. *Dancecult: Journal of Electronic Dance Music Culture*, 7(1), 15–34.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.12801/1947-5403.2015.07.01.01>



URBAN SPACE  
URBAN SPACE

ART AND LITERATURE  
ART AND LITERATURE

FILM AND CULTURE  
FILM AND CULTURE

HONG KONG  
HONG KONG

CONTOVERSIES  
CONTOVERSIES

# Cantopop is a Precious Part of Culture

*Chan Hin Tsz, Rainbow*

## **Introduction**

Hong Kong's Cantopop culture was a dominant force in Asia and beyond. From the 70s to the 90s, many foreign pop songs were remade and adapted as Cantonese songs. Some became global hits, like those by Leslie Cheung, Anita Mui and the rock band Beyond. Their lyrics reflected the desires and needs of Hongkongers, and became the voice of the vibrant and growing city. They set the trend of Cantopop's cultural significance in Hong Kong so most of Generation X became die-hard fans of Cantopop stars. However, Cantopop seems to have gone downhill in recent years. This article argues that Cantopop is still an important part of culture because Cantopop is a channel to express Hongkongers' values, which will also carry on and grow an audience or a fanbase.

## **Innovations on Music**

Cantopop nowadays are still innovative on social media. With the rapid changes of the evolving mediascape, more and more indie bands are reaching wider audiences, transforming the ways of Cantopop production and promotion in the new media ecosystem (Wang, 2018). For instance, the indie bands The Hertz and Whizz release their music on Patreon that allow their subscribers to pre-listen before it is officially released to traditional outlets, such as radio and TV. They mostly use social media to promote their songs, such as Instagram, where they post their daily feeds or stories to maintain a fanbase.

Eason Chan's recent style has also become more dynamic and diversified when compared to "The Four Heavenly Kings" in the 90s (Chu, 2017). Social media enables him to respond quickly and directly to popular demand. In order to cater to the audiences in different places around the world, some popular Cantonese songs are rewritten in Mandarin for mainland and other overseas audience, like *Today Next Year* in Cantonese and *Ten Years* in Mandarin, both of which express the feelings of reluctance when the couples separated and let go after ten years.

### **Hongkongers' Values and Culture**

Cantopop has always been a channel for HongKongers' values and culture. For instance, the band Nowhere Boys released a song *That's Why*, which is about people in Hong Kong who wished to have their own dream flats, but the price of property is prohibitively high that they can only afford a nano flat or not at all (Nowhere Boys, 2020). The song expresses the phenomenon of the increasingly unaffordable property price. Many Hongkongers are unable to purchase their own flats. Waves of Hongkongers emigrating overseas have also inspired the song *For Those Who Stayed, For Those Who Had Left* by *C Allstar*, describing the choice faced by Hongkongers to leave in search of better opportunities, or to stay in their beloved hometown and face an uncertain future. The song captures the sorrow and regret of separation with loved ones and the anxiety towards an uncertain future.

### **Competitive Markets**

When focused on market value alone, Cantopop faces an inherent disadvantage as the language is spoken by a relatively small population. When compared to the neighbours, like

Mandopop or Korean pop, Cantopop has a smaller market. Korean pop releases their music with elaborate narratives and multi-language versions with slight changes in the arrangement. The market is big enough for them to thrive across different media platforms, such as YouTube, Spotify and KKBOX. For example, Korean boy group BTS was the winner of Artist of the Year in America (MRC II Distribution Company L.P., 2021). Their concerts broke the box office records in America (McIntyre, 2021). Cantopop simply cannot compete with Mandopop and K-pop due to market size and limited resources.

Despite the smaller international appeal, the 2020s' revival of Cantopop focused more on local markets rather than international ones, reflecting local issues in Hong Kong and playing on uniquely Cantonese lyrics. For example, Panther Chan's *Tracey* tackles the local LGBTQ+ issue. Among the transgenders in Hong Kong, some of them would undergo sex reassignment surgery; some would do hormonal therapy; some would simply wear clothes to express their gender identity. No matter what they choose, they all try their best to live as their true selves despite discrimination. The song *Tracey* repeats "if one day you found out that I am not the one as you thought/ would you look at me the same way?/ I just want you to know no matter what I become/ I am still me/ please do not make fun of me/ do not judge me because of my differences." Similarly, the recent winner of the best singer-songwriter in ViuTV Chill Club awards in 2021, Terence Lam, released the song *Just Carry On* during the Covid-19 pandemic. He used a brisk rhythm to encourage everyone to keep moving forward. The arrangements and phasing are rarely heard in Cantopop, which accentuates the pandemic anxiety.

## Conclusion

All in all, Cantopop is still a valuable part of Hong Kong culture. Given the creativity and sensitivity found in recent songs, it would only be a matter of time that Cantopop soars again.

## References

- C All Star. (2021, April 15). *All Star- For those who stay, For those who had left (Official Music Video)*. [Video]. YouTube.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cTHb9fhN90o>
- Chan, P. (2018, November 19). *Panther Live-Tracey*. [Video]. YouTube.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BY7DsB7NcQI>
- Chu, Y. W. (2017). *Hong Kong Cantopop* (1st ed.). Hong Kong University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1rfzz86>
- KKBOX. (2021,December 4). No.1 *Weekly New Singles*. Facebook.  
<https://www.facebook.com/KKBOXSG/photos/a.113019995534616/1972979139538683>
- KKBOX. (2021,December 4). No.1 *Weekly New Singles*. Facebook.  
<https://www.facebook.com/KKBOXSG/photos/a.113019995534616/1972979139538683>
- Lam, T. (2019, May 7). *Terence lam <just carry on>(Official Music Video)*. [Video]. YouTube.  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ievJesbs\\_fw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ievJesbs_fw)



- McIntyre, H. (2021, December 3). *BTS Scores The Second-Biggest Ticket Grosses For A Single Concert Event In U.S. History*. *Forbes*.  
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/hughmcintyre/2021/12/03/bts-scores-the-second-biggest-ticket-grosses-for-a-single-concert-event-in-us-history/?sh=285aef02787c>
- MRC II Distribution Company L.P. (2021, November 22). 2021 winners. American Music Awards.  
<https://www.theamas.com/winners/2021-winners/>
- Nowhere Boys. (2020, July 16). *Nowhere Boys- That's Why(Official Music Video)*. [Video]. YouTube.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cTHb9fhN90o>
- Wang, S (2018). Music, social media and public pedagogy: Indie music in the post-Cantopop epoch. *Asian Education and Development Studies*, 7(1), 42–52.  
<https://doi.org/10.1108/AEDS-03-2017-0022>

## Ghost in the Shell (1995)

*Grace Man*

In *Ghost in the Shell* (1995), the amalgamation of corporations and crime within cyberpunk emphasizes the social effects of the capitalist economic system and elevates the individual over the group. Cyberpunk exhibits telling affinities with Hong Kong cityscape. Kowloon Walled City is a realm of gang-infested, mindless violence. The place is a gritty, grim picture of urban poverty. Street-level anarchy, stacked slum, and modern architecture emanate a mixed aura of the posthuman. Cyberpunk questions the reality of the body while obfuscating the border between the natural and artificial. Cyberpunk's anti-idealistic universe is embodied in the Hong Kong cityscape.

The interaction between the visible and the unseen is a key theme in cyberpunk from the stealth function of the prosthetic "thermo-optical camouflage." What we can see and what we cannot see are intertwined. It emphasizes immanence and materiality that could be read as an attack against metaphysical pretensions. The paradoxical grounding of out-of-body experiences is dissociated and disembodied in the camouflage. Digital technology frequently conceptualizes the city as an immaterial network or abstract map of data that has been processed by computers. Its cities are nevertheless emphatically material. By emphasizing the instability of substance and community in Kowloon Walled city, it underscores the insufficiency of the principle of finitude,

which holds that humans are circumscribed and bounded.

The vulnerable dystopian society asks how our mortal bodies are a limitation when cybernetic prosthesis can replace anything organic. Cyberpunk expresses the unpredictability of human existence in a future of computerized work. It underlines the ultimate uncanniness of anything we may deem familiar. Technology does not eliminate the materiality of the body. The pervasiveness of crime and disease, as well as the enduring appeal of artifacts from bygone eras, highlight the cybercity's corporeal dimension. Cyberpunk thrives on a paradoxical fusion of order and disorder.

A confusion of familiarity and strangeness results in uncanny effects. The merging of the cityscape and the prosthetic body is uncanny, which contrasts the splendor of the technology and the squalor of the cityscape. The coalescence and convergence of technoscience and capitalistic conglomerates are further evoked through the setting of the movie. Cyberpunk is central to the interweaving of technoscience and animism. The representation of Hong Kong delineates a contemporary technological situation: the improvement in people's lives is not anchored by technological advancement. Cyberpunk implies "high tech, low life." The combination of tall buildings, dark and cramped alleys and dazzling neon signs is a mixture of technology and disrepair. Hong Kong is a melting pot of cultures and peoples, much like the cyberpunk future where humans coexist with machines and clones.

Ghost is the soul with a deceased body so it is in a shell of an artificial vessel - the reality of the body is revealed. Fate of the individual in the midst of relentless technology paves the way for subsequent cyberpunk musings. In a society where people

are increasingly encoded as bytes in a vast flow of data that is under the authority of governmental organizations, one would wonder what the meaning of humanity is. The idea of “transcendence as disembodiment” is ironically resisted by cyberpunk. René Descartes’s “I think therefore I am” resonates with the film. The fusion of human and artificial intelligence through the spirit achieves a state of egolessness free from the shackles of the “ego,” so that the soul is freed from both physical and spiritual bondage and is free to rise above. It does not matter whether the “body” is flesh and blood or a network of data. Discussions about embodiment and the body’s relationship to space and time are at the heart of cyberpunk and cyberculture. We invariably observe and learn things as bodies - that is, membranes of flesh and blood rather than as incorporeal consciousnesses even in the most virtualized situations. In the end, knowledge is embodied since memories and expectations of the future are imprinted in our every cells. Our body has memories even if we forget it in our brain. The body is not just a shell to carry the human soul, a hub for computer connections. If memories are transferred into data, consciousness can achieve immortality via the vessel of robots. Altering the memories creates a different consciousness. By fusing two different consciousnesses, two souls can be united and augmented.

The cyber-enhanced bodies and space prefigure the human condition in a future continuous tense. The reimagination of Hong Kong cityscape in *Ghost in the Shell* paved the way of how the future can be imagined.



URBAN SPACE  
URBAN SPACE

ART AND LITERATURE  
ART AND LITERATURE

FILM AND CULTURE  
FILM AND CULTURE

THEORY AND PRACTICE  
THEORY AND PRACTICE

CONTROVERSIES  
CONTROVERSIES

# An Empty, Spotless Mind

*Chan Cheuk Hei, Eric*

In *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (2004), the memory-erasing service provided by Lacuna Inc. does not help users become better persons. Instead, it causes them to repeat the same scenario they have previously been in without learning anything. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the intrinsic value behind memories of pain and suffering. It is essential for us to understand that, though some memories may be gut-wrenching, they define who we are as emotional human-beings. We ought to learn from them in the hopes of becoming a better person.

## **Always Repeating the Same Mistakes - Utilitarianism**

An individual who is unable to learn from the past mistakes simply cannot grow as a person. After Joel and Clementine have their memory erased, they both get on the train to Montauk unprompted, as it reminds them of a feeling of familiarity when they feel lost after the procedure. As a result, they both end up meeting each other again and are doomed to repeat the past. In the film, on two occasions that after having the memories of a breakup erased, they still end up falling for each other since they have not learnt from the past. Having a memory of the past erased seems to be doomed to repeat the same mistakes and painful events over and over, while being unable to learn and accept these experiences.

It should be noted that a patient could be at risk of being easily manipulated after the memory-erasing procedure, like in Clementine's case, being manipulated into falling in love with someone imitating Joel. It is a potential risk of becoming susceptible to those with bad intentions as one becomes ignorant of the past shortly after waking up from the procedure. As mentioned by Liao (2008), tragedies contribute a great part to the formation of our identity and way of thinking. If tragedies are forgotten, one may easily come to believe in falsehoods. Refusing to accept the truth that conflicts with the identity one has created, it results in self-deception that changes the knowledge of our own identity. A patient is at risk of enduring an unwelcomed surprise upon discovering evidence of their past, specifically when it contradicts their newly constructed persona or self-image. Erasing an unpleasant memory could result in more painful encounters in life. The pain brought by repeating the same painful mistakes outweighs the simple blissful ignorance. Hence, it is an immoral act to wipe out a painful memory as it also erases an opportunity to learn and grow.

### **Deception and Disrespect - Kant's Theory of Duty**

Deleting all memories of suffering is simply lying to yourself and requires a whole network of deception from everyone. Stripping away your own memories and emotions is disrespectful to one's identity as a rational being. This is never morally permissible according to Immanuel Kant regarding the intention or motive.

It is worth recognising that it is only human for wanting to be rid of traumatic experiences. The act of erasing one's painful memory appears to be reasonable and universalisable in



agreement with Kant's first categorical imperative. However, for evidence of such memories to be "fully erased", it requires creating a whole network of deception surrounding the related person or memory. For the procedure to be complete, it is demanded that all of your friends and family have to lie to you as Lacuna Inc sends out notice pads to everyone around you. Apart from self-deception, it constructs a web of lies and falsehoods to conceal the existence of the traumatic memory.

Moreover, it is demeaning to one's identity as a rational human being to remove one's own memories and feelings according to Kant's second categorical imperative. Lacuna's memory-erasing service is similar to Robert Nozick's argument of the experience machine, which argued that such hedonism undermines the dignity of human beings (Rivera-López, n.d.). Besides, erasing shared memories without informed consent is unacceptable as it prohibits the chance of deliberation with the related individuals. Therefore, the willful ignorance of stripping away any pain and suffering for the sake of pleasure is disrespectful to our identity as rational beings.

### **Counterargument**

It is understandable that sometimes we prefer fictional reality over the actual world, but erasing the memories means that joyful moments are gone along with the bitter memories. The concept of pure hedonism cannot function in this scenario, as for Joel and Clementine, who only feel lost and confused without the years of shared memories of mixed feelings. Clementine, being empty of the past memories, suffers from emotional breakdowns while Joel regrets his decision of erasing the shared memories of their companionship during

the procedure. When Joel re-lives and experiences the bitter-sweet history of the romantic past, the ups and downs of their relationship remind him of the initial feeling of being loved. Instead of wanting to delete the memories of mixed feelings completely, he wishes that he had the chance to change and accept Clementine for who she is. It is arguable that learning to accept our own past may bring eventual happiness in life, contrary to the common belief of consequentialism.

For Mary, when she confesses her love for Howard, she feels disgusted by her own actions after being told about her forgotten affair with him. Forgetting her own past and decisions only brings nothing but pain to herself. Yet, her decision to give back the patients' recording tapes brings a new opportunity for others to accept their past and what they have experienced. Joel and Clementine are given a second chance in life, and though shocked by their own memories, they are still willing to try.

## **Conclusion**

As harsh as painful memories can be, humans have to learn to accept such experiences so that they can guide us to grow as a person. It is disrespectful to ourselves to simply get rid of any pain and suffering in our lives along with the chance to learn and accept one's self-identity. Contrary to Nietzsche's idea of "blessed are the forgetful", it is human that we make mistakes that cause pain to ourselves and others, as Alexander Pope suggests, "to err is human." Even given the opportunity to simply forget our past mistakes, we should give ourselves a chance to try again, to overcome pain and suffering instead of walking away.

## References

- Gondry, M. (2004). *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*. [Film]. Focus Features.
- Liao, S. M. & Sandberg, A. & Savulescu, J. (2008). *Practical Ethics: Should We Be Erasing Memories?* University of Oxford.  
<http://blog.practicaethics.ox.ac.uk/2008/11/should-we-be-erasing-memories/>
- Rivera-López, E. (n.d.). *What Does Nozick's Experience Machine Argument Really Prove?* Torcuato Di Tella University.  
<https://www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Valu/ValuRive.html>

# A World Without Hunger

*Mariam Rana*

Hunger is a chronic issue in most developing countries. To ensure adequate food accessibility in the current situation, crop productivity must be enhanced via the use of innovative technologies. Organic farming produces less yields and cannot solve world hunger on its own. Genetically modified crops include genetic material from many species which have the potential to solve global food shortages. Genetically modified crops are the solution to world hunger rather than organic farming.

GM crops can combat global hunger and malnutrition, which are far-reaching issues that affect millions of people around the world today. According to Nodoushani, Sintay and Stewart (2015), GM crops have the ability to improve the economy while causing less harm if used wisely. They could likewise maximize their ability to mitigate hunger and disease across the globe. The startling truth that our planet has 957 million undernourished people (United Nations, 2021) and 2.37 billion people suffer from malnutrition (Action Against Hunger, 2020) sheds light on the global hunger problem. Many impoverished people rely primarily on a single crop, such as rice, as their primary source of food. Children in third-world countries are the most obvious victims. “If all children in deprived areas were given enough vitamin A, up to 2.7 million deaths could be prevented each year” (Norton, 2012). GM

crops are an important alternative to alleviate malnutrition because it is “nutritionally enhanced to improve the content and bioavailability of essential nutrients, such as vitamin A and iron” (Hefferon, 2015, #2). Furthermore, GM food can reduce chronic illnesses including heart disease and cancer.

Organic farming is a system focused on providing food with little impact on ecosystems, animals, or humans and is frequently recommended as a solution. However, it is less productive than GM crops since it requires a larger area to produce the same quantity of food as GM crops (Lomborg, 2022). The yield is too small to feed the world. By 2050, nine billion people need to be fed. Mass conversion to organic farming will mean nutrient shortages and yield loss. Organic farmers rely on crop rotation to help reduce pests. The same field will not yield corn, wheat, or another staple as frequently, causing billions to go hungry. A food production system that is inefficient and cannot feed everyone is not sustainable (Berezow, 2016). The greatest tragedy that humanity might face this century is not global warming, but a global shift to organic farming, which would result in the deaths of an estimated 2 billion people (Emsley, 2001). Organic production is connected with greater expenses per unit of output and consequently higher pricing, mostly due to lower yields. Most consumers in developed countries are sufficiently wealthy that increasing food costs would not threaten their food security. However, the situation is different in developing countries. Many impoverished families spend more than half of their money on food (Meemken & Qaim, 2018). In these circumstances, food price rises are connected with increased levels of food insecurity and undernutrition.

Organic farming may not be able to feed everyone in the world. GM crops will be used to feed the hungry and provide

nutrition to the impoverished. Agonizing about starving future generations will not take care of them. Food biotechnology will. GM crops are a better long-term solution to the world's hunger.

## References

- Action Against Hunger. (n.d.). World hunger facts.  
<https://www.actionagainsthunger.org.uk/why-hunger/world-hunger-facts>
- Berezow, A. (2016). *Organic farms yield 20% fewer crops than conventional farms*. American council on science and health.  
<https://www.acsh.org/news/2016/08/25/organic-farms-yield-20-fewer-crops-than-conventional-farms>
- Emsley, J. (2001). *Going one better than nature?*. Gale.  
<https://go.gale.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA188007330&sid=googleScholar&v=2.1&it=r&linkaccess=abs&issn=00280836&p=AONE&sw=w&userGroupName=anon%7E8e534a97>
- Hefferon, K. L. (2015, February 11). Nutritionally enhanced food crops; progress and perspectives. *International Journal of Molecular Science*.  
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4346933/>
- Lomborg, B. (2022). Lomborg: Want to alleviate world hunger? Ditch the organics. *Boston herald*.  
<https://www.bostonherald.com/2022/05/31/bhr-z-hunger-oped-0531/>
- Laganda, G. (n.d.). *2021 is going to be a bad year for world hunger*. United Nations.  
<https://www.un.org/en/food-systems-summit/news/2021-going-be-bad-year-world-hunger>

- Meemken, E, A & Qaim, M. (2018). *Organic culture, food security, and the environment*. Annual reviews.  
<https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/10.1146/annurev-resource-100517-023252>
- Norton, A. (2012, August 16). *Genetically modified rice; a good vitamin A source*. Reuters.  
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-genetically-modified-rice-idUSBRE87E0RO20120815>
- Nodoushani, O., Stewart, C., & Sintay, J. (2015). Genetically engineered food and genetically modified organisms. *ProQuest*, 13(1), 136-141.  
<https://www.proquest.com/docview/1755486071/375EB45C74DB44F0PQ/1?accountid=11440>



