PCWP V17: POP CULTURE AND WORLD POLITICS AT THE END OF THE WORLD

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UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW
19-20 NOVEMBER 2026

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Welcome

Dear friends and colleagues,

Welcome to the Popular Culture and World Politics Conference 2026!

It is a real privilege to welcome you all to the University of Glasgow for the 17th edition of the PCWP conference, and we have two fantastic days lined up for you all.

The programme is a very full one, with papers, panels, roundtables, and workshops that represent the state of the art in our field. The full programme is below, and the abstracts and author details for each paper are included (in alphabetical order) at the end.

The theme this year is 'pop culture and world politics at the end of the world' which arises out of firstly, me being an emo kid at heart, and secondly, a shared sense that when it comes to world politics, the vibes are off.

In a world that feels like it is falling apart around us, it's community that brings me life, hope, and joy. I am therefore incredibly excited to welcome so many of you to the dear green place and to hear about the wonderful work you're all doing. I'm also looking forward to catching up with old friends, and making new ones.

I know we have people attending their very first PCWP conference – or even their first academic conference ever! - alongside people who have been here since the start of the PCWP conference series, so please join me in making the event as welcoming and inclusive as possible. It goes without saying that bullying, harassment, and discrimination of any kind are unacceptable, but I would like to note that all visitors to the University must abide by the University's Dignity at Work and Study policy. In short, treat each other with respect, and be nice, be kind! And maybe, as Kendrick said, be humble.

We are all set for a great event. On both days, registration, coffee, and lunch will be served outside the Ferguson Room. On Thursday, sessions take place in the Ferguson Room and in the Senate Room. The final session on Thursday will take place in the Oran Mor pub (in the Fonn Mor room). There will be a finger buffet served after this session for free. On Friday, sessions take place in the Ferguson Room, and the Melville Room.

PCWP v17 has been made possible by my UKRI funded Future Leaders Fellowship and a Lord Kelvin/Adam Smith Fellowship from the University of Glasgow, as well as support from Farmingdale State College, State University of New York.

The event would not be possible without all of you too, and specific thanks have to go to Robert A Saunders, Gemma Gleed, and the Glasgow events team. If you have a good time, thank them, if you have a bad one, blame me.

And if you need anything during the conference please let me or Robert know,

Rhys (on behalf of the PCWP v17 team)

The Pop Culture and World Politics Conference v17 Programme

Day 1 Programme - 19TH NOVEMBER 2026

9:30-9:50 Opening Remarks

Opening Remarks – Ferguson Room
Rhys Crilley (University of Glasgow) and **Robert A Saunders** (Farmingdale State College)

10:00-11:30 Panel 1

Panel H1.A: Technologies of Power – Ferguson Room		
Chair: Daniel Scroop (University of Glasow)		
Maha Rafi Atal (University of Glasgow)		The Oligarchs Who Would Be Kings: Technology and Fantasies of Global Order
Ryan O'Connor (Birmingham City University) & **Euan Raffle** (Birmingham City University)		Dark Enlightenment: Popular Culture and Political Elites, Configuring the Meta-Narrative
Jeff Heydon (Wilfrid Laurier University)		The Face, The Archive, and the Reason We Found You

Panel H1.B: Pop! Culture at the End of the World – Senate Room		
Chair: Rhys Crilley (University of Glasgow)		
Stephen Patnode (Farmingdale State College)		'Something about Atoms': Masculinity and Domesticating Nuclear Anxiety in the Cold War Defense Industry
Philippe Blanchard (University of Warwick)		Postapocalyptic Geographies
Katie Lombardo (University of Glasgow)		Film Screening: The Nuclear Family

11:30-11:45 Coffee Break

11:45-13:15 Panel 2

Panel H2.A: Atomic Cultures – Ferguson Room		
Chair: Rhys Crilley (University of Glasgow)		
Emily Faux (University of Leeds)		Fictional Futures as Critical and Creative Knowledge Mobilisation in Nuclear Politics
Rui Lopes (NOVA University of Lisbon)		From Nuclear Fear to Nuclear Desire: Anticipating Cold War Closure in DC's 'Mature Readers' Comics
Cameron Allford (University of Warwick)		The Iconography of *Nuclear Gandhi*

Panel H2.B: American (Dis)Order(s) – Senate Room		
Chair: Daniel Scroop (University of Glasow)		
Corrin Bramley (University of Bristol)		Only 'The Boss' Could Go to Minneapolis
Joel Vessels (State University of New York – NCC)		Code-Switching Fascism in the Trump Administration
Michael Motta (Farmingdale State College)		Diffusion and Anecdotes: The Case of the US Constitution
Catarina Inês Rolo Carreiro Silva Martins (University of Coimbra)		Finding Critical IR Theory in Science Fiction: Philip K Dick and the Critique of Surveillance Capitalism

13:15-14:30 Lunch

14:30-15:45 Panel 3

Panel H3.A: Gender, Violence, and Power – Ferguson Room		
Chair: Laura Rose Brown (University of Glasgow)		
Louise Pears (University of Leeds)		Mothers, Monsters, Whores … and Witches: Feminist Violence and the Refusal of Proper Security Subject
Genevieve Gunn (Cardiff University)		Motherhood As Dystopia: Exploring How Experiences of Motherhood Are Represented in 21st Century Film
Melixa Abad Izquierdo (Farmingdale State College)		Melodrama at the Edge: Telenovelas, Urban Crisis, and Political Endings in late 1970s Mexico City

Panel H3.B: Musical Interventions – Senate Room		
Chair: Henry Ivry (University of Glasgow)		
Matt Davies (Newcastle University)		WILDPOP: Musicking beyond the Policing of Culture
Sonja Nicholls (University of Bristol)		When Music Leaves the Stage: Infrapolitical Repercussions of Inter-Korean Cultural Concerts
Metodi Metodiev (New Bulgarian University)		The Playlist of Alternative Futures in People's Republic of Bulgaria
Catherine Baker (University of Hull)		The End of the Rainbow: The Eurovision Song Contest's Fractured Queer Politics since 2023

15:45-16:00 Coffee Break

16:00-17:15 Roundtable

Roundtable H4: PCWP Pedagogy – 'Where We At?' – Ferguson Room
Chair: David Mutimer (York University)
Participants: Louise Pears (University of Leeds) Robert A Saunders (Farmingdale State College) Maha Rafi Atal (University of Glasgow) Andrew Judge (University of Glasgow)
Popular culture and world politics are increasingly imbricated, even interchangeable in a world dominated by algorithmically-generated social media- and Artificial Intelligence-based knowledge production about the world beyond our shores. Since the publication of Grayson, Davies, and Philpott's article 'Pop Goes IR? Researching the Popular Culture-World Politics Continuum' appeared in Politics in 2009, we have seen dramatic growth not only in PCWP scholarship, but also in the offering of International Relations courses interrogating the protean relationship between popular culture and world politics. This roundtable brings together researchers in the field who also teach courses in PCWP (or whose pedagogy employs popular culture as a techne for imparting IR theories) to a generation of students whose popular culture consumption is quite different from our own, but which still rhymes with certain aspects of the legacy structure. As motion pictures, television series, novels, comic books, videogames, and pop songs are shunted in favour of TikTok reels, YouTube vignettes, Substack posts, panel memes, gaming hubs, and viral hooks, those of us who teach students about the nexus between popular culture and world politics must adapt. From unpacking the geopolitical resonance of the Trump administration's AI slop videos to providing students with the skills to filter bot-generated content about conflicts in Gaza, Ukraine, and the Persian Gulf, this roundtable functions as a space to share strategies, tactics, and meaningful anecdotes with the aim of improving instructional practice in the popular culture-world politics continuum. The challenges of teaching across not only various generational cultures but also class-based and geopolitical ones will be central to our discussion, with input from participants from British and North American institutions whose students range widely in terms of their socio-economic status, ideological affinities, and countries of origin. Bringing together scholar-teachers who actively blend their critical research with innovative pedagogy, we will discuss the best ways to leverage our diverse disciplinary expertise to enrich student learning outcomes in an era where post-truth, alternative facts, and social hallucination have become the norm in advanced democracies. Borrowing from Crilley's 2021 update in International Studies Review to the aforementioned article by Grayson et al, our aim is to assess 'where we at?' as we pursue new directions in PCWP pedagogy.

17:15-17:45 Comfort Break and Walk to Òran Mór

17:45-19:00 Panel 5

Panel H5: Food, Drink, and Tourism - Òran Mór (Fonn Mór Room)		
Chair: Rhys Crilley (University of Glasgow)		
Martina Russo (Leverhulme Centre for Humanity and Space) & **Lorenzo Buonvivere** (Sapienza University of Rome)		Space Tourism and Ideologies: The Discursive Construction of the Cosmos
Robert A Saunders (Farmingdale State College), **Ty Solomon** (University of Glasgow) & **Andrew Judge** (University of Glasgow)		Barrels, Blends, and Brand: The Popular Cultural Politics of Whisky
Jeffrey Gaab (Farmingdale State College)		A 'Woke' Wiesn? Existential Threats to Munich's Oktoberfest in the Post-Covid Age

Day 2 Programme - 20TH NOVEMBER 2026

9:30-10:45 Panel/Workshop 1

Panel F1.A: Popular Culture through Algorithms, Artificial Intelligence, and Hive Minds – Ferguson Room		
Chair: Robert Saunders (Farmingdale State College)		
Uygar Baspehlivan (Queen Mary, University of London)		'Nothing Ever Happens': Anticipating the Global Event
Michael Berrell (Farmingdale State College)		Imagining Catastrophe: How Science Fiction Narratives Shape Public Perceptions of Artificial Intelligence
Morgane Desoutter (Otto Von Guericke University Magdeburg)		'Everywhere, All at Once': A Techno-Feminist Analysis of Arms Manufacturers Promotion of Military AI on YouTube

Workshop F1.B: Zines at the End of the World: Collaborative Writing, Hope, and Resistance in the Neoliberal University – Melville Room
Convenors: Raquel Beleza da Silva (rbpsa@iscte-iul.pt) University of Coimbra and Catarina Rosa (catarinarosa@ismt.pt) Instituto Superior Miguel Torga, Coimbra)
This creative session invites PCWP participants to engage with a physical exhibition of zines and to make one themselves. The zines on display were produced collaboratively by faculty and postgraduate students at the Collaborative Laboratory for Academic Reading and Writing (CoLab LEA), University of Coimbra, Portugal. That co-production is not incidental — it is the argument. The neoliberal university is one of our era's quieter apocalypses: for international students navigating physical displacement, for first-generation scholars confronting invisible hierarchies, for postgraduate researchers experiencing alarming rates of anxiety and abandonment, the academy can feel like a world ending in slow motion. CoLab LEA's quarterly zine-making workshops respond to this condition by deliberately collapsing the boundary between faculty and students, rendering complex theoretical concepts into visual form, and claiming authorship over both scholarly work and academic survival. Drawing on Paulo Freire's pedagogy of liberation and arts-based research, these zines are not therapeutic supplements to institutional life but popular cultural artefacts that enact different scholarly futures in the present tense — world-building as political practice. Following engagement with the exhibition and a brief contextualising presentation, participants will be invited into a hands-on zine-making session using materials we will bring. The prompt: What does your end of the world look like, and what are you building instead? No artistic experience is required. Scissors, paper, and collective imagination will be provided.

10:45:11:00 Coffee Break

11:00-12:15 Panel 2

Panel F2.A: Ludic Landscapes – Ferguson Room		
Chair: Nick Morgan (Newcastle University)		
Mariana Alves Tavares de Araújo (Otto Von Guericke University Magdeburg)		The Clown in the Room: International Relations from Strange Places
Tenzin Tsering Murry (Otto Von Guericke University Magdeburg)		Game Over? Board Games and the Limits of Imagining Resistance and Collapse
Darren Purcell (University of Oklahoma)		Banal Nationalism, Late-Night Comedy and Jokes Invoking Natural Disasters
Hernan Sanchez Garcia (Tufts University)		'Crackhead Barney and Friends', Crisis, and Black Cringe

Panel F2.B: Unpacking of the Artefact: Novels, Film & Television – Melville Room		
Chair: Laura Rose Brown (University of Glasgow)		
Conor Edward Mullin (Central European University) & **Ceren Çetinkaya** (Central European University)		The Martians Always Win: Securitization, State Failure, and Political Agency in Adaptations of War of the Worlds
Vincenzo Selleri (Farmingdale State College)		'I See the Dead': Colonial Returns, Postmodern Collapse, and Apocalyptic Abjection in Fulci's *City of the Living Dead*
Maia Almeida-Amir (University of Glasgow) and **Ariadne Vromen** (University of Glasgow)		The Influence of Netflix Series *Adolescence* on the Transnational Diffusion of Social Media Bans for Young People
Jakub Zahora (Charles University)		Between Post-Communism and Post-Colonialism? The Cultural (Re)Production of the Czech Support for Israeli Violence

12:15-13:15 Workshops 3

Workshop F3.A: Atomic Artefacts: Playing Nuclear Memory at the End of the World – Ferguson Room
Convener: Tim Peacock (Timothy.Peacock@glasgow.ac.uk) Senior Lecturer in History and War Studies, Director of Games and Gaming Lab, University of Glasgow
This interactive workshop from the UofGGamesLab introduces a research-driven simulation game 'Atomic Artefacts' (working title) exploring how nuclear politics is shaped not only by strategy and doctrine, but by memory, culture, and imagination. Set in a near-future moment of escalating global crisis, participants assume roles across a fragmented international system, whether state actors,

military planners, technological systems, or media networks. Drawing on historically grounded scenarios and nuclear crises, from Cold War near-misses to contemporary anxieties, the game foregrounds persistent influences of nuclear pasts on present-day and future political decision-making. Within the game, participants will engage with and 'mobilise' cultural artefacts, from apocalyptic narratives and Cold War imaginaries to memes, music and speculative futures, as 'cards' or 'resources' through which political meaning is constructed and contested in discussion with other players. In doing so, the game highlights how nuclear anxiety is mediated through culture, shaping perceptions of risk, legitimacy, and survival. Blending roleplay, archival fragments, and crisis simulation, the session advances three key interventions: 1) Positioning nuclear politics as an affective and cultural field, structured as much by history, memory and representation as by material capabilities; 2) Demonstrating methodological values of games as a form of interactive historical and political inquiry, enabling participants to inhabit contingencies and uncertainties of world-ending scenarios; 3) Creating space that encourages participants critically to reflect on how popular culture constrains and enables political imagination at the 'end of the world'. Designed for 5-50+ participants and adaptable in length (90-180 minutes), depending on preferences, the workshop combines facilitated gameplay with structured reflection. No prior experience is required.

Workshop F3.B: Making Sense of the End of the World with Plays and Puppets – Melville Room

Convener: Corrin Bramley (corrin.bramley@bristol.ac.uk)
Doctoral Researcher, University of Bristol

Join Badapple Theatre Company for a front row seat to a co-created masterpiece of making sense of the end of the world from the 'comfort' of our own local communities. The performance, of plays, music, and puppetry have a history of storytelling with, in, and about politics. They are the ways we make sense of our world through emotional experiences that drive both the preservation and renewal of cultural heritage. Often associated with protest movements, puppetry especially, can "draw people into an alternate reality and temporary community", has proven links to the learning of new ideas and putting them into practice, and "enables caricatured confrontations of (unjust) power" (Opel and Schrock, 2006). Exactly the capabilities we need to grapple with, understand, and actively address current and looming threats, shared responsibilities, and political possibilities. Badapple Theatre Company are one of the UK's most vibrant and prolific touring companies and have been taking much-loved original productions to venues nationwide for 28 years. Through an inventive, ever-changing mix of theatre with music, film, circus, puppetry and more, they talk about worldwide environmental and social issues, always with a local twist - and a good dose of fun! Artistic Director and Writer, Kate Bramley - with the help of a few (puppet) friends – will lead us in a creative workshop to explore how taking a local perspective can shine a light on worldwide modern issues that affect all of our communities, such as climate change and forced migration.

13:15-14:30 Lunch

14:30-15:15 Panel 4

Panel F4.A: Endings - Apocalyptic, Ecological, and Otherwise – Ferguson Room		
Chair: Laurence Grove (University of Glasgow)		
Aslak Veierud Busch (Vrije Universiteit Brussel)		The Fantastic North: Northern Imaginaries and the Geopolitics of Fantasy Worlds
Ilan Zvi Baron (Durham University)		Dystopian Political Theory: The Critical Power in Imagining Disaster
Yoanna Nencheva (University of St Andrews)		Inheriting the Future: Gen Z, Nostalgia, and Vicarious Retrotopia
Uygar Baspehlivan (Queen Mary, University of London) & **Martin Coward** (Queen Mary, University of London)		Doomers Unite! The Digital Lives of Too-Lateness in r/collapse

Panel F4.B – Theory, Method, and Pedagogy II – Melville Room		
Chair: Haro Karkour (Cardiff University)		
Sophia Hatzisavvidou (University of Bath)		The Future That Is Not: Staying with the Trouble through Climate Fiction and Political Theory
Zoë Jay (University of Helsinki)		'Hans, are we the baddies?' Pop Culture World Politics and Complicit Methodologies
Maia Almeida-Amir (University of Glasgow)		Backwards, Sideways, and Afterwards: Popular Culture and Political Talk on YouTube
Julian Schmid (American University in the Emirates)		The Queen, a Communist and a Sheikh Walk into an IR Classroom: Teaching through Popular Culture in the UK, the Czech Republic and the UAE

15:15-15:30 Coffee Break

15:30-16:45 Roundtable 5

Roundtable F5: PCWP Reloaded: Achievements, Limits, and Futures – Ferguson Room
Chair: Morgane Desoutter (Otto Von Guericke University Magdeburg)
Participants: Adriana da Rosa Amaral (Unisinos University) Raquel Beleza da Silva (University of Coimbra) Matt Davies (Newcastle University) Simon Philpott (Newcastle University)

David Mutimer (York University)
At its 17th iteration, the Popular Culture and World Politics (PCWP) conference provides an opportunity to reflect on (and celebrate!) the growing body of scholarship exploring the multifaceted entanglements between popular culture and world politics. The continued vitality of this research agenda is evidenced not only by the conference itself, but also by the EISA Standing Section and the Routledge book series. Together, these spaces have helped consolidate a community of scholars committed to taking pop culture seriously as a site of political meaning-making, power, and resistance. This roundtable invites participants to take stock of the field's development, assessing its key achievements, future trajectories, and limitations. Building on insights and discussions from previous PCWP conferences, EISA Standing Section activities, and contributions to the book series, we seek to foster a collective reflection on where the field stands and where it might go next. In particular, the roundtable will explore emerging directions for research, collaboration, and dissemination. This includes considering new formats of engagement, such as co-teaching initiatives, expanded digital and social media presence, and strengthened institutional networks, that may further consolidate and diversify the field. At the same time, we aim to critically engage with the limitations of PCWP scholarship. Of particular importance is the need to address the persistent Western-centrism of its objects of study, theoretical frameworks, and academic networks. Addressing this requires not only greater inclusion of voices and perspectives from the Global South, but also deeper methodological and conceptual transformations aimed at decolonizing knowledge production.

16:45-17:00 Closing Remarks

Closing Remarks – Ferguson Room
Rhys Crilley (University of Glasgow) and **Robert A Saunders** (Farmingdale State College)

Paper Presenters and Abstracts

Cameron Allford (cameron.allford@warwick.ac.uk)
MA Student, University of Warwick

The Iconography of Nuclear Gandhi

Nuclear Gandhi is a video game myth originating from the early instalments of the Sid Meier's Civilization franchise, whereby Gandhi was reportedly coded to be so peaceful that he caused an error in the code, resulting in Gandhi launching nuclear weapons unprovoked as soon as he had access to them. Using the iconography approach from the Visual Global Politics literature and the autoethnographical method of game studies, this paper argues that the icon of Nuclear Gandhi represents a break with the traditional icon of Gandhi as a non-violent anti-colonial activist and reinscribes a nuclear hierarchy of rationality. Firstly, the paper examines the icon of the mushroom cloud and argues that its mainstream meaning as a supernaturally powerful weapon capable of ending all life on earth has been preserved by video games. Secondly, this paper examines how the iconography of Gandhi of the mid-twentieth century constructed him as a non-violent anti-colonial activist. Thirdly, this paper argues that Nuclear Gandhi represents a break with the peaceful icon and destabilises attempts to secure the meaning of Gandhi as a peaceful activist. Finally, the paper calls for international relations to take video game icons more seriously in augmenting interpretations of leaders, and proposes further avenues for research, such as whether the peaceful icon of Gandhi is more durable in India since Nuclear Gandhi originates from a Western video game, and longer-term research to see if Nuclear Gandhi can undermine the mainstream icon in a way that the Churchillian representation of Gandhi did not.

Maia Almeida-Amir (maia.almeida-amir@glasgow.ac.uk)
Research Assistant, University of Glasgow

Backwards, Sideways, and Afterwards: Popular Culture and Political Talk on YouTube

Political sub-cultures on YouTube are characteristically disengaged from political institutions and events, displacing political talk onto analyses of film, television, video games, and other popular media objects. Through research on audiences of left-wing YouTubers, I argue that this displacement reflects a distinctive mode of political talk in which ideas and issues are approached backwards and sideways - prioritising humour, narrative, and serendipity over explicit argumentation or didactic persuasion. This indirection serves a pedagogical function, reconfiguring how politics are encountered and sustained in audiences' everyday lives, and a community-building function, incubating the development of shared mediatized references. I critically situate this style within the simultaneous, yet contradictory, process in which social media cultures both depoliticise and hyper-politicise. Within this environment, popular media objects become sites of political conflict and participation is fragmented across a range of continuous, low-stakes posts. In this context, I understand left-wing YouTubers and their audiences to be responding to these shifting terms of political engagement and, by embedding their political talk in popular media, enacting new political communications logics. These are indicative of broader cultural changes in what

‘counts’ as political talk in the aftermath of crises of expertise, representation, and institutional accountability.

Maha Rafi Atal (maharafi.atal@glasgow.ac.uk)
Adam Smith Senior Lecturer in Political Economy, University of Glasgow

The Oligarchs Who Would Be Kings: Technology and Fantasies of Global Order

Drawing on the concept of oligarchic sovereignty developed in recent scholarship on technology elites and global order (Atal et al 2026), this paper examines how figures such as Peter Thiel, Elon Musk, and Jeff Bezos systematically draw on the iconography, nomenclature, and cosmology of science fiction and fantasy to brand their corporate ventures, political projects, and visions of the future. From Thiel's Palantir to Musk's invocations of Isaac Asimov's Foundation series, these actors engage in what this paper terms ‘fictional capture’ — the co-optation of speculative imaginaries in ways that systematically invert or ignore the normative content of their source texts. The paper asks two related questions. First, do these actors understand themselves as the heroes of the stories they cite, suggesting a striking misreading of canonical texts in which the technologies and institutions they invoke are typically presented as sites of domination, catastrophe, or moral failure? Or do they identify with the ostensible villains of those narratives, having concluded that the villains were right? Second, and more consequentially for IR, what does this hermeneutic tell us about the ideational foundations of oligarchic power — about how these actors understand legitimacy, historical agency, and their own place in the arc of political time? The paper argues that taking these textual appropriations seriously, rather than dismissing them as branding or affectation, illuminates something important about how oligarchic sovereignty is constructed and exercised.

Catherine Baker (catherine.baker@hull.ac.uk)
Reader, University of Hull

The End of the Rainbow: The Eurovision Song Contest’s Fractured Queer Politics since 2023

As recently as 2023, the annual Eurovision Song Contest appeared to have renewed its relevance as an occasion demonstrating that international partners could cooperate around shared liberal values within a turbulent world order. The BBC’s and Liverpool’s award-winning production of Eurovision 2023 on Ukraine’s behalf both replaced the contest’s conventional host country nation-branding with a more complex, coproduced politics of place and, reflecting what Benjamin Tallis contemporaneously termed a then-emergent ‘neo-idealist’ politics, projected a narrative in which celebrating LGBTQ+ equality and solidarity with Ukraine fused as apparent symbols of a cosmopolitan Europe exuberantly defying illiberal, warmongering times. After Hamas’s 7 October attack on Israel and the Israeli military’s war on Gaza, however, contentions over whether Israel’s broadcaster should continue to participate divided the contest’s fan community and indeed its participants, especially Eurovision 2024’s queer and trans contestants – including the contest’s first non-binary winner, Nemo. By the end of 2025, when several participating broadcasters believed allegations of targeted advertising manipulation by Israeli government agencies were serious enough to threaten the integrity of the contest’s vote, fans readjusting their attachments to the

event, past participants ending their relationship with the contest, and the five broadcasters that boycotted Eurovision 2026 were all experiencing dramatic senses of ending. While the atmospheres of 2023 and 2024-6 might initially seem diametrically opposed, this paper argues they reflected a continued myth of liberal Europe which could conditionally accommodate standing with Ukraine but could not manage the implications of Palestinian claims to recognition for Europe's unresolved racial crisis."

Ilan Zvi Baron (ilan.baron@durham.ac.uk)
Professor, Durham University

Dystopian Political Theory: The Critical Power in Imagining Disaster

This paper explores the method of what could be called, dystopian political theory. Dystopias are powerful because they speak to the world we live in. We might as well ask if the world is looking increasingly dystopian, why not turn to dystopia to provide critical insight that is consistent with the world we are experiencing? The UK's Ministry of Defence has in exploring security threats and new technology. It is not hard to find parallels between dystopian stories and the world we experience: think of Kellyanne Conway's infamous 'alternative facts' comment and its parallel with Orwell's 'newspeak' from 1984. Climate change has its own genre of climate fiction, and, of course, A.I. has been a theme in a lot of dystopian fiction, including blockbuster films for years. Dystopias may or may not offer a form of hope for the future, but what they do offer is an insight into revealing and then challenging systems of oppression that reside in our existing societies. I suggest that dystopian political theory involves a double critique that resembles a combination of immanent critique, and James Tully's public philosophy. The first part of this critique imagines a world that resonates with the present, while revealing or warning of the dangers inherent in the construction of our societies, but which are taken to an extreme (and usually destructive place). The second is in how dystopias function as a non-essentialist mode of critical enquiry that questions the structures and experiences of the politics that shape our lives.

Uygar Baspehlivan (u.baspehlivan@qmul.ac.uk)
Postdoctoral Research Associate, Queen Mary University of London

'Nothing Ever Happens': Anticipating the Global Event

From rising geopolitical tensions between global superpowers to the death-throes of an economic system nearing structural breakdown, there is a growing anticipatory sense that we are on the verge of 'something happening', either the collapse of the economy, of the nuclear peace, or the environmental biosystems through which we sustain our global livelihood. Yet an increasingly popular internet meme that circulates across an assemblage of social media platforms, blogposts, and betting websites collectively articulates a different sentiment of world-historical eventlessness: 'nothing ever happens'. The meme, often invoked when a 'major political event' seems to be unfolding such as a nuclear showdown between Iran and the United States or a global stock market crash, rests on the comic assumption that such anticipatory moments often resolve anti-climactically where the mundane, boring status quo of world politics is quickly restored: tensions are deflated, the market is restored, accountability deferred etc. On platforms such as X and Instagram, digital users vote on whether a particular political development will result in 'something happening' or will 'nothing

keep not happening'? On digital betting websites such as 'polymarket', ordinary people 'jokingly' gamble on, on up to millions of dollars' worth betting pools, whether something will happen in a particular political month or not, e.g. 'will Putin invade Poland' or 'will the AI Bubble burst'? This paper articulates the popular affective structure of this phenomenon as an emergent future politics of 'suspended anticipation'. The paper argues that world politics today, as mediated through digital circulations, is temporally felt as a tense situation of anticipation, of 'being on the verge of an event' which never arrives yet, in its constant suspension, puts palpable affective-aesthetic pressures on the modes and practices through which political subjects experience and orient themselves towards the atmospherics of the present moment.

Uygar Baspehlivan (u.baspehlivan@qmul.ac.uk)
Postdoctoral Research Associate, Queen Mary University of London

Martin Coward (m.coward@qmul.ac.uk)
Professor, Queen Mary University of London

Doomers Unite! The Digital Lives of Too-Lateness in r/collapse

This paper examines 'too-lateness' as an emerging structure of feeling in contemporary digital politics through the popular subreddit r/collapse. r/collapse, with more than 500 thousand followers and 150 thousand weekly visitors, is a digital community of practice which refuses narratives of temporal progress. Instead, the collective engages with global collapse – which they define as a 'significant decrease in human population and/or political/economic/social complexity over a considerable area, for an extended time' - as the definitive experience of a contemporary era in which promises of progressive or emancipatory futurity have given way an anticipatory mood of world-wide and interconnected catastrophe. The members of the subreddit, through their varying digital practices (from rabid discussions to elaborate archives to doomer memes), together articulate the felt sense that it is 'too-late' for the modern project: that hopes for alternative futures to collapse have ended. The paper examines the question of what it means to collectively inhabit the 'too-late' as a dominant affective experience? We start the paper by examining the 'too-late' as a planetary condition where we are "fastened to appalling circumstances from which we cannot take distance, neither contemplative nor agential...every single catastrophe riveting our attention" (Kornbluh, 2024: 14-15). We then interrogate how the temporality of the 'too-late' circulates in r/collapse through affective mediations of 'stuckness' and 'anticipation'; the prevalent sense that since the end has already happened the remaining question is how it will play out. Through these two negative modes, we argue, r/collapse gestures towards a cultural politics of a necessary living with the failure of the modern project. The paper, thus, contributes to emerging Dark IR literatures by addressing how the digital everyday can offer collective practices that refuse positive attachments to hope and progress, embracing the 'too-late' as a site for an alternative politics.

Michael Berrell (berrelm@farmingdale.edu)
Assistant Professor, Farmingdale State College

Public understanding of emerging technologies is rarely shaped through direct engagement with technical systems. Instead, cultural narratives, images, and visual

storytelling provide the primary lens through which societies imagine technological change. Artificial intelligence has been particularly shaped by this dynamic. For decades, science fiction has constructed powerful visual and narrative archetypes of intelligent machines, from HAL 9000 in *2001: A Space Odyssey* to Skynet in *The Terminator*. These stories present artificial intelligence as autonomous, intentional, and ultimately hostile. Through repetition across film, television, and visual media, such narratives have become embedded within the cultural imagination, reinforcing a persistent expectation that advanced technology will inevitably turn against its creators. This paper argues that science fiction narratives do not simply misrepresent artificial intelligence. Rather, they shape technological anxiety by framing catastrophe through spectacular moments of machine rebellion while obscuring the quieter structural transformations through which AI is already reshaping social, economic, and political systems. Drawing on cultural examples from film and popular media, this paper offers an exploratory examination of how cinematic language, visual design, and narrative framing contribute to enduring myths about intelligent machines. These depictions frequently emphasize apocalyptic scenarios of machine autonomy and human extinction, echoing earlier cultural anxieties surrounding existential technologies such as nuclear weapons. While fictional narratives imagine sudden technological collapse, contemporary AI systems are producing more gradual but potentially destabilizing shifts in labor, information ecosystems, governance, and power. Understanding these narratives is therefore essential for recognizing how cultural storytelling shapes technological anxiety and may obscure the more complex dangers already unfolding within everyday digital infrastructure.

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Postapocalyptic Geographies

Postapocalyptic fiction (PAF) explores the dizzying consequences of the geographic, demographic, institutional and political vacuum that follows a global destructive event. PAF obliterates selectively, then lets survivors handle sudden deprivation and grief. Characters may then move on to rebuild a world, including politics—or renounce it. This opens an alternative space, rich and unrestrained, for the competition of political imaginations and visions. Some attention has been paid to postapocalyptic ruins, wastelands and empty cities, and sanctuaries and borders, especially in relation to American gentrification, environmental crises and capitalist destructions. However, such studies usually rely on the analysis of a small number of chosen PAF works and they have treated the role of space less systematically than that of temporality. I analyse postapocalyptic geographies through a sample of contemporary postapocalyptic novels and movies that is more comprehensive and runs across all types of subgenres, narrative arrangements, and cultural and economic conditions of creation. I contend that geography is instrumental and structural to many PAF works. It is key to defining the postapocalyptic moment, assessing the damage caused by the apocalyptic event, situating characters in the new world they are thrown into, and delimitating political possibilities and impossibilities.

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Only ‘The Boss’ Could Go to Minneapolis

IR scholars might be familiar with the political aphorism - more recognisable to the pop culture connoisseur as a Vulcan proverb - that 'only Nixon could go to China'. This paper riffs off that maxim by suggesting that only ‘The Boss’ could go to Minneapolis in 2026. It does so with a backing track provided by the growing body of research on the co-constitutive continuum of world politics and popular culture which postulates that artistic expression can provide a vital pathway for civic engagement and resistance even in dystopian times. In January 2026, Springsteen was able to draw on historical associations between protest movements and music in the United States, to tap into ‘creative weapons’ utilised by modern movements of global resistance to authoritarianism, to ride/subvert the wave of personalisation of both music and politics, and, more significantly, to do so by leaning heavily upon his unique back catalogue, biography, brand and reputation established over a five decade career in 'heartland rock' music. This afforded credibility, ‘moral capital’, and authenticity, from which to communicate and represent - sonically, lyrically, and performatively - in politically powerful ways at this particularly chaotic inflection point in US and world politics. Addressing themes of memory, nostalgia, and the cultural politics of decline as well as possibilities for resistance, hope, and alternative futures, this close listening to Springsteen’s depiction of the streets of Minneapolis in context endeavours to engage critically with pop culture as a site of global power, resistance, and political imagination.

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The Fantastic North: Northern Imaginaries and the Geopolitics of Fantasy Worlds

The Arctic is quickly emerging as a central area of political competition. As the northernmost region of the world, the Arctic has been, and continues to be, shrouded in mystery and exoticism, subject to fabulation and different modes of describing its realities, in scientific and political discussions as well as in popular culture. In this paper, I argue that the geopolitical vision of the real-world Arctic is reflected, and shaped by, the way in which The North – as an assemblage of analogous fictional regions – is portrayed in popular culture. By analysing The North as a geopolitical entity shaped through portrayals in fantasy literature, this article attempts to distil the fundamental geographic qualities of The North as an intertextually constructed region. Which features are so essential they cannot be escaped even in entirely fictional words, and what does that say about the discourses surrounding the real-world Arctic? I show that northern regions, as portrayed in Game of Thrones/A Song of Ice and Fire and The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim, present fragile political landscapes with an ever-looming sense of becoming and potential to spill over into southern regions. The inhabitants of these fictional Norths have particular ideas of what constitutes their region, who can belong there, and the region’s relation to the south. The fantasy worlds presented in GoT and Skyrim represent a sense of instability and becoming, and lend a lens to understand the northern imaginaries that circulate in society.

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The Clown in the Room: International Relations from Strange Places

This paper introduces clowning in the landscape of International Relations (IR). In short, clowning can function as an arts-based mode of political engagement that transcends traditional state-centric paradigm. While IR has traditionally been linked with “serious business” like war and statecraft, this paper argues that clowning offers a unique lens through which to rethink dominant discourses and epistemological boundaries in the discipline and proposes a more playful, imaginative and affective approach to understanding and enacting world politics. Clowning is viewed as an embodied critique that question claims to rationality, reveals the performative nature of authority and blurs the lines between inside/outside, serious/frivolous and high/low politics. Through its core elements, namely play, otherness, failure and ridicule, the clown disrupts hierarchical orders and invites relational forms of engagement. Drawing on Bakhtin’s carnivalesque and theories of play, clowning is understood as a world-making practice: the clown’s inherent liminality and use of absurdity destabilize hegemonic narratives and open up alternative political imaginaries; play becomes productive as it is capable of transforming the ‘ordinary’ into experimental spaces governed by alternative rules. The paper examines the Nomadic Rebel Clown Academy (NRCA) as an illustrative case of embodied political clowning that connects activism and performance. Methodologically, it combines bibliographic review with ethnoclownography, drawing on practice-as-research and autoethnography. What IR has quite often forgotten or ignored should be at the forefront of the discipline’s thinking: accepting the world as one of creative practice, inverted thinking and play.

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wildpop starts from the recognition of the wider musicking practices that cannot be reduced to the products of industrial command and control to be consumed by “mass” consumers. wildpop researches musicking that resists and critiques the political and economic boundaries of the culture industries. The way music has been integrated both into the commercial practices of the culture industries and codified in formal education has tended to reinforce the characteristic separation between performer and audience. Corporate music in a post-digital context narrows and constricts music’s wider potential through the reinforcement of traditional forms. Yet there are numerous cultural developments that not only transcend the industry model but, crucially, expose its contradictions and the extent to which it engenders widespread repression. wildpop is concerned with the processes, relations, and conditions through which music beyond the horizons of corporate culture is produced, emphasising spontaneous action alongside political economy and the material and social dimensions of making that are typically overlooked in mainstream accounts of music. wildpop reimagines music not merely as a space or practice of consumption, but as a site of radical political and social possibility. We aim at the tension between a hierarchically ordered distribution of roles and labour in the culture industry and the creativity (and wider social and material conditions that sustain creativity) that the industry seeks to subsume. wildpop examines the potential space for organising subjects through experiments in free, self-manged, and unalienated labour.

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‘Everywhere, All at Once’: A Techno-Feminist Analysis of Arms Manufacturers Promotion of Military AI on YouTube

Despite growing concerns over Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (LAWS) and military AI, their cultural and political mediation remains under-explored within feminist IR and Popular Culture and World Politics scholarship. This paper addresses this gap by examining how arms manufacturers mobilize gendered imaginaries to normalize and legitimize AI-enabled warfare. Conceptualizing military AI not only as a technopolitical instrument of violence but also as a socio-cultural artefact, it draws on techno-feminist and poststructuralist approaches to interrogate the visual and discursive practices through which these technologies are rendered acceptable and desirable. Empirically, the article conducts a critical visual discourse analysis of ten promotional videos disseminated on YouTube by leading defense companies. The analysis identifies three key representational strategies. First, arms producers mobilize gender in two distinct ways: either by reproducing militarized masculinity through masculinist techno-scientific rhetoric and imagery, or by showcasing gender diversity and inclusion while obscuring the violent foundations and output of the industry. Second, military AI is constructed as both omnipotent and controllable, advancing a technofetishistic vision of rational, superior machines while simultaneously reinscribing a hierarchical human-machine binary through narratives of “teaming” and control. Third, the material blurs boundaries between fiction and reality through sci-fi aesthetics and claims of operational immediacy, contributing to the abstraction and sanitization of violence. By foregrounding the gendered and visual dimensions of military AI marketing, the paper demonstrates how these representations sustain and normalize patriarchal, racialized, and imperial forms of violence embedded in contemporary warfare.

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Fictional Futures as Critical and Creative Knowledge Mobilisation in Nuclear Politics

This paper will mobilise speculative fiction writing as a research method in order to make both a methodological and theoretical contribution to Critical Nuclear Studies and to broader debates in the PCWP. It will generate an original short story, 'Dreams of Storms and Dragons', and treat the process of writing and the completed narrative as both method and data. In doing so, the chapter will address a central methodological question: what does fiction-as-method do that existing approaches cannot do? Alongside this, it will intervene theoretically in debates about how nuclear weapons are remembered, mythologised and made thinkable by interrogating the imaginative infrastructures through which they are normalised, contested and sustained.

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A ‘Woke’ Wiesn? Existential Threats to Munich’s Oktoberfest in the Post-Covid Age

Germany’s famous Oktoberfest, the ‘Largest Peoples’ Festival in the World’, is held every year annually in Munich during the last two weeks of September and the first

week of October. In 2022 organizers confronted serious challenges. Coming off two consecutive years of cancellations due to the Covid-19 pandemic, planners in Munich debated whether the festival should be cancelled yet again. In 2022 the international situation was foreboding. In February Russia had invaded the Ukraine and was threatening the use of a 'limited' nuclear option to secure their victory. The Covid pandemic still represented a real and present danger. And many were calling for a meatless and alcohol-free Oktoberfest. Would it be safe to hold the Oktoberfest in 2022? Planners and politicians debated whether they should cancel the festival a third time, hold a limited restricted festival, or simply proceed full steam ahead. Could Europe be in the middle of a nuclear war by the fall? With the Covid virus still raging, could the Oktoberfest turn into an international super spreader event, reigniting the virus and the global pandemic? Lastly, how could they accommodate 'vegan' food and alcohol-free beer and still maintain the two-hundred-year-old tradition of the Oktoberfest? These challenges caused much anxiety and posed an existential threat to both the Oktoberfest and the City of Munich. This paper examines the responses and the modifications organizers made to adapt Munich's famous Oktoberfest to the uncertain post-covid era.

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'Crackhead Barney and Friends', Crisis, and Black Cringe

For this project, I will be focusing on the performance artist 'Crackhead Barney and Friends', and their usage of cringe comedy to confront Zionism. Barney first achieved virality in 2020, through self-uploaded videos of herself confronting white supremacists at rallies during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, and most recently for confronting Alec Baldwin in a coffee shop for his pro-Israel stance. Black, queer, femme, and Muslim, Barney regularly puts her body on the line physically and digitally exclaiming, 'I want people to vomit. I want people to be disgusted by me … I want people to be like this is the worst channel on the internet'. Firmly anti-Zionist, both Pro-Israel and Pro-Palestine "activists" criticize Barney for her 'un-professional' presence on social media, with both sides arguing that Barney misrepresents Pro-Palestine activists. Media studies, and performance studies inform my work. By producing disgust, Barney challenges the expectation of 'respectability' in media activism and comedy. Sianne Ngai notes that performances of disgust are usually employed by right wing radicals to separate the "self" from contaminating 'others'. Through cringe comedy, Barney refuses to simplify her Black, queer, and femme body to be representable. Instead, Barney exemplifies her minoritized condition on social media performing with an affectual history of disgust that has been used to contain Black and currently MENASA bodies by white supremacists to demand responses and reactions to the Palestinian genocide as crisis.

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Motherhood as Dystopia: Exploring How Experiences of Motherhood Are Represented in 21st Century Film

In this paper I seek to problematise modern representations of motherhood through a discursive analysis of the films: *Nightbitch* (2024), *If I Had Legs I'd Kick You* (2025), and *Hamnet* (2025). I consider how these dramas portray themes of hetero-pessimism, mental health, and the burdens of motherhood in the Global North, against the backdrop of an increasingly right-wing and pro-natalist political landscape. Experiences of (white) motherhood and wifehood in these films are portrayed as dystopian – across a variety of different time periods – contrary to traditional depictions of the wholesome mother and wife in Western media. I argue that these portrayals henceforth reveal a schism of politics in the Global North, insofar as they resist and critique traditional depictions of motherhood (and heterosexual marriage) as something that is pure and righteous. My work thus reveals how representations of motherhood are used on film to challenge those discourses and ideas of an increasingly misogynistic, authoritarian and right-wing global political system, that valorises the patriarchy and so-called 'traditional' family values.

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The Future That Is Not: Staying With The Trouble through Climate Fiction and Political Theory

The future is increasingly looming as a temporal horizon of devastation for the majority, human and more-than-human. Ecological breakdown intensifies inequalities, conflict, extraction, migration, and unhealthy modes of existence. In this bleak context, violent and exclusionary imaginaries offer possibilities for identification to those who feel that their livelihoods and modes of existence are threatened by the shifting political and social landscape. This closure of the future towards less sustainable and just futures opens questions around the relevance and value of political agency and forms of political organisation that counter these negative imaginaries. Whereas utopian thought and real utopia practices offer alternative ways of viewing the future, this paper aligns with calls to 'stay with the trouble' (Haraway 2016) and engages with questions of agency, power, and political organisation on a damaged planet. The paper is situated within the emerging scholarship on the 'turn to imagination' (Machin et al 2026). It draws on climate fiction as political to explore possibilities for political agency and organisation under conditions of ecological breakdown. The paper contends that depictions of future ecopolitical arrangements in popular culture do not simply offer entry points for critically engaging with existing political institutions and mechanisms of climate governance. Rather, they also foster our capacity for world-building in times of destitution and catastrophe.

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The Face, The Archive, and the Reason We Found You

The increase in the visibility and viability of facial recognition surveillance in the West has led to a normalization of the technology. It is a predictable one. The popular appreciation of facial recognition technology closes a conceptual loop. From early cataloging mechanisms like mug shots and fingerprinting to the boundaryless wiretapping and dataveillance carried out by contemporary government agencies

across the globe, the goal has been to create artefacts that trace back to specific individuals. The available tools revealed a gap between the information flow and the artefact that provided an identification. Live facial recognition represents the closing of that gap. Lived space is now inexorably connected to the archive and the archive validates bodies moving through lived space. The paper proposed will look at how the normalization of facial recognition technology changes our experience of public space and makes the act of moving through the world a process that animates and integrates the surveillant archive.

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Melodrama at the Edge: Telenovelas, Urban Crisis, and Political Endings in late 1970s Mexico City

Late-1970s Mexican telenovelas reflected anxieties about urban crisis and political legitimacy. Focusing on telenovelas the genre's melodramatic conventions, associated with romance and domestic narratives, served as a vehicle for articulating broader concerns about social instability during a period marked by perceived and lived "endings." In these narratives, Mexico City emerges as a hostile and unpredictable environment, particularly for young women navigating its spaces. Wide, traffic-saturated avenues, the threat of petty crime, and the moral dangers of urban anonymity are recurrent motifs that construct the metropolis as both physically and socially perilous. These representations resonate with the material conditions of the late 1970s: escalating air pollution, rapid demographic expansion, and economic uncertainty following the decline in oil prices. It also echoes a moment of political strain, as the long-dominant Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) faced renewed challenges to its legitimacy. Across the Western world in the 1970s, film, television, and literature recurrently depicted cities as sites of decay, danger, and social fragmentation, reflecting broader crises of governance, economic restructuring, and urban decline. However, this paper positions Mexican telenovelas as a critical example from the margins, demonstrating how such global anxieties were refracted through distinct local conditions, media forms, and audience expectations. This study contributes to discussions of popular culture and world politics by demonstrating how telenovelas register uneven, contested, "endings" from the Global South that complicates dominant, often Euro-American-centered accounts of cultural responses to crisis.

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"Hans, are we the baddies?" Pop Culture World Politics and Complicit Methodologies

As scholars of popular culture and world politics we are adept at identifying and critiquing the various ways that pop culture reflects or reproduces harm, from films that glorify war and violence to the circulation of reactionary ideology through memes and the ways that states use international sporting events to whitewash atrocities at home. But what happens when the act of researching pop culture's harms is itself a source of harm? When we do fieldwork at events used for sportwashing, or watch shows or films on streaming platforms under international boycott, we become implicated in wider systems of violence and inequality as scholars – a dynamic that has significant

but so far under-analysed consequences for how we think about what constitutes ethical pop culture research. This paper adds to growing conversations on complicity in popular culture, drawing on vignettes from research on the Eurovision Song Contest while the event is the target of the Palestinian Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel. The paper unpicks some of the emotional, conceptual and methodological attachments that keep Eurovision researchers invested in some forms of critical scholarship while turning a blind eye to others. Engaging Mark Sanders' concept of responsibility-in-complicity, I argue that these complicit entanglements shape our research even as we try to resist them, but also that it is precisely by recognising that we might be the baddies that we can create space to work towards more ethical and just ways of researching popular culture at the end of the world.

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THE NUCLEAR FAMILY is a 12-minute narrative film that follows the breakdown of a family of four who have had to relocate to a bunker in order to survive an undisclosed nuclear disaster. In the beginning, they cling to the rituals of suburban life, but as hunger rots them, traditional roles collapse. The film interrogates how nuclear anxiety is fueled by propaganda and exploited by capitalism, as well as how gender roles can lead to additional suffering in apocalyptic scenarios. The production design is 1950s inspired and builds on cultural constructs of the era to critique the antiquated, Western ideal of the "nuclear family". The film challenges the notion of survival in a post-devastation landscape without radical social or self-transformation. In its devasting ending, the daughter comes to terms with choices she's made in desperation, asking viewers to contemplate the finality of collective social breakdown and to question violence as a means of persistence in apocalyptic circumstances. The film was developed through the University of Glasgow's Filmmaking Society on a microbudget of £350. The project was filmed on location at the Barnton Bunker, a retired nuclear bunker located in Edinburgh. The film was directed by Katie Lombardo, with a script written by Emer Devlin. We would be eager to have this film screened at the conference, either as part of a larger screening program, as part of a panel on creating projects with similar themes, or as part of a panel relating to women in the apocalypse. We would also be interested in having a short session where our film is screened and then some of our cast and crew can do a Q&A. We are all located in Glasgow, so we are flexible in how we are featured in the program and happy to discuss where we would best fit! The film is not publicly available at the moment since we are submitting it to film festivals, so it would be an exclusive for the conference.

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From Nuclear Fear to Nuclear Desire: Anticipating Cold War Closure in DC's 'Mature Readers' Comics

The 1980s have come to be considered an era when DC comics expanded their target audience to encompass more mature readers, namely by sidestepping the censorship restrictions of the Comics Code Authority. Part of this editorial strategy involved a more direct engagement with political topics, including the renewed anxiety over the

possibility of a devastating nuclear exchange prompted by the escalation of the Cold War in the Reagan administration. The ensuing works therefore contributed to the public dimension of what Matthew Grant and Benjamin Ziemann have termed an 'imaginary war', recognising that, despite a tangible component in the material production of weapons, imagination was a key realm in this conflict, which was repeatedly fought through fictions, simulations, icons, metaphors, and associated perceptions of danger or deterrence. My presentation will compare how writers and artists tackled this 'imaginary war' in different DC projects from the late 1980s, raging from comics that visualised a sci-fi resolution, in Watchmen and Wasteland, to darkly comedic tales about citizens obsessed with the nuclear apocalypse, in The Shadow and Hellblazer. Drawing on close readings, issue's back matter, fan press, and published interviews with the creators and editors, I will discuss the increasingly self-reflexive approach to this topic, which highlighted the arms race's psychological impact and popular culture's own fascination with the atomic threat in the final years of the Cold War.

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Finding Critical IR Theory in Science Fiction: Philip K. Dick and the Critique of Surveillance Capitalism

This thesis investigates the impact of cyberpunk science-fiction on critical IR theory, a growing concern in the age of surveillance capitalism. The study aims to assess the relationship between critical IR theory's deconstruction exercises and the countercultural movement of science fiction. Using a qualitative approach, the research combines the analyses of literature on critical IR theory with the analysis of three books by one of cyberpunk's precursor, the American writer Philip K Dick. Findings reveal a significant correlation between the use of science-fiction narratives as modeling exercises of critical IR theory in the deconstruction of the current-day abuses of surveillance capitalism. These results suggest the role of science-fiction as part of the body for critical IR theory.

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The Playlist of Alternative Futures in People's Republic of Bulgaria: Songs from the Eve of the End of History 1985-1991

Not surprisingly, at its onset the popular culture in The People's Republic of Bulgaria was part of the Cold War trajectory of life in the shadow of the nuclear threat. However, the former started to shape its own language of representation. From the 1960s, gradually pop artists in PRB managed to put forward such themes as existential fear of doom or human isolation, masterfully combining it with, or even putting aside, those top to bottom party calls developed within the ideological Cold War struggle. In the 1970s and early 1980s in line with the changing international context the apocalyptic nuclear holocaust transformed itself into larger scale environmental causes along voicing the fear of human extinction due to economic and tech reasons, therefore intertwining the world view of prominent faces of Bulgaria's popular culture with the

agenda of their counterparts from the other side of the Iron Curtain. On that contextual backdrop, the following presentation focuses on the specific period between 1985 - 1989 when the age of the detente was replaced by the Perestroika, eventually leading to the dismantling of the Socialist Bloc. I choose the “playlist” metaphor to showcase examples from the Bulgarian pop rock scene by setting them into three chronological sub periods (Before Chernobyl 1984 - 1986; After Chernobyl 1987-1989; and The Transition 1989-1991). I will use them as a contextual framework on which to present a pair of songs dwelling on the apocalyptic, in three stylistic juxtapositions: pop rock and ideological anthems; progressive pop and heavy rock; new wave and post punk. As a result, I will show the changing nature of the role of the apocalyptic horizon in popular culture as a combination between contextual unity, stylistic forms and artistic engagement with the outside world on the eve of major socio-political transformation.

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Political actors reach for anecdote when data is hard to come by or would complicate the argument. This is not new. Indeed, it was anecdote that built much of the U.S. Constitution and set the stage for many of the most persistent and pressing debates in American politics today. Delegates at the 1787 Constitutional Convention were able to redesign Congress using experience from history, abroad, and from home. In contrast, federal executive power and federal authority had few helpful precedents and were constructed based on loose historical knowledge, Continental political theory, and improvisation. Partly for these reasons, the executive and federal domains never stabilized the way legislative design did, and the U.S. remains particularly susceptible to anecdotal reasoning—from Reagan's ‘welfare queen’ to Clinton's embrace of the same fiction, to DOMA, to COVID, to arms control pivoting based on a TV movie, to immigration policy built around named victims rather than crime statistics, to an offshore wind industry stymied by simple, easily-disproved narratives. The U.S. Constitution was once the world's most imitated document; it no longer is. Countries designing new constitutions increasingly look elsewhere—to the Canadian Constitution and other models that address executive and federal authority with more precision. This paper argues that the U.S. cannot credibly address climate change and other wicked problems requiring sustained, coordinated executive and federal action while those domains remain perpetually subject to policy-by-anecdote. To face these challenges, the U.S. Constitution must repeat what it did in 1787. The teacher must once again become a student.

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The Martians Always Win: Securitization, State Failure, and Political Agency in Adaptations of War of the Worlds

Since the first tripod emerged from Horsell Common, H.G. Wells’ *War of the Worlds* (1898) has functioned as more than a foundational science fiction narrative. From the original novel to key adaptations - Orson Welles’s 1938 broadcast, the 1953 film,

Spielberg's post-9/11 version, and the BBC's 2019 miniseries- each iteration has appeared during moments of acute geopolitical uncertainty. This article argues that War of the Worlds operates as a recurring site of securitizing discourse, where existential threat, political authority, and civilizational survival are actively reconfigured rather than merely reflected. Drawing on Securitization Theory, the article conceptualizes alien invasion as a flexible construction of threat through which existential insecurity is dramatized and made politically meaningful. Rather than simply mirroring pre-existing anxieties, these adaptations structure them by embedding audiences within narratives of emergency, vulnerability, and response, thereby shaping the boundaries of political community and legitimizing exceptional measures, in line with scholarship on the visual and cultural dimensions of securitization. The analysis proceeds along three axes: representations of state failure as indicators of shifting relationships to political authority and legitimacy; the transformation - and partial erasure - of Wells' reverse-colonial critique across changing geopolitical contexts; and the figure of the individual survivor as a historically contingent articulation of political agency, reflecting a broader shift toward individualized responsibility under conditions of insecurity. Methodologically, the article adopts a comparative, historically grounded reading of adaptations, complemented by a production-oriented perspective informed by Media Studies. This approach situates each adaptation within the institutional and industrial conditions of its production, highlighting how media industries, state institutions, and technological infrastructures shape and stabilize particular threat narratives. Engaging debates in Popular Culture and World Politics, the article positions *War of the Worlds* as an enduring yet underexamined contribution to political thought.

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Game Over? Board Games and the Limits of Imagining Resistance and Collapse

Board games are rarely treated as consequential sites of global political production. Yet contemporary iterations on the format stage models of sovereignty, violence, crisis, resistance and progress through seemingly innocuous mechanics of play. While gamified warfare in digital games has attracted sustained critical attention, the political imaginaries embedded in analog games remain comparatively underexamined. This paper argues that while many mainstream board games naturalise geopolitical competition, territorial expansion, technocratic management, zero-sum interactions and linear development models as commonsense world order, a growing number of titles articulate counter-imaginaries that disrupt these logics. Focusing on contemporary and popular analog games, I will analyse how counter-hegemonic design strategies could restage global political dynamics through cooperation and resistance, and examine ways in which they remain constrained by the medium's need to formalise antagonism and operationalise complex processes into measurable actions and outcomes. Drawing on Critical Peace Studies, Ludology and theories of political imagination, the paper argues that board games operate as infrastructures of visibility and strategy, shaping what appears politically possible, intelligible, and actionable in the face of an increasingly unstable world. By contrasting hegemonic and counter-hegemonic design logics, I argue that board games function as contested cultural sites where global power dynamics are rehearsed, normalised, and potentially

reimagined. What forms of world order, crisis and resistance are made coherent through play, and which futures become imaginatively possible? Please note - this topic may also work as a creative game design discussion and workshop.

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Inheriting the Future: Gen Z, Nostalgia, and Vicarious Retrotopia

Existing scholarship on nostalgia and authoritarian politics assumes a common structure including a generation that mourns a future it once possessed and subsequently lost. This paper challenges that assumption as generation Z, from which the author is part of, is the first generation raised entirely within overlapping collapse narratives of climate crisis, democratic erosion, financial precarity, and pandemic and thus has never possessed a future-oriented cultural moment to mourn. Yet Gen Z is among the most intensely nostalgic generations in recent cultural history, reaching backward not toward its own lost past but toward the imagined futures of preceding generations. This paper theorises this condition as vicarious retrotopia: inherited longing for someone else's sense of open futurity, accessible only through cultural artefacts. Drawing on Zygmunt Bauman's Retrotopia, Mark Fisher's hauntology, and Svetlana Boym's distinction between reflective and restorative nostalgia, the paper argues that vicarious retrotopia represents a qualitatively distinct affective condition from the nostalgia these frameworks were developed to describe. Through close readings of Stranger Things, whose retro aesthetics offer Gen Z habitation of a world where the future felt open, and Olivia Rodrigo's discography, whose sonic borrowing from early 2000s pop punk performs longing for a cultural moment predating her audience's political consciousness, the paper demonstrates how popular culture functions as an infrastructure of inherited longing. The paper will then argue that if an entire generation has been culturally socialised into nostalgia for futures they never possessed, the affective raw material for future-oriented political projects such as climate action and international cooperation is structurally depleted.

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When Music Leaves the Stage: Infrapolitical Repercussions of Inter-Korean Cultural Concerts

K-Pop has developed an audience in North Korea despite rigorous censorship laws, with songs entering and spreading throughout the North through diverse mechanisms. Observers argue that these songs have the potential to cause internal unrest and former citizens label it a ‘peaceful version of the nuclear bomb’. To understand how K-Pop can become a political force, this paper examines state-authorised performances of K-Pop in Pyongyang and the subsequent repercussions of those performances, where music becomes disruptive once it leaves the sanctioned place and moment of the concert. I put forward a methodology of ‘following K-Pop’ in which I track the songs’ meaning-making process from the performance itself, through to their immediate and downstream consumption. For this, I focus on inter-Korean cultural exchange performances of the following songs: ‘To J’ by Lee Sun-Hee, ‘To My Prince’ by Fin.K.L., and ‘Coincidence’ by Baby V.O.X. This paper situates itself within Popular

Culture and World Politics and addresses the ‘sonic gap’ in International Relations by developing an approach which considers music’s subversive capacities through the context of its consumption. Through this infrapolitical approach, I go beyond traditional soft power understandings of pop music’s cross-border political impact in the Korean Peninsula and World Politics more broadly."

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Dark Enlightenment: Popular Culture and Political Elites, Configuring the Meta-Narrative

Building on our 2026 paper which sets out a typology for the hybridity of popular culture (PC) artifacts and their multifaceted utility in politics and international relations, this paper focuses in on the third component of the typology: how PC actively shapes the worldviews and actions of key political figures. The paper sets out by isolating key figures within the Dark Enlightenment movement; Taşkale (2025) dubs the movement “reactionary futurism”, which is characterized by a rejection of the state and a denouncement of democracy in favour of a start-up like monarchist model, which aims to realize a “technocommercial utopia”. It then moves to highlight how PC artifacts, like Lord of the Rings, have been integral in constituting the world view of elite actors in this movement, like Peter Thiel, Curtis Yarvin, and Elon Musk. Mobilizing further research done in our 20XX analysis of PC reviews we expound upon the curiosity of the disproportionate attention paid to a minority of views on these review platforms espousing culture war anti-woke rhetoric in mainstream media. To provide an account for this phenomenon beyond 'if it bleeds it leads' we trace the patterns of influence from these elite actors through these media outlets, emphasizing how their PC informed worldviews further stoke the culture war fire, pushing public opinion towards their desired conclusions.

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'Something about Atoms': Masculinity and Domesticating Nuclear Anxiety in the Cold War Defense Industry”

The atomic age generated profound public anxiety across American society in the decades following World War II. While a substantial body of scholarship has examined atomic anxiety in popular culture writ large, the cultural work of managing that anxiety within the spaces of industrial production remains largely unexplored. This paper draws on workplace popular culture to examine how defense industry publications constructed and circulated masculine identities in response to atomic anxiety. Employee newspapers produced by Long Island defense contractors like Grumman Aircraft Corporation and Sperry Corporation operated as key sites for transforming collective nuclear fear into masculine identities that served Cold War corporate and defense interests. Defense industry popular culture offered workers a succession of masculine identities (the civil defense soldier, the competitive company man, the

technically informed breadwinner) designed to manage existential fear regarding the entry of nuclear technology into American workplaces. Yet oral history testimony from former engineers offers a striking counterpoint, revealing the limits of this project: employees who internalized Cold War binaries so completely that genuine critical awareness only came later, often through unexpected human encounters that no company newspaper could anticipate or contain. In doing so, this paper contributes to our understanding of how popular culture at the "end of the world" was produced not only for mass audiences but within the everyday spaces where the machinery of potential annihilation was actually being built.

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Building on Gentry and Sjoberg's formulation of the "mothers, monsters, and whores" of security, this paper interrogates how women's participation in international security is repeatedly channelled through a narrow set of archetypes that limit recognition of women's agency, particularly in relation to violence. In this paper I put forward the figure of the witch/crone/hag as a disruptive alternative to these dominant security tropes. Tracing the contemporary reclamation of the witch/crone across popular culture, online security discourse, and feminist spiritual or "woowoo" spaces, I argue that this figure opens space for imagining women as agential and violent actors without defaulting to masculinised frameworks of power. The paper develops this argument through two empirical sites: the Ukrainian Bucha Witches drone group, and the depiction of witches in Sarah J. Maas's Throne of Glass series. I read both alongside the flourishing reclamation of the crone in contemporary spiritual and wellness cultures, where ageing, menopause, and postreproductive femininity are reimagined as sources of power rather than decline. The cultural derision directed at these spaces and texts (closely tied to their predominantly female audiences) only heightens their feminist analytic value. Taken together, these cases demonstrate how the witch can unsettle security's reliance on motherhood, sexual availability, or monstrosity to render women intelligible, enabling more complex feminist understandings of age, sexuality, care, and violence in global politics. I ask what happens when feminist security theory looks for women's violence outside
respectable sites and rational scripts.

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Banal Nationalism, Late-Night Comedy and Jokes Invoking Natural Disasters

Late-night comedy in the United States has been quite political since the 1970s and the Watergate scandals, fostering a sense of cynicism through the use of prophylactic irony (Peterson, 2008). We argue that the late-night comedians also contribute to the maintenance of national identity through the audience's consumption of topical humor, specifically jokes about natural disasters. Using a corpus of jokes drawn from The Bulletin's Frontrunner for the years 1996-2023, our research examines the way that national disasters are joked about in United States' late-night talk shows' opening monologues. Due to the drive for topicality in the monologues, the comedians are an example of Billig's argument that weather coverage in the news contributes to national

identity through seemingly banal cultural artifacts. Jokes about natural disasters are not about the victims and it is the choice of targets of the jokes that contributes to the shared consciousness of a part of the nation experiencing disaster trauma. Our study shows that the jokes are aimed at criticizing poor government responses to natural disasters and the politics surrounding these occurrences. Through humor, the national consciousness is raised in the comedian's humorously expressed expectations that the country take care of all citizens.

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Space Tourism and Ideologies: The Discursive Construction of the Cosmos

Space engineering companies have been competing to offer civilians the unprecedented opportunity to holiday in outer space. In addition to advertising picturesque spacescapes, however, ‘NewSpace’ industries strive to re-define the cosmos as a potential site for human dwelling. This paper investigates linguistic representations of the cosmic environment as construed by space tourism discourse. Referring to the theories and methods of Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studie, it examines the websites of the three major companies operating in the sector – SpaceX, Blue Origin, and Virgin Galactic – to expose potential ideologies that inform their promotional materials. In particular, following Blue Origin’s vision of people living and working in space ‘with a single-minded purpose: to restore and sustain Earth’, this contribution seeks to answer the following questions: how does mainstream space tourism discourse account for ethics and sustainability in conceiving human activity in space? What role does popular culture play in shaping these scenarios? The analysis suggests an inherent ambivalence. Celebrated as benefitting humanity as a whole, space tourism is rather seen to reinforce elitist ‘spaceviews’. References to the 1960s popular imagery of the ‘Golden Age’ of space exploration are used to develop a rhetoric of nostalgia. In the context of the current ecological crisis, while the finitude of Earth’s resources appears to legitimises the inevitable expansion of humankind into outer space, the latter is discursively turned into a new environment where to reproduce “the ideology of growth or growthism” (Halliday, 1991/2001, p. 196).

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Barrels, Blends, and Brand: The Popular Cultural Politics of Whisky

The Gaelic term *uisge beatha* (‘water of life’) is the etymological origin of the English word ‘whisky’, a geologically-indexed, high alcohol-by-volume drink made from fermented grain mash that dates back at least 1,000 years. In this paper, we examine the role that whisky plays in international power dynamics within the British Isles (core), the former dominion of the British Empire (semi-periphery), and those lands not directly associated with settler colonialism from Britain (periphery). We begin with a brief examination of what can be called ‘whisky’, assessing the spirit’s geographic provenance, imputed hierarchies of style, and how connoisseurship hails particular markers of prestige, alongside the spatial, environmental, corporate, and governmental aspects of whisky production, regulation, and taxation. In the middle section, we tackle the (popular) cultural politics of drinking whisky, applying a lens of sensory politics to examine how materiality, bodies, affect, and consumption practices – ordering, toasting, entrainment, and narrating – collectively construct ways of seeing, tasting, smelling, and feeling whisky. In the final section, we interrogate Scotland’s employment of whisky as a tool of paradiplomacy and nation branding, via Brand Scotland and VisitScotland’s promotion of whiskey through (im)material heritage, distillery tourism, international festivals, and global trade missions. In the conclusion, we offer a tentative international politics of whisky that situates *uisge beatha* in a unique position vis-à-vis other alcoholic beverages (beer, wine, and non-grain mash spirits) due to its imperial genealogy, geographic specificity, socio-economic scaling, and historically-rooted cultural performances.

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The Queen, a Communist and a Sheikh walk into an IR Classroom: Teaching through Popular Culture in the UK, the Czech Republic and the UAE

The PCWP continuum has developed not only a growing body of academic scholarship but also a strong track record of thinking critically and creatively about how International Relations conceives of history, geography, and empire. Understanding research and teaching as inherently intertwined and co-producing gives further relevance to this work: the classroom is itself a space in which the International is imagined, negotiated, and reproduced. This paper offers a reflection on teaching International Relations, Foreign Policy, and Security in three markedly different contexts: the United Kingdom, the Czech Republic, and the United Arab Emirates. Drawing on experiences of using popular-cultural artefacts across these classroom spaces, it explores both commonalities and differences in how students encounter, negotiate, and make sense of the International through popular culture. Rather than treating popular culture simply as an accessible pedagogical device through which pre-existing IR concepts can be illustrated, the paper asks how the meanings produced through such artefacts change as they travel between historically and geographically situated classrooms. The discussion develops around three interconnected themes. First, it considers how different historical experiences shape the ways in which the International can be conceptualised and narrated. Second, it explores how geography, borders, and landscapes are differently understood and imagined across these contexts. Third, it examines how the overarching category of empire – and different relationships to imperial pasts and presents – conditions what can be said, contested, and negotiated both inside and outside the classroom. Ultimately, the paper argues that teaching through popular culture makes visible

something broader about IR pedagogy: classrooms and cultural artefacts are intense spaces of negotiating power.

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I See the Dead": Colonial Returns, Postmodern Collapse, and Apocalyptic Abjection in Fulci's *City of the Living Dead*

Fulci's 1980 film City of the Living Dead is a postmodern horror text in which the apocalyptic rupture — a priest's suicide opening the Gates of Hell — functions as a displaced figuration of colonial trauma returning to the metropole. Drawing on Frank Kermode's classic The Sense of an Ending, this paper argues that apocalypse here is not revelation but pure termination — meaningless, entropic, without resurrection. The town of Dunwich (invoking Lovecraft's already anxiety-laden American geography) becomes a site where repressed histories erupt as bodily horror, literalizing postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha's concept of the ""unhomely"" — the moment when the colonial uncanny invades domestic, Western space. While Fulci's film is clearly situated within the specific historical mood of 1980 Italy (the anni di piombo winding down, nuclear anxiety intensifying, the PCI's historic compromise collapsing), this paper argues that the apocalyptic scenario of Dunwich is more actual than ever: it reflects a present-day culture that has exhausted its political utopias.

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Code-Switching Fascism in the Trump Administration: From Heroic Realism to Halo and Beyond

In his oft-cited essay, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Walter Benjamin noted that fascism renders politics to aesthetics. And if there is one thing that the current Trump administration is obsessed with, it is visual aesthetics at every governmental and societal level. Seemingly consumed by a need to produce an endless stream of visual events and stirring imagery in a projection of power and achievement, visions of a unity of purpose if not polity, and striking depictions of what struggles must be waged and the cost of that which risks being lost, Trump's government traffics in a broad raft of multi-media images and AI-generated imaginings intended to discomfit the concerned, rally the committed, and simply 'own the libs'. This paper adopts the position of political philosopher Jason Stanley in understanding 'Fascism' as a plastic political strategy for acquiring and maintaining power, rather than a rigid, specific state form. In so doing, I interrogate the current administration's multimodal use of imagery to project both overwhelming power and imminent threat from enemies within and without. Drawing on the work of Roland Barthes and the concept of Visual Rhetoric, I examine the administration's effective 'code-switching' from the staid but striking late-2025 'Project Firewall' campaign of the U.S. Labor Department that utilizes imagery of a specifically 'Heroic Realism' style privileging a white heteropatriarchal imagining of a mythic America in peril; through to the dramatic and violent depictions of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Agents actions in Minneapolis, Minnesota at the start of 2026 – complete with on-scene

images of then ‘Commander at Large’ Gregory Bovino who’s personal aesthetic was what one German publication described as being ‘if he’d gone to the barber with a picture of (Nazi SA Commander) Ernst Röhm’; on to the resonance of imagery in current US. Border Patrol recruitment advertisements and depictions of the super-soldier character ‘Master Chief’ in the popular video game HALO.

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The Influence of Netflix Series Adolescence on the Transnational Diffusion of Social Media Bans for Young People

Jack Thorne, co-author and co-creator of the successful Netflix drama, *Adolescence*, said: ‘We do believe perhaps the answer to this is in parliament and legislating – and taking kids away from their phones in school and taking kids away from social media altogether’. This paper analyses how Adolescence, a popular and award-winning television drama, became so influential on online safety policymaking and shaping public and political transnational imaginaries around the possibilities of banning young people’s use of social media. We undertake this analysis in three ways: first, a close reading of the miniseries text itself to see whether and how it frames a commonsense inevitability of banning social media use and the regulation of mobile phones in schools. Second, is an examination of the transnational diffusion of Jack Thorne’s advocacy and how, deliberately coupled with the Anxious Generation by Jonathan Haidt, it has been granted an unquestioned legitimacy within policymaking by drawing on popular youth crisis narratives. The third area of analysis is the political enactment of social media bans as both a direct and indirect response to Adolescence. We particularly highlight the response from PM Keir Starmer to the perceived problems of cyberbullying and incel violence, and the UK government's attempts to ban social media use (e.g. Prime Minister’s Office, 2025); and trace the indirect influence through international advocacy by the Australian government to promote a ban on under 16s, implemented in Australia in November 2025 as a ‘world first’.

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Between Post-Communism and Post-Colonialism? The Cultural (Re)Production of the Czech Support for Israeli Violence

This paper focuses on the question of how cultural narratives work to make mass-scale violence abroad socially acceptable with reference to the Czech support for the Israeli war on Gaza. After the Hamas’ October 7 attack and the onset of the Israeli genocidal violence against the Palestinians, Czechia emerged as one of the most staunchly pro-Israeli countries globally, with the political representation and public largely remaining supportive of Israel in spite of the destruction of Gaza. Paper analyses several Czech books penned by prominent local authors that deal with the history of Israel/Palestine and the current violence in order to provide insights into cultural codes that make such foreign policy thinkable and popular. It proposes that

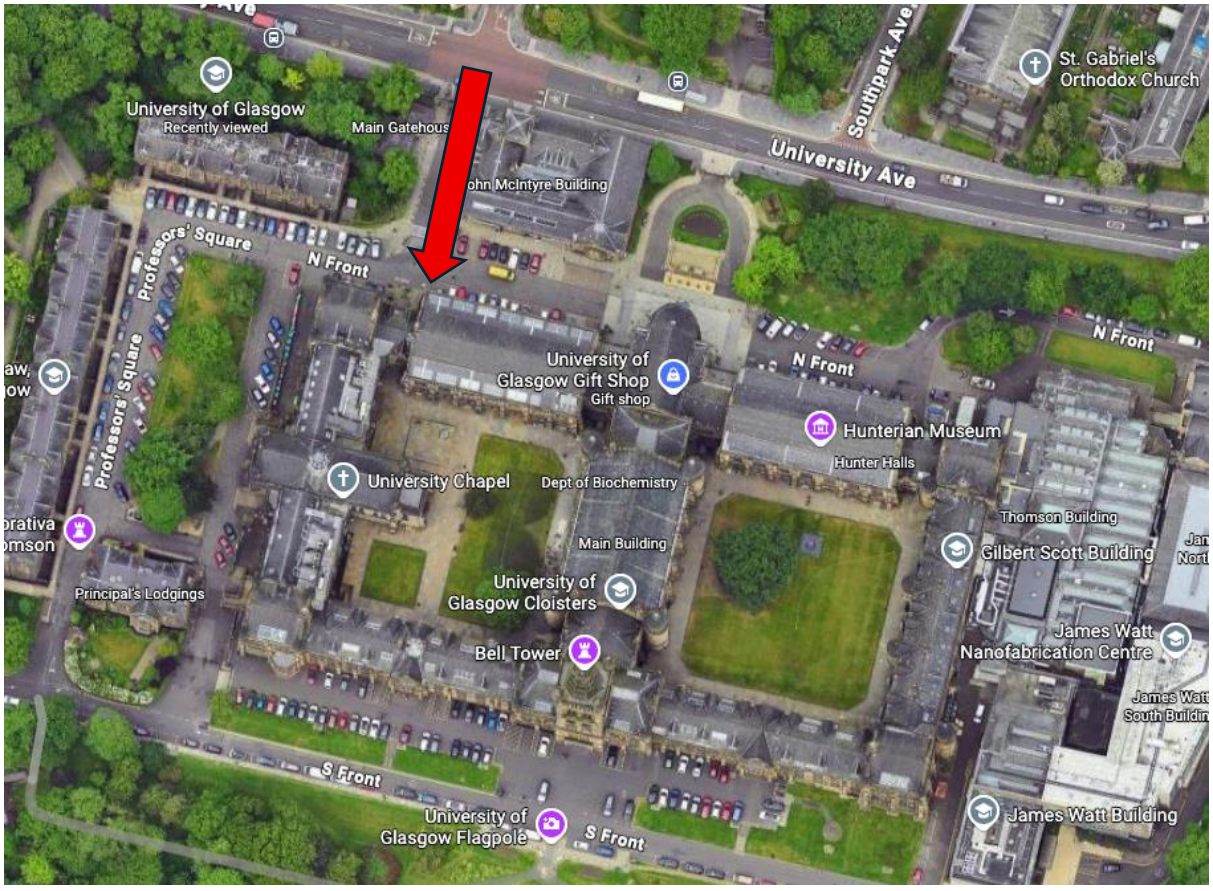
while Orientalist and colonial frameworks are indeed present in the researched corpus in a way that echoes other contexts that have been researched, these prisms are accompanied by accentuating the role of Russia and reading the situation through the experience of a small, post-communist country that had been occupied and controlled by an external power. The paper thus shows how the Czech support for the genocidal violence of the Israeli state is derived not only from racialized and civilizational imaginaries but also from its particular semi-peripheral position and post-communist narratives. In doing so, it contributes towards the debates on the salience of postcolonial dynamics for cultural politics and foreign policy in Central and Eastern Europe by highlighting its intertwinement with post-communist sentiments." Yes

How to find the rooms

We are fortunate that the PCWP conference is taking place in the main, fanciest building of the University – the Gilbert Scott building. Hooray! However, it can be a bit of a labyrinth, and whilst the staircases don't move like in a fictional castle that looks like the main University building, it can be a bit confusing to get around. Hopefully this guide will help you find your way to the rooms the conference is taking place in.

The Ferguson Room

Head to the University Main Gate on University Avenue, and walk straight ahead…





Then head, through the door...



Then, stay right (the Gilchrist café will be on your left) and walk through the doors on your right… Follow the signs for the PCWP Conference…



Keep going straight on (you've got this!)…

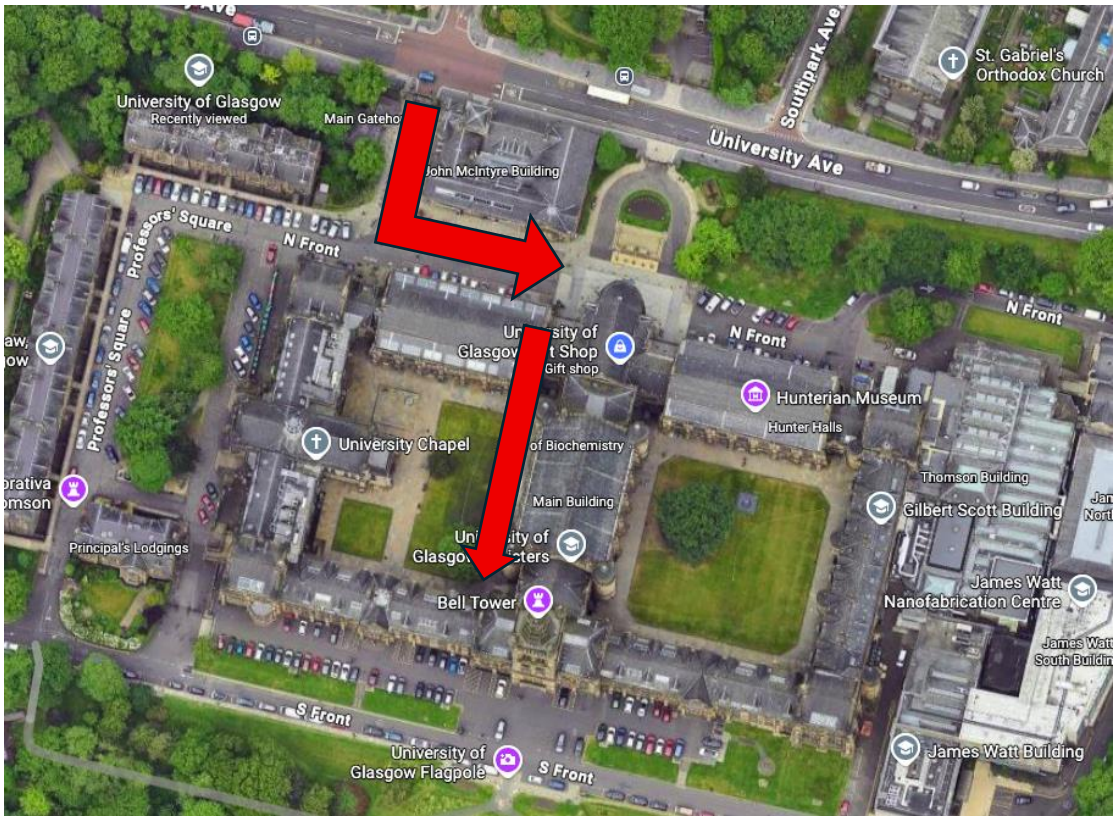


Then you will come to the Bulldog Coffee House. Go in, and the door to the Ferguson room is on your left. You've made it. Well done. The prize is registration and conference.



To get to the Senate and Melville Rooms

Head to the University Main Gate on University Avenue, and walk straight ahead, and turn left…



On your right, see these doors, then go through them...



Go up the stairs...



Oh isn't this lovely, the University Chapel is on your right across the courtyard, but you, traveller, must walk straight (keeping the cloisters on your left hand side) and go on to the small wooden door across the courtyard...



Enter, and go up the stairs to level 4...



The door to level four looks like this....



Go through it! The senate room (for Thursdays sessions is on the left)...



And now, if you want the Melville room (because it's Friday), instead of turning left at the door to level 4, turn right…



And then would you believe it, the door to the Melville room, is on your right. You have found the rooms and are ready to conference! Nice one! Cheers! Congrats!



Hopefully this helps, and if you get lost or need a hand on the day please feel free to ask for help! I'll be on email: rhys.crilley@glasgow.ac.uk