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## Frames, Fiends, Feelings and Family: Succession's Affect and the Law School Classroom

Gillian Calder

Rebecca Johnson

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# FRAMES, FIENDS, FEELINGS AND FAMILY: SUCCESSION'S AFFECT AND THE LAW SCHOOL CLASSROOM

Gillian Calder\* & Rebecca Johnson\*\*

## INTRODUCTION: OPENINGS

In late 2022 we saw a syllabus-in-progress from Susan Bandes and Diane Kemker, colleagues at DePaul University College of Law. They were in the process of establishing a fictional Waystar Royco School of Law.<sup>1</sup> Inspired by a similar initiative based on the show *Seinfeld*<sup>2</sup> their plan was to run a Zoom gathering that would focus exclusively on the HBO series *Succession* as the fourth season and final season was set to drop. Each week different “professors” would take the opportunity to teach a class grounded in their areas of interest and expertise, drawing primarily on legal issues emerging in the TV series; along the way collectively building a critical conversation about law, popular culture, and pedagogy.<sup>3</sup>

This seemed like an inviting moment for the two of us, professors at the University of Victoria in Canada, to spend some time operating across national borders with colleagues interested in law, emotion, and popular culture. We were intrigued by the idea of centring an entire semester’s worth of conversation around a single television series.<sup>4</sup> And

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\* Professor of Law, University of Victoria, Faculty of Law.

\*\* Professor of Law, University of Victoria, Faculty of Law. Gillian and Rebecca both thank Monica Wong for research assistance, Diane Kemker, Susan Bandes, and all faculty at the Waystar Royco School of Law, and the audiences at our three presentations, April 9, 2023 on-line, June 20, 2023 at the University of Toronto, Faculty of Law and August 16, 2023 at the Melbourne Law School, University of Melbourne.

1. See a discussion of the genesis of the idea here: Karen Sloan, *Law Professors Mine ‘Succession’ For Legal Lessons*, REUTERS (Mar. 28, 2023, 2:10 PM), <https://www.reuters.com/legal/legalindustry/law-professors-mine-succession-legal-lessons-2023-03-28/>.

2. The Yada Yada Law School was developed by Iowa Law Professor Gregory Shill in 2020 as a fake law school where real law professors taught classes about nothing to raise funds during the pandemic. See a discussion of this project with a link to their objectives, faculty, and syllabus here: Joseph Fawbush, *Want to Make a Difference? Go to Yada Yada Law School. Seriously.*, FINDLAW (Aug. 10, 2021), <https://www.findlaw.com/legalblogs/greedy-associates/want-to-make-a-difference-go-to-yada-yada-law-school-seriously/>.

3. A part of this community building was a closed Facebook group, administered by Diane, that enabled us to supplement our classroom engagement with conversations, questions, memes, and other media, and where the Zoom recordings could be hosted.

4. There is some resonance here to schools that create a “theme” that can play itself out in different departments over an entire semester. One example of this is the University of Michigan,

more to the point, we were intrigued by the decision to organize this conversation not in the conventional language of “workshop” or “conference” but rather with an explicit focus on the space of the classroom. How might this TV series make space for us to think not only about the substantive connections between the show and our teaching areas (family law and business associations) but also about some contemporary questions about legal pedagogy itself?

The Waystar Royco experiment in popular culture arrived at a particularly timely moment for us, as the Canadian legal community was once again engaging in recurrent questions about the relationship between the law school classroom and the profession. Questions about what it means to be a competent lawyer in these times are related to concerns about the kind of legal education that can support the development of important legal competencies.<sup>5</sup> What might be the place of popular culture in this work? And so, the threads came together.

In this Essay, we reflect on our engagement with this imaginative law school initiative. We begin by situating ourselves in the story, to contextualize the legal questions that brought us to the project. We then offer some comments on current Canadian discussions about the project of legal competencies,<sup>6</sup> pointing to some of the ways that legal scholars are turning to popular culture as part of this work. Finally, we will share reflections on some of the specific ways that our engagement with *Succession* offered us space to work. Using a methodology drawn from our intentional disruption of the conventions at three different academic presentations we conclude by paying attention (with a Canadian accent) to the place of affect and emotion in our shared project of developing humane professionals for the study and practice of law.

## I. LOCATIONS AND IDEAS

Let us begin then by locating ourselves in this project.<sup>7</sup> Before looking more specifically at how we have thought about the question of legal

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where College of Literature, Science, and the Arts hosts campus theme semesters. For example, the 2023 “Arts & Resistance” theme. *Arts & Resistance: Explore the Power of the Arts to Shape Society*, UNIV. OF MICH., <https://arts.umich.edu/arts-initiative/arts-resistance/> [https://perma.cc/W92X-QFJB].

5. POLICY AND PLANNING DEPARTMENT, L. SOC’Y OF B.C., RECOMMENDATION TO DEVELOP A COMPETENCE BASED SYSTEM FOR LAWYER LICENSING (2022).

6. This current moment in legal education, at its most optimistic, “opens up space for discussion of the intersecting ways that learners will acquire competencies across their time from admission to law school through their continuing professional development in the practice of law.” Moira Aikenhead & Gillian Calder, *Competency-Based Education: Some Thoughts on Student Mental Health*, 81 *Advoc.* 731, 731 (2023).

7. This turn towards introducing and locating oneself is important to both of us in the context of our grounding in feminism, and in the Indigenous legal traditions of the place we live. For more

competence using *Succession*, we perhaps can confess that neither of us was initially drawn to this particular TV series. Indeed, we had avoided this show about the inter-generational dimensions of family business in spite of the fact that one of us teaches family law, and the other teaches business associations. Gillian had initially said that she simply had no interest in a show that purported to centre the 1%. Rebecca, despite being a self-proclaimed TV addict,<sup>8</sup> had actively resisted watching the show notwithstanding person after person telling her that she *should* watch it. The problem in her case was that her own family had been embroiled in litigation over a family business for over fifteen years. Having spent decades living through “*Succession* gone wrong,” she did not feel enthusiastic about watching more of it on TV.

What was compelling, however, was the lure of the project created by Susan and Diane.<sup>9</sup> After binge-watching Season One, Gillian determined that the show offered a unique way to think critically about what we mean by family when we are talking about family business, and Rebecca caved. Watching the show together began to make visible the many related projects we care about, and before long we were head long into conversations about the ways that law regulates our understanding of the family and the economy, and about the show’s engagement with empire and colonialism. Through feminist lenses, we could see how *Succession* in the classroom would fit with our critical and embodied approach to pedagogy. Hook, line, and sinker. And we found ourselves in conversation about the big questions that we return to again and again in our regular classrooms, as students engage with the legal frameworks surrounding “family” and “business.”

In teaching family law, Gillian had always begun the term by making visible that family law jurisprudence generally proceeds as if there is one idea of what constitutes a family. And of course, the notion of “the family” is not only a fallacy, it is an inaccuracy that would not well serve our students or their future clients. What is “the family” in Canadian family law? As a starting place, she would emphasize the three prominent forces that help us to navigate what it is we mean when we talk about family. The first is law itself. Law tells us what kind of families are normative by granting some forms of family benefits and privileges,

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on this, see Sarah Morales, *Locating Oneself in One’s Research: Learning and Engaging with Law in the Coast Salish World*, 30 CANADIAN J. WOMEN & L. 144, 144–45, 165 (2018).

8. Rebecca Johnson, *Television, Pleasure and the Empire of Force: Interrogating Law and Affect in Deadwood*, in LAW AND JUSTICE ON THE SMALL SCREEN 33, 33 (Peter Robson & Jessica Silbey eds., 2012).

9. The opportunity to work with these two extraordinary women was also a factor in our decision-making.

while others are sanctioned and in some contexts criminalized.<sup>10</sup> And law regulates our understanding of the family in all kinds of arenas—we know we are a family, for example, when we can claim our spouse as a dependent for income tax purposes, or not a family when we cannot sign a child’s passport application.

The second force is experience: the fact that we live in families. Whatever law says about the formalities of “family,” people come to know what families are because of their direct experiences of caregiving, discipline, accommodation, inclusion, and love. And those families are ones that we are born into, as well as ones that we create for ourselves socially and as spouses and parents. These experiences of family may align and diverge in many ways from the legally normative family, opening up spaces of conversation that can be deeply affect-laden. Given the ranges of lived experiences people have with families, the issues raised in the classroom can touch very close to home.

The third force is popular culture. And for many, this is in fact one of the most persuasive forms of norm creation in our understanding of the family. The ubiquity of film, social media, television, music, and literature creates worlds of relationality.<sup>11</sup> The point is simply that ideas about normative family structures can and do persist, even in the face of different legal structures governing family, or experiences of family. These ideas also can create barriers and blockages in how principles of family law find application to people engaging with the challenges of family relationships and breakdowns. Drawing on other forms of storytelling in the family law classroom, in pedagogy, and in space for student engagement, makes visible the value of affective entanglement and is a precursor and inspiration for this work.<sup>12</sup>

It was with this framing—and focused on the capacity of television to shape our understanding of “the family”—that Gillian turned to *Succession*. And not far into the show, Gillian realized that the version of family that the series was offering as normative was discordant in two

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10. On, for example, the heteronormative and monogamous elements of the legally normative family, see Lori G. Beaman, *Is Polygamy Inherently Harmful?*, in POLYGAMY’S RIGHTS AND WRONGS: PERSPECTIVES ON HARM, FAMILY AND LAW 1, 4–5 (Gillian Calder & Lori G. Beaman eds., 2014); Gillian Calder, *Penguins and Polyamory: Using Law and Film to Explore the Essence of Marriage in Canadian Family Law*, 21 CANADIAN J. WOMEN & L. 55, 73–74 (2009).

11. Gillian, for example, had no idea about child custody until she watched the film *Kramer vs. Kramer* when she was 15 years old. *KRAMER VS. KRAMER* (Columbia Pictures 1979). And through the balance of her teenaged years, even though divorce was not imagined by her parents, all she really wanted to do was live with her dad.

12. For examples of the kinds of projects students produced in the family law classroom, see Gillian Calder & Rebecca Johnson, “Reimagining Justice: Art, Law and Social Change”—*The Gallery Walk*, UNIV. OF VICTORIA: PROJECT PEDAGOGY (May 27, 2019), <https://onlineacademiccommunity.uvic.ca/projectpedagogy/2019/05/27/reimagining-justice-art-law-and-social-change-the-gallery-walk/> [https://perma.cc/B6D9-6RC8].

ways. First, the Roy family relationships posited as central by the show seemed to be those between siblings; relationships that are not often granted normative power in family law. Second, the show provides us with Logan Roy (Brian Cox) in the role of the patriarchal oppressor, but this is not so much in relation to a spouse or a gendered other, but in relation to his impotent children. The series, thus, was not just a way into rethinking family, but a way into rethinking what this series suggests about power and wealth, and about what happens to “family” when the focus is on “*family business*.”

And Rebecca found herself asking questions on the flipside. What was the meaning of “business” in “family *business*”? While students generally approached family law with the sense that it was an emotion-heavy subject/practice, her experience was that they approached business associations with the sense that it was more emotionally (and perhaps even politically) neutral.

In the contemporary Canadian context, however, conversations about business/economy are very difficult to untangle from our particular history of settler colonization, with its extractive logics, and links to Empire. Imperial imaginaries do persist in the present, continuing to shape contemporary understandings about the nature of business and economy.<sup>13</sup> As Edward Said made visible, much of this work happens in the cultural domain.<sup>14</sup> In the context of business, J.K. Gibson-Graham have argued that many of our prevailing cultural conceptions have rested on “the tendency to represent economy as a space of invariant logics and automatic unfolding that offer[s] no field for intervention.”<sup>15</sup> There is a flattening involved in learning companies and corporate law without attention to the affects, emotions, languages, structures, and ideologies which shape everyday understandings of business.

In the JD classroom context, attention to the details of her family’s ongoing (and often unbelievable) conflict around business, enabled different conversations about the place of emotion/feeling in the allegedly neutral area of business law.<sup>16</sup> But further layers of complexity were

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13. This complicated Canadian/imperial history is explored in JAMES TULLY, *STRANGE MULTIPLICITY: CONSTITUTIONALISM IN AN AGE OF DIVERSITY* 3 (1995). See also JAMES TULLY, *PUBLIC PHILOSOPHY IN A NEW KEY: VOLUME II: IMPERIALISM AND CIVIC FREEDOM* 127 (2008); Rebecca Johnson, *Living Deadwood: Imagination, Affect, and the Persistence of the Past*, 42 *SUFFOLK U. L. REV.* 809, 814 (2009).

14. EDWARD W. SAID, *CULTURE AND IMPERIALISM* 5, 12–15, 17, 23 (1994).

15. J.K. GIBSON-GRAHAM, *A POSTCAPITALIST POLITICS*, at xxi (2006). For an exploration of other economic imaginaries, see generally *THE HANDBOOK OF DIVERSE ECONOMIES* (J.K. Gibson-Graham & Kelly Dombroski eds., 2020).

16. For a set of pedagogical materials exploring how this family conflict could be used in the Business Associations classroom to explore challenges of governance in Canadian and Indigenous legal orders, see Rebecca Johnson, *Some Business Associations Materials ('LaRue' meets 'Big River First Nation')*, RECONCILIATION SYLLABUS (Feb. 8, 2022), <https://reconciliationsyllabus.wordpress.com>.

involved for Rebecca teaching not only in the JD program, but also in the JD/JID program (the dual degree in Canadian common law and Indigenous Legal Orders).<sup>17</sup> In the context of the Transsystemic Business Associations course,<sup>18</sup> students contended with both neoliberal/capitalist and Indigenous understandings of economy. Many of the latter focused on non-extractive economic logics, often placing different conceptions of kinship close to the centre of economic logics.<sup>19</sup> That is, conceptualizations of family and business were also related, but in different ways.<sup>20</sup>

It is with these questions in mind that Rebecca found herself watching *Succession*, with its brutalist understandings of relationships, money, economy, production, and power. Thus, she found herself asking about how one might shift relations of extractive power when the entity that is at the heart of the harm is a family, albeit one taking a non-normative, non-regulated through law, form? What might this series allow us to see about imperial imaginaries, capitalism, toxic masculinities and whiteness, power imbalances, deviancy, normalcy, and gender in the story that *Succession* tells us about the Roy family?

Though we had come late to the *Succession* party, we approached it as a “strong text” similar to the kinds that Jeanette Winterson has

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com/2022/09/03/some-business-associations-materials-larue-meets-big-river-first-nation/ [https://perma.cc/ZBD6-HD79].

17. This four-year program (the first of its kind in the world) enables students to graduate with both a Juris Doctor (JD) and a Juris Indigenarum Doctor (JID). The program focuses on the skills needed to practice with Indigenous legal orders, within the Canadian common law, and at the interface between them. The first cohort of students entered the program in 2018. For a program overview, see *JD/JID Program Overview*, UNIV. OF VICTORIA, <https://www.uvic.ca/law/admissions/jidadmissions/jid-courses.php> [https://perma.cc/NHM2-WWBV].

18. *Law 3151 - Transsystemic Business Associations*, UNIV. OF VICTORIA, [https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/undergrad/index.php#/courses/rkk8jOpm4?bc=true&bcCurrent=LAW3151%20-%20Transsystemic%20Business%20Associations&bcGroup=Law%20\(LAW\)&bcItemType=courses](https://www.uvic.ca/calendar/undergrad/index.php#/courses/rkk8jOpm4?bc=true&bcCurrent=LAW3151%20-%20Transsystemic%20Business%20Associations&bcGroup=Law%20(LAW)&bcItemType=courses) (last visited Feb 1, 2024).

19. This attention to relational economies can be seen in Dara Kelly & Christine Woods, *Ethical Indigenous Economies*, 7 *ENGAGED SCHOLAR J.* 140, 140–42, 149–53 (2021); SHALENE WUTTUNEE JOBIN, *UPHOLDING INDIGENOUS ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIPS: NEHIYAWAK NARRATIVES* (2023); CAROL ANNE HILTON, *INDIGENOMICS: TAKING A SEAT AT THE ECONOMIC TABLE* (2021). See also ROBIN WALL KIMMERER, *BRAIDING SWEETGRASS: INDIGENOUS WISDOM, SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE, AND THE TEACHINGS OF PLANTS* (2013). See in particular her chapters, *The Gift of Strawberries* and *Defeating Windigo*. *Id.* at 22, 374.

20. This is visible in the JESSICA ASCH, KIRSTY BROADHEAD, GEORGIA LLOYD-SMITH & SIMON OWEN, *SECWÉPEMC LANDS AND RESOURCES LAW RESEARCH PROJECT* 9–11, 28, 58 (Jessica Asch & Simon Owen eds., 2016). For a few more examples of how Indigenous legal resources open space for taking the specific kinds of relationships that occupy so much of the business imaginary, see Rebecca Johnson & Bonnie Leonard, “*Coyote and the Cannibal Boy*”: *Secwépehc Insights on the Corporation*, in *CORPORATE CITIZEN: NEW PERSPECTIVES ON THE GLOBALIZED RULE OF LAW* 91 (Oonagh E. Fitzgerald ed. 2020); Rebecca Johnson, “*Building a Ladder of Arrows: Re-Storying Partnership Through the War with the Sky People*”, in *3 BUSINESS STORYTELLING AND POSTCOLONIALISM* 135 (Ozan Nadir Alakavuklar, Amon Barros, Nimruji Jammulamadaka & Ana Maria Paredo eds., 2024).

argued, “work along the borders of our minds and alter what already exists.”<sup>21</sup> Engaging with popular culture as this form of text, we argue, enables a deepening of questions and a way to imagine what it might take to have less oppression in these two foundation legal institutions, the familial relations in which we find ourselves, and the economic relations in which we attempt to provision ourselves to survive. And, as legal educators, what ways might we, working within our law school contexts, think of the kinds of competencies required for us (as both students and professors) to engage with these questions in these times? And how might something like *Succession* be part of that work? Let us turn briefly to the question of legal competency and popular culture.

## II. LEGAL COMPETENCIES AND POPULAR CULTURE

There is a significant and rich literature engaging with the question of how law might best taught and learned. Answers to that question are very much linked to other assumptions about the nature of law, the nature of legal practice, and the organization of our social and legal worlds.<sup>22</sup> Discussions about how much time is allocated to theory or practice surface with regularity. What is the place of apprenticeship or intellectual engagement? Is law an art or a science? In the North American context, the taking up of the Langdell’s case method marked one shift in ideas about legal knowledge, and how to best prepare one for legal practice.<sup>23</sup> In his 1967 lecture titled, “Pericles and the Plumber,”<sup>24</sup> William Twining reflected on the tensions between the “academic” and the “practical” aspects of legal practice, and the challenges of finding the right kind of balance within the law school context. Or, one might reflect back on another suggestion, in 1969, that Brandeis University might build a new law school to train government policy-makers, not practicing lawyers.<sup>25</sup> We think here of our own law school (at the University of Victoria), founded in the wake of these moves, with the

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21. JEANETTE WINTERSON, *ART OBJECTS: ESSAYS ON ECSTASY AND EFFRONTERY* 25 (1995).

22. On this point, see Val Napoleon, *Thinking About Indigenous Legal Orders*, in *DIALOGUES ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND LEGAL PLURALISM* 229, 233–34 (René Provost & Colleen Sheppard eds., 2013). Napoleon argues that in decentralized legal orders, there is less of a tendency to see law as enacted by legal experts, and more of a tendency for legal decision making to be more widely distributed. This has implications for where and how law is taught.

23. For a temporally located reflection on this shift in ideas about legal education, see Charles W. Eliot, *Langdell and the Law School*, 33 *HARV. L. REV.* 518, 518, 523–34 (1920).

24. William Twining, *Pericles and the Plumber*, in *LAW IN CONTEXT: ENLARGING A DISCIPLINE* 64–66, 69, 72 (1997).

25. This conversation is with Morris Abram, *Educating the Lawyer as Policy-Maker*, in *THE LEGAL IMAGINATION: STUDIES IN THE NATURE OF LEGAL THOUGHT AND EXPRESSION* 938 (1973).



mission to produce humane professionals with a strong focus on social change through training students to seek change through legal reform.<sup>26</sup>

This balance—between theory and practice—resurfaces as a question every decade or so. These questions are part of the contemporary fabric of the Canadian legal academy, as the profession asks as part of its regular cycle of renewal—to ask again what kinds of competencies are needed in these times? At the current moment, this conversation involves relationships between the law schools (who produce graduates) and the law societies (who license and regulate the profession). For us in British Columbia, the debates circulate around a 2021 interim report to the Law Society of B.C., authored by Jordan Furlong, that amongst other things posits the elimination of law schools in the arc of legal education.<sup>27</sup>

What kind of attention is needed as we ask both what those competencies might be, and how they can be taught, learned, developed, and practiced.<sup>28</sup> Amongst the many competencies to be developed, we have been particularly interested in those related to affect and emotion.<sup>29</sup> What pedagogies might support the work of developing competencies that in the process of enabling students to make the most of their cognitive powers, helps them understand the power of their emotional minds.<sup>30</sup>

We note that different law schools, depending on the financial and other resources available to them, have always responded to their times in a number of innovative ways, creating moot programs, internships, co-op placements, clinical programs, field schools, writing programs, pro bono clinics, and more. In each case, people have worked at the development of both knowledges and skills to support people in the work of law. These programs are, one might note, resource heavy. That is, they

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26. See, e.g., Julie Sloan, *Building Bridges: Law for All*, UNIV. OF VICTORIA (Nov. 27, 2020), <https://www.uvic.ca/news/topics/2020+torch-law-centre+news> [<https://perma.cc/6SXY-L9KL>]. Established in 1977, the Law Centre is a pillar of student education and access to justice at UVic Law, serving “between 1,800 and 2,000 low-income clients per year.” *Id.*

27. JORDAN FURLONG, A COMPETENCE-BASED SYSTEM FOR LAWYER LICENSING IN BRITISH COLUMBIA: INTERIM REPORT 9–13, 36–39 (May 10, 2022).

28. See Gillian Calder & Rebecca Johnson, *Metaphorical Hallways: Critical Pedagogies and the Canadian Network of Law & Humanities — or: What Happens When You Put a Paper Maché Torso in the Hallway or Ask Your Colleagues to Look Under the Dress?*, CANADIAN NETWORK OF L. & HUMANS. (Jan. 14, 2023, 12:17 AM), <https://cnlh.ubc.ca/metaphorical-hallways-critical-pedagogies-and-the-canadian-network-of-law-humanities-or-what-happens-when-you-put-a-paper-mache-torso-in-the-hallway-or-ask-your-colleague/> [<https://perma.cc/CVK5-XXKZ>].

29. See e.g., BRIAN MASSUMI, PARABLES FOR THE VIRTUAL: MOVEMENT, AFFECT, SENSATION 1–2 (2002); EVE KOSOFSKY SEDGWICK, TOUCHING FEELING: AFFECT, PEDAGOGY, PERFORMATIVITY 1–2 (2003); ALISON YOUNG, THE SCENE OF VIOLENCE: CINEMA, CRIME, AFFECT 21 (2010).

30. See Alan M. Lerner, *From Socrates to Damasio, from Langdell to Kandel: The Role of Emotion in Modern Legal Education*, in AFFECT AND LEGAL EDUCATION: EMOTION IN LEARNING AND TEACHING THE LAW 151, 172 (Paul Maharg & Caroline Maughan eds., 2011).

often require significant investments in time, planning, and money. In those contemporary conversations, there is plenty of robust attention paid to the innovations that have been happening in the academy, as colleagues have taken up the challenges of these moments to consider all the ways that the practices and pedagogies of law remain connected to the legal problems of our times. This has been particularly interesting for us, in thinking about competencies as going beyond questions of content, that is substantive familiarity with subject areas like torts, contracts, or criminal law, to also include values, ethics, abilities, and more.<sup>31</sup> There is, for example, a particular rich set of conversations about the ability of lawyers to develop skills in emotional intelligence or trauma-informed practice.<sup>32</sup>

We do take inspiration from a long history in law of drawing on cultural texts in order to extend a number of different legal competencies. This year, for example, marks the 50th anniversary of James Boyd White's *The Legal Imagination* (1973), which placed law and literature in conversation with each other with the explicit goal of making space for the extension of many aspects of legal competence.<sup>33</sup> Theatre, film, and art have found their way into classrooms, opening space for a host of purposes. Gillian has, for example, made significant use of performance and games, which supports students in developing the affective capacities needed for working with clients, but also for developing skills of critical engagement.<sup>34</sup> Given the rise of media-rich texts in our times,

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31. We have been influenced in this work by the advocacy of Dr. Annie Rochette, including her recent scholarship on revisioning competencies shared with us in its unpublished forms, and through her work in structuring workshops on competencies at the University of Victoria's Faculty of Law. To have access to Dr. Rochette's forthcoming work *Competencies, Competency-Based Education and Competency Frameworks* we are encouraged to contact her directly at annierochette@me.com.

32. See HOW TO ACCOUNT FOR TRAUMA AND EMOTIONS IN LAW TEACHING (Mallika Kaur & Lindsay M. Harris eds., forthcoming June 2024); Gillian Calder, 'The Winter We Danced': *Emotion, Embodiment and Indigenous Legal Orders in the Canadian Constitutional Law Classroom*, in HOW TO ACCOUNT FOR TRAUMA AND EMOTIONS IN LAW TEACHING (Mallika Kaur & Lindsay M. Harris eds., forthcoming June 2024).

33. For a conversation about reimagining legal competence opened up by the book, see generally LIVING IN A LAW TRANSFORMED: ENCOUNTERS WITH THE WORKS OF JAMES BOYD WHITE (Julen Etxabe & Gary Watt eds., 2014).

34. Gillian Calder, *Guantanamo: Using a Play-Reading to Teach Law*, 142 CANADIAN THEATRE REV. 44, 44–48 (2010); Gillian Calder, *Performance, Pedagogy and Law: Theatre of the Oppressed in the Law School Classroom*, in THE MORAL IMAGINATION AND THE LEGAL LIFE: BEYOND TEXT IN LEGAL EDUCATION 215, 215–17 (Zenon Bańkowski & Maksymilian Del Mar eds., 2013); Suzanne Bouclin, Gillian Calder & Sharon Cowan, *Playing Games with Law*, in THE ARTS AND THE LEGAL ACADEMY: BEYOND TEXT IN LEGAL EDUCATION 69, 70–74, 77–80 (Zenon Bańkowski, Maksymilian Del Mar & Paul Maharg eds., 2013).

it is no surprise that scholars have drawn these texts into their scholarship in a variety of different ways.<sup>35</sup>

Film has been a site of significant engagement, and there is certainly a depth and breadth to law and film scholarship. As Orit Kamir notes, one might note a variety of premises in this scholarship, premises that open space for engagement with different competencies.<sup>36</sup> For example, one premise is that film parallels law. Scholarship here explores moments where “film imitates law,” where “law imitates film,” and where a series of feedback loops result in mutual projects of construction. Taking this approach, it is possible to approach a series like *Succession* with attention to both the parallels and the disjunctures.

A second premise is that films are jurisprudential texts. Beginning from this starting point, and focused on the development of different competencies, the same cinematic text opens up to different questions. Here, one might draw movies into the classroom in robust and creative ways to explore topics ranging from gender roles, familial structures, and human relations, to memory, tragedy, and truth. In some ways, one might approach a cinematic text like one would approach a court decision, but in ways that enable conversation that is not built on the bodies or tragedies of real people. The distance made possible by a cinematic text can open space for people to explore emotions, affects and ideas in ways that invite connections to the “real” world without worrying about getting it wrong.<sup>37</sup>

Kamir offers a third premise: that one might approach the filmic text as a means to understand cinematic stories as crucial to processes of indoctrination and judgment.<sup>38</sup> Here, scholarship explores the ways that films teach us to judge the world in certain ways, participating in the constitution of subjects and communities. Drawing on film in this way, students can actively develop their capacities for judgment, and for

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35. In 2009, for example, we issued a call which generated a list of ways that colleagues across Canada were drawing film into their classrooms. See Elizabeth Adjin-Tettey et al., *Using Film in the Classroom: The Call and Response*, 21 CANADIAN J. WOMEN & L., 197 (2009).

36. Orit Kamir, *Why ‘Law-and-Film’ and What Does it Actually Mean? A Perspective*, 19 CONTINUUM: J. MEDIA & CULTURAL STUD. 255, 255–78 (2005).

37. There is an exploration of this point in Rebecca Johnson & Ruth Buchanan, *Getting the Insider’s Story Out: What Popular Film Can Tell Us About Legal Method’s Dirty Secrets*, 20 WINDSOR Y.B. ACCESS JUST. 87, 94 (2001). We argue that students who are working with complicated legal problems find it easier to begin that work in the context of cinematic texts where there is a rich affective context and less risk of getting things “wrong.”

38. Orit Kamir, *Cinematic Judgment and Jurisprudence: A Woman’s Memory, Recovery, and Justice in a Post-Traumatic Society (A Study of Polanski’s Death and the Maiden)*, in LAW ON THE SCREEN 27, 29 (Austin Sarat, Lawrence Douglas & Martha Merrill Umphrey eds., 2005). On the place of judgment in mediation discourses, see Jennifer L. Schulz, *The Cook, the Mediator, the Feminist, and the Hero*, 21 CANADIAN J. WOMEN & L. 177, 178–79, 180 (2009).

understanding how they, in their roles as lawyers, negotiators, judges, legislators, clients, are embedded in structures of judgment.

The point here is that there are many ways to draw on film in the classroom, to engage with a variety of competencies that are always in the process of developing. And so, as we thought about *Succession*, we considered how we might use the series as an opportunity to reimagine how we might work at developing these specific competencies in the law school classroom, to look carefully at the ways that both law and film are agents in the construction of meaning, and the coercive means, subtle as they may be, used to construct legal concepts such as subject, community, identity, memory, gender, justice, truth, and family.<sup>39</sup>

As the term continued at the Waystar Royco School of Law, we delighted in the different approaches taken by our fellow faculty, and reflected on the different competencies that we were invited to consider. And as we began planning for our own classroom session, we were conscious of all the ways that the “story” of *Succession* exerted its own pressure on our thinking. Intriguingly, we found ourselves trying to grapple with the less explicitly narrative elements of the story, wondering about how to engage with the affective discomforts that were coming along for the ride.

It is certain that law and film both enjoy the power to mediate the social imaginary.<sup>40</sup> What we have been less practiced at is attending to the languages and methods for engaging with those aspects of film linked less to the arguments than to the affects attending on those arguments. Even in the process of formulating arguments about fundamental justice, about the ways the law fails to address the needs of differentially situated subjects, we know the impulses to rein in the affective dimension, preferring to remain in the cognitive register, separating reason from emotion, what we think from what we feel, the objective from the subjective. But as we know from the work of law and emotion scholars, like Susan Bandes,<sup>41</sup> there is much more that is affective, sensory, and embodied about “thinking” than we typically imagine. What are the kinds of skills/practices needed for the work of law? And how might we use *Succession* in this low-stakes-classroom as a space for experimentation?

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39. See ORIT KAMIR, *FRAMED: WOMEN IN LAW AND FILM 2* (2006).

40. DAVID A. BLACK, *LAW IN FILM: RESONANCE AND REPRESENTATION* 13–14 (1999).

41. *THE PASSIONS OF LAW* 13 (Susan A. Bandes ed., 1999).

III. PLAYING WITH *SUCCESSION*

That we would collaborate on a presentation for the Waystar Royco School of Law made eminent sense. In our myriad conversations about pedagogies across our disciplines, over the years, it was intriguing that we had never paid attention to the *intersection* of family law and family business. But as we discussed the overlaps in family and business, and the affect-laden ways the stories were told in *Succession*, we found ourselves returning to the questions of pedagogy that have been central in our intellectual journeys. And thus, as we prepared for our curricular contribution to the Waystar Royco School of Law,<sup>42</sup> we chose to present not on a specific aspect of the legal questions that had brought us to *Succession* but instead on the more theory rich questions of how popular culture offers insight into the place of power in the structuring of law. We began to examine how a show like *Succession* had come to make us feel.

A. *Framing a Story: Image and Sound*

We began our exploration of the connection between *Succession* and the questions we hoped to ask about law with the visual framing of the story. Robert Cover argues, “[n]o set of legal institutions or prescriptions exists apart from the narratives that locate it and give it meaning.”<sup>43</sup> So we made our primary jurisprudential text for this exploration the way the story was shaped by the opening credits.<sup>44</sup> Whether one is new to a series, or a regular viewer, the first encounter is often indeed with the opening credits themselves. Long before one has made a relationship with the plot or the characters, the opening credits set out, through the music and visuals, a set of expectations about what is to come, as well as a “soundscape” which will become attached to the repetitive experience of returning for further engagements with the story. The introductory notes of *The Twilight Zone*, *The Bugs Bunny/Roadrunner Show*, *Happy Days*, *Friends*, or *Game of Thrones*, do the work of inviting us into a certain space of expectation.<sup>45</sup>

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42. Rebecca Johnson & Gillian Calder, *Jacobin Revolutionaries or Flaccid Sausages? Love, Empire and the “Family” Business in Succession*, (Waystar Royco School of Law, Apr. 4, 2023).

43. Robert M. Cover, *Foreword: Nomos and Narrative*, 97 HARV. L. REV. 4, 4 (1983).

44. This YouTube video shows all four seasons of credits to *Succession* played at the same time: Andromeda Galaxy, *All Succession Opening Credits at the Same Time*, YOUTUBE (Mar. 28, 2023), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ZiKZ75WKIo>. There is also lots of interesting analysis available on the opening credits. For example, see Nicole Gallucci, *6 Curious Changes to ‘Succession’s Season 4 Opening Credits*, DECIDER (Mar. 27, 2023, 10:30 AM), <https://decider.com/2023/03/27/succession-season-4-intro-opening-credits-changes/> [<https://perma.cc/CA8S-QV6P>].

45. Rebecca Johnson, *Television, Pleasure and the Empire of Force: Interrogating Law and Affect in Deadwood*, in LAW AND JUSTICE ON THE SMALL SCREEN, *supra* note 8, at 33.

There is also a tradition of attending to credits to see what changes. For example, in *The Simpsons*, an ongoing chalkboard gag sees Bart writing lines on the chalkboard as a punishment that differs from episode to episode, sometimes reflecting a moment of popular culture.<sup>46</sup> There is also a body of literature that studies opening credits for the clues they offer. One might think, for example, of the *White Lotus* franchise and the wealth of clues to the story's mysteries that are foreshadowed at the outset of Season Two.<sup>47</sup> The point is that people will have examples from past shows that we love where we waited to see what the credits might offer as decoders of the mystery, or places of scrutiny and conversation.

As we discovered while binge-watching the series, the opening credits to *Succession* changed subtly from season to season. We began to parse them for what they told and foretold, particularly with attention to the themes that drew us in: family, business, emotion, and ultimately, empire. Curious as to how others might experience an extended engagement with the credits, we decided to use them as one of the primary texts for our classroom session.<sup>48</sup> We asked our colleagues and audience to watch the four versions of the credits play alongside each other. Because the opening credits are a brief ninety seconds, we played the credits through twice, asking students to note something that they found particularly striking from the credits, and something else that they noted changed or stayed the same between the seasons.<sup>49</sup> In this exercise, the goal was to pay attention to the generation of affect through image and sound. What anxieties are signalled in the images and music? Do the opening credits establish an argument about the relationship between family and business? How might attention to the embodied and affective dimensions of the viewing experience help us explore how affect is employed in both critical and transformative ways?

The reflections from the participants in all of our presentations were apt. They were struck by the credits as a home movie. For example, the credits open with a series of fragments evoking a family video. We see

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46. This website tells the story behind this running visual joke in *The Simpsons* opening credits, including a list of all the different chalkboard gags used over time: *Chalkboard Gag*, WIKISIMPSONS, [https://simpsonswiki.com/wiki/Chalkboard\\_gag](https://simpsonswiki.com/wiki/Chalkboard_gag) [https://perma.cc/NXG5-GPC8].

47. This article offers a read of how all the twists and turns of Season Two of *White Lotus* were signaled in their opening credits: Leah Marilla Thomas, *The 'White Lotus' Season 2 Opening Credits Hid Major Twists and Clues in Plain Sight*, COSMOPOLITAN (Dec. 12, 2022, 5:02 PM), <https://www.cosmopolitan.com/entertainment/tv/a42218662/the-white-lotus-season-2-opening-credits-easter-eggs/> [https://perma.cc/3UBU-HNQ6].

48. Johnson & Calder, *supra* note 42.

49. We would recommend the exercise of watching the one-and-a-half minute opening credits if one has not yet seen the series. Fans of the show have already done the work for us of placing all four opening credits alongside each other, so they ran in common time, enabling us to see them together. Andromeda Galaxy, *supra* note 44.

young children being lined up for a family photo, images of a father and son in the first season and then images of siblings alongside each other in the seasons that follow. We see pictures of a patriarch that we believe to be Logan Roy shot from behind or walking away; signalling that his attention is always elsewhere. There are very few images of mothers, instead there are images of caregiving from what appears to be nannies or other hired help. We see meals in settings that signal the work of business rather than the gathering of family. The glimpses of these meals are also interwoven with images of business, newspapers, news broadcast, skyscrapers, reminding us of business' pre-emption of family.

Participants also responded to the use of colour and tone. The palette used in the opening credits suggests a movement back and forth in time. The home video of the children is filmed in a sepia-drenched style, evoking a much more distant past, looking much more like the 50s than the 80s when the Roy children would have been the ages of the children in the credits. The business images (largely buildings and media) are filmed in a much colder set of blue tones, with a distinctly modern feel. Many of those are filmed as if we are at street level looking up, or in a helicopter looking down, maintaining at all times, distance. Even the clothing captures this mixing of colors. The colours Logan wears in "family" and "business" images are similar, perhaps signaling that family and business are the flip of each other, or at least not deeply distinguished.

The lack of emotion shown throughout the credits was also evoked by our audiences. While there are many images of the kids, there are very few smiling faces. The children are dressed formally as if they are merely on display. When they are doing activities, they are only the activities of privilege or wealth, playing tennis, walking with a pony, driving a small race car, smoking a cigar. The children in childhood and the children in business do not change much. And where their father is in relation to them is also evocative. We see him mostly walking away. More often than not, we view only the back of his head. And while for many of us, our fathers were not in our childhood photographs because they were behind the camera, that is not the case here. We see Logan in the frame, uninterested in his children, until they can take a seat at the business table.

The four opening credits come together with an image of four children riding an elephant. It is a discordant image, but it is not an image of joy. In a short few seconds, it undoes any sense that this is a playful, birthday party image, underlining only that this is also a story of empire, a story of childhood traumas, a story of absent parenting, and an uneven, bumpy ride. Ultimately, there are flashes of humour in the

credits, mostly in the chyrons that flash by, changed slightly from season to season, offering us “[g]ender fluid illegals may be entering the country ‘twice.’”<sup>50</sup> But they end with the glass, steel, and phallic symbols of a New York sky, and with a man sitting at the head of a table, wearing the sweater of someone in his final years. The images are rich and a reminder that we are at the heart of Robert Cover’s *Nomos and Narrative*,<sup>51</sup> asking about the stories that scaffold the legal worlds we inhabit.

### B. Capturing a Moment

What the opportunity to think about this show through this fictional law school made possible was a different pedagogical encounter with some of the theoretical structures of power manifest in popular culture engagements with law. And so, we took our imaginings about the show from the Waystar Royco School of Law to two academic conferences and we used our methodology of disruption in those settings to ground this Essay. Working with our audience’s reaction to the credits, for example, allowed a robust conversation across jurisdictional and disciplinary boundaries. Bringing that conversation to root in chosen moments from the series made visible what less oppression in the two foundational legal relations at the heart of the show—familial and economic—might mean. A show that had felt very alienating in its characters, storylines, and manifestations of privilege, began to open up a way into thinking how important it is to attend to the affect-laden dimensions of power, in theory and in the every-day.

In our early conversations around the series, we frequently returned to a moment when Logan is in the throes of negotiating a sale of the family business to GoJo, a company owned by the young, enigmatic Lukas Mattson (Alexander Skarsgård).<sup>52</sup> Mattson has a very different approach to media in the twenty-first century than the scions of the Roy family. The episode shows the children finally working with each other in close relationality to try to keep the family business, demonstrating in the process that it is an entity that matters to them and not just something for their father to sell out from under them. They believe that, working together, they have enough votes to block their father, and thus retain a role in the business. They confront their father as the Roy family is gathered at Lady Caroline Collingwood’s (Harriet Walter)

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50. This is one of the ATN headlines that appears in the opening credits of Season Two.

51. Cover, *supra* note 43, at 4.

52. *Succession: All the Bells Say* (HBO television broadcast Dec. 12, 2021) (Season Three, Episode Nine).



wedding in Tuscany.<sup>53</sup> They are rattled to discover that he has somehow been made aware of their hopes to block the sale and has “bought out” their mother (or, as they articulate it, their mother has “sold them out”).<sup>54</sup> We watch as their father derides them, and relishes his strength over them. We watch with discomfort as they are infantilized by Logan, rendered inarticulate by the skilled manoeuvring of their bully/parent. When Logan asks his children for a reason why he should not sell, what they have in their hand, Roman Roy (Kieran Culkin), the youngest, offers, “I don’t know . . . fucking, love?”<sup>55</sup> In this scene, expectations about “family” and “business” collide at high speed. Logan’s response affirms his view that the patriarch of the family is the only one who will decide what will or will not happen with “the business.” In one skillfully executed eight-minute scene, we have modelled for us the legal significance of the sibling relationship and the questions of what “family” ultimately is in family business. The powerful acting begins to unearth the seeds, planted throughout the four seasons, of the significance within the Roy family of intergenerational trauma and childhood abuse, making visible the ways the legacies of colonialism are wrought on people’s bodies. Empire, emotion, family, business, love.

Our second encounter with the means through which the show was pushing our understanding of law, empire, emotion and family occurred in the throes of watching the episode, “Connor’s Wedding.”<sup>56</sup> The epiphanic death that occurs was in many ways expected (the show was called *Succession* after all). The episode is beautifully done, in acting, in story, in emotion, in scoring, and as a catalyst for the drama to emerge. But what caught us off-guard was the musical framing. Alongside our interest in the credits that set up each episode to tell a particular story of family, business, empire, and emotion, we now had the closing credits, where the show’s familiar theme was offered with a different musicality.<sup>57</sup> Listening more closely to the closing credits from the beginning of Season One, we began to see how much attention had been paid, throughout the series, to variation; our analysis thus focused

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53. *Id.*; Lady Caroline Collingwood is the mother of Kendall, Siobhan, and Roman Roy, the ex-husband of Logan Roy, and the former step-mother of Connor Roy, Logan’s eldest child.

54. *Id.*

55. *Succession: All the Bells Say*, *supra* note 52; Jesse Armstrong, *All the Bells Say*, in *SUCCESSION SEASON THREE: THE COMPLETE SCRIPTS 685* (Home Box Office, Inc. 2023).

56. *Succession: Connor’s Wedding* (HBO television broadcast Apr. 9, 2023) (Season Four, Episode Three).

57. You can hear the music for the ending credits in the episode here: Film School Generation, *Closing Credits #Succession Season 4 Episode 3 4x03: ‘Connor’s Wedding’ Nicholas Britnell HBO*, YouTube (Apr. 9, 2023), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BvUHztNM0qs&t=11s>. Gillian found it overwhelming.

not only on the visuality of the opening credits but on the musicality of the closing.<sup>58</sup> And the death of a character that neither of us was particularly attached to, suddenly grounded what is arguably one of the finest episodes in television history.

At the Law, Culture, and the Humanities Annual Conference held in 2023 in Toronto, we heightened our focus on the law and emotion elements of *Succession*, still using the opening credits, but now asking our audience to engage with the music we drew from select closing credits.<sup>59</sup> What we were trying to do with an audience particularly attuned to the role that popular culture plays in our understanding of law, was to evoke an affective response by disrupting the conventions of paper presentation.<sup>60</sup> Using clips of both opening and closing credits, we facilitated an audience discussion and conversation about the operation of the visual and the auditory on their engagement with the story, including audience members who had never seen the show.

Once again, *Succession* offered us the experience of rich conversation across disciplinary boundaries, and more explicitly about questions of law and emotion. This popular cultural moment, a show with so much critical acclaim and mainstream media attention, opened a door to the ways that affect operates to sustain difficult or damaging relations of power. In this iteration of our presentation, we drew on our third moment, from the episode, *Church and State*.<sup>61</sup> Here Logan's brother Ewan Roy (James Cromwell) delivers a searing eulogy, sharing their childhood history of dislocation, abandonment, of being a four and a five-year-old sent alone by ship to America during the war, of the death

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58. This article by Joshua Barone in the *New York Times* captures the connection between the show's music and the surprisingly affective nature of the story itself: Joshua Barone, *The 'Succession' Soundtrack Is Fit for a Concert Hall*, N.Y. TIMES (May 25, 2023), <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/25/arts/television/succession-soundtrack-classical-music.html>. This piece, by Raiser Bruner in *Time* Magazine, offers insight on why the music itself is memorable, including the disjuncture of the slightly out of tune piano: Raisa Bruner, *Music Experts Explain Why the Succession Theme Song is So Memorable*, TIME (Aug. 30, 2019, 12:40 PM), <https://time.com/5662975/succession-theme-song/> [<https://perma.cc/7CSY-HAQY>].

59. At LCH in Toronto, our presentation, entitled "What Happens in Sex-Vegas": *Succession and the Imprint of "Family" Laws on the "Family" Business*, was part of a curated panel on issues of Economies, Empire, Ethnography, Erasure. *2023 LCH Conference Schedule*, LCH, <https://law-culturehumanities.com/2023-lch-conference-schedule/> [<https://perma.cc/XVB3-WKD6>]; Gillian Calder & Rebecca Johnson, "What Happens in Sex-Vegas": *Succession and the Imprint of "Family" Laws on the "Family" Business* (Law, Culture & The Humanities, Conference on Economies, Empire, Ethnography, Erasure, 2023).

60. See Elizabeth Adjin-Tettey, Gillian Calder, Angela Cameron, Maneesha Deckha, Rebecca Johnson, Hester Lessard, Maureen Maloney & Margot Young, *Postcards from the Edge (of Empire)*, 17 SOC. & LEGAL STUD. 5, 8–10 (2008).

61. *Succession: Church and State* (HBO television broadcast May 21, 2023) (Season Four, Episode Nine).

of their sister, and how all of it shaped Logan into the man that he had become. Or, as Ewan offered to the staid and stoic audience,

[the kind of man who] wrought some of the most terrible things. . . . who has here and there drawn in the edges of the world. Now and then darkened the skies a little. Closed men's hearts. . . . He was mean, and he made but a mean estimation of the world and he fed a certain kind of meagreness in men.<sup>62</sup>

A scene that in its raw and revelatory honesty, enabled us to draw explicit parallels between the stories that the show told us about Logan Roy as simultaneously a survivor of trauma, and a bully who enacts violence on those he purports to love; and the forms of intergenerational trauma that exist in Canada's colonial histories.

Our third try at putting this form of embodied thinking before academic audiences came at a conference in Melbourne entitled, "Visualising Corporate Authority: Archive, Representation, Imagination Workshop."<sup>63</sup> Alongside two other Waystar Royco School of Law faculty and for Australian scholars of corporations and colonialism, we returned to the questions that we started with in the Waystar Royco School of Law, exploring how popular culture offers multiple spaces through critical and creative pedagogy to unearth what rests at the heart of law. Here, we asked what we might be visible at the intersection of the corporate and the colonial.

We also returned to the substantive issue that first caught our interest—what do we mean by "the family" when we are talking about "family business"? And as we set out to give this third and final iteration of our thinking, the decades long litigation that had served as the catalyst for problem-based learning for Rebecca's class came to a close. Right in front of us, it was "useful to examine the ways that informal mechanisms of social control such as popular culture participate in the production and maintenance of certain visions of the family as normal or deviant."<sup>64</sup> The fictional journey we had travelled with the Roy

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62. *Id.*; Jesse Armstrong, *Church and State*, in *SUCCESSION SEASON FOUR: THE COMPLETE SCRIPTS* 685–86 (Home Box Office, Inc. 2023). For a transcript of Ewan's eulogy see Laura Martin, *Succession: Read Ewan Roy's Revelatory Funeral Eulogy In Full*, *Esquire* (May 22, 2023), <https://www.esquire.com/uk/culture/a43958249/succession-read-ewan-roys-revelatory-funeral-eulogy-in-full/> [<https://perma.cc/K5TM-8HSY>].

63. Diane Kemker, "You're Doing TV Wrong!": A Case Study of *Succession* on How (and Why) to Watch Television as a Law Professor (or Law Student), 73 *DEPAUL L. REV.* 869 (2024); Gillian Calder & Rebecca Johnson, *Frames, Fiends, Feelings and Family: Succession's Affect and the Law School Classroom* (Visualising Corporate Authority: Archive, Representation, Imagination Workshop, 2023); Lisa Siraganian, *Biopic of an Ex-Human Being: Challenging the Corporate Internal Decision Structure Model at Waystar Royco* (Visualising Corporate Authority: Archive, Representation, Imagination Workshop, 2023).

64. Rebecca Johnson, "Leaving Normal": Constructing the Family at the Movies and in Law, in *NEW PERSPECTIVES ON DEVIANCE: THE CONSTRUCTION OF DEVIANCE IN EVERYDAY LIFE* 163, 164 (Lori G. Beaman ed., 2000).

family and their dysfunction resonated in some measure with the clarity and sense of closure in the very difficult final moments of that family litigation.

And in parsing through the critical moments of the show, to offer some final thoughts for yet another audience of similarly situated scholars, our fourth and final moment came in the realization of the significance of weddings. Siobhan “Shiv” Roy’s (Sarah Snook) wedding at the end of Season One offered us Kendall Roy’s (Jeremy Strong) Chapquiddick moment, with its fall from grace.<sup>65</sup> This failure is made visible in the start of Season Two credits, which replaces the photo of the patriarch standing alongside one child, with an image of four children, suggesting that the patriarch’s choice of successor is no longer clear. Caroline’s wedding at the end of Season Three, gave us Kendall, Siobhan, and Roman feeling the multiple stings of betrayal, and turning to each other for the possibility of something new.<sup>66</sup> And ultimately Connor Roy’s (Alan Ruck) wedding, where the death of Logan signals that the succession that had at one point in time seemed inevitable—that it would be one of the three—was now unlikely. In the final moments of the show, the heteronormativity of family overshadows all, as we come to see that succession at the end of the day, is going to flow not to Kendall’s adopted children, but to Tom Wambsgans (Matthew Macfadyen) and Shiv’s biological child, yet to come.

The realization that some of the most important revelations in *Succession* emerged out of heteronormativity’s most performative moments, might have led us to the cynical revelation that this sideways journey that *Succession* had offered in considering the sibling relationship, had been a sidebar at best. Coupled with the realization that the resolution of Rebecca’s family business litigation didn’t come from a sibling finally seeing the error of their ways, but through the inevitable trade-off that litigating disputes often forces, justice in the argument, or justice in the cost. But the questions in and of themselves are illustrative. As Johnson and Buchanan remind us, “[b]oth law and film are viewed as social institutions, engaged in telling stories about social life. . . . Law, like film, is not simply engaged in the finding of truth, but also more fundamentally in the making of meaning.”<sup>67</sup> Through its careful use of affect this show enabled feeling, and along the way it made us care.

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65. *Succession: Nobody Is Ever Missing* (HBO television broadcast Aug. 5, 2018) (Season One, Episode Ten).

66. *Succession: All the Bells Say*, *supra* note 52.

67. Johnson & Buchanan, *supra* note 37, at 87.

## CONCLUSION: FINAL FRAME

One of the ways that we, as scholars, document our thinking is in our mainstream scholarly contributions. This project involved a fake law school, weekly engagement with the law that flowed from a television series, dynamic social media commentary curated on Facebook, three different collaborative and visual attempts to engage audiences at conferences, and some revelations about family, business, empire, and emotion along the way. And in some ways that happened because the “classroom” changed and provided us with the chance to play. It also made visible that in this critical moment in legal education, our discussions on the role that legal competencies play have to shift. As legal educators we need to pay more attention to the power of these questions—where in a legal education is there attention to affect, emotion, embodiment, visuality, aurality, and tactility? Where do law students develop the important skills of emotional intelligence and ethical imagination? Through the Waystar Royco School of Law we pushed our audiences and ourselves to engage differently with the ways we approach the questions that matter to us most; and we came out the other side thinking a bit more acutely about affect, emotion, empire, and law.