

# Screen time

**ANOUSHKA BEAZLEY** outlines some essential viewing

## BLACK LIVES MATTER

**A**S AN ASIAN woman – my whole life – I wonder how much my erratic disinterest in racism comes from the feeling that it isn't my problem. It's a problem for those who are not my colour.

Magazine journalism is time sensitive and as I write this column protests are going on all over the world in response to the death of George Floyd. My daughter has been given a list of programmes her school recommends. They wish to appropriately educate her during this time. I am grateful for this decision and wish the teachers who had taught me had educated themselves in such a way. The following are essential viewing. At all times.

**I AM NOT YOUR NEGRO.  
WHEN THEY SEE US.  
13TH.**

## LITTLE FIRES EVERYWHERE – AMAZON PRIME

**C**ELESTE NG'S NOVEL pits mothers Elena Richardson (Reese Witherspoon) and Mia Warren (Kerry Washington) against each other, and the series was released at a time when racial tensions managed to trump seemingly pointless Presidential daily briefings. Elena is rich, neat and white. Mia is poor, wild and black. The theme of motherhood viscerally claws through the screen: Elena struggles to be kind without being racist while raising four children, including Izzie who finds affinity and permission in the artistic rebellion of Mia, her mother's new friend/house 'manager.' And, in heart wrenching symmetry, Mia's daughter seeks solace in the Waspy womb of Elena, a woman who has buried her career in the war of maternal sacrifice and who offers the wealth and societal privilege a young black girl with a broke single mother can only dream of. But the twist is that this adapted racial melodrama isn't about race at all and all about the impossibilities of motherhood; race and class mere apprentices to a quieter slave owner – the symbiotic procreation of generational unmet needs. 'Women hate themselves,' writes Annie LeClerc, 'but they hate themselves in the name of the mother who is too much present. . .' (Olivier, 1989). Ng deftly pushes us to expand our moral judgments and simultaneously our understanding of ownership and possession – being nine tenths of the law – as Mia and Elena's fragile friendship breaks under pressure: the legal case of the adoptive versus biological mother, underneath it all the beating

heart of the surrogate. Anna Freud et al (1973), in *Beyond the Best Interests of the Child*, describes the psychological parent as 'one who, on a continuing, day to day basis, through interaction, companionship, interplay and mutuality, fulfils the child's psychological needs for a parent, as well as a child's physical needs. The psychological parent may be a biological, adoptive, foster or common-law parent. There is no presumption in favour of any of these after the initial assignment at birth.' Interestingly a 'wanted child' is not seen as an assured conclusion, and is defined in a separate clause as 'one who receives affection and nourishment on a continuing basis from at least one adult and who feels that he or she is and continues to be valued by those who take care of him or her.' *Little Fires* poignantly exemplifies the morass of afterbirth left raw and exposed in the space between the psychological parent and the wanted child and the primal pain endured by both. I watched eight episodes in a day. It's called lockdown people don't judge. . . .

## MAYANS M.C. – BBC2

**S**EASON TWO OF this spin-off from popular seven-series *Sons of Anarchy* follows EZ Reyes and post-prison life in a motorcycle gang. Set in a border town between Mexico and California the boys keep the focus on loyalty to the club via criminal activities. At first the life and the club is a mistake. EZ is a college graduate destined to do better than his immigrant heritage dictates but an obsession with justice and finding out who killed his mother leads to the accidental death of a cop and the allure of the club becomes tantalising. Drug money is currency, prostitutes and alcohol are staples, and the promise of a ready-made family is more addictive than anything else. 'Families filter and reinforce the impacts of the wider society. Families also reflect the uniqueness of their members, who engage in societal processes while maintaining their homes as bases of attachment' (Massey & Dunn, 1999). *Sons* consulted a real life biker, now a regular on the *Mayans*, for authenticity. The power of the *Mayans* is in our real life need for family, more savage and authentic than the murder and mayhem in a real life cartel.

## References

Massey, R.F. & Dunn, A.B. (1999). 'Viewing the Transactions Dimensions of Spirituality Through family Prisms.' *Transactional Analysis Journal*, 29(2) pp115-129.  
Olivier, C. (1989). *Jocasta's Children*. Routledge: New York



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