

Generational gifting

ANOUSHKA BEAZLEY considers the challenges and joys of inheritance

SUCCESSION – NETFLIX

IT'S POSSIBLE I missed this series when it first came out because I was not ready. I'm not sure I'm ready now. The writing is bitingly satirical, the characters aggressively dysfunctional and while allegedly based on the Murdoch family, the Roy family could be any number of elite and wealthy clans. So, what is feeding my current obsession, given that my normal mode of transport is the Jubilee Line as opposed to luncheon by helicopter? Creator Jesse Armstrong peels back the necrotic dynamics that run rife within certain families and offers us the raw beating hearts of foetuses so desperate for approval they will do anything. And once you've eaten the caviar and disembarked from the private jet, they are just another fucked-up family.

Kendall Roy (son of media mogul Logan Roy) a recovering addict reluctantly going through a divorce from the mother of his two kids, must quickly step up when his father is incapacitated by a brain injury. Kendall has been groomed for this day from birth, it has consumed and shaped him and he was the expected favourite to step into his father's shoes. As a result of Logan's dubious business practices, Kendall faces difficult financial decisions. The sins of the father and Kendall's sole purpose in life must now contend with battling a tyrannical Logan, not ready to let go, and disgruntled and vulture-esque siblings. Cue catastrophic levels of betrayal sending Kendall into a tragic downward spiral and, at the end of Season 1, leaving a broken boy sobbing into the symbiotic clutches of his narcissistic father.

'Clients suffering from disorders in infancy do not process their aggressive impulses properly,' Lederer (1997). Lederer writes that it is this condition which constitutes what is termed the narcissistic defence in psychoanalysis. Romulus, scrappy, morally corrupt and the youngest of the siblings, takes his name from the legendary King of Rome, who was suckled by a wolf and had to claim back his noble birthright at the expense of his twin brother. The Roy children are the 'tough kids' that Lederer talks about. The P1 which is concrete in its constitution and exists to protect the C1 from any future pain which might replicate in any way the original

loss of mother. The Roy siblings fight it out in the boardroom for the position of CEO and Lederer describes the tough kid as 'assuming the executive' where intimate relationships with others as well as their own Adult selves, externally and internally, are forbidden. *Newsflash*: money can't buy decontamination. Season 3 is on its way. Thank God.

THE REPAIR SHOP – BBC 1

OFTEN A SHOW'S popularity can be noted through its channel history. The Repair Shop began on BBC 2 in half-hour slots and progressed to a full hour on BBC 1. People bring objects, which have often been in the family for some time, to a thatch-roofed barn in the middle of nowhere (purpose-built by the BBC production team) and entrust a team of expert craftsmen to repair their heirloom. A woman carves her name into a trunk in Mexico which travels with her daughter, one of sixty-six Polish refugees who boarded the now infamous Windrush ship. Today, her daughter, the third generation of this story, now offers the trunk for repair. The craftsmen take us through their wonderful processes, so many of these themselves passed down through the generations. I realise that I am enthralled by the idea of restoration, and not merely talk of rust-removal baths, super-fine wire wool and camphor wood, but the psychotherapeutic idea of repair after rupture. I am watching these attempts at restoration challenging my Don't belong (Gouldings, 1976) injunction and wonder if I am not alone. This trunk is now the only thing left which connects the client's grandmother, her mother and her sister. For forty years this trunk has languished in a shed losing its glory day by day and the popularity of this show speaks to our relationship with memory, grief, family, belonging and how we construct our identity. People have enquired as to whether the barn itself is a real repair shop and though many of the craftsmen have their own businesses the repair shop itself exists only in the world of the show. Much like our understanding of grief, of family and our sense of belonging exists only in the world of our memory, and I wonder if this show represents a desire to repair memory, which in turns reshapes our identity.

References

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