

Design Objectives:

- Background of all pages should be an image from the movie that work with depth and/or negative space.
- Text will be directly places on the image.
- Majority of text will be legible but some will be following the depth of the setting.
- Text should be informative and relative to the content of the story.
- Prioritise text based on its importance to the plot.
- Unanswered questions.
- Text that isn't legible will not be relevant. But it will be readable.
- It will start off as simple descriptions of the film and the more you go in the deeper it gets.

Target Audience:

- Those who are a fan of the film.
- Those who either have unanswered questions or are curious to know more about the movie.

Audience Needs:

- To have their questions answered.
- To learn more about the film and the process of its making.

The Killing of a Sacred Deer is a 2017 psychological horror film directed by Yorgos Lanthimos, from a screenplay by Lanthimos and Efthymis Filippou. It stars Colin Farrell, Nicole Kidman, Barry Keoghan, Raffey Cassidy, Sunny Suljic, Alicia Silverstone, and Bill Camp. The story is based on the ancient Greek play *Iphigenia at Aulis* by Euripides.

The film follows a cardiac surgeon (Farrell) who secretly befriends a teenage boy (Keoghan) with a connection to his past. He introduces the boy to his family, who begin to fall mysteriously ill.

The *Killing of a Sacred Deer* was selected to compete for the Palme d'Or in the main competition section at the 2017 Cannes Film Festival. The film was theatrically released in the United States on October 20, 2017, by A24, and in the United Kingdom and Ireland on November 3, 2017, by Curzon Artificial Eye. It has received positive reviews, and grossed \$4.7 million worldwide.

No one does tragedy quite like the Greeks, so it's fitting that the year's most effective effort comes from Greek auteur Yorgos Lanthimos (*Dogtooth*, *The Lobster*). The *Killing of a Sacred Deer*, his fifth and latest film, eschews a literal retelling of its source material, Euripides's *Iphigenia in Aulis*, in favor of a dense chamber drama that exposes the heart of body horror—literally—and revitalizes the power of myths for a modern audience.





Dr. Steven Murphy (Colin Farrell) is a heart surgeon who, by his own fault, has accidentally killed a patient. Years later, he's visited by Martin (Barry Keoghan) the son of the deceased, who dishes out the doctor's punishment: either he kill his daughter (Raffey Cassidy), son (Sunny Suljic), or wife (Nicole Kidman), or all three will lose the ability to walk, stop eating, start bleeding out of their eyes, and stop living—in that order. It's chilling in its directness: less a character study than the ballad of a coward who has to face consequences.

In *Poetics*, Aristotle defined tragedy as, "An imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude...through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these emotions." And if there's one thing that unites each of Lanthimos's films, it's the classical tragic story arc: things get worse for characters in already-bad situations, then they get worse still. This is built into *The Killing of a Sacred Deer*, a film about what happens when you have to face a punishment that you don't want to admit you've earned.



This is the essence of the myth from which *The Killing of a Sacred Deer* takes its name, *Iphigenia in Aulis*. Dating back to 405 BCE, Agamemnon and his men are stranded on an island because the goddess of the hunt, Artemis, has suspended the winds they require to set sail for Troy. If the war effort is to continue—and it must—he has to sacrifice his own daughter, Iphigenia, because he was previously responsible for the death of a sacred deer belonging to the goddess.

The brunt of the play sees Agamemnon struggling with the decision to either kill his daughter, or have his family be killed by his own restless soldiers. *The Killing of a Sacred Deer* is a de facto reimagining of *Iphigenia*, in all its its futility and absence of a moral checkpoint.

If further meaning can be distilled from *The Killing of a Sacred Deer*, it comes from the tension generated when forces of mobility come into conflict with forces of immobility. Inverting the way that American democracy can be interpreted through the Athenian city-state, *The Killing of a Sacred Deer* can be read using a uniquely American work of art as its roadmap. First exhibited in 1948, *Christina's World* is the most famous work by painter Andrew Wyeth; It depicts Anna Christina Olson, a friend of the painter who was afflicted with an undiagnosed degenerative neuromuscular disease, reduced to crawling and dragging her lower body by her upper half.





Of his choice in subjects, Wyeth said, "If in some small way I have been able in paint to make the viewer sense that her world may be limited physically but by no means spiritually, then I have achieved what I set out do." But Christina's body is actually freed from the painting by its own design: the arms belong to Olson, but the torso was actually based on that of the artist's wife, who was able to sit as a model for long periods of time. The effect is that the viewer is unable to tell whether this chimera-Christina is crawling towards or revolting away from the farmhouse in the painting's background. The core of its tension, a body that can move but is unable to, colliding with a body that is unable to move but somehow still can, finds its modern expression in unforgiving shots of Steven's kids dragging their bodies about their family home to bargain for their lives with a father who, no matter what, will not be able to save them.

People hate Christina's World—and Wyeth's oeuvre—for its literalness, sentimentalism, and abject lack of metaphor, and *The Killing of a Sacred Deer* is guaranteed to make such critics squirm in their seats. But love it or revile it, it's undoubtedly one of the decade's opaquest films. That an ancient myth can be used to root both a family drama and an explosive exposition of body horror in the modern American experience signifies a director entering the master-stage of his craft. Unruly tensions abound across multiple levels, simple and complex, and it just might be that unique film that has no answers; but, as with the catharsis that comes at the end of great tragedy, if viewers can prepare themselves for a singularly excruciating time at the theater, they'll carry with them a lightness heading back out into the street.



The story itself is simple enough. A doctor, Dr. Stephen Murphy, has had an accident. During heart surgery he has killed a patient on his table. Murphy may have had a drink or two before the procedure, but it definitely was an accident. Only problem? This now dead patient has a son, Martin, and a widow that he has now left bereaved (left bereft? No idea.)



Anyway, now, as far as troubling coincidences go, Martin, happens to be a god. Ok, set the god thing aside for now... maybe not a god, but rather, someone with interesting super powers. In exchange for killing his father, Martin expects Dr. Murphy to make amends. At what terms: the doctor can either kill one of his children, or, watch as everyone in his town, stops eating, and then begins bleeding out the eyes... and finally die.

Is this hyperbole? The ravings of a lost, and mourning soul? Well, when Bob cannot walk... we begin to wonder if this wasn't the ravings of a lunatic. And collapses as well? Well, now we know we are fullon walking into the world (Speaking of which, I totally remember an episode of the Twilight Zone that movie – the one entitled “It’s A Good Life”, wherein there is a boy that controls town, and sends them “Out into the corn” if they frustrate or anger him. But the Twilight Zone, the boy’s name is Martin, and instead of sending them out... kills them.)



Soon Stephen tells his wife Anna. But she is unclear. She's annoyingly more interested in the back story. Martin's father's death than helping Stephen solve this logic puzzle. She wants to know if he'd been drinking. She wants to know his relationship to Martin, the mother... etc. Gah! I mean, that's irrelevant! Right? But soon the movie barrels forward and we find ourselves with Martin, held hostage, by Stephen, in the basement. He's been shot. And beaten. But still the kids illnesses are progressing. So when Anna lets Martin go, Stephen and Anna have a choice to make. Should they kill one child to save the other?

And sure enough, that's what Stephen does. In a game Russian Roulette of the worst kind... Stephen shoots Bob, and he dies. Chosen randomly... the gods have spoken. And just like that, Kim gets better, and the family tries to move on. Right? The what of the movie makes sense right? It's just the – WHAT THE HECK – of the movie that doesn't make any sense at all. So let's away, shall we, to the next section of our discussion around the explanation of what happened in *The Killing of a Sacred Deer*?



What about that title? The Killing of a Sacred Deer?

When I first heard the title 'Killing of a Sacred Deer' immediately made my mind jump to the Greek Mythos world. You see, because there is a story about Iphigenia wherein she appears as the Greek fleet gathers to prepare for war against Troy. There, the leaders of the Greeks, you know, that Agamemnon guy? Well he makes a bad mistake and accidentally kills a deer in Artemis' sacred grove. An apparently sacred deer no less. And as a result, Artemis punishes Agamemnon by stopping the winds so his fleet can't sail to Troy. But the seer Calchas, helpful as he is, lets Agamemnon know that in order to appease Artemis, he'll need to sacrifice his eldest daughter, Iphigenia. Sounding a little familiar? Well, Agamemnon initially refuses, but eventually relents, as he is pressured by the other commanders.



And who is Martin if he isn't Artemis. Even the name is similar. Wikipedia describes Artemis as the deer and the cypress as sacred to her. She was the daughter of Zeus and Leto and she was the goddess of the hunt, the wilderness. And in this story, Martin is playing the part of a god punishing a clueless and unrepentant recalcitrant. Right? We'll get to who that unrepentant recalcitrant is later. Trust me. Regardless, the story of Iphigenia is the story of Abraham and Isaac. It's a story of debt, loss, payment, and retribution. It's a story of Justice...

Sacred Deer and Questions of Justice?



Martin has just walked Dr. Murphy through the agreement. That his whole family would die if he didn't kill someone. That it would happen through a series of unfortunate escalations of events. Paralysis, Starvation, and Bleeding out the eyes. And then he says this – it's the only thing that I can think of that's close to justice. Eh?

Well, think about it, Dr. Stephen Murphy killed Martin's father through gross negligence at best, and manslaughter at worst. Everything should have gone fine. But instead? He died. And so, Murphy should be held accountable for his actions. You know... eye for an eye and all. The curious thing here though? There is zero admission of guilt in this entire movie on the behalf of Dr. Murphy. He blames the anesthesiologist 100%. Heck, he blames anyone and everyone other than himself.

The bigger question here is, what is the point of blood in exchange for blood? Why does blood have power to pay off a blood debt? Well, from a spiritual standpoint, religions the world over have looked to sacrifices as having power to pay debt forever. In the Jewish world, sacrifices were made to pay for sin of the person's past. Pigeons, sheep, goats, rams... heck, Abraham and Isaac anyone? We have a spiritual forefather ready to sacrifice his son, but God provided a ram caught in a thicket instead. In exchange for WHAT? though! Well, blood in exchange for sin. The death of a loved one in exchange for the murdering of a child's father on an operating table.

Did you consider while you were watching the film that the Murphy's were extravagantly wealthy? That house is like a McMansion. And that McMansions are a symbol of American extravagance and success? And in America we love nothing better than a pulling yourself up by your bootstraps story. Success! Opulence! Material possessions!! This is the pinnacle of American Success as defined by advertisers and the Joneses alike.

But if Stephen Murphy is America, then what is America guilty of? Have we killed a deer or something? A sacred deer no less? Could it be that our concentration on materialism and selfishness is similar to this myopic killing of Martin's father? That America is not only guilty of these crimes but that we aren't even aware of our crimes. That instead of apologizing and asking forgiveness he blindly heads down the path and illogic of ultimately killing one of his own children. Right? No? Trust me, this movie is an indictment of each of us.

So in the final scene of the movie, the Murphys head to a local diner for standard, greasy, American fare. Hamburgers. French fries. And in case we missed it? Piles and piles of ketchup. And as the three of them (obviously missing one) sit there, in comes Martin – the god of judgement for the murder of all sacred deer. Stephen eyes Martin and vice versa. The two of them locked in a dodgy detente. All the while Kim is still longing for Martin with zero regard for the death of her brother, little desire to change.

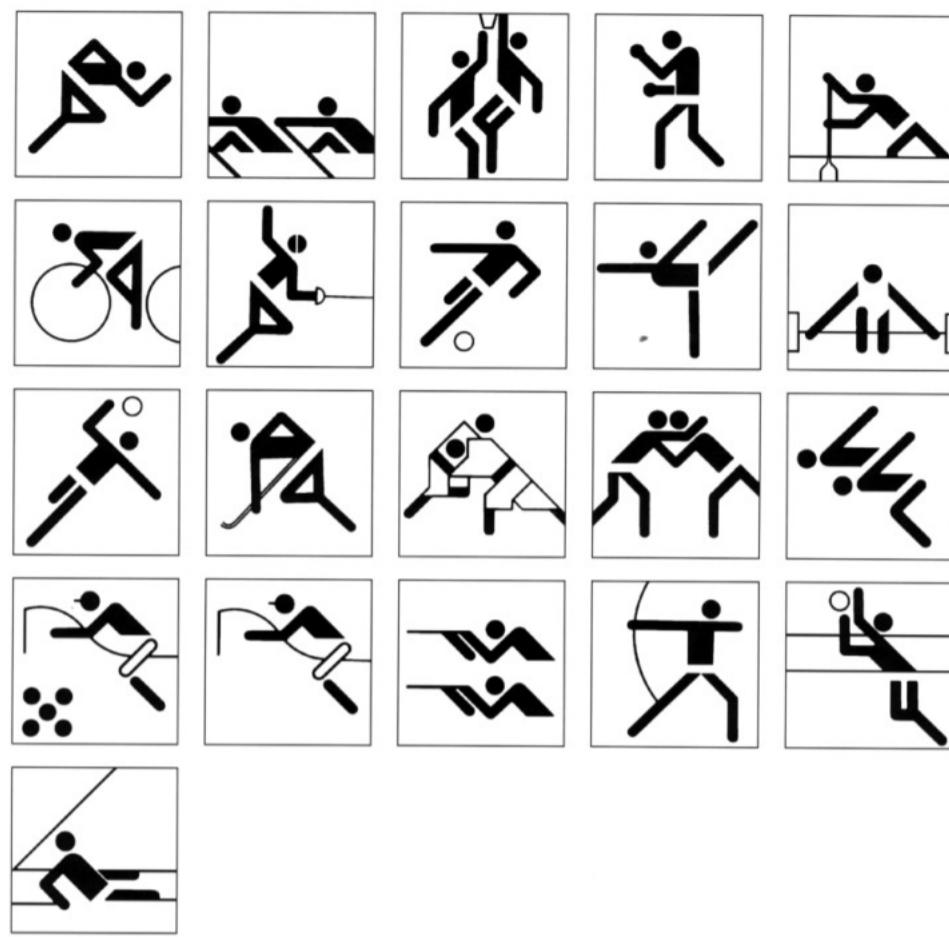
Ultimately, it's one final reminder of just how unrepentant Dr. Murphy and his family are. They were just party to kidnapping, child abuse, the works. And not to mention they killed their own son. As too, America is continuing to unrepentantly pillage the world to keep its place at the top of the pyramid.



Otl Aicher Inspired Icons

Body Text - Georgia, Bold, Size 11

Flipped Text - Georgia, Bold, Size 18



12 Column Grid -

Total Width 1440px

Gutter Width 60px

Column Width 60px

Colours of text will differ depending on the page. Will use the colour picker depending on the scene in the background and it's placement on the image. — Without trying to over power the image.

Icons illustrated will be of moments in the film or props in the order they appear on and are crucial to the story, symbolically or literally.

For examples:

