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Through the Haze: Fidelity of Adaptation in Paul Thomas Anderson's *Inherent Vice*

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Adaptations are typically judged and critiqued based upon two different camps in adaptation studies: how faithful it remains or how equivalent it is to the source. *Inherent Vice* (2014) raises a curious question and places itself in both of these camps, causing a debate on how adaptation studies fits with this film. When discussing a faithful adaptation, Frederic Jameson proposes, "The novel and its film adaptation must not be of equal quality" (217). While Jameson astutely posits that these two works should not be compared in terms of merit, the approach appears to be preferential towards one work or the other. His argument seems to focus on how the two works' qualities are different from each other; if the book reads poorly, the film should succeed and vice versa. This positioning appears to be why he also discusses how adaptations should be considered when the two works are of equal quality: "the film must be utterly different from, utterly unfaithful to its original" (218). While he makes his case by examining *Solaris* (1972), his assertions avoid discussing the possibilities of both of his ideas existing at once. *Inherent Vice* remains faithful by using the words of the author in the film, yet the dramatic change of the delivery of those words create a conundrum for fidelity studies.

In 2014, Paul Thomas Anderson adapted Thomas Pynchon's *Inherent Vice* which is one of his shortest novels, sitting at 369 pages. Despite its relatively shorter length, readers still struggle to grasp the meaning and structure of the novel. As typical of a Pynchon novel, a large cast of characters makes it difficult to follow which characters are where and what their relations are to each other; however, they all revolve around one main character, Doc Sportello, played by Joaquin Phoenix in the film. The plot accompanies Doc in 1970s Los Angeles as he tries to discover what happened to his ex-girlfriend, Shasta Fay, played by Katherine Waterston, who disappears after giving him a case to protect her current lover, Mickey Wolfmann (Eric Roberts). While Doc investigates her disappearance and attempts to find Wolfmann, a single mother, Hope Harlingen (Jena Malone) asks Doc to locate her husband (Owen Wilson) who she believes is still alive

despite what everyone else believes. These three mysteries intertwine and tangle themselves up tightly, leaving the reader, viewer, and Doc lost in a haze surrounded by mystery.

The novel finds itself jumping blindly from scene to scene and the film echoes the same narrative style. Even though the film's storytelling and faithfulness to the novel would be the major thing to focus upon in fidelity studies, it's important to analyze the differences between the novel and the film, what remains to be seen, and why fidelity seems to come as a constant focus for critics and writers. When discussing the goals of adaptation studies, Brett Westbrook states, "…film adaptation studies as a whole must examine why the fidelity issue recurs and then theorize a way to account for this impulse to not just compare, but to prefer one 'text' over the other" (38). Paul Thomas Anderson's *Inherent Vice* acts as a case study to examine this phenomenon at its core. Approaching a Pynchon novel to adapt provides a question for Anderson to solve: how does Pynchon's voice live in the film while not becoming a complete transposal from the novel? In adaptation studies, the focus of fidelity can provide an insight into Pynchon's words at play in the film, but the study of the adaptation must also examine an intertextual relationship with the original work.

Against all odds, Anderson translates Pynchon's words graciously to the screen, electing to follow the source material while also changing a minor character, Sortilège (Joanna Newsom), into the narrator of the film who embodies the voice and words of the author throughout its runtime. *Inherent Vice* utilizes special tools like moving images to portray episodes from the novel that are shrouded in the haze of the main character's drug use. Through the voice of Sortilège as Pynchon's voice and faded imagery to embody drug-induced scenes, Anderson's adaptation preserves the intoxicating haze and struggle to discover correlation and meaning while also providing new insight into the original source.

In order to discuss the role of adaptation, it is important to first consider the elements that constitute adaptation studies. One facet of these studies is the question of fidelity and how faithful an adaptation remains to the source material. Walter Benjamin describes this identity of the original piece through the idea of "aura" around the object: "In other words, the unique value of the 'authentic' work of art has its basis in ritual, the location of its original use value" (224). This point brings up a question of what happens when a piece of work is translated to another medium. This remains a treacherous debate for adaptation studies because, as some scholars may insinuate, a way to preserve the aura is to directly transpose the piece itself. However, this

cannot be the case, for a change in medium immediately creates a disparity between the original work and the adapted one. In discussing the possibility of preserving the original work's aura, Linda Hutcheon claims, "It is repetition but without replication, bringing together the comfort of ritual and recognition with the delight of surprise and novelty. *As adaptation*, it involves both memory and change, persistence and variation" (173). Essentially, it is the preservation of the aura and a direct confrontation with that aura that creates a successful adaptation. The confrontation and recognition of the differences in mediums creates a dialogue that allows both works to flourish and provide new insights into each other in the process. Instead of remaining faithful to the novel or concern itself with fidelity, adaptation should allow for studies that examine what makes the two works different and informative to each other.

The way that the two works inform each other predicates itself upon the differences between written word and moving image. As Dudley Andrew states, "The analysis of adaptation, then, must point to the achievement of equivalent narrative units in the absolutely different semiotic systems of film and language" (34). These different mediums provide a tense back and forth between the original and its adaptation, but it does not disengage itself from the older work to create a new one. If anything, it becomes adaptation studies' goal to "…carefully and rigorously examine 'intertextual' relationships" (Albrecht-Crane and Cutchins 13). The different mediums become a source of discovering new meanings that may have not been so apparent with just the presence of one work. This intertextual relationship relates to Mikhail Bakhtin's ideas of "utterance" and dialogic engagement that comes with the relationship of utterances (18–19). Applying this to adaptation studies helps to understand what makes the two works different from each other, while also engaging directly with their equivalences and similarities to discover a dialogue present between the works.

In case of an adaptation, readers who have read the book or are acquainted with the original source material tend to judge the film based on its fidelity to the original work. However, this criticism towards adaptations is unwarranted, as it promotes the proposition that a text is unchangeable—possibly even ineligible for interpretation—to all who have read or experienced the source text. When talking about adapting the unadaptable, Diane Lake discusses how a film's fidelity does not mean a word-for-word translation: "Even if I put someone on screen reading the book word for word, the very act of having someone read the book to the viewer would change the nature of the book" (408). A book's reading will change throughout a myriad of contexts,

so it remains impossible to nail down exactly what one piece of literature seeks to utter. As soon as one attempts an adaptation, the text's spirit alters, mostly because the form and style of film is drastically different from literature; film exists on multiple tracks—with spoken and written words, performance, music, sound effects, and moving images—rather than corresponding to only the written words. This is where fidelity and its meaning for adaptation begins to shift: "Fidelity meant respect for the spirit of the novel, but it also meant a search for necessary equivalents" (Bazin, *What is Cinema?* 141). These equivalents are not necessarily the same because, as Andrew contends, the semiotic languages are different from one another. The spirit of the novel which makes the novel authentic provides an inclination for two works—one a reproduction of the other—to become pieces that can inform each other. Fidelity should not be solely focused on the faithfulness of an adaptation; instead, it should consider how the film manages to capture the novel's spirit through inherent changes.

The spirit of Thomas Pynchon appears throughout his written works and seeps into the understanding of his dense, laborious novels. In each novel, paranoia runs rampant, and the use of sarcasm and humor defines his work. Pynchon's work stands as its own authentic representation because the experience of reading the novel ties in with the narrative flow of the book itself. *Inherent Vice* was published in 2009, but he already possessed a legacy and fan base from his earlier works. Over his career, which began in the 60s, Pynchon has published numerous expansive, thick novels, such as *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973). Within this novel, the plot is situated near the end of World War II with a fragmentary narrative style and a large assortment of characters spread across the globe. Despite the serious times and topics, Pynchon squeezes humor and sarcasm dry in the novel and guides the reader through. The noir novel, *Inherent Vice*, focuses on the words that Pynchon pens to provide a sarcastic, anxious, and distrusting outlook for the reader. If it was not for the third-person narration from Pynchon, the reader would be hard-pressed to trust and follow the words. Imagining Doc as the narrator of the novel raises the concern as to how are his words to be trusted if he is constantly inebriated. Therefore, Pynchon provides a voice that carries the reader throughout the convoluted plot of the novel.

Paul Thomas Anderson's *Magnolia* (1999), *Punch-Drunk Love* (2002), and *The Master* (2012) are a few examples of Anderson's focused career on his own original work; however, the novel *Oil!* by Upton Sinclair loosely inspired Anderson's film *There Will Be Blood* (2007), but he chose to deviate from the book in many unwonted ways. Each of his works have been subject to many interpretations, mostly

because his films seek to expand and stretch to a point where things are not plainly spelled out for the audience, thus, making them search for meaning in his work. At the time of the release of Pynchon's novel, Anderson sought to do an adaptation, as he found himself getting "…tired of [his] own voice" (Oscars 00:02:05). Adapting Pynchon's work became an avenue for Anderson to experiment with other voices. Anderson's main focus became to adapt Pynchon's work in such a way as to be more accessible to audiences, while remaining faithful to the novel at the same time.

When discussing the act of literal fidelity and its impossibility in film, André Bazin proposes, "A novel is a unique synthesis whose molecular equilibrium is automatically affected when you tamper with its form" (Bazin, André, "Adaptation, or the Cinema as Digest" 19). For Thomas Pynchon's novels, his voice and writing style is sewn directly with the experience that comes with reading one of his novels, as his wit, sarcasm, and occasional paranoia elevate the texts he writes. For instance, throughout *Inherent Vice*, Pynchon—through the narrator and Doc's inner voice—questions the illogical surroundings of a California backdrop, and subsequently, gets hung up in small details which propel the characters to almost think and move through loops of familiar interactions. So, Anderson had to struggle to capture that paranoia and looping mentality from the source's elusive nature, while also trying to make sense of the events happening on the screen. Typically, as Brian McFarlane states, "Fidelity criticism depends on a notion of the text as having and rendering up to the (intelligent) reader a single, correct 'meaning' which the filmmaker has either adhered to or in some sense violated or tampered with" (8). An adaptation may attempt to boil down complex ideas and plots into a simplistic story, raising questions over fidelity as the problem is a fundamental negativity concerning the adaptation process. While the film medium changes the novel's form and condenses itself, there must be a way to gaze at complexity on both sides. *Inherent Vice*, however, directly confronts this notion; the adaptation refuses to disengage from the complex narrative and character relations in its filmic counterpart.

The question of fidelity arises with how the text alters and molds in the dialogue and characters. The narrative of *Inherent Vice* follows Doc Sportello, but the narration of the novel is done through an omniscient, third-person perspective, calling to attention the voice of Pynchon. He was able to accomplish this because "...a single novelistic text comprises a series of verbal signals that can generate a plethora of possible readings, including even readings of the narrative itself" (Stam, "Beyond Fidelity: The Dialogics of Adaptation" 57). This is exactly where *Inherent Vice* sits: perched upon a divider between

keeping true to the novel's events and commenting on the aura around characters and the paranoia of 1970s Los Angeles, all of which Pynchon delivers in his erratic, witty style of writing. Anderson's objective was to capture Pynchon's writing style as well as deliver it in a film format. Bazin states, "Instead of presenting itself as a substitute, the film is intended to take its place alongside the book—to make a pair with it, like twin stars" (*What is Cinema?* 141). This coupling of the film and novel must come from the intertextual relationship between the novel and film. The "twin stars" are meant to circle, feed off, and survive off each other. For his work on *Inherent Vice*, Anderson found a reading and criticism in the role of a minor character: Sortilège.

Typically, a film that utilizes a narrator to tell the story of an adaptation bases itself in the first-person point of view present in the novel. *Inherent Vice* does not have this luxury, as Pynchon delivers the events through an omniscient third-person point of view. When translating the text, then, Anderson confronted the problem of how to remain faithful to the text while also providing a change to elicit storytelling. Bazin states, "Literal translations are not the faithful ones…A character on the screen and the same character as evoked by the novelist are not identical" (*What is Cinema?* 127). In the film version of *Inherent Vice*, Pynchon's voice is clearly heard throughout the film—not with his own voice, but that of Sortilège. Anderson discusses the inclusion of the character Sortilège as the narrator: "There [was] a very good potential to bring in a voice that could add something to the story. [Pynchon's voice] had such a great feeling to it. I just wrote 'Narrator' – that was it" (Fear). Sortilège only appears sporadically in the novel, while she presides over the entire film, like an omniscient character that watches the fumbling Doc Sportello. Anderson discusses Sortilège's role in the novel, saying "…[she] lives down at the beach, and is really into astrology, and says really beautiful things to Doc, like little pieces of advice… [she acts] also as a helper, to help guide us through this maze" (Oscars 00:03:25–53).With Anderson's point of view in mind, the differences between the novel and film provide fidelity criticism notations of difference, and fidelity would focus solely on how they are different. However, Albrecht-Crane and Cutchins posit, "Discovering difference then becomes not a quest to uncover the inevitable lack of fidelity, but rather an affirmative focus on how texts form and *in-form* each other" (15). The focus then turns to the relationship between the two works and the informative connection between them. The changes and differences allow for a critique on the original piece and pave a path for the film to provide a commentary about characters and events in the original work.

When Stam discusses how film adaptations can act as critiques towards the source material, he hints towards a specific function of adaptation: creating a dialogical response that can enhance both materials ("Beyond Fidelity: The Dialogics of Adaptation" 76). This expansion of Sortilège's character in the adaptation aids the audience to unravel the fragmented narrative and experience Pynchon's voice directly, which presents a commentary on the events and the characters creating an entirely different point-of-view from the one present in the novel. Macfarlane states, "The device of oral narration, or voice-over, may serve important narrative functions in film (e.g. reinforcing a sense of past tense) but, by virtual necessity, it cannot be more than intermittent as distinct from the continuing nature of the novelistic [narration]" (16). McFarlane brings up an important point when translating a first-person novel to film, but he does not address what happens when a third-person novel shifts into a first-person narration. Additionally, he avoids confronting how a narration can evolve into a new way of analyzing the novel itself. For *Inherent Vice*, Sortilège's narration takes the place of Pynchon's words, but her presence as the narrator of the film raises a complex issue, i.e., whose story unfolds on screen. The film prefers and displays Doc's actions and thoughts—like Pynchon's novel—but the shift in point-of-view creates an intertextual moment that compels the audience to consider the Pynchon's authority. Just as Pynchon's voice takes the readers through the novel's narrative, Anderson has used a minor character with insinuations of otherworldly powers to embody Pynchon's perspective. This perspective creates a disconnect for the audience as they are no longer reading a noir account from the author who holds no position in the novel's plot, rather they are receiving narration from a character from within the story who seems omniscient and knows everything about Doc's adventures.

The first lines in the novel are written from the narrator's point-of-view describing the scene of Shasta coming into Doc's house:

> She came along the alley and up the back steps the way she always used to. Doc hadn't seen her for over a year. Nobody had. Back then it was always sandals, bottom half of a flower-print bikini, faded Country Joe & the Fish t-shirt. Tonight she was all in flatland gear, hair a lot shorter than he remembered, looking just like she swore she'd never look. (Pynchon 1)

Every word of this introduction is preserved in the film and provided by Joanna Newsom, saying the same words written in the novel until Shasta and Doc have their conversation, which follows fairly closely to the novel's depiction of the rendezvous. When talking about the re-

sponsibility of a screenwriter, Diane Lake says, "The fundamental job of the screenwriter is to reach inside the story to its essence and to find a new way to tell it filmicly" (409). By using Sortilège as the narrator, Anderson seeks to explore the different ways of divulging the story while keeping true to the words of the source text. In a New York Film Festival discussion panel, Joanna Newsom commented on her narration of the film, saying, "I had a responsibility to speak for the actual text…nothing should come out of my mouth that wasn't written in the book or in the script" (Film at Lincoln Center 00:22:27–46). With this framework in mind, Pynchon's voice is most prominent in this character as she embodies the text of the novel in the film. This means Sortilège acts as an omniscient narrator while still retaining her supporting role for Doc. It's at this point that the question of factual evidence (according to the diegesis of the film) begins to bring about the changes or power over the narrative that Sortilège gains from this adaptation. Bazin states, "The novel is a cold, hard fact, a reality to be accepted as it stands" (*What is Cinema?* 136). Bazin discusses the stature of words present in a novel and how they provide concrete evidence that the reader picks up on. Anderson finds a way to preserve the reality of the novel with the voice that acts as the authority of facts in the story: Pynchon. By absorbing the omniscient point-of-view, Sortilège shifts and mutates. Anderson approaches her role as an omniscient character in a new, seraphic way, yet it also acts as a commentary towards the character in the novel.

When Sortilège is introduced in the novel, Pynchon places emphasis on her skills: "She was in touch with invisible forces and could diagnose and solve all manner of problems, emotional and physical" (11). This reinforces how Anderson considers Sortilège as a character that acts not only as a friend for Doc, but also as an "earth-goddess-like pal" (Hill). He places her at specific moments throughout the narrative which reinforce her position of being a spiritual guide. For instance, in the film, as Doc is driving to the Chryskylodon Institute, Sortilège appears and explains the meaning and origin of "chryskylodon," remarking, "I'm a nerd in the classics… it's ancient Greek, it means 'animal tooth made out of gold" (01:31:03–09). As Doc pulls up to the Institute, Sortilège disappears from the car, seeming to vanish without warning. This differs greatly from the novel as it's a different character, Tito, who tells Doc that "chryskylodon" means "gold fang" (185). Anderson's choice to eliminate Tito in favor of Sortilège speaks to Stam's statement about how "…although adaptations tend to sacrifice 'extra' characters from novels, occasionally the opposite process takes place" ("Beyond Fidelity: The Dialogics of Adaptation" 71). In the case of *Inherent Vice*, Anderson removes some characters, but expands Sortilège to become a helpful clairvoyant to

Doc along his journey. She absorbs certain characters' explanations and dialogue from the novel giving her a new role as an omniscient and omnipresent narrator who appears and disappears without a trace.

It is important to note the role of voice-over in film, especially in noir films. In "The Melancholic Voice-Over in Film Noir," Haacke focuses on the importance of a voice-over: "For if the ocular centric dialectic of 'enlightenment' and 'noir' represents the potential for skeptical rationalism, self-assertion, and freedom to collapse into cynical instrumentalism, hubris, and violence, then the melancholic voice-over represents a distinctly non-visual, subjective testimony to the dark side of that dialectic" (49). In this melancholy, a male usually occupies this role that casts a shadow over the whole of society in a strangely controlling way. The construction of the narrative from a male perspective creates a doubt about anything that challenges the authority posed by the male narrator of the film. Haacke does give brief credit to "…several important examples of film noir [featuring] female voice-overs…" but does not engage deeply with the affect the shift from male narrators to female narrators may have (49). *Inherent Vice* boldly assumes a role that can tackle the placement of a female in control of a noir narrative. While Sortilège occupies the same doubtful viewpoint of male narrators in film noir, her doubts are not cast as targeted responses that challenge her. Instead, she acts as a character that understands the world and makes inferences based on the reality present in front of her or Doc. If reality possesses an insinuation of something evil lurking around the corner, Sortilège is able to perceive it and narrate about the implications posed by it. In adapting the noir book to screen, *Inherent Vice*'s narrator breaks from the mold of telling things from her point of view; rather, Sortilège delivers the story through clairvoyance.

This omniscient and omnipresent narrator floats in and out of the film with the power of perceiving the imbalances present in the world around her. Yet, how is it that the adaptation molds this narrator from a minor character in the novel? Naremore argues for the "…need to augment the metaphors of translation and performance with the metaphor of intertextuality…" (12). This relates strongly with Hutcheon's position, and Sortilège's omnipresence and omniscience place themselves in astounding positions to examine the changes as a dialogic engagement with the novel. In the novel, when Doc discusses a boat—named the Golden Fang—out in the bay with a few people, Sortilège seems to suddenly emerge with words of wisdom: "Sortilège, who had been silent till now, chewing on the end of one braid and directing huge enigmatic lamps from one theoretician to another, finally piped up..." (Pynchon 101). This goddess-like appearance of coming

in and out of the narrative also reflects her name, which is French for "spell, hex, or sorcery." While she was a minor character in the novel, her name intrigues the reader to consider her character with a magical sensibility. If this study were to focus on fidelity, the change from minor character to narrator would be a cause for an uproar about the infidelity of *Inherent Vice*. However, adaptation studies proclaim that "… 'sameness' and 'difference' are not binary opposites, that 'difference' maybe observed even where there is 'sameness' or 'equivalence'" (Raitt 47). The difference is apparent and obvious, yet it also fits within equivalence to the novel.

Sortilège's role, in fact, creates two simultaneous equivalences for the adaptation: her sorcery and Pynchon's words. It creates a certainty that Pynchon's words are the only ones that can tell the story; however, this certainty also comes with the fact that Sortilège retains her namesake. Her character evolves to be equal to the author's voice in commanding and narrating the universe of the film. She acts as guide for the film and the audience, coming in to keep the audience subdued with Pynchon's writing and point of view. This idea is heightened by Doc and Shasta in the conclusion of the film: a scene that diverges from the novel to make commentary on the role of Sortilège while keeping the sense of paranoia that is present in the novel. When Shasta and Doc are driving away from Los Angeles in the closing of the film, the couple discusses all the events of the film, until Doc brings up Sortilège. Shasta then says to Doc, "She knows things Doc. Maybe about us that we don't know" (02:20:47–55). The shamanistic appeal to Sortilège evokes a paranoid feeling that someone may know Shasta and Doc's inner feelings more than themselves, and this speaks to the nature of Sortilège embodying Pynchon's voice. It's as if Joanna Newsom is playing Pynchon—a writer that is obsessed with his characters and their motivations—rather than playing just a woman who can "…[tell] time from a broken clock" (Pynchon 282). Anderson heightens Sortilège's otherworldly aura to take on diatribes and explanations that feel like Pynchon breathes in the film itself. The characters of the novel suspect her incredible power, but they never question it directly; so, when Shasta does it here, Anderson directly deals with "…Roland Barthes's provocative leveling of the hierarchy between literary criticism and literature, [which rescues] the film adaptation as a form of criticism or 'reading' of the novel, one not necessarily subordinate to the source novel" (Stam, "Beyond Fidelity: The Dialogics of Adaptation" 58). Anderson is able to elevate the film to a new level of critique on the novel, adding an element that can dramatically alter the way one reads the novel.

All changes in Sortilège's role and absorption of characters comes down to one concern: "If one has nothing new to say about a novel, Orson Welles once suggested, why adapt it at all?" (Stam, "Beyond Fidelity: The Dialogics of Adaptation" 63). With *Inherent Vice*, Anderson's critique of Sortilège adds a new layer to the reading of the novel. This adaptation provides a look at how Pynchon's voice carries from the novel into the film through this minor character. Anderson's reading questions the true power of Pynchon's words in the telling of the story by giving the illustrious, dense prose to Sortilège. When the film opens, Sortilège visibly recounts the story to someone off screen—is it the audience? Someone in the film? While these questions are not directly addressed, they position the words of Pynchon to remain somewhat in power, yet they are narrated through a changed point-of-view. The emphasis on the words creates a world to be explored visually, and Sortilège acts as a guide through the film's convoluted story and numerous characters.

While the film's dialogues and script usually take precedence in adaptation studies, the image must also begin to be considered alongside in the study. Brain McFarlane briefly addresses the power of a changed medium: "[Adaptation] opens up the whole issue of the effect of cinema's institutional mode of representation on the display of a narrative derived from a text in a different medium" (199).Yet, there are not many direct moments where the visuals are discussed alongside the writing and narrative of a film adaptation. *Inherent Vice* contains the possibility to examine the image as an extension of the adaptation because the images provide a way to engage with the story at another level. When talking about consolidation of a text to screen, Diane Lake states, "If I'm adapting a 500-page novel into a 110-page screenplay I know going in that I can't tell the whole story" (409). Where Anderson cuts back the text and narration, he delegates certain moments to be exemplified cinematically instead. The image also answers the question: "Does the film adaptation maintain the point of view and focalization of the novel?" (Stam, "Beyond Fidelity: The Dialogics of Adaptation" 72). Since Sortilège maintained the omniscient point of view that Pynchon takes up in the novel, the images can be seen as her telling the story to an unknown third party. When the audience views these images, they notice how certain portions of the novel are not narrated, instead giving focus to the performance and visuals of the film.

The visual structure of the adaptation provides a clear picture of the intertextual relationship between the visuals and the novel's description. This intertextuality presents itself as a way for the film to interpret the hazy imagery experienced by Doc throughout the novel. Since he is constantly inebriated, the visual details of the novel be-

come mere imprints of what he would have actually experienced. This new layer in the film positions the adaptation to not just transfer a novel to the screen, but also how "…[The adapters] must interpret…" it (Albrecht-Crane and Cutchins 16). In Anderson's case, it paves the way for visual interpretation. The visuals of a film must also seek to capture the spirit and aura of the original novel. In today's age, the visual medium can be utilized to further elevate and comment upon an original novel because it allows the spirit to be represented differently. This moment with film even follows what Benjamin describes while discussing reproduction: "…for the first time in world history, mechanical reproduction emancipates the work of art from its parasitical dependence on ritual" (224). No longer does the novel provide every detail that an adapter must conform to; in its place, the film can highlight the spirit of the novel in its own way. In the case of *Inherent Vice*, the drug-induced haze Doc wades through in the novel is clearly portrayed in the film.

The images of the novel are usually shrouded in mystery; Pynchon does not find himself focusing on them often. For instance, when Doc is in a parking lot of a music club, the scene is moody and dark. Pynchon writes, "The nearly total absence of lighting in the parking lot could have been deliberate, to suggest Oriental intrigue and romance, though it also looks like a crime scene waiting on its next crime" (83). It attempts to capture the mood of the 1970s, including the drug fueled haze of Doc's adventures. The film adapts this scene from the text effectively emulating an eerie, smoky atmosphere. There are many similar sequences in the film, especially during drug Doc's reveries and hallucinations. Almost every scene has Doc thinking about drugs, taking drugs, or experiencing some event under their influence. This adds yet another commentary to the film as Anderson takes advantage of the image track to further influence the film's critique of how Doc solves his crimes; in fact, this part is remarked on in some dialogues in the film, where Sortilège seems to whisper—as the narrator—to Doc, "Doper's ESP" (02:04:37). After she murmurs this, Doc finds out that someone had been trying to set him up, by deluding him to believe that he has the upper hand while he's still under the influence. Since Doc's surroundings are consistently in a haze because of his drug binges, Anderson takes advantage of the visual medium to accentuate Doc's dependence on drugs to make a critique on how it both hinders the character and aids him in solving the mysteries.

André Bazin states, "It is not impossible for the artistic soul to manifest itself through another incarnation" ("Adaptation, or the Cinema as Digest" 23). For Pynchon, the "artistic soul" is constituted by his words, and Anderson engages with the same through Sortilège's

narration. However, this artistic soul can also be gleamed from the emphasis on the visual medium. When discussing the cinematography of the film, Robert Elswit, the director of photography, states, "We were going for an oceany sunlight, a low-contrast, soft-quality image like a faded photograph, so we did things like shoot into windows, which lowers the contrast" (Dawes). Throughout the film, everything seems to be shot in a haze, with some kind of lens flare, or with the low contrast that Elswit discusses. This permits the film to embrace the 1970s nostalgia of the novel, and the look balances itself with the time period. Anderson has discussed his inspiration in several interviews: "I had a kind of faded-postcard idea for this movie. And then I got lucky, because I had all this film stock in my garage from back when I made Magnolia, in 1999. It was heat-damaged and faded, and we started shooting tests with that, and it looked great" (Kermode). His fascination with fading stock changes the feeling of the film to one that yearns for the past. In Pynchon's novel, this nostalgia is delivered alongside paranoia, so that the yearning for past also leaves a doubt about the portrayal of thetime period. This statement goes hand-in-hand with his insistence on the faded look of the film, using 35mm stock which assisted to reproduce the images he had been searching for. This look echoes the haze Doc wades through while solving his cases: usually paranoid or anxious about unknown events and images that he senses around every corner.

This paranoia and anxiety in the film translates itself to the audience from the visual standpoint, especially because "…Films, then, are more directly implicated in bodily response than novels. They are felt upon the pulse" (Stam, "The Theory and Practice of Adaptation" 6). The hazy visuals portray this exact bodily response by displaying the drug-induced haze which perhaps the audience can also feel alongside Doc. However, these visuals and responses can also come from the actors' performances. For instance, when Doc first meets Hope Harlingen in the novel, she hands him a picture of her child, Amethyst, and the novel describes Doc's reaction, stating, "He was startled at the baby's appearance, swollen, red-faced, vacant" (Pynchon 38). In the film, this scene is missing portions of Hope and Doc's dialogue. However, the film plays a comedic moment out of the situation, depicting Doc's anxious, stunned emotion through Joaquin Phoenix's performance. When Hope hands him the photo in the film, he shrieks loudly at the picture, and the film does not cut to insert a shot of the picture itself. Instead, it relies on the impression of the actor's reaction, which gives the characters an inner dialogue to empower the written word on a visual level through their acting. This focus on the image comes out at other points of the adaptation as well, such as depicting a picture that is described in the book as "a *Last Supper*–type grouping around a

long table in the kitchen, with everybody in heated discussion over a number of pizzas" (Pynchon 137). The image in the film reiterates the exact image described in the novel, electing to favor the strengths of film, rather than relying on the narration of Sortilège or Pynchon. Moreover, this representation of imagery in the film also alludes to the cinematography of the film, which has a reminiscent feeling of the 1970s, having a faded, hazy look to the frames.

The adaptation of *Inherent Vice* brings changes that ask the audience to consider the power of words and images present in both of the works. Instead of simply worrying about the words of Pynchon through Sortilege, the images also provide the audience with an immediate bodily response—an engagement that the wavering thought present in the novel which has been achieved in the haze of constantly twisting narrative. Instead of simply being lost in the narrative of the film, viewers lose themselves in the drug-induced haze that Doc always finds himself in. The images compliment the words and outline how the world appears to Doc to the audience. This blending of image and wordplay creates a response to the novel that highlights how Pynchon's words can evoke an uneasy, lost feeling in both viewers and readers.

The problem with adapting a Thomas Pynchon novel comes in portraying the array of characters, the complex paranoid narrative, along with the incredibly sarcastic voice of Pynchon himself. In order to achieve this, the expansion of Sortilège into the narrator and the focus on hazy imagery creates the dialogic response. In addition, the film then acts alongside the novel to discomfit the audience and get them to question what they have experienced after the credits roll by on screen. The unsettling feeling that comes from Pynchon's novel and Anderson's film compliments not only their individual works, but also the intertextual relationship between the original work and the adaptation. Fidelity criticism provides a glimpse of the differences and equivalences present in the adaptation, but it is difficult to fall in line with fidelity criticism's emphasis that a film adaptation must participate within a completely faithful depiction of an original work. The spirit and aura of the original work must be preserved, but the study of such adaptations should not rely on a recounting of differences without notating the intertextuality between the works.

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