

LLIDS /e'lidz/



Language, Literature, and Interdisciplinary Studies

ISSN 2457-0044

ECOSOMATIC CRITICISM
JOHN MUIR
DANMEI WEB SERIES
GEOPOLITICS
DISABILITY STUDIES
PANOPTICON
CROSSOVERS
FIDELITY CRITICISM
ADAPTATION STUDIES
HOMOEROTICISM
MACBETH
PERUMAL MURUGAN
FRANTZ FANON
WEB SERIES CENSORSHIP
GREAT INDIAN MIGRATION
BUNDLE THEORY

ISSUE 2.4 © SUMMER 2019

This page has been intentionally left blank.

**LANGUAGE, LITERATURE,
AND
INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES**

ISSUE 2.4 © SUMMER 2019

EDITORIAL BOARD

Editors

Deeksha Suri

Nikita Goel

Guest Associate Editor

Md. Faizan Moquim

Assistant Editor

Pallavi

Editorial Assistant

Ritupma Shekhawat

Advisory Board

Dr. Abhishek Sharma

Dr. Angus McBlane

Dr. Ashish Thomas

Mr. Manjesh Rana

Dr. O. P. Singh

Ms. Priyanka Srivastava

Mr. R.K. Sharma

Dr. S. K. Singh

Dr. Veerendra Kumar Mishra

Dr. Yvonne Stafford-Mills

Language, Literature, and Interdisciplinary Studies (LLIDS)

ISSN 2457-0044

Language, Literature, and Interdisciplinary Studies (LLIDS) is an open access e-journal with a double-blind peer review policy. It is published quarterly in Fall, Winter, Spring, and Summer. *LLIDS* is conceived as a platform to engage with the existing fault lines of standard academic research through perceptive and rigorous enquiry. Committed to promote the standards of quality research, it provides discursive space for relevant and meaningful investigations in the fields of linguistics, literature, and other interdisciplinary studies for both upcoming as well as established scholars alike.

LLIDS does not levy any author processing charges or publication fee. It remains accessible to all and is licensed under **Creative Commons Attribution-No Derivatives 4.0 International License**.



For any further queries, please write to us at llids.journal@gmail.com

Contents

- v *Editorial*
vii *Contributors*

ADAPTATION: IN SERVICE OF CINEMA OR NOVEL?

- 1 **Toward a Dialogic Reception in Adaptation Studies: Bundle Theory and Fidelity Discourse in Contemporary Adaptations of *Macbeth***
William Puckett
- 17 **Through the Haze: Fidelity of Adaptation in Paul Thomas Anderson's *Inherent Vice***
Travis Merchant
- 33 **From Online Danmei Literature to Web Series: A Study of Chinese Internet-based Adaptations Under Censorship**
Yumo Yan

SPECIAL SUBMISSIONS

- 53 **A Geography Animated with Intentions: Reclaiming Indigenous Vitality through Land-Based Decolonial Struggles in Frantz Fanon's Algeria Writings**
Nanya Jhingran
- 72 **What Cannot Be (Re)written: Disentangling Panoptic Structures in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wall-paper" and *Herland***
Heather Fox

- 84** **Ecosomatic Paradigm Through Disability Studies in John Muir's**
My First Summer in the Sierra
Gage Greenspan

BOOK REVIEWS

- 96** ***Trial by Silence and A Lonely Harvest* by Perumal Murugan**
Reviewed by *Rituparna Sengupta*
- 102** ***India Moving: A History of Migration* by Chinmay Tumbe**
Reviewed by *Swati Mantri*

EDITORIAL

Deeksha Suri

Transposition of the text to film, studied through varied discursive practices since its inception with George Bluestone's works in 1950s, has been the point of convergence for debates surrounding the fidelity of films to novels, Bakhtinian approach of a dialogical engagement, and poststructuralist approach of finding varied meanings through symbolic codes. The development of scholarship on Adaptation Studies thereof has consistently undermined the proprietary attitudes towards source texts to put its faith in their creative mutations through media. Studies on Auteurism in cinema—through postmodern techniques, for instance—efface literary texts as the 'touchstone' as well as the single organizing principle for adaptations. Similarly, concentration on various factors of film-making—narrative techniques, socio-cultural backgrounds, themes, music, and visuals—ensure that there can hardly be one normative model for determining an adaptation's relation to a text.

The focal point of communication between cinema and the source text in fidelity criticism is to largely study both mimetic as well as new positions that films take to ascertain a degree of either their dependence on or transgression from the text. But the domain of Adaptation Studies is increasingly witnessing a movement away from fidelity criticism to explore the hybrid nature of adaptations within their intertextual layers. Acknowledging the plurality of the text, the scholarship advanced by the likes of Robert Stam, Linda Hutcheon, Thomas Leitch, and Deborah Cartmell, argue against a single origin of either the text or the film—each being a composite of several coexisting narratives and inspirations. Such shift in the orientation of Adaptation Studies understands both these composites as symbolic codes of signifying systems interpreted through Bakhtinian dialogic relationship, thereby engaged in an ever evolving dialogue, through the mediation of viewer/reader, that brings the text and the film in mutual exploration and negotia

Addressing the transposition of text from one medium to another the Call for Papers for this issue focused on the negotiations between adaptations and their source text with a view to explore adaptations as 'autonomous piece(s) of art.' Moving beyond the concerns over faithful adaptations papers selected in the themed section discuss how visual media strategically engages written text in the process of transposition. Through a serious engagement with the issues of innovations within adaptations they attempt to question viewers' uncritical assumption of cinema as a derivative form of literature and suggest that a

fundamental critique of fidelity criticism requires a recognition of “multiple versions exist[ing] laterally, not vertically” (Linda Hutcheon). Responding to the re-presentational elements of adaptations, the papers in the themed section of the journal problematize the conventional hierarchical status of source texts over adaptations.

William Puckett applies Bundle Theory to develop a non-essentialist position and open up a much required debate on the critique of fidelity discourse. Traversing major criticism on fidelity discourse through the concept of ‘individuating properties’ which are pointing to the influences on both the source texts as well as the adaptations equally, the paper does away with the hegemony of the source text as the basis of perceiving the credibility of an adaptation. Travis Merchant’s paper on Paul Thomas Anderson’s *Inherent Vice* discusses various elements of the movie which either correspond to or deviate from the text. Made in a noir style the film maintains the virtue of a comparatively arcane novel. Shifts in narratorial voice and points of view in the film delineate new ideas and possibilities such as incorporating female voice-over in noir films, bringing in the voice of Pynchon in the film, strategies of images, music, etc. Adaptation studies look into the performative as well as socio-political valency with regard to viewership. Also entering this terrain is Yumo Yan’s paper on the web-series *Guardian* based upon Danmei genre of literature which dwells on homoerotic relationships to interrogate stringent censorship laws in China. Exploring the role of censorship within the rotating axis of production and reception of the story, the paper highlights such issues as political constraints, representation of Queer, strategies of storytelling, and female gaze among others. Studying the handling of these issues within public domain this case study, while maintaining a dedicated fanbase, also generates a dialogue on fidelity criticism which pertinently takes forward the discussion of forsaking the reliance on source text.

Collating literary, philosophical, socio-political, geographical, and environmental perspectives non-themed section of this issue, advancing interdisciplinary research, begins with Nanya Jhingran’s paper on Frantz Fanon’s writings. It engages discursively with the geopolitical perspective to argue for indigenous sovereignty through land based decolonization in the face of neo-colonialism. The next paper by Heather Fox enquires into the pervasiveness, and yet an apparent invisibility, of panoptic structures within Charlotte Perkins Gilman’s “The Yellow Wall-Paper” and *Herland* through Foucauldian analytical framework. The last paper in the section by Gage Greenspan takes up John Muir’s *My First Summer in Sierra* to argue for an “ecopsychosomatic paradigm” by expanding Matthew J. C. Cella’s ecosomatic paradigm in order to account for mental disabilities. Also

featuring in this issue are two book reviews, by Rituparna Sengupta and Swati Mantri, which introduce the readers to two books of Perumal Murugan centering around the dilemmas of fidelity, desire, and socio-cultural taboos, and the dynamics of migrations within the Indian subcontinent in the work Chinmay Tumbe, respectively.

This issue marks the completion of LLIDS's Volume 2 which, through its four issues, focused on the possibilities of rigorous research on the genre of novel along the axis of its history, place, and situation; cultural materialist reading of power and subversion in novel; aesthetic experience and reception of novel; and finally its transformative engagement with other mediums like cinema. All these strategies of engagement with this genre hopefully made the readers aware of the pertinent issues that bear on the evolving conception and reception of novels in our age.

CONTRIBUTORS

William Puckett (will@williampuckett.com) is a graduate student of Comparative Literature (MSc) at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland. His research interests include the overlapping of the cultural and temporal coordinates of geographical locations and how this overlap can re-determine identity and future-oriented identity(s) with a specific focus on postcolonial re-presentations of the self. He has been exploring this phenomenon from both the perspective of Literature and Visual Culture within academia.

Travis Merchant (travismerchant@gmail.com) is an MA student with a concentration in film and media studies in the English department at North Carolina State University, USA. He is a Film Studies Teaching Assistant at North Carolina State University, Image Editor for Film International, and Adjunct Instructor at Wake Technical Community College. His interest in film and media studies includes phenomenology, speculative realism, sound design and music, and how media embody dialogism and intertextuality.

Yumo Yan (yy2887@columbia.edu) is a first year MA student at Film and Media Studies Program, Columbia University, USA. She received her undergraduate degree in Film from Hong Kong Baptist University. Her undergraduate thesis titled “Society in Transition: Postmodernism in the Films of Lou Ye” tackles the problem of Chinese postmodernity/postsocialism within Lou Ye’s oeuvre. Her research interests include Chinese cinema historiography, queer cinema, and film musicals.

Nanya Jhingran (nanyaj@uw.edu) is a graduate student, Teaching Fellow, and Assistant Director of the Expository Writing Program at the University of Washington in Seattle, USA, where she is currently working on her PhD in English Literature and Culture. Her research explores the poetics of survival and belonging in spaces of war and occupation across the Global South with a particular focus on gender-based violence. She received her M.A. in English Literature at the University of Washington in 2019.

Heather Fox (Heather.Fox@eku.edu) is Assistant Professor of English at Eastern Kentucky University, USA. A Frances S. Summersell and Phi Kappa Phi award recipient, her research engages interdisciplinary approaches to American literature (particularly women’s litera-

ture and the literature of the American South), writing and rhetoric studies, and archival studies. Her current projects include a monograph that situates women writers' narrative arrangements as social commentary and a collaborative article on recovery-based archival research as a pedagogy for student investment.

Gage Greenspan (gagegspan@gmail.com) recently received his MA in English from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, USA. At Cal Poly SLO, he was an instructor of a freshman writing and rhetoric course, a tutor at the university's Writing Center, an editor for *Fresh Voices* (a pedagogical, annual publication consisting of Cal Poly student essays), and Co-Managing Editor for Cal Poly's *Sprinkle* (an international journal of undergraduate research in feminist and queer studies). For his prospective PhD, he intends to study the intersections of Marxism, Gender Studies, and Modern and Contemporary Theatre/Performance.

Rituparna Sengupta (rituparna05sengupta@gmail.com) is a PhD scholar at the department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, India. Her dissertation focuses on the contestation over cultural nationalism, masculinities, and femininities in popular culture texts—contemporary Indian popular fiction, film, and graphic narrative—that adapt 'Hindu' mythology. Her co-written paper 'This Side, That Side: Restoring Memory, Restoring Partition' is forthcoming in the edited anthology *Documenting Trauma in Comics: Traumatic Pasts, Embodied Histories, and Graphic Reportage*, by Palgrave Macmillan, UK.

Swati Mantri, (swatimantri15@gmail.com) completed her PhD from Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, India in 2019. Her research, at present, is positioned in urban sociology and examines the social and material effects of urban space on the construction of social lives and the 'self.' She has worked on multiple projects for UNICEF, National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, and Vikramshila Education Resource Society (Kolkata). Her research interests include identity studies, urban sociology, migration studies, visual anthropology as well as sociology of space and food.

This page has been intentionally left blank.

Toward a Dialogic Reception in Adaptation Studies: Bundle Theory and Fidelity Discourse in Contemporary Adaptations of *Macbeth*

William Puckett

William Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Macbeth* has retained a position of continual presence in films with renowned directors such as Orson Welles (1948), Akira Kurasawa (1957), and Roman Polanski (1971) undertaking adaptations on the source text. Though these directors did not feel bound by fidelity within their respective films, fidelity criticism, especially for canonical texts, has retained a privileged perspective in any discourse of adaptation studies. This paper examines adaptations of *Macbeth*—Jeremy Freeston's *Macbeth*, 1997; Billy Morrisette's *Scotland, PA*, 2001; Geoffery Wright's *Macbeth*, 2006; and Justin Kurzel's *Macbeth*, 2015—in order to discuss and problematize fidelity criticism in adaptation studies.

However, within the field of adaptation studies, as with any cultural or artistic criticism, from what perspective does one observe and with what critical toolbox does one examine a work is paramount for a discussion on the relation of a source text to a new work. Consequently, there have been many schools of thought that have affected critical inquiry and engagement with arts and literature; from the Formalists of the early twentieth century placing import on the form of the work, New Criticism emphasizing close reading and evaluation, Semiotics studying how meanings are made according to a study of signs, to Psychoanalysis, Deconstruction, Feminism, and Queer Theory to name a few. The point of such a brief account of Western literary criticism (which is not exhaustive by any means) acts as a starting point for the perspective of this essay and the inevitable plurality of historical precedence and contemporary trans-textual approaches that must accompany any inquisition into this paper. The paper attempts to build a comparative critique on the relevance of an inquiry on fidelity in adaptation studies and how do the spacio-temporal locale and generic shifts within an adaptation affect the reception of a new work in relation to the former. The paper also analyzes whether time, place, and generic shifts offer a potential escape from the trappings of fidelity criticism. While raising these questions the paper seeks a way out from fidelity criticism through Bundle Theory.

Films, as Sergei Eisenstein (1898–1948) described, are a “montage of attractions.” According to Jaques Aumont, “[i]n cinema the attraction is defined by the associative relationship to the theme –

and by its concatenation with other attractions, the whole of a chain” (43). This chain of relationships, with regard to ‘theme’ is what will be drawn forth throughout this essay offering that time, or rather temporality and anachronism along with generic shifts are the liberating factors for adaptations from the dependency on fidelity. While being an established mode of examining film based on literature, fidelity discourse limits any potential engagement with a new work based on a source text to a singular link with that source, whereas this essay will argue for the impossibility of a 1:1 ratio between film (as a new creation) and its source text, even if fidelity is the intent of the new work. It is the relationship to the *theme*, rather than the film’s fidelity to the source text, that can enrich accessibility for contemporary audiences.

In the opening lines of *Adaptation* (1984), Dudley Andrew states that fidelity discourse is “[f]requently the most narrow and provincial area of film theory, [whereas the] discourse about adaptation is potentially as far reaching as you like” (Braudy ed. 452). This remains true, as current scholarship still wrestles with the varying incarnations and valuations based on a taxonomy that would, according to Julie Sanders’ *Adaptation and Appropriation* (2016), signal a “relationship to a source text” (27). In accord with this taxonomy Andrew reduced adaptation to three modes: “*borrowing, intersection, and fidelity of transformation*” (Braudy ed. 453). Other scholars too, according to Thomas Leitch have built upon “...years of theoretical practice dividing adaptations into three categories – *close, loose, or intermediate*” (Desmond and Hawkes 2005), or *literal, traditional, and radical* (Cahir 2006). Though these tripartite subcategories of adaptation do not align exactly with each other, neither do they offer “...a model of adaptation superior to the fidelity discourse that they reject [n]or a mode of inquiry likely to lead to better questions or better models” (Leitch, *The Oxford Handbook of Adaptation Studies* 69). Both the models by Desmond and Hawkes as well as Cahir are dominated by a 1:1 relationship between the text and the film, and even though they reject fidelity as the ultimate goal, each of their models operates within a frame of relative fidelity—marking nuanced levels of individuality as a legitimating evaluative method toward filmic adaptations of “literary originals” trapping the discourse within a prison of fidelity.

With Andrew’s claim that “...well over half of all commercial films have come from literary originals” (453) the field of adaptation studies must continually undertake the valuation of filmic adaptations for the infinite ways and combinations that directors, cinematographers, or any other collaborative union might address, situate, or relate a new work to a source text. However, Andrew’s use of the term “literary originals” takes on import in that regardless of his intention, it

implies primacy of the literary work – relegating the filmic adaptation as secondary. By shifting the language used from ‘literary original’ to ‘source text’ or ‘literary platform,’ a de-prioritization can occur that might help, or allow for more plural readings of filmic adaptations that would not be subordinated to the “literary original.” However, this want to remove the import on fidelity—as being the degree of exactness with which something is copied or re-produced—is not a new notion. According to Leitch, “...fidelity discourse [has been] universally attacked by theorists as far back as George Bluestone...with each text, avowed adaptation or not, afloat on a sea of countless earlier texts which it could not help borrowing” (*The Oxford Handbook*, 63)—a chain of connections—with multiple arguments and theoretical roots that would remove subjectivity, authorial intent, and originality in earlier presentations by authors and theorists such as Roland Barthes and Julia Kristeva.

Building off Andrews’ provocation that the most “...frequent and tiresome discussion of adaptation concerns fidelity and transformation” (455), this essay will look at the cultural, geographic, temporal, and generic transposition—in the controlled shift from the original to the present—as a mechanism that might alleviate the reliance on a 1:1 relationship between text and film allowing for filmic adaptations to break free from a debilitating discourse of fidelity, encouraging a more contemporary accessibility to the source text. In order to position such an approach, this essay, as previously stated, will look at multiple adaptations of William Shakespeare’s *The Tragedy of Macbeth*.

While it is not the intention of this essay to qualify any one adaptation over the other or argue for a preferred approach to adaptation, the films addressed will stand as examples of the tripartite subcategories offered by Andrew, Desmond and Hawkes, and Cahir. In order to offer that the evaluation of a filmic adaptation is not limited to the degree with which a film relates to the source text, this essay forwards Bundle Theory as a means to read the filmic adaptation as a continuation in a chain of individuating properties. These individuating properties are, as will be shown, a part of a larger individuating chain of ‘origins’ that demand a pluralistic engagement in order to address the multiple aspects of temporal location, setting (geographic and cultural), and genre within any departure from, or adherence to, a *source text* or *literary platform*. Such an engagement is necessary to move beyond the 1:1 relational adaptation toward a polysemous method that such a discourse requires. It is not necessarily the degree of accuracy with which a film relates to a source text, but rather, the dialogue with the *source text* or *literary platform* takes on import.

However, prior to the discussion on Bundle Theory, first a look at current issues and takes on fidelity discourse must be established in order to ground Michael Losonsky's revisionist take on Bundle Theory as a viable alternate approach. *Leitch* has argued that while transposition—generic, cultural, geographic, temporal, or other—can be persuasive with regard to specific adaptations, he feels that "...they are unlikely to play a leading role in advancing adaptation studies as it struggles to emerge from the disciplinary umbrella of film studies and the still more tenacious grip of literary studies" (*The Oxford Handbook of Adaptation Studies*, 68). However, while it is difficult not to agree with Leitch in this regard, it is the focus on specific or individual adaptation that Leitch brings up which can prove to be the freeing mechanism that could potentially offer the most for the reception of contemporary filmic adaptations of canonical source material.

Beginning with Andrew¹ who divides his subcategories into *borrowing*, *intersecting*, and *transformation* and suggests that *borrowing* is "the most frequent mode of adaptation" in which "...the artist employs more or less extensively the material, idea, or form of an earlier, generally successful text...hoping to win an audience by the prestige of its borrowed title or subject" (454). The notion of borrowed power is of import here, in that the adaptation cites an earlier successful text in order to derive power by association. This is not a new technique solely embodied in filmic adaptation; as Andrew notes medieval paintings employing biblical iconography or Julian Schnabel's painting *Exile* (1980), coinciding with the time of Andrew's writing, which visually cites and adapts Caravaggio's *Boy with a Basket of Fruit* (1593) are examples of the same practice. Schnabel, much as Andrew suggests, is *borrowing* the power of the source text to validate his claim for figurative painting, which according to Hal Foster is "...taking the referential status of its images and meanings for granted" (129) using the power of the former text to validate the new manifestation.

Geoffery Wright's 2006 adaptation of *Macbeth*, set in the ganglands of Melbourne, Australia, offers an excellent example of reliance on the borrowed power of the earlier work. Though Wright modernizes the film—offering a young and sexy, black leather clad cast—it maintains the language of the original work while shifting the

¹Andrew's subcategories in this regard, can act as a foundation, or rather, because all of the discussed authors are essentially breaking down their respective subcategories in a similar fashion, this paper will focus on Andrew's version as it offers an overarching look at how adaptation has been subcategorized with Desmond and Hawkes, and Cahir being only slightly differential to his thought each will consequently come into discussion.

geo-temporal location. Though the temporal, cultural, and geographic setting has been shifted, the script or text of the source text remains un-affected. The audience is presented with the source text in black leather and guns instead of the original tartans and swords.

Intersecting, in contrast to *borrowing* for Andrew is less a direct adaptation (1:1 reflection) but a refraction, suggesting that the direction of a given text has been changed as it passed into a new medium. This refraction has been best summarized by André Bazin who, building off Baudelaire's presentation of the theatre as a "crystal chandelier," offers that:

If one were called upon to offer in comparison a symbol other than this artificial crystal like object, brilliant, intricate, and circular, which refracts the light which plays around its center and holds us prisoners of its aureole, we might say of the cinema that it is the little flashlight of the usher, moving like an uncertain comet across the night of our waking dream, the diffuse space without shape or frontiers that surround the screen. (Bazin 107).

Regardless of the fact that Bazin is speaking about the theatricalization of film, he suggests that the film gives a glimpse of the *dark corners* of the source text. *Intersection* as such, according to Andrew, provides "...an experience of the original, modulated by the particular beam of the cinema" (455). Justin Kurzel's *Macbeth* (2015) embodies such a scope—keeping true to themes, language, temporal location, and setting, mostly shot in Scotland, in period appropriate wardrobe, and true to the Shakespearean language. Kurzel has shown the text through the lens of the cinema, with sweeping landscapes, montage, close-ups, shot/re-shot, etc. The cinematic effect captured through editing releases the confinement to individual acts and scenes, that stage productions must rely on, as each scene is liberated from the constraints of the physical stage which has to be changed between acts. Within such a cinematic scope, the transition is fluid and open to capture the landscapes that the text and stage can only allude to. This kind of *intersection* between literature and film refracts the scope of the source text through a multiplicity of vantage points unavailable on the page or stage production. The camera can move anywhere—visualizing the text, script, or stage production from any angle—breaking free from the constraints of the limited orientation of the stage and the authors' description of the setting.

Finally, *transforming*, which concerns fidelity directly, is a mode of evaluation which, according to Andrew, assumes "...that the task of adaptation is the reproduction in cinema of something essential

about the ‘original’ [source] text” (455). This essential-ness is referring to the degree of the word for word account and representation of the cultural, temporal, and geographic location of the source text, that is, how is it transformed and with what degree of fidelity does it relate to the source text. Jeremy Freeston’s *Macbeth* (1997), which is true to the letter transformation of the original source text—retaining fidelity as its goal—was filmed in the actual location(s) and landscape that the source text names with scenes being shot in Dunfermline Abbey (Fife) and Blackness Castle (Falkirk), which are but a stone’s throw away from Inverness, Dunisnane, and Birnam Wood. As with the location, the scenes are shot in the same static tradition of theatre, restricting each scene to a singular location—following the description to the letter and, in this case, to the historical theatrical presentations of the text. It can thus be surmised that Andrew’s subcategories lack delineation between the borders of each subcategorization that might help to clarify his terminology—as all of these films could easily occupy multiple if not all three categories at the same time.

As such, Wright’s *Macbeth* (2006) could easily fit into the category of *intersecting* as it makes use of the mobility of the camera’s perspective lens, just as Kurzel’s *Macbeth* (2015) is *borrowing* from the original source text—though employing a more sweeping scope. Freeston’s *Macbeth* (1997) too, though seemingly conscious of a want for fidelity utilizes the camera to allow for close-ups and varying perspectives presented by the director through cinematic tropes that would be unattainable in traditional theatrical productions or the original script. However, all of the above three cases could be considered within the construct of *transforming* due to the fact that each retains core elements as well as (returning to Andrew’s quote) “something essential about the ‘original’ [source text].”

However, Desmond and Hawkes, and Cahir’s more simplified subcategories of adaptation can perhaps be of more use with these examples in the sense that they—much like Andrew’s subcategory of *transforming*—relate adaptation to the closeness or distance from an exactness or specific correspondence with the source text or literary platform. So, with regard to the aforementioned examples and the freedom with which Desmond and Hawkes, and Cahir address the relationship between a filmic adaptation of a work of literature: Freeston’s adaptation can be understood as a *close* or *literal* adaptation (fidelity of transformation); Kurzel’s as *loose* or *traditional* (intersecting); and Wright’s as *intermediate*, or *radical* (borrowing). Though a bit clearer than Andrew’s subdivisions, these particular articulations toward a taxonomy of adaptation still limit the evaluation between film and text to a 1:1 ratio, prioritizing the source text as the control group

with which the latter is measured. Within each of these three articulations of a tripartite division, adaptation remains an essential evaluative aspect as argued by the given authors. Cahir promotes *traditional* adaptations (Leitch 71), and Andrew, though not specifically saying so, aligns himself with André Bazin's "championing of this mode" (intersecting) that was "a refraction of the original" (454), both seeking the middle, offering nothing more than a re-hashing of previous thoughts and circular arguments that bring us back to a discourse of fidelity.

Though current taxonomy aims to organize adaptive practices so as to evaluate filmic adaptations based on specific critical preferences—that is, the freedom with which an adaptation engages with a source text—it may also prove relevant to examine how the generic, cultural, geographic, and temporal transposition of a source text can affect its filmic adaptation or literary platform that disregards the current trade embargo which would limit the number of sources that can be incorporated into an adaptation study. Thus, a movement away from the 1:1 ratio between the source text and film, and the temporal, geographic, and generic shifts, can be viewed as degrees of relation to the literary platform, toward an engagement with all of the elements, or individual properties as a bundle—a dialogic relationship.

Coinciding with the two tripartite divisions that have so far been discussed in this paper, it is now necessary to look at cultural, geographic, and temporal transposition within the process of adaptation. However, there is a fourth transposition: a *generic* transposition which can occur between two mediums, as was touched on by Andrew's in the subcategory *intersecting*, which will be focused upon later in order to highlight the potential for renewed engagements and receptions. What needs to be discussed between the source text and the adaptation is the occurrence of trans-medial, intertextual, and inter-medial exchange—a crossing of borders (trans-medial), a mosaic of quotations (intertextual), and an operation between two media (inter-media). Irina Rajewsky delineates these three categories as: "medial transposition" which would include filmic adaptations and novelizations; "media combination" such as opera, film, theatre—collaboration constituted by media constellation; and "intermedial references" which would account for references in a literary text to a film in so far as an evocation of filmic techniques, that is, zoom, pan, fade, montage editing, etc... (51–52). Though she acknowledges that "...a single medial configuration may certainly fill the criteria of two or even all three of the inter-medial categories..."—much as Andrew's taxonomy was blurred—it is Rajewsky's inter-medial practices which examine a "...perceptible medial difference between two or more individual media," a remediation on, not a replication of the source text (62). It is the

plurality that is of great import here as a relationship between media has more than just a 1:1 ratio that would quantify fidelity as a significant discursive apparatus. An inter-medial engagement, as such, not only calls for, but requires a plural engagement and dialogue between references and properties. In order to move beyond the 1:1 relationship of fidelity discourses and emphasize on the plurality that Rajewsky brings up, Rebecca Bushnell's "Tragedy and Temporality" (2014) can act as a spring board, enabling a dive into Michael Losonsky's revisionist take on Bundle Theory and the infinite chain of individuating properties, leaving behind pedestrian examinations of filmic adaptations that would attempt to qualify an adaptation on the degree of accuracy a film showcases to its earlier source text.

Bushnell offers (with regard to reception) that "...each experience is unique...a play is staged again and again, a film rescreened, and a text reread, each time differently and each time affected by what came before" (784). Though Bushnell is not explicitly speaking on adaptation, it is a reasonable comparison for adaptation studies. Just as each reception of a work will be unique, so will be any adaptation, even if fidelity to the source text in the strictest sense is the goal. In one way or another, via the reader, viewer, or adaptive director, some elements undergo a change—Losonsky refers to these as impure individuating properties—which alters the authorial intent of the source text, its historical reception and presentation, and any contemporary reception of the work.

Taking up Losonsky's presentations in "Individuation and Bundle Theory" (1987) enables an argument against current discourses that would prioritize the primacy of the source text or 'literary original,' further building on Rajewsky's plurality, and Bushnell's individuation of experience. Consequently, this essay posits that there can be no original, only a thematic dialogue—any work, source text or adaptation, is made up of a bundle of properties that come before them, of which any reciprocal work is individuated by an impure individuating property—and that each impure individuating property is made up of another bundle that is individuated by yet another impure individuating property, which is again made up of another bundle of individuating property *ad infinitum*.

Bundle Theory, having its origins in the eighteenth century with David Hume, offers that "...individuals [or for the purposes of this essay—works of art, that is, texts, plays, film, etc.,] are identical to bundles of properties...properties related to each other in some way" (Losonsky 191–192). However, much of the conflict and discourse surrounding Bundle Theory is related to and directed at notions of *human nature, being, and the identity of indiscernibles*, offering that no

two sets have the same members (Van Cleve 96). Comparing two things (works of art, adaptation or not) will never accord to a degree of fidelity but rather to a degree of difference—of othering—a degree of distance from a perceived center. Consequently, from Hume’s introduction of Bundle Theory to the secondary and tertiary receptions and objections as such, a continual revisionist perspective has been maintained allowing for change (“new” versus “old” Bundle Theory). Whereby “old” Bundle Theory identifies the individual via a complex of properties, “new” Bundle Theory translates a statement about individuals into a statement about properties—allowing for change and “accidental qualities” (Van Cleve 103). As such, the differentiation between “old” and “new” Bundle Theory continues to push Hume’s question “[a]nd the question still is, by what standard do we proceed when we judge them to be equal; or in other words, what we mean when we say they are equal” (Steinberg 136).

Therefore, for the purposes of this essay, Losonsky’s essay takes on greater centrality as it can allow for filmic adaptation to move beyond the previous focus of Bundle Theory and its engagement with *human nature* and *being* toward a reception and evaluative criticism of fidelity discourses’ reliance on a 1:1 relationship between text and film—which the critics against Bundle Theory would deem impossible—enabling an infinite dialogue with further individuating properties and encouraging a polysemous engagement with multiple sources of influence, adaptation, and appropriation, that is, geographical, temporal, and generic. However, such a theory is not without its problems² with the premier challenge to it being human nature and the problem of the principle of the identity of indiscernibles which would ascertain that no two identities could be made up of the same properties. However, the problematic within this essay is not that of human nature or of individuation but of how to engage a filmic adaptation with something that would not prioritize the original literary platform—a way to discuss individuation(s) without attempting to identify the original.

Losonsky argues that individuals, or in the case of this essay, artworks “...can have the exact same properties...thus individuals [or artworks] cannot be individuated by their properties” (191). A solution to this problem, Losonsky maintains, is the introduction of “impure properties,” that is, “...if we assume that every individual [or work of art] has a haecceity,” that is “...a unique spacio-temporal location...then the Bundle Theory has available impure properties that individuate...,” thus, “...taken at face value, Bundle Theory is analyzing or defining [the concept of an] individual” (191–192). Therefore it is the individuation not the individual that becomes paramount for such a

²For a list of objections against Bundle Theory see: Van Cleve pg. 95–96.

discussion allowing cultural, geographic, and temporal transposition, and plurality to come into play. It is through this spacio-temporal location that the individuation of a given bundle gains import as a part of a network. Furthermore, if according to Losonsky:

...we can distinguish the chain of *x*'s from the chain of *y*'s [text from film]...then if we [can] assume that necessarily every chain of individuation traces out a spacio-temporal 'line' (or worm)³ that is distinct from all other chains...the process of one thing developing out of another has a spacio-temporal feature that can be relied on to distinguish that process...[because]...there will be spacio-temporal differences between two objects. There will also be other differences...but it seems obvious...that the property of originating *in* something is such that it entails properties that it will allow one, at least in principle, to distinguish between an object and the objects from which it originates. (196).

Similarly, a contemporary adaptation of *Macbeth* is not reliant solely on the *source text*, but on a chain of infinite individuations that have occurred in the process of adaptation that have come after Shakespeare's initial publication, and of all the tales, myths, and motifs (individuating properties) that were part and parcel to the individuating properties which made up the 'bundle' that is Shakespeare's source text *The Tragedy of Macbeth*.

What this means for any contemporary adaptation of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and its subsequent reception is that it is not imperative for the contemporary version/adaptation to adhere to any protocol of fidelity with the *original* in order to impress upon the contemporary audience the essential qualities of the Shakespearean original, rather it is the dialogue between the contemporary auteurs and the classical master that will resonate and enrich the experience within and for the present.

A key adaptation in this regard that can help illustrate such a dynamic is Billy Morrissette's *Scotland, PA* (2001), set in small-town Pennsylvania (USA) circa 1975, at a fast food burger joint, soundtracked by period specific rock-n-roll beset in the American dream. Such an adaptation clearly moves the *source text* culturally, geographically, and temporally from feudal Scotland toward the veils and shad-

³Here, Losonsky is referring to a specific entity—an individual that is representative of the line of connection, but is its own individuation—made up of that which came before it but individuated by its very existence within its own spacio-temporal location.

ows of an American democracy that promotes the dream of upward mobility. It is much in line with challenging the 1:1 relationship between film and text that fidelity criticism is tied to, and thereby offers a generic shift from tragedy to dark comedy that refreshes the source text for contemporary audiences while retaining the literary platform's essential themes. As previously discussed, Cahir would argue that such a move towards a *radical* adaptation would be at one's own "peril," however, this is a troubling position for adaptation studies in which the persistent question remains whether adaptations should limit the possibilities of audience reception(s) to degrees of fidelity or rather allow for and promote a dialogue beyond it.

To prioritize the source text, as much of the current discourse does, is to limit the present (adaptive) work's future orientation with the past. As an example, a comparative analysis of Italian Renaissance and Neoclassicism can be made to establish which of the two offers a more enriching experience with regard to adaptation(s), spacio-temporal location, and a relationship with past works of art and literature: Italian renaissance offers a more enriching experience in terms of engagement with both the forms and stories of the past (classical antiquity, Greek and Roman mythology, and the old testament) as well as the religious propaganda of the Catholic church, giving new life to the "source texts" of Ancient Greece and Rome within a new setting and overarching narrative of Catholicism or the Neoclassicism that followed centuries later that would quote and replicate the forms of the past directly. While Neoclassicism's adaptive process (*borrowing*) is quoting the past in order to capitalize on the cultural value of the previous period or specific work, adaptive practices of the artists of Italian Renaissance (*radical*) bring the source texts (both classical antiquity and the old testament) to life within a new plurality and spacio-temporal shift, revitalizing the previous works into their own contemporaneity. What becomes key here is the plurality of engagement. The renaissance gave new life to the source text(s) of the past by shifting them geographically, culturally, temporally, and generically—shifting from what was perceived as Greek and Roman Paganism to a Christian doctrine in order to make them knowable to an audience that would not have been familiar with the works of the past.

Morrisette's adaptation—much as the renaissance—repositions the adaptation of the source text culturally, geographically, temporally, and generically allowing for and encouraging a polysemous interaction with the film and a contemporary connection that not only represents a work of the past, but makes it temporally and culturally accessible to his contemporary audience. Though the temporal location of the film is still removed from the relative present of

the film's release date the temporal distance is shifted. The *time* of the narrative is not the present but shifted to the past which, though removed slightly (by roughly thirty years), becomes closer still to the contemporary audience while remaining within a knowable past. The acts of travesty are not so removed as to be too distant to be relatable. The tragedy is replaced with a dark comedy that would adhere to the realities of contemporary American life and the farce of the American Dream. An upward mobility can be seen within a conversation of Shakespeare's work whereby ruthlessness—intentional or otherwise—enables relatability, but at a cost. The relationship of the film with Shakespeare's source text is subverted from tragedy to dark comedy, from the halls of Scottish royalty to small town American white trash class divisions where rock-n-roll, commercialism, the myth of the American Dream, and "a fantasy of social mobility" gloss over the "...inequalities and social hierarchies structuring the country's real but invisible class system" (Deitchman 140). All of these themes which corroborate with the source text, and could easily be exploited by the previously mentioned subcategories of Desmond and Hawkes, Cahir, and Andrew as degrees of relation toward a discourse of fidelity. They can also be viewed within the scope of Losonsky's Bundle Theory whereby the shifts or transpositions become impure individuating properties that demand recognition in their own right, notwithstanding the more general individuating properties that would include: actors, director, cinematographer, screenwriter, etc.

Even though Desmond and Hawkes, Cahir, and Andrew's tripartite subdivisions are valid and can account for the examples of current and past adaptations of Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Macbeth*, they still qualify the adaptation with regard to the degree of accuracy filmic adaptations retain to the "original" through a discourse not just of similarities but of otherness and difference. Bundle Theory, in contrast, offers a dialogue with the source text that deprioritizes the primacy of the "original"—a movement away from a center-peripheral dialectic. Fidelity discourse, however, still presents an "othering" of the filmic adaptation as something outside of the original that is almost the same but not quite⁴—something to be evaluated according to the closeness of the "other" with the original, or rather, as mimicry.⁵

However, as a potential counter to Bundle Theory's import with regard to the dialogue between texts, and a discussion of fidelity

⁴Referring to Homi Bhabha's famous essay "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse" (1984).

⁵Homi Bhabha's notions of mimicry have their own power and potential for and towards Adaptation Studies and Fidelity Discourse—as a form of liberation that can cross borders.

discourse, according to Losonsky "...one way to handle this problem is to stop the regress within a privileged set of individuals that are individuated by pure properties" (192). This type of thinking however would privilege the "literary original" with "pure properties" retaining the current dilemma and subjugation of literary primacy over adaptation studies. Consequently, this privileged set of individuals would only take us to the current debate over fidelity discourse requalifying the subjugation and colonization of any filmic presentation outside of the literary source text. It offers a conception of Bundle Theory that is "...giving a reductive analysis that aims at eliminating the concept of the individual" (192), re-reducing adaptation to its current 1:1 evaluative relationship with the source text, perpetuating literature's colonial/imperial dominance over Film Studies and, even more so, over Adaptation Studies as a field.

If we are to accept Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Macbeth* as a source text which is made up of a bundle of properties that are individuated by the impure properties associated with the infinite chain of origination (present, past, and future) then with each adaptation there is a consequent introduction of further impure individuating properties, that is, medium, director, cultural, geographical, and temporal location as well as performance, film quality, lighting, genre, etc. Thus, no presentation can ever simply operate as a 1:1 relationship because to do so is to "other" and subjugate anything outside the "original"—the relationship as such becomes an imperial occupation and colonization of the subject of filmic adaptations. The criticism and reception as well as the presentation of the adaptation is a line of further individuation(s) on a chain of individuations. Within this same theory, the source text too would also be individuated through an "infinite chain of origination" because within the same rationale, no one entity is the original and consequently there can be no prioritization of medium and/or version (adaptation) over the other. As according to Losonsky's accounting of his version of "new" Bundle Theory, all individuals (art, film, text, play, music, etc.) are infinitely connected in a chain of origination, deprioritizing any one "original" or "center," moving toward a conversation amongst equals.

Therefore, if it can be accepted that reducing a filmic adaptation of a literary source text to a 1:1 relationship is akin to the subjugation of one media over another—that of a center-peripheral dialectic—the only escape from such a subjugating discourse is to acknowledge that both entities are made of "bundles of properties" and neither is reducible to the essence of the other. Bundle Theory with a plurality of origins and trajectories and the idea of inter-medial dialogue and conversation is the only avenue for an audience or criticism that would

stand against a discourse of occupation and a comparison of inequality via difference.



Works Cited

- Armstrong, D. M. *Universals and Scientific Realism*. Cambridge UP, 1978.
- Baylis, Charles A. "Max Black. The Identity of Indiscernibles." *Mind*, vol. 61, 1952, pp.153–164.
- Bazin, André. *What Is Cinema?* Vol. 2, California UP, 2005.
- Braudy, L. and M. Cohen. *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*. 5th ed., Oxford UP, 1999.
- Cahir, Linda Costanzo. *Literature into Film: Theory and Practical Approaches*. McFarland & Co., 2006.
- Ehring, Douglas. "Bundle Theory." *Tropes: Properties, Objects, and Mental Causation*. Oxford UP, 2011, pp. 98–135.
- Foster, Hal. *Recodings: Art, Spectacle, Cultural Politics*. Bay, 1985.
- Freeston, Jeremy, director. *Macbeth*. Cromwell Productions Ltd., 1997.
- Hermansson, Casie. "Flogging Fidelity: In Defense of the (Un)Dead Horse." *Adaptation*, vol. 8, no. 2, 2015, pp. 147–160.
- Hoefler, Anthony D. "The McDonaldization of 'Macbeth': Shakespeare and Pop Culture in 'Scotland, PA.'" *Literature/Film Quarterly*, vol. 34, no. 2, 2006, pp. 154–160. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/43797271.
- Hume, David. *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. Edited by Eric Steinberg, Hackett Publishing, 1993.
- Hutcheon, Linda. *A Theory of Adaptation*. Routledge, 2006.
- Kurzel, Justin, director. *Macbeth*. Anton Capital Entertainment, 2015.
- Leitch, Thomas M. *Film Adaptation and Its Discontents: From Gone with the Wind to The Passion of the Christ*. Johns Hopkins UP, 2007.
- . editor. *The Oxford Handbook of Adaptation Studies*. Oxford UP, 2017.
- Losonsky, Michael. "Individuation and the Bundle Theory." *Philosophical Studies*, vol. 52, no. 2, 1987, pp. 191–198.

- Morrisette, William, director. *Scotland, PA*. Lot 47 Films, 2001.
- Orr, M. *Intertextuality: Debates and Contexts*. Blackwell, 2003.
- Pike, Nelson. "Hume's Bundle Theory of the Self: A Limited Defense." *American Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 4, no. 2, 1967, pp. 159–165.
- Rajewsky, Irina O. "Intermediality, Intertextuality, and Remediation: A Literary Perspective on Intermediality." *Intermedialités: Histoire Et Théorie Des Arts, Des Lettres Et Des Techniques*, no. 6, 2005, p. 43. www.erudit.org/fr/revues/im/2005-n6-im1814727/1005505ar.pdf.
- Saunders, Julie. *Adaptation and Appropriation*. 2nd ed., Routledge, 2016.
- Shakespeare, William, and Nicholas Brooke. *The Tragedy of Macbeth*. Oxford UP, 1991.
- Singh, Vijaya. "Fiction to Film: A Brief History and a Framework for Film Adaptations." *Filming Fiction*. Oxford UP, 2012.
- Van Cleve, James. "Three Versions of the Bundle Theory." *Philosophical Studies: An International Journal for Philosophy in the Analytic Tradition*, vol. 47, no.1, 1985, pp. 95-107. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/4319731.
- Wright, Geoffrey, director. *Macbeth*. Palace Films and Cinemas, 2006.

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

Travis Merchant

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 expan-

sion 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. McFarlane 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 responsibility 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 mi-

nor 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 become 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 gleaned 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 oceanic 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 the time 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 noting the intertextuality between the works.



Works Cited

- “Academy Conversations: Inherent Vice.” Online video clip. *YouTube*, 19 Dec 2014, www.youtube.com/watch?v=M95Yz1DwAOI.
- Albrecht-Crane, Christa and Dennis Cutchins. “New Beginnings for Adaptation Studies.” *Adaptation Studies: New Approaches*, Rosemont Publishing and Printing Corp, 2010, pp. 11–24.
- Anderson, Paul Thomas, writer and director. *Inherent Vice*. Warner Bros, 2014.
- Andrew, Dudley. “Adaptation.” *Film Adaptation*, edited by James Naremore, Rutgers University Press, 2000, pp. 28–37.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. *The Dialogic Imagination*. Translated by Caryl Emerson and Michal Holquist, University of Texas Press, 1998.
- Benjamin, Walter. *Illuminations*. Translated by Harry Zohn, Schocken Books, 2007.
- Bazin, André. “Adaptation, or the Cinema as Digest.” *Film Adaptation*, edited by James Naremore, Rutgers University Press, 2000, pp. 19–27.
- Bazin, André. *What is Cinema?* Translated by Hugh Gray, Vol. 1, University of California Press, 1967.
- Dawes, Amy. “Robert Elswit’s two sides of L.A. in ‘Inherent Vice,’ ‘Nightcrawler.’” *LA Times*, Los Angeles Times, 1 Jan 2015, www.latimes.com/entertainment/envelope/la-et-mn-en-robert-elswith-20150101-story.html.
- Fear, David. “Paul Thomas Anderson Reveals Secrets of Stoner Odyssey ‘Inherent Vice.’” *Rolling Stone*, 15 Jan 2015, www.rollingstone.com/movies/features/paul-thomas-anderson-reveals-secrets-of-stoner-odyssey-inherent-vice-20150115.
- Haacke, Paul. “The Melancholic Voice-Over in Film Noir.” *JCMS: Journal of Cinema and Media Studies*, vol. 58, no. 2, 2019, pp. 46–70. *Project MUSE*, doi:10.1353/cj.2019.0002.
- Hill, Logan. “Pynchon’s Cameo, and Other Surrealities.” *The New York Times*, 26 Sep. 2014, www.nytimes.com/2014/09/28/movies/paul-thomas-anderson-films-inherent-vice.html?_r=0.

- Hutcheon, Linda. *A Theory of Adaptation*. 2 ed., Routledge, 2013.
- Jameson, Fredric. "Afterword: Adaptation as a Philosophical Problem." *True to the Spirit*, edited by Colin MacCabe et al., Oxford University Press, 2011, pp. 215–234.
- Kermode, Mark. "Paul Thomas Anderson: 'Inherent Vice is like a sweet, dripping aching for the past.'" *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 28 Dec. 2015, www.theguardian.com/film/2014/dec/28/paul-thomas-anderson-interview-inherent-vice-mark-kermode.
- Lake, Diane. "Adapting the Unadaptable – A Screenwriter's Perspective." *A Companion to Literature, Film, and Adaptation*, edited by Deborah Cartmell, Wiley-Blackwell, 2012, pp. 408–15.
- McFarlane, Brian. *Novel to Film: An Introduction to the Theory of Adaptation*. Clarendon Press, 1996.
- Naremore, James. "Film and the Reign of Adaptation." *Film Adaptation*, edited by James Naremore, Rutgers University Press, 2000, pp. 1–16.
- "NYFF52: 'Inherent Vice' Press Conference | Paul Thomas Anderson + Cast." Online video clip. *YouTube*, 4 Oct 2014, www.youtube.com/watch?v=CqQ_7CpU-g. Pynchon, Thomas. *Inherent Vice*. Penguin Books, 2010.
- Raitt, George. "Still Lusting After Fidelity?" *Literature/Film Quarterly*, vol. 38, no. 1, 2010, pp. 47–58. *JSTOR*, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43797678>.
- Stam, Robert. "Beyond Fidelity: The Dialogics of Adaptation." *Film Adaptation*, edited by James Naremore, Rutgers University Press, 2000, pp. 54–76.
- Stam, Robert. "The Theory and Practice of Adaptation." *Literature and Film*, edited by Robert Stam and Alessandra Raengo, Blackwell Publishing, 2005, pp. 1–52.
- Westbrook, Brett. "Being Adaptation: The Resistance to Theory." *Adaptation Studies: New Approaches*, Rosemont Publishing and Printing Corp, 2010, pp. 25–45.

From Online Danmei Literature to Web Series: A Study of Chinese Internet-based Adaptations Under Censorship

Yumo Yan

Web series produced by and for Chinese online streaming platforms have been on the rise since 2013, and have made available a space for production outside the traditional mass media like television. These web series often adapt their scripts from popular online novels, including danmei literature. Since China joined the Internet in 1994, the spread of this technology has opened up new spaces and created new genres for Chinese literature, and the development of Chinese Internet literature and its subgenre, danmei fiction, have been frequently scrutinized in both English and Chinese scholarly works.¹ Recently, variegated Chinese-language research have been directed towards the phenomenon of popular danmei novels adapted into web series and aired on major online streaming platforms such as iQiyi, Tencent Video, Youku, etc. However, most of these scholarly works, in particular Weihua Chen and Qin Hu's 2018 essay, "A Study on Online Tanbi Drama in China in the 21st Century," on the emergence and development of Chinese online danmei series as well as Yang Liu's 2018 essay, "Study on the Adaptation Strategy of the Chinese Network Tanbi Novel in the Receptional Aesthetic Vision," on adaptation strategies taken by danmei web series, center on the danmei web series industry before June 30th, 2017, that is, before the "General Rules For Reviewing Netcasting Content"² were issued by the China Netcasting Services Association which for the first time officially banned homosexual content in web series. Thus, in the face of censorship post-2017 danmei web series adaptations confront the challenge of trying to stay true to the original danmei novels while being unable to showcase explicit homosexuality on screen. Focusing on the issue of censoring the content of web series adaptations of online danmei literature, this paper first reviews the opening up of an alternate space that 'online' danmei literature has created for queer expressions outside the state-controlled system, and then argues how this space outside heterosexual norms operates despite the 2017 policy which seeks to ban on-screen homosexuality thereby highlighting the space that danmei web series initially opened up for queer representations that

¹Danmei, 'Boys' Love' in English, or Tanbi in Japanese, refers to a subgenre in literature, film, animations which romanticizes homosexual relationships between male characters to target a female audience.

²《网络视听节目内容审核通则》

were not allowed on TV. By using a 2018 danmei web series *Guardian* as a case study, this paper investigates how the post-2017 danmei web series made compromises due to censorship but also found strategic ways to hint at queer relationships by making the queer edge subtle enough to pass the censors. In doing so, this paper wishes to provide a speculation into the future of Chinese danmei literary adaptations under increasingly stringent censorship of online mass media.

The rise of online Chinese danmei literature since the late 1990s relied on the increasing popularity of online Chinese literature and the influx of danmei culture from Japan. Scholars of Chinese Internet literature like Guobin Yang, Michel Hockx, and Jin Feng have emphasized on the crucial role the Internet played in providing a space for Chinese literature outside of the heavily state-controlled publishing system. Circumventing the need to obtain legal book numbers in the publishing process, this online space outside of print literature allowed for greater freedom of personal and creative expression. However, initial optimism of Internet literature being “democratic” and “anti-elitist,” as worded by Yang (342–343), has started to wane, as the state has sought to tighten censorship around erotic and obscene content in Internet literature since 2007 (Hockx 116). Literary websites have become increasingly commercial and actively participate in self-censoring the content with a view/intent to get Internet Publishing Permits (Hockx 115).³ However, censorship is perhaps most evident in danmei literature, which is, according to Hockx, the most prominently transgressive genre that features romantic and sexual relationships between male protagonists (115). The genre originated from an anti-naturalist literary movement called *tanbi*⁴ in early-twentieth-century Japan that stressed highly aestheticized descriptions of sensory impressions. By the 1970s it was used to describe a genre of Japanese girls’ comics that portrayed beautiful, androgynous young men with feminine bodies and romanticized homosexual relationships targeted at women readers craving for “beauty” (Feng 4–5). *Tanbi*, directly translated from its *Kanji*,⁵ into Chinese pronounced as danmei, was introduced into China in the 1990s via Internet popularity and the influx of Japanese comics and animations that came with it (Yang and Xu 252). As a genre of romanticized male homoeroticism, created by and for

³The Internet Publishing Permit (网络文化经营许可证) is a license issued by the government that commercial and non-commercial websites of gaming, manga, music, videos, literature need in order to operate. The license expires every three years.

⁴Tanbi, たんび in Hiragana, 耽美 in Kanji.

⁵Editor’s note: The “Japanese” word for Hanzi or Chinese characters.” The Japanese use Chinese characters, called Kanji, along with two forms of a syllabary, called Hiragana and Katakana. (Source: Insup Taylor, M. Martin Taylor. *Writing and Literacy in Chinese, Korean and Japanese*, John Benjamins Publishing company, 2014)

heterosexual women and usually lacking in critical as well as political edge, the depiction of overtly feminine and androgynous male characters of danmai sometimes makes it pretty different from ‘actual’ queer literature; because of this, numerous scholarly essays have delved into the mentality behind heterosexual women’s preference for danmei literature. Zhou argues that danmei literature and Boy’s Love fandom have the political potential to stimulate anti-homophobic discourses, and provide women readers with different ways to re-think about sexuality and gender outside of heteronormative ideologies, especially in the Chinese society where the attitude towards sexuality and gender remains largely conservative (29). Yang and Xu question the common attribution of “straight women read[ing] danmei,” arguing that danmei literature very likely assists readers in discovering their own sexual identities (253). Feng centers her research on readership and suggests that by setting the story in fantasized and fictional worlds and depicting utopian love with little markings of realism, danmei literature provides a space for female readers to “impersonate” an ideal masculinity through the gaze at the male protagonist in the novel, and this process encourages them to perceive themselves as empowered (24). These works are significant in understanding the varied dynamics of danmei literature in relation to female readership, but this paper seeks to take departure from feminist discourses and concentrate on internet-based adaptations in the wake of censorship.

Although policies banning pornographic content in Internet literature have been in force since the 2004 “Self-regulations on Prohibiting the Circulation of Obscene, Pornographic or Other Malicious Information on Websites,”⁶ as well as the 2007 “An Urgent Announcement about Strict Action against Online Obscene and Pornographic Fiction,”⁷ danmei literature existed at the margins and thus enjoyed a considerable degree of freedom until around 2010–2012 when literary websites, in cooperation with the state, started to censor keywords involving sexual descriptions of male homosexual activities by using keyword filtering programs (Zhou 35). Although this filtering restricted danmei writers from writing explicit sexual content on websites, authors nevertheless found ways to get around censorship such as substituting sensitive words with pinyin⁸ or deliberately creating typos

⁶ 《互联网站禁止传播淫秽、色情等不良信息自律规范》

⁷ 《关于严厉查处网络淫秽色情小说的紧急通知》

⁸Ed. note: An official romanization system adopted in 1979 for “Putonghua” or the standard “Chinese language.” It is used in China for teaching the sounds of “logographic” “Chinese characters,” for inputting a Chinese word on a computer to retrieve a character for it, and to write Chinese words for foreigners. (Source: Insup Taylor, M. Martin Taylor. *Writing and Literacy in Chinese, Korean and Japanese*, John Benjamins Publishing company, 2014)

to avoid keyword-screening softwares (Hockx 124), describing sexual activity poetically and metaphorically (Hockx 125), posting pictures of texts on other platforms like Weibo (Zhou 35), coding the texts through translation machines such as “Buddhist Sutras Translator” (Zhou 35), etc. This paper will thus demonstrate the recurrent process of coming up with alternate spaces of expression outside the mainstream along with new ways to circumvent censorship even after continuous bans.

Web series or webisodes are a new form of online videos that emerged in 2012 and have since gradually gained popularity among Chinese audiences. Web series are similar to TV series in style and format (or in the case of web series with only one episode, similar to film), but are produced by online streaming platforms and meant to be streamed online only, although in recent years some web series like *Love Me if You Dare* (2015), which was co-produced by Sohu Video and Shandong Film & TV Media Group and was aired both online and on TV,⁹ is an excellent example of web series entering the domain of traditional television. With the increasing popularity of web series, this new medium has received scholarly attention but it mostly remains limited to Chinese scholarship. Huimin Wang theorizes three stages that web series went through. The first stage (2012–2013) consisted of short, low-budget, self-mocking web series like *Diors Man* (2012)¹⁰ and *Never Expected* (2013)¹¹ (13). Using irony and low production values to separate themselves from mainstream productions, these newly emerged web series flagged their outsider status and commented on class hierarchies from peripheral perspectives (13). These series achieved considerable success, and web series began to receive more funding from streaming platforms along with other traditional TV production companies, thus moving into their second stage (2014–2015) in which higher production values and longer series became dominant in the market (14). However, the production costs of web series were still significantly lower than that of TV episodes, thus, with relatively smaller stakes of failure, some new genres that were seldom seen in TV productions were put into experiments in web series, resulting in a burgeoning of detective thrillers and tomb raiding series while also running traditionally popular TV genres dealing with themes like going back in time and coming-of-age stories (14). The new genres, alienated from reality, fulfilled audience’s expectations of watching something peculiar (14). However, this burgeoning space of artistic

⁹ 《他来了，请闭眼》. See <https://www.zhihu.com/question/36628094>

¹⁰ 《屌丝男士》. The translation from 屌丝, which literally means “loser,” to “Diors,” is a parody in itself.

¹¹ 《万万没想到》. Other translations of this series include *Unexpected*.

freedom with sufficient capital did not last long due to the government's tightening of censorship control in 2017. Prior policies, like the 2012 "China Network Audiovisual Program Service Self-discipline Convention"¹² on which the 2017 policy was based, did seek to regulate web series but the regulations were quite unspecific and loose as compared to traditional TV resulting in a comparatively large space for creative freedom. However, the "General Rules For Reviewing Net-casting Content"¹³ issued on June 30th 2017 for the first time officially specified that web series would now be subject to "thorough censorship"¹⁴ and "censorship before airing"; thus pushing web series into their third and current stage termed by Wang as "a return to the mainstream" (16). This implies that the censoring of web series is now identical to the censoring of TV programs, causing some genres like fantasy and depictions of homosexuality to be banned in web series.¹⁵ Textually, it also means that web series would have to conform more to political correctness, be more mainstream and less experimental in genre, and return to realism for a mass appeal (16).

In recent years both TV and web series have increasingly resorted to adapting popular online novels such as *The Journey of Flower*¹⁶ (2015), *Princess Agents*¹⁷ (2017), *Eternal Love*¹⁸ (2017), and *Fighter of the Destiny*¹⁹ (2017), as well as highly successful serial stories such as *The Tomb Raider Chronicles* (2015)²⁰ which has been adapted into web series (Xie 57). Yan Xie analyzed several reasons for TV and web series turning to adapting successful online novels. Compared to published novels, online novels go through shorter production process, and due to the vast quantity of online literature, provide more options for producers (Xie 57). It is also relatively cheaper to acquire full adaptation rights for online novels (57–58). Successful online novels have higher chances of success when adapted, because they have survived the competitive online literature market and have already gained a fanbase that will very likely turn into fans of the adaptations (58). According to statistics, readers of Internet literature and audi-

¹² 《中国网络视听节目服务自律公约》

¹³ 《网络视听节目内容审核通则》

¹⁴ 《先审后播，审核到位》

¹⁵ Li Jingsheng, head of the SAFRT TV department, said in February 2016: "What is not allowed on TV is not allowed in web series/电视台不能播的网站也不能播" (Wang, 15).

¹⁶ 《花千骨》

¹⁷ 《楚乔传》

¹⁸ 《三生三世十里桃花》

¹⁹ 《择天记》

²⁰ 《盗墓笔记》

ences of web series both fall within an age range of 10–39 years-old, thus, making it highly likely that fans of the original novel and audience of the adaptation will overlap (58). In order to keep the original fanbase, adaptations often seek to live up to the fans' expectations which usually means trying to stay true to the original novel. Thus, the tension is especially pronounced in adaptations of online danmei novels, in which fidelity approach finds itself in conflict with the censorship laws.

If one looks at the trajectory of the development of danmei web series, the situation is different from the trajectory of non-danmei web series in general, as self-censoring of danmei web series came before the 2017 policy. Chen & Hu mapped out a similar three-stage trajectory for them. The first danmei web series to appear was *I Love You If You Were Men*²¹ in 2014, which consisted of a single episode (Chen & Hu 71). The first stage, from *I Love You If You Were Men* (2014) to *Addicted*²² (2016), involved small budget productions mostly within the genre of urban comedy (73). Due to loose regulations at this time, danmei web series sought to depict explicit homosexuality on screen, and *Addicted* even included explicit sexual behavior between male protagonists, but the series was quickly brought down and banned before it was completely aired. This incident marked a turning point in danmei web series productions, and caused later danmei web series to self-censor themselves and gradually embark on, according to Liu, a process of “de-danmei-fication” (1). Thus, in the second stage, danmei web series adaptations witnessed a surge of productions that used other aspects of the story to cover up the danmei parts, for example, placing the story within traditional Chinese settings and flaunting this cultural background to cohere to mainstream values (Chen & Hu 73). However, these cultural danmei web series still kept identifiable depictions of homoerotic relationships.²³ From *The Raccoon*²⁴ (2016) to *Love Is More Than a Word*²⁵ (2016), cultural danmei web series achieved considerable success, thus were able to open up new genres in the third

²¹ 《类似爱情》

²² 《上瘾》

²³ A major problem with examining danmei web series made in the past few years is that, after their initial airing, they might be asked by the censors to recut and leave out certain parts; thus, the version that we currently find on the Internet might be very different from the original version. For example, in *Love Is More Than a Word*/识汝不识丁, a wedding scene between the two male characters was filmed and was included in the original version, but it was cut out in later edits. Thus, although homosexuality is subdued in *Love Is More Than a Word*, the intention of explicitly showing homosexuality was present in the filmed wedding scene.

²⁴ 《多情愫，今安在》

²⁵ 《识汝不识丁》

stage of danmei web series' development, exemplified by *Till Death Tear Us Apart*²⁶ (2017) that took place in the Republican era (Chen & Hu 73).

Although Chen & Hu's essay was published in September 2018, their case study stops at *Till Death Tear Us Apart*, which was aired in February 2017, and it partially explains why their third stage seemed to end somewhat abruptly. And possibly because of this time gap, they did not take into account the 2017 policy that censored homosexual content in web series completely. Another 2018 essay that nodded at the issue of censorship but also ignored the 2017 policy was Yang Liu's aforementioned essay which points out that danmei web series operate on three different levels: appealing to fans of the original novel, appealing to a wider audience that may not welcome homosexual relationships on screen, and conforming to SAFRT standards, which she only accounted for a policy on TV series issued on March 2nd, 2016 titled "General Rules of TV Production"²⁷ (1–2). Though the essay quotes head of SAFRT TV department Li Jingsheng's words that web series shall receive the same degree of censorship as TV programs (1–2), but the essay does not engage with 2017 policy. Moreover, Liu's paper shies away from examining policies; it rather theorizes the "perfect" model for danmei web series that appeals both to fans and regular audience which, she argues, showcases unimposing heterosexual relationships on supposedly homosexual couples (14), having multiple storylines outside of the romantic plotline (18), employing an aesthetic that stresses beautiful images such as using soft lighting (22), among others. Contrary to Liu's position, this paper stresses the need to change methodologies of research on web series so as to take into account strategies of adaptation in the face of 2017 censorship policy. Before 2017, it was perhaps necessary to think about ways to regulate and improve productions in the industry when creative freedom was guaranteed, but after the 2017 regulations, when the banning of homosexual relationships on-screen almost closed this space off for filmic adaptations of danmei literature, the emphasis should now turn to ways through which web series can portray queer relationships amidst censorship.

Hollywood faced similar challenges from 1930 to 1968 under the Production Code which banned representation of explicit homosexuality in film productions. Nevertheless, directors found ways to hint at the possibilities of queer relationships between the lines and through *mise-en-scene* that led to a number of queer classics even at

²⁶ 《愉此一生》

²⁷ 《电视剧内容制作通则》

the time of stringent censorship. This paper draws upon this approach of reading between the lines and identifying the particular ways in which post-2017 danmei web series *Guardian* (2018) worked to implicitly hint at potential homoerotic relationships. It will also examine the comments and danmus under the series on Youku,²⁸ as well as discussions of *Guardian* on the Chinese social media Weibo to theorize ways through which actual spectators interact with the platform to protect the series from censorship. The role that actual spectators play in decoding queerness in danmei web series cannot be overlooked or dismissed, and *Guardian* demonstrates interesting spectator-platform relationships that point to the possibility of future cooperative alignment between spectators and platforms to together combat censorship.

The 2018 web series *Guardian* was adapted from a popular online danmei novel *Zhenhun*²⁹ posted on Jinjiang Literature City from November 2012 to March 2013,³⁰ written by the long time column author, Priest. Priest started writing on Jinjiang in 2007, and has by now produced 19 danmei novels and 10 heterosexual romances which are still available for viewing on the Jinjiang website. Her most popular novels are her lengthier danmei works that range from 400,000 to 960,000 characters.³¹ Priest's works have frequented Jinjiang's chart for most well-received novels, and several of her danmei as well as romance works have been issued in print by commercial publishing houses, although any description of sexual activities and majority of overtly explicit depictions of homosexuality have been deleted or replaced by expressions of familial bonding in the publishing process. An online reader who purchased the print version of Priest's 2016 novel, *Modu*,³² noted that what got deleted and what passed the censors was highly ambiguous; a line declaring the homosexual relationship between two male characters in the original online novel, "he is my lover", has been replaced in the print version by "he is my family," but another homoerotic scene of the male protagonist licking his

²⁸Danmu is a type of short comment (usually no longer than 50 words, but it depends on the platform and nature of the video) that will scroll across the screen on the video. To avoid blocking the video, users can adjust the transparency of danmus or disable them all together. Because *Guardian* was taken down in August and was made available again in November 2018, a lot of original danmus were lost during the process; thus, this paper also presents an image from archives of danmus when *Guardian* was initially aired (Fig.2).

²⁹《镇魂》

³⁰www.jjwxc.net

³¹Comparing the points that each novel earned, which is calibrated from the number of hits the novel received, the top 5 most popular novels that Priest had written are all danmei novels. See <http://www.jjwxc.net/oneauthor.php?authorid=145956>

³²《默读》

lover's fingers has not been deleted,³³ exemplifying the space of ambiguity and freedom which exists despite stringent censorship. Priest's numerous works have also been adapted into radio episodes aired on online radio platforms like *Maoer FM*,³⁴ exhibiting the potential and flexibility of her works for adaptation into other media. Six of her danmei works and two of her romances have been sold for filmic and animation adaptations. In the case of *Guardian*, which was the first filmic adaptation of her works to come out, Priest was not involved in the adaptation process,³⁵ and would have likely sold full adaptation rights to the production company.

The web series *Guardian* (2018) was directed by Zhou Yuanzhou, an experienced cinematographer turned director of well-known Chinese TV series such as *Sparrow*³⁶ (2015). Prior to *Guardian*, Zhou had worked as a cinematographer on only one web series *Naughty Princess*³⁷ (2015). The first draft of *Guardian*'s script came out in the winter of 2016,³⁸ the production of *Guardian* was finished in 2017, and *Guardian* was aired in June 2018, stepping on key moments when SAFRT announced and actually put into practice stricter censorship on danmei web series. After the huge success *Guardian* received in the summer of 2018, it was suddenly removed from Youku on August 2nd, days after the season was finished. But the platform unofficially reassured the fans that *Guardian* was only temporarily taken down, and would be back soon.³⁹ The reasons behind this censoring remain unknown, however, a photo taken of an email possibly sent to Youku by SAFRT was widely circulated on the Internet, which asked Youku to take down *Guardian* for "...promoting feudalism and superstition, exaggerating the dark sides of society, and containing violent images" (Fig.1). It is not certain whether feudalism and superstition were simply guises to dissemble the real reason of curtailing danmei tendencies, but when the series was back on Youku in November 2018, some but not all homoerotic scenes and other "violent" scenes were eliminated from the story. On the whole, there were no major changes in the story, as an average of 10 to 20 seconds were cut out from the majority

³³ See <https://www.zhihu.com/question/296097445>

³⁴ 猫耳FM

³⁵ Her name was not in the credits, but it would have been highly likely that the production team communicated with her.

³⁶ 《麻雀》

³⁷ 《调皮王妃》

³⁸ See http://www.sohu.com/a/243404680_100156659

³⁹ See <https://kknews.cc/zh-my/entertainment/z5blq3a.html>

of episodes, with only a few episodes receiving cuts of up to five minutes.⁴⁰

Comparing *Guardian* with Priest's original novel in conjunction with the 2017 policy would illuminate how the story was compromised in view of censorship in the process of adaptation. One major change was shifting the background setting of the story from mythology to science. The original novel exists in a world where an abyss and spirits coexist with the urban space, and the male protagonist Zhao Yunlan is head of a mysterious government department named "Special Investigation Office," which looks into supernatural cases that cannot be explained by science. Zhao, as the "guardian," has the ability to see spirits, and is in charge of communicating and cooperating with regulators of the abyss regarding cases of spirits doing harm to inhabitants of Earth. During Zhao's investigations he meets Shen Wei, who is ostensibly a university professor, but later reveals himself to be the regulator of the abyss, the one guarding the souls, also a long-time acquaintance of Zhao's, who never revealed his dual identities up to this point. As the two male protagonists bond while solving cases and develop feelings for each other, the truth of their past lives is uncovered. Zhao, a human on the surface, is actually a reincarnation of Kunlun, the mountain god in Chinese folklore, who regains his powers by the end of the novel. This mythological setting of the original novel, although taken from actual Chinese folklore, would not have likely passed chapter 4.4.1 of the 2017 policy,⁴¹ which states that web series should not "...promote superstition that runs counter to science." This includes "...propagating superstitious thoughts of the soul possession, reincarnation, witchcraft and other feudal superstitions" and "...propagating ignorance, evil, grotesque and other aspects of feudal culture." Therefore, the parallel existence of an abyss with the human world and Zhao being Kunlun, a god-like figure, would have made it difficult for the series to pass the censors. Due to these reasons, the adaptation took a scientific turn and imagined a futuristic world where ordinary humans, genetically modified humans, and aliens coexist on planet named Haixing due to an alien invasion hundreds of years ago; the ordinary and genetically modified humans live on the surface, while aliens reside underground. Thanks to physics instead of superpowers, Shen Wei, who regulates the social order of the underground world, is able to travel between the underworld and the surface at will, while other aliens are not allowed to do so. But some

⁴⁰See https://weibointl.api.weibo.cn/share/64921195.html?weibo_id=4305601758310178

⁴¹For full policy, see <https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E7%BD%91%E7%BB%9C%E8%A7%86%E5%90%AC%E8%8A%82%E7%9B%AE%E5%86%85%E5%AE%B9%E5%AE%A1%E6%A0%B8%E9%80%9A%E5%88%99/21508108?noadapt=1>

still manage to travel illegally to the surface to cause harm and the Special Investigation Office works with Shen to transport the “smugglers” back to the underground, a place that resembles an abyss and has no sunlight. Most of the remaining notions of magic are explained by physics and electronics, and one of Zhao’s co-worker, a monk in the original novel, is turned into a tech-guy, while Zhao’s past life as Kunlun is eliminated altogether. Although textually the whole story masks itself under a cover of science, the look of the web series is nowhere near scientific, but still resembles the mythological and the yin-yang worlds of the abyss in the original novel. The act of loosely applying a mask of science over the story so as to pass the censors demonstrates the ambiguity and looseness of censorship. Although the story was altered according to the change of background, and new characters were added in, on the whole the general trajectory of the series remained true to the original novel.

However, with the 2017 policy, the homosexual affair central to any danmei novel was officially denied in web series; thus, posing *Guardian* with its biggest dilemma: how to adapt a danmei novel when danmei was banned on-screen. The 2017 policy was improvised at the 2012 “China Internet Audiovisual Program Service Self-discipline Convention,”⁴² a convention of “self-discipline” that roughly sketched out the code of conduct web series producers should follow; for example, reject feudalism, embrace traditional Chinese virtues, not produce contents forbidden by law, etc. The 2012 policy did not specifically mention homosexuality, although same-sex marriages remain illegal in China and homosexuality is banned in TV productions, and only stated that web series should not promote “obscene and erotic contents.” However, the exact definition of what is considered “obscene and erotic content” has long been highly ambiguous in various disciplines, exemplified by Hockx’s discussion of the term in censorship of online literature. In chapter three of Hockx’s book *Internet Literature in China* (2015) on online fiction and postsocialist publishing, he points out that while so-called “obscene materials” containing erotic contents are banned in online fiction, the censors also stated that “literary and artistic works of artistic value that contain erotic contents are not regarded as obscene materials” (117). This ambiguity of where to draw the bottom line between artistic and vulgar, obscene and not obscene, makes it hard even for policy makers to distinguish between them (118–119). Precisely due to the ambiguity surrounding the terms in the

⁴² 《中国网络视听节目服务自律公约》 For full policy, see <https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E4%B8%AD%E5%9B%BD%E4%BA%92%E8%81%94%E7%BD%91%E8%A7%86%E5%90%AC%E8%8A%82%E7%9B%AE%E6%9C%8D%E5%8A%A1%E8%87%AA%E5%BE%8B%E5%85%AC%E7%BA%A6>

2012 policy, web series before 2017 experienced considerable amount of freedom, and danmei web series, although rejecting the heterosexual norm, thrived. However, this ambiguity towards what is considered obscene materials in web series was overturned in the 2017 policy. In chapter 4.8.6, the 2017 policy specifically points out types of obscene and erotic content that are prohibited:

1. Specifically showing prostitution, fornication, rape, masturbation and other plots;
2. Demonstrate abnormal sexual relationships and sexual behaviors such as incest, homosexuality, sexual perversion, sexual assault, sexual abuse and sexual violence;
3. Display and promote unhealthy views of marriage and love, such as extramarital affairs, one-night stand, sexual freedom, wife change, etc.
4. Showing lengthy and intimate scenes in bed, of kissing, caressing, showering, and similar implicit and explicit performances related to sexual activity;
5. Scenes, lines, music and sound effects with obvious sexual provocation, sexual harassment, sexual insults or similar effects;
6. Display male and female sex organs, or cover them with only limbs or minimal clothing;
7. Contain sexually explicit scenes, lines, music, sound effects that are unacceptable to the underaged;
8. Use vulgar language, etc.;
9. Use adult movies, erotic movies, R-rated films, sneak shots, nudity, and various other provocative texts or images as the title, classification, or promotion strategies of videos.⁴³

With the issuing of the 2017 policy that officially groups homosexuality within the realm of obscene and erotic content that is being censored, danmei web series now face a dilemma starkly different from that in the past. While previous danmei web series can voluntarily “de-danmei-fy” themselves to appeal to a larger audience outside the danmei community, the 2017 policy makes void the nature of danmei in web series and forces such adaptations to conform to heteronormativity. Thus, post-2017 danmei web series are forced to enter into a new stage where they need to respect the ethics of adaptation and try to keep the fanbase of the original novel by staying authentic and fulfilling the fans’ aspirations to see homoeroticism on screen, as they simultaneously struggle with the policy’s banning of explicit homosexuality and have to code queer contents in ways subtle enough to

⁴³For full policy, see <https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E7%BD%91%E7%BB%9C%E8%A7%86%E5%90%AC%E8%8A%82%E7%9B%AE%E5%86%85%E5%AE%B9%E5%AE%A1%E6%A0%B8%E9%80%9A%E5%88%99/21508108?noadapt=1>

pass the censors. This requires a combination of two forces: the will of the production team to code homosexual content, and the acuteness of the spectators to decode queerness. *Guardian* proved itself to be a successful attempt in doing this, and has set an example for future danmei adaptations under censorship.

Interviews of director Zhou Yuanzhou and two male lead actors Bai Yu and Zhu Yilong show that they have all read the original novel and have constantly used it as a reference to shape their acting and comprehension of the characters.⁴⁴ Bai recounts his concern that the danmei aspects would be hard to pass the censors after reading the original novel, but he also points out that although the story had to undergo major alternations, he believed the key to adapting *Guardian* was to preserve the authenticity of the characters' personalities, and to try to portray the characters in the most true-to-novel sense.⁴⁵ This intent of bringing queerness in the series resulted in many improvised moments of homoeroticism. For example, in one scene, Zhao, who is drunk, leans on Shen's shoulder. Shen pushes him away, but as Zhao leans on him the second time, Shen lends Zhao his shoulder and even adjusts his posture to make Zhao more comfortable. According to the interviews, this scene was not in the script,⁴⁶ but the director kept it, referring it to the original novel and deeming that such interactions were plausible. The actors' performance in this scene intricately balances the level of homophobia and homosociality.

Also contrary to the common tactic of de-danmei-fication which involves assigning heterosexual love interests to the male protagonists in order to reduce homosexual possibilities between the two, *Guardian* did not introduce female love interests for the two male protagonists, thus, keeping the potential for queerness. However, there is a female character named Zhu Hong in the original novel who has a crush on Zhao, and also expresses her love for him, but gets refused by Zhao as he is in a relationship with Shen. However, Zhu, portrayed as a strong and independent woman with a "butchness" to her character, moves on quite quickly, and later becomes supportive towards the homosexual relationship between Zhao and Shen. The fact that Zhu is rejected by Zhao, with a cliché reason saying "you deserve better," eliminates the potential for a heterosexual plot line. Notably, Zhao's answer is generic enough to leave a considerable space open for interpretations as to why Zhao really rejects Zhu and, in the eyes of danmei

⁴⁴For Zhu's and Bai's interview, see <https://www.weibo.com/5445663911/GmxTMwP2C?type=comment>

⁴⁵See <http://ent.sina.com.cn/v/m/2018-07-28/doc-ihfxszf7851004.shtml>

⁴⁶See <http://kuaibao.qq.com/s/20180709A1BCK000?refer=spider>

fans, affirms the homosexual relationship between Zhao and Shen that they wish to perceive. Moreover, the character construction of Zhu being both butch and feminine, independent and caring, also signals to a type of woman different from the overly-feminine woman with little agency in traditional heterosexual narratives, thus, appealing to danmei fans' needs for strong female characters on-screen. But this plot line of Zhu having a crush on Zhao is possibly kept in the web series to signify a potential heterosexual relationship for the censors' approval.

The codes of queerness are also embedded in various aspects of character construction and *mise-en-scene*. The character Shen Wei embodies a softer masculinity that stands out from the typical image of the tough male in heterosexual narratives. In the series, Shen has dual identities: on the one hand he is a gentle and sophisticated university professor, on the other, he is the powerful guardian of the underworld, often appearing as a fully cloaked and masked figure holding a wand. Shen's body, freely morphing between these two starkly different identities signals a queerness in the character. This queerness is further supported by the inherent softness in Shen's personality. When he is cloaked and restores order between the two worlds, he abides by rules but often emits sympathy for aliens that meant no harm. In both the identities, he protects and cares for Zhao, cooks for him, tidies up his room, and voluntarily cuts himself and uses his own blood as medicine for Zhao who is harmed by evil powers, thus strengthening the bond between these two male characters. The queerness in Shen is also highlighted by the forty-four sets of costumes that Shen wears throughout the series, marking the series' emphasis on beauty as central to the nature of danmei.⁴⁷ Apart from the sheer number of costumes, the orientation towards details of Shen's dressing, like stuffing the ends of his tie into his shirt when he sits down, and using a cuff to hold the sleeves of his shirt in place (which is initially introduced by Zhu Yilong and later becomes Shen's signature), flag a queerness in Shen through *mise-en-scene*.

The ending of *Guardian*, however, sets fans of the original novel in rage. While the original novel ended on a happy ending where Zhao and Shen lived happily ever after, *Guardian* ends on a tragic note, with the two characters sacrificing themselves to restore the order of both worlds by bringing sunlight to the underworld. The death of both the characters can be seen as signaling towards the failure of a

⁴⁷See <https://www.xuehua.us/2018/06/23/%E3%80%8A%E9%95%87%E9%AD%82%E3%80%8B%E5%89%A7%E7%BB%84%E4%B8%BA%E4%BD%95%E8%BF%99%E4%B9%88%E7%A9%B7%EF%BC%9F%E9%92%B1%E9%83%BD%E7%BB%99%E6%B2%88%E5%B7%8D%E4%B9%B0%E8%A1%A3%E6%9C%8D%E4%BA%86%EF%BC%8C/>

potential homosexual relationship, but it still leaves a relatively queer space open for alternative interpretations. Towards the end of the series, we are informed that in the aftermath light is brought to the underworld, and aliens and humans live happily ever after. The series doesn't end as this articulation of a happy future fades to black, but instead, with a fade in, the screen shows a cosmic space where both Zhao and Shen are amidst the stars and the universe; they say goodbye to each other, but vow to meet again in another time and space. In this supernatural space between worlds and time, the two characters can be seen as fantasizing about a world where homosexuality is made possible and legal, and the series gives its best shot at queerness at the very end by not closing the story off but by preserving the chance of re-encounter.

The issuing of the 2017 policy designates that post-2017 danmei web series either face extinction or try to find alternative ways out that nod to both censorship and the danmei community. In the face of regulations, danmei web series do not have much freedom to express queerness but it can still be encoded within the series for spectators. And it is highly likely that queerness did get through to the danmei fans judging from the immense popularity that the web series received.⁴⁸ During the course of its airing, from 13th June to 25th July 2018, *Guardian* received over 28 trillion hits⁴⁹ making it one of the top three most popular web series aired around the time.⁵⁰ Up to 26th July, the official discussion page of *Guardian* accumulated 110.4 trillion hits, had almost 1 million fans, and 16.74 million posts were written about the series, making it the number one discussed web series on Chinese social media, Weibo. This can be attributed to a group of fans who named themselves “Guardian Girls (or Boys),” who were often readers and fans of the original novel or fans of larger danmei culture. Guardian Girls actively initiated heated discussions of the series on social media, creatively reworked existing material and produced fan clips, memes, and funny posts that went viral. Some of these included screenshots with changed subtitles to parody the hidden homosexual relationship between the two characters or recuts of all homoerotic moments in the series. Although the series affirmed no actual homosexual relationship between the two male protagonists, Guardian Girls seem quite content with reworking existing material and shaping it according to their homoerotic fantasies. Thus, even under censorship

⁴⁸For official statistics, see https://www.weibo.com/6126633570/GrGi3kTjt?type=comment#_rnd1554481078384

⁴⁹The number is no longer available on Youku, as Youku announced that it will no longer disclose how many hits a series has received on its website. See <https://tech.sina.com.cn/i/2019-01-18/doc-ihqfskcn8187531.shtml>

⁵⁰<http://news.guduomedia.com/?p=29007>

which bans explicit depictions of homosexuality on-screen, fan's aspirations have been fulfilled in the subtle play of homosexuality on-screen.

Further examining the danmus and comments Guardian Girls posted under the series indicate that danmei fans are aware of the current challenges faced by danmei web series adaptations. Guardian Girls, knowing that the danmus and comments they post on the platform were very likely to be monitored, self-censored themselves from explicitly mentioning the danmei aspects of the series in their posts so as to ensure a successful and "safe" airing of the series. As a substitution they invented other terms to implicitly allude to homosexuality, for example, calling the relationship between Zhao and Shen "Socialist brotherhood," which refers to homosexuality that could not be made explicit under state censorship (Fig. 2). As they initiated heated discussions over the series on social media, the platform Youku also benefited economically from the immense popularity that Guardian Girls brought to the series and to the streaming platform. As a result, Youku bought outdoor advertising venues for *Guardian* on July 20th 2018 at HuanQiuGang Twin Towers in Shanghai to specially thank Guardian Girls and further promote the series. *Guardian* exemplifies how danmei web series can still effectively code homosexual content for danmei fans even under censorship, and bring considerable commercial revenue to both the series and the platform. Thus ensuring that platforms are more likely to continue to invest in future danmei web series due to their lucrative potentials, and creating a cooperative alignment between the platform and danmei fans that together combats censorship's curbing of this genre.

Although the 2017 policy makes it hard for danmei adaptations to survive and for the platforms to keep producing and airing future danmei web series, even as Chinese society is in urgent need cultural productions opposing the dominant gender discourses and mainstream cultures by challenge state censorship, *Guardian's* success hopefully makes way for more danmei adaptations to come.



Works Cited

- “An Urgent Announcement about Strict Action against Online Obscene and Pornographic Fiction/关于严厉查处网络淫秽色情小说的紧急通知” 1 August, 2007, http://www.china.com.cn/policy/txt/2007/09/08/content_8840517.html.
- Chen, Weihua and Qin Hu. “A Study on Online Tanbi Drama in China in the 21st Century/新世纪中国耽美网络剧类型化研究.” *Media Observer/传媒观察*, Issue 9, September 2018. pp. 71–77.
- China Internet Audiovisual Program Service Self-discipline Convention/中国网络视听节目服务自律公约 (2012.7.13). <https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E4%B8%AD%E5%9B%BD%E4%BA%92%E8%81%94%E7%BD%91%E8%A7%86%E5%90%AC%E8%88%2%E7%9B%AE%E6%9C%8D%E5%8A%A1%E8%87%AA%E5%BE%8B%E5%85%AC%E7%BA%A6>.
- Feng, Jin. “‘Addicted to Beauty’: Consuming and Producing Web-based Chinese ‘Danmei’ Fiction at Jinjiang.” *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture*, vol. 21, no. 2, Fall, 2009, pp. 1–41.
- General Rules For Reviewing Netcasting Content/网络视听节目内容审核通则(2017.6.30).<https://baike.baidu.com/item/%E7%BD%91%E7%BB%9C%E8%A7%86%E5%90%AC%E8%8A%82%E7%9B%AE%E5%86%85%E5%AE%B9%E5%A%E%A1%E6%A0%B8%E9%80%9A%E5%88%99/21508108?noadapt=1>.
- “Guardian Back Again After Three Months, Danmu and Scenes Cut Out/镇魂时隔三月重新上架 弹幕减少经典剧情遭删.” *Sina Entertainment/新浪娱乐*, 12 Nov. 2018. <http://ent.sina.com.cn/v/m/2018-11-12/doc-ihnstwwr1134198.shtml>.
- Hockx, Michel. “Introduction”, “One Internet Literature in China”, “Three The Bottom Line”, in *Internet Literature in China*. Columbia University Press, 2015, pp. 1–58, 110–140.
- Liu, Yang. *Study on the Adaption Strategy of the Chinese Network Tanbi Novel in the Receptional Aesthetic Vision/接受美学视域下中国大陆网络耽美小说影视改编策略研究*. 2018. Chang’an University, Master’s dissertation. <http://kns.c>

nki.net/KCMS/detail/detail.aspx?dbcode=CMFD&dbname=CMFD201901&filename=1018791991.nh&v=MTk5Mzk4ZVgxTHV4WVM3RGgxVDNxVHJXTTFGckNVUkxPZlkrWm1GaXZsVk w3S1ZGMjZGclN4SDlqRnJwRWJQSVI=.

Priest's column on Jinjiang Literature City. <http://www.jjwxc.net/oneauthor.php?authorid=145956>.

“Self-regulation of Banning the Circulation of Obscene, Pornographic or Other Malicious Information on Websites/互联网站禁止传播淫秽、色情等不良信息自律规范”, 10 June 2004, <http://www.china.com.cn/chinese/MATERIAL/583721.htm>.

She'er. “Interview of Guardian's director Zhou Yuanzhou: Producing the Most Popular Web Series in This Summer/专访镇魂导演周远舟 主创泪洒地君殿 今夏最热网剧诞生始末.” *Sohu/搜狐*, 26 July 2018, <http://www.sohu.com/a/243404680100156659>.

Wang, Huimin. “Development of Chinese Web Series as Subculture/中国网络剧的亚文化生存与演进.” *Media Observer/传媒观察*, March 2018, pp. 13–16.

Xie, Yan. “Reasons Behind TV and Web Series Adaptation of Online Novels/网络小说改编电视剧及网络剧兴起成因分析.” *Radio & TV Journal/视听*, August 2018, pp. 57–58.

Yang, Guobin. “Chinese Internet Literature and the Changing Field of Print Culture.” *From Woodblocks to the Internet: Chinese Publishing and Print Culture in Transition, circa 1800 to 2008*, edited by Cynthia Brokaw and Christopher A. Reed, Brill, 2010, pp. 333–352.

Yang, Ling and Yanrui Xu. “Danmei, Xianqing, and the making of a queer online public sphere in China.” *Communication and the Public*, vol. 1, no. 2, 2016, pp. 251–256.

Zhou, Shu Yan. “The Subversive Power of Female Fantasy: Queering Boy's Love Fandom on the Chinese Internet.” *Reimagining Masculinities: Beyond Masculinist Epistemology*, edited by Frank G. Karioris and Cassandra Loeser, Oxford: Inter-Disciplinary Press, 2014, pp. 25–42.

Zhou, Yuanzhou. *Guardian/镇魂*. Shanghai Shiyue Entertainment Co. Ltd, 2018. https://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XMzY2MDI5NDM0MA==.html?spm=a2h0k.11417342.soresults.dtitle&s=dca053efbfbd36efbfd.

A Geography Animated with Intentions: Reclaiming Indigenous Vitality through Land-Based Decolonial Struggles in Frantz Fanon's Algeria Writings

Nanya Jhingran

In the wake of resurgent engagement with Frantz Fanon's oeuvre through the recent publication of Jean Khalfa and Robert J. C. Young's collection of his previously unpublished writings titled *Alienation and Freedom* (2018), we must acknowledge the relevance of Fanon's political and psychiatric writings to our neocolonial present. Since their publication, *Black Skin, White Masks*¹ as well as *Wretched of the Earth*² have received much critical and scholarly attention, with the latter having become a touchstone text for revolutionary movements such as the Black Panther Party, among others. However, despite these radical engagements Fanon's work has been unevenly canonized with certain parts of the aforementioned texts gaining great traction and other works such as *A Dying Colonialism*³ and *Toward the African Revolution*⁴ remaining relatively obscure. One of the results of this unevenness is that we stand to lose the nuances that emerge only from proleptic readings of these earlier texts. This paper argues that Fanon's observation of the Manichean divide between colonizer/colonized as that between life/death or mobility/immobility must be understood specifically as a critique of settler colonialism through a reading of *Wretched of the Earth*, *Toward the African Revolution*, and *A Dying Colonialism*. In particular, it meditates on Fanon's argument around geology, geography, and infrastructure in colonial and revolutionary Algeria to demonstrate that self-determined land-based sovereignty is fundamental to Fanon's vision of radical decolonization. In order to fully mobilize Fanon's thought in our neocolonial present, one in which structural adjustment, economic liberalization, and corporatized land grabs are displacing millions from their indigenous lands all over the Global South, we must pay heed to his observation that a decolonial discourse of national development emerges out of the anticolonial revolution and enables the re-establishment of relationality between the land and the native population of Algeria.

¹Editor's Note (*hereafter referred to as Ed. N.*): Originally published in French as *Peau noire, masques blancs* in 1952.

²Ed. N.: Originally published in French as *Les Damnées de la Terre* in 1961.

³Ed. N.: Originally published in French as *L'An V de la révolution algérienne* in 1959.

⁴Ed. N.: Originally published in French as *Pour la révolution africaine: Écrits politiques* in 1969.

In order to be successful, contemporary anticolonial efforts must pay attention to the uneven geographies of neocolonialism and capitalist imperialism which Fanon signals in his Algeria writings. Our efforts at decolonization must be informed by a critical understanding of the geopolitics of global capitalism. Global capitalist expansion is informed by the drive to possess land and resources by undermining indigenous peoples' sovereignty, survival, and humanity. While on the one hand global capitalism has enabled voluntary mobility of the middle and upper classes across the Global South, it has also forced a far larger percentage of the earth's population into poverty and non-voluntary refugee migration. We must, therefore, frame the emergent discourse on cosmopolitanism and world citizenship within a recognition of the large disparity between voluntary and forced migration. Additionally, in the wake of the 20th century, which saw a wave of anticolonial nationalist revolutions give way to young independent nation-states across the Global South, much critique is laid upon nationalism in view of the failure of the nation-state model to fully secure economic or political sovereignty in many post-independence nations.⁵

These intellectual and economic preoccupations (in)form the selective applications of Fanon's revolutionary thoughts such that his globalisms are elevated at the expense of his geographically- and nationally-specific analyses are obscured. Gautam Premnath, in his piece "Remembering Fanon, Decolonizing Diaspora," powerfully critiques the deployment of Fanonian thought for the defense of notions of diaspora and hybridity that vacate the crucial role of nationalism in anticolonialism. Premnath observes that one of the effects of canonizing *Black Skin, White Masks* is that "...such work tends to marginalize the complex understanding of 'national consciousness' derived from the experience of decolonizing Algeria" (66). He demonstrates that these pre-revolutionary pre-Algerian texts are quickly taken up by Western

⁵In the field of postcolonial studies, some foundational critiques of nationalism and anticolonial national discourse include Homi Bhabha's *Nation and Narration* (1990) and Gayatri Spivak's *Critique of Postcolonial Reason* (1999). Homi Bhabha critiques nationalist discourse for maintaining the authoritarian tendencies characteristic of the project of modernity. In response, he hails Fanon's claim that "national consciousness, which is not nationalism, is the only thing that will give us an international dimension" to make a case for an internationalist idea of the nation which resides in the margin and is ambivalent, or "Janus faced" regarding its borders and polity. In so doing, however, Bhabha divorces the geographical situatedness and distinctly anti-colonial basis of Fanon's idea of the nation which is unambivalently opposed to colonization (4). Spivak, on the other hand, critiques the discourse of nationalism for consolidating the figure of the "third world woman" as an instrumentalized stand-in for the developmental needs of the nation, and as the terrain and symbol of national authenticity to be shielded from "western" influence (244–248).

critics because “...the narrative of racialization coincides neatly with the narrative of modern individuation” and that such deployment ultimately “...breaks off the dialectical drama of Fanon’s perpetual questioning, and the manner in which his writings on Algeria respond to the dilemmas voiced in earlier writings” (Premnath 67). It is, therefore, only by paying attention to the dialectical development of his thought across texts, especially in his Algeria writings, that we can responsibly and fully understand his philosophy.⁶

This paper, in particular, engages with the question of decolonization and nationalism and builds on Premnath’s work to argue that we must take into account Fanon’s discussion of the crucial role geography and land play in fomenting a revolutionary nationalism and national consciousness in Algeria before, during, and after the Algerian revolution. The primary conceit of this argument is that by contextualizing Fanon’s work within this line of inquiry, we may be able to counteract previous deployments of his thought that have abstracted his very specific critique of French settler colonialism in Algeria. This paper will demonstrate that Fanon prioritizes decolonizing the relationship to land and developing a land-based nationalism as necessary steps in the anti-colonial struggle. For Fanon, this approach emerges as imperative to the development of a nation that can break out of both the immobility imposed by colonialism as well as the enduring economic shackles imposed by neocolonial infrastructures of trade and production.⁷

⁶Both Neil Lazarus (1993), and Benita Parry (1987) have written against the blanket repudiations of nationalist discourse that emerged in the 80s and defended the need to pay attention to the affordances and capacities of nationalist thought in the radical anticolonial vein. In “Disavowing Decolonization,” Lazarus argues that much recent critique of nationalism as an ideological paradigm takes post-45 nationalisms as their object of critique. In turn, Lazarus makes a case for “think[ing] differently about nationalism-above all in the ongoing context of anti-imperialist struggle” (71). Benita Parry, whose argument is cited in Lazarus’ paper, positions Bhabha and Spivak’s deconstructive approach towards colonial discourse as in tension with Fanon’s designificatory approach and argues that we question “the politics of projects which dissolve the binary opposition colonial self/colonized other, encoded in colonialist language as a dichotomy necessary to domination, but also differently inscribed in the discourse of liberation as a dialectic of conflict and a call to arms?” (30).

⁷This paper reads Fanon’s work as theorizing a form of anti-colonial revolutionary nationalism which is founded upon a decolonized relationship between the indigenous body and indigenous land. While Fanon’s work is based in Algeria and takes the French colonization of Algeria and the Algerian anti-colonial revolution as its subject of analysis, his theories are applicable beyond this geopolitical location. As such, this paper makes a claim for a reading protocol for Fanon’s theory of decolonization rather than a reading protocol for Algerian history. To that degree, any biases

Frantz Fanon begins “Colonial War and Mental Disorders” by demonstrating that contrary to popular justifications, the colonizing power takes no interest in the humanity of the colonized:

We must remember in any case that a colonized people is not just a dominated people. Under the German occupation the French remained human beings. Under the French occupation the Germans remained human beings. In Algeria there is not simply domination but the decision, literally, to occupy nothing else but a territory. The Algerians, the women dressed in haiks, the palm groves, and the camels form a landscape, the *natural* backdrop for the French presence. (*Wretched of the Earth* 182)

Fanon utilizes theatrical vocabulary to demonstrate that during colonial conquest, Algerian actors become merely the stage upon which the colonizers act. As “the backdrop” of French colonial activity, the colonized lose all agentive capacity as they are objectified and territorialized. The land as well as the people are deemed wild, uninhabitable, and in need of cultivation. For the colonizer, “...cutting railroads through the bush, draining swamps, and ignoring the political and economic existence of the native population are in fact one and the same thing” (*Wretched* 182). The colonized people and the colonized land, when rendered indistinguishable, become the *terra nullius* upon which the colonizing power establishes its institutions and infrastructure. Throughout his oeuvre, Fanon demonstrates how the colonized, by virtue of being denied their vitality, are immobilized in manifold ways. This immobilization takes on the form of a social death, “a death on this side of death, a death in life” (*African Revolution* 13). Reading across Fanon’s work, on the one hand, one encounters the death of the colonized in varied registers—biological, intellectual, psychosomatic, temporal—as well as the arrest of social life in Algeria. On the other hand, however, we find deep webs of dynamic and developing institutions that work together to defend and develop the colonial project. Across his work, therefore, Fanon can be read as charting the matrix of fixity/mobility, arrest/frenzy, and death/vitality to demonstrate how colonial logics of ‘progress’ and ‘innovation’ depend on the production of social death and fractured temporalities, not to mention the death of the colonized body, as the necessary condition for colonial advancement.

The colonized are immobilized, both physically and temporally, by being imagined as coterminous with their land. Although the

that inhere in Fanon’s depiction of colonial Algeria and the anticolonial revolution may be duplicated in this reading and should be subject to critique.

initial image of Algeria presented by Fanon holds the potential for lively co-existence between “the women,” “the palm groves,” and “the camels,” these vital possibilities are negated by colonial conquest as they are relegated to the “*natural* backdrop” (original emphasis) of “French *presence*” (*Wretched* 182; emphasis added). Unlike “French *presence*,” which is dynamically active in time, the colonized are as unmoving and unchanging as the land itself. Vital indigenous networks of cross-species relations are interpreted by the colonizer as untamed nature, laying in wait to be transformed by human labor from raw material into civilization. In the image described above, the (hallucinated) visual fixity of life in Algeria gives it the temporality of geologic time, outside of modern human temporality. In other words, the colonizer imagines the colonized as no different than the occupied land – just like the Earth, the colonized provide stable ground for building upon; just like the Earth, the colonized don’t immediately show the effects of these colonial renovations. In the beginning to “Colonial War and Mental Disorder,” Fanon draws an environmental metaphor to explain the process of decolonization: “...imperialism [...] sows seeds of decay here and there that must be mercilessly rooted *from our land and from our minds*” (*Wretched* 181). In doing so, Fanon recognizes that the forms of violence enacted upon the colonized land and the colonized mind are inseparable, and emphasizes that the process of decolonization must therefore happen for both simultaneously. The stakes of this project emerge through the realization that if the land and the body are not dialectically decolonized, the effects of colonization will continue to unravel not only for the human lifespan but, in the measure of geologic time, for generations to come.

In marking Algeria as undeveloped *terra nullius* where organic life unfolds in the measure of geologic (as opposed to human) time, colonization causes the arrest of Algerian national time. Fanon develops this argument in *Toward the African Revolution* in the chapter titled “Mr. Debre’s Desperate Endeavors” where he states that the “...new time inaugurated by the conquest, [...] is a colonialist time because [it is] occupied by colonialist values” (158). He establishes that colonialist values come to define colonial times thereby negating Algerian values and Algerian time. In order to fully grasp this claim regarding national versus colonialist time, we must read proleptically and pay attention to his arguments around geography. The colonizer spatializes the question of temporality by determining that certain spatial locations inhabit premodern temporalities.⁸ From this it follows

⁸Dipesh Chakrabarty, in his book *Provincializing Europe* (2000), argues that so-called third-world nations were seen to inhabit the “waiting room of history” which he calls ‘Time 2’ in opposition to ‘Time 1’ defined as the “time of modernity” inhab-

that the project of bringing these locations into the time of modernity must needs be a process of spatial restructuring. In this same piece, Fanon argues that the colonial conquest of Algeria, "...since it can be neither sentimental nor intellectual, [...] will be geographic" (*African Revolution* 159). The colonialist is not interested in appealing to the sentimentality or the intellect of the colonized and proceeds on a primarily geographic basis. The colonized human now emerges as another element of the geographic that requires taming and integration. This process denies the humanity of the colonized and, in doing so, erases the fact that this society functions within its native and dynamic temporal structure. Instead, in the colonial period, the human and the land are understood as raw materials to be acquired and developed. Fanon calls this form of colonial territorializing "a geography animated with intentions," and argues that it is this framing of the nation as untamed land which enables France to claim that "...the authority of France in Algeria is a requirement of nature" (*African Revolution* 160). For the French, this empty land must be enfolded into the New World, made habitable for (ostensibly Enlightenment era definitions of) Man, and infused with the temporality of future-oriented development and progress.⁹

French colonialists, therefore, establish territorial claims by framing humans as coterminous with territory and thereby disavowing the possibility of an Algerian humanism. Algeria, replete with all its inhabitants (human and nonhuman), becomes the stilled geographic foundation upon which colonial infrastructure is established. Fanon's choice of terminology for explaining the immobilization of the Algerian is reflective of this process of stilling. In the phase of colonial settlement, Fanon describes Algeria as "...a world compartmentalized, Manichean and *petrified*, a world of statues" (*Wretched* 15; emphasis added). He describes the arrest of the colonized subject in geologic terms: petrification, a process which involves "...the replacement of the soft organic parts of plant or animal remains by inorganic material,

ited by the first-world nations of the Western world. It is this same colonial logic that Fanon brings to our attention which fractures temporality by spatializing (8).

⁹For more work which attends to the "overrepresentation of Man" and the European colonial settlement of land in the interest of civilizing the "savage," see Sylvia Wynter (2003), Katherine McKittrick (2006), among others. In particular, Wynter's exploration in "Unsettling the coloniality of Truth/Power/Being" of the colonial invention of the category of rights-bearing Man as engendering a definition of the Human which carried within it definition of non-Human others draws on and extends Fanon's idea that decolonization would give birth to a new concept of human (pp 267–270). Katherine McKittrick, in her book *Demonic Grounds*, also reads Fanon (among others) to argue that "deep space" and "a poetics of landscape" are crucial to understanding colonial spatial infrastructures as active sites of contestation (23–35).

esp. calcium carbonate or silica, often preserving the original structure of the organism” (“petrification, n.”). Petrification, the process whereby life sediments into rocks, which are then mined to yield raw materials for colonial infrastructure. Thus, colonial infrastructure extracts not only labor but also vital energy from indigenous life.

It is important to note, however, that Fanon does not claim that native life is entirely fossilized in the process of conquest. He tactically maintains that colonized life presents “a *virtually* petrified background” (*Wretched* 15). For Fanon, the stillness of the native can be read as a sort of crouching in preparation; he notes that for the colonized “...the impulse to take the colonist’s place maintains a constant muscular tonus [...]” and that “...it is not that he is anxious or terrorized, but he is always ready to change his role as game for that of hunter” (*Wretched* 16, 17). Fanon hereby preserves the existential potential for action and mobility by limiting his claim to say that “...on the inside the colonist achieves only a pseudo-petrification” (*Wretched* 17). It is, however, still important to meditate on this petrification, incomplete as it is, in order to understand its undeniable implications: the immobilized bodies of the colonized are unable to fight the feverish development of colonial infrastructure in the initial phase and subsequently become locked into their interiority (“on the inside”) while remaining frozen as rocks on their land. No authentic mobility can be achieved unless this interiority is translated into material action carried out in physical space. Frozen bodies must regain their lost dynamism in order for decolonization to take effect.

This possibility of the native enacting his desire in public space is eradicated by the colonizer who demobilizes not only the natives but also their culture. For Fanon, the term ‘culture’ partly describes the interactions between people and their land-based infrastructure. In “Racism and Culture,” he defines culture as “...certain constellations of institutions, established by particular men, in the framework of precise geographical areas” (*African Revolution* 31). By providing this particular definition, he clarifies culture as that which is both socially- and geographically-specific to the lifeworld of the native. Most strikingly, the cultural apparatus articulated by the people is dynamic and open to change; he states that it is “...characteristic of a culture [...] to be open, permeated by spontaneous, generous and *fertile* lines of force” (*African Revolution* 34). The colonizer, however, is set to deny this sort of dynamism to the colonized. The colonized peoples’ culture is therefore taken to be as static as they are thought to be. Producing effects similar to Edward Said’s theory of orientalism, Fanon describes that when approached and (re)formulated by the colonizer, the native culture becomes ossified, static, and resistant to change and dynamism.

By being ascribed the form of so many discovered artefacts, native ways of living are not imagined to be constantly evolving to serve the indigenous population. As a result, "...the [native] culture [...] both present and mummified, [...] testifies against its members" (*African Revolution* 34). The colonized are therefore fixed in their totality and placed into a framework of meanings that is foreign to them, to the degree that "...concern with "respecting the [indigenous] culture of the native populations" [...] betrays a determination to objectify, to confine, to imprison, to harden" (*African Revolution* 34). Given that native life is understood as less-than-human, the colonizer's approach to native culture is always already archaeological, rather than anthropological; it proceeds in a taxonomic rather than dynamic fashion. The colonizer is similarly unable to preserve the vitality and dynamism of indigenous institutions which necessarily share a dialogic relationship with indigenous culture.

During the colonial period, therefore, the dynamism of indigenous culture and infrastructure is frozen to make way for the colonizer's mobility. By the way of facetious claims of respect for the culture, the colonizer also deadens those living institutions "...in which qualities of dynamism, of growth, of depth can be recognized" and replaces them with "...archaic, inert institutions, [...] patterned like a caricature of formerly fertile institutions" (*African Revolution* 34). These new institutions are "archaic" and "inert" precisely because they are driven by the colonizer's fixed definition of the indigenous culture – a definition which does not imagine this culture as living, adaptive, or dynamic. Fanon argues that as a result of this refusal to acknowledge the vitality of indigenous life, even though colonial institutions mimic the indigenous ones that they have replaced, they are incompetent to fulfill the needs of native population by failing to recognize and respond to their changing needs. In so doing, this colonial infrastructure levels deep psychosomatic injury on indigenous people's minds and bodies.¹⁰

¹⁰For a compelling exploration of Frantz Fanon's arguments regarding the harms produced by colonial psychiatry through the institution of the colonial hospital, refer to Gibson and Beneduce's *Frantz Fanon, Psychiatry and Politics* (2017). In particular, Gibson and Beneduce explore Fanon's argument regarding the failure of Western psychiatry in the colonial context and corroborate that colonial infrastructures not only fail to provide care to the colonized subaltern but also trap them in medical diagnoses that pathologize them: "Late colonial society, in other words, could produce only files—official versions of the colonized, masked in the discourse of an ethnopsychiatry that presumed to understand the Arab mind and then quickly pathologized it as defective and subject to "North African syndrome"" (181).

Across his works, Fanon pays special attention to this form of psychosomatic harm weathered by indigenous people in their encounters with colonial institutions. In “the North African Syndrome,” he explores how the western doctor is unable to provide meaningful diagnoses to the North African in Europe. Although this piece is not set in Algeria, it helps contextualize Fanon’s insistent attention to geography and infrastructure with respect to indigenous psychology. He explains that European medical professionals go about their diagnostic process with an “a priori attitude”—that they expect specific symptoms to appear as markers of certain illnesses in order to warrant the appropriate treatment. This approach assumes that the patient will be able to evaluate his/her psychological response to the environment and report the harrowing symptoms in an appropriately legible manner. Fanon disturbs these assumptions and argues that the North African, however, is unable to have any stable experience of the French environment because it “...does not come with a *substratum* common to his race, but on a foundation built by the European” (*African Revolution* 7; emphasis added). This loss of ‘substratum,’ of common racial ground disables his phenomenological experience of his environment such that “...without a family, without love, without human relations, without communion with the group, the first encounter with himself will occur in a neurotic mode, in a pathological mode” (*African Revolution* 13). Fanon employs poetic language to demonstrate how the North African repeatedly experiences death in every colonial space he traverses in his everyday existence in the metropole:

A daily death.
a death in the tram,
a death in the doctor’s office,
a death with the prostitutes,
a death on the job site,
a death at the movies,
a multiple death in the newspapers,
a death in the fear of all decent folk of going out after midnight,
a death. (*African Revolution* 13)

Fanon employs the formal poetic elements of repetition and parallel structure to denote how the North African experiences these diverse colonial infrastructures as all enacting upon him a similar and persistent violence. No matter their intended utility, the North African encounters only death in various registers in these European institutions. Because these institutions are built by the colonizer with no regard to the colonized, these men feel alienated by these institutions precisely because “...by the very fact of appearing on the scene, [they enter]

into a pre-existing framework,” one which was designed to be hostile to them (*African Revolution* 7).

If we keep this analysis in mind while reading Fanon’s commentary on Algeria, we are able to observe the extent to which the Algerian is alienated by the loss of their native infrastructure. Cut off from their land, trapped in the colonizer’s definition of their culture, and robbed of their indigenous institutions, native life is both physically and psychically immobilized. Over this fossilized foundation, the colonizer begins setting up new institutions that serve their own needs. Unlike the fixity endured by the Algerian, Fanon demonstrates how the European enjoys immense social and economic mobility in the colony:

The European individual in Algeria does not take his place in a structured and relatively stable society. The colonial society is in perpetual movement. Every settler invents a new society, sets up or sketches new structures. The differences between craftsmen, civil servants, workers, and professionals are poorly defined. Every doctor has his vineyards and the lawyer busies himself with his rice fields as passionately as any settler. (*Dying Colonialism* 134)

It is important to read these descriptions of mobility and potential in the colonizers alongside the descriptions of arrest and living-death in the colonized to fully grasp the dynamic Fanon identifies. In the space of the colony, the colonized are ontologized as land, their cultures are overdetermined, and their institutions are rendered obsolete. Meanwhile, the colonizer “invents,” “sets up,” and “sketches”; their social roles are “poorly defined.” In violent contrast to the native’s embodied death, Fanon states that “...in the heart of every European in the colonies there slumbers a man of energy, a pioneer, an adventurer” (*Dying Colonialism* 133). By drawing these contrasts, Fanon clarifies that the colonized and the colonizer are not just in a position of ideological opposition but that the immobilization of the colonized is the necessary precondition for colonial activity. Colonial institutions are built through the negation of the vitality of the native and the destruction of their active relationship with their land.

No aspect of infrastructural modernization and development enacted by the colonizer can truly benefit or serve the native until and unless they acknowledge their humanity. In “Letter to a Frenchman” Fanon charges the most liberal of Frenchmen, who are ready to leave Algeria, with being “...concerned about Man but strangely not about the Arab” (*African Revolution* 48). He urges them to open their eyes to

their complicity in Algeria's destruction. He powerfully describes the utter abjection felt daily by the Algerian *fellah* (peasant) in language that mirrors his description of the North African in France:

Motionless *fellah* and your arms move and your bowed back
but your life stopped. The cars pass, and you don't move. They
could run over your belly and you wouldn't move.
Arabs on the roads.
Sticks slipped through the handle of the basket.
Empty basket, empty hope, this whole death of the *fellah*.
Two hundred fifty francs a day.
Fellah without land.
Fellah without reason. [...]
On your face despair.
In your belly resignation...
What does it matter *fellah* if this country is beautiful. (*African
Revolution* 50, 51)

The psycho-affective similarities between this excerpt and the one from "The North African Syndrome" animate the core of Fanon's argument about geography and decolonization. In his account, French colonization has not only settled on Algerian land, it has infrastructurally transformed it to the degree that it is unrecognizable as Algeria. This colony operates entirely in a French framework and the experience of the North African, despite being on his native land, is that of being in a foreign nation. As a result, "...in this petrified zone, not a ripple on the surface, the palm trees sway against the clouds, the waves of the sea lap against the shore, the raw materials come and go, legitimating the colonist's presence, while more dead than alive the colonized subject crouches forever in the same old dream" (*Wretched* 14). In order to break from this dream-like pseudo-petrification, the colonized population must shatter this infrastructure that keeps them captive and build the institutions that will support their mobility.

Fanon argues that it is absolutely impossible, during the anticolonial revolution, to preserve the colonizer's institutions while establishing national sovereignty. He categorically states in "On Violence" that "...to dislocate the colonial world does not mean that once the borders have been eliminated there will be a right of way between the two sectors" (*Wretched* 6). Instead, effective decolonization "...means nothing less than demolishing the colonist's sector, burying it deep within the earth or banishing it from the territory" (*Wretched* 6). In other words, the colonizer's territorial claims must be negated, and

their infrastructure flattened to the ground.¹¹ The decolonized nation must be built upon Algerian soil and its institutions devised in accordance with the emerging national culture and indigenous needs. For Fanon, the peasantry emerges as a key actor both during the revolution and post-independence precisely because "...the rural masses have never ceased to pose the problem of their liberation in terms of violence, of *taking back the land from the foreigners*, in terms of the national struggle and armed revolt" (*Wretched* 79; emphasis added). Unlike the urban population who are at the heart of the colonial metropole, the peasantry in the interior "...survive in a kind of petrified state but keep intact their moral values and their attachment to the nation" (*Wretched* 79). These peasants as "...veritable exiles in their own country and severed from the urban milieu where they drew up the concepts of nation and political struggle..." clarify to the intellectuals that the primary objective is to reclaim the land (*Wretched* 78). The urban movement, led by the nationalist intellectuals, must therefore establish a close, dialectical relationship with the rural masses for they "...take a global stance from the very start. Bread and land: how do we go about getting bread and land?" (*Wretched* 14).

The importance of land does not merely inform the spirit or symbolism of the Algerian revolution. Land materializes as central to both insurrectionary strategy in the revolutionary stage and economic strategy in the post-independence phase. In the revolutionary phase, guerilla warfare becomes the way in which the Algerian revolutionary army makes up for its lack of military instruments and technology. In "On Violence," Fanon claims "...guerrilla warfare [as the] instrument of violence of the colonized" (*Wretched* 26). It is, however, not only because it compensates for the lack of arms that guerilla warfare becomes a primary weapon in the anticolonial revolution. Guerrilla warfare, as that which is performed in relation with the land, remobilizes settled land and uses it to indigenous advantage. As Fanon observes,

The national liberation army is not an army grappling with the enemy in a single, decisive battle but travels from village to village, retreating into the forest and jumping for joy when the cloud of dust raised by the enemy's troops is seen in the valley. The tribes begin to mobilize, the units move their positions,

¹¹In a recent article titled "Concerning Maoism: Fanon, Revolutionary Violence, and Postcolonial India" (2013), Priyamvada Gopal reads Fanon's famous claim from "On Violence" where he argues that "decolonization is always a violent event" as suggesting that the destruction of institutional imperialism is necessarily violent in the manner that it restructures society in a radical way. We can similarly read this call for the destruction of the colonist's sector as signifying the oppositional modality in which decolonization apprehends colonial infrastructure.

changing terrain. [...] Now it is we who are in *pursuit*. Despite all his technology and firepower, the enemy gives the impression he is floundering and *losing ground*. (*Wretched* 86; emphasis added)

Drawing upon the native knowledge of the land, especially in the interior, the masses reform their relationship with the land so that it no longer works against them. Moreover, it is a form of attack that is deeply mobile and active; in which "...you no longer fight on the spot but on the march [and] every fighter carries the soil of the homeland to war between his bare toes" (*Wretched* 85). Fought in dynamic relation with "...muscular the land, guerrilla warfare mobilizes the petrified colonized subject and their dreams, dreams of action, dreams of aggressive vitality" (*Wretched* 15). While Fanon finds this militant form of action necessary during the revolutionary phase, he does argue that it is important that it be developed around a sound intellectual agenda. He states that in order to "...transform the movement from a peasant revolt to a revolutionary war," the national leaders must "...rediscover politics, no longer as a sleep-inducing technique or as a means of mystification, but as the sole means of fueling the struggle and preparing the people for a clear-sighted national leadership" (*Wretched* 86). A truly mobilized national politics therefore emerges as that which guides and is guided by the militant land-based insurrection of the masses.¹²

In the post-independence phase, once the revolutionary war is over, this land-based politics must expand in order to (in)form the foundation of the new nation. Fanon declares that after independence any national leader "...must first restore dignity to all citizens, furnish their minds, fill their eyes with human things and develop a *human landscape* for the sake of its enlightened and sovereign inhabitants" (144; emphasis added). Even though the colonizer brings modern technology and infrastructure to the colony, he ultimately dehumanizes the native. Upon his departure, therefore, the process of modernization must be preceded by an evaluation of indigenous infrastructural needs. In this process, Fanon argues, it is important to pay attention to the relationship with land and soil. He points out that "...the colonial sys-

¹²Fanon's emphasis on the importance of land as both symbolic and material resource in the anticolonial struggle must be read within the particular context of the French settler's colonial conquest of Algeria. In other postcolonial locations, nationalist ideology's use of land as symbolic resource has been critiqued for being a particularly gendered and gendering construction of land-as-woman or woman-as-land. For more, see "Legacies of Departure: Decolonization, Nation-Making and Gender" by Urvashi Butalia and "Nations in an Imperial Crucible" by Mrinalini Sinha in Levine's *Gender and Empire* (2004).

tem, in fact, was only interested in certain riches, certain natural resources, to be exact those that fueled its industries” (*Wretched* 56). As already discussed in the paper, the Algerian people, in being made co-terminous with their land, became another natural resource for the colonizer and did not participate in the development of their land as agentive actors. As a result, Fanon notes that “...no reliable survey has been made of the soil or subsoil” (*Wretched* 56). In order to set up their national industries such that they do not merely fulfil the needs established by the colonizer and to thereby avoid effective neo-colonization, “...everything needs to be started over again: the type of exports needs to be changed, not just their destination, the soil needs researching as well as the subsoil, the rivers and why not the sun” (*Wretched* 57). Both production and trade must therefore be thoroughly informed by the native’s self-directed study of the land in order to develop a fully sovereign national economy.

Fanon’s insistence on research-based development perhaps stems from his commitment to invention and creativity. As early as in *Black Skin, White Masks* he claims that the only way to repair the traumatic effects of the “split imposed by the Europeans” involves no less than “restructuring the world” (*Black Skin* 63). In the conclusion to *Black Skin, White Masks*, he again emphasizes the importance of sovereign self-development when he states,

I am not a prisoner of History. I must not look for the meaning of my destiny in that direction.
I must constantly remind myself that the real *leap* consists of introducing invention into life.
In the world I am heading for, I am endlessly creating myself.
[...]
The density of History determines none of my acts.
I am my own foundation.
And it is by going beyond the historical and instrumental given that I initiate my cycle of freedom. (204, 205)

Decolonization, for Fanon, emerges as an opportunity not only to be free from the material rule of the colonizer but also to escape the historical constrictions placed upon the colonized. It is an opportunity to undo the colonial petrification of mind and body, and invent radically new ways of living in the world. Most importantly, it must be seized as an opportunity to embody a form of critical mobility which does not merely depend on the given historical forms of the human but which constantly interrogates them and invents new ones. In the last sentence of *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon proclaims “O my body, always make me a man who questions!” (*Black Skin* 206). This call to the

body, rather than the mind, suggests that the decolonizing process is as organic as it is intellectual. The colonized body is that which had been petrified; whose muscles had slowly atrophied; which had been turned to rock. Decolonization must not only rehabilitate these atrophied muscles but also create the conditions for their regular use and development. This requires the setup of infrastructure that is responsive to the needs of the newly mobile society.

Since the petrification of the colonized was achieved through the destruction of their native infrastructure and the mummification of their once-living cultures, decolonization must maintain a sustained focus on revamping its cultural and infrastructural core. Fanon is cognizant of this when he states that "...it is not possible for a man to evolve otherwise than within the framework of a culture that recognizes him and that he decides to assume" (*African Revolution* 34). It is imperative to develop a cultural identity that facilitates the growth of the decolonized society. This cultural identity, however, cannot be merely mined from the precolonial past. Given that conquest causes irrecoverable damage and introduces entirely new conflicts into the colonized world, any cultural identity needs to be formed with respect to the terms of the present and not just the past. While the colonizer asserts a fixed cultural identity onto the colonized, the decolonizing nation must re-assert an open, dynamic cultural identity that breaks from the exotified colonial version.

Moreover, it is important to develop a new cultural identity not only for aesthetic or intellectual but material-economic reasons as well. This, for Fanon, is the only way to escape the clutches of neocolonialism where the newly independent country still functions with colonial institutions and fulfills the colonizer's trade needs. He warns that in the post-independence period, "[the] cult for local products, this incapacity to invent new outlets is likewise reflected in the entrenchment of the national bourgeoisie in the type of agricultural production typical of the colonial period" (*Wretched* 100). Much like in the revolutionary period, the intellectual must look not towards the urban national bourgeoisie but towards the people, the masses, for a glimpse of the new national culture. He argues that "the culture with which the intellectual is preoccupied is very often nothing but an inventory of particularisms. Seeking to cling close to the people, he clings merely to a visible veneer. This veneer, however, is merely a reflection of a *dense, subterranean life in perpetual renewal*" (*Wretched* 160). It is significant that his dynamic cultural life is subterranean because the underground is the zone of operations of the colonized body which was previously made coterminous with territory. It is, therefore, in this zone that the national spirit is conceived and reared. The colonized in-

tellectual and the national bourgeoisie, mired in urban colonial life, are ignorant of this mass activity precisely because of their proximity to the colonizer. Therefore, for the nation to truly break from the clutches of the colonizer, these intellectuals and national bourgeoisie must meet the masses in the underground and join them "...in the process of dirtying [their] hands in the quagmire of [their] soil" (*Wretched* 140).

Decolonization, therefore, demands that the colonized society re-establish a dynamic relationship with their land and build institutions that are reflective and supportive of this relationship. Without gaining a decolonized knowledge of their geography and geology, the colonized will remain fixed within the economic and cultural forms imposed by the colonizer. Moreover, as has been established above, these forms are built with the purpose of alienating the colonized and will continue to do so. In order to build a society that is truly sovereign and hospitable to the indigenous needs of the people *and* the land, the new nation must let go of extractive colonial infrastructures. For Fanon, this disavowal of colonial infrastructures does not foreclose modernization, it decolonizes the process of assimilating modern technology by refusing to preserve the dehumanizing technologies imposed by the colonizer. Most importantly, the relationship between man and nation is one in which both are constantly re-defining each other dialectically. He concludes *Wretched of the Earth* by stating that "when the nation in its totality is set in motion, the new man is not an a posteriori creation of this nation, but coexists with it, matures with it, and triumphs with it" (*Wretched* 233). In order to break the fixity imposed by colonial contact, the colonized must re-establish a dialectical and dynamic relationship with the nation.

Reading across Fanon's works enables us to understand the various nuances of his theory of anti-colonial nationalism. As a proponent of self-determined inventiveness, his argument welcomes cosmopolitan trans-nationalisms and discourses of hybrid identity. One must, however, be careful not to ignore the geographically-specific nature of his writings. This paper demonstrates that Fanon is deeply invested in articulating a land-based de-colonial national culture. The model of nation that he envisions for Algeria is articulated in direct relation with Algerian land and Algerian people. It is clear that, for him, true sovereignty is achieved only once the people have re-established an authentic relationship with their land and collectively set up the infrastructure needed to support their society, in terms of their ever-unfolding decolonizing present(s). It is only by reading proleptically that we can therefore take political lessons from *Black Skin, White Masks* in a manner that is responsible to Fanon's entire oeuvre. By vacating the

geopolitical specificities of Fanon's work, we not only miss the opportunity to most effectively mobilize his thoughts in our political present, we also do a disservice to his most politically informed writings. The psycho-affective is only one element of a larger process of invention that begins at the level of small nations but reverberates globally. Throughout his work, Fanon argues that only by truly breaking away from colonialism and envisioning radically new ways of existing in symbiotic relationships with the Earth and with each other can the process of decolonization develop a new definition of Man.



Works Cited

- Bhabha, Homi K. *Nation and Narration*. Routledge, 1990.
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton University Press, 2000, <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb.04798>.
- Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Translated by Richard Philcox, Grove Press, 2004.
- . *A Dying Colonialism*. Translated by Haakon Chevalier, Grove Press, 1965.
- . *Black Skin, White Masks*. Translated by Richard Philcox, Grove press, 2008.
- . *Toward the African Revolution: Political Essays*. Translated by Haakon Chevalier, Grove Press, 1967.
- Gibson, Nigel C. *Frantz Fanon, Psychiatry, and Politics*. Rowman & Littlefield International, 2017.
- Gopal, Priyamvada “Concerning Maoism: Fanon, Revolutionary Violence, and Postcolonial India.” *South Atlantic Quarterly*, vol. 112, no. 1, Jan. 2013, pp. 115–28. doi:[10.1215/003828761891278](https://doi.org/10.1215/003828761891278).
- Lazarus, Neil. “Disavowing Decolonization: Fanon, Nationalism, and the Problematic of Representation in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse.” *Research in African Literatures*, vol. 24, no. 4, 1993, pp. 69–98.
- Levine, Philippa. *Gender and Empire*. Oxford University Press USA - OSO, 2004.
- McKittrick, Katherine. *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle*. University of Minnesota Press, 2006, <http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=310740>.
- Parry, Benita. “Problems in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse.” *Oxford Literary Review*, vol. 9, no. 1/2, 1987, pp. 27–58. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/43973680.
- “Petrification.” *The Oxford English Dictionary*. OED Online, www.oed.com/view/Entry/141892. Accessed 3 June 2018.

- Premnath, Gautam. 2000. "Remembering Fanon, Decolonizing Diaspora." In *Postcolonial Theory and Criticism*, edited by Chrisman, Laura and Benita Parry, Brewer Press, pp. 57–73.
- Sinha, Mrinalini. *Nations in an Imperial Crucible*. Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present*. Harvard University Press, 1999.
- Wynter, Sylvia. "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation—An Argument." *CR: The New Centennial Review*, vol. 3, no. 3, 2003, pp. 257–337. doi:[10.1353/ncr.2004.0015](https://doi.org/10.1353/ncr.2004.0015).

What Cannot Be (Re)written: Disentangling Panoptic Structures in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wall-paper" and *Herland*

Heather Fox

With its centered tower encircled by inmates' cells, Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon was an architectural response to an eighteenth-century social problem: how to best control a prison's population. Its design—a circular structure with a centered tower that is "...pierced with wide windows that open onto the inner side of the ring...and divided into cells, each of which extends the whole width of the building"—positions inmates' bodies relative to the watchtower, in order to perpetuate a sense of constant surveillance.¹ The incarcerated cannot see into the watchtower from their cells. They cannot discern whether or not they are actually being observed. Blending this sense of visibility with invisibility, the Panopticon produces docile bodies, evaluated from a distance and controlled through the mind.² Thus, as Michel Foucault warns in *Discipline and Punish* (1975), "visibility is a trap" (200). Psychological infrastructure, more than physical design, establishes and re-enforces its power.

The Panopticon's design, however, is not dependent on a prison setting but can be evoked in any setting that constructs a panoptic relationship between the observer and the observed. Literary representations, such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wall-paper" and *Herland*, further illuminate connections between setting and psychological control to reinforce oppressive ideology. Frequently anthologized and read across disciplines, the female narrator in "The Yellow Wall-paper" succumbs to the panoptic confinement designed and enforced by her husband, who also serves as her physician. Twenty years later, Gilman's serialized utopian novel, *Herland*, seems to revise "The Yellow Wall-paper" by portraying an all-female society's response to gender roles. And yet, this gender reversal strategy only repositions the observer and the observed when the community

¹This description of the Panopticon comes from Michael Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (1975), which describes both its physical architecture and its effect on prisoners (200).

²Foucault introduces the term "docile bodies" in part three of *Discipline and Punish*, arguing that disciplined bodies become docile when power is "dissociate[d]" from the body or when the body becomes the object of "strict subjection" (138).

incarcerates three male characters.³ The novel (inadvertently) preserves the narrative that it seeks to resist. Characters located within panoptic surveillance are subjects without agency, perpetuating the design that they attempt to overturn. Whether structured as a prison (Bentham's Panopticon), a nursery (the narrator's room in "The Yellow Wall-paper"), or a utopia (the all-female society in *Herland*), the observer and observed are equally enveloped in the psychological effects of the panoptic power structure. It is impossible to eliminate the Panopticon within the shadow of the Panopticon because its design—or narrative structure used to maintain oppressive ideology—perpetuates its effect.

In "The Yellow Wall-paper," both nineteenth-century patriarchal ideology and the "rest cure" comprise the panoptic structure.⁴ The narrator is confined to an upstairs bedroom and controlled through constant surveillance. Her room, previously a nursery, contains barred windows, a bed bolted to the floor, "rings and things" in the walls, and a gate at the top of the stairs (648). However, it is the wallpaper's pattern, as John S. Bak points out in his panoptic reading of the story, which is most distressing to the narrator, particularly its "bulbous eyes" (43). The story's narrator explains to the reader that she "...know[s] a little of the principle of design" and the pattern is "...not arranged on any laws of radiation, or alteration, or repetition, or symmetry, or anything else that [she] ever heard of" (651). Its replication in her irrational confinement further contributes to her obsession to follow "...that pointless pattern to some sort of conclusion" (650). In this way, the narrator, as Jane Thraikill contends, "...becomes a participant in the drama of the wallpaper...[which] insistently solicit[s] attention from its analyst" (548). She must solve it (not the pattern, but the flaw in the rest cure's design represented by the pattern) before she becomes a part of its perpetuation; and yet, by trying to solve it, she sustains the psychological effects of its design. Confined in a prison-like setting, the narrator "*feel[s]*" that "there is something strange about the house," that she cannot fully articulate—the relationship be-

³I borrow the term "gender reversal strategy" from Carter-Sanborn, who asserts that readers identify Gilman's "main tool" in *Herland* (and *With Her in Ourland*) as "role reversal" (2).

⁴Invented by Silas Weir Mitchell, the "rest cure" was prescribed to nineteenth-century women (and men) who exhibited symptoms of a "nervous condition." It prescribed six to eight weeks of bed rest, extra meals, and removal from the home's "potentially toxic" social atmosphere ("Rest Cure"). Charlotte Perkins Gilman underwent this treatment, and Thraikill situates the beginnings of scholarly treatments that connect "Gilman's experience with the rest cure" and the "paradigmatic of the patriarchal silencing of women" in 1970s feminist scholarship (526). See, also, Hochman, Fetterley, and Lanthrop.

tween visibility and invisibility, which renders her powerless to control her subjection (648, emphasis added). Even when John is physically absent to observe her adherence to the “rest cure” the wallpaper’s pattern acts as a psychological extension of his surveillance.

Just as the narrator is observed by John (and the wallpaper), she enacts the role of observer in her isolated environment. Foucault describes this as “permanent visibility,” which sets up an “automatic functioning of power” in which the subject of observation becomes part of the observing. In other words, subjects cannot escape the “...power situation of which they are themselves the bearers” (201). Refusing her prescribed stasis, she examines both the internal and the external—the wallpaper within the room and the garden outside her barred windows. In contrast to the wallpaper, the garden represents order with its “...box-bordered paths, and lines with long grape-covered arbors” (654). Part of the natural world and separate from the confines of her bedroom, it appears free, “*delicious[ly]*” hopeful (648); but, as Lee Schweningen argues through her ecofeminist reading of the story, its liberating presence is deceptive, or a “...site of limits, of control, of the artificial, [and] of denial” (27). The narrator cannot access this space physically. Instead, she must position herself in the garden psychologically, or separate from her body which remains trapped in the home, in order to enjoy its freedom.

Indeed, if the garden is examined closely, its narrative progression resembles the narrator’s sequential analysis of the wallpaper’s design and her eventual self-positioning within it. The garden’s “lines” become “gnarly” as the story unfolds (649). The narrator increasingly lacks the ability to distinguish between what exists within and what exists outside of her room. The “smooches” she creates are like garden paths, and the pattern’s disorder reminds her of “fungus.” The “horrid paper” oozes into the garden becoming “mysterious” and “riotous” (649). By the end of the story, the narrator envisions multiple women creeping in the garden, all resembling the woman in the wallpaper she helps to escape. Like her perception of multiplying eyes in the wallpaper’s design, elements from the garden enter her room, and conversely, her room spills into the garden, simulating and perpetuating a panoptic design capable of infiltrating both internal and external, mind and body.⁵

Despite her progressive assimilation, the narrator still attempts to resist through the act of writing. She writes, “There comes John, and

⁵Scott reads this as ecological adaptation.

I must put this away,—he hates to have me write a word” and confides further in a contextual aside to the reader, “I can write when [my sister-in-law] is out, and [I can] see her a long way off from these windows” (650). Nonetheless, her subversive writings also progressively succumb to a prescribed narrative. As the story continues, her entries become shorter and less grounded in chronological time. For example, the first entry notes that they are renting the home for three months; the second entry records a time span of two weeks between the first and second entries; and the third entry conveys that the Fourth of July has ended (650). After the third entry, however, there are no further references to chronological time until the last section’s “Hurrah! This is the last day” (655). As the length of each entry gets shorter, time loses its distinctions, coinciding with her integration into the pattern’s design. Foucault contends that the Panopticon “...create[s] and sustain[s] a power relation independent of the person who exercises it; in short, ...inmates [are] caught up in a power situation of which they are themselves the bearers” (201). As the narrator becomes more consumed by unraveling the wallpaper’s design, in an effort to unravel her illness and its prescribed cure, she writes less. By writing less, she conforms to her husband’s/physician’s directive to not write. Consequently, she conforms to the rest cure’s panoptic effect, enacting what she attempts to resist.

Even though her writing is an act of resistance, the narrator cannot write her own text because the Panopticon has written it (and is writing it) for her. Instead, the narrator’s voice embodies asides like “I never used to be so sensitive” and “I cry at nothing, and cry most of the time...when I am alone” (650). John tells her that she is the only one who can help herself, but she confides to the reader that John “takes all care *from* me” (648, emphasis added). However, as Judith Fetterley rightly argues, “John’s definition of sanity requires that his wife neither have nor tell her own story” (160–64). The narrator cannot write her own text because she does not have the agency to write it. Instead, her text merges with other texts—the wallpaper, the garden, the rest cure, nineteenth-century patriarchal ideology, John—so that, by the end of the narrative, it is difficult to distinguish her voice from other voices. The more she tries to read the texts around her and untangle her voice, the more she becomes bound by these texts. Indeed, her explanation of the wallpaper’s design resembles her attempts to construct her own narrative: “You think you have mastered it, but just as you get well underway in following, it turns a back-somersault and there you are. It slaps you in the face, knocks you down, and tramples on you” (653). Like the reciprocal effects of panoptic surveillance, she perpetuates other texts’ power through her analysis of them.

The narrator comprehends that to write her own text, she must destroy the wallpaper, but since the pattern represents the panoptic and patriarchal control present in her efforts to tell her own story, she cannot eliminate it completely. She cannot move the bed to reach the sections of the wallpaper above her head. She can only peel off "...all the paper [she] could reach standing on the floor" (655). She tells John, "'I've got out at last, '...in spite of you and Jane. And I've pulled off most of the paper, so you can't put me back!'" (656). Scholars often focus on the identity of Jane in the narrator's declaration to John, but the significance of her declaration to John is not to associate herself with a name. Instead, the placement of "Jane" at the end of the story signal her unsuccessful attempts to disentangle herself from the identities prescribed for her—John's wife, John's patient, a woman struggling with illness, a woman unable to maintain her sanity—in the same way that her name or identity become absorbed as part of the wallpaper's text.⁶ She can pull off *most* of the paper but not *all* of it. In fact, the more she physically engages with the paper, in her attempt to destroy its panoptic effect, the more alive it becomes, multiplying into "...so many of those creeping women" (656). In contrast to the body parts in the wallpaper's design, which eventually merge into the figure of a woman, the narrator must dissociate her mind from her body to escape, or as John Bak contends, to break "...free of this internal prison—the Victorian mind" by "...transcending all levels of consciousness" through madness (45). And yet, like the garden, the possibility of "escape" remains deceptive.

The narrator's attempts to tell her story, even as it merges with prescribed narratives. But the wallpaper itself, as Shirley Samuels contends, "...leaves a smudge on her body even as she attacks it" (104). The Panopticon (embodied in nineteenth-century patriarchal ideology and visually represented in the wallpaper's design) metaphorically remains fixed to the wall in unreachable remnants. At the end of the story, John's fainted body no longer confines her physically to the

⁶There are various readings of "Jane." While some scholars read Jane as a separate identity from the narrator, Bak argues that Jane is the narrator. In "Reading about Reading," *Gender and Reading: Essays on Readers, Texts, and Contexts*, Johns Hopkins UP, 1986, Judith Fetterley asserts that the narrator actually "...becomes a version of John himself" (164). In response to the question, "if the narrator is Jane, then why does she try to tie her up again once she has escaped," Susan Lanser argues in "'The Yellow Wallpaper,' and the Politics of Color in America," *Feminist Studies*, 15.3 (Autumn 1989): 415–41, that Jane's existence reflects a "...culture obsessively preoccupied with race as the foundation of character" (425). Lanser suggests that yellow references indicate the cultural fear of racially-mixed identities and late nineteenth century immigration (425–7). Finally, she posits that Jane could be linked to the Jane in Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (Lanser 428–9).

room, and yet the narrator remains within it—not because she is mad as much as because she cannot destroy all the wallpaper. Her text is not entirely her own and, therefore, continues to perpetuate its panoptic power.

One explanation for the narrator's decision to remain with John's body may be that the ending of the story reflects her "...desire to duplicate John's text but with the roles reversed" (Fetterley 164). Perhaps, then, Charlotte Perkins Gilman's serialized novel, *Herland*, could be read as an answer to the narrator's desire, since it reverses the gender dynamics of the observer and the observed. *Herland's* serialized chapters were first published in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's self-published magazine *The Forerunner*, between 1915 and 1916, later published collectively in 1979. The novel portrays three male protagonists—Vandyck Jennings, Jeff Mangrove, and Terry Nicholson—and their incarceration in an all-female society. Van narrates their story—first from an aerial perspective and, once captured, from within Herland's walls, which increasingly resemble "The Yellow Wallpaper's" nursery. Among other similarities between the story and novel, Van, Jeff, and Terry are under constant surveillance. There are no bars on the windows, but they are uniformly dressed and confined (albeit, together) in a room with three beds. Their room, "built out on a steep spur of rock," uses the natural environment to reduce the possibility of physical escape (25). The garden beneath their windows offers no escape, entrenched by walls that remind the protagonists of their limited visibility.

Like "The Yellow Wall-paper's" narrator, Van, Jeff, and Terry attempt to resist assimilation, but their efforts only reinforce and perpetuate the panoptic effect. The men work together to study the landscape from their windows, fashion a rope, slip down the wall, survive on nuts from the forest, advance toward their flying machine at night, and dismantle the cloth surrounding it. And yet, despite their combined efforts, Van explains that the community "...knew well we would make for our machine, and also that there was no other way of getting down—alive. So our flight had troubled no one; all they did was to call the inhabitants to keep an eye on our movements all along the edge of the forest between the two points" (38). The same three characters who first observed them when they entered Herland (Celis, Alima, and El-lador) reveal that they had been watching their attempt to escape without concern.

Herland's observers transcend visibility like the view from within the Panopticon's watchtower—their eyes are always present. Sometimes Herland's eyes are linked to an individual character (or group of characters like the women in the tree), while, at other times,

eyes are not individualized but part of a collective social body of surveillance. Michael Foucault describes this as a "...faceless gaze...thousands of eyes posted everywhere, mobile attentions ever on the alert, a long, hierarchized network" (214). Like bulbous [wallpaper] eyes in "The Yellow Wall-paper," the eyes in *Herland* are part of an intricate design that perpetuate surveillance in the absence of a primary observer.

After their attempted escape and re-capture, Van writes that they expected punishment but instead "...back we went, not under anesthetic this time...each of us in a separate vehicle with one able-bodied lady on either side and three facing him" (36–7). Van dismisses separation from Jeff and Terry as punishment because it does not include physical retribution, even though the characters' isolation and increased surveillance invoke Foucauldian discipline, which "...introduces...the constraint of a conformity that must be achieved" (182). The scene ends with a description of their physical assimilation, "...all sitting together on the roof...all in similar dress; our hair, by now, as long as theirs, only our beards to distinguish us" (38–9). Their normalization eliminates their individuality and replaces it with collective identity, or as Foucault describes it, a "regime of disciplinary power" that defines the limits of abnormality to control "binary opposition" (182–83). By unifying Van, Jeff, and Terry's appearances (first, between each other and later as part of *Herland*'s society), they become incapable of resistance because they are part of a collective that controls their resistance. The inmates appear nearly indistinguishable from their captors.

Normalization in *Herland* engenders the same panoptic surveillance as the wallpaper in "The Yellow Wallpaper." Its power is enacted and perpetuated by those within its design, and its introduction eliminates individuality in favor of a collective identity. As part of this collective voice, Van's voice (like "The Yellow Wall-paper's" narrator) is not entirely his own. His narration comments on experiences through asides to the reader using the narrative approach reminiscent of Gilman's earlier published story. At the beginning of the novel, he writes that his words are "...written from memory...[and] if [he] could have brought...the material [he] so carefully prepared, this would be a very different story" (1). A few chapters later, his asides point to a "different story" that contrasts a utopian perspective. Van confides that "it was not pleasant, having them always around, but we got used to it" and "...the prospect [of no bars on the windows] was not reassuring" (25). Like nineteenth-century patriarchal ideology enforced through the wallpaper's and garden's texts, *Herland*'s ideology writes *Herland*.

The female characters, as Van describes, ask “...different questions at different times, and [put] all our answers together like a picture puzzle,” a compilation of “...charts and figures and estimates, based on the facts in that traitorous little book and what they had learned from us” (123). “Traitorous” comprises Van’s subversive narrative, illuminating his resentment that he lacks the agency to write his own story because his normalization situates him within the Herland collective. In other words, Van’s writings about their experiences further indoctrinate his mind body as belonging to Herland’s panoptic infrastructure.

Read together, the presence of panoptic settings and narrative asides invite readers to consider the relationship between “The Yellow Wall-paper” and *Herland* as more reciprocal than responsive. In both texts, identifying the location of the Panopticon’s watchtower, or more pointedly who resides within it, expands this critical engagement. If John Bak’s claim that the wallpaper acts both as watchtower and observer in “The Yellow Wall-paper” is applied to *Herland*, then Celis, Ellador, Alima, and the “careful ladies sitting snugly in big trees” constitute observers whose implementation of a psychological infrastructure completely replaces the need for an architectural watchtower (Bak 44; Gilman 38). Herland’s observers transcend visibility like the Panopticon’s watchtower observers. Their eyes are always present, whether they belong to the individual female characters sitting in the trees or to an anonymous collective body of surveillance.

In this way, *Herland*’s watchtower evolves into architecture without walls, where observers come and go, see or choose not to see. Wai-chee Dimock’s reading of “The Yellow Wall-paper,” does not examine panoptic effect, rather it contends that the observer is not a character but Gilman’s positioning of the reader as mediator between character and text to create “...a deliberate and enabling gap...between what the female reader is and what she must become” (613–14). Gilman, as Dimock suggests, imagined her ideal reader as both female and professional, a small subset of American society at the turn-of-the-twentieth century. In other words, it would be more than a century later before Gilman’s ideal reader would be socio-culturally positioned to best complete a comparative reading of her text. By locating ourselves (contemporary representatives of this ideal) within the privileged space of the Panopticon’s watchtower, we see into all the inmates’ cells. The contemporary reader can diagnose “The Yellow Wall-paper’s” narrator’s symptoms—a recent birth and a “nervous” distress that she “cannot be with [her son]”—as possible post-partum depression (531–32), and is outraged by the effects of John’s patronization, being fully aware that the narrator cannot cure herself with “will and self-control” because her will and self-control have been

taken from her through the “rest cure’s” extension of nineteenth-century patriarchal oppression (534). Therefore, reversing the gender trope, while leaving panoptic ideology intact, does not rewrite “The Yellow Wall-paper’s” injustice.

In *Herland*, the physical walls may be absent but the psychological infrastructure that engages surveillance-based discipline remains fixed within the novel’s setting. As a result, *Herland*’s male protagonists, like “The Yellow Wall-paper’s” narrator’s resistance through writing her story, cannot develop beyond their prescriptive narratives. Jeff, who “...idealized women in the best Southern style...full of chivalry and sentiment” (8); Terry, who is a wealthy, “sexual predator”;⁷ and Van, who represents level-headedness, all embody male character archetypes. So that when Van tells readers that he “ceased to feel a stranger, a prisoner,” it is not because he is no longer a *Herland* prisoner (77). Instead, it reflects a confinement that utilizes interpersonal relationships, instead of anonymous eyes, to maintain a prescribed panoptic discipline.

The narrative structures that perpetuate oppressive ideologies, as originally sourced in nineteenth-century patriarchal control, are inherent in both “The Yellow Wall-paper” and *Herland*. Their presence confirms Foucault’s portrayal of the Panopticon as “...a privileged place for experiments on men...for analyzing with complete certainty the transformations that may be obtained from them” (204). The male protagonists in *Herland* are all subjects of a failed experiment to deconstruct this panoptic privilege. In recognizing the continued presence of the Panopticon, despite rewriting gendered positions of power, this utopian experience could be questioned, as evidenced by Terry’s failed assimilation.⁸ Instead, as depicted in Terry’s last *Herland* scene, which is reminiscent of “The Yellow Wall-paper’s” ending, female characters are physically located on the floor, wrestling (either physically or psychologically) to subdue violence—the significance of

⁷Avril describes Terry as “from the very start...a predator.” She argues that his nickname, “Old Nick,” “underlines a parallel between Terry and the devil himself” (148). Sutton-Ramspeck’s findings in a textual comparison between the serialized version (*The Forerunner*) and the “heavily” edited version (by Ann J. Lane, 1979, Pantheon edition) supports Avril’s argument. Sutton-Ramspeck recovers the missing phrase “or what he assumed to be conquest,” which emphasizes the significance Gilman placed on Terry’s attempted marital rape of Alima. Gilman, Sutton-Ramspeck contends, was “...far ahead of her time in even conceiving that husbands’ forcing their wives to have sex against their will is a form of violence against women.

⁸While Fusco does not engage Terry’s failed assimilation, my argument developed from Fusco’s assertion that Gilman was committed “...to understanding people as the products of systems” (423).

which is further emphasized in Beth Sutton-Ramspeck's comparison between the serialized version (in *The Forerunner*) and Ann J. Lane's edited version (most popular with contemporary readers) in 1979. Deleted from the 1979 edition, the original text describes Terry's attempted marital rape of Alima as a potential "conquest." Gilman's intended word choice, as Sutton-Ramspeck argues, "...is revelatory of Terry's psychology [since it]...conflates violent military language with language also traditionally applied to courtship" (407–8).

In other words, in the same way that a successful "rest cure" would have cured "The Yellow Wallpaper's" narrator but does not/cannot, a successful solution to nineteenth-century ideological oppression would have converted Terry but does not/cannot. Neither attempt toward a "cure" works as intended. Without the elimination of an implemented oppressive ideology the narrative that perpetuates it cannot be revised. Incapable of implementing its vision because it remains bound by the ideology it seeks to destroy, *Herland* cannot rewrite "The Yellow Wall-paper" because it did not disentangle itself from unwittingly replicating a panoptic infrastructure.



Works Cited

- Avril, Chloé. "Sexuality and Power in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland*." *ModernaSpråk*, vol. 98, no. 2, Jan. 2004, pp. 148–51.
- Bak, John S. "Escaping the Jaundiced Eye: Foucauldian Panopticism in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper." *Studies in Short Fiction*, vol. 31, 1994, pp. 36–41.
- Carter-Sanborn, Kristin. "Restraining Order: The Imperialist Anti-Violence of Charlotte Perkins Gilman." *Arizona Quarterly*, vol. 52, no. 2, June 2000, pp. 1–36.
- Dimock, Wai-chee. "Feminism, New Historicism, and the Reader." *American Literature*, vol. 63, no. 4, Dec. 1991, pp. 601–22.
- Fetterley, Judith. "Reading about Reading: 'A Jury Of Her Peers,' 'The Murders In The Rue Morgue,' And 'The Yellow Wallpaper.'" *Gender and Reading: Essays on Readers, Texts, and Contexts*, edited by Elizabeth A. Flynn and Patrocínio P. Schweickart, Johns Hopkins UP, 1986, pp. 147–64.
- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. 1975. Translated by Alan M. Sheridan, Vintage Books, 1995.
- Fusco, Katherine. "Systems, Not Men: Producing People in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland*." *Studies in the Novel*, vol. 41, no. 4, Winter 2009, pp. 418–34.
- Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. *Herland*. Dover Publications, 1998.
- . "The Yellow Wall-paper." *New England Magazine*, vol. 11, no. 5, Jan. 1892, pp. 647–57.
- Hochman, Barbara. "The Reading Habit and 'The Yellow Wallpaper.'" *American Literature*, vol. 74, no. 1, Mar. 2002, pp. 89–110.
- Lanser, Susan S. "'The Yellow Wallpaper,' and the Politics of Color in America." *Feminist Studies*, vol. 15, no. 3, Autumn 1989, pp. 415–41.
- Lathrop, Anna. "*Herland* Revisited: Narratives of Motherhood, Domesticity, and Physical Emancipation in Charlotte Perkins

Gilman's Feminist Utopia." *Vitae Scholasticae*, 2006, pp. 47–63.

"Rest Cure." *Science Museum Brought to Life: Exploring the History of Medicine*, 22 Mar. 2014, <http://broughttolife.sciencemuseum.org.uk/broughttolife/techniques/restcure>.

Samuels, Shirley. "How the Turn of the Century Feminism Finds Charlotte Perkins Gilman's 'The Yellow Wallpaper.'" *Feminist Moments: Reading Feminist Texts*, edited by Susan Bruce and Katherine Smits, Bloomsbury, 2015, pp. 99–106.

Schweniger, Lee. "Reading the Garden in Gilman's 'The Yellow Wallpaper.'" *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and the Environment*, vol. 2, no. 2, June 1996, pp. 25–44.

Scott, Heidi. "Crazed Nature: Ecology in 'The Yellow Wall-Paper.'" *The Explicator*, vol. 67, no. 3, 2009, pp. 198–203.

Sutton-Ramspeck, Beth. "New Textual Discoveries and Recovered Passages in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *Herland*." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, vol. 34, no. 2, Fall 2015, pp. 403–10.

Thraikill, Jane F. "Doctoring 'The Yellow Wallpaper.'" *ELH*, vol. 69, no. 2, Summer 2002, pp. 525–66.

Ecosomal Paradigm Through Disability Studies in John Muir's *My First Summer in the Sierra*

Gage Greenspan

The writings of the environmentalist John Muir have been an integral component in both the establishment of environmental protection laws and the field of literary ecocriticism. Muir's original fascination with nature created in him a desire to ultimately remove himself from the realm of human civilization. Although, his passive approach shifted dramatically after having observed humankind's intense commodification of nature, which José Anazagasty-Rodríguez describes as resulting from "...the dominant valuation of nature [being] precisely the capitalist valuation, one that stresses nature's exchange-value" (Rodríguez 101). Muir devoted himself to establishing laws for environmental protection, and writing about his voyages through nature in an attempt to facilitate in others the same connection toward nature that he felt. These actions not only sought to protect the fragile environment of North America, they also functioned as an attempt to thwart the United States' ideological obsession with conquest (Gifford 3). Muir's interest in destabilizing certain dominant ideologies of power along with his fundamental focus on the environment prompts an investigation as to how his writings can be viewed through the intersection of ecocriticism and other branches of literary studies that criticize power structures, which along with Lawrence Buell's conception that "[e]cocriticism gathers itself around a commitment to environmental..." (Buell 11), allows for a juncture of ecocriticism and disability studies. The central argument of this paper focuses on the intersection between ecocriticism and disability studies through a study of John Muir's *My First Summer in the Sierra* exploring it as a literary basis for engaging Matthew J. C. Cella's "ecosomatic paradigm," while simultaneously complicating it through an analysis of Muir's passages regarding the broken tree and the "mad" shepherd. A critique of the ecosomatic paradigm is undertaken in this paper to expose its potential applicability not only to physical disability but also to mental disability.

There has been limited scholarly attention paid to the budding field of ecosomatics,¹ much of which is contained within *Disability*

¹Ecosomatics and Literature: "Retrofitting Rurality: Embodiment and Emplacement in Disability Narratives" by Matthew J.C. Cella; "Ecosomatic and Ethnological Pathologies: Ethnicity, Disability, and Capabilities in Meridel Le Sueur's 'Women on the Breadlines'" by Lina Geriguis; and "Forced Excursion: Walking as Disability in

and the Environment in American Literature: Toward an Ecosomatic Paradigm,² edited by Cella. Through literary analysis, this book of collected essays develops a definition of ecosomatics as a field that considers the body, with particular attention on the disabled body, as being inherently connected to and shaped by its immediate environment. In his introduction to the volume, Cella observes that "...the body is a pivotal component of the place-making process, to the point that embodiment and emplacement are practically synonymous" (Cella 4). Although the existing scholarship regarding ecosomatics in literature reaffirms Cella's conception of ecosomatics, it focuses on the connection between the physically disabled body and its environment, leaving out a discussion on mental disabilities. This paper aims to debate a consideration of the mind within the ecosomatic paradigm.

Cella begins his article titled "The Ecosomatic Paradigm in Literature: Merging Disability Studies and Ecocriticism" with a critique of Edward S. Casey's *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World* that prompted him to merge ecocriticism and disability studies through the construction of what he refers to as the "ecosomatic paradigm." Cella is particularly concerned with one of Casey's central arguments for a cohesive bond between the human body and the natural environment. Casey states, "If I am to get oriented in a landscape or seascape [...] I must bring my body into conformity with the configurations of the land or the sea [...] The conjoining of the surface of my body with the surface of the earth or sea—their common integumentation—generates the interspace in which I become oriented" (Casey 28). This "conformity" and "conjoining" of the natural space and the human body seems to exist in coordination with the beliefs of Romantic authors like Wordsworth and Coleridge, as well as Naturalists like Thoreau and Muir. Casey's argument is a serviceable theory to incorporate an ecocritical view of humanity's unavoidable connection with nature. Cella, however, critiques Casey's description of humankind's association with the natural world for its exclusion of the disabled body's place within the argument. Cella states, "[i]t is important here to call attention to the fact that Casey's phenomenology of place more or less presumes a compulsory able-

Joshua Ferris's *The Unnamed*" by Chingshun J. Sheu. Ecosomatics and Dance Theory:"Focusing on the Natural World: An Ecosomatic Approach to Attunement with an Ecological Facilitating Environment" by Jennifer Beauvais; "Embodiment and embodiment: Integrating Dance/Movement Therapy, Body Psychotherapy, and Ecopsychology" by Cheryl Amelia Burns; and "The Quest for an Ecosomatic Approach to Dance Pedagogy" by Rebecca GoseEnghauser.

²Contains essays on ecosomatics by Jill E. Anderson, Elizabeth S. Callaway, Matthew J.C. Cella, Phoebe Chen, James J. Donahue, Barbara George, Katherine Lashley, and Amanda Stuckey.

bodiness...” (Cella 576). He thereby strives to create room for the inclusion of the disabled body into Casey’s framework. Cella’s utilization of the phrase “compulsory able-bodiness” in his assessment of Casey’s work highlights one of the central focuses of disability studies. Through an analysis of literary works, disability studies seeks to expose a harmful ableist ideological construction which states that the “normative” mind-body is the only conception of the mind-body that is worth considering. In this way, Cella roots his theoretical implications within the larger objectives of disability studies.

As a theoretical answer to the problem of Casey’s work, Cella established the notion of “ecosomatic paradigm” which “...recognizes the variety of somatic experience and seeks to nullify the able-bodied/disabled dyad by emphasizing the metaphorical power of considering the impaired body in relation to its environmental situatedness” (Cella 587). In other words, Cella’s establishment of the ecosomatic paradigm allows to perceive the natural world as a place where the separation between able and disabled body diffuses, allowing for an equal representation of ‘ableness’ for both the groups. Cella goes on to explain how the ecosomatic paradigm can be applied to literature through a combined lens of ecocriticism and disability studies, “[m]y primary contention is that the scrutiny of literary representations of the ecosomatic paradigm, particularly those focused on people with disabilities, provides a key method through which to deconstruct norms of embodiment while simultaneously promoting ethical treatment of the natural world” (Cella 575). It is important to note that Cella’s use of the word “scrutiny” merely refers to an analysis of the type of literary works in question, as opposed to condemning them. In this way, Cella allows for the consideration of positive portrayal of the ecosomatic paradigm within literature. The remainder of Cella’s article works to establish a presence of the ecosomatic paradigm within Cormac McCarthy’s *The Road* and Linda Hogen’s *Solar Storms*, thereby providing two examples of evidence for its validity. This essay seeks to analyze John Muir’s influential text *My First Summer in the Sierra*—a work of nonfiction based on Muir’s first major exploration into the natural world of California—in a manner that diverges from Cella’s conception of the ecosomatic paradigm as shown through McCarthy and Hogen’s works. It aims to analyze the ways in which *My First Summer* simultaneously reinforces and complicates the ecosomatic paradigm. It explores ecosomatic paradigm’s versatility as a theoretical framework, while also highlighting its limited inclusiveness in relation to mental disabilities.

Since the ecosomatic paradigm views body in terms of its “environmental-situatedness,” it is imperative to first develop a conception of how Muir views the environment in *My First Summer*. The context for the political and economic atmosphere in which Muir was writing was complex. In the late 1800’s, after the Mexican Cession of land has provided the United States with most of its western body, people were conflicted in their judgement of the resourcefulness of this newly acquired landscape. Cella states that “...for much of the nineteenth century, surveyors and settlers characterized the arid American West as essentially disabled, defined by what it supposedly lacked: water and trees” (Cella 591). Muir sought to counter this notion of the western landscape as “essentially disabled” through the process of representing the environment as aesthetically-abled, thereby refusing its supposed disability as a land that was not economically viable. In this effort, Muir consistently describes the land as regenerative. One example of this is when he describes how a certain flower “...grows on sun-beaten slopes, and like grass is often swept away by running fires, but it is quickly renewed from the roots” (19). The ability for the grass and flowers to regrow after being nearly destroyed by something as catastrophic as a fire exemplifies nature’s powerful regenerative properties. Muir highlights the extreme competence of this renewal by remarking how the entire body of a flower can be completely regenerated just from its roots. Later in the text, Muir likens the environment to an immortal being, where there is “[n]o stagnation, no death. Everything kept in joyful rhythmic motion in the pulses of Nature’s big heart” (73). This and the above quote work effectively to establish his conception of nature as something that is entirely abled, even if it is “essentially disabled” from a capitalistic perspective. A hint of the ecosomatic paradigm exists in the bodily descriptors of “motion,” “pulses,” and “heart.” Through the lens of disability studies, the above passage can be interpreted as Muir glorifying the land not for its visible motion—characteristic of able-bodied people—but in the inner motion of its metaphorical heart, which does work to include the disabled. Finally, Muir solidifies his connection between nature and humanity through his constant personification of natural surroundings. This literary technique is described by John Leighly in “John Muir’s Image of the West,” where he observes how “[t]his God, who in Muir’s writings presides over the universe, is often replaced, in a neighboring sentence or paragraph, by a more or less personified, maternally solicitous Nature” (312). The notion that nature is not only personified but is also depicted as “maternally solicitous” further propels an ecosomatic argument. Muir argues that nature exists as a place where the disabled person feels nurtured in a manner that conceives them in an equal manner to able-bodied people. This argument is thoroughly expanded upon in the next section.

Once Muir describes the environment in a regenerative manner, he then discusses body's relation to nature in an ecosomatic fashion. Early on, Muir exuberantly states, "[o]ur flesh-and-bone tabernacle seems transparent as glass to the beauty about us, as if truly an inseparable part of it, thrilling with the air and trees, streams and rocks, in the waves of the sun—a part of all nature, neither old nor young, sick nor well, but immortal" (Muir 16). Describing the body as "transparent" allows for it to become indistinguishable from nature, as Casey views it in his theory. Muir takes it forward with the image of body's cohesion with nature, describing the physical human form as being an "inseparable" part of nature. While these details set the foundation for the ecosomatic approach, with a focus on human contiguity with the environment, Cella also defines his theoretical term as necessarily creating a space where able and disabled bodies are represented equally. The two parts of the above quote seem to relate to this component of the ecosomatic paradigm. The first can be observed in how Muir relates the "body" to "glass" which seems to suggest an equalizing implying an ultimate sense of fragility between all human bodies whether they are able or disabled. The second, more obvious, connection to disability can be interpreted in his insistence that bodies in nature shed their "old" and "sick" qualities, which can be considered disabled descriptors. In place of these adjectives denoting disability, Muir claims that people experience the "immortal" sensation of nature within themselves (established in the previous section). Within this single sentence, Muir seems to address Cella's central question regarding the utilization of an ecosomatic paradigm to account for the disabled body (Cella 577). Muir's perception of nature seems to do exactly that. He creates it as a space that accounts for a wide variety of disabled bodies.

As further evidence of Muir's application of an ecosomatic paradigm, he also describes nature as a place where "...worldly cares are cast out, and freedom and beauty and peace come in" (41), where there is "[n]o pain... , no dull empty hours, no fear of the past, no fear of the future" (131), and as a place where, "...under its spell one's body seems to go where it likes with a will over which we seem to have scarce any control" (118). While the dissipation of "worldly cares" and the notion of "no pain" speak directly to an ecosomatic conception of disability, Muir's last quote assumes a different approach at designing nature as a great equalizer of bodies. The quote suggests that nature has metaphorical and seemingly magical ability to lull a person into an out-of-body experience by animating their body for them. The rhetoric employed here by Muir is crucial in developing an ecosomatic depiction of the environment as a place where variously disabled persons may experience an able-bodied sensation. Though at

some places in the text, Muir begins to sound as if he is describing the saturating bliss of nature from an ableist point of view, he immediately opens up his statement to a variety of bodies in a particularly ecosomatic fashion. He states that "...every movement of limbs is pleasure, while the whole body seems to feel beauty when exposed to it as it feels the campfire or sunshine, entering not by the eyes alone, but equally through all one's flesh...One's body then seems homogeneous throughout, sound as a crystal" (Muir 131). The initial association of "limbs" and "pleasure" can be considered inaccessible to people with limb disabilities. However, Muir immediately expands this pleasure to the entire body, through "all one's flesh," suggesting that any person's body can experience the intense sensation that results from an immersion in nature. Muir also adds to the inclusivity of nature's grandeur to those inflicted with blindness. Although he focuses on how the pleasure of nature can be witnessed with one's eyes, it does not enter one's being "by the eyes alone," but "equally through all one's flesh." The images that Muir provides within this passage describe the body in nature as "homogeneous throughout" and "sound as a crystal." Muir's concept of experiencing bodily homogeneity while immersed in nature is getting at the heart of the ecosomatic paradigm, in that it "... (nullifies) the able-bodied/ disabled dyad..." by creating a sense of uniformity to all parts of the body within every person (Cella 587). Comparing the body to a "crystal" relates to this homogeneity of the body, but also works alongside Muir's earlier descriptor of the body as "glass." Functioning together, these two metaphors establish an idea that the body of any person in nature is simultaneously fragile as glass and "sound" as a crystal. This establishes that both able-bodied and disabled persons exist in a position of equality in nature. All of the passages in this section work collectively to exhibit how Muir—although not typically a name to be found in literary disability studies—constructs an arguably clear sense of the ecosomatic paradigm in *My First Summer*. This allows his text to not only be read as a strong force in ecocriticism, but also as an early conception of disability rhetoric. Having established this argument in promotion of ecosomatic paradigm, Muir's work can also be seen to be operating in a fascinating way to effectively complicate and challenges Cella's theoretical framework. The clearest instances of this appear in Muir's passages regarding the regenerated tree and the "insane" shepherd.

The moments in Muir's text where he describes the shepherd and the tree originally stood out from the traditional pattern of *My First Summer* due to an observation made about Muir's writing style in Chris Powici's article, "What Is Wilderness? John Muir and the Question of the Wild." Powici notices how "Muir leavens his account with the occasional 'subjective' adjective and adverb ('fine,' 'picturesquely')

but his main objective here is precision” (77, parenthesis added). While much of Muir’s observations of nature follow a pattern of scientific descriptions, these “subjective” moments stand out as instances where Muir directly inserts his opinionated perspective into the text, resulting in a variety of interesting speculations and metaphors. One of the strangest of these metaphorical observations in *My First Summer* occurs when Muir happens upon a tree that, after having been broken during a storm, has begun to regenerate its trunk, “[t]he storm came from the north while it was young and broke it down nearly to the ground [...] Wonderful that a side branch forming a portion of one of the level collars that encircle the trunk of this species (*Abiesmagnifica*) should bend upward, grow erect, and take the place of the lost axis to form a new tree” (143-144, parenthesis added). At first, this reads as simply another one of Muir’s descriptions of nature possessing regenerative properties—similar to the flowers growing back after a wildfire—which aids in constructing the ecosomatic paradigm in Muir’s text. However, it is in Muir’s comparison of the tree to a man with a broken back where the regenerative aspect of ecosomatic paradigm comes into question in terms of its rhetoric of disability. When contemplating the tree, Muir imagines, “[i]t is as if a man, whose back was broken or nearly so and who was compelled to go bent, should find a branch backbone sprouting straight up from below the break and should gradually develop new arms and shoulders and head, while the old damaged portion of his body died” (144). The tree’s comparison to a man acts as a direct connection to Casey’s conception of humanity’s connection to nature, which is the basis for Cella’s ecosomatic paradigm. Muir’s act of likening the tree to a disabled man seems as if Muir is constructing another relation to the ecosomatic paradigm, as he has done within the previously mentioned quotes about regeneration, homogeneity of the body, and the disappearance of pain. Instead, the reader is given an image of regenerating limbs followed by a description of the damaged “human” torso dying. The latter portion of this quote works directly against one of the central tenets of disability studies which is to claim the disabled body as abled and valid in its own right, even without the process of physical healing. This image of the disabled body as “defunct” is also hinted at in the previous quote—occurring right before Muir metaphorically compares the tree to a disabled person—where Muir describes the tree’s new trunk as “(taking) the place of the lost axis” (Muir 144).

Muir’s other instances of the celebration of body in nature establish a “...contiguity between mind-body and its social and natural environments...” which promote “...the work of negotiating a ‘habitable body’ and ‘habitable world’ [that] go hand in hand” (Cella 575).

Alternately, Muir's description of the disabled body as "damaged" and "lost" implies an entirely separate theoretical conception of nature's relationship to the disabled body. Instead of nature providing an ecosomatic space that situates all varieties of bodies on an equal plane, the description of the regenerated tree embeds a sense of inferiority within disabled bodies, visualizing them as something that must be discarded in favor of an abled body. This goes against what Cella describes as the mission of disability activists, "...rather than focus on treating 'the condition and the person with the condition,' disability activists instead spotlight 'treating' the social processes and policies that constrict disabled people's lives' (11)" (Cella 578). This exposes an unfortunate angle which the ecosomatic paradigm can take in literature, where the environment's regenerative properties are likened to the ableist human notion that "normative" is best. While the example of Muir's tree complicates the ecosomatic paradigm's representation of the body, Muir's description of the shepherd's mental state (Muir 147) poses a problem as to how the ecosomatic perspective does not apply to mental disabilities as it does to the realm of somatic disabilities.

Although *My First Summer* reads as though he is exploring the wilderness by himself, there are in fact a few rotating companions who travel alongside him as they all work to move the sheep to better feeding grounds. The only one of these characters that Muir spends more than a few sentences ruminating on is the shepherd. In Muir's conception of the shepherd, he identifies him as a prime example of all California shepherds, who are described in the following way, "[o]f course his health suffers, reacting on his mind; and seeing nobody for weeks or months, he finally becomes semi-insane or wholly so [...] The California shepherd, as far as I've seen or heard, is never quite sane for any considerable time" (Muir 24). Muir's decision to diagnose the shepherd with the generalized mental disability referred to as "insanity" is problematic in its own right. However, as the text continues, Muir's ableist rendering of the shepherd interferes with the previous argument of his tendency to establish an ecosomatic paradigm. As the text continues, the reader is given evidence that Muir's diagnosis of the shepherd is at least partially based on the shepherd's inability to feel a great sensation of pleasure or any enjoyment from his immersion in nature. The primary example of this is when Muir records the shepherd's opinion of Yosemite, "[w]hat," says he, 'is Yosemite but a cañon—a lot of rocks—a hole in the ground—a place dangerous about falling into—a d—d good place to keep away from" (Muir 147). Wholly unlike Muir's conception of nature, the shepherd views exploration of environment merely as a way of getting oneself injured. In an attempt at processing this way of thinking about the natural environment, Muir

writes, “[s]uch souls, I suppose, are asleep, or smothered and befogged beneath mean pleasure and cares” (Muir 147). There begins to emerge a connection between Muir’s conception of the shepherd’s “insanity” and his inability to experience nature in the exuberant, rehabilitating way that Muir himself does.

The shepherd’s function in Muir’s text is comparable to how Lennard J. Davis’ “Introduction: Normality, Power, and Culture” relates the typical role of the disabled minor character in literature as a literary device to arouse pity in the reader (9). This pity is not the same type of sympathy that Charles Dickens was hoping to conjure up with the inclusion of Tiny Tim in *A Christmas Carol*. Instead, Muir seems to be trying to elicit pity for the shepherd as someone who has gone mad due to his inability to comprehend the magnificence of nature. In “Disability and the Justification of Inequality in American History,” Douglas C. Baynton provides some form of explanation for Muir’s ableist conception of the shepherd, explaining, “. . .not only has it been considered justifiable to treat disabled people unequally, but the *concept* of disability has been used to justify discrimination by other groups by attributing disability to them” (17, author’s emphasis). In other words, Muir views the shepherd’s disability as a justification for the judgmental manner in which he writes about the shepherd, perceiving the disability as partially a result of the shepherd’s apathy toward natural environments. Davis provides further insight into this phenomenon when arguing that “[t]he ‘problem’ is not the person with disabilities; the problem is the way that normalcy is constructed to create the ‘problem’ of the disabled person” (1). Muir’s love for nature acts as a signifier for “normalcy” with regard to the functioning of the psyche, while the shepherd is depicted as mentally disabled in his “insanity,” due to his disinterest in nature. Overall, Muir seems to approach mental disability—with his rumination on the shepherd’s uneasy mental state being the only representation of mental disability in *My Summer in the Sierra*—in a manner that is entirely unlike the optimistic, ecosomatic view in which he approaches disabilities of the body. The question then becomes, how does Muir’s tendency to develop an ecosomatic paradigm, while simultaneously approaching mental disability from an ableist point of view, critiques and complicates the conception of the ecosomatic paradigm? The root of this issue seems tucked within Matthew Cella’s article. Although Cella continuously focuses on the disabled body in relation to the ecosomatic paradigm, he rarely mentions how the ecosomatic paradigm conceives nature in terms of the disabled mind. He only addresses the mind in an offhand way, occasionally switching out the term “body” for “mind-body” (Cella 575). Even in the instances where he incorporates the “mind-

body,” it seems as if the phrase loses its consideration of the mind almost immediately after he uses the term. Such as when he says, “[t]he ecosomatic paradigm assumes contiguity between the *mind-body* and its social and natural environments; thus, under this scheme, the work of negotiating a “*habitable body*” and “*habitable world*” go *hand in hand*” (Cella 575, emphasis added). Cella immediately discards the notion of the “mind” when referring to the “habitable body,” as well as within the body-oriented phrase “hand in hand.” Ultimately, Cella’s lack of focus on the disabled mind is evident even within the word “ecosomatic,” where the root “soma” refers directly to the body. If Cella had theorized more about the disabled mind’s position in relation to nature, he would have named his term something along the lines of “the ecopsychosomatic paradigm.” But ultimately, he solely tends to conceptualize how nature develops a positive construction of the human body, while ignoring its relationship to the mind. This seems to be echoed in how Muir writes off the shepherd’s “insanity” as a product of his disinterest with nature, instead of theorizing how the natural environment might have potentially negative impact on the mental state of an individual like the shepherd, whose job forces him to live within a natural world that is secluding and alienating for him. This critique of the ecosomatic paradigm through the lens of Muir’s text is an imperative argument to consider. It calls for necessary attention to the discussion of mental disability, which is often overlooked due to its inability to manifest itself as a noticeable bodily formation as addressed by Margaret Price in “Defining Mental Disability” (305).

The overarching purpose of an analysis such as this is not to condemn Cella’s work for providing more attention to the somatic perspective of disability studies than it does to the arena of mental disability. Instead, it highlights an idea of how his theoretical framework can be expanded, similarly to how he saw room for the expansion of Edward S. Casey’s text. The difference here is that, while Cella reworked Casey’s theories to incorporate both able and disabled bodies in an ecocritical perspective of literature, this paper seeks to rework Cella’s theory of the ecosomatic paradigm to incorporate mental disabilities within the ecosomatic paradigm’s conception of humanity’s situatedness in nature. The arguments within this paper are also not intended to negatively alter the image of John Muir, thereby condemning him as a writer who sometimes incorporated conflicting and presumptuous representations of nature’s relationship to the disabled mind and body. Rather, one of its central functions is to celebrate how incredibly progressive Muir’s thoughts regarding the environment and the body were for his time period, as well as to emphasize how Muir’s literary accomplishments can continue to be viable sources for nu-

anced theoretical analyses within the fields—and the intersection—of ecocriticism and disability studies.

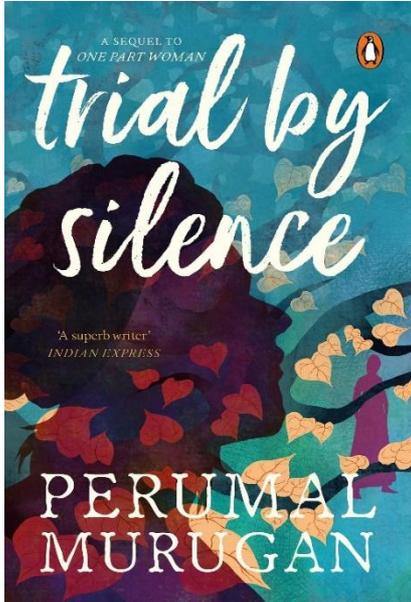


Works Cited

- Anazagasty-Rodríguez, José. "Re-Valuing Nature: Environmental Justice Pedagogy, Environmental Justice Ecocriticism and the Textual Economies of Nature." *Atenea*, vol. 26, no. 1, June 2006, pp. 93–113.
- Baynton, Douglas C. "Disability and the Justification of Inequality in American History." *The Disability Studies Reader*, edited by Lennard J. Davis, Routledge, 2013, pp. 17–33.
- Buell, Lawrence. *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination*. Blackwell, 2005.
- Casey, Edward S. *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World*. Indiana University Press, 1993.
- Cella, Matthew J. C. "Introduction: The Ecosomatic Paradigm and the American Environmental Imagination." *Disability and the Environment in American Literature: Toward an Ecosomatic Paradigm*, edited by Matthew J.C. Cella, Lexington Books, 2016, pp. 1–18.
- . "The Ecosomatic Paradigm in Literature: Merging Disability Studies and Ecocriticism." *Isle: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*, vol. 20, no. 3, 2013, pp. 574–596.
- Davis, Lennard J. "Introduction: Normality, Power, and Culture." *The Disability Studies Reader*, edited by Lennard J. Davis, Routledge, 2013, pp. 1–14.
- Gifford, Terry. *Reconnecting with John Muir: Essays in Post-Pastoral Practice*. University of Georgia Press, 2006.
- Leighly, John. "John Muir's Image of the West." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, vol. 48, no. 4, Dec. 1958, pp. 309–318.
- Muir, John. *My First Summer in the Sierra*. Penguin Classics, 1997.
- Powici, Chris. "What Is Wilderness? John Muir and the Question of the Wild." *Scottish Studies Review*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2004, pp. 74–86.
- Price, Margaret. "Defining Mental Disability." *The Disability Studies Reader*, edited by Lennard J. Davis, Routledge, 2013, pp. 298–307.

Trial by Silence and *A Lonely Harvest* by Perumal Murugan. Translated by Aniruddhan Vasudevan

Reviewed by Rituparna Sengupta



TRIAL BY SILENCE. By Perumal Murugan. Translated by Aniruddhan Vasudevan. Gurgaon: Penguin Random House, 2018; pp. 265, 350 INR, ISBN: 9780143428336

and Hinduism. The novel, set in early twentieth century, narrates the story of Kaliyannan and Ponnayi, a loving married couple, and their struggle with the stigma of being ‘childless.’ The climax of the novel drives Ponna away from Kali and into the arms of a stranger, as she is ‘tricked into’ visiting a chariot festival and participating in the religiously-sanctioned practice of seeking a sexual partner believed to be invested with divine attributes by the half-female deity Maadhorubaagan for that particular night for the purpose of procreation. Before the controversy, Murugan had already finished writing the two sequels to *Maadhorubaagan*. He wrote in his Foreword to the revised Tamil edi-

O, now, for ever
Farewell the tranquil mind! Farewell
content!
(*Othello*, Act 3 Scene 3)

Tis in ourselves that we are thus or
thus. Our bodies are our gardens to
the which our wills are gardeners.
(*Othello*, Act 1 Scene 3)

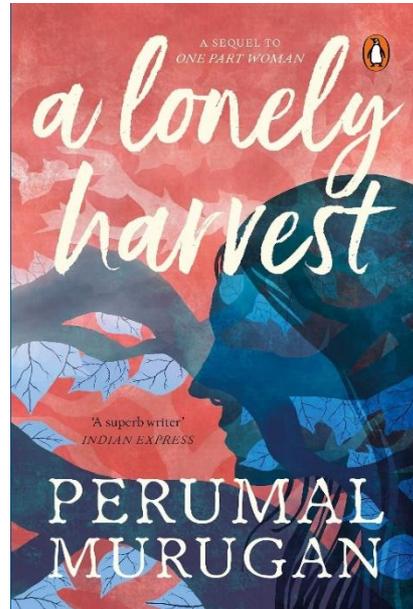
In January 2015, Tamil writer, poet, and scholar, Perumal Murugan made a dramatic declaration on his Facebook page: “Author Perumal Murugan is dead. He is no God. Hence, he will not resurrect. Hereafter, only P Murugan, a teacher, will live.”¹ This was in response to the controversy around his book *Maadhorubaagan*, (2010; tr. *One Part Woman*, 2013) and the harassment he had to face at the hands of members of the influential Gounder caste community—from which he too hails—who alleged that his book ‘insulted’ Gounder women

¹Lal, Amrith, Amitabh Sinha & Geeta Gupta, “Tamil author Perumal Murugan announces his ‘death’ on Facebook over lack of freedom of speech.” *Indian Express*, anuary 15, 2015, New Delhi. www.indianexpress.com/article/india/indiaothers/forced-to-withdraw-novel-tamil-author-announces-his-death/.

tion of the books (post-controversy) that when he had written the sequels, he had experienced “a great freedom of mind,” and that he celebrates them for emerging “...from the rarest of rare moments in life,” while also being anguished over the realisation that such freedom is no longer possible (in the current political climate of religious chauvinism).²

Readers had been bereft of closure when *Maadhorubaagan* ended with the suggestion that Kali, devastated by the news of Ponna’s ‘infidelity’ was contemplating suicide. The ending was especially unsettling, given how intimately the author had drawn readers into the world of Kali and Ponna’s tender, playful love and consuming desire for each other, which gathers urgency as their idyllic romance is disrupted by societal pressure. It is to Murugan’s credit that even though the reader had been enthralled by the blissful union of Kali and Ponna and though this turn of events seems tragic, the mood evoked at this turning point is far from sentimental and is instead layered with nuanced, dark facets of sexual desire and possessiveness. The engaged curiosity of readers about the novel’s ending, compelled the author to return to the story for not one, but two sequels moving along different trajectories—one in which Kali succeeds in his suicide attempt (*Aalavayan* 2014; tr. *A Lonely Harvest* 2018) and another in which he fails (*Ardhanaari* 2014; tr. *Trial by Silence* 2018).

At one obvious level of interpretation, both novels are quite distinct. *Trial by Silence* traces the tortured psyche of Kali as he withdraws from Ponna (and others he considers ‘co-conspirators’) into an eloquent punishing silence, and thwarts attempts at reconciliation. A



A LONELY HARVEST by Perumal Murugan. Translated by Aniruddhan Vasudevan. Penguin Random House India, 2018; pp. 264. ₹399. ISBN: 9780143428343

²Murugan ended his literary exile in 2017 with the publication of his book *Poonachi: Or the Story of a Black Goat*. He adopts particular literary strategies therein to defy and circumvent censorship: www.helterskelter.in/2018/06/book-review-poonachi-perumal-murugan/.

Lonely Harvest on the other hand traces Ponna's journey through different stages of grief, desperately trying to keep Kali captive in her memories. If the former is about a man unable to overcome his sense of betrayal and self-pity, the latter is an enquiry into female resilience and solidarity, even if it stems from resignation. Both novels end with swift surprises, taking the story forward in two different directions.

Kali's death in *A Lonely Harvest* is geared towards discovering "...how Ponna's world might expand or shrink as a consequence of this" and towards this end the author humbly admits to have "...taken the freedom to wander around inside the world of women" (Preface, revised Tamil edition, translated in English). Women occupy the centre stage here, coming to each other's support socially and emotionally, negotiating a world skewed against them. It is with her mother-in-law Seerayi's and mother Vallayi's help that Ponna learns to sow and reap a full, if lonely, harvest. The older women close ranks around the vulnerable Ponna who is distracted with grief. They shield and watch over her; not for once blaming her, but Kali instead, for his rashness and inconsiderate pride which ruins her life. The Seerayi who empathises with her widowed daughter-in-law here is different from the embittered mother-in-law in *Maadhorubaagan*. As Ponna nurtures her farm, reliving the loving care of her relationship with Kali, and rewarded by its fecundity, she likewise cultivates her own self. In *Trial by Silence*, we meet Ponna who is aghast at having unwittingly betrayed her lover, but has too much self-respect to cling to a man who called her a 'whore.' Though the motif of the disowned wife and abandoned child is at least as old as Kalidasa's *Abhijñānaśākuntalam*, Murugan's take on the motif presents a story of durable resilience and self-discovery.

Despite moving along different paths, both books have significant impulses in common and are ultimately companion pieces in meaningful ways. Both concern themselves with betrayals and lost loves, coloured with the subtle emotion of *abhimaan*.³ Both stem from Kali's resolve to punish Ponna and her bewildered grief, raising questions of gendered power equations in the most ideal male-female bonds of love. Both lovers have been to the festival at different times—he, freely and unthinkingly as a youth awakening to his sexuality, and she, for procreative purposes, resorting to psychological projections of Kali's image onto her lover for the night—but the consequences for both are expectedly different. In the course of both the

³Word of Sanskrit origin; the approximate meaning being 'egotistical and resentful hurt felt towards a loved one' (my translation).

novels we learn that sexual fidelity, mostly taken for granted, is not an unchanging constant but a convention erected and breached for human convenience. The *ardhanārīshwar*⁴ ideal inspiring the festival, also embodied in Ponna-Kali, is by no means suggestive of absolute equality and untrammelled harmony. Both the books raise important inter-linked questions: Is it the thought of Ponna's betrayal or the possibility of the confirmation of his own impotence that Kali is unable to face? Is Kali pushed to his death/muteness by others or is his tragedy self-inflicted, born of his egotistic shortsightedness? Is social custom to be seen as a merciful outlet for individual needs, or a perverse tool for quenching the very needs it itself stokes?

The sequels continue the descriptions of the sensuous and erotic union of Kali-Ponna, infusing them with various elemental aspects of nature. For both, everything around seems to be suffused with memories of their love. In *Harvest*, Kali metamorphoses into the field, the breeze, the rocks and the harvest for Ponna, as she charts the universal journey of keeping a loved one hostage in one's memories, to slowly learning to set them free. Kali's desire for Ponna despite his hurt pride, and his masochistic summoning of the visage of his imagined rival, harken back to the famed Shakespearean tale of jealousy and suspicion born of desire, except that here Othello carries his Iago within himself.

The character of Uncle Nallayyan is the novels' North Star, predictably appearing in both the texts with different and yet concerted intent. Free and uninhibited, self-aware, and worldly wise, he brings perspective of life beyond the individual experience and the world beyond the village to Kali in one case and Ponna in the other. Uncompromisingly frank and unsentimental, weaving tales of sexual 'aberrations' into bawdy humour, he exposes the hypocrisy of sexual mores for men and women, and shows a rare sympathy for female desire and the concomitant recognition of male privilege. Through his and Seerayi's recollections of family and village histories, the readers catch glimpses of a social order where husbands invited men to have intercourse with their wives, for pleasure or progeny. There is also a description put forth by the farm help, Vengayi, of a freer life for widows in her own community. All these episodes serve to establish the

⁴Editor's Note: *Ardhanārīshwar* in Hindu mythology is 'the lord who is half female' (Source: *Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, edited by Dennis Cush, Catherine Robinson, and Michael York. Routledge, 2008, pg. 40). Its androgynous form, combining the characteristics of Shiva and his female energy, parvati, is symbolic of the dissolution of the boundaries between the male and the female, and suggestive of their fusion.

contingency of moral values—across time, caste, and propertied classes.

The tension between the corporeal and the spiritual that is carried forth in the sequels move towards a resolution, as the limits of individual experience, especially self-pity, are gradually laid to rest against the backdrop of collective human wisdom and compassion. If *Maadhorubaagan* showed us a world in which the individual is deeply embedded within the social and constrained by it, then its sequels portray how the social is likewise deeply invested in the individual. If it is the well-intentioned meddling of the family that caused the rift between the lovers, then its repercussions are also keenly felt by both the closely-knit families, who have their own guilt to negotiate with.

Even readers unfamiliar with the original Tamil version will be able to appreciate Aniruddhan Vasudevan's adept translation which successfully carries over the spirit and flavour of the original text into its English translation. This is most visible when it comes to portions of the text that dissolve the distinction between the human and the natural world. *A Lonely Harvest*, for instance, carries the following lines:

With a quiet, steady smile, Kali flowed into the bed. Flattening down the soil that had been raked and piled, he slowly filled up the brinjal bed. He stood over the roots and sank into them. Ponna could not even hear Muthu shouting to ask if the bed had been fully watered. All that filled her eyes was the sight of Kali filling up the channel so completely that it looked like the banks would submerge. (p. 63)

Though carefully shorn of *Maadhorubaagan's* recognisable geographical and religious references, and accompanied by emphatic disclaimers about their own fictionality, the sequels are by no means apolitical. Together, they respond to the political forces founded on notions of obsession with racial purity and religious authoritarianism, which had sought to censor and silence their precursor. As Nallayyan gently reminds us, for each narrative, there are as many counter narratives—norms contain within themselves their own counters, however discomfiting. In times when the ancient practice of *niyoga*⁵ is explained away as a medical marvel, the assertion that such a practice essentially stemmed from 'legitimate' extra-marital sexual intercourse

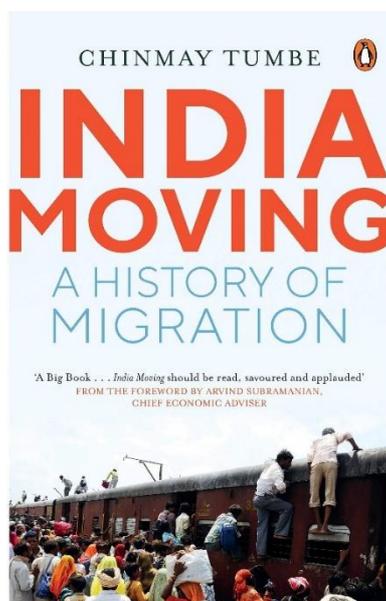
⁵The ancient Hindu practice that sanctioned a woman, who was a widow or whose husband was unable to father a child, to approach another man, under strictly-observed conditions, to help her bear a child.

is nothing short of radical, and a reclamation of human dignity as well as imperfection in the struggle for survival. The novel alludes to a culture in transition, influenced by the 'white man' and his (Victorian) morality into adopting fastidious approaches to sexuality and reproductive ethics. This is as true of Kali as of the modern reader for whom the festival and its custom sound so scandalously licentious as to make him vehemently disavow its very existence. Even as the present historical moment prompts us to question the links between the illusion of free will and the oppressiveness of simultaneous realities, Murugan's unique universe re-centres the human into the life-affirming ambit of choice, and foregrounds the strength of the human spirit to bear its consequences.



India Moving: A History of Migration by Chinmay Tumbe

Reviewed by Swati Mantri



INDIA MOVING: A HISTORY OF MIGRATION by Chinmay Tumbe. Penguin Random House India, 2018; pp. 304. ₹599. ISBN: 9780670089833

In the face of recent global migration and humanitarian crisis unfolding in Indian sub-continent, South America, sub-Saharan region, and beyond, Chinmay Tumbe's *India Moving: A History of Migration* is a timely reminder of treating migration as a dynamic phenomenon and not as a one-off event wherein the transformative effect of journey on the migrant is ever-lasting. Referring to migration as 'rites of passage' (p.142), the frame-

work adopted by Tumbe gives migration a ring of adventure that the migrant undertakes as an expedition, one that is transformative in nature. The book provides a nuanced insight into various contextual cases of Indian migration—both external as well as internal—and offers a fascinating account of “cultural crossovers” (p.153) through various symbolic references ranging from popular cultural icons to everyday social practices, from inter-community relations to formation of transnational ties.

Today, the currency of the term migrant has acquired an inevitable presence in economic, political, and even social discourse. Whether as a threat or as an adventurer, the migrant is present everywhere: what are the set of social relations that influence people's movement? What is the key to understand migration? Why is migration undertaken and why has such a phenomenon been persistently growing? Who is really the beneficiary of such processes? These exploratory questions constitute some of the key concerns in Chinmay Tumbe's *India Moving: A History of Migration* that cohesively studies several historical junctures and epochs of Indian migration history and its diasporas.

Thematically divided into six chapters, Tumbe's book is a culmination of the authors' primary research during his PhD at IIM Ban-

galore and his professional engagements in the field thereafter. An attempt to stitch the historical data and research findings within the larger theoretical framework of international as well as internal migration in India, affords the writer to use an intersectional analytical lens in this book. A perceptive observation of the socio-cultural and religious affinities of Indian migrants, historical particularities, and how factors like gender, class, and caste affect the migration patterns of Indians, strengthens Tumbe's argument on how "...the view of low spatial mobility in Indian history is seriously questionable. Not only has India witnessed some of the world's largest episodes of voluntary and involuntary migration, but is also unique in currently sustaining considerable immigration, internal migration and emigration – all three at the same time" (p.2).

The burgeoning research on migration studies often focuses on the single major factor of socio-economic mobility that encourages migration. Keeping in tune with the recent trends on migration studies, the methodology of analysis used by the author here includes an examination of social and cultural factors as well. Thus reminding the readers that although economic factors are crucial, they are not the only determining factors in the decision to migrate. By incorporating themes like 'displacement,' 'development,' and 'partition,' this book introduces the readers to the myriad circumstances under which migration is possibly undertaken by an individual. Tumbe's specific treatment of the subject includes citing various significant historical events in India's socio-political history, as well as tracing the trajectory of migration that Indians undertook in three distinct phases—pre-colonial, colonial, and contemporary recent times—which also interact with and bind together the cross-cultural narratives emanating from various corners of the country. To this end, the book is particularly informative in exploring the links between international migration concomitant with the forming of Indian diasporas and the significant economic power exerted by diasporic remittances. Tumbe posits that this not only acted as a source of capital for the state but more importantly fostered streams of migration through consolidation of networks transnationally.

Moreover, arguing for the "Great Indian Migration" as a voluntary model of migration, Tumbe emphasises upon the "reason and duration of migration" (p.34) as imperatives to understand migration patterns in India. To this end, what makes the theory presented different from other published work on similar topics, is the attention paid to the often ignored social processes such as migration of food practices, festivals, and languages, etc., that accompany the act of migration. Migra-

tion as a social factor, experienced through everyday lives, is emphasized upon through the usage of popular cultural symbols like Udupi restaurants, Karachi bakery of Hyderabad, Bollywood movies, and song lyrics. Over time, these themes have motivated writings in social-anthropology, but one might not find many such resources accessible to the uninitiated reader.

While explaining the crucial moments with ease for the layman, the author effortlessly brings together several snippets from ancient history of Indian migration as well as recently published books such as Sujatha Gidla's *Ants among Elephants* (2017) and attempts to move beyond the sole gaze on the male migrant. One understands that a book of such nature could be inexhaustibly voluminous and could only address as much. But the question of women mobility or implications of migration on women, although raised, leaves much scholarly foray to be desired.

Insofar as the book espouses the virtues of how migration is benefitting for some, it however leaves the reader wondering about the agency of the migrant and the various locations subsuming migrant as a victim or as an opportunist. Moreover, although Tumbe's work succinctly weaves together multiple strands of migration stories emanating from different corners of the country that have significantly shaped the Indian demography over time, the author misses the opportunity to take a comprehensive position on the rise of many new trends that push the discourse on migration to the forefront, for instance, the rise of populist movements across the world as a response to immigration policies.

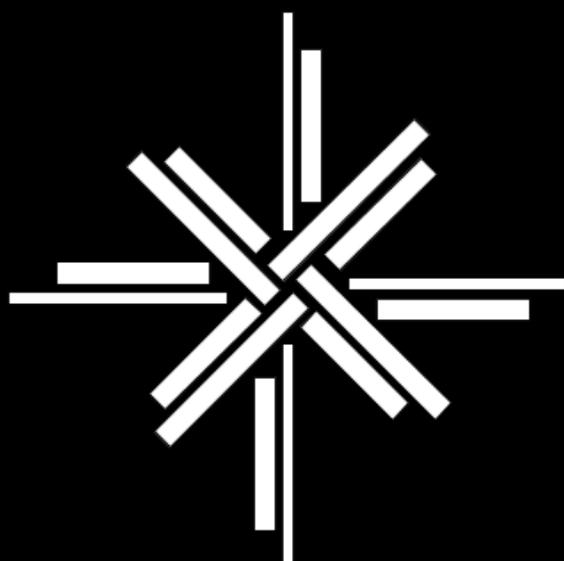
The phenomenon of migration is seen to have the power to impact and shape transnational connections, international geopolitical relations, and the stability of a state. In times when emergence of new categories of visas to restrict incoming migrants and refugee crisis features in everyday news, Chinmay Tumbe's historical and anecdotal account of migrating Indians is an informative research that revisits some old conundrums around the formation of Indian diaspora and produces new insights into what the author posits as "Indians now reside in every country of the world, barring perhaps North Korea and a few others. And with every new Indian adventure abroad, readers are greeted with a new book describing how Indians have made that particular part of the world their home" (p.152). The multifarious perspectives presented in the book will appeal to the layman reader and scholars alike, for it brings out the consciousness of social change linked to structural functions of migration and will familiarize them with migra-

tion patterns, settlement practices and strategies that migrants resort to. The diverse sources of reference in the book are complemented by the lucid narration style of the author and shall definitely encourage its readers to delve deeper into the intersectional ties of migration, place-making, and construction of a specific identity.



This page has been intentionally left blank.

This page has been intentionally left blank.



www.ellids.com